Reported direct speech in Dutch*

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1.   Introduction

Direct speech can be rendered literally by means of a so-called quotative construction. This article examines the properties and structure of reported direct speech in Dutch; however, parts of the discussion apply to other languages as well. As an initial illustration, consider (1a–c) in English:

(1)   a.   "Quotes are invisible," reported Jake.
      b.   "Quotes," reported Jake, "are invisible."
      c.   Jake reported, "Quotes are invisible."

The part between quotation marks is called the *quote*, the rest is the *reporting clause*. From (1) it is clear that quotes can be sentence-initial, discontinuous, or sentence-final. One of my conclusions will be that the quote-final construction (1c) is fundamentally different from the other two.

    Quotative constructions are not restricted to high-frequent reporting verbs such as *zeggen* 'say' and *vragen* 'ask'. A large number of verbs (>500) are acceptable, depending on the context. Some examples are given in (2):

(2)   *verbs of…*

speech and writing:	*antwoorden, neerpennen, prediken, …*	
	answer, scribble down, preach	
emotional speech:	*schreeuwen, vloeken, zuchten, …*	
	shout, swear, sigh	
arguing:	*ruziën, spotten, zich verweren, …*	
	quarrel, mock, defend oneself	
direct emotion:	*giechelen, grienen, schateren, …*	
	giggle, snivel, roar	
sound:	*sissen, toeteren, zingen, …*	
	hiss, blast, sing	
thought:	*concluderen, fantaseren, peinzen, …*	
	conclude, fantasize, contemplate	

observation and   *opmerken, verduidelijken, voorrekenen, …*
explanation: observe, clarify, figure
etc.

Furthermore, reporting clauses are not necessarily restricted to a verb and a subject. They are sometimes complete clauses, and the relation with the quote can be implicit or even completely determined by the context, hence independent of the lexical semantics of the verb. Some examples are shown in (3):[1]

(3) a. "Dit is niet veel   soeps," becommentarieerde ze mijn artikel.
         this is not much cop   commented.on   she my   article
         '"It's not up to much," she commented on my article.'
     b. "Hier heb je   drie knikkers," toonde hij zijn goede wil.
          here have you three marbles   showed he his good will
          '"Here, have three marbles," he showed his good will.'
     c. "Dat had je   niet moeten zeggen," trok hij wit   weg.
          that had you not should say   drew he white away
          '"You shouldn't have said that," he was getting pale.'

Sentences like these have a literary flavor.

Section 2 briefly comments on the status of quotes themselves. Section 3 deals with the quote-initial construction. Section 4 introduces the so-called *quotative operator*. Section 5 shows that quote-final constructions behave differently. Section 6 contains some formal syntactic considerations. Section 7 is the conclusion.

2. The quote itself

Indirect speech is different from reported direct speech in a number of ways. Consider the examples in (4):

(4) a. Joop zei: "Ik ben ziek."   [direct speech]
         Joop said I am ill
     b. Joop zei dat hij ziek was.   [indirect speech]
         Joop said that he ill   was

First, there is an obvious change of perspective, which explains the conversion from first to third person. Second, the quote in (4a) is a main clause (hence verb-second), whereas in (4b) the statement is clearly a subordinate clause (hence verb-final). Third, if the tense differs from that of the main clause, it is usually adapted; in (4), *ben* (PRESENT) changes to *was* (PAST).

Following Luif (1990), I claim that quotes are autonymously used substantives. A simple but effective argument for this is that a quote can be in another language; see (5), for example:

(5) a.   Joop zei: "I hate you."
     b. *Joop zei dat I hate you.

Obviously, an English clause cannot be a subordinate clause in a Dutch sentence or vice versa.

A further indication that a quote is autonymous is that synonymy does not count. Although *big* 'piglet' is synonymous to *babyvarken* 'baby pig', the quote *"big"* is not the same as *"babyvarken"*. Therefore, (6a) is anomalous, unlike (6b), where we have indirect speech:

(6) a. #Joop zei: "big", oftewel "babyvarken".
     b.   Joop zei dat het een big,   oftewel een babyvarken, was.
          Joop said that it   a   piglet i.e.   a   baby.pig   was

Furthermore, contrary to subordinate clauses/phrases, quotes can be seriously incomplete (i.e., from a syntactic out-of-context perspective); see the final quote *"de"* in the following discourse, for example:

(7) A in general: Heeft iemand   de deksel gezien?
                      has   someone the lid   seen
     B to C: Het woord "deksel" is toch   neutrum?
                      the word   lid   is actually neuter
     C to B: Nou, hij zei   toch echt: "de".
                      well he said still really the:NONNTR

Notice also that a quote can be used as an identifying attributive adjunct to a substantive; see the second line of (7), and the examples in (8):

(8) a.   Joop sprak de onsterfelijke woorden "Volg   mij, heren!"
          Joop spoke the immortal   words   follow me gentlemen
     b.   het rijmpje/liedje "Eén ei   is geen ei."
          the rhyme/song   one egg is no   egg
     c.   De vraag   "Moet je nog   koffie?" vinden sommigen
          the question must you some.more coffee   find   some
          beledigend.
          offensive

These quotes can be compared to *Beethoven* in *the composer Beethoven* or *prudence* in *the cardinal virtue prudence*, for instance.

Thus, the internal structure of a quote is opaque for the context; the quote as a whole behaves substantive-like.

3.   The reporting clause in quote-initial constructions

What is the connection between a reporting clause and a quote? Considering standard examples involving verbs like *say* or *ask*, or other examples with transitive verbs such as *onthullen* 'reveal' in (9), it is tempting to think that the quote is simply the direct object in the reporting clause.

(9)   "Ik heb een nieuwe vriendin," onthulde Joop.
        I   have a   new   girlfriend revealed Joop

However, on closer inspection this cannot be the case. In quote-initial constructions, the reporting clause is parenthetic to the quote. This claim is in line with Collins & Branigan (1997) and Schelfhout (2000).[2] One of the main reasons is that quotes can be combined with reporting clauses that do not have an available object position; see the examples in (10):

(10)   a.   "Deze koe heeft bronchitis!" ontplofte/jankte   de dierenarts.
             this   cow has   bronchitis   exploded/whined the veterinarian
       b.   "Het spijt   me," weerde ze de ober   af, "maar ik hoef niet meer."
             it   regrets me   kept   she the waiter off but   I need no   more
             '"I am sorry," she kept the waiter off, "but I need no more." '
       c.   "De werkgelegenheid is   toegenomen," aldus de burgemeester.
             the employment   has increased   thus the mayor

In (10a) the reporting verbs are all intransitive. In (10b) the verb is transitive, but the object position is already occupied by another phrase (here, *de ober* 'the waiter'). In (10c) there is no verb, hence no direct object position to begin with.

   Furthermore, the first part of a discontinuous quote need not be a constituent; see (11):

(11)   "Ik heb," zei Joop, "geen zin   om mee te gaan."
        I   have said Joop   no   liking for along to go
        '"I don't," said Joop, "feel like coming with you." '

Therefore, topicalization of (a part of) the quote from an embedded position is not an option.

   Notice also that the reporting clause cannot be discontinuous, although the quote can; this is shown in (12):

(12)   a.   *"Ik," zei Joop, "wil   een biertje" tegen de ober.
              I   said Joop want a   beer   to   the waiter
       b.   *Hij wilde   "een man" zeggen "met een bruine jas"
              he wanted a   man   say   with a   brown coat

It is not the case that the intertwining pattern in (12) is linguistically unaccept-able in general, as is shown by the example involving extraposition in (13):

(13)   <u>Hij heeft</u> *een man* <u>gezien</u> *met een bruine jas.*
         he has   a   man seen   with a   brown coat

Thus, the above facts strongly suggest that a reporting clause is inserted as a whole and stays that way; this supports the idea that it is a parenthetical.

4.   The quotative operator and empty objects

If a reporting clause is indeed a parenthetical (in quote-initial constructions), it is not subordinated; therefore, it must be a main clause. This is correct; see e.g. (14b) — and recall that subordinate clauses in Dutch are verb-final:

(14)   a.   "Ik heb een nieuwe baan," *vertelde* Joop me gisteren.
                I have a   new   job   told   Joop me yesterday
         b.   *"Ik heb een nieuwe baan," Joop me gisteren *vertelde.*
         c.   *"Ik heb een nieuwe baan," Joop *vertelde* me gisteren.

However, there is a complication. If the quote is not directly part of the report-ing clause, why is this clause verb first (14a) instead of verb second (14c)?

   Following ideas by Collins & Branigan (1997) and Schelfhout (2000), I as-sume that a reporting clause in a quote-initial construction in Dutch contains an abstract quotative operator with the meaning of *zo* 'so', which causes sub-ject-verb inversion:

(15)   [OP$_{quote}$ Verb$_2$ Subject Predicate]

The structure of (15) is actually verb second. It ties in with other apparent V1 constructions, for which structure-initial operators have been proposed as well:

(16)   a.   Heb je   een DVD-speler gekocht?   [yes/no question]
                have you a   DVD player bought
                'Did you buy a DVD player?'
         b.   Koop een DVD-speler!   [imperative]
                buy   a   DVD player!
         c.   Zat een Belg   op de grond, viel-die eraf.   [joke]
                sat a   Belgian on the floor fell-he thereof
                'There was a Belgian sitting on the floor; then he fell off it.'

An abstract quotative operator can be replaced by the overt adverb *zo*, which is also obligatorily clause-initial in this construction:

(17)   "Daarom   moeten we verder gaan," (zo) liet Joop ons (*zo) weten.
      therefore must   we on   go   so let Joop us   so know
      ' "Therefore, we must go on," (so) Joop let us know (*so).'

It seems to me that, apart from stylistic considerations, *zo* is always possible:[3]

(18)   a.   "Omdat," (zo) vond/meende/sprak   Joop, "bananen krom zijn."
            because so found/thought/spoke Joop bananas bent are
      b.   "Bananen," (zo) grijnsde/twijfelde/raaskalde Joop, "zijn krom."
            bananas so grinned/doubted/raved   Joop are bent
      c.   "Ik geloof," (zo) deed Joop zijn zegje, "dat   bananen krom zijn."
            I believe so had Joop his say   that bananas bent are
      d.   "Het spijt   me," (zo) weerde ze de ober   af, "maar ik zit vol."
            it   regrets me   so kept   she the waiter off but   I am full
            ' "I am sorry," (so) she kept the waiter off, "but I am full." '

Therefore, *zo* must be an adverbial phrase. Like the quote itself, it cannot be an argument of the reporting verb.

    It is not evident what *zo* means in each case. It is undoubtedly a pronominal element, and it refers to the content of the quote. However, it can also have a manner interpretation: someone said or did something in a particular way, namely by uttering <quote>. The more remote the meaning of the reporting verb is from the canonical *say*, the more prominent this manner reading becomes. This finding can be related to the following theoretical observation. If the reporting verb is obligatorily transitive, as in (19), the quotative operator (whether it is spelled out as *zo* or not) is necessary to license the empty object. We might speculate that coindexation under c-command does the trick, comparable to the situation in parasitic gap constructions.

(19)   a.   Joop erkende *(iets)
            Joop admitted   something
      b.   "Dat is waar," OP^i erkende Joop $[e]^i$.
            that is true   admitted Joop

OP in (19) has a simple referential reading, but if there is no empty object, such as in (18c/d), the manner reading becomes prominent. Thus, although it is not entirely clear to me why this would be so, it seems that *OP/zo* licenses either an empty object or a manner reading. Notice also hat the meaning of *OP/zo* in (18b) is less transparent (i.e., ambiguous); apparently this has to do with the fact that verbs like *grijnzen* 'grin' are only semi-transitive: they do not license a nominal object, but complements of other categories (CP, sometimes PP) are admissible.

5.   Quote-final constructions

Now let us turn to quote-final constructions; compare (20a) to (20b):

(20) a.   Joop gromde: "Ik doe niet mee."   [quote-final]
           Joop grumbled I   join not
      b.   "Ik doe niet mee," gromde Jaap.   [quote-initial]

The reporting clause is prosodically more prominent in a quote-final construction. Furthermore, it is foregrounded, whereas it is backgrounded in a quote-initial construction. (The quote is never backgrounded.)

Notice that there is normally no inversion in a quote-final construction; compare (21) to (20a).

(21) *Gromde Joop: "Ik doe niet mee."

Therefore, it seems unlikely that there is a quotative operator in this construction. Inversion can, of course, be triggered by other mechanisms; see (22):

(22) a.   Zei je: "Ik wil   koffie"?   (yes/no.question)
           said you I   want coffee
      b.   Zeg 'ns: "AAA"!   (imperative)
           say once/just AAA
      c.   Zei die vent: "…"; riep   ik weer: "…" (connected discourse)
           said that guy   …   yelled I   in.turn …

In (22c), for instance, the implicit initial element means *and then* (which is of course different from a quotative operator *so*).

Interestingly, the possibilities concerning the reporting clause are more restricted than in quote-initial constructions. Although I find the quote-initial construction more natural in general, the quote-final one is also acceptable. The generalization seems to be that the quote can be related to a complement position of the reporting verb (no matter whether it concerns a nominal or clausal complement); see the examples in (23):

(23) a.   Joop zei/schreeuwde/huilde: "Ik wil   niet!"
           Joop said/screamed/cried   I   want not
      b.   ?De dierenarts   piekerde: "Deze koe heeft bronchitis."
           the veterinarian worried   this cow has   bronchitis
      c.   *Ze weerde de ober   af: "Het spijt   me, maar ik hoef niet meer."
           she kept   the waiter off it   regrets me but   I need no   more
      d.   *Joop deed zijn zegje: "Ik geloof dat bananen krom zijn."
           Joop did   his say   I believe that bananas bent are
           'Joop had his say, "I believe that bananas are bent." '

e. * Aldus de dierenarts: "Deze koe heeft bronchitis."
     thus   the veterinarian this   cow has   bronchitis

Note that the intonation in (23) must be 'integrated' (no falling pitch at the end of the reporting clause). Of course consecutive sentences are always fine, as in (24):[4]

(24) a.   De dierenarts piekerde. "Deze koe heeft bronchitis."
      b.   Ze weerde de ober af. "Het spijt me, maar ik hoef niet meer."

I conclude that reporting clauses in quote-final constructions are not parentheticals, but matrix clauses; the quote is embedded in the reporting clause. Therefore, this construction is essentially different from the quote-initial one.

6. Some formal syntactic considerations

6.1 Quote-final constructions

In Section 2 I showed that quotes are autonymous and behave like substantives. I will provisionally use the following notation:

(25)   [$_{NP}$ "…"]

The part between the quotation marks can be anything from a brief interjection to a number of sentences. The quote as a whole is nominalized in some way, and can be inserted into another clause:

(26)   [$_{CP}$ Joop gromde: [$_{NP}$ "[$_{CP}$ Ik doe niet mee.]"]]
        Joop grumbled   I join not

What is the position of the quote in (26)? Is it in the direct object position, or is it indirectly linked to this position? There are indications that the latter is the case. Specifically, regular DP objects are spelled out to the left of the verb; therefore, the position of final quotes is rather comparable to that of object clauses.[5] Interestingly, Koster (1999) proposes that an object clause is an extraposed specification of an empty object. If this configuration is indeed possible, it can be extended to quotes as well:

(27)   … dat Joop [e] zei: ["Ik doe niet mee"]
           that Joop   said   I join not

Apart from some brief comments below, I cannot go into the topic of specifying coordination, Koster's Colon Phrase, or the theory of extraposition in these terms; however, see De Vries (2002:Ch7 and 2006) and the references there.

Nevertheless, an independent indication for the idea that a quote is a specification is provided by (28):

(28)   Joop verdedigde zich   aldus/zo/{met deze woorden}: "Ik heb   het niet
       Joop defended   himself thus/so/with   these words   I have it   not
       met opzet gedaan."
       with intent done
       'Joop defended himself with the words, "I did not do it on purpose." '

Here, the quote is related to an adverbial manner phrase.

6.2 Quote-initial constructions

In Section 4 I argued that a reporting clause in a quote-initial construction contains a quotative operator. We might ask if it is inserted *in situ* or moved to the first position. The standard movement test in (29) suggests the latter.

(29)   ?"Bananen zijn krom," meldde   An (*het feit) dat Joop had gezegd.
          bananas are bent   reported An   the fact that Joop had said

Therefore, a parenthetic reporting clause involves the structural setup in (30):

(30) $[_{CP} \; OP_i \; V \; [_{IP} \ldots t_i \ldots t_v \ldots]]$

Here, I assume that the operator is generated as an adverbial phrase in the middle field. (Note that the trace t_i is not to be confused with a possible additional empty object position *[e]*, depending on the transitivity of the verb, as indicated in (19b) in Section 4.)

     The reporting clause is parenthetically inserted within or directly after the quote. So far, I have not discussed how parentheses are to be treated in syntax. Although this is a more general problem, I would like to add some brief notes on the subject. Parentheses are like adverbial phrases in that they are more or less independent additions to the clause. They differ from adverbial phrases in that they are 'opaque' (e.g., for c-command-based relations); see also Espinal (1991). In De Vries (to appear) I propose the following: i) like adverbial phrases, parentheses are adjoined at some position in the host structure, which is what causes the linear integration; ii) however, parentheses are embedded in a monovalent specifying phrase $[_{\&:P} \; \&: \; XP_{par}]$; iii) the specifying head &: is also used for specifying coordination (appositions, for instance) and, on the phonological side, it usually triggers a parenthetic ('comma') intonation; iv) as always, &: and its complement (here, XP_{par}) are combined (merged) in a special way (I called it b-inclusion), which — by definition — creates a paratactic hierarchy,

not the usual syntactic hierarchy; this is what places the parenthetic phrase in another 'dimension', i.e. outside the normal sentence hierarchy.

The naive structure in (31) shows in an independent way that something along these lines is necessary:

(31) $[_{NP}$ "$[_{CP}$ Bananen," $[OP^i$ meldde An], "zijn krom]."$]^i$

The reporting clause is parenthetically inserted within the quote. As was discussed above, the quotative operator refers to the quotation as a whole. As a consequence, (31) shows a so-called *i-within-i* configuration, which is logically impossible. The improved representation is given in (32):

(32) $[_{NP}$ "$[_{CP}$ Bananen $[_{C'}$ $[_{\&:P}$ $]$ $[_{C'}$ zijn krom]]]."$]^i$
                              $\&: [_{CP}$ OP^i meldde t$_{op}$ An t$_v]$

Here, the reporting clause is embedded within &:P, which is adjoined within the host (i.e. the quote) — in this case at the C'-level. The projection &:P is established by merging its components (&: and CP$_{par}$) in the special way briefly described above; therefore they are withdrawn from the normal hierarchy, which is indicated graphically by putting them on a different line. As a result, OP^i is no longer hypotactically included within the quote $[_{NP}$ "…"$]^i$.

What is also interesting is that, if these ideas are on the right track, the specification is the quotation in quote-final constructions (see Section 6.1), but the reporting clause in quote-initial constructions. This makes the two constructions mirror images of each other in important respects (although of course the situation is not fully symmetric). The differences are summarized in the following schema:

	quote-final	quote-initial
OP/zo and hence inversion in reporting clause	–	+
Reporting clause is backgrounded	–	+
Reporting clause specifies quote	–	+
Quote specifies (empty) argument in reporting clause	+	–

As a consequence, the quote-initial construction functions differently in a discourse than the quote-final construction. For instance, an appropriate response to the question *What did John say literally?* could be the quote-final answer: *Well, John said: "…"*; here, a quote-initial answer with a backgrounded reporting clause would be odd. Usually, however, the content of the quote is more important than the act of reporting itself; this explains why the quote-initial construction is used more often.

Conclusions

–   A quote is an autonymously used substantive.
–   Quote-final constructions are different from quote-initial ones.
–   Reporting clauses are main clauses.
–   A large number of verbs can be used as reporting verbs, including intransitive ones and transitive ones with objects unrelated to the quote.
–   In quote-final constructions, the reporting clause is the main utterance; it is V2; there is no quotative operator; the quote is embedded and usually related to an argument position of the reporting verb by means of specifying coordination.
–   In quote-initial constructions, the reporting clause is a backgrounded parenthetical; it is apparently V1, but actually V2; there is a quotative operator; the quote exists independently of potential argument positions of the reporting verb.
–   A quotative operator is not the object of a reporting verb but an adverbial phrase; it is moved to the first position of the reporting clause; it triggers inversion; it may license an empty object or a manner interpretation; it itself is discourse-licensed and refers to the quote.

Notes

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1. Not everybody accepts (3c), which is the most extreme example. It is taken from the ANS, second edition, p. 1099. See also Schelfhout (2000) for examples as in (3).

2. The parenthetic view is also consistent with more general work on parenthesis by e.g. Espinal (1991), and in particular on verb-initial comment clauses by Reis (2002), but not with Ross (1973), Wagner (2004) and some others. It seems to me that at least part of the controversy can be resolved if the often neglected fact is taken into account that comment clauses can occasionally be subject-oriented instead of speaker-oriented, as described in Reinhart (1983) and Corver & Thiersch (2002). From these works it may be concluded that subject-oriented comment clauses are not parentheses at all. Since quotes are completely opaque, reporting clauses cannot be subject-oriented. Therefore, this complication does not play a role here.

3. There is one systematic exception in that the combination of *zo* and *aldus* is impossible, for instance in (10c). This can be explained in two ways: first, *zo* and *aldus* are nearly synonymous; second, an *aldus*-parenthesis is nonclausal; therefore, there is no operator position (SpecCP).

4. A possible source of confusion in written text is that the subsequent sentences in (24a/b) are sometimes connected with a colon.

5. Quotes in the middle field exist as well. For reasons of space, these cannot be discussed here.

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