

"VAN" as a quotative in Dutch: Marking quotations as a typification

Harrie Mazeland ¹

CIW, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen. Postbus 716, 9700 AS Groningen

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Dutch speakers may introduce a quotation with a construction that is similar to '(is) like' in English. In Dutch, this is done by the format [*ik / hij zei van* + quotation] ('he said' + "van"), where "van" is a preposition roughly equivalent to English 'of'. In this paper, I try to show that the construction with VAN_{like} is used as a quotative frame that projects a citation with a typifying function. I will discuss distributional and interactional evidence for this position.

When a speaker uses the format of direct reported speech, he or she almost inevitably purports to provide an accurate rendition of some unique speech or thought event by demonstrating how things are formulated on that other occasion. In spite of this, direct reported speech is not always used for rendering a specific prior utterance or thought. The participants in talk in interaction know this, and researchers who study reported speech know this too (*see, for example*, Goffman 1981, Tannen 1989, Clark & Gerrig 1990 or Holt 1996). Direct reported speech may be used to depict talk or thoughts that have never occurred in the way it is presented by the reporting speaker. This is why Tannen talks about "constructed dialogue." (1989: 110-119)

A prominent non-literal type of use of direct reported speech is when a speaker uses it for depicting a *kind* of utterance or thought. The speaker typifies the kind of utterance or thought that is made in the situation he is talking about. In this paper, I try to show that in Dutch talk in interaction, this kind of *typifying* use of reported speech is often marked as such by the quotative marker "van". See, for example, Mary's quotation of what her friend Marion '*always says*' in the extract below (arrow number 2):

Extract 1. From a story telling. (*Context: Diana and Mary are neighbours. Mary is telling a next story to Diana and Bob about how to kill seriously wounded little animals like mice and birds.*)

Mary: ·Hhh maar dat- (.) beestje was ook niet doo:d,
 but this- little animal was not dead either,

 dus die hebben we ('m: >bij jullie<) op 't balkon neergezet
 so we had put it at your place on the balcony

- ₁ en dan hadden we hele tijd van moeten we nou:h ·hh ether
and then we were the whole time VAN_{like} do we have to use well
 gebrui- >'n watje met ether voor z'hhjhn n[heuhsjheh houwe
ether- keep absorbant cotton with ether in front of its nose
- Diana: [(°h·HHhh)
- Mary: ·hh (of) moet je 'n K_LA_P geveh of zo: ,
(or) do you have to hit it hard or the like
 0.4
- Diana: hm[mm.
- Mary: →₂ [Marion zegt dan altijd van nou moet je de vuilnisbak
Marion always says then VAN_{like} well you have to dump the garbage can
 op z'n- [(0.9) op z'n k_op laten valleh,=
on its- on its head,
 [((knocks on the table))
- Diana: =°hm ↓m.

Mary uses direct reported speech to tell about what Marion *always* says in a situation like the one she is telling about in her story: *'Mary always says ... well you have to dump the garbage can ...'* (arrow 2). The quote is framed by the quotative construction "X zegt ... van" ('X says ... VAN'). "Van" is a preposition in Dutch. In other environments of use it often can be translated into English with 'of' or 'from', or with the genitive in languages with case marking. As an element of a quotative construction, it is quite similar to the use of '(is) like' in English, - as in *'she's like leave me alone.'* (from the Santa Barbara Corpus, see Foolen 2001; cf. Golato 2000). Because of this similarity, I will mark the quotative use of "van" in the text with 'VAN_{like}'.

In quotative frames with VAN_{like}, the quotation often takes the grammatical role of the object of a construction with a verb of saying such as "zeggen van" ('say like'), "vragen van" ('ask like'), "roepen van" ('shout like'), or "bellen van" ('call like'), or a verb of thinking like "denken van" ('think like'), "ervaren van" ('experience like') or "hebben van" ('be like', see arrow 1 in extract 1).² However, VAN_{like} is also used as a device for tying a quotation to a possibly complete utterance in which the speaker tells about a speech or thought event. Compare extract 2:

Extract 2. *Phone call.* Hans is explaining to his wife Jetty why he is so late. He is a soccer coach, and after an evaluation meeting with his team, he has also talked with one young player separately.

- Hans: nou en toen hē'k natuu'k ook 'n aantal ding'n
well and then of course I have also given feedback
- ₁ e'em trug gekoppeld
briefly about a couple of things
 (.)

- Jettie: °ja[: h : h h°] ((*sighing*))
 yes
- Hans: →₂ [(dat uut die) gelsprekken erold bin'n,
 (*that came out*) of these talks,
 →₃ van joh dat bin'n aandachtspunt'n,
 VAN_{like} *man these are points of attention*,
- Jettie: ja:h.
 ye:s.

The quotation '*man these are points of attention*' (arrow 3) is not delivered as the grammatical object of a construction with a verb of saying, but as an *increment* (cf. Schegloff 1996) to the preceding turn-constructural unit (arrow 1 and 2). The use of the construction with VAN_{like} enables the speaker to bring the quotation so to speak retroactively within the scope of the preceding turn-constructural unit (TCU). Particularly this possibility of tying a quotation to an utterance that is already possibly complete makes the VAN quotative a highly flexible device for post hoc typifying the communicative or cognitive event a speaker has just described in the preceding TCU. Note that in both environments of use -- that is, the quotation as the grammatical object of a verb of saying in a TCU that is designed from the outset as a quote-delivering unit, and the quotation that is added to a possibly complete TCU as an increment -- the [VAN + quotation] unit is always tied to a clausal or sentential unit in which the speaker mentions a speech or thought event. Quotations that are framed with a VAN quotative never initiate a freestanding quote.

The use of quotative frames with VAN_{like} is a phenomenon that seems to be restricted to talk in interaction. It is not documented in more formal modes of written interaction (Romijn 1999); if it is used in written texts, it indexes a colloquial style. It is also said to be a relatively new device which is supposed to have spread around only recently -- since the seventies -- with its origins in the talk of young people (see Foolen, this volume). However, Van der Toorn (1997: 529-30) points to similar forms of use of the construction in nursery rhymes and songs for children that probably go back to the 19th century already.

The quotatives with VAN_{like} that are documented in extract 1 are instances of the type of use that has a clearly typifying function. The speaker is generalizing over a series of occasions ("Marion zegt dan altijd van ..."; '*Marion then always says ... VAN_{like} ...*', arrow 2) or over a situation in which the type of event that is demonstrated in the quotation must have occurred repeatedly ("en dan hadden we hele tijd van ..."; '*en then we were the whole time VAN_{like} ...*', arrow 1). Extracts 3-5 document some more instances in which the speaker is not purporting that he or she is replaying a unique speech event when using the direct reported speech format. In extract 3, the speaker reports the type of action that is performed by several different speakers on a series of occasions within the same situation. In extract 4, the speaker reports about a future course of action that is acted out as a form of advice-giving in the situation about which he is telling. And in extract 5, the speaker uses the VAN quotative to typify the point of view of a collective with respect to the issue at hand, without attributing it to a particular author:

- Rick: → want, (0.2) >net zoals X Y Z en Z roept van jah, als je
because, just as X Y Z & Z shouts VAN_{like} well, if you
 Kappa d'rbij hebt, < gaan we naar klassieke media, (0.6)
have Kappa in it, we go to the classic media,
 roep ik dan: [(van ja:h-)]
then I shout (VAN_{like} well-)
- Max: [>(nee) dat is] niet waar.<
(no) that is not true.
- 0.5
- Rick: dat roept Eric Jenssen dus hè?
that is what Eric Jenssen shouts then you know?

In other words, the quotative construction with VAN is regularly used as a frame for citations that do not have a narrative function, that is, the quoter is not replaying a unique speech or thought event in the past. This kind of quotation usually has a typifying function. The speaker characterizes a category of communicative or cognitive events with a typical but schematically rendered member of it. In a little collection of 59 instances of VAN quotatives -- gathered from various types of talk in interaction, ranging from informal phone calls, meetings and tax negotiations to non-standardized open research interviews -- I found the following distribution of the non-narrative versus the documentary use of the quotation:

<i>Depicting a unique speech event</i>	<i>Non-narrative, typifying use of the quotation</i>	<i>Different</i>
11	43	5

Table 1. Distribution of rendition types of VAN-framed quotations (N = 59)

The significance of this distribution is unclear as long as it can not be weighed against some total number of relevant, possible occasions of use (Schegloff 1993). There are other types of evidence, however, that support the claim that VAN quotatives are primarily used as a practice for characterizing a type of communicative or cognitive action. Apart from lexical and collocational evidence -- which I will not discuss because of the limited space available³

-- two other types of evidence can be found. I will first discuss a type of distributional evidence and then some types of interactional evidence.

Distributional evidence

In my data, there is evidence that speakers use VAN quotatives selectively within coherent stretches of talk developing over time. We have already seen an example of this in extract 4. Hans first reports an utterance that purportedly has been said this way in the speech situation he is telling about (arrow 1). He frames this quotation with a straight quotative construction "toen zegg'n wij" (*'then we say'*, arrow 1). He then continues with an embedded quote "en gewoon zegg'n van" (*'and just say VAN_{like} ...'*, arrow 2), which is characterizing a future course of action. The reported speaker is giving his interlocutor advice how to act communicatively in the envisaged situation. Interestingly, this embedded citation is framed with a VAN quotative:

Extract 4. Detail.

Hans: →₁ toen zegg'n wij: maar dan moet je dus
 then we say but then you have to go PRT_{so}
 g'woon naar Barend toegaan: ,
 just to Barend,
 0.3
 Tim: jah,
 yes,
 Hans: →₂ en gewoon zegg'n van joh: , (0.8) als 't weer
 and just say VAN_{like} man, if it's the same again
 dit jaar weer zo is met de opkomst, (...)
 this year with the attendance,

A first observation that can be made here is that, in a telling with a series of quotations, the teller may shape the quotative frame one time without VAN_{like} (arrow 1) and another time with VAN_{like} (arrow 2). The other observation is that this teller preserves the VAN quotative for reported speech that is characterizing a type of communicative action. The reported speaker is performing and showing how something should be said in the future; he is not replaying something that has happened this way.

Extract 6 documents another type of selective use of the VAN quotative within a single telling:

Extract 6. From a phone call between the college friends Nora and Mona. They are exchanging stories about their experiences as trainee teachers. The extract renders the last part of a long story telling about how Nora dealt with the misconduct of a pupil.

Nora: 't is ook zo poe:pig. (man, nou, ik ging ik) naar
 it is so cute too. (boy, well, I went I) to

- ₁ die begeleider toe, ik zei jah, heb je eerder gezien.
this supervisor, I said yes, have met you before.
- ₂ ja jah, ·hHH jhah(hh) hij zei(h) van ·hH
yes yes he said VAN_{like}
- ₃ [ik riep flikker op, maar dat was hemaal niet
 [((relatively high pitch, in a children-like voice))
I shouted out fuck off, but that was not at all directed
- voor haahehr[heh,
to her=huh
- Mona: [eh hah huheh ((laughs))

Nora's "ik zei jah, ..." (*I said yes, ...*, arrow 1) is the sixth time in a row in this telling that the teller frames a quotation of one of the protagonists with the unmarked quotative construction [I / he said + quotation]. However, when she finally delivers the punch line of her story, she frames it with a VAN quotative ("hij zei van ..."; *he said VAN_{like} ...*, arrow 2). The fact that the seventh -- and possibly last -- quote in this telling is the first one to be framed with a VAN quotative clearly suggests that the speaker deploys the VAN-construction selectively, that is, orderly. The VAN quotative is not only prefacing the punch line of the telling (see Golato 2000), but it is also introducing a quotation that is shaped differently from the preceding quotes in the telling. It is produced in a very high pitch and it is delivered in a 'typically' childish and timid voice (arrow 3). By almost caricaturally characterizing (see Mitchell-Kernan 1972) what the antagonist's response looked like, the story recipient should be able to recognize and to evaluate the manner in which he has said this. The teller uses the device for marking a contextually noticeable, telling-relevant type of re-enactment of how something was said at this specific position in the telling.

Note that extract 6 shows that a quotation that is replaying a unique communicative event may also be shaped as a typification. Contrary to the assumptions underlying table 1, the typifying use of a quotation that is framed with the VAN quotative is not confined to non-narrative uses of the quotation. It may also be deployed to index a unique narrative event as a prototypical member of a category. By drawing attention to *how* something was said or thought in the reported situation, the speaker is not just documenting *what* was said, but also inscribing the quote into a telling-relevant category. Upon re-examination of the 11 cases of quotations with a narrative function mentioned in table 1, I looked whether the quotation was shaped so as to provide the recipient with identifiable cues as to *how* the quoted speech was delivered. This next round of analytic induction (*cf.* Schegloff 1968 and Heritage 1988) resulted in locating at least 4 more cases that were undoubtedly formatted so as to inscribe the quote as an instance of a telling-relevant category. The typifying use of the reported speech format that is marked by the VAN quotative thus may be either a category-inscribing typification of a single event or a construction representing a type.

There are more instances of the selective use of VAN quotatives in my data, but I

hope the discussion of just these two instances suffices to show how speakers methodically choose between alternative ways of framing and announcing reported speech. When a speaker frames a quotation with a VAN quotative, it is projecting the delivery of a quote that is designed to be heard as a typification. The VAN-framed quotation is used to convey a typification, either of a narrative event or of a constructed type of speech or thought event.

Interactional evidence

Next turn is the position we have to inspect in order to be able to see how turns at talk are analysed by the participants themselves (Sacks *et al.* 1974; see also Holt 2000). If quotations that are introduced through a VAN quotative primarily have a typifying or exemplifying function, this must be validated by the way recipients respond to them. Typification by exemplification works towards recognition: the recipient is expected to recognize the quotation as a member of a class or a token of a type they already know or are familiar with. The quotation is designed to enable the recipient to hear it as a working prototype of the locally relevant communicative action, thought or attitude. Instead of reactions that display that the recipient has heard something new (as for example might be displayed by newsmark receipts such as 'oh'; see Heritage 1984), responses in which the recipient shows recognition are more likely. Extract 7 documents a case in point:

Extract 7. From a report-card meeting in high school (see Mazeland & Berenst 2001). The teachers discuss the progression of the pupil Mohamed. Saskia is the Biology teacher, Paul is the teacher for Dutch).

Math: (Saskia) j(ij) zit heel erg na te denke (°ook.)=
 (Saskia) you are thinking a lot (as well).

Bio: =ja:h, ik zie- ik zie 'm zo zitte daar met z'n blij hoofd,
 yes, I see- I just see him sitting there so with his happy face,
 net wat Paul net ook al aangeeft dat ie ook heel
 just like Paul already pointed out before that he also very
 vaak (dings die juf da ligt daar..)
 often (things like) teacher, it's over there.

- dat ie helpt en dan zit ie met z'n:- (0.5)
that he is assisting and then he is sitting there with his-
- ₁ [met 'n smile ↑van (0.4) >ik heb je geholpe[n!<
with a smile VAN_{like} I have assisted you!
- Engl: →₂ [jah!
yes
- Dutch: →₃ [huh!=
- Engl: →₂ =jA:h ja jah!=
yes yes yes!
- Bio: =da vinnik- (0.3) ja:h, ik vin 'm heel erg vooruit gegaan.
this I think- well, I think he has made very much progress.

The Biology teacher qualifies Mohamed's smile with a quotation that exemplifies a specific attitude (arrow 1). This quotation is responded to by several colleagues with displays of recognition: the 'yes'-ses of the English teacher (arrows 2), or the laughing "huh!" of the Dutch teacher (arrow 3). The recipients orient to the quotation as something they recognize. They do not treat the Biology-teacher's quote as new information that has changed their knowledge base.

There are similar reactions to VAN-introduced quotations in my data, but I want to conclude with a rather extreme case. In this instance, it is the recipient who delivers the quotation that was projected by the teller:

Extract 8. From the phone call between the college friends Nora and Mona.

- Nora: ik zei van nou: >wie heeft 'r geen boek< bij zich:
I said VAN_{like} well who doesn't have a book with him
- krijgt 'n sticker:
is gonna get a sticker ((a kind of fine-registration card, hm))
- 0.4
- ja mevrouw ze lezen elkaar steeds vhoor:(hhh),
yes ma'am they are reading aloud to each other the whole time
- >ik zeg (oh-< ik) hoo:rde al wel zo'n zoem:toon:
I say (oh I) was already hearing a humming noise
- ₁ °maar ik dacht van° (0.4)
but I thought VAN_{like}

Mona: →₂ nou ja:h as ze 't zachtjes doe[n:],
well yes if they do it quietly,

Nora: →₃ [ja:h,
yes,

(.)

daarom.

that's why.

The thought that Nora projects with the VAN quotative ("maar ik dacht van", '*but I thought VAN_{like}*', arrow 1), is not delivered by herself. Instead, the recipient takes over with a candidate substitute for the projected quote. She not just *claims* to have understood what kind of thought the speaker is projecting, she pre-emptively *demonstrates*⁴ to already know what it will look like by volunteering a formulation of it at the point at which its delivery is due. In talk in interaction, this is as close as people can get to demonstrating to one another that they are on the same wavelength. Note, by the way, that the recipient's *collaborative completion* (cf. Lerner 1991) of the speaker's turn is ratified by the turn owner herself -- who is also the owner of the projected thought -- in her response ("ja, (.) daarom"; '*yes (.) that's why.*', arrow 3). This is very strong interactional evidence that a speaker may project the report of a thought or speech event as an instance of a type that is known or agreed upon by the recipient as well.

Summary and discussion

In conclusion, there is interactional evidence for the claim that VAN quotatives are projecting the typifying kind of quotation use. VAN_{like}-prefaced quotations regularly get the kind of reaction that shows the recipient is recognizing the type that is exemplified in the quotation. There is quantitative and qualitative distributional evidence. Quantitative: the typifying use is far more frequent in my data than other types of use. Qualitative: apart from the interactional evidence already mentioned, I also showed that speakers use VAN quotatives selectively in order to differentiate between documenting and typifying uses of the quotation format.

The central point of Clark & Gerrig's 1990 paper on quoting -- that quotations are essentially demonstrations -- may be specified for VAN-framed quotations by saying that they demonstrate a communicative or cognitive event *by* typifying it. In one of his lectures on story telling, Harvey Sacks wonders why people make quotations. They do not quote to be more accurate, because a quote does not have to be more accurate than a description of what someone has said (1992, II: 309-10). Sacks then goes on by showing that one rationale for rendering an event by quoting it is that a quotation is giving evidence for a conclusion without already formulating that conclusion (see also Holt 2000). VAN-framed quotations do something similar. By marking and designing a quotation as an instance of a type that can be recognized by the recipient, the speaker is guiding the recipient's conclusion into a specific

direction, that is, the direction that converges with the evaluation that is culturally associated with the category.

Endnotes

¹ I want to thank Henk Pander Maat for helpful suggestions and some articulated comments.

² The verb may be in the present tense, in the simple past or with a perfect aspect. Most quotations have the shape of direct reported speech, but a few instances of indirect reported speech also occur in my data.

³ Examples of lexical-constructional evidence are the use of fixed expressions with "van", such as "in de zin van ..." + quotation (*'in the sense of'*) or the use of constructions with cataphoric "zo" (*'so'*) in expressions such as "dan hebben ze echt zoiets van ..." (*'then they really have something VAN' + quotation*). Examples of collocational evidence in the utterance part with the quotative frame are the insertion of the tag "weet je wel" (*'you know'*) immediately before the quotative with VAN *likes*, or the use of particles that solicit recognition or confirmation such as "gewoon" (*'just'*, as in extract 4) or "natuurlijk" (*'of course'*). Collocational evidence in the quotation itself are the use of summary quotations such as "zo and zo" (*'such and such'*) and the use of the tag "of zo" (*'or so'*) as a kind of unquote marker at the end of the quotation.

⁴ See Sacks, 1992, Vol. II: 252 for the distinction between *claiming* vs. *demonstrating*.

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