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The origin and use of quotative markers in Agul

1. Complementation and reported speech in Agul

❖ The profile of Agul

AGUL (also spelled AGHUL, native name [aʁu¹ č'al]) is a language of the Lezgian branch within the Nakh-Daghestanian, or East Caucasian, family. Its close relatives are Tabassaran and Lezgian; other Lezgian languages are Tsakhur, Rutul, Budugh, Kryz, Archi and Udi.

There are more than 25,000 first-language speakers of Agul in Russia, mainly in rural areas of South Daghestan. This study is based on the dialect spoken in the village of Huppuq¹.

Agul is an ergative language with (predominantly) agglutinative morphology and a rich case system (about 30 cases, including numerous locatives). The basic word order is SOV, dependents as a rule precede heads.

❖ Complementation strategies

Complement clauses are headed by converbs, participles, infinitive or “masdar” (verbal noun), largely depending on the semantics of the matrix verb, cf.:

- INFINITIVE

- (1) ruš.a-s uč.i-n jerʁe č'ar-ar q'at'-q'.a-s k:ande-a.
girl-DAT [self-GEN long hair-PL piece-do.IPF-INF] want-PRS

The girl wants to cut off her long hair.

- PERFECTIVE CONVERB

- (2) wun it:a-a, duʁt:ir.di-s un-aq'.u-na k:and-e.
you(SG) be.ill-PRS [doctor-DAT sound-do.PF-CONV] need-COP

You are ill and (you) should call a doctor.

- PERFECTIVE PARTICIPLE (substantivized)

- (3) za-s ha-a ge qaj.i-f.
I-DAT know-PRS [DEMG RE:come.PF-S]

I know that s/he came.

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❖ Quotative strategies

Verbs introducing reported speech are different in that they have other strategies for encoding of their complements, i.e. for introducing the reported speech, cf.:

- “UNMARKED” STRATEGY: just a speech verb, no marking on the quote

(4) dad.a p.u-na-a, naj-č š.u-ne gada?
 father(ERG) say.PF-RES-PRS [which-LAT go.PF-PFT son]

Father said: “Where did the son go?”

gada q-uš.u-f-e wa-qaj, p.u-na-a.
 [son RE-go.PF-S-COP you(SG)-COMIT] say.PF-RES-PRS

“The son went with you”, said (the others).

- COMPLEMENTIZER STRATEGY: speech verb and quotative marker *puna*, adjacent to the head of the embedded clause

(5) rahman.a-s ak.a-a zun, me žiga ze-f e puna.
 Rakhman-DAT say.IPF-PRS I [DEMM place my-S COP] QUOT

(Then) I say to Rakhman: “This is my place!”

❖ Speech verb *akas*

The generic speech verb *akas* ‘say, tell’ is suppletive² and has two stems (standard verbs use one stem in all forms), cf.:

PERFECTIVE STEM: *up.u-* (first vowel can be dropped)

> Perfective Past *upune*, Resultative *upunaa*, Experiential *upufe*, etc.

IMPERFECTIVE STEM: *ak.a-* (first vowel can be dropped)

> Present *akaa*, Habitual *akaje*, Generic *akafe*, Future *akase*, etc.

IMPERATIVE: *up* ‘say!’ ~ PROHIBITIVE *maKa* ‘don’t say!’

2. Quotative marker / complementizer *puna*

2.1. *puna* as a converb

p.u-na [say.PF-CONV] is a perfective converb of the verb ‘say’, literally meaning ‘having said’, cf. the prototypical use of converb in adverbial clause describing precedence in a sequence of actions:

(6) gada.ji-s waχt:una qi-šaw p.u-na, dad q-uš.u-ne.
 son-DAT [in.time RE-come(IMP)] say.PF-CONV father RE-go.PF-PFT

After telling his son to come back in time, father went away.

(or: Father said his son to come back in time, and went away.)

² Suppletion is rather rare in Huppuq’ Agul, the two other suppletive verbs being ‘go’/‘come’ (with the derived pair ‘take’/‘bring’) and ‘give’.

2.2. *puna* as an indirect speech marker

The reported speech construction using a speech verb and the quotative marker *puna* is close to the prototypical **indirect speech**, with most of features associated with it in other languages (cf. Aikhenvald 2008: 410-417 for a typological overview).

❖ Shift in personal deixis

1st and 2nd persons in the quote are interpreted from the perspective of the Current Speaker (not the Original Speaker).

- (7) dad.a p.u-ne, zun mask:aw.di-s ʔ̣.a-s-e puna.
 father(ERG) say.PF-PFT [I Moscow-DAT go.IPF-INF-COP] QUOT
*Father_i said that I (*he_i) would go to Moscow.*

If the 3rd person participant of the situation described in the quote is coreferential with the Original Speaker, logophoric/reflexive pronoun *uč* is obligatorily used; the use of demonstrative³ can only have non-coreferential interpretation.

- (8) dad.a_i p.u-ne, uč_i (ge_j) mask:aw.di-s ʔ̣.a-s-e puna.
 father(ERG) say.PF-PFT [self DEMG Moscow-DAT go.IPF-INF-COP] QUOT
Father_i said that he_i (s/he_j) would go to Moscow.

❖ Shift in spatial and temporal deixis

Demonstratives, spatial and temporal adverbs in the quote are interpreted from the perspective of the Current Speaker.

- (9) dad.a p.u-ne, baw jaʔa mi-č qu-ʔ̣.a-s-e puna.
 father(ERG) say.PF-PFT [mother today DEMM-LAT RE-go.IPF-INF-COP] QUOT
Father said, that mother is coming here <PROXIMAL> today.

(The original father's words could be, e.g., "Mother will come to you tomorrow"; father's location does not have to be the same as that of the speaker.)

- (10) te insan.di_i p.u-ne, ge gada uč.i-n-f_i e puna.
 DMT man(ERG) say.PF-PFT [DEMG boy self-GEN-S COP] QUOT
The man_i said, that that <DISTAL> boy was his_i (son).

(The original man's words could be, e.g., "This <PROXIMAL> boy is mine".)

❖ Back-shifting of verbal tenses

Does not happen! All tenses used in the quote are interpreted from the perspective of the Original Speaker.

❖ Reported commands possible

- (11) dad.a p.u-ne za-s, jaʔa qi-šaw puna.
 father(ERG) say.PF-PFT I-DAT [today RE-come(IMP)] QUOT
Father told me to come back today. <IMPERATIVE>

- (12) dad.a p.u-ne, wun jaʔa qaj-raj puna.
 father(ERG) say.PF-PFT [you(SG) today RE:come.PF-JUSS] QUOT
Father said that you should come back today. <JUSSIVE>

³ There is a 4-term demonstrative system in Agul, the values are (roughly): *me* 'close to the speaker', *le* 'close to the addressee', *te* 'far from the speaker', *ge* 'neutral'.

❖ Reported vocatives and exclamatives impossible

(Without *puna*, possible with the direct speech interpretation.)

- (13) dad.a p.u-ne za-s, žan k'irk', jaša qi-šaw (*puna).
 father(ERG) say.PF-PFT I-DAT [dear boy today RE-come (IMP)] QUOT
Father said to me, dear boy, come back today.
- (14) dad.a p.u-ne, wun fidaHan iže ruš e (*puna).
 father(ERG) say.PF-PFT [you(SG) how.much good girl COP] QUOT
Father said, what a good girl you are!

❖ Reported questions

Reporting of questions is possible as a direct quotation, with a corresponding interrogative intonation. If *puna* is used, it is interpreted as an additional (dependent) utterance predicate introducing a direct quote, not as the indirect speech marker.

- (15) dad.a hurχ.a-ji, wun mus qu-ŋ̇.a-a?
 father(ERG) ask.IPF-PST [you(SG) when RE-go.IPF-PRS]
Father asked: "When do you come back?"
- (16) dad.a hurχ.a-ji, wun mus qu-ŋ̇.a-a, p.u-na.
 father(ERG) ask.IPF-PST [you(SG) when RE-go.IPF-PRS] say.PF-CONV
Father asked, (saying:) "When do you come back?"

For indirect questions, there exists a special strategy with the conditional mood forms, that has the properties of indirect speech:

- (17) dad.a hurχ.a-ji, wun mus qu-ŋ̇.a-j-či.
 father(ERG) ask.IPF-PST [you(SG) when RE-go.IPF-CONV-COND]
Father asked, when do you <ADDRESSEE OF THE CURRENT SPEAKER> come back.

2.3. *puna* in complement clauses

Apart from the indirect speech marker, *puna* has grammaticalized into a complementizer used with a wider range of matrix verbs, such as:

- manipulative predicates: *burmiš aq'as* 'order', *eχt:ijar ic'as* 'permit', *minet aq'as* 'ask for, request', *t'alab aq'as* 'ask for, request'
- propositional attitude predicates: *quχas* 'believe', *χijal xas* 'think'
- predicates of knowledge: *χabar xas* 'learn, realize', *Harxas* 'understand'
- commentative predicates: *?alamatt:ia* 'be amazed', *nečt:ia* 'be ashamed'

- (18) habaw.a=ra minet aq'.u-f-ij za-s, uč faq̇.aχ puna.
 granny(ERG)=ADD request do.PF-S-COP:PST I-DAT [self RE:take(IMP)] QUOT
Grandmother also asked me to take her here.

While request presupposes a speech act, this is already not true for cases like:

- (19) zun quχ.u-ne, gi uč.i duq'.u-f-e puna berhem.
 I believe.PF-PFT [DEMG(ERG) self(ERG) sew.PF-S-COP QUOT dress]
I believed her, that she sewed the dress herself.

(20) fulan kas ʕ̣.a-a puna, har-x.a-je-f-e gi-s.
 [some person go.IPF-PRS] QUOT know-become.IPF-PART2-S-COP DEMG-DAT
And he (= a clairvoyant) understands, that such-and-such person is coming.

(21) isaq'.a-s, add.a-s ɣabar x.a-j-e, č̣i žüre
 Isak-DAT uncle-DAT news become.IPF-CONV-COP [sister separate
 aq'.u-na-a puna.
 do.PF-RES-PRS] QUOT
...And Isak, uncle learns that sister got divorced.

(22) me-wur.i ɣijal x.u-na-a, le-wur adark.a-j
 DEMM-PL(GEN) thought become.PF-RES-PRS [DEML-PL look.for.IPF-CONV
 am-e-f-e puna.
 {IN}stay-PART-S-COP] QUOT
They (the parents) thought that they (children) were still looking for the lost oxen.

2.4. *puna* in adverbial (reason/purpose) clauses

One of conventional ways of encoding adverbial clauses with reason and purpose meaning is the use of a finite clause with *puna* as a subordinator, cf.:

(23) gada qaj-ne puna, č̣arawa ruḳ.u-ne dad.a.
 [son RE:come.PF-PFT] QUOT ram slaughter.PF-PFT father(ERG)
Because his son returned home, father slaughtered a ram (for him).

(24) ṣ̌.u-ne zun, ha-me k'eruq-ar... ʕ̣.a-s-e puna,
 go.PF-PFT I [ha-DEMM calf-PL go.IPF-INF-COP] QUOT
 ha-te naq'̣-ar.i k'il.i-ʕ̣-di.
 ha-DEMT grave-PL(GEN) head-INTER-LAT
I went, in order to graze the calves, towards the upper graveyard.

There are several ways of reason and purpose encoding; the use of *puna* strategy underlines the subjective motivation of the agent (having “internal awareness” value, in Tom Güldemann’s terms), cf.:

(25) č̣in dukan.i-s ṣ̌.u-ndawa, dukan qik'.i-na-a puna.
 we(EXCL) shop-DAT go.PF-PFT:NEG [shop close.PF-RES-PRS] QUOT
We did not go to the shop, because it was closed (i.e. we thought it was closed; it could be that in reality it was open).

(26) gada.ji da-uɣ̣.u-raj puna, ad.i-f-e dad c'ik'in-ar.i-k
 [son(ERG) NEG-drink.PF-JUSS] QUOT come.PF-S-COP father wedding-PL-SUB
Father went to the wedding, so that his son did not get drunk (i.e. wanting to control his son).

The “internal awareness” nuance is also supported by that *abas* ‘say, tell’ as a lexical verb can sometimes refer to thought and reflection, without presupposing any speech production, cf.:

- (27) ukał uka.a-s-e p.u-na, zont fajš.u-ne zun.
 [rain rain.IPF-INF-COP] say.PF-CONV umbrella take.PF-PFT I
Thinking that it would rain, I took an umbrella.

3. The unmarked strategy: full and reduced speech verb

3.1. Use of full speech verb: an ambiguous strategy

The unmarked strategy is the main means of expressing direct speech; at the same time, this strategy is not confined to that function, as the direct vs. indirect interpretation of the embedded clause (quote) is not stable and can depend on discourse factors (at least, on word order).

❖ Unmarked strategy expressing direct speech

- no shift in personal, spatial and temporal deixis
- no back-shifting of verbal tenses
- possibility of reporting questions, commands, vocatives and exclamatives

- (28) dad.a_i p.u-ne, zun_i (*uč.i_i) hik.a-s-e mašin.
 father(ERG) say.PF-PFT [I self(ERG) drive.IPF-INF-COP car]

- (29) zun_i hik.a-s-e mašin, p.u-ne dad.a_i.
 [I drive.IPF-INF-COP car] say.PF-PFT father(ERG)

- (30) dad.a_i, zun_i hik.a-s-e mašin, p.u-ne.
 father(ERG) [I drive.IPF-INF-COP car] say.PF-PFT

Father said, "I shall drive the car".

(The direct interpretation, irrespective of the word order.)

BUT:

❖ Unmarked strategy expressing indirect speech

- shift in spatial and temporal deixis

- (31) dad.a p.u-ne, baw jaša mi-č qu-ṛ̌.a-s-e.
 father(ERG) say.PF-PFT [mother today DEMM-LAT RE-come.IPF-INF-COP]
Father said, "Mother will come here today".

- (32) baw jaša mi-č qu-ṛ̌.a-s-e, p.u-ne dad.a.
 [mother today DEMM-LAT RE-come.IPF-INF-COP] say.PF-PFT father(ERG)
Father said, "Mother will come here today".

or: *Father said, that mother would come here today.*

(Both direct and indirect interpretation available.)

- (33) dad.a, baw jaša mi-č qu-ṛ̌.a-s-e, p.u-ne.
 father(ERG) [mother today DEMM-LAT RE-come.IPF-INF-COP] say.PF-PFT
Father said, that mother would come here today.

(Only indirect interpretation available.)

3.2. Use of morphologized speech verb *аҗај* (*ʒaj*)

In the present tense, not a standard finite form, but an enclitic morphologized form *аҗај* (*ʒaj*) of the speech verb can be used:

- (34) q:unši-jar.i hul-ar qu-ŋ̣.a-s-e = **ʒaj**.
 neighbour-PL(ERG) [guest-PL RE-go.IPF-INF-COP]=*ʒaj*
As neighbours say, guests will come.

This form is definitely related to the forms derived from the Imperfective stem of the verb ‘say’, cf. the finite Present *аҗаа* / *аҗаја* ‘is saying, says’ or Habitual *аҗаје* ‘(usually) says’.

Like a finite verb, *ʒaj* functions as a syntactic head governing its own argument — the speaker, coded by the Ergative case (this NP can also host the clitic, like in (35)). Still, other dependents like the addressee NP, or temporal adverbials, are hardly acceptable, which point to the lack of syntactic autonomy compared to a finite form.

- (35) q:unši-jar.i = **ʒaj** hul-ar qu-ŋ̣.a-s-e.
 neighbour-PL(ERG)=*ʒaj* [guest-PL RE-go.IPF-INF-COP]
As neighbours say, guests will come.

Functionally, *ʒaj* “defocuses” the situation of saying: using the clitic, the speaker underlines the content of the statement, and not the fact that such-and-such person said that; the source of information is indicated, but backgrounded. On the contrary, when the “normal” finite form is used, the fact of saying (and the person who said that) and the content of the statement are of equal communicative importance.

- (36) q:unši-jar.i **ʒ.a-a**, hul-ar qu-ŋ̣.a-s-e.
 neighbour-PL(ERG) say.IPF-PRS [guest-PL RE-go.IPF-INF-COP]
Neighbours say, that guests will come.

This “defocusing” function has led to a further grammaticalization of *ʒaj* as a hearsay marker (‘they say’). This use is very frequent in narratives, where *ʒaj* as a hearsay marker modifies finite forms and often occurs in a superfluous manner (almost after each narrative clause), cf. some examples from Agul fairy-tales:

- (37) x.u-ne, x.u-ndawa = *ʒaj* lemert = na žumart аҗ.а
 become.PF-PFT become.PF-PFT:NEG=*ʒaj* Lemert=and Dzhumart say.IPF
 ʒu ču.
 two brother

There lived (= there were, there weren’t), they say, two brothers called Lemert and Dzhumart.

- (38) sa č’uq’ dewlet qa-je-t:-ar ij = *ʒaj* Hür.i-n ʕan.a-ʔ,
 one a.little wealth {POST}be-PART-S-PL COP:PST=*ʒaj* village-GEN inside-IN
 ge-wur.i-q qa-ji = *ʒaj* jac-ar, ʒu jac...
 DEMG-PL-POST {POST}be-PST=*ʒaj* OX-PL two OX

(These people) were more or less rich, they say, in the village; they had oxen, they say, two oxen.

(39) aχp:a qaj-ne = ɸaj, χab fajqaj-ne = ɸaj ha-ge χalbizak,
 then RE:come:PF-PFT=*ɸaj* again RE:bring.PF-PFT=*ɸaj* ha-DEMG water-melon
 le χalbizak waʔ, p.u-ne = ɸaj šuw.a, saje χalbizak,
 DEML water-melon no say.PF-PFT=*ɸaj* husband(ERG) other water-melon
 p.u-ne = ɸaj.
 say.PF-PFT=*ɸaj*

Then (the wife) came back, they say, and she brought back that water-melon, they say. “Not this water-melon! — said her husband, they say, — (Bring) another water-melon!” — he said, they say.

4. Summary

As Tom Güldemann notes, “quotative indexes across languages tend to assume properties of routinized grammatical structures” (2008: 49). In Agul, we see at least two examples of this tendency:

- the perfective participle *puna* of the verb ‘say, tell’ became a quotative marker in the indirect speech construction, and further evolved into a more general complementizer (with a wider range of verbs) and a subordinator in reason and purpose adverbial clauses (with a subjective modal nuance);
- a morphologized present tense form *ɸaj* of the same verb is used as a semi-autonomous finite predicate (defocusing the situation of saying), and as an evidential hearsay marker.

Abbreviations

ADD – additive particle; COMIT – comitative; COND – conditional; CONV – converb; COP – copula; DAT – dative; DEMM/DEML/DEMT/DEMG – demonstratives (M, L, T, G-series); ERG – ergative; EXCL – exclusive; GEN – genitive; IMP – imperative; IN – ‘inside’ localization; INTER – ‘inside, between’ localization; INF – infinitive; IPF – imperfective; JUSS – jussive; LAT – lative; NEG – negation; PART – participle; PF – perfective; PFT – perfective past; PL – plural; POST – ‘behind’ localization; PRS – present; PST – past; QUOT – quotative *puna*; RE – repetitive; RES – resultative; S – substantivizer; SG – singular; SUB – ‘under’ localization. Aspectual stems of verbs and oblique stems of nouns are separated by dots.

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