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). The present study is based on a subcorpus of ca. 45000 words, plus some constructed examples. Examples from the Corpus are marked with © (<‘Corpus’).

1. Speech verb \textit{akas}

The generic speech verb \textit{akas} ‘say, tell’ is a highly frequent transitive verb with suppletive stems.

- **Morphology of \textit{akas}**
  - **PERFECTIVE STEM:** \textit{up.u-} (first vowel can be dropped)
    > Perfective Past \textit{upune}, Resultative \textit{upunaa}, Experiential \textit{upufe}, etc.
  - **IMPERFECTIVE STEM:** \textit{ak.a-} (first vowel can be dropped)
    > Present \textit{akaa}, Habitual \textit{akaje}, Generic \textit{akafe}, Future \textit{akase}, etc.
  - **IMPERATIVE:** \textit{up} ‘say!’ ~ **PROHIBITIVE** \textit{ma} ‘don’t say!’

- **Frequency of \textit{akas}**

The most frequent verb in the text corpus, according to preliminary counts: it is much more frequent than such verbs as \textit{aq’as} ‘do, make’, \textit{xas} ‘become’, \textit{a || aa} ‘be inside’, \textit{ʕəs} ‘go, come’. Average frequency of \textit{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 *sa*j (*akaj*) ‘they say’ < identical to the imperfective converb *a*j.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 *a̱.a-a* zun, me ŋiɡa 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 ŋ.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) χuturf.a-s ŋ.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
  ?emk’ ag.u-na-a *p.u-na-a*, ja’i a ze ŋuw.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
  χuturf 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”.* ©
(4) hajwan.di-s jarh.a-j-dü zun ak.a-a, sa fi = ra
horse-DAT beat.IPF-CONV-COP:NEG:Q I say.IPF-PRS one what=ADD
lix.a-s aq’.u-ndawa hajwan.di ak.a-a, murk’-ar
{SUPER} put.IPF-INF do.PF-PFT:NEG horse(ERG) say.IPF-PRS kick-PL
aq’.a-j ak.a-a, mi-č qu-č.a-guna ak.a-a,
do.IPF-CONV say.IPF-PRS DEMM-LAT RE-go/come.IPF-TEMP say.IPF-PRS
č.a-s χa-jde zat’ – mat’ ak.a-a.
you(PL)-DAT bring.IPF-PART3 thing RDP:thing say.IPF-PRS
"Why shouldn’t I beat my horse? – says (the owner), – The horse kicked – he
says – and didn’t let me put anything on it, – he says – when I was on my way here,
– he says – the things I wanted to bring you". ©

• no speech verb:
(5) malla č’a-j-e, ja mahamad, wa-s fiš kand-e?
Malla go/come.IPF-CONV-COP [VOC Mahamad you(SG)-DAT who love-COP]
Malla comes: “Hey Mahamad, whom do you like?” ©

Typically ‘direct’ speech reports are expressed with the UNMARKED STRATEGY; more or less typical ‘indirect’ ones are covered by the COMPLEMENTIZER STRATEGY. However, the correlation between the two strategies and the direct/indirect speech is not absolute.

3. Complementizer strategy with puna

3.1. Indirect (or “semi-direct”?) speech

Although the strategy shows some properties of the prototypical indirect speech (cf. Aikhenvald 2008: 410-417 for a typological overview), this “indirectness” is not absolutely consistent.

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

(6) dad.a p.u-ne, zun maskaw.di-s č’a-s-e puna.
father(ERG) say.PF-PFT [I Moscow-DAT go.IPF-INF-COP] puna
Father, said that I (*he) would go to Moscow.

If the 3rd person participant of the situation described in the quote is coreferential with the Original Speaker, logophoric pronoun uč is obligatorily used; the use of demonstrative² can only have non-coreferential interpretation.

² 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’. The pronoun uč, apart from being used in logophoric contexts, also functions as a (3rd person) reflexive and intensifier.
(7) dad.a_i p.u-ne, uč_i (ge_i) mask:aw.di-s ʕ˳a-s-e puna.
father(ERG) say.PF-PFT [self DEMG Moscow-DAT go.IPF-INF-COP] puna
Father said that he_i (s/he) 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 jaša mi-č qu-ʕ˳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 p.u-ne, ge gada uč.i-n-f_i e puna.
DEMT man(ERG) say.PF-PFT [DEMG boy self-GEN-S COP] puna
The man, said, that that <DISTAL> boy was his_i (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, jaša 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 jaša 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, şan k’irk’, jaša 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 fidarian 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-ᵢₐ-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-ᵢₐ-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-ᵢₐ-a-j-ści.
father(ERG) ask.IPF-PST [you(SG) when RE-go/come.IPF-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’, extijar ic’as ‘permit’, minet aq’as ‘ask for, request’, t’alab aq’as ‘ask for, request’
- propositional attitude predicates: quχas ‘believe’, xijal xas ‘think’
- predicates of knowledge: xaβar xas ‘learn, realize’, haβxas ‘understand’
- commentative predicates: ḋalamattia ‘be amazed’, nečtiia ‘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.
Because his son returned home, father slaughtered a ram (for him).

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 asas as a lexical verb can sometimes refer to thinking, without presupposing any speech production, cf.:

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.

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 -štį)

“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)3

(24) ʔašal-ar.i aš.a-j x.u-naje-f-e te-wûr.i, ʔan weeping-PL(IN) say.IPF-CONV become.PF-PART2-S-COP DEMT-PL(ERG) [dear feteh, wa-q-ti fiš = ra faţš.u-ne, χizri = ra faţš.u-ne = kaj. Feteh you(SG)-POST-LAT who=ADD take.PF-PFT Khizri=ADD take.PF-PFT] = kaj. 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 ja’a mi-č qu-ʃ.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 ja’a mi-č qu-ʃ.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 ja’a mi-č qu-ʃ.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 aʁaj (kaj)

The form aʁaj (or kaj) ‘s/he says; they say’ is identical to the imperfective converb aš.a-j [say.IPF-CONV] of the ‘say’ verb. Given that is can be used as the finite

head ((29) below), it is probably not a special use of the converb but rather the morphologized form of the finite Present abaa || abaja ‘is saying, says’ or Habitual akaje ‘(usually) says’ – which both historically include the imperfective converb as part of the periphrastic construction⁴.

The general function of abaj (baj) 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, abaj (baj) 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 abaj (baj) is usually superfluous and often pleonastic, like that of the finite Present in (4) above.

(28) …κ.a-a ge neχčir-ar.i mi-s, ja kas, ab.a-a,
say.IPF-PRS DEMG bird-PL(ERG) DEMM-DAT [VOC person say.IPF-PRS
ha-te ul-ar čin qu-χ.a-s-e abaj, we
ha-DEMT eye-PL we:EXCL RE-bring.IPF-INF-COP baj your(SG)
bugu-s abaj, ha-te dar.alal q α.l-a-q qame-a = baj.
near-DAT baj ha-DEMT tree(GEN) side-POST {POST}stay-PRS=baj
...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.

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

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, abaj (baj) 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) qunši-jar.i hul-ar qu-ʔ.a-s-e = baj.
neighbour-PL(ERG) [guest-PL RE-go/come.IPF-INF-COP]=baj
Neighbours say that guests will come.

⁴ Present abaa || abaja ‘is saying, says’ < abaj a [imperfective converb + auxiliary ‘be inside’]; Habitual akaje ‘(usually) says’ < abaj e [imperfective converb + copula].
Functionally, *ʁaj* 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) qunši-jar.i = ʁaj hul-ar qu-f'a-a-s-e.
neighbour-PL(ERG)=ʁaj [guest-PL RE-go/come.IPF-INF-COP]

Guests will come, as neighbours say (or: according to the neighbours).

(31) qunši-jar.i = ʁaj-a-a, hul-ar qu-f'a-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 *ʁaj* has lead 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 *ʁaj* often occurs in a superfluous manner, cf.:

(32) x.u-ne, x.u-ndawa=ʁaj lemert=na ʒumart aʁ.a
become.PF-PFT become.PF-PFT:NEG=ʁaj Lemert=and Dzhumart say.IPF
ʔu ču.
two brother

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

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

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 *asaj* (*saj*). 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**


**References**

- Ganenkov D., Maisak T., Merdanova S. 2009b. Дискурсивная анафора в агульском языке // Не Фестшрифт: Статьи в подарок (к юбилею А. Е. Кибрика). Electronic collection; URL: http://www.kibrik.ru