

Review: Güldemann, Tom. 2008. Quotative indexes in African languages: A synchronic and diachronic survey. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. (Empirical Approaches to Language Typology 34). ISBN 978-3-11-018590-4

Dmitry Idiatov

► **To cite this version:**

Dmitry Idiatov. Review: Güldemann, Tom. 2008. Quotative indexes in African languages: A synchronic and diachronic survey. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. (Empirical Approaches to Language Typology 34). ISBN 978-3-11-018590-4. Studies in Language, John Benjamins Publishing, 2011, 35 (2), pp.445-452. 10.1075/sl.35.2.07idi . halshs-00655722

HAL Id: halshs-00655722

<https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00655722>

Submitted on 1 Jan 2012

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Güldemann, Tom. 2008. *Quotative indexes in African languages: A synchronic and diachronic survey*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. (Empirical Approaches to Language Typology 34). ISBN 978-3-11-018590-4

The book under review provides a thorough construction-oriented synchronic and diachronic investigation of quotative indexes in a representative sample of 39 African languages. The study is typologically and theoretically well-informed and offers a good deal of thought-provoking findings and insightful generalizations of general interest, well beyond the Africanist readership whose attention the title may attract most. The book also contains a wealth of language-specific data and analyses, both synchronic and diachronic. These data and analyses will be relevant not only to the specialists in the respective languages and language families, who could profit a lot from the new perspective on the data they may already be familiar with, but also to a readership attentive to issues of cross-linguistic diversity and language change.

A QUOTATIVE INDEX is defined as “a segmentally discrete linguistic expression which is used by the reporter for the orientation of the audience to signal in his/her discourse the occurrence of an adjacent representation of reported discourse” (p. 11). Reported discourse is understood broadly and also includes “texts that were never actually uttered like so-called ‘internal speech’, or in general any representation of cognitive acts or states” (p. 7). The study focuses especially on quotative indexes marking direct reported discourse, as in (1), that is, the kind of reported discourse where “the formal interference of the reporter is maximally restricted” (p. 8)

(1) [*He said to me,*]_{QUOTATIVE INDEX} [*“Come back tomorrow!”*]_{REPORTED DISCOURSE (= QUOTE)}

The generic speech verb *say* forms the nuclear part of the quotative index in (1). The quotative index in (1) also includes a reference to the SPEAKER, viz. *he*, and the ADDRESSEE, viz. *to me* (p. 7). Note that *say* in (1) is not conventionalized in the function of introducing an adjacent representation of reported discourse, i.e. a quote. That is, as such it does not fulfill the “quote-orienting or quote-pointing function” (p. 134). However, quotative indexes can also contain dedicated QUOTE-ORIENTERS, or simply QUOTATIVES, which share the feature of reference to an utterance with speech verbs, such as *say*, while at the same time functionally differing from the latter in being conventionalized in relation to reported discourse. That is, either they are not used in other contexts at all or they lack (fully or partially) the feature of reference to an utterance when no representation of reported discourse is adjacent. For instance, consider *be like* in English, as in (2), as an example of such a quotative.

(2) *And he’s like, “That’s great!”*

Chapter 1 presents the object of the study and major research questions, as well as theoretical and methodological foundations. In Chapters 2 (“The internal structure of quotative indexes”) and 3 (“Quotative indexes and their linguistic context”), Güldemann (henceforth TG) proposes a (morpho)syntactic typology of quotative indexes and of quotatives. The two major parameters used for the classification of quotative indexes are: (i)

whether the construction involved is a clause and how complex it is (detailed in 3 below), and (ii) the position of the quotative index with respect to the quote (detailed in 4).

- (3) The syntactic structure of quotative indexes
 - (i) monoclausal
 - (ii) monoclausal bipartite
 - (iii) biclausal (bipartite)
 - (iv) non-clausal
- (4) The position of the quotative index with respect to the quote
 - (i) preposed
 - (ii) postposed
 - (iii) circumposed
 - (iv) intraposed
 - (v) combination involving intra-quote

A secondary parameter classifies monopartite quotative indexes (monoclausal and non-clausal) in terms of their primary semantic orientation, viz. quote-oriented vs. (in the case of monoclausal quotative indexes) event-oriented (pp. 153-154) or (in the case of non-clausal ones) participant-oriented (pp. 160-161). This parameter is not applied in Appendix 1 where major types of quotative indexes in the sample languages are presented. Various combinations of the two major parameters are possible within a given language. Interestingly, none of the 39 languages of TG's sample has all the four syntactic constructional types of quotative indexes summarized in (3) above.

Quotatives as the nuclear parts of quotative indexes are first of all classified syntactically as to whether they are predicative or nonpredicative. One of the major results of Chapters 2 and 3 is the finding that quotative indexes are often based on elements other than speech verbs, "suggesting that they are more than simple predicative assertions about a speech event" (p. 2). Morphosyntactically, predicative quotatives may behave as regular verbs and are then classified as QUOTATIVE VERBS (p. 13). Those predicative quotatives that do not fully qualify for the status of verb in a given language are referred to as QUOTATIVE PREDICATORS (p. 15). Nonpredicative quotatives do not show any properties characteristic of verbs in a given language. In its general outline TG's classification of quotatives is very appealing, although I found certain aspects of its presentation somewhat confusing. A figure summarizing all the types of quotatives, comparable to the one provided on p. 516 for the classification of quotative indexes, would have been helpful. For instance, the term QUOTATIVE MARKER, defined as a "grammaticalized function word which is normally adjacent to the quote" "in addition to a predicate" appears to be introduced on p. 14 as a type of a nonpredicative quotative. However, on p. 15, quotative markers are referred to as a "more general category" of which the predicative quotatives, viz. quotative predicators and quotative verbs, "can be [functionally] conceptualized as special subtypes". Again on p. 14, the notion of quotative marker is exemplified by introducing the concept of QUOTATIVE COMPLEMENTIZERS, which are quotative markers occurring when a quote is in a relation of complementation with a

clausal quotative index. Later in the text, however, the label “quotative/complementizer” is usually used rather than “quotative complementizer”. As becomes clear from the discussion in Sections 3.1 and 3.4, the reason behind TG’s avoidance of the latter label is that there is, as he convincingly argues, hardly any evidence for the widespread view that the representation of a reported discourse is the object complement of a higher clause (and respectively, that any verb used to build a quotative index is transitive). It would have been more consistent then to use a term like QUOTATIVE CLAUSE LINKING MARKER to indicate that the relation of a quote to the adjacent clause-level quotative index is not that of complementation but of some type of clause linking. See, for instance, Idiatov (2010) where I tried out the present classification on data from Mande languages.¹ Alternatively, as the relevant data may not always be present in the primary sources, the need to distinguish between complementation and clause linking in such a typological survey could have been avoided by using a more general term, such as QUOTATIVE CLAUSE RELATOR, that is a syntactic or morphological element marking a relation between two clauses such that one clause is a quotative index and the other is a quote. Finally, I would also propose to confine the term QUOTATIVE MARKER to the leftover category of non-predicative quotatives that relate the quote to a non-clausal quotative index (cf. Idiatov 2010 for an illustration on the example of Mande languages).

Chapters 4 to 7 focus on the diachrony of quotative indexes and quotatives, investigating both their variable sources and the recurrent further developments that they undergo themselves. Thus, Chapter 4 provides an overview of previous research on the etymology of quotatives, where speech verbs have figured particularly prominently as presumably the most natural source of quotatives. TG is quite critical of this line of analysis and he subjects it to a thorough scrutiny taking the oft-cited case of Yoruba to illustrate his point. He argues that a better understanding of the history of quotative constructions can be achieved if they are analyzed as a particular case of “mimesis constructions”, as suggested by their recurrent synchronic properties examined in Chapters 2 and 3. Mimetic expressions directly enact a state of affairs rather than describe it. Besides reported discourse, they comprise “representational gesture, ideophones, and non-linguistic sound imitation” (p. 275). Chapter 5 reveals a much more varied range of sources of quotatives than just speech verbs, as summarized in (5), and demonstrates that the alternative, mimesis perspective straightforwardly accounts for the data observed.

- (5) The diverse origins of nuclear elements of quotative indexes
- (i) generic speech verbs (e.g., ‘say’, ‘tell’)
 - (ii) generic verbs of equation, inchoativity and action (e.g., ‘be(come)’, ‘do, make’, ‘go’)
 - (iii) markers of similarity and manner (e.g., ‘like’, ‘as’, ‘thus’, ‘so’)
 - (iv) quote-referring pronominals and deictics (e.g., ‘this’, ‘that’)
 - (v) foregrounding devices and presentationals (e.g., ‘it is’, ‘there is’)
 - (vi) pronominals referring to the speaker

¹ In Mande, the word order together with the way transitivity is obligatory manifested within a clause unambiguously exclude a complementation interpretation.

TG warns against “overgeneralizing the speech-verb channel” of the origin of quotatives (p. 267) and deplores that argumentation in the literature on the history of quotatives is often “reduced to purely theoretical consideration of crosslinguistic precedents” instead of “a careful reconstruction” (p. 269). However, in the ardour of his legitimate critique, he sometimes falls prey to the same pitfall of overgeneralization but in favour of the “channels” other than speech verbs. Thus, I believe this is the case with Mandinka and Gola quotatives which TG, somewhat unfortunately for his otherwise quite convincing argument, takes as exemplar cases to illustrate his point (pp. 344-345, 418-422).

In Mandinka the quotative *kó* can function as a quotative predicator and a quotative clause linking marker (cf. Idiatov 2010:849). On the basis of the observation that “the simulative marker ‘like’ has the same phonetic form” and the same form “also appears in the complex conjunction *kó níŋ* ‘as if’” (where *níŋ* is ‘if, when; and, with’), TG comes to conclusion that “it is reasonable to view the simulative marker as the source for the quotative index” (pp. 344-345), against the commonly accepted view that the simulative *kó* ‘like, as’ comes from a quotative construction such as *í sí à fò kó* (2SG POTENTIAL 3SG QUOTATIVE) ‘you would say; like, as’ (Creissels 1983:188) or rather simply *í kó* (2SG QUOTATIVE) ‘you [would] say; like, as’. Even though TG does admit (p. 422) that the traditional account “has a certain amount of plausibility”, he argues that “it still remains unclear where the quotative verb is to have come from” (p. 421). However, neither of the two hypotheses is convincing here. To begin with, in many other lects within the Manding dialect continuum of which Mandinka is the westernmost variety, the simulative is only formed as a quotative index with the obligatory 2SG pronoun *í* representing the speaker, as in Bamana *í kó* (2SG QUOTATIVE) or *í n’à fɔ́* (2SG FUT:3SG say). From the point of view of Manding phonotactics, once the construction *í kó* is conventionalized and its original morphological makeup blurred by frequent use, the loss of *í* would be absolutely natural (cf. Idiatov 2010:858). Furthermore, the same kind of simulative uses of structurally identical quotative constructions based on quotatives of various origins and undergoing similar conventionalization and formal reduction are well attested elsewhere in Mande, as in Kpelle *yéyé* (or simply *yé*) ‘2SG:QUOTATIVE; like, as’ (Westermann & Melzian 1930:69) or Tura *yé* ‘as, like’, originally a 2SG form of the quotative (cf. Idiatov 2010:852-853).² At the same time, no quotative extensions of originally simulative markers, comparable to *be like* in English, as in (2) above, have been reported in Mande. Finally, the Mandinka quotative *kó* has clear cognates in Mande that have nothing to do with simile or mimesis but with speech, such as the speech verbs *kù* (PFV)/ *kùɛ* (IPFV) ‘(vi) speak, talk’ in Jeli, *kó* ‘(vt) say’ in Soninke and *kúmá* ‘speak, talk; speech, words’ in

² In this respect, compare TG’s observation that he has “not found a single clear case of the historical development whereby [...] a specialized and complex QI [Quotative Index] became reduced in substance to a one-word sign that was then reanalyzed as an adposition ‘like’” (p. 422). Another clear example of such a development outside of Africa that comes to mind is Ukrainian *mov*. The simulative meaning ‘like, as’ of *mov* is clearly derivative of its quotative use as is suggested by the fact that *mov* is a truncation of a form of the speech verb *movyty/movljaty* ‘to speak, say’. Note that a related form *movljav* (lit.: ‘he spoke, said’) is used only as a quotative (or an attenuator ‘so to speak’). The same is true of the cognate Russian form *mol*.

Mandinka itself (from **kó-má* ‘speech/talk-do’, where the verb ‘do’ on which this compound is based has been lost in Mandinka), as well as the nouns *góó/wóó* ‘voice’ in Looma and *wùù* ‘voice, speech, language; issue, matter’ in Tura.

Gola, as described by Westermann (1921:45, 150, 161, 175), has a person-inflected quotative whose stem is *yaa* and two simulative markers ‘like’, viz. *mãã*, which is the 2SG form of the quotative (‘you say’) similarly to the Mande languages mentioned above, and *yaa*, which has “the same form” as the quotative stem and also makes part of two manner deictics *yáe* ‘so, like this’ and *yéi* ‘so, like that’ (pp. 420-421). On the basis of this, TG concludes that the simulative *yaa* is the source of the quotative *yaa*. Several objections can be made here. To begin with, the simulative *yaa* and the quotative *yaa* seem to have different tones. Thus, although Westermann (1921) marks tones only on some words and also leaves the tones of the two forms unmarked, the high tone marked on the aforementioned manner deictics *yáe* and *yéi* which are based on the simulative suggest that the tone of the simulative is also high, viz. *yáá*, whereas the tone of the quotative is in all probability low, viz. *yàà*, as suggested for instance by the 3SG form of the quotative *wààŋ* found in Fachner (1990:41-43). Second, both the quotative and the simulative look very much like a relatively recent borrowing from a Southwestern Mande language, in all probability Kpelle, as is already hinted at by Westermann (1921:45) himself with respect to the quotative. Thus, the Liberian variety of Kpelle described by Westermann & Melzian (1930) has *yéyé* (or simply *yé*) ‘2SG:QUOTATIVE’, also used as ‘like, as’, and *yè/nè/yèyé/nèyé* ‘3SG:QUOTATIVE’ (1930:22, 69). The variation *y-/n-* in the 3SG form of the quotative points to the pronominals of the so-called “absolute” series whose vowel is *a* (1930:15, 69), such as the 3SG forms *yà/nà*, so that the older forms of the quotative were presumably *yáyé* and *yàyé/nàyé* respectively,³ which in Gola apparently contracted to *yáá* and *yàà*.

Chapter 6 deals mostly with various kinds of non-quotative functions that quotative indexes may develop, as summarized in (6).

- (6) Functional extensions of quotative indexes (p. 522)
- (i) naming
 - (ii) reported evidence
 - (iii) illocution reinforcement (and possibly other speech act modifiers)
 - (iv) simile (relevant for simulative and manner-clause linkage)
 - (v) proximative (prospective)
 - (vi) deontic modality
 - (vii) indirect causation
 - (viii) purpose-clause linkage

³ The “absolute” pronominals are used in equational and presentative constructions, as well as for emphasis in some other constructions (cf. Westermann & Melzian 1930:15-16). In other Southwestern Mande languages, such as Mende, it is rather the pronominals of the “basic”/perfective series (comparable to the Kpelle “past” pronominals, as found in Westermann & Melzian 1930:4) that have been involved in quotative formation. See Idiatov (2010:854-855) on the origins of the quotative stem *yé*.

- (ix) reason-clause linkage
- (x) condition-clause linkage
- (xi) multipurpose subordination

Chapter 7 considers various elements that have often been claimed in the literature to go back to quotative indexes but that, TG argues, are at best independent parallel developments from a common source, or just altogether unrelated, (7).

- (7) Elements frequently misclassified as developments of quotative indexes
 - (i) “auxiliary-foregrounding complex”: multipurpose auxiliaries, dummy predicatives, and inflection-type markers, as well as predication and clause operator
 - (ii) functions in nominal morphosyntax: nominal identification, listing, and coordination markers, as well as multipurpose relational grams

Chapter 8 provides a summary of the findings and a concise overview of the typology of quotative indexes proposed in the study, and discusses some possible questions for further research. The end material accompanying the book includes two appendices, one with the data on the major types of quotative indexes found in the sample languages and one with quotative and generic speech verbs attested in the sample languages, a list of references, as well as language, author and subject indexes.

As is somewhat inevitable with studies of such scale, different readers may happen to regret this or that issue having been overlooked or find it not having been treated properly. I have already brought up some of my own grievances above and would like to add a couple of minor remarks by way of a conclusion. However, they should not disguise my overall high appreciation of the quality of the research and writing involved in the study under review.

One point that I feel TG could have made much more explicit is that (fully in accordance with the constructional approach he takes) in a given language, the same quotative form can happen to be construed in more than one way depending on the construction it enters (cf. examples from Mande in Idiatov 2010). He is clearly aware of this fact but at some places he seems to have been distracted by the identity of form, as when on pp. 123, 134 he analyzes the clause-linking use of the quotative *kó* in Mandinka as a case of “[quotative] verb copy” of the quotative verb *kó*, even though elsewhere, as on p. 344, he keeps these two functions of the form *kó* distinct. Finally, one minor parameter that can be added to the typology of quotatives concerns the possible importance of lexical semantic distinctions of various kinds between different quotatives in a given language. For instance, in Soninke (Western Mande; Mali), there are four different quotative verbs. The choice between them depends on honorificity status of the speaker of the reported discourse, with one of the four verbs being a default quotative verb that can be applied to anyone (cf. Idiatov 2010:838 for references and examples).

References

Creissels, Denis. 1983. *Éléments de grammaire de la langue mandinka*. Grenoble: l’Université des Langues et Lettres de Grenoble.

- Fachner, Regine. 1990. The noun phrase in Gola. *Afrikanistische Arbeitspapiere* 23. 5-52.
- Idiatov, Dmitry. 2010. Person–number agreement on clause linking markers in Mande. *Studies in Language* 34(4). 832–868.
- Westermann, Diedrich. 1921. *Die Gola-Sprache in Liberia: Grammatik, Texte und Wörterbuch*. Hamburg: L. Friederichsen.
- Westermann, Diedrich & H.J. Melzian. 1930. *The Kpelle language in Liberia: Grammatical outline, colloquial sentences and vocabulary*. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer & Ernst Vohsen. [Reprinted in 1974, Nendeln: Kraus Reprint].