

Title: “*The cigarette lighter says...*”: Fictive interaction in languages without a writing system

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Fictive interaction (Pascual 2002, 2006) is a cognitive phenomenon that reflects the structure of conversation, and is manifested in language structure and use (e.g. “an attitude of ‘*why bother?*’”, “a ‘*why bother?*’ attitude”). Intra-sentential fictive interaction is usually manifested in the use of direct speech. This is nontrivial, since direct speech is universal, whereas indirect speech is not (Li 1986).

We suggest that in languages without a writing system, fictive interaction is a compulsory grammatical construction, rather than a pragmatic option, as in languages with writing. In Kwaza for instance, a non-written language of Brazil, fictive interaction is the only grammatical means to present certain situations and events (van der Voort 2002):

- (1) Bwa- da´mỹ-Ø- tse
[It [the cigarette lighter] says: “*I want to run out*”]
[It [the gas of the cigarette lighter] is about to run out]

Similarly, Korowai, a non-written Papuan language, requires the use of fictive interaction to express emotions (de Vries & van Enk 1997):

- (2) Kuasél fikh fo fe-té-tofekho walé-do khe-nè ima-té-tofekho
[They came and had a look *and ‘Oh, my! in our canoes there are mirrors, fish hooks.’*]
[They saw in astonishment that in their canoes there were mirrors and fish hooks.]

In numerous non-written languages, fictive interaction is the only way to present thoughts and intentions. Consider Kombai, a Papuan language (de Vries 2010):

- (3) Aifo-nene
[‘*We want to go*’, they say]
[They want to go]

Furthermore, fictive interaction may be required to express conditionality, causation (Güldemann & von Roncador 2002) and even grammatical tense (van der Voort 2009a, 2009b). We will present a large literature study of fictive interaction in the grammar of non-written languages from various families. For each language, we will document: (i) the form(s) of fictive interaction; (ii) its range of semantic function; and (iii) its degree of grammaticalisation.

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