

## Two predicates, one clause: Cross-linguistic insights into the early stages of quotative development

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Across languages, complementizers develop from verbs meaning ‘say’ (Klamer 2000; Cohen et al. 2002; Deutscher 2012; Kuteva et al 2019; inter alia). While there is much work on this topic, it is mostly based on the cognate status of quotative markers and ‘say’ verbs, with little known about the details of this process or about how new structures emerge in spontaneous oral discourse. Based on our collection of oral texts in different languages we observe that these quotative elements are on a very different stage of grammaticalization. Furthermore, languages can have more than one speech verb that is either defective or developing into a quotative marker. In this paper we survey emergent quotative uses of ‘say’ verbs in five languages - Macedonian (South Slavic), Wan (Mande), and Chuvash and Bashkir (Turkic) and show that defectiveness is not a necessary condition for grammaticalization. Figure 1 presents quotatives across languages at different stages of grammaticalization between lexical speech verbs and complementizers.

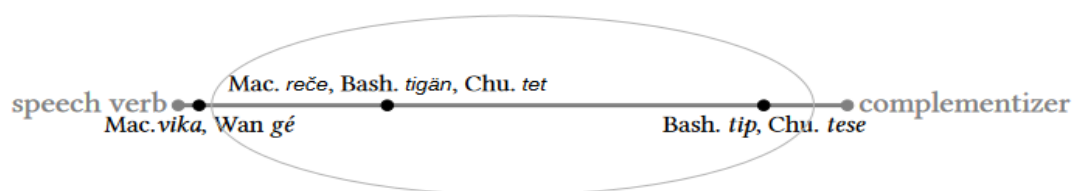


Figure 1: the quotative space

In Macedonian, there are two main ‘say’-verbs: *vika* ‘says’ and *reče* ‘said’. Both of these show exceptional syntactic properties that distinguish them from other verbs in the same language: they can be iterated throughout the discourse report, creating a monoclausal construction featuring two finite verbs in a language that does not have serial verb constructions. Nonetheless, it is only *reče* that also shows other properties of grammaticalization, such as loss of inflection and phonetic reduction. It can be the only predicate introducing the discourse report, but it can also combine with *vika*, in which *vika* functions as the main verb and *reče* as a quotative marker. Chuvash *tese* and Bashkir *tip* are well-established as complementizers grammaticalized from the converbs of the ‘say’-verb. Additionally, these languages employ the forms *tet* ‘says’ and *tigän* ‘said’ respectively, which, like *reče* can be iterated throughout a discourse report and get grammaticalized into quotative markers. In Macedonian and the Turkic languages, these emergent quotative uses are so far restricted to spontaneous oral discourse but not recognized as standard by educated speakers; they remain unreported in grammatical descriptions. Instead of the expected loss of verbal properties (Güldemann 2008), we observe that the verbs start appearing in contexts where other verbs are unattested, while initially retaining the full range of their morphophonological properties. Moreover, a language like Wan shows that defective speech verbs do not *necessarily* develop into quotative markers. Wan has a separate quotative marker (*dóō*) which can perfectly well combine with the defective speech verb (*gé*). The reason this

verb is becoming defective thus is not due to it being recategorized, i.e., defectiveness does not always precede grammaticalization. Thus, these emergent quotative uses of speech verbs provide important evidence for the earliest stages of the process.

**Keywords:** grammaticalization, quotative verbs, reported speech, quotative markers

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