**A linguistic cycle for quotatives in eastern Bantu languages**

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## Data for this study

Narrative texts (often contain a lot of direct speech)
- mix of oral and written, folk tales and actual events
- collected by SIL colleagues in DRC, Mozambique, Tanzania and Kenya

## Speech orienters

Any words or phrases that accompany represented speech (direct, indirect, semi-direct, etc). Also called 'speech margin', 'quotation formula', 'quote margin', 'quote tag'.

**Function**: A speech orienter indicates that there is speech, but it can also describe who is speaking, who is being spoken to, and the manner of speaking. Factors such as whether a discourse is formal or informal, whether the speech forms part of a conversation or a monologue, whether the speaker is a major or minor participant, and so on, can affect the content of speech orienters, and even whether one occurs or not.

**Position**: Depending on the language, speech orienters can occur before, after or within the represented speech, or at more than one location. In eastern Bantu languages, speech orienters almost always occur before represented speech.

## Quotatives

1. An invariable particle (sometimes a complementizer) that either accompanies or replaces a lexical verb of speech (or thought).
2. A 'reduced' verb (limited derivational morphology, may be phonologically reduced) that either accompanies or replaces a lexical verb of speech (or thought).
3. A non-finite verb form that accompanies a lexical verb of speech (or thought).
4. An obligatory speech verb – that is, a verb which occurs in (almost) every speech orienter, even if another speech verb is present.

1 – 3 can be identified on formal, qualitative grounds, but 4 is can only be identified through quantitative data.

## Types of quotatives

1. An invariable particle (sometimes a complementizer) that either accompanies or replaces a lexical verb of speech (or thought).

**Tembo** [tbt] JD531 (Masumbuko Shabani, p.c.)

(1) a. *Lusuku luuma, muka Kangamba era kubusa eba wai **mbu**, "…"*
day one wife(of) Kangamba AUX ask husband her QUOTE

b. *Kangamba ... era kuuma mwa bunu **mbu**, "…"*
Kangamba AUX touched in mouth QUOTE

c. *Na mukai **mbu**, "…"*
and his_wife QUOTE

2. A 'reduced' verb (limited derivational morphology, may be phonologically reduced) that either accompanies or replaces a lexical verb of speech (or thought).

**Malila** [mgq] M24 (Eaton 2015a)

(2) *Ʉsankonya a-kha-toneel-a **a-kha-ti**, "…"*
Sankonya 3SG-NARR-interrupt-FV 3SG-NARR-say

(3) *Abhalindʉ **bha-kha-ti**, "…"*
girls 3PL-NARR-say

3. A non-finite verb form that accompanies a lexical verb of speech (or thought).

**Kisi** [kiz] G67 (Hazel Gray p.c.)

(4) *bhandu bhooha bha-ka-**jobh-a**, "…"*
people all 3PL-NARR-say-FV

(5) *bhakaahidi **ku-jobh-a**, "…"*
they.promised INF-say-FV/QUOTE

(6) *a-ku-ti **ku-jobh-a**, "…"*
3SG-PROG-say INF-say-FV/QUOTE

4. An obligatory speech verb – that is, a verb which occurs in (almost) every speech orienter, even if another speech verb is present.

**Bena** [bez] G63 (Eaton 2015b)

(7)  *Avaanu   vaapulihiidze        dzonda   neke   vatigile,   "…"*
     people    they.heard [P2]      all       then    they.said [CONSECUTIVE-SUBJUNCTIVE]

(8)  *U-Ngamufifi    ihigaga              itigalaga,   "…"*
     Hyena           he.answered [CONS]    he.said [CONS]

(9)  *U-Mbwa    aapilwise         itigila,   "…"*
     Dog        he.replied [P2]    he.said [PRESENT]

### Data from 11 eastern Bantu languages

**Rangi** [lag] F33

Stegen (2011), 66 texts, 3,200 clauses

***No quotative, but one speech verb predominates***

The verb *sea* 'say' (or 'tell' with an object prefix) occurs 273 times, but other speech verbs also occur: *ʉrya* 'ask' (24), *wiira* 'tell' (13), *imba* 'sing' (9), *kemera* 'call' (4), *itika* 'answer' (3), and *anda/anza* 'start' (3).

(10)  *Na ikamʉʉrya, "Moosi kʉri, jooli isikʉ masakaato?"*
      And it (cat) asked him (dog), "Elder dog, how (is) today the hunt?"

      *Kʉri na ikasea, "Isikʉ heendawee masakaato yabooha."*
      The dog then said, "Today maybe the hunt is good."

      *Na ikamʉsea, "Isikʉ ni che ʉsákaatiire?"*
      And it told him, "Today it is what you have been hunting?"

                                                                                    (Stegen 2011: 452)

**Digo** [dig] E73

Source: Nicolle (2013, 2015), 14,000 word corpus; detailed analysis of 7 texts, 864 clauses

***Incipient (potential) quotative: lexical speech verb; very frequent but not yet obligatory***

Lexical speech verb *amba* 'say': occurs in almost all speech orienters.

(11)  *Yuyu     mutu        achiamba, "…"*
      this      person      he.said [CONS]

      *Anaambwa                     ni  hiye simba, "…"*
      he.is.told [CONT, PASSIVE]    by   that  lion

      *Anaamba, "…"*
      he.says [CONT, subject is the person]

      *Anaambwa, "…"*
      he.is.told [CONT, PASSIVE, subject is the person]

*Amba* usually occurs alone but is occasionally preceded by another verb.

(12)  *Fisi   rajibu              hiyu  mutu    rinamuamba, "…"*
      hyena  it.answered [PST]    this   person  it.tells.him [CONT]

      'The hyena answered this person telling him, "…"'

The only speech verbs which can occur without *amba* are *iha* 'call' and *uza* 'ask' (but these are rare), plus *maka* and *angalala* 'wonder' introducing thoughts.

*Amba* combines with a complementizer *kukala* before fewer than half of the occurrences of indirect speech, and never before direct speech.

**Bena** [bez] G63

Source: Eaton (2015b), 6 texts, 674 clauses

***Quotative with few formal features of grammaticalization: virtually obligatory speech verb; infinitive form functions as a complementizer with a limited range of verbs of speech and perception***

Speech verb *tigila* 'say' occurs in almost all speech orienters; is fully inflected; occurs either alone or following another speech verb; never combines with a complementizer.

(13)  *Avaanu   vaapulihiidze        dzonda   neke   vatigile, "…"*
      people    they.heard [P2]      all       then    they.said [CONS.SUBJ]

      'All the people heard then they said, "…"'

(14)  *U-Ngamufifi    ihigaga              itigalaga, "…"*
      Hyena           he.answered [CONS]    he.said [CONS]

      'Hyena answered and said, "…"'

(15)  *U-Mbwa    aapilwise         itigila, "…"*
      Dog        he.replied [P2]    he.said [PRES]

      'Dog replied saying, "…"'

Infinitive form *ukutigila* functions as a complementizer which can be used with matrix verbs including 'hear', 'realize', 'know', and 'tell' (where the complement is **indirect** speech):

(16) | *U-Ndandadzi* | *ihelelaga* | *kwa* | *muhindza* | *uyo* | *kumulongela* | ***ukutigila*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spider | went | to | girl | that | to.tell.her | COMP |

| *vagelanidze* | *inoolani.* |
|---|---|
| they.arrange | wedding |

'Spider went to that girl to tell her **that** they should arrange a wedding.'

**Kisi** [kiz] G67

Source: Hazel Gray (p.c.), 11 texts, 709 clauses

***Quotative with few formal features of grammaticalization: infinitive form of 'say'; occurs in fewer than half of all speech orienters, and never with the most common speech verbs***

The verb *jobha* occurs more frequently as a main verb of speech (26 tokens) than all other speech verbs combined (22 tokens).

(17) | *bhandu* | *bhooha* | *bhaka**jobha**, "..."* |
|---|---|---|
| people | all | they.said [CONS] |

'all the people said, "..."'

The infinitive form *kujobha* functions as a quotative 6 times with various speech (or thought) verbs. The most common speech verbs, *jobha* 'say' and *kota* 'ask', never co-occur with *kujobha*.

(18) | *bhakaahidi* | ***kujobha**, "..."* |
|---|---|
| they.promised | saying/QUOTE |

'they promised (saying), "..."'

**Malila** [mgq] M24

Source: Eaton (2015a), 14 texts, 755 clauses

***Quotative with more formal features of grammaticalization: obligatory reduced speech verb; infinitive form also functions as a complementizer with non-speech verbs (of conceptualization and perception)***

The reduced verb *-ti* 'say' is an **obligatory** part of all speech orienters; it usually occurs alone but occasionally follows another speech verb.

(19) | *Abhalindʉ* | ***bhakhati**, "..."* |
|---|---|
| girls | they.said [NARR] |

'The girls said, "..."'

(20) | *ʉSankonya* | *akhatoneela* | ***akhati**, "..."* |
|---|---|---|
| Sankonya | she.interrupted [NARR] | she.said [NARR] |

'Sankonya interrupted and said, "..."'

The infinitive form *kʉti* functions as a quotative introducing direct speech and as a complementizer with verbs of conceptualization (such as 'plan') and perception (such as 'see').

(21) | *Bhamu* | *bhakhalinga* | *kʉmʉbhʉzʉlizya* | ***kʉti**, "..."* |
|---|---|---|---|
| others | they.tried | to.ask.him | saying/QUOTE |

'Others tried to ask him (saying), "..."'

(22) | *bhakhalola* | ***kʉti*** | *atalʉ...* |
|---|---|---|
| they.saw | COMP | he.was.not.there |

'they saw that he was not there...'

**Jita** [jit] JE25

Source: Pyle & Robinson (2015), 10 texts, 1,096 clauses

***Fully grammaticalized quotative: almost obligatory, invariant expression; also functions as an all-purpose complementizer and marker of interpretive use***

Invariable quotative, *ati* may occur alone or optionally preceded by a speech verb. It is almost obligatory; it may occasionally be omitted before indirect speech or when the speech verb includes an object marker.

The same form functions as a quotative, a complementizer and an interpretive use marker. The following example illustrates all three functions:

(23) | *Wasongo* | *ˆnabhuusya* | *Mutuuju* | ***ati*** | *"**Ati*** | *owayika* | *kutiki* | *goowu?"* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chameleon | he.asked | Hare | QUOT | INTERP_USE | you.say | how | mister |

| *Mutuuju* | ***ati*** | *"Naayika* | ***ati*** | *nikukirire* | *bhuri* | *chiinu."* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hare | QUOT | I.have.said | COMP | I.have.surpassed.you | every | thing |

'Chameleon asked Hare, "What exactly are you saying mister?" Hare (said), "I said that I am better than you at everything."'

**Suba-Simbiti** [ssc] JE431

Source: Masatu (2015), 8 texts, 513 clauses

*Fully grammaticalized quotative: invariant expression that occurs in most – but not all – speech orienters; also functions as a complementizer*

Most speech orienters consist of a speech verb and an invariant quotative *igha*.

(24) *Omoghaaka uyö akamohonshora* **igha** "..."
old.man that he.answered.him QUOTE
'That old man answered him, "..."'

(25) *Akaghamba* **igha** "..."
he.said QUOTE
'He said, "..."'

*Igha* also functions as a complementizer.

(26) *akahika akanyoora* **igha** *m-maheene...*
he.arrived he.found COMP COP-true
'he arrived and found that it was true...'

Speech verbs can occur without *igha*; conversely, *igha* can occur without a speech verb, but this is rare.

(27) *Kasi uwa bhoraaya akaghamba, "..."*
but of Europe he.said [NARR]
'But (the son) from Europe said, "..."'

(28) *Akaherra suwaabho amang'ana* **igha**, *"Baba, eng'era... ngiitirë."*
he.took.to their.father news QUOTE father buffalo I.have.killed.it
'He took their father the news, "Father, the buffalo... I have killed it."'

**Fuliiru** [flr] JD63

Source: Van Otterloo (2011, 2015), 153 texts; detailed analysis of 13 texts, 1,000 clauses approximately

*Multiple quotatives: different (optional) invariant forms that occur in most – but not all – speech orienters*

The default quotative with direct speech is *ti*; it can occur alone but is not obligatory, especially in conversations.

(29) *Uyo mulaguzi* **ti,** *"..."*
that fortune_teller QUOTE

(30) *Umulaguzi anagishuvya, "..."*
fortune_teller he.answered.him

*Kwokwo* 'thus' is used for emphasis, for example near the peak of a narrative. *Kwo* is used to introduce indirect speech and as a complementizer. *Mbu* and *ngu* function like *ti* but are rare, and *mbu* also introduces indirect speech.

Fuliiru has a wider range of speech verbs in narrative texts than other eastern Bantu languages as well – more variation all round.

**Makonde** [kde] P23

Source: Leach (2015), 8 texts, 585 clauses

*Multiple quotatives: different (optional) invariant forms that occur in most – but not all – speech orienters*

Quotatives occur either alone or following a speech verb 49 times; speech verbs occur without a quotative 8 times. Various speech verbs and five quotatives occur. All the quotatives are forms of *doni* 'thus'. One, *kudo,* introduces new direct speech or a change of direction in a conversation or monologue:

(31) *Litunu aaloka kundila kulola* **kudo:** *"Inyama abaa!*
Hyena he.coming on.road looked QUOTE meat EXCLAM

*I jo nyangu aju?"* **Kudo:** *"Um nyangu hanava doni."*
it.is.not that my.friend this QUOTE no my.friend he.is.not thus

'When Hyena was on the road he looked and exclaimed, "My goodness, meat! But isn't this my friend?" (Then he said,) "Definitely not, my friend doesn't look like this."'

**Kwaya** [kya] JE251

Source: Odom (2015), 10 texts, 1,015 clauses

*Grammaticalized quotative with reduced occurrence: invariant but optional expression; may be preceded by an optional speech verb*

Kwaya has a quotative *ati* and a distinct lexical verb *ika* 'say' (which usually co-occurs with *ati*).

There is considerable variation between texts. Some texts introduce almost every direct quote with *ati*:

(32) *ˆNaabhabhwira* **ati** *"Munaane amanji gaani."*
he.told.them QUOTE you.give.me water my

**Ati** *"Kitari nago, kyetira."*
QUOTE we.are.not with.it we.have.poured.it

'He told them, "Give me my water." They (said), "We don't have it, we have poured it away."'

Other texts introduce most direct quotes with just a verb:

(33) *Kimwi* **mbamubhwira,** *"Utakugenda awe omwene..."*
so they.told.her you.not.go you yourself

*Anu :bhaakingire mu-njira omugaya uyo ˆnaasabha omuyara uyo*
there when.they.arrived in-path servant that she.asked girl that

*emyenda, "Naanako omwenda gwawo gunu niirenge."*
clothes I.request clothes your these I.try.them.on

'So they told her, "You are not going by yourself..." When they came to the path that servant asked that girl for clothes (saying), "I am requesting your clothes, I should try them on."'

**Kabwa** [cwa] JE405

Source: Walker (2011), 11 texts, 530 clauses

***Quotative which requires an accompanying speech verb: invariant expression (also functions as a complementizer); only occurs in half of all speech orienters, but a speech verb is obligatory***

Various speech verbs occur in speech orienters in Kabwa. A speech verb is almost always required, and an invariant quotative (the complementizer *ega* which also introduces indirect speech) occurs in about half of all speech orienters.

(34) *Wakatuuju areegwa arabhuurya Wang'wena* **ega,**
Hare he.hears he.tells Crocodile QUOTE

*"Mukaho aragamba* **ega** *tugende bhwangu bhwangu."*
your.wife she.says COMP we.go quickly quickly

'Hare heard and told Crocodile, "Your wife says that we should go quickly."'

### A linguistic cycle for quotatives

The speech orienters in these languages reflect what I believe to be different stages in a 'linguistic cycle' in which quotatives develop from speech verbs and are then lost and replaced by new quotatives derived from different speech verbs, and so on.
I assume that increased frequency precedes formal grammaticalization (phonological reduction, loss of inflection), so an obligatory speech verb is likely to be a new or potential quotative, and an invariant but optional expression is likely to be an old or 'dying' quotative.

**Pre-quotative stages**

- **Stage A:** Various lexical verbs are used to introduce speech, and one verb with a general meaning of 'say' predominates; a verb is the sole obligatory element within a speech orienter, since there is no quotative marker. (Rangi)

- **Stage B:** One lexical verb with a general meaning of 'say' occurs in almost all speech orienters, either as the only verb of speech or in combination with other speech verbs (i.e. redundantly). (Digo)

**Newly grammaticalized quotative**

- **Stage C1:** The lexical verb 'say' is still common, but the infinitive form of the verb 'say' functions as a quotative with other speech verbs, and may also function as a complementizer with verbs of perception, cognition and/or intention. (Bena, Kisi)

- **Stage C2:** As in Stage C1, but as well as the infinitive form of a speech verb functioning as a quotative, the verb becomes phonologically reduced and finite forms also function as quotatives. (Malila)

**Fully grammaticalized quotative**

- **Stage D:** The original verb 'say' (or a specific form of it) develops into a quotative or quotative/complementizer which is (almost) obligatory in every speech orienter; other speech verbs (possibly including a new lexical verb 'say') may precede the new quotative marker, but cannot occur without it. (Jita, some Kwaya texts)

**Declining quotative**

- **Stage E1:** The quotative or quotative/complementizer is optional; speech verbs may occur without it. (Suba-Simbiti)

- **Stage E2:** Various quotatives occur in the language, exhibiting distinct functions. A quotative is optional if a speech verb is present. (Fuliiru, Makonde)

  (The two languages in this category seem to use a larger variety of speech verbs than the other languages. Is this connected with having more than one quotative?)

**Dying quotative**

- **Stage F:** The quotative can no longer function alone in a speech orienter; a lexical speech verb is obligatory (except in closed conversations) and the quotative becomes less frequent. (Kabwa, some Kwaya texts)

**No quotative (but the cycle continues...)**

- **Stage A′:** Each speech orienter requires a speech verb (except possibly in closed conversations), and so the quotative is redundant and is no longer used. (It may persist as a complementizer used in indirect speech, however.) One verb (with a general meaning of 'say') comes to predominate. (Rangi)

And so the cycle continues...

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