"Inner Speech" in Papuan Languages

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1   Introduction

In a number of grammatical descriptions of Papuan languages it is explicitly mentioned that "intention" (as in: 'I want (him) to go') and other constructions that express "thought content" make use of a form of the verb 'to say'. Various authors refer to what they call "inner speech" (e.g. Bromley 1981:50; Reesink 1987:255; De Vries 1990:296), since these constructions seem to parallel Direct Speech quotations. There are some striking similarities in languages of other parts of the world with regard to the functional domains of 'to say', e.g. Adelaar 1990 on Quechua; Saxena 1987 on Tibeto-Burman; Heine et al. 1991 on African languages.

In this paper I will focus on Usan, drawing cursory comparisons with other languages when I deal with the following questions:

1.   What is the morphosyntax of direct quotations?
2.   Are there morphosyntactic criteria to differentiate between direct and indirect quotations?
3.   Is it possible to differentiate between the different "functions" of say-constructions, or do these functions only represent idiomatic translations in a language such as English?
4.   Finally, in the conclusion, I want to raise the question what lexicalization of types of speech can tell us about a culture's attitude toward language, i.e. speech.

2   Direct quotations

Direct quotations involve reported speech, within a matrix discourse. The reported material does not have to be verbatim, of course. What is required, is that the deictic orientation is independent of that in the matrix discourse. In many Papuan languages (Kobon, Davies 1981:1; Amele, Roberts 1987:12; Gahuku, Deibler 1971:101; Kombai, De Vries 1989:160)

quotes are introduced by the verb 'to say' and followed by the same verb or a special quotation marker. Thus, Usan is not exceptional:

1) *Wo$_i$ qam-ar: "Ne$_j$ mani abau ba tap is-a$_j$* ne
   he say-3:FP you food bag take path descend-2/3s:DS and
   ye$_i$ qemi gagam ba qon-qon is-ib-am$_r$" qam-arei$_i$
   I bow strong take side-RED descend-sg:FUT-1s say-3s:FP
   'He$_i$ said: "You$_j$ take the bag with food and go down the path and I$_i$ will take the gun and go down by the sides [=through the bush]," he$_i$ said.'

Note that (1) shows all the features of a direct quotation: The speaker is telling about a hunting trip he took with a friend. The matrix discourse is marked by a Far Past tense. His friend is referred to by a third person pronoun. When S. quotes what his friend told him, the friend is referred to by first person, S. is second person, and the tense is Future. The quoted discourse forms an independent 'world' with the appropriate deictic orientation. All tenses and moods are possible, of course.

The construction given in (1) is by no means the only possible one. Often the quote introduction has the cataphoric adverbial *ete* [*e-t-e* 'this/here + postposition -*t* 'for/at/on/etc.' + this/here]: *wo ete qamar* 'he said thus', whereas following the quote one often gets *ende* [*e-ng-t-e*: -*ng* 'given/a particular one] which can be used both cataphorically and anaphorically. The addressee, either in a full NP or a free pronoun, is marked by the postposition -*nob* 'with': *Wo ete ye-nob qamar* 'He said thus to me'. Occasionally, either the introduction or closing formula is left out. Again, the latter options are not exceptional (Cf. Bromley 1981:270).

3 Morphosyntax of indirect speech

Indirect speech does not occur in Kobon (Davies 1989:1). Drabbe 1959:23 & 137 seems to suggest that Kaeti and Wambon lack indirect speech. According to Haiman (1989:148), Hua is one of the languages in which only direct quotation is possible. Indirect speech is possible but rare in Amele (Roberts 1987:14) and Dani (Bromley 1981:271). Amele signals indirect speech by the absence of a speech verb, i.e. the 'quote' is followed directly by verbal suffixation. According to Roberts, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between direct and indirect speech. That is true also for Usan, especially because the constructions to be discussed in section 4 look like direct quotations. And again, indirect quotations in Usan are rare. The following is unelicited:

2) *Wo bur ger   wer-ib   at igam-a   iu-ar   eng ye-nob*
    he pig one shoot-sg:FUT:SS do be-2/3sg:DS go:away-3s.FP the I-with
    qam-arei
    say-3s:FP
    'He told me that he had tried to shoot a pig and it got away'

Example (2) shows the object of the verb 'to say' as a presuppositional nominal, i.e. a full clause with final verb marked as any 'given' nominal by the determiner *eng* (Reesink 1987:208). Much more frequently are constructions that seem to involve direct quotations, as in (3).

3) *wonou ubeni eng ye bo   skur-t   yar   qamb ibitiri*
    his   wife   the I again school-to come:IMP say:SS persist
    igam-a   ye bo   is-omei
    stay/be-2/3s:DS I   again descend-1s:FP
    'His wife kept on pressing me saying I should come to school again and I went down again'

The use of an Imperative mood of 'to come' followed by the SS-form of 'to say' suggests a direct quotation in this sentence, which actually is an example of 'other functions', to be discussed in section 4. This other function of 'to say' expresses "thought contents" or purpose. Comparison of (4) and (5) shows that (3) is in fact an indirect quotation.

4) *Wo qam-ar: ne   mi   eng arir   wog!,   (ende) (ye-nob)*
    he say-3s:FP you thing the   throw:SS leave:IMP thu s   I-with
    qam-arei
    say-3s:FP
    'He said:"You throw that thing away!", (thus) he said (to me)'

5) *Wo ye mi   eng arir   wog   qamb   qam-arei*
    he I thing the throw:SS leave:IMP say:SS say-3s:FP
    'He told me to throw that thing away'

The difference between direct (4) and indirect (5) speech is not found in the mood of the verb. In both cases an Imperative is required when the subject of the matrix clause is different from the one in the quoted material. The pronominal reference is different, though: in (4) S. is referred to by a second person, since he was the addressee in the original speech act, whereas in (5) S. refers to himself by a first person pronoun. A second difference is that indirect quotations do not use the introducing and closing 'formula's'. A similar contrast is found in sentences with identical subjects in matrix and 'quoted' clause. Indirect speech makes use of medial future verb forms (6), while direct speech uses final future forms (7).

6) *Wo   yar-ib   qamb   qam-arei*
   he   come-sg:FUT:SS say:SS   say-3s:FP
   'He said he would come'

7) *Wo   qam-ar: "Barim   yar-ib-am",   (ende)   qam-ar*
   he   say-3s:FP tomorrow come-sg:FUT-1s (thus)   say-3s:FP
   'He said: "Tomorrow I will come", he said (thus)'

The situation in Usan is similar to the treatment of person references in Dani (Bromley 1981:243-245): "where the subjects of the subordinate and superordinate verbs are coreferential [...] the person category of the subject of the subordinate verb is interpreted as if the subject of the superordinate verb were the speaker [...]". Thus, literally, (6) reads: 'he said saying (I) will come'. Where S. is involved as object of the subordinate clause, again, Dani and Usan show remarkable similarity in allowing double first person marking, with one referring to S. and the other to the subject of the matrix clause. Compare (8) and (9). The Dani verb *wat-* 'kill' has the form *was-uwok* (1PL deferred hortative Bromley 1981:49) for 'Let's kill him later', the object *w-* '3s' being part of the stem, but in (8) the object is first person, as well as the subject. Literally it reads 'They were saying having said "let us kill me later"':

8) *N-as-uwok   olvk-at   y-khylakoukwha*
   me-let's.kill.later having:said-PRED saying-they:were:FP
   'They used to make plans to kill me' (Bromley 1981:244)

9) *Wo$_i$ eng ba di   ye$_j$ yeis-ib$_i$ qamb$_i$ ba di-arei*
   he   this take come:up I   give:me-sg:FUT:SS say:SS take come:up:3s.FP
   'He$_i$ brought this up in order to give to me$_j$'

A first person pronoun in the subordinate clause can also refer to the subject of the matrix clause, but in that case the mood of the verb should be an Imperative:

10) *Wo   mi   eng yeis   qamb di-arei*
    he   thing this give:me:IMP say:SS come:up-3s:FP
    'He came up in order that (I) give him this thing'
    [Lit. He came up saying "give me this thing"]

A further argument for considering such constructions as indirect, rather than direct speech is the fact that state or process verbs, which do not allow a volitional agent as subject and thus cannot occur in the Imperative mood as a final verb, receive this very mood when they are the content of a purpose construction:

11) *Wuri ai   sigen-iom   qamb   mi   eng   mor   big-umirei*
     they   ground   dry-sg:IMP   say:SS   thing   this   inside   put-3p:FP
     'They put this thing inside in order that the ground would dry up'

4   "Functions" of 'to say'

In various publications one finds statements about the number of different functions of 'to say'. Deibler (1971) lists twelve functions of *l-* 'to say" in Gahuku, such as marking normal quotes, thought content, inceptive/inchoative, purpose, desire/wish, naming, etc. Similar functions of this verb have been reported for Tibeto-Burman languages, though in this case Saxena (1987:385) ascribes the grammaticalized quotative complex to influence from neighboring Indic languages. In Quechua "the verb *ni-* 'say' can refer to all kinds of mental activity in which no actual talking is involved [...it] demands a message complement in directly quoted speech" (Adelaar 1990:4). In Ewe, presumably representative of other African languages, "the verb *bé* 'say' has been grammaticalized to a clause subordinator after verbs such as 'say', 'know', 'believe', and 'hope', and it also serves to introduce PURPOSE clauses, though not CAUSE clauses" (Heine et al. 1991:236).

Usan *qamb* 'say:SS' figures in a number of constructions that require different translations. These I will provisionally label as different functions, while I will search for features in Usan morphosyntax that would justify such a differentiation.

i) Purpose: examples have already been given for the case where subjects of matrix and purpose clause are coreferential (6) and (9), and those where the subject referent of the main clause intends for somebody/thing else to do something: (3), (10) and (11). With coreferential subjects the medial future same subject verb is most commonly used in the purpose clause. But the subjunctive (what I call 'uncertain future') is also possible:

12) *Wo   nomon   qur   ger   ba   yar-a   g-in   qamb*
     he   stone   fruit   one   take   come-2/3s:DS   see-1s:UF   say:SS
     ar   tap   umo   asi   g-amei
     just   path   down   look:for:SS   see-1s:FP
     'I just went down the path to see if I would see him bring some money'

ii) Lest: The subjunctive is especially used when the event in the subordinate clause is undesirable. In this case a natural translation contains a negation 'in order that not' or 'lest', where Usan has no explicit negation:

13) *Mi   qei-qei   mani umer-iner   qamb   gitab   ig-oun*
     thing some-RED yam wilt-3s:UF   say:SS abstain:SS be-1p:PR
     'We abstain from various things lest the yam wilts'

iii) Pretense: When the subordinate clause contains a final verb form with a present tense, the interpretation is invariably one of pretense: the subject of the matrix clause does 'as if':

14) *Yamangar eng der   munon woro-bai-oun   qamb abub   wapet*
     woman   the get:up man   them-take-1p:PR say:SS k.o.vine imitate:SS
     nam baab...
     tree hold:SS
     'The women got up and imitated the abub vine and held the trees as if they were taking [=marrying] men...'

iv) Mistaken thought: When the subject of the matrix clause thinks that a certain event took place, of which the Speaker knows it didn't, and therefore is engaged in the action of the main clause, one would translate *qamb* as 'because X thought'. The verb in the 'quoted clause' has a final form with past (Near or Far) tense:

15) *...me ya-g-ab   eng yag umo-nd   is-orei   qamb ye-toat*
     not me-see-SS the river down-at:the descend-3s:FP say:ss me-follow:SS
     is-umirei
     descend-3p:FP
     '...and when they didn't see me they followed me thinking I had gone down to the river'

Here is a shorter example, with a non-verbal 'mistaken thought':

16) *Qob ger eng an bubun qamb   qugurag-et   ig-oumon*
     talk one the you new   say:SS heavy -experience:SS be-2p:PR
     'As for this other problem, you find it difficult because you think it is something new'

v) Inception: When the event of the subordinate clause is expressed with a medial future SS verb form, as in (i) with coreferential purpose, but the subject of the main clause is not a volitional agent or the 'intended' action is not particularly desirable, *qamb* can be interpreted as marking inception of an action:

17) *Munon um-ib   qamb qindeind qob   ete   qemer-ib-a*
     man   die-sg:FUT:SS say:SS delirium talk thus say-3s:FUT
     '(when) a man is about to die he will rave and say thus:...'

vi) Attempting: Usan does not have a lexical item for 'to try' or 'to attempt'. This meaning is expressed by an qamb construction followed by the verb 'to do'. The subordinate verb is either a medial future SS form or a subjunctive, just as for the purpose construction of (i):

18) *Wo saberi end   in-in   qamb   eb-eter   eng wo qeemben ue*
     he bed   the:at sleep-1s:UF say:SS do-3s:FP the he adequate not
     'When he tried to sleep on the bed, he couldn't'

vii) Listing: When *qamb* directly follows a noun (phrase) it signals that the noun is only one of a list of items that S. wants to refer to. The other items may be explicitly mentioned following *qamb*, but this is not obligatory.

19) *wau waramb qiyo tugar qamb abau   ..soop ur gumet*
     child hit:SS or   basket say:SS netbag cut:up:SS burn:SS
     '...they kill a child or cut up and burn (their) baskets, say, and their netbags and ...[other stuff]'

It is clear that all seven "functions" exhibit only one form of the verb 'to say', the medial SS form. The same subject referent marking is in accordance with the switch reference rules of Usan, i.e. the following predicate has the same subject referent as *qamb*. The "different functions" seem to follow directly from the verb form in the subordinate clause. I would suggest, then, that Usan has only two functions for *qamb* 'to say'. The first is the general function to refer to the act of speaking or telling. This allows all possible forms of the verb paradigm. The second function is what we could call a grammaticalized one, which allows only the medial Same Subject form *qamb*. This one covers all instances that refer to "inner speech", which invariably requires indirect "quotations". The two functions allow for interesting stackings of the verb 'to say' as in:

20) *Ne yar-ab   bo   oau   ete qi-u-t-ab   ne igo-arar   qamb₁*
     and come-SS again insides thus RECIP-3s-give-SS and stay-pl:IMP say:SS
     qemer-in₂ qamb₃ qur-aum₄ e-ng   wo me dear-au   e-ng
     say-1s:UF say:SS say-1s:PR this-GIV he not come:up-NOM this-GIV
     'Given that I say₄ that I wanted [= saying₃] to say₂ [= *qemerin*] that [= *qamb₁*] they should come and make peace and stay thus, it is that [= unfortunately] he hasn't come up'

5   Conclusion

Usan is rather representative of Papuan languages (at least those of the TNGP) with repect to the use of the verb 'to say'. Also, there are hardly any other lexical items referring to speech acts, or to use a less technical term, to modes of speech. 'To ask' is *qebi*, which can be inflected by itself, but more often it is found in series with inflected *qamb*: *qebi-amorei* 'he asked' or *qebi qam-arei* 'asking he spoke'. Likewise *taui* 'pay back, return', when linked to *qamb* conveys 'to answer'. In the same way *qob* 'talk' refers to all speech. It has to be glossed as: 'word', 'sentence', 'story', 'issue' or 'problem' [note the parallel in Tok Pisin: *nogat tok* = 'no problem' for *qob ue*]. Merlan and Rumsey (1991:119) note the identical facts about Ku Waru [=Kaugel dialect]. This and other observations, such as the difficulty outsiders have in noticing when a speaker shifts from a main clause to an embedded (quasi-)quote, lead them to make some statements about Ku Waru culture to the effect that language, i.e. speech, has a more material function in Ku Waru than in other cultures. Speech, according to Merlan and Rumsey, is valued as a mode of social action (p. 222), "in some contexts at least, perceived as the most salient and socially-valued form of doing, efficacious action" (p.223).

I wonder if the emphasis on 'preference for direct speech' in Papuan languages accurately reflects the real situation in these languages. From my observations, I would not say that native speakers have any problem distinguishing between direct speech and reported speech. Much less would they characterize the "functions" listed in section 4 as direct quotations. Usan speakers are well aware that *qamb* in such constructions does not 'mean' speaking. I also wonder if perhaps the subtle grammatical cues for indirectness are just as much available in other languages as they are in Usan. The Dani material, as well as Enga examples (Lang 1973:xxxix),[1] and Merlan and Rumsey's admission that deictic categories do not always agree with the point of view of the reported speech situation (1991:342), seem to point in this direction.

The title of this paper refers to the phenomenon of a 'grammaticalized' use of the etymon *qamb* and its equivalents. That is to say, these functions of 'to say' are only distantly related to its original meaning, and its morphological and syntactic valencies are reduced. That's simply the way Papuan languages (apparently they share this with languages in other parts of the world) express 'thought content' = "inner speech". The title is not meant to characterize Papuan cultural traits, or imply nonsense such as "Papuan languages still express the social origin of thinking", as the term "inner speech" borrowed from Vygotsky (1962:131) would suggest. The

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[1] Here's one example that resembles Usan (3) and (5):

Nambá   Wápaka   pú-p-i-li   lá-o   mási-l-i-no
I   Wabag   go-PAST-2sg-CONT utter-o   think-PRES-2sg-AUGMENT
'You want me to go Wabag (but I don't know whether I can)'

Actually, I think the gloss should have been: 'You think (mistakenly) that I went to Wabag'. In any case, the verb of the 'quoted' clause is marked for second person while the pronominal subject is first person. In regular direct quotes, the latter item would have been second person also.

dearth of lexicalized speech acts, or the generalized meaning of 'to say' with its "many functions" does not say anything about a culture's attitude towards language. The statements about the multitude of functions of one lexical item do say something about the attitudes linguists and anthropologists have towards language, namely, that our own emic system is still the yardstick by which we measure other languages.

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