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## Reported speech and “semi-directness” in Agul

### 0. Preliminaries

- ❖ The study is based on the dialect spoken in the village of Huppuq’ (Kurakhskiy rayon, Daghestan).
- ❖ For the Huppuq’ corpus of spontaneous oral narratives, ca. 15 hours of recordings were made in 2004, 2005, 2007 and 2008 (by Dmitry Ganenkov, Solmaz Merdanova & Timur Maisak)<sup>1</sup>. The present study is based on a subcorpus of ca. 45000 words, plus some constructed examples. Examples from the Corpus are marked with © (< ‘Corpus’).
- ❖ Earlier accounts of reported speech strategies in Agul include: Merdanova 2006, Maisak & Merdanova 2009a and (in a broader perspective) Daniel 2007.

### 1. Speech verb *akas*

The generic speech verb *akas* ‘say, tell’ is a highly frequent transitive verb with suppletive stems.

#### ❖ Morphology of *akas*

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 *taKa* ‘don’t say!’

#### ❖ Frequency of *akas*

The most frequent verb in the text corpus, according to preliminary counts: it is much more frequent than such verbs as *aq’as* ‘do, make’, *xas* ‘become’, *a* || *aa* ‘be inside’, *ʕas* ‘go, come’. Average frequency of *akas* ‘say, tell’ is about one occurrence per 21 words, or even once per 17 words if we also count the hearsay marker that goes back to this verb.

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❖ Grammaticalization paths of *akas*

- markers of ordinal numerals *-pu* and (much more rare) *-punde* < perfective participles *p.u* [say.PF] and *p.u-nde* [say.PF-PART3] ‘one who said / to whom it was said / about what it was said etc.’; cf. *sad* ‘one’ ~ *sad-pu* || *sad-punde* ‘first’
- complementizer and subordinator *puna* < perfective converb *p.u-na* [say.PF-CONV] ‘having said’; cf. section 3
- hearsay marker *ʔaj* (*akaj*) ‘they say’ < identical to the imperfective converb *ak.a-j* [say.IPF-CONV], but probably a reduced form of the finite Present *akaa* / *akaja* ‘is saying, says’ or Habitual *akaje* ‘(usually) says’; cf. section 5

## 2. Speech reporting strategies

❖ COMPLEMENTIZER STRATEGY: quotative marker *puna*, adjacent to the head of the embedded clause (quote)

- (1) rahman.a-s      ak.a-a      zun, me      žiga      ze-f      e      puna.  
 Rahman-DAT    say.IPF-PRS I      [DEMM place my-S COP] *puna*  
*(Then) I say to Rahman, that this is my place.* ©

❖ UNMARKED STRATEGY: no marking on the quote

- (2) 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).* ©

It is not always the case that one speech verb per quote is used; two principal deviations from this are rather common:

- a pleonastically used speech verb – in one of the finite past tense forms (e.g. Perfective Past *pune* or Resultative *punaa*) or present tense forms (e.g. Present *akaa* || *akaja* or Habitual *akaje*), cf.:

- (3) χut:urf.a-s      š.u-guna      mi,      wallah, malla,      p.u-na-a,      za-s  
 look.IPF-INF go.PF-TEMP DEMM(ERG) [wallah mullah say.PF-RES-PRS I-DAT  
 ʔemk’ ag.u-na-a      p.u-na-a,      jaʔa      ze      šuw.a-k-as  
 dream see.PF-RES-PRS say.PF-RES-PRS today my husband-SUB/CONT-ELAT]  
 p.u-na-a,      wun,      p.u-na-a,      fi      e-j-čuk’.a-s  
 say.PF-RES-PRS [you(SG) say.PF-RES-PRS what COP-CONV-VERIF.IPF-INF  
 χut:urf      kitab.i-s.  
 look(IMP) book-DAT]

*She went (to ask mullah) to explain her dream: “Mullah, – she said – I have seen a dream – she said – today about my husband, – she said – you – she said – look in your book what does it mean”. ©*



- (7) dad.a<sub>i</sub> p.u-ne, uč<sub>i</sub> (ge<sub>j</sub>) mask:aw.di-s ʔ<sub>o</sub>.a-s-e puna.  
 father(ERG) say.PF-PFT [self DEMG Moscow-DAT go.IPF-INF-COP] *puna*  
*Father<sub>i</sub> said that he<sub>i</sub> (s/he<sub>j</sub>) would go to Moscow.*

(NOTE: In principle, *uč* here can also have non-coreferential interpretation, given that its basic discourse function is the reference to the focus of empathy of the whole episode/narrative; cf. Ganenkov et al. 2009b for details.)

❖ Shift in spatial and temporal deixis

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

- (8) dad.a p.u-ne, baw jaʔa mi-č qu-ʔ<sub>o</sub>.a-s-e puna.  
 father(ERG) say.PF-PFT [mother today DEMM-LAT RE-go.IPF-INF-COP] *puna*  
*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 did not have to be the same as that of the speaker.)

- (9) te insan.di<sub>i</sub> p.u-ne, ge gada uč.i-n-f<sub>i</sub> e puna.  
 DMT man(ERG) say.PF-PFT [DEMG boy self-GEN-S COP] *puna*  
*The man<sub>i</sub> said, that that <DISTAL> boy was his<sub>i</sub> (son).*

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

❖ No back-shifting of verbal tenses

All tenses used in the quote are interpreted from the perspective of the Original Speaker. Cf. the Future in (6)-(8), the present copula in (9), etc.

❖ Reported commands possible

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

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

❖ Reported vocatives and exclamatives impossible

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

- (12) dad.a p.u-ne za-s, žan k'irk', jaʔa qi-šaw (\*puna).  
 father(ERG) say.PF-PFT I-DAT [dear boy today RE-come(IMP)] *puna*  
*Father said to me, dear boy, come back today.*

- (13) dad.a p.u-ne, wun fidaħan iže ruš e (\*puna).  
 father(ERG) say.PF-PFT [you(SG) how.much good girl COP] *puna*  
*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.

(14) dad.a hurχ.a-ji, wun mus qu-ŋ̇.a-a?  
 father(ERG) ask.IPF-PST [you(SG) when RE-go/come.IPF-PRS]  
*Father asked: “When do you come back?”*

(15) dad.a hurχ.a-ji, wun mus qu-ŋ̇.a-a, p.u-na.  
 father(ERG) ask.IPF-PST [you(SG) when RE-go/come.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:

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

Thus, the complementizer strategy with *puna* shows mixed behavior: it is

- indirect with respect to the following properties:
  - the shift in personal deixis
  - the shift in spatial and temporal deixis
  - no reported vocatives and exclamatives
  - no reported questions
- direct with respect to the following properties:
  - no back-shifting of verbal tenses
  - the possibility of reporting commands
- biperspectival (in Evans’ terms) with respect to:
  - the use of logophor in the 3rd person

### 3.2. *puna* as a complementizer

With a wider range of matrix verbs (cf. Ganenkov 2006), among them:

- manipulative predicates: *burmiš aq’as* ‘order’, *ex̣ṭijar 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: *ʔalamatt:ia* ‘be amazed’, *neč̣tia* ‘be ashamed’

(17) 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 *puna* dress]  
*I believed, that she sewed the dress herself.*

### 3.3. *puna* as an adverbial subordinator

In adverbial clauses with reason and purpose meaning.

In comparison to other ways of reason and purpose encoding, underlines the subjective motivation of the agent.

- (18) gada qaj-ne puna, čarawa ruk:u-ne dad.a.  
 [son RE:come:PF-PFT] *puna* ram slaughter.PF-PFT father(ERG)  
*Because his son returned home, father slaughtered a ram (for him).* ©
- (19) š.u-ne zun, ha-me k'eruq-ar... ʕ.a-s-e puna,  
 go.PF-PFT I [ha-DEMM calf-PL go/come.IPF-INF-COP] *puna*  
 ha-te naq'ar.i k'il.i-ʕ-di.  
 ha-DEMT grave-PL(GEN) head-INTER-LAT  
*I went, in order to graze the calves, towards the upper graveyard.* ©

The “internal awareness” nuance (in Güldemann’s terms) is probably supported by the fact that *akas* as a lexical verb can sometimes refer to thinking, without presupposing any speech production, cf.:

- (20) 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.*

#### 4. Unmarked strategy: direct speech and deviations from it

The unmarked strategy is the main means of expressing direct speech; this is the prevalent strategy used of speech reporting in spontaneous narratives. In most cases the quote directly reproduces the Original Speaker’s words without any kinds of deictic shifts and or other changes.

- (21) gada.ji-s aka.a-je-f-e, ja baw.a-n, ja dad.a-n, wa-s  
 son-DAT say.IPF-PART-S-COP [VOC mother-GEN VOC father-GEN you(SG)-DAT  
 fiš k:and-e, wun, na-n ruš ʕ.a-j-e wa-s?  
 who love-COP you(SG) who-GEN daughter bring.IPF-CONV-COP you(SG)-DAT]  
*They say to the son: “Sonny, whom do you like, who’s daughter will you marry?”* ©

However, the quote does not have to be absolutely “faithful” to the Original Speaker’s words, and some elements can be found in the quote that are undoubtedly introduced by the Current Speaker.

- ‘so-and-so’ (adverbial demonstrative in *-šti*)

- (22) ja kas, aka.a-a, wun naj-sa-as e?  
 [VOC person say.IPF-PRS you(SG) which-LOC-(IN)ELAT COP]  
 wallah, qat:q'a-a mi uč.i-n q'isa-jar, ha-me ze  
 [wallah tell.IPF-PRS DEMM(ERG) self-GEN tale-PL ha-DEMM my  
 č:uč:u **ha-mi-šti** q'.u-f-e za-s...  
 brother(ERG) **ha-DEMM-ADV** do.PF-S-COP I-DAT]  
*“Hey man, where are you from?” — “Wallah, – and he tells his story, – my brother has done to me so-and-so...”* ©

- ‘such-and-such’ (indefinite pronoun *fulan*)

(23) ja baw.a-n, me fulan ruš χ.a-j-e-wa?  
 VOC mother-GEN DEMM **a\_certain** girl bring.IPF-CONV-COP-Q  
 “Sonny, maybe you will marry **such-and-such** girl?” ©

- discourse “fillers” (placeholders)<sup>3</sup>

(24) ʔašal-ar.i aκ.a-j x.u-naje-f-e te-wur.i, žan  
 weeping-PL(IN) say.IPF-CONV become.PF-PART2-S-COP DEMT-PL(ERG) [dear  
 feteH, wa-q-ti fiš=ra fajš.u-ne, χizri=ra fajš.u-ne=κaj.  
 FeteH you(SG)-POST-LAT **who**=ADD take.PF-PFT Khizri=ADD take.PF-PFT]=*κaj*  
*They were saying weeping: “Dear FeteH, you took with you **what’s his name**...  
 you took Khizri with you...”* ©

What is more important from the point of view of the direct vs. indirect speech opposition is that word order can influence the interpretation. Cf. examples with different position of the quote with respect to the main clause:

- Direct interpretation preferable.

(25) dad.a p.u-ne, baw jaša mi-č qu-ŧ̣.a-s-e.  
 father(ERG) say.PF-PFT [mother today DEMM-LAT RE-come.IPF-INF-COP]  
*Father said, “Mother will come here today”.* (preferable)  
 or: *Father said, that mother would come here today.*

- Indirect interpretation preferable.

(26) baw jaša mi-č qu-ŧ̣.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.* (preferable)

- Only indirect interpretation available.

(27) dad.a, baw jaša mi-č qu-ŧ̣.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.*

This is probably due to the fact that the quote in (27) is embedded inside the main clause with the speech verb, so it cannot be interpreted as an independent utterance of the Original Speaker.

## 5. The use of reduced speech verb *авај* (*вај*)

The form *авај* (or *вај*) ‘s/he says; they say’ is identical to the imperfective converb *аκ.а-ј* [say.IPF-CONV] of the ‘say’ verb. Given that it can be used as the finite

<sup>3</sup> On the use of interrogative pronouns as placeholders cf. Ganenkov et al. 2010.

head ((29) below), it is probably not a special use of the converb but rather the morphologized form of the finite Present *агаа // агаја* ‘is saying, says’ or Habitual *агаје* ‘(usually) says’ – which both historically include the imperfective converb as part of the periphrastic construction<sup>4</sup>.

The general function of *агај (гај)* is to signal the reported speech as such; it is compatible with both direct and indirect speech reports.

### 5.1. Reduced speech verb in direct speech reports

With direct quotes, *агај (гај)* occurs in the ‘historical present’ mode, when the Present or the Habitual are used in the main narrative line. The function of the reduced verb here is to underline that what is being said is the reproduction of someone else’s (not the narrator’s) words. The use of *агај (гај)* is usually superfluous and often pleonastic, like that of the finite Present in (4) above.

- (28) ...к.а-а ge neχč:ir-ar.i mi-s, ja kas, **а.а-а**,  
 say.IPF-PRS DEMG bird-PL(ERG) DEMM-DAT [VOC person **say.IPF-PRS**  
 ha-te ul-ar čin qu-χ.a-s-e **агај**, we  
 ha-DEMT eye-PL we:EXCL RE-bring.IPF-INF-COP *гај* your(SG)  
 bugu-s **агај**, ha-te dar.ala q:al.a-q qame-a = **гај**.  
 near-DAT *гај* ha-DEMT tree(GEN) side-POST {POST}stay-PRS]=*гај*

...And the birds **say** to him: “Hey man, we’ll bring your eyes – **they say** – back to you, – **they say** – as they are still near that tree” – **they say**.

- аχр:а qа fi q’.а-а zun faqaj.i-guna **а.а-а**, за-с  
 then [PTCL what do.IPF-PRS I RE:bring.PF-TEMP **say.IPF-PRS** I-DAT  
 ʔak ag.a-dawa = **гај**.  
 light see.IPF-PRS:NEG]=*гај*

Then he **says**: “What shall I do when you bring them? I do not see the light” – **he says**. ©

### 5.2. Reduced speech verb in indirect speech reports

With indirect quotes, the function of the reduced verb is to introduce the information source. In such cases, *агај (гај)* still functions as a syntactic head governing its own argument — the agent (speaker), coded by the Ergative case. Other dependents like the addressee NP, or temporal adverbials, are hardly acceptable, though, which points to the lack of syntactic autonomy of this form.

- (29) q:unši-jar.i hul-ar qu-ŷ.a-s-e = **гај**.  
 neighbour-PL(ERG) [guest-PL RE-go/come.IPF-INF-COP]=*гај*  
*Neighbours say that guests will come.*

<sup>4</sup> Present *агаа // агаја* ‘is saying, says’ < *агај а* [imperfective converb + auxiliary ‘be inside’]; Habitual *агаје* ‘(usually) says’ < *агај е* [imperfective converb + copula].

Functionally, *akaj* (*kaĵ*) de-emphasizes the situation of saying: using the reduced form in (30), 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 as a background. On the contrary, when the standard finite form in (31) is used, the fact of saying (and the person who said that) and the content of the statement are of equal communicative importance.

(30) q:unši-jar.i = **kaĵ**                      hul-ar      qu-ṛ́.a-s-e.  
 neighbour-PL(ERG)=*kaĵ*                      [guest-PL RE-go/come.IPF-INF-COP]  
*Guests will come, as neighbours say (or: according to the neighbours).*

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

### 5.3. Reduced speech verb as a hearsay marker

The backgrounding use of *kaĵ* has led to its further grammaticalization as a hearsay marker ('they say') which attaches to finite forms as an enclitic. This use is very frequent in narratives, where *kaĵ* often occurs in a superfluous manner, cf.:

(32) x.u-ne,                      x.u-ndawa = **kaĵ**                      lemert = na      žumart      ak.a  
 become.PF-PFT become.PF-PFT:NEG=*kaĵ* Lemert=and Dzhumart say.IPF  
 žu      ču.  
 two      brother

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

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

*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. ©*

## 6. Summary

- ❖ The strategy that most of all looks like the "indirect speech" involves the complementizer *puna*. This is not a consistent indirect speech strategy, though: it is rather a mixed one, combining properties of the indirect, direct and biperspectival speech reporting.
- ❖ The "unmarked" strategy which does not involve any dependency marker and presents the quote in its "pure" form is mainly used for direct speech

reports. At the same time, some factors (e.g. word order) can make the indirect interpretation preferable or even the only possible.

- ❖ An interesting special case of signalling reported speech is the use of reduced present-tense verb *аҗај* (*җај*). It can be used pleonastically in direct quotes; in indirect speech reports it refers to the (backgrounded) information source. The end of the grammaticalization process of this item is the hearsay marker.

## Abbreviations

ADD – additive particle; ADV – adverb; COMIT – comitative; COND – conditional; CONV – converb; COP – copula; DAT – dative; DEMM/DEML/DEMT/DEMG – demonstratives (M, L, T, G-series); ELAT – elative; 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; PTCL – particle; Q – question; RDP – reduplication; RE – repetitive; RES – resultative; S – substantivizer; SG – singular; SUB/CONT – ‘under’/‘in contact’ localization; SUPER – ‘on top’ localization; TEMP – temporal converb; VERIF – verificative; VOC – vocative. Aspectual stems of verbs and oblique stems of nouns are separated by dots. Unmarked values (Absolute, Singular) are not glossed.

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