

## Evidentiality in Tauya

*Lorna MacDonald*  
*The University of Regina*

### 1. Introduction

The term 'evidentials' refers to those devices which are used in language to provide information about the reliability of a proposition. For example, they may refer to the source of information on which a proposition is based (e.g., hearsay), or they may refer to a speaker's commitment to the truth of a proposition (e.g., uncertainty). As Jacobsen has pointed out, evidentiality is a semantically defined category, and therefore the devices used in its expression may not fall into a single morpho-syntactic category. For example, in the sentences below, evidentiality is expressed by a (higher) main verb in (a); by a modal verb in (b); and by a particle in (c):

- (a) *They say* that black cats bring bad luck
- (b) The wind *may* have blown these shingles off the roof
- (c) *Maybe* he's in a bad mood because he quit smoking

The languages of Papua New Guinea do not appear to be particularly rich in inflectional evidential morphology. For example, Foley, in his typological survey of Papuan languages, found the inflectional expression of evidentiality to be a fairly restricted areal phenomenon, limited in its distribution to the Engan languages and a few neighbouring languages of the Southern Highlands Province (1986: 165). In these languages, evidentiality is marked by final suffixes added to verbs, and they may distinguish, for example, information obtained through witnessing an event from information obtained through hearsay.

In this paper, I examine the emergence of an evidential suffix in Tauya, a language belonging to the Madang-Adelbert Range Subphylum, and spoken by about 400 people living in the Upper Ramu Valley, Madang Province, Papua New Guinea<sup>1</sup>. This suffix appears to be of recent origin. First, its historical development is transparent. Second, it is relatively unstable, insofar as it is impossible to assign

it membership in a single morpho-syntactic category. The evidential suffix in Tauya is evolving from the verb 'to say', which is used in direct quote constructions. This particular development is certainly not unique to Tauya. For example, Gordon has demonstrated that the verb 'to say' in Maricopa, a Yuman language, has evolved into a reportative clitic (Gordon 1986: 76). However, in Tauya the new evidential suffix is not interpreted as simply signalling information that was obtained through hearsay evidence, as might be expected from its origin. Rather, it is being interpreted as signalling false presupposition; a possible explanation for this interpretation is suggested in this paper<sup>2</sup>.

## 2. Direct Quotes

In Tauya, as in a number of other Papuan languages<sup>3</sup>, sentential complements of certain verbs are expressed as direct quotes. In Tauya, these include verbs of speech (as in (1), below), purpose (2), volition (3), and perception (4). The quoted speech is followed by the verb stem /o-/ 'say', which is inflected as a same-subject (SS) coordinate medial verb, with the SS medial suffix /-pa/. The SS inflection signals that the subject of the verb 'say' is coreferential with the subject of the following verb which, in this case, is a verb of speech, purpose, volition or perception.

- (1) "Bramani na -yau -e -?a" o -pa ?ati ya -fe -a -?a  
 2sg see 1/2 IND say SS say 1sg TR 3sg IND  
 He told me that he saw me in Brahman  
 (Lit.: "I saw you in Brahman" he said (and) he told me)
- (2) "?ufiya neri -amu -?a" o -pa Bramani yate -a -?a  
 food buy 1sgFut IND say SS go 3sg IND  
 He went to Brahman to buy food  
 (Lit.: "I will buy food" he said (and) he went to Brahman)
- (3) "Mandani yate -amu -?a" o -pa ese -a -?a  
 go 1sgFut IND say SS want 3sg IND  
 He wants to go to Madang  
 (Lit.: "I will go to Madang" he said (and) he wants (it))

- (4) "ni mo<sup>?</sup>ou ya -pi wate -<sup>?</sup>ai mene -i -<sup>?</sup>a"  
 3pl all 1sg GEN house ADESS stay 3pl IND,  
 o -pa po -ni ese -a -<sup>?</sup>a  
 say SS talk INSTRU hear 3sg IND  
 He<sub>i</sub> heard that they all stayed in his<sub>i</sub> house  
 (Lit.: "They all stayed in my house" he said (and) he heard it  
 through talk)

To express negative volition or purpose, the verb in the quoted speech includes the avolitional auxiliary /-<sup>?</sup>ate-/ :

- (5) "Bramani yate -<sup>?</sup>ate -e -<sup>?</sup>a" o -pa ese -a -<sup>?</sup>a  
 go AVOL 1/2 IND say SS want 3sg IND  
 He doesn't want to go to Brahman  
 (Lit.: "It would be bad if I went to Brahman" he said (and) he wants (it))
- (6) "ya<sup>?</sup>e sotopimai -<sup>?</sup>ate -a -<sup>?</sup>a" o -pa satepa <sup>?</sup>aufe -e -<sup>?</sup>a  
 water come in AVOL 3sg IND say SS door close 1/2 IND  
 I closed the door so the rain wouldn't come in.  
 (Lit.: "It would be bad if the rain came in" I said (and) I closed the door)

In the examples given above, the quoted sentences are all in the indicative/unmarked mood, with the modal suffix /-<sup>?</sup>a/. Phonetically, the sequence /-<sup>?</sup>a o +pa/ (INDIC#say + SS suffix) is realized as -<sup>?</sup>opa, with deletion of the low vowel. Since this is the form which is being reanalyzed as an evidential suffix, all subsequent examples which include direct quotes in the indicative/unmarked mood are transcribed with -<sup>?</sup>opa, glossed simply as 'QUOTE'. However, it must be noted that direct quotes may occur in other moods, as in the following examples (see also (5)):

- (7) "awa na -pi <sup>?</sup>umu -a -nae" o -pa ya -su<sup>?</sup>utu -i -<sup>?</sup>a  
 father 2sg GEN die 3sg Q say SS 1sg ask 3pl IND  
 They asked me if my father died  
 (Lit.: "Did your father die?" they said (and) they asked me)

- (8) *“yate fitau -ane -e” o -pa ?ati nen -fe -a -?a*  
 go throw 2plFut IMP say SS say 3pl TR 3sg IND  
 He told them to go away  
 (Lit.: “Go away!” he said (and) he told them)

Person reference in direct quotes is generally assigned with reference to the subject of the verb ‘say’, i.e., the person being quoted, rather than with reference to the narrator. That is, the subject of the verb ‘say’ occurs as 1st person; the narrator, if referred to in the quote, may then occur as 2nd person (as in (7), above), or as a 3rd person, as in the following example:

- (9) *“awa ni -pi ?unu -a” -?opa nen -fe -a -?a*  
 father 3sg GEN die 3sg QUOTE 3pl TR 3sg IND  
 He told them that my father died  
 (Lit.: “Her father died” he said (and) he told them)

Assigning person reference in this way can result in some ambiguity in the context of the narration; for example, it is not immediately clear that the referent of the 3sg possessive pronoun in (9) is the narrator. However, this ambiguity can be avoided if the quoted speech is prefaced with a disambiguating NP or subordinate clause, as in (11) and (12):

- (10) *“∅ -sepame -a” -?opa yau -a -?a*  
 3sg sick 3sg QUOTE see 3sg IND  
 He saw that I/you/she was sick  
 (Lit.: “She is sick” he said (and) he saw (it))

- (11) *ya -ra “∅ -sepame -a” -?opa yau -a -?a*  
 1sg TOP 3sg sick 3sg QUOTE see 3sg IND  
 He saw that I was sick  
 (Lit.: As for me, “She is sick” he said ...)

- (12) *ya -sepame -a -na “∅ -sepame -a” -?opa yau -a -?a*  
 1sg sick 3sg SUB 3sg sick 3sg QUOTE see 3sg IND  
 He saw that I was sick  
 (Lit.: I was sick (and) “She is sick” he said and ...)

Occasionally, however, person reference in the quoted speech is assigned in part with reference to the narrator. In these examples, nominal elements in the quote

(pronouns) are used with the narrator as 1st person, whereas person reference on the verb (subject and object reference) is used with the subject of the verb ‘say’ as 1st person. The result is thus a combination of a direct and an indirect quote<sup>4</sup>. For example, in (13) the possessor of the noun *-neme* ‘head’ is 3rd person, although it is logically co-referential with the 1st person subject of the verb in the same quoted sentence:

- (13) *pai inaomo Ø -neme -?ai “epitei -pa,*  
 pig blood 3sg head ADESS break SS,  
*efi -amu” -?opa ?ai -a -na -ra ...*  
 put in 1sgFut QUOTE do 3sg SUB TOP  
 He wanted to break and put the (dried) pig blood into his head ...  
 (Lit.: “I will break and put” the dried pig blood in his head he said ...)

Similarly, in (14) the possessor of the noun *-potiyafo* ‘arm’ is 3rd person, although it is logically co-referential with the 2nd person subject of the imperative verb in the same sentence:

- (14) *ota nono Ø -potiyafo “ya -tu -a -e” o -a -na -?i ...*  
 male child 3sg arm 1sg give 2sgFut IMP say 3sg SUB PRO  
 She told the boy to give her his arm  
 (Lit.: She told the boy “Give me!” his arm ...)

Assignment of person reference in (13) and (14) indicates that, in these examples, only the verb in the quoted speech represents a direct quote, and the remainder of the sentence is quoted indirectly.

### 3. Subordinate Clauses

As well as occurring in the direct quote construction described in 2, sentential complements of verbs of perception (but not of speech, volition or purpose) may occur as subordinate clauses in the absolutive case. As such, the subordinate clause suffix *-na/* replaces the modal suffix on the verb in the embedded clause; this is followed by the absolutive case suffix *-Ø*. Thus, alongside (4), above, (15) is also possible:

- (15) *ni moʔotu ni -pi wate -ʔai mene -i -na -∅*  
 3pl all 3sg GEN house ADESS stay 3pl SUB NOM  
*po -ni ese -a ʔa*  
 talk INSTRU hear 3sg IND  
 He heard that they all stayed in this house

Other examples include:

- (16) *na -sepame -ti -a -na -∅ yau -e -ʔa*  
 2sg sick INTEN 3sg SUB ABS see 1/2 IND  
 I saw that you were very sick

Other examples include:

- (17) *fomitiya mei fofe -i -na -∅ ese-mene -a -ʔa*  
 yesterday here come 3pl SUB ABS know 3sg IND  
 He knows that they came here yesterday
- (18) *afe nen -pi ʔumu -a -na -∅ ese -ene -ʔa*  
 mother 3pl GEN die 3sg SUB ABS hear 1/2pl IND  
 We heard that their mother died

#### 4. Contrasts in Presuppositional Status

Subordinate clauses in Tauya are presupposed. Thus, for example, unlike coordinate medial clauses, subordinate clauses are always interpreted as being in the indicative/ unmarked mood, regardless of the mood marked on the following (final) verb. Coordinate medial clauses, on the other hand, may be interpreted as sharing the non-indicative mood of the final verb. For example:

- (19) *Coord: mei fofe -pa na -yau -a -nae*  
 here come SS 2sg see 3sg Q  
 Did he come here and see you?

- (20) *Sub.: mei fofe -a -na na -yau -a -nae*  
 here come 3sg SUB 2sg see 3sg Q  
 He came here (and) did he see you?

The presuppositional status of subordinate clauses is clearly evident when their interpretation and distribution as complements of verbs of perception are compared with those of direct quote complements. First, the interpretations assigned to the

two constructions are clearly distinct: subordinate clause complements are presuppositional, whereas direct quote complements are not.

- (21) *Sub.: ∅ esei roroti -a -na -∅ yau -e -?a*  
 3sg bone exhaust 3sg SUB ABS see 1/2 IND  
 I saw that he was exhausted (= He was exhausted and I saw it)

- (22) *Quote: "∅ esei roroti -a" -?opa yau -e -?a*  
 3sg bone exhaust 3sg QUOTE see 1/2 IND  
 I saw that he was exhausted (... but someone else may interpret his condition differently)

Second, certain verbs of perception imply presuppositional complements, whereas others imply complements which are non-presuppositional. In Tauya, complements of verbs of the first type may occur only as subordinate clauses; complements of verbs of the second type may occur only as direct quotes. For example, the verb 'know' is presuppositional. In Tauya, 'know' is expressed as /*ese + mene-*/ 'hear' + Stative. Complements of this verb may occur only as subordinate clauses:

- (23) *ni mei mene -a -na -∅ ese-mene -e -?a*  
 3sg here stay 3sg SUB ABS know 1/2 IND  
 I know that he is here

Note that the following sentence, in which the complement occurs as a direct quote, is ungrammatical:

- (24) \* "*ni mei mene -a" -?opa ese-mene -e -?a*  
 3sg here stay 3sg QUOTE know 1/2 IND  
 (I know that he is here)

On the other hand, the verb 'think' implies non-presuppositional complements. In Tauya, 'think' is expressed as /*mi fei-*/ 'thought#boil', and complements of this verb may occur only as direct quotes. Thus, (25) is possible, but (26) is not:

(25) "ni mei mene -a" -?opa mi fei -e -?a  
 3sg here stay 3sg QUOTE think 1/2 IND  
 I think that he is here

(26) \* ni mei mene -a -na -∅ mi fei -e -?a  
 3sg here stay 3sg SUB ABS think 1/2 IND  
 (I think that he is here)

Finally, the presuppositional status of subordinate clauses is suggested by the fact that they may not be used to express complements of verbs of speech, volition or purpose. Complements of verbs of speech are hearsay, and thus are not presupposed. In Tauya, they may occur as direct quotes, as in (27), but not as subordinate clauses, as in (28).

(27) na -ta "∅ -yau -e" -?opa ?ati ya -fe -a -?a  
 2sg TOP 3sg see 1/2 QUOTE say 1sg TR 3sg IND  
 He told me that he saw you

(28) \* na -yau -a -na -∅ ?ati ya -fe -a -?a  
 2sg see 3sg SUB ABS say 1sg TR 3sg IND  
 (He told me that he saw you)

Similarly, one cannot presuppose the purpose or volition of another:

(29) ya -ra "∅ -yau -amu" -?opa ese -a -?a  
 1sg TOP 3sg see 1sgFut QUOTE want 3sg IND  
 He wants to see me

But,

(30) \* ya -yau -?e -na -∅ ese -a -?a  
 1sg see 3sgFut SUB ABS want 3sg IND  
 (He wants to see me)

(31) ya -ra "∅ -yau -amu" -?opa mei fofe -a -?a  
 1sg TOP 3sg see 1sgFut QUOTE here come 3sg IND  
 He came here to see me





(36) *“ya -ra asi na -pi -yae” o -pa ...*  
 1sg TOP clansman 2sg GEN Q say SS  
 “Am I your clansman?” he said ...

(37) *“yate -?atenene” o -pa ?ati sen -fe -i -?a*  
 go PROH say SS say 1pl TR 3pl IND  
 They told us not to go.

However, although complements of verbs of speech may occur in any of the 7 moods, complements of verbs of perception, volition and purpose are restricted to the indicative/unmarked mood. Thus, a very high proportion of direct quote constructions have the following form:

“ ... V + .. + ?a” o + pa ,

where /-?a/ is the indicative/unmarked modal suffix. As was described in 2., the sequence /-?a o + pa/ (INDIC#‘say’ + SS suffix) is realized phonetically as -?opa. This form is the typical morphological mark of the direct quote construction, and it is this form which is being reanalyzed as an evidential suffix. Although derived as a sequence of 3 morphemes, it is being reinterpreted as a single evidential suffix with an interpretation exactly opposite to that of subordinate clause complements. That is, it is being reinterpreted as signalling, not merely the absence of presupposition, but as signalling false presupposition.

It must be noted that this reanalysis is by no means complete. In most of its uses, the quotative medial-verb status of -?opa is clearly retained, as in the examples presented above. However, in other cases it is equally clear that -?opa either is losing or has lost its primary function of simply signalling a direct quote. That is, there appears to be a change in progress.

In some cases, the reanalysis of -?opa is not syntactic, but merely in interpretation. Here, -?opa follows a direct quote, but it is clear from the context that the quoted speech represents, not a proposition, but a false presupposition on the part of the person being quoted. In this use, informants consistently translate -?opa as ‘think’ (Pidgin *tingting*).

For example:

(38) *afe ya -pi -ra sa?afo mene -a -?opa fofo -pa*  
 mother 1sg GEN TOP just stay 3sg QUOTE come SS

*ya -epite -ʔe -ʔopa mei-mei -a*  
 1sg get 3sgFut QUOTE cry 3sg

He thought that his mother was alive and that she would come and get him and as he was crying ...

(39) *ori ya -pi wate tei -ʔate -a -ʔopa -yaeʔ ori*  
 trap 1sg GEN NEG catch AVOL 3sg QUOTE Q trap

*na -pi tei -ʔe -nani*  
 2sg GEN catch 3sgFut ASSERT

You think it would be bad if your traps didn't catch (game)?  
 Your traps will catch.

No syntactic reanalysis is apparent in the examples presented above<sup>5</sup>. In fact, both (38) and (39) could be translated as direct quotes, as in (38') and (39'):

(38) "My mother is alive" he said and "She will come and get me" he said and as he was crying ...

(39) Did (you) say "It would be bad if my traps didn't catch"? Your traps will catch.

However, the contexts in which (38) and (39) occur clearly indicate that the quoted speech represents false resuppositions. In (38), the narrator has, in preceding paragraphs, described the death of the mother; in (39), the clause following the *-ʔopa* clause attests to its falsity. In fact, Tauya is not alone among Papuan languages in using direct quotes to express false presuppositions. For example, Deibler demonstrates that, in Gahuku direct quotes in the interrogative mood have a similar interpretation:

When the verb 'to say' is preceded by an interrogative verb at the end of the supposedly quoted speech, and not followed by the verb 'to ask', it indicates that the "quoted speech" is the content of what the speaker was supposing or wondering about. It is often implied that the supposition was an incorrect one. (Deibler 1971: 105).

Reesink (1986) notes that complements of the verb 'to say' may have a similar function in Usan. For example:

(40) *iyau mugei is -orei qamb taut is -orei*  
 dog wallaby descend 3s.FP say follow.SS descend 3s.FP  
 Thinking that the wallaby had gone down

Reesink states that (40) would be used if

... the speaker knows that the first event did not eventuate, [the speaker] would have to choose [(40)], indicating that the reason existed for the dog, but that he (= the speaker) knows better.

(Reesink 1986: 259).

This evidence from Gahuku and Usan suggests that the reinterpretation of direct quotes as signalling false presupposition may be a reasonably natural, and thus perhaps fairly widespread, development.

In Tauya, reanalysis of the direct quote construction is not confined to reinterpretation; in some cases, there is evidence of a corresponding syntactic reanalysis. For example, in (41), *-?opa* again signals a false presupposition. Here, however, *-?opa* has lost its medial verb status, and is used as an evidential auxiliary added to the final verb. Its status as an auxiliary is evident from the presence of a following subject marker (*/-e-/*, indicating 1/2sg subject in the aorist tense), and by the interrogative modal suffix used with VPs, */-nae/*<sup>6</sup>:

(41) *aaaa yu?au -mene -?opa -e -nae? pate ate Ø*  
 hide STAT QUOTE 1/2 Q tomorrow old woman 3sg

*-naufe -pa -ra na -yau -amu*  
 finish SS TOP 2sg see 1sg.Fut

Aaaah! You think I'm hiding? Tomorrow I'll finish off the old woman and see you.

In (42)-(44), reanalysis in another direction is apparent. In these examples, *-?opa* is used as a suffix on NPs, again signalling false presupposition. Here, *-?opa* is perhaps best translated as 'so-called' or 'as if it were':

(42) *?e?e wawi ?afa a?ifo ?<sup>w</sup>ei -ti -a -na*  
 oh old man INDEF eye gone PERF 3sg SUB

*Ø -sipinimo ?<sup>w</sup>ei -ti -a -na -ni pai*  
 3sg mouth gone PERF 3sg SUB ERG pig

*fai -te -pa Ø -sipinimo -?opa -ra Ø -neme -?ai*  
 cut get SS 3sg mouth QUOTE TOP 3sg head ADESS

*efi -?afe -pope -a -?a*  
 put in PROG HAB 3sg IND

Oh! An old man's eyes were gone and his mouth was gone so he was cutting the pig and putting it into his head as if it were is mouth

- (43) *?<sup>w</sup>eieimo -piya-piya -?opa wate ese -?atenene*  
 story INTEN QUOTE NEG hear PROH  
 Don't listen as if this were a real story (... I just made it up)

- (44) *o?osi ni -pi -?opa wate mene -a -?a*  
 land 3sg GEN QUOTE NEG stay 3sg IND  
 His so-called land isn't his (i.e., the land said to be his doesn't belong to him)

In Gahuku, a similar interpretation is possible for direct quotes in the interrogative mood:

- (45) *neniq ozegipama nehe loko gizapa lamanaq uke ...*  
 my child is-it? saying watch well I-did  
 I watched over it as though it were my own child (Deibler 1971: 105)

## 5. Summary

The examples presented above demonstrate that a reanalysis of the direct quote construction in Tauya is in progress. This reanalysis appears to have been initiated by the contrast in presuppositional status between direct quote and subordinate clause complements of verbs of perception. That is, subordinate clause complements are presuppositional, and the direct quote construction is being reinterpreted as signalling the opposite of this, i.e., false presupposition. In some cases, this reanalysis consists simply of reinterpretation; in others, there is evidence of some syntactic reanalysis, such that the typical morphological mark of the direct quote construction, *-?opa*, is evolving into an evidential suffix which may occur with both VPs and NPs.

It is interesting to note that the only other evidential suffix in Tauya, dubitative *-rafo*, also occurs freely with NPs and VPs, as in the following examples:

- (46) *Aresa -rafo bramani yate -a -?a*  
 DUB go 3sg IND  
 Maybe Aresa went to Brahman



East-Central Highlands family, there is a negative predicate used with NPs which looks suspiciously similar: *-opa(o)* (see Haiman 1980: 248). For example:

kma	vede	+	a	++	opa(o):	Huva	vede	baune
Siane	men		Cit.		not	Hua	men	we are

We are not Siane men: we are Hua men

3 See, for example, Haiman 1980 for Hua; Deibler 1971 for Gahuku; West 1973 for Wajokeso; Wells 1979 for Siroi; Reesink 1986 for Usan.

4 A somewhat similar situation occurs in Gahuku. However, in Gahuku the variation occurs in the verbal affixes, and appears to be restricted to representing the narrator as 1st person in the quoted sentence:

A verb-affix pronominal form in the quoted speech whose referent is the person or persons who are doing the quoting is a first person pronoun instead of a second person pronoun as would have been used by the original speaker. (Deibler 1971: 109).

5 Note that *-?opa*, a medial verb form, occurs with inflection for mood in (39); in Tauya, mood is generally marked only on final verbs. However, this does not represent a syntactic reanalysis: coordinate medial verbs are occasionally used finally, with inflection for mood, and are interpreted as sentence fragments. They occur with the interrogative modal suffix used with NPs, */-yae/*, rather than with that used with VPs, */-nae/*.

6 See fn. 5.

## References

- Chafe, Wallace and Johanna Nichols (eds.), 1986. *Evidentiality: The linguistic coding of epistemology*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation. [Advances in Discourse Processes, Vol. XX.]
- Deibler, Ellis W. 1971. Uses of the verb 'to say' in Gahuku. *Kivung* 4:101-110.
- Foley, William A. 1986. *The Papuan languages of New Guinea*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gordon, Lynn. 1986. The development of evidentials in Maricopa. In Wallace Chafe and Johanna Nichols (eds.) 1986:75-88.

- Haiman, John. 1980. **Hua: A Papuan language of the Eastern Highlands of New Guinea.** Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Jacobsen, William H. 1986. The heterogeneity of evidentials in Makah. In Wallace Chafe and Johanna Nichols (eds.), 1986:3-28.
- Reesink, Ger P. 1986. **Structures and their functions in Usan, a Papuan language of New Guinea.** Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Wells, Margaret A. 1979. **Siroi grammar.** [Pacific Linguistics B-51.]
- West, D. 1973. **Wojokeso sentence, paragraph and discourse analysis.** [Pacific Linguistics B-28.]