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Direct and Reported Speech Constructions in the Amuric Languages

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Abstract

This article examines speech reporting strategies in two endangered Amuric languages, Nivkh and Nighvng, spoken on Sakhalin Island and in the Amur region of Russia. It explores direct and reported speech constructions, as well as their interaction in narratives. While the distinction between direct and indirect speech is generally clear, some reported speech constructions structurally resemble direct speech more than others. Direct speech typically consists of an introductory clause with a reporting verb, followed by a quotation. Amuric languages feature multiple speech verbs with varying frequencies in texts. Reported speech constructions are mostly multi-clausal and fall into five structural types. The defining feature of some of them is a special reportative subject marker. Multi-clausal constructions differ between Nivkh and Nighvng, while monoclausal reports, marked by a reportative clitic on the finite verb, are similar in both. In narratives, both strategies can co-occur within the same report but not within a single clause.

Keywords

Amuric languages, Nivkh, Nighvng, grammatical strategies, speech reporting, direct and indirect speech

1 Introduction

Amuric is a small language family comprising two closely-related languages, Nivkh and Nighvng, spoken on Sakhalin Island and in the Amur region of Russia. The Amuric family, which has often been considered to constitute an isolate (Gruzdeva & Janhunen 2025), is traditionally classified as "Paleosiberian" or "Paleoasiatic" together with several other unrelated languages of Northeast Asia. Both Nivkh and Nighvng are heavily endangered, with no more than 50 fluent speakers altogether (2021). The Amuric family represents a continuum of several distinct varieties, but the major split goes between Nivkh, also known as Amur Nivkh (A), extending from the Lower Amur basin to northwestern Sakhalin, and Nighvng, also known as Sakhalin Nivkh (S), spoken only on Sakhalin Island. Both languages have today a separate literary standard.

Typologically, the Amuric languages are (poly)synthetic, with a rather complex phonology and predominant suffixation (Gruzdeva 1998). Only possessor and object (including reflexive and reciprocal) markers can be prefixed (or, more precisely, cliticized) to nouns and transitive verbs. Amuric is well-known by its root/morpheme-initial consonant alternations, which take place at morpheme boundaries and within noun and verb phrases.[1]

At the level of the simple clause Amuric displays some features of isolating structure, especially with respect to core arguments, which are typically unmarked. The canonical word order is *subject-object-verb* (SOV). All modifiers, except for numerals/quantifiers, precede the

[1] The words entering the complexes that are subject to morphophonological alternations are separated in the examples by '+'. For more details on Amuric polysynthesis see (Mattissen 2003). Grammatical glossing in the sentence examples follows the Leipzig rules: https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/pdf/Glossing-Rules.pdf.

head nominal. Adverbial clauses are formed by converbs (= non-finite forms) of different origin and are arranged in chains which end with the matrix clause. The latter, in turn, is built around the clause-final finite form. The only complementation strategy is clausal nominalization which scopes over the entire clause and allows it to function as an object argument of a matrix predicate. Amuric does not have any complementizers. Relative clauses are built with participial verbal forms, which synthesize with the head noun.

As in most other languages, the quoted speech in Amuric can be transmitted either in the form of a direct quotation or as an indirect speech report, which are incorporated into the narratives within certain types of constructions. I will call these constructions 'direct speech construction' and 'reported speech construction' correspondingly. Until now, both types of constructions and relevant verb forms have been discussed only in three studies on Amuric morphosyntax. Two earlier works focused on the description of reportative converbs, which were interpreted as forms of "retelling mood" («пересказочное наклонение»), cf. Panfilov (1965: 122–123), or "non-evidential mood" («неочевидное наклонение»), cf. Kreinovich (1979: 316–317). Much more detailed examination of different types of speech constructions has been conducted in (Nedjalkov & Otaina 2013: 179–198). This study is a valuable source of theoretical observations and interesting language data with the focus on (Amur) Nivkh. The goal of the present paper is to broaden and deepen the analysis of the relevant constructions, to suggest some diachronic observations, and to bring into the discussion new data from (Sakhalin) Nighvng.

Besides the introduction (section 1), this paper consists of three sections, which consecutively explore direct speech constructions (section 2), reported speech constructions (section 3), and the interaction between the two in narratives (section 4). The results are summarized in the conclusion (section 5).

The main source of the Nivkh data is the small corpus of four texts which have been published in (Panfilov 1965). The texts comprise altogether around 1230 sentences and in the following discussion will be referred to as PC (Panfilov's Corpus). This corpus is complemented by examples from (Nedjalkov & Otaina 2013). The original transcription of examples taken from these sources is preserved. The data from Nighvng, as well as some additional data on Nivkh, come from the texts and elicited examples (FM) that I have been collecting during my fieldwork on Sakhalin Island and in the Amur region since 1989.

2 Direct Speech Constructions

In Amuric narrative discourse, the majority of quoted speech is represented by direct quotations, which convey the actual speech or reflections of the characters. PC comprises 140 instances of direct speech reports, which altogether comprise 320 sentences. This amounts to 26 % of all sentences in the corpus. The quotations are built as declarative, imperative or interrogative sentences; they contain interjections, vocatives, exclamations, and other elements, which make the speech of the narrator natural and lively. The corresponding constructions do not display any shift in personal, temporal or spatial deixis. Some of the direct quotations are rather long and internally complex. They may contain chains of clauses, multiple sentences or short dialogues. The longest direct quotation in the corpus contains 11 sentences.

Direct speech constructions comprise typically (but not obligatorily) an introductory clause, which precedes the quotation and contains a verb of speech or cognition (= reporting

verb). The Amuric languages have several verbs of speech whose frequency in the texts varies considerably.

The verb S/A *it-* ‘say’, which in Nivkh is also attested in the form of *ir-*, is by far the most common means for introducing direct quotations. In PC, 57 % (81 instances) of direct speech reports are introduced by this verb of speech, cf. (1). In the dialogues, it also performs the function of the ‘answer’ verb, cf. (2). As will be shown in section 3, *it-* is the most versatile verb of speech that is employed for introducing indirect speech reports. The verb is intransitive, but it can be used with a dative-marked addressee, cf. *ɲe-rχ it-nt* <1SG-DAT say-IND> ‘[sb] said to me’.

(1) *hoʁoŋan* *mer + ɲivx* *it-c.* *ɲi* *kins + kʰu-ɟ=ra.*
then 1PL.INCL + man say-IND 1SG devil + kill-IND=FOC
‘Then our man says: “I killed a devil.”’ (Panfilov 1965: 228–229) [A]

(2) *vo* *ərk* *ma-la-ɟ=la* *j-ot-c.*
settlement already be_close-QUAL-IND=Q 3SG-ask-IND
oʁla *it-c.* *hə* *ma-la-ɟ=ra.*
child say-IND yes be_close-QUAL-IND=FOC
‘Is the village already close? – [he] asks. The child answers (lit. says): – Yes, [it is] close.’ (Panfilov 1965: 245) [A]

The verb S *Xer-*, A *Xez-* ‘tell [sb]’ is used for introducing direct speech in narratives much more rarely (13 examples in PC). Except for some occasional examples (see section 3), it is not employed in reported speech constructions. This verb of speech is transitive and takes the addressee as an object, cf. *pʰ-umgu + kʰez-ɟ* ‘[he] says to his wife’ in (3).

(3) *pʰ-rəf-toχ* *pʰrə-ror* *pʰ-umgu + kʰez-ɟ.*
REFL-house-DAT come-CVB_DIST.3SG REFL-woman + tell-IND
kerq *entox* *kʰinŋu-ɟ.*
sea very be.beautiful-IND
‘Having come home, [he] says to his wife: “The sea is very beautiful.” (Panfilov 1965: 241) [A]

The verb S/A *Fur-* ‘tell [sth]’ is also transitive, but its object encodes the speech report content, cf. A *ŋəzit + fur-* ‘tell a tale’. In its basic form, this verb of speech cannot serve as a reporting verb. However, in Nivkh the direct quotation can be introduced by the cognate intransitive verb *kʰespʰur-*, which is derived by compounding of the noun A *kʰes* ‘news’ and the basic verb *Fur-* ‘tell [sth]’, cf. (4). Only one example of such use is found in PC, but this reporting verb is attested in other sources. *Fur-* is also found in one type of reported speech construction.

(4) *ɲivx-gu + kʰez-ř* *kʰespʰur-ɟ.*
man-PL + tell_news-CVB_NAR.3SG tell-IND
ɲi *kerq-tox* *vi-ɟ…*
1SG sea-DAT go-IND
‘[He] telling people the news, told: “I went to the sea…” (Panfilov 1965: 241)

The quoted questions are typically introduced by the transitive verb S *j-ot-*, A *j-oc-* 'ask [sb]', whose object expresses the source of information, cf. S *əmk + ot-* 'ask mother'. There are 6 instances of direct quotations introduced by this verb in PC, cf. (5):

(5) *hemaɲaχ* *j-oc-c.* *ola* *řatx* *vi-ivi-ɟ=ŋa?*
old.woman 3SG-ask-IND child:VOC where go-PROGR-IND=Q
'The old woman asked: Child! Where are you going?' (Panfilov 1965: 226) [A]

In narratives, one can also find isolated examples of other verbs of speech, such as S/A *lu-* 'sing', cf. (6), and S/A *pʰolaɣ-* 'shout', cf. (7). In addition, both verbs regularly form a kind of serial construction with the verb *it-* 'say', cf. A *lu-r it-c* <sing-CVB_NAR.3SG say-IND> '[s/he] says/said singing', *pʰolaɣ-r it-c* 'shout-CVB_NAR.3SG say-IND> '[s/he] says/said shouting'. The verb A *vuɣu-* 'call [sb]' occurs in my data only in one example.

(6) *cʰam* *lu-d.* *u:məv + ɲivx* *mər-ivu-ra.*
shaman sing-IND be.brave + man rise-PROGR-EVID.3SG
'The shaman sang: "The brave man is rising."' (Panfilov 1965: 226) [A]

(7) *cʰvəvs-kir* *aŋgur* *hemar + tʰəx + pəv-ra*
hammer-INSTR strongly:3SG old.man + forehead + hit-COORD.3SG
aŋgur *pʰolaɣ-ra.* *atak-a*
strongly scream-COORD.3SG grandfather-VOC.SG
qʰotr + cʰomru-ra.
bear + free-EMPH/EVID
'[He] hit the old man hard on the forehead, screamed strongly: "Grandfather! The bear is free!"' (Panfilov 1965: 225) [A]

The direct quotation of inner speech is typically introduced by the intransitive verb S/A *kʰəmlə-* 'think', cf. (8). In PC, there are 16 examples of its use in this function.

(8) *nana* *i-də-ba* *ɲi* *kʰəmlə-d.*
just 3SG-look-CVB_IMMED 1SG think-IND
ənəja *ur-l-kař + řaŋɢeɣlŋ=eqŋař*
oh! be.good-QUAL-AUG + girl=PROB
'As soon as I saw her, I thought: "Oh! What a wonderful girl!' (FM 1991: 5) [S]

The speech-introducing part and the direct quotation usually represent two independent clauses, each of which can be used on their own. The predicate of the introductory clause typically occurs in the form of the indicative mood and is marked by the suffix S *-(n)t/(n)d*, A *-ɟ/-c*. In some narratives one can occasionally find examples of non-finite forms of reporting verbs, which in this case are almost exclusively represented by the narrative converbs in S *-r* : *-t* : *-n*, A *-r* : *-t*, cf. (9). In such constructions, the introductory clause and the direct speech report are syntactically linked together and form a bi-clausal or a poly-clausal structure. For some reason PC does not contain examples of such constructions, but they are nevertheless attested in other sources.

(9) *ral* *it-r* *ta* *maɣva* *park* *i-ɲ-ja.*

frog say-CVB_NAR.3SG take here only 3SG-eat-IMP
'The frog saying: "Take (it), eat yourself."' (Kreinovich 1934: 221) [A]

Quite often, the direct quotations appear in narratives without any introductory part, in which case they can be followed by a conclusive part. The latter represents an independent clause, which begins with a demonstrative adverb and ends with the verb of speech or cognition. Demonstrative adverbs are used here to signal cross-clause relations, summarizing the direct speech report expressed in the preceding discourse. This type of reporting markers is very common in the languages of the world, see e. g. (Aikhenvald 2011: 290). In Amuric narratives they also serve as general 'sentence connectives', for more details see (Gruzdeva 2020). They can appear only clause-initially and cannot move around in the clause. Structurally, many of them represent lexicalized forms of narrative converbs derived from the verb S/A *ha-* 'do/be like that', cf. *har* in (10), or from the verb S *həmɟi-*, A *hoʁo-* 'be like that', cf. *hoŋgur* in (11). The process of lexicalization is not yet completed, since the adverbs still agree with the subject in person and number in the same way as regular narrative converbs. In case the subjects of the direct speech report and the conclusive clause are non-coreferential, the demonstrative adverb tends to include the causative suffix *-Ku-*, see (Nedjalkov & Otaina 2013: 181).

(10) *tʰu ɲa-qř-kis vi-j-d-ɣun=da har ətk it-nd.*
sledge one-CL_GEN-INSTR go-FUT-IND=FOC so:3SG father say-IND
'"[We] will go by one sledge," – so father said.' (FM 2000:5:13) [S]

(11) *heʁa-girn imŋ + tʰa:r-ux vi-nəkta. hoŋgur kʰəmlə-ɟ.*
fear-CVB_CONC 3PL + between-ABL go-JUSS.1SG like_that:3SG think-IND
'"Although I am afraid, let me go between them," – so [he] thought. (Panfilov 1965: 228) [A]

Finally, direct quotations can be incorporated into the narrative without any framing part. In such cases, a special emphasizing intonation of the narrator is of particular importance. The predicate of the clause preceding the direct speech report can appear in the finite form, as in (12), or in the form of a converb, as in (13):

(12) *ɲiɲeq j-uskul-ř amra-d. əjka hor-ʁra!*
a.little 3SG-pluck-CVB_NAR.3SG try-IND oh be.delicious-CATEG
'Plucking [it] a little, [he] tried it: "Oh, [it] is really delicious!"' (FM 2014) [S]

(13) *ma-la-ř tʰər-ŋa nud + ŋa=lu?*
be.close-QUAL-CVB_NAR.3SG look-CVB_SIM what + animal=Q
'Coming closer, when (he) looked: "What animal [is that]?" (FM 2014) [S]

3 Reported Speech Constructions

Amuric has several reported speech constructions, most of which are multi-clausal (section 3.1). A single mono-clausal construction is formed with the reportative clitic (section 3.2).

Contrary to general tendency, cf. e. g. (Spronck & Nikitina 2019: 120), Amuric reported speech constructions are not characterized by many specific phenomena. For instance, they do not involve spatial or temporal deictic shift — the spatial or temporal deictic adverb is the

same that can be assumed to have been used by the original speakers of the quote. Also, the patterning of pronouns (shift in personal deixis) does not differ fundamentally from their behaviour outside reported speech contexts. The only truly idiosyncratic feature of reported speech constructions, which, however, is absent from some of them, is the special reportative subject marker. Such marking can in principle be compared (but definitely not equated) with the use of logophoric pronouns in other languages, cf. (Nikitina & Bugaeva 2021).

3.1 Multi-clausal Reported Speech Constructions

All multi-clausal reported speech constructions are segmentable into clearly identifiable units. Each construction comprises the matrix clause, indicating the speech event. This clause typically contains the verb S/A *it-* or some other verb of speech or cognition, which cannot be omitted. The reporting clause can be formed with different types of non-finite or finite verbal predicates. The matrix and reporting clauses do not show interdependency with respect to tense or mood, but there is always a shift from the speaker's to the reporter's perspective. In the following, I will discuss in detail five types of multi-clausal constructions, starting from the central dedicated reported speech construction with the reportative clause.

3.1.1 Type 1

The first type is represented by the construction with the reportative clause. This construction is by far the most common type for expressing the reported speech in Nighvng, and is also very common in Nivkh. In this construction, a reportative clause (RC) is embedded into the matrix clause and is framed by the subject and predicate of the latter. The subject of the matrix clause occupies the topical sentence-initial position, whereas the predicate ends the sentence.

The predicate of the reportative clause is the reportative converb in S *-fuř* : *-fut*, *-vuř* : *vut*, A *-vur* : *-vut*, whereas the predicate of the matrix clause is always represented by the verb of speech S/A *it-* 'say'. Both predicates constitute the obligatory elements of the construction, cf. (14–17). The reportative converb can take the desiderative/intentional suffix S/A *-inə-*, cf. (15), or the future suffix S *-i-,* A *-nə-*, cf. (16). In some rare cases the converb can be followed by the emphatic clitic *=Ci* 'even', cf. (17). The reportative converb agrees in person and number with the subject of the matrix clause, which will be discussed in the end of this section.

(14) *ɲ-ətk* [*pʰ-ŋafq-ʁan* *osqavil-fuř*]$_{RC}$ *it-nd.*
1SG-father REFL-friend-REP be.coward-CVB_REP.3SGsay-IND
'My father said (that) his friend was coward.' [S]

(15) *ɲ-ətk* [*cʰo* *malʁo-jnə-vuř*]$_{RC}$ *it-t.*
1SG-father fish be.abundant-DES-CVB_REP.3SG say-IND
'My father says (that) there is going to be a lot of fish.' (FM 1989:2:16) [S]

(16) [[*paŋɟ-r* *pil-ŋan*]$_{TC}$ *ŋa + χa + ur-la + ɲivx*
born-CVB_NAR.2SG be.big-CVB_SIM animal + shot + be.good-QUAL + man
mu-nə-vur]$_{RC}$ *it-c=ra*
become-FUT-CVB_REP.3SG say-IND=FOC
'[He] said [that] growing up, getting big, [you] will become a good hunter (lit. a man shooting animals well).' (Panfilov 1965: 122) [A]

(17) *cəj* *pʰ-siŋru-vur=ci* *it-c.*
again REFL-deceive-CVB_REP.3PL=EMPH say-IND
'[He] said he had been deceived again.' (Nedjalkov & Otaina 2013: 187) [A]

In all the above-cited examples (14–17), the verb *it-* 'say' appears as a single finite predicate. There are also other possibilities. First, the reported speech construction can be further extended by the demonstrative adverbs of the same origin as in the constructions with the direct speech, cf. *har* in (18). Alternatively, the verb of speech itself can be used in the non-finite finite form of the narrative converb, as in (19).

(18) [*ərŋan* *ɲi* *ur-la + ŋaŋəŋɲivx* *mu-nə-vur*]$_{RC}$
at_one_time 1SG be.good-QUAL + hunter become-FUT-CVB_REP.3SG
har *it-c.*
so:3SG say-IND
'[He] said [that] I would eventually become a good hunter.' (Saveljeva & Taksami 1970: 521) [A]

(19) *if* [*pʰ-o:la-aχ* *eʁ-gur*
3SG REFL-child-CAUSEE be.fast-CAUS-CVB_NAR.3SG
pʰrə-nə-vur] *pʰ-ŋafq-roχ*
come-FUT- CVB_REP.3SG REFL-friend-DAT
it-r *raju-ɟ.*
say-CVB_NAR.3SG write-IND
'He wrote his friend [that] his son would arrive soon.' (Nedjalkov & Otaina 2013: 188 [A]

Modern speakers allow not only *it-* 'say', but also other verbs as matrix predicates, cf. *raju-* 'write' in (20):

(20) *nanak* *pʰe-ʁan* *ɲe-rχ* *tʰolf* *pʰrə-nə-vur*
older.sister REFL-REP 1SG-DAT summer come-FUT-CVB_REP.3SG
ɲe-rχ *raju-ɟ*
1SG-DAT write-IND
'[My] older sister writes to me [that] she will come to me in summer.' (FM 2014: 4) [A]

As can be seen from many examples, the addressee of the speech report is usually not explicitly mentioned. Those constructions which do contain mentions of the addressee rely on one of two strategies. The addressee can be expressed by adding the oblique object to the verb *it-* 'say', cf. *pʰ-ŋafq-roχ it-r* 'saying to his friend' in (19). Alternatively, the transitive verb S *Xer-*, A *Xez-* 'tell [sb]' together with the addressee as an object can be added to the construction. In this case, the verb S *Xer-*, A *Xez-* appears in the form of the narrative converb and precedes the finite verb *it-* 'say', cf. (21).

(21) *if* [*pʰ-o:la-aχ* *eʁ-gu-r*
3SG REFL-child-CAUSEE be.fast-CAUS-CVB_NAR.3SG

pʰrə-nə-vur]$_{RC}$ *pʰ-ŋafq+xez-r* *it-c.*
come-FUT- CVB_REP.3SG REFL-friend+tell-CVB_NAR.3SG say-IND
'He told his friend (that) his son would arrive soon.' (Nedjalkov & Otaina 2013: 187) [A]

The constructions with the reportative clause may include other types of subordinate (chiefly, adverbial) clauses. Altogether, these clauses may form rather complex structures of varying composition. For instance, in (22), the reportative clause is preceded by the concessive clause (CC), which does not belong to the reportative clause. In (23), the temporal clause (TC) forms a part of the indirect report, which is interrupted at the final border of the clause by the subject of the matrix clause *ɲ-əmək* 'my mother'. The following reportative clause contains another single-predicate temporal clause *vi-ke* 'going'. Irrespective of internal structure, the construction is closed by the matrix verb *it-* 'say'.

(22) [*cʰi* *orbot-kin*]$_{CC}$ [*cʰχa* *cʰ-imə-doχ*
2SG work-CVB_CONC money 2SG-give-DAT
qʰau-vut]$_{RC}$ *it-c.*
not.be-CVB_REP.3PL say-IND
'Although you worked, they did not give you [any] money, [they] say.' (Nedjalkov & Otaina 2013: 191)

(23) [*ɲi* *napə* *paŋɲ-ŋan*]$_{TC}$ *ɲ-əmək*
1SG still born-CVB_SIM 1SG-mother
[*ɲ-ətək* *vi-ke* *pəkz-vuř*]$_{RC}$ *ir-c=ra.*
1SG-father go-CVB_DUR disappear-CVB_REP.3SGsay-IND=PL
'My mother says [that] my father, going away, disappeared when I was born.' (Panfilov 1965: 245) [A]

In spontaneous speech, the structure of the reported speech construction can be even more fragmented. This is exemplified by (24), where the speaker, first, produced a reportative clause in combination with the verb of speech in the finite form. Afterwards, she added new information to the speech report in the form of another finite clause:

(24) [*cʰo + řom* *ha-vut*]$_{RC}$ *it-t.* *in-aχ*
fish + oil do.so-CVB_REP.3PL say-IND 3PL-CAUSEE
ra-gu-tʰa-d-ɣun.
drink-CAUS-ITER.3PL.NFUT-IND-PL
'[He] said [that] they drank them with fish oil.' (FM 1989:2:16) [S]

The author of the quote can be stated explicitly, in which case it is expressed by the subject of the matrix clause, as illustrated by examples (21) and (23). The author can be also omitted, if understood from the previous context, cf. (16–17), or s/he can have a generic meaning, as in examples (22) and (25).

(25) [*pat* *jaŋ-ʁan* *pʰřə-jnə-vut*]$_{RC}$ *it-t-ɣun.*
tomorrow 3SG-REP come-DES-CVB_REP.3PL say-IND-PL
'[They] say [that] he is going to come tomorrow.' (FM 1989:2:16) [S]

In Amuric, coreference between arguments in different clauses is often expressed by the reflexive pronoun S/A *pʰi* in one of the clauses. This is also typical of the constructions with reportative clauses. If the author of the speech report is identical with some argument in the reportative clause, then the reportative clause obligatorily contains the reflexive pronoun, cf. (26). This pronoun is controlled by the author of the report, which is expressed by the subject of the matrix clause. The author of the report can be any person. In case of non-coreference of the subjects, the reportative clause always contains the explicit subject, cf. (27). As confirmed by (Nedjalkov & Otaina 2013: 189), in (28), the third person singular pronoun *if* can be interpreted only as a subject of the reportative clause and never as a subject of the matrix clause.

(26) *əmk* [*pʰe-ʁan* *ɣe-fuř*]$_{RC}$ *it-nd*.
mother REFL-REP take-CVB_REP.3SG say-IND
'Mother said [that she] herself took [it].' (FM 2000:4:16) [S]

(27) *əmk* [*jaŋ-ʁan* *ɣe-fuř*]$_{RC}$ *it-nd*.
mother 3SG-REP take-CVB_REP.3SG say-IND
'Mother said [that] she (not herself, someone else) took [it].' (FM 2000:4:16) [S]

(28) [*if* *pʰrə-nə-vur*]$_{RC}$ *it-c.*
3SG come-FUT-CVB_REP.3SG say-IND
'[Sb (known from the context)] said [that] he would come' or '[They] say [that] he will come.' (Nedjalkov & Otaina 2013: 189)

The marking of the subject of the reportative clause displays certain variation. First, it can be unmarked in the same way as the subject of the matrix clause. This happens mostly in Nivkh, cf. (23). Second, the subject can be marked with the suffix *-aχ*, which is also used for marking the causee in the causative construction, cf. the causative construction in (29) and the construction with the reportative clause in (30):

(29) *nanx* *pʰ-asq-aχ* *pxi-roχ* *vi-gu-d.*
elder.sister REFL-younger.sister-CAUSEE forest-DAT go-CAUS-IND
'Elder sister forced her younger sister to go to the forest.' (FM 1991:2:18) [S]

(30) *təŋank* *tʰəlguř-kun-ux* [*milk-aχ* *malɣo-vut*]$_{RC}$
formerly tale-PL-ABL devil-CAUSEE be.many-CVB_REP.3PL
it-nd-ɣun
say-IND-PL
'Formerly [they] said in the tales [that] there used to be a lot of devils.' (FM 1991:2:18) [S]

Finally, the subject of the reportative clause can be marked by the specialized suffix *-Qan,* cf. (26–27), (31–32). The allomorphic variation of the reportative suffix follows the general rules of Amuric morphophonological alternations: (i) *-qan* is used after stems ending in fricatives (including the voiceless trill *ř*): *hajmŋař-qan* 'old men'; (ii) *-ʁan* is used after stems ending in a plosive, a vowel, a lateral, a stable nasal, and the approximant *j*: *tʰlaŋi-ʁan* 'reindeer'; (iii) *-ɢan* is used after stems ending in a non-stable nasal: *eɣl(ŋ)-ɢan* 'children'.

(31) *K^{h}evin it-c.* [*Məgun-ʁan k^{h}eq + xu-vur*]$_{RC}$ *it-c*
Kevin say-IND Mygun-REP fox + kill-REP_3SG say-IND
'Kevin said that Mygun had killed a fox.' (Kreinovich 1978: 302) [A]

(32) *ɲ-xer-d-ɣun* [*c^{h}a-ʁan vi-inə-fut*]$_{RC}$ *it-t-ɣun*
1SG-tell-IND-PL 2SG-REP go-DES-REP:2PL say-IND-PL
'[They] told me that you were going to leave.' (FM 1991:2:5) [S]

3.1.2 Type 2

In the second type of construction, the reported speech is rendered by the narrative clause (NC) with the converb in S *-ř* : *-t : -n*, A *-r* : *-t*. Just like the reportative clause, the narrative clause is framed by the subject and the predicate of the matrix clause. As in other cases, the matrix predicate is represented by the verb *it-* 'say'. In case the subject of the narrative clause is coreferential with that of the matrix clause, no reflexive pronoun is required in the narrative clause, cf. (33). If added, the reflexive pronoun *p^{h}i-* acquires the emphatic meaning 'by him/herself' (Nedjalkov & Otaina 2013: 196), cf. (34). The narrative converb also agrees with the subject of the matrix clause. In case the subjects of the narrative clause and the matrix clause are non-coreferential, the converb takes the causative suffix *-Ku-* and the subject of the narrative clause is marked by the causee suffix *-ɑχ*, cf. (35). Furthermore, in this construction the narrative converb always comprises the intentional/desiderative suffix *-inə-*, which somewhat weakens the truth commitment of the speaker to the reported proposition, cf. (33–35). Such kind of epistemic evaluation is typical of reported speech, see (Spronck 2012).

(33) *əzŋ* [*orbotf-toχ ɲ-ɣe-jnə-ř*]$_{NC}$ *it-nd*
master work-DAT 1SG-take-DES-CVB_NAR.3SG say-IND
'The master said that [he] was going to take me to the job.' (FM 2000:4:120) [S]

(34) *if* [*p^{h}i p^{h}rə-jnə-r*]$_{NC}$ *it-c.*
3SG REFL come-DES-CVB_NAR.3SG say-IND
'He said [he] himself would come.' (Nedjalkov & Otaina 2013: 196) [A]

(35) *ətk* [*ɲ-ɑχ k^{h}ə + řořp^{h}řə-gu-jnə-ř*]$_{NC}$ *it-nd.*
father 1SG-CAUSEE axe + bring-CAUS-DES-CVB_NAR.3SG say-IND
'Father said that I [should] bring the axe.' (FM 2000:4:132) [S]

(36) *hə + von-gu ŋa + ŋəŋ-t pal-roχ*
that + villager-PL animal + look.for-CVB_NAR.3PL forest-DAT
vi-ɟ-ɣu. *loŋ* *ɲa-qr* *ha-ŋan*
go-IND-PL month one-CL.GENERIC do.so-CVB_SIM
məɣ-inə-t *it-c-ɣu.*
descend-DES-CVB_NAR.3PL say-IND-PL
'The villagers went to the forest to hunt animals. [They] said [that they] would return in a month's [time]' (Nedjalkov & Otaina 2013: 196) [A]

In Nivkh, the narrative converb may also contain the bound forms of the negative verbs *j-iki-* ‘be unable’ and *molo-* ‘not want’:

(37) *if* *pʰrə-jki-r* *it-c.*
3SG come-be_unable-CVB_NAR.3SG say-IND
‘He said [he] could not come.’ (Nedjalkov & Otaina 2013: 197) [A]

(38) *if* *pʰrə-j-molo-r* *it-c.*
3SG come-EP-not.want-CVB_NAR. 3SG say-IND
‘He said [he] did not want to come.’ (Nedjalkov & Otaina 2013: 197) [A]

3.1.3 Type 3

The third type of construction is attested only in the speech of modern speakers and is not mentioned in other sources. It contains the complement clause and employs the transitive verb *Fur-* ‘tell [sth]’ as a predicate of the matrix clause. The verb takes as an object the nominalized clause, which renders the speech report, cf. (39):

(39) *if* *pʰi* *enf-toχ* *vi-r* *orbot-nə-ɟ + fur-ɟ.*
3SG REFL other.place-DAT go-CVB_NAR.3SG work-FUT-IND + tell-IND
‘He told [that] he would go to work to another place.’ (FM 2014: 2) [A]

This construction can be further embedded into the matrix clause with the verb *it-* ‘say’. In (40), the verb *Fur-* ‘tell [sth]’ functions as the predicate of the narrative clause, which is followed by the matrix clause. The speech report is constructed as the standard complement clause, which is embedded into the narrative clause. In this construction, both the subject of the matrix clause and that of the complement clause are unmarked. As in other constructions, the narrative converb agrees with the subject of the matrix clause.

(40) *ɲi* [[*cʰi* *tav-ux* *ujɣi-d=vəřk*]$_{CC}$ *+ pʰur-t*]$_{NC}$ *it=bana*
1SG 2SG house-ABL NEG-IND=only + tell-CVB_NAR.1SG say=CATEG
ha-d
do.so-IND
‘I only said that you are not at home.’ (FM 1991:5:124) [S]

My data contain several examples, when, apparently by analogy, the same construction is formed with the transitive verb *Xer-* ‘tell [sb]’, cf. (41). Note that normally the object of this verb indicates the addressee.

(41) *jaŋ* [[*ɲi* *pʰ-salqaw-d*]$_{RC}$ *+ xer-ř*]$_{RC}$ *it-t.*
3SG 1SG REFL-deceive-NMLZ + tell-CVB_NAR.3SG say-IND
‘He says that I deceived him.’ (FM 2000:4:15) [S]

3.1.4 Type 4

The fourth construction is found only in Nivkh. Here, the reported speech is structurally incorporated into the narrative as follows. The construction begins with the subject of the matrix clause. It can also be moved to the final part of the sentence either before or after the

final predicate. The indirect speech report is built on the model of the finite (indicative) clause and is followed by the auxiliary verb *ha-* 'be/do so', which appears in the form of the reportative converb. Depending on the person and number of the subject of the matrix clause the latter has the form *ha-vur* or *ha-vut*. This element serves as a reporting marker and marks the link between the matrix clause and the speech report. The whole construction is closed by the predicate of the matrix clause, which in most cases is represented by the verb *it-* 'say', cf. (42–44).

(42) *if* [*imŋ-aχ* *əki-gur* *orbot-c*]
3SG they-CAUSEE be.bad-ADV.3SG work-IND
ha-vur *it-c*.
be.so-CVB_NAR.3SG say-IND
'He said (that) they worked badly' (Nedjalkov & Otaina 2013: 52) [A]

(43) *ətək* [*pʰe-ʁan* *pʰrə-nə-ɟ*] *ha-vur* *it-c.*
father REFL-REP come-FUT-IND do.so-CVB_NAR.3SG say-IND
'Father said [that he] himself would come.' (Nedjalkov & Otaina 2013: 186) [A]

(44) [*pət* *ɲən-doχ* *caŋgi-ʁan* *pʰrə-nə-ɟ*] *ha-vut*
tomorrow 1PL.EXCL-DAT chief-REP come-FUT-IND do.so-CVB_NAR.3SG
ir-c-ɣu.
say-IND-PL
'[They] said [that] tomorrow the chiefs will come to us.' (FM 2014: 4) [A].

As an alternative to the matrix verb *ir-c-ɣu* '[they] told' in (44), the consultant suggested the verb *Xez-*, as in (45), cf. also (46). Other verbs of speech/cognition are rare but also possible in this type of construction, cf. (47).

(45) [*pət* *ɲən-doχ* *caŋgi-ʁan* *pʰrə-nə-ɟ*] *ha-vut*
tomorrow 1PL.EXCL-DAT chief-REP come-FUT-IND do.so-CVB_NAR.3PL
ɲən + kʰez-ɟ-ɣu.
1PL.EXCL-DAT + tell-IND-PL
'[They] said [that] tomorrow the chiefs will come to us.' (FM 2014: 4) [A]

(46) *ɲ-nanak* [*pʰe-ʁan* *tʰulf* *ɲivx + əv-nə-ɟ*]
1SG-older.sister REFL-REP winter man + be.with-FUT-IND
ha-vur *cʰozjo-r* *ɲ-xez-ɟ.*
do.so-CVB_NAR.3SG whisper-CVB_NAR.3SG 1SG-tell-IND
'My sister whispered to me [that] she would marry in winter.] (FM 2014: 6) [A]

(47) *if* [*pʰe-ʁan* *viluʁəř-c*] *ha-vur*
3SG REFL-REP be.bachelor-IND do.so-CVB_NAR.3SG
ɲ-siŋru-ɟ.
1sg-deceive-ind
'He lied to me [that] he was a bachelor.' (FM 2014: 11) [A]

The position of the clause rendering reported speech is fixed with respect to the matrix clause, but syntactic status of the former is not completely clear. It is obviously embedded into the matrix clause, but there is no syntactic subordination, as the report is simply juxtaposed to the reporting marker. As a result, the whole structure reminds the direct speech construction, with two differences though. First, the subject of the reported speech is marked in the same way as the subject of the reportative clause, i.e., either by the causee suffix *-ɑχ* or by the reportative suffix *-Qan*, cf. (43–47). Also, in case of coreference of the subjects of the matrix and embedded clauses, the reflexive pronoun *pʰi-* appears in the speech report, cf. (43), (46–47). All this confirms the shift in personal reference, which is not typical of the direct speech constructions.

3.1.5 Type 5

In terms of syntactic analysis, the fifth type of reported speech construction, which is also found only in Nivkh, is even more problematic. Basically, it has the same structure as the construction of type 4 but differs from it in several aspects. The auxiliary verb *ha-* 'do/be so' appears here not in the form of the reportative converb, but in the form of the demonstrative adverb, which is also used in the direct speech construction, cf. *har* in (48) and *hagut* in (49–50). If mentioned, the subject of the speech report is not marked with the reportative clitic but is unmarked in the same way as the subject of the matrix clause. Finally, this construction imposes even less lexical restrictions on the matrix predicate and allows in this position such verbs as *kʰəmlə-* 'think', *e-ʁz-* 'think, worry', cf. (49), *mə-* 'hear', cf. (50), and some others. All mentioned phenomena demonstrate that the construction of type 5 shows close affinity with the direct speech construction, as discussed in section 2. In fact, the only differential feature is the personal reference, which in the reported speech construction is shifted to the perspective of the speaker. The shift is most obvious in the constructions with coreferential subjects, when the subject of the speech report is marked by the reflexive pronoun, cf. (48). Person shift is known to be the most prominent feature for distinguishing direct and indirect speech. In the direct speech construction this element would have been marked by the first-person pronoun.

(48) *if* *pʰrə-r* [*pʰi* *tazaf-c*] *har* *it-c.*
3SG come-CVB_NAR.3SG REFL be.late-IND so:3SG say-IND
'He said coming [that] he was late.' (Nedjalkov & Otaina 2013:195) [A]

(49) [*if* *ɲi-tʰxəřp-c*] *hagut* *e-ʁz-ɟ.*
3SG 1SG-forget-IND so:1SG 3SG-worry-IND
'[I] worried [that] she forgot me.' (FM 2014: 9) [A]

(50) *hoŋke* *cevrq* *it-c.* *ɲi* *kʰes + heʁ-d.*
then bird say-IND 1SG news + hear-IND
[*u:məv + ɲivx* *nəx* *tu-tx* *pʰrə-r* *qʰo-nə-ɟ*]
be.brave + man today this.place-DAT come-CVB_NAR.3SG sleep-FUT-IND
hagut *mə-ɟ.*
so:3PL hear-IND
'Then the bird said: "I heard the news. Today the brave man coming here will sleep, so [I] heard.' (Panfilov 1965: 228) [A]

3.1.6 Agreement of Converbal Forms

Amuric has a whole set of non-finite converbal forms that agree with the subject in person and number. All markers of these forms include the same elements *r* and *t* in the Amur variety and *r* / *ř*, *t*, and *n* in the East Sakhalin variety (the voiceless trill *ř* occurs word-finally). Here, I will discuss the agreement of the reportative and narrative converbs.

In both varieties the reportative converb has two variants of suffixes — one with the consonant *ř (-vuř*) or *r* (*-vur*), and another with the consonant *t* (*-vut*). The alternation of these consonants indicates the agreement of the corresponding verb form with the subject in person and number according to the pattern presented in Table 1. As one can see, the consonant *r* or *ř* is attested in the second- and third-person singular forms, whereas the consonant *t* appears in all other persons and numbers. The peculiarity of the reportative converb is that it agrees not with its "own" subject, but, rather, with the subject of the matrix clause verb, as in (51) and (52). There can be some deviations from this rule in narratives, cf. (53).

(51) *t^{h}ulf ha-data əcx-kun [q^{h}avla + t^{h}olf*
winter do.so-CVB_BSIM old.man-PL be.hot + summer
ha-jnə-vut]$_{RC}$ *it-nt-ɣun.*
do.so-DES-CVB_REP.3PL say-IND-PL
'In winter old men said that the summer was going to be hot.' [S]

(52) *əɣrku + t^{h}əlgu* [*kins əlɣi-vut*] *ir-c=ra.*
be.old + tale devil be_abundant-CVB_REP.3PL say-IND=FOC
'Old tales say that there used to be a lot of devils.' (Panfilov 1965: 241) [A]

(53) *v-əmək it-c. c^h-apak-xu c^{h}i*
3SG-mother say-IND 2SG-father_in_law-PL 2SG
mu-ɣət-i-vur ir-c.
die-COMPL-EP- CVB_REP.3SG say-IND
'His mother says: "Your fathers-in-law said [that] you had died."' (Panfilov 1965: 249) [A]

TABLE 1 Distribution of common elements of the suffixes *r* / *ř* vs. *t* in Nivkh and Nighvng

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1 PERSON	*t*	*t*
2 PERSON	*r* / *ř*	*t*
3 PERSON	*r* / *ř*	*t*

As for the narrative converbs, the Nivkh forms have two variant suffixes, *-r* or *-t*, which demonstrate the same agreement pattern as the reportative converbs (see Table 1). The corresponding Nighvng narrative converbs have three variants of suffixes, *-ř*, *-t* or *-n*. The second and third person singular converbs are always marked by the suffix *-ř*. In all other numbers and persons, the choice between the variants *-t* and *-n* is determined by the mood/aspect of the matrix verb. In case the matrix verb occurs in the future tense, or in the optative, hortative, imperative or jussive mood, the narrative converb takes the variant *-n*, as shown in Table 2. In other tenses and moods, the corresponding variant is *-t*, as shown in

Table 1. The narrative converb also agrees with the subject of the matrix verb. In case the subjects of a converb and a matrix verb are non-coreferential, the converb takes the causative suffix *-Ku-*, which functions as a switch-reference marker.

TABLE 2 Distribution of the suffixes *-r* / *-ř* and *-n* in Nighvng

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1 PERSON	*n*	*n*
2 PERSON	*r* / *ř*	*n*
3 PERSON	*r* / *ř*	*n*

3.2 Mono-clausal Reported Speech Construction

Mono-clausal speech reports in Amuric are built with the reportative clitic S/A *=Furu*, which cliticizes to the finite verbal, adverbial or nominal predicate and is highly productive in all varieties. The verbal predicate marked by this clitic can occur in all tenses, but only in the indicative mood.

The allomorphic variation of the reportative clitic *=Furu* follows the general rules of Amuric morphophonological alternations: *=furu* is used after stems ending in a plosive, a vowel, a lateral, a stable nasal, or the approximant *j*; *=pʰuru* is used after stems ending in a fricative (including voiced and voiceless trills) and a non-stable nasal.[2]

The clitic conveys an unwitnessed event usually known from hearsay. Sentences containing predicates with this clitic do not allow direct explication of the source of information: it cannot be named. Verbal predicates with the reportative clitic are often used in folklore texts, when the narrator wants to emphasize that s/he himself did not witness the situation described in the sentence (Nedjalkov & Otaina 2013: 199–200), cf. (54–56). Relationship of reported speech with the domain of reported evidentiality is well established and have been mentioned in various sources including (Aikhenvald 2004, Spronck & Nikitina 2019: 140-142, Teptiuk 2019: 33).

(54) *milk* *pʰřə-jvu-ŋa* *qanŋ* *aɣ-ř* *ha-d=furu*
devil come-PROGR-CVB_SIM dog bark-CVB_NAR:3SG do.so-IND=REP
'When a devil is coming, [they say that] a dog is barking.' (FM 1989:2:16) [S]

(55) *jaŋ* *pat* *pʰřə-jnə-d=furu*
3SG tomorrow come-DES-IND=REP
'[They] say [that] he is going to come tomorrow.' (FM 1989:2:16) [S]

(56) *əːrə* *pʰrə-ɟ=hata?* *nəmr=pʰuru*
when come-IND=Q yesterday=REP
'When did [he] arrive? – They say, yesterday.' (Nedjalkov & Otaina 2013: 200) [A]

The reportative clitic *=Furu*, which serves as a marker of reported evidentiality represents an interesting example of successive grammaticalization and suffixalization (Gruzdeva 2016). The clitic itself is derived from the root of the verb of speech *Fur-* 'tell [sth]' (Panfilov 1965: 123). As a result of grammaticalization, the root of this verb developed into

[2] Stable nasals have been historically retained in all Amuric varieties, whereas non-stable nasals have been lost in Nivkh and retained in Nighvng.

the indirect evidential clitic *=Furu*, which attaches to the finite predicate. Along with this usage the clitic has been also suffixalized into the converbal suffix S *-fuř*: *Fur- > =Furu > -fuř,* after which the initial consonant of the suffix has become voiced in most (sub)varieties, cf. S *-vuř*, A *-vur*. These changes were accompanied by a phonological reduction, due to which this converbal suffix came to end in the same consonant S *-ř,* A *r* as one of the variants of a narrative converb suffix S *-ř* : *-t* : *-n,* A *-r* : *-t*. This similarity promoted further developments, as a result of which the reported converbal suffix nowadays also has two variants, viz. S *-fuř* : *-fut*, S *-vuř* : *-vut*, A *-vur* : *-vut*.

4 The Interaction of Direct and Reported Speech in Narratives

In Amuric narratives, direct and reported speech can be combined within the same report. It is not possible, however, to use different strategies within the same clause. The illustrative example (57) is constructed as follows. The initial sentence (57a) contains the verb of speech *it-* 'say' and serves as an introductory phrase to the direct quotation in (57b). The direct quotation contains two sentences, which are both built as regular declarative clauses. The following sentence (57c) comprises the speech verb *Xer-* 'tell [sb]' and is an introductory phrase to the direct quotation in (57d), which itself ends in the same speech verb and introduces the reported speech in (57e). The sentences (57c–e) represent therefore a hierarchical structure, in which one report is embedded into another one. The last sentence (57e) represents a bi-clausal dedicated reported speech construction with the reportative converb. According to Kreinovich (1979: 316–317), further embedding would be possible only with the mono-clausal reported speech construction.

(57) a. *ɲizun* *pʰrə-r* *ɲe-rχ* *it-nt.*
Nizun come-CVB_NAR.3SG 1SG-DAT say-IND
'Nizun came [and] said to me:

b. *xugan* *pʰrə-nt.* *ɲi=park* *pʰ-ɲaχ-kir* *i-ndə-nt.*
Xugan come-CVB_NAR.3SG 1SG=FOC REFL-eye-INST 3SG-see-IND.
"Xugan came. I saw it with my eyes."

c. *ɲi* *wi-t* *segin + xer-nt.*
1SG go-CVB_NAR.1SG Segin + tell-IND
I went [and] told Segin:

d. *ɲizun* *pʰrə-r* *ɲ-xer-d.*
Nizun come-CVB_NAR.3SG 1SG-tell-IND
"Nizun came [and] told me:

e. *xugan-χan* *pʰrə-vur* *it-nt.*
Xugan-REP come-CVB_REP.3SG say-IND
«[He] said that Xugan had come»"'. (Kreinovich 1979: 316–317) [S]

Similarly, example (58) also includes both direct quotation and reported speech. Sentence (58a), which ends in the speech verb *it-* 'say', introduces the direct quotation, which consists of two sentences. Sentence (58b) is an imperative sentence, which begins with the

vocative form. Sentence (59c) represents a mono-clausal reported speech construction with the reportative clitic.

(58) a. *hoʁoror* *if* *it-c.*
after_that 3SG say-IND
'After that he said:

b. *əlc-ɣo* *namagut* *u:məv + ɲivx + ətŋu-ve.*
servant-VOC.PL well:2PL be.brave + man + guard-IMP.2PL
"Servants! Guard the brave man well!

c. *u:məv + ɲivx* *nəx* *tutx* *pʰrə-nə-ɟ=furu*
be.brave + man today here come-FUT-IND=REP
[They say] the brave man will come here today." (Panfilov 1965: 123) [A]

5 Conclusion

In this paper, I have discussed various speech reporting strategies which are used in different varieties of Amuric. It should be noted that in Amuric the distinction between direct and indirect speech is rather straightforward, though some of the reported speech constructions are structurally more similar to the direct speech constructions than others. There is no semi-direct speech, as discussed, for instance, in (Aikhenvald 2008).

As can be concluded from the data, direct speech is expressed in a similar way in both Nivkh and Nighvng. Also, mono-clausal reported speech constructions look the same. On the other hand, multi-clausal reported speech constructions display considerable structural variation. They can be classified according to the type of the reporting clause and ranged according to its degree of syntactic integration with the matrix clause.[3] The constructions of types 1–2 contain reporting clauses that share most of their properties with adverbial clauses and are well integrated into the construction through subordination. To my knowledge, such constructions are not very frequent cross-linguistically. The construction of type 3 is a recent innovation and is structured as the standard construction with the complement clause — a typical strategy for many languages. It is possible that this construction has arisen under the influence of the Russian language. The constructions of types 4–5 show an apposition-like relation, which is more common to direct speech constructions. These constructions are not attested in Nighvng.

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[3] This can be seen as a development corresponding to the syntactic approach advocated in (Nikitina & Bugaeva 2021).

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