



1999

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Recommended Citation

Levinsohn, Stephen H. (1999) "Οτι recitativum in John's gospel: A stylistic or a pragmatic device?," *Work Papers of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, University of North Dakota Session*: Vol. 43 , Article 2.

DOI: 10.31356/silwp.vol43.02

Available at: <https://commons.und.edu/sil-work-papers/vol43/iss1/2>

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“Ὅτι *Recitativum* in John’s Gospel: A Stylistic or a Pragmatic Device? *

Stephen H. Levinsohn

This paper distinguishes three ways in which speech is reported in the Greek of John’s Gospel: directly (without the complementizer ὅτι), indirectly (with ὅτι and appropriate changes to first and second person references), and in ‘ὅτι-direct’ form (i.e., with ὅτι but without changes to first and second person references). The default way of reporting speech in Koine Greek is directly. Typically, when using direct speech, the reporter purports to reproduce the original speech verbatim. When in indirect form, the speech is not reported verbatim and/or is backgrounded with respect to what follows. The ὅτι-direct form is used to signal that the speech culminates some unit. When a reported speech is embedded in another reported speech, however, the use of ὅτι may be influenced also by the presence of ὅτι in the immediate context. When ὅτι follows the formula ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι/ὑμῖν ‘truly truly I say to you’, it signals that the assertion concerned makes explicit some previous point.

When a speech or writing is reported in Ancient or Koine Greek using the orienter verbs λέγω/εἶπον ‘say/said’ or γράφω ‘write’, the author has the option of inserting the complementizer¹ ὅτι between the orienter and the reported speech.

Example (1) (John 8:19) illustrates a speech which is not preceded by ὅτι; and (2b) (John 4:41-42a—UBS text), one which is preceded by ὅτι.² In both, the orienter verb is ἔλεγον ‘were saying’.

- (1) ORIENTER REPORTED SPEECH
ἔλεγον οὖν αὐτῷ, Ποῦ ἐστὶν ὁ πατήρ σου;
were.saying so to.him where is the father your
So they were saying to him, “Where is your father?”
- (2) a. καὶ πολλῶ πλείους ἐπίστευσαν διὰ τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ,
and more many believed because.of the word his
- b. ORIENTER ὅτι REPORTED SPEECH
τῇ τε γυναικὶ ἔλεγον ὅτι Οὐκέτι διὰ τὴν σὴν
to.the and the.woman were.saying that no.longer because.of the your
λαλιὰν πιστεύομεν, αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀκηκόαμεν καὶ οἶδαμεν
word we.believe selves for we.have.heard and we.know

* I am grateful to Tony Pope for the many observations and suggestions that he made on an earlier version of this article.

¹ “Complement types often have associated with them a word, particle, clitic, or affix whose function it is to identify the entity as a complement. Such forms are known as *complementizers*” (Noonan 1985:44-45).

² Some MSS omit ὅτι. Throughout this paper, the comment *UBS text* indicates that I have followed the reading in the 27th (1994) edition of Nestle-Aland’s *Novum Testamentum Graece*, but that ὅτι is absent (or present) in some MSS.

ὅτι οὕτως ἐστὶν ἀληθῶς ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου.
that this is truly the savior of the world

And many more believed because of his word and were saying to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world.”

In (2b), the references to the speakers and the addressee are respectively in the first and second person, not the third person, even though ὅτι is present. In (3b) below (John 4:51—UBS text), in contrast, the reference to the addressee is in the third person:³

- (3) a. οἱ δούλοι αὐτοῦ ὑπήντησαν αὐτῷ
the slaves his met him
- b. ORIENTER ὅτι REPORTED SPEECH
λέγοντες ὅτι ὁ παῖς αὐτοῦ ζῆ.
saying that the child his lives

his slaves met him and told him that his child was alive.

Because the references to the speakers and/or addressees change to third person, the reported speech of (3b) is considered to be *indirect*.⁴ In contrast, the reported speeches of (1) and (2b) are considered to be *direct*, because the first and/or second person references of the original speech are preserved. To distinguish the types represented by (1) and (2b), I shall refer to (2b) as *ὅτι-direct*.

Grammarians refer to the use of ὅτι in (2b) as “*recitativum*, when it is practically equivalent to our quotation marks” (Moulton & Milligan 1974 (1930):463; see also Arndt & Gingrich 1957:593; Blass, Debrunner & Funk 1961 §470(1); Porter 1992:268; Robertson 1934:442; Wallace 1996:454). However, they offer no explanation as to why it is sometimes present and sometimes absent with direct speech. The purpose of this paper is to address that deficiency. The explanation will entail recognizing different functions for the indirect and ὅτι-direct ways of reporting.

In order to be able to contrast the presence versus the absence of ὅτι *recitativum* in comparable contexts, the data are divided as follows. Examples of reported speech or writing that are *not* embedded in another speech are considered in §1. Citations of a previous speech or writing that are embedded in another speech are discussed in §2. Reported speeches introduced with the formula ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι/ὑμῖν ‘truly truly I say to you’ are presented in §3.

This paper does not discuss ὅτι following verbs that *require* a complementizer when their complement is verbal. Such verbs denote sense perception (e.g. ἀκούω ‘hear’), mental perception (e.g. γινώσκω ‘know’), “thinking, judging, believing, hoping,” and “verbs of swearing, affirming and corresponding formulae” (Arndt & Gingrich loc. cit.).⁵

Nor does this paper consider ὅτι when used as a *causal* conjunction. Zerwick (1963:145 §422) suggests that ὅτι is often used to give “the reason not why the fact *is* so, but whereby it is *known*

³ Although all MSS have ὅτι present, some read σου for αὐτοῦ, in which case the speech of (3b) would be ὅτι-direct.

⁴ See (12) (sec. 2.2) for an instance of indirect speech in which second person changes to first person when a speech is embedded in another. See chapter 17 of Porter 1992 for the different forms of indirect reporting found in the New Testament. For example, indirect speech is introduced with ἵνα ‘so that’ in John 4:47—see Table 1 of sec. 1.

⁵ Ὅτι appears to be obligatory also if the demonstrative οὕτως is used in the speech orienter to refer to the following speech. See, for example, John 21:23b (ἐξηλέθεν οὖν οὕτως ὁ λόγος εἰς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς ὅτι...*So this word spread among the brothers that...*).

to be so.” In (4) (John 5:16), for instance, the reason that the Jews persecuted Jesus was because he was ‘working’ on the Sabbath and they *knew* this to be so.

- (4) καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐδίωκον οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τὸν Ἰησοῦν,
and because.of this were.persecuting the Jews the Jesus
ὅτι ταῦτα ἐποίει ἐν σαββάτῳ.
because these.things was.doing on Sabbath

It was because of this that the Jews started persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath.

Following a verb of saying, it is not always clear whether ὅτι is to be interpreted as a causal conjunction or as *recitativum*. In (5b) (John 20:13), for instance, the UBS text treats ὅτι as *recitativum*. However, the preceding question (5a) asks the addressee *why* she is weeping, so it would be natural to interpret (5b) as giving the reason for her weeping (see the punctuation in Alford 1863: I, 900).

- (5) a. καὶ λέγουσιν αὐτῇ ἐκεῖνοι, Γύναι, τί κλαίεις;
and say to.her those.ones woman why you.weep
And they said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?”
b. λέγει αὐτοῖς ὅτι ἤραν τὸν κύριόν μου,
says to.them that/because took.the lord my
καὶ οὐκ οἶδα ποῦ ἔθηκαν αὐτόν.
and not I.know where placed him

She said to them, “(Because?) they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.”

1. Ὅτι introducing unembedded reported speech

When a speech is reported and it is not embedded in another speech, the author may use direct speech (as in (1) above), ὅτι-direct speech (as in (2b)), or ὅτι-indirect speech (as in (3b)).

The norm is for speeches to be reported in *direct* form. In John's Gospel, orienters containing a form of ἀποκρίνομαι ‘answer’ or ἐρωτάω ‘ask’ are *never* followed by ὅτι,⁶ while the only example of ὅτι following the historic present of λέγω is the one discussed above (5b), which may well not be *recitativum*. Typically, when using direct speech, the reporter purports to reproduce the original verbatim (see Li 1986:38-40).^{7,8}

Indirect reported speech introduced with ὅτι occurs infrequently in John's Gospel. By using indirect speech, the reporter claims only that the speech is “truthful in relevant respects” (Follingstad forthcoming); he does not purport to reproduce the original verbatim. Thus, in (3b) above, the reported speech conveys the sense of what the slaves said without communicating their exact words.

⁶ See also the example of ἐξετάζω ‘ask’ in 21:12. Ὅτι may follow ἀποκρίνομαι; see Acts 25:16, for example.

⁷ Or as ‘verbatim’ as is possible for a speech that was translated into Greek from Hebrew or Aramaic. I am grateful to Jim Meyer for pointing out to me that such speeches are not truly reported verbatim.

⁸ Citations from a written source are usually introduced with a form of γράφω ‘write’ or the noun γραφή ‘writing, scripture’, though the introducer is sometimes εἶπεν ‘said’ or λόγος ‘word’. All the citations in John's Gospel that are not embedded in a reported speech are presented directly (i.e., with ὅτι absent). In each instance, it seems evident that the author's intention is to cite the original verbatim. See 2:17, 12:14-15, 12:38, 12:39-40, 19:19, 19:24, 19:36 and 19:37.

However, saying that indirect speech is not verbatim does not explain *why* an author chooses to report certain speeches indirectly. One common motivation in languages for using an indirect form is to *background* the speech with respect to what follows. For example, Mfonyam (1994:195) observes concerning Bafut (Grassfields Bantu, Cameroon), “Another means by which background information is marked in Bafut is by indirect reported speech.”

Indirect speech appears to be used in John’s Gospel for the same reason. The following table gives an overview of the distribution of direct and indirect speech in the passage which includes (3).

Table 1: John 4:46b-54 (UBS text)

(46b)	<i>Now there was a certain royal official whose son lay ill in Capernaum. (47) This man, having heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, went and was asking that (ὅτι) he come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.</i>	(INDIRECT)
(48)	<i>Then Jesus said to him, “Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe.”</i>	(DIRECT)
(49)	<i>The official says to him, “Sir, come down before my little boy dies.”</i>	(DIRECT)
(50a)	<i>Jesus says to him, “Go, your son will live.”</i>	(DIRECT)
(50b)	<i>The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started on his way.</i>	
(51)	<i>As he was going down, his slaves met him and told him ὅτι his child was alive.</i>	(INDIRECT)
(52a)	<i>So he asked them the hour when he began to recover,</i>	(INDIRECT)
(52b)	<i>and they said to him ὅτι “Yesterday at one in the afternoon the fever left him.”</i> (ὅτι-DIRECT or INDIRECT)	
(53a)	<i>Then the father realized that this was the hour when Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live,”</i>	(EMBEDDED DIRECT)
(53b)	<i>and he himself believed, along with his whole household.</i>	
(54)	<i>This was the second sign that Jesus did after coming from Judea to Galilee.</i>	

As v. 54 indicates, this passage recounts one of Jesus’ ‘signs’. The improvement in the child’s health (v. 51) does not itself show that Jesus had healed him. It is because the child got better at the time that Jesus had assured the official that his son would live that convinces him that Jesus was responsible for the healing. The speeches of vv. 51-52a can, therefore, be viewed as *preliminary* to the rest of the episode of vv. 51-53. Similarly, the request of v. 47 can be viewed as preliminary to the rest of the episode of vv. 46b-50.

The same argument probably applies to the short speeches found in John 7:12b ((6b) below), 9:9a (UBS text) and, in some MSS, 7:40, 7:41 and 9:9b. It is not possible to know for certain whether the speeches concerned are in indirect or ὅτι-direct form. However, each one is the first speech of an exchange⁹ and can readily be viewed as preliminary to the subsequent speech(es), so I think it likely that they should be interpreted as indirect ones. Furthermore, in the case of (6b), prospective μέν also backgrounds the sentence (see Levinsohn 1999, §10.1).

⁹ In Luke-Acts, in contrast, it is the *final* speech of such exchanges (“the quotation that culminates the build-up to a key speech”—Levinsohn 1978:33) which is typically introduced with ὅτι; see Acts 2:12-13, for example.

(6) a. *And there was considerable complaining about him among the crowds.*

b. οἱ μὲν ἔλεγον ὅτι ἄγαθός ἐστιν,
some were.saying that good is

c. ἄλλοι [δὲ] ἔλεγον, οὐ, ἀλλὰ πλανᾷ τὸν ὄχλον.
others but were.saying no rather deceives the crowd

While some were saying that he was a good man, others were saying, "No, he is deceiving the crowd."

The remaining unembedded reported speeches in John's Gospel that are introduced with ὅτι are either unambiguously ὅτι-direct or, like 4:52b (Table 1 above), may be interpreted as such. In an earlier paper I suggested that, in Luke-Acts, ὅτι recitativum "in some sense ... is always used to introduce a quotation which terminates or culminates some unit" (Levinsohn 1978:25). It appears that the same is true in John's Gospel when the speech is in ὅτι-direct form. For instance, the speech of John 4:42 ((2b) above) is "the final speech of a narrative section" (op. cit. 32), while the speech of 4:52b is the culmination of the conversation reported in vv. 51-52.¹⁰

In summary, then, the default way of reporting unembedded speeches in John's Gospel is in direct form. When reported in indirect form, the speech is preliminary to what follows. When reported in ὅτι-direct form, the speech is the culmination of some unit.

2. Ὅτι introducing an embedded speech

This section first considers a stylistic explanation for the use of ὅτι in connection with a reported speech or writing in John's Gospel that is embedded in another speech (§2.1). This explanation accounts for the majority of the data, but leaves a residue. I then discuss possible pragmatic explanations for the same data (§2.2), which also leave a residue.

2.1. A stylistic explanation for the occurrence of ὅτι with embedded speeches and writings

The stylistic reason for the use of ὅτι with embedded speeches and writings in John's Gospel is simply that, if the matrix speech is *not* introduced with ὅτι, then the embedded material will be. Conversely, if the embedded material is preceded by ὅτι (whether recitativum or the causal conjunction), then it will not be introduced with ὅτι.¹¹

This principle is illustrated in (7a) below (John 10:34). Because the matrix speech (*Is it not written in your law*) is not introduced with ὅτι, the embedded citation (*I said, "You are gods"*) will be introduced with ὅτι, while the doubly embedded speech (*You are gods*) will not be. The same argument applies to the embedded speeches of (7c) (v. 36). According to the stylistic preference described in this section, because the matrix speech (*Is it not written ... you say*) is introduced without ὅτι, the embedded speech (*You blaspheme*) will be introduced with ὅτι. Then, because the continuation of the matrix speech contains ὅτι, the second embedded speech (*I am the Son of God*) will be introduced without ὅτι.

(7) a. ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς [ὁ] Ἰησοῦς, Οὐκ ἔστιν γεγραμμένον ἐν τῷ νόμῳ ὑμῶν ὅτι Ἐγὼ εἶπα, Θεοί ἐστε;
answered to.them the Jesus not is written in the law your that I I.said gods you.are

Jesus answered, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, you are gods'?"

¹⁰ See also 1:32, 6:14, 9:9c (UBS text), 9:17b, 9:23, 10:41 (UBS text), 13:11 (UBS text—the conclusion of the explanation which was introduced with γάρ), and 18:9.

¹¹ This principle presumably lies behind Blass, Debrunner & Funk's (1961:§470(1)) comment about John 3:28, "ὅτι is omitted before οὐκ because ὅτι already comes before εἶπον".

- b. *“If those to whom the word of God came were called ‘gods’—and the scripture cannot be annulled—*

c. ὃν ὁ πατήρ ἡγίασεν καὶ ἀπέστειλεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον
 whom the father sanctified and sent into the world
 ὑμεῖς λέγετε ὅτι Βλασφημεῖς,
 you you.say that you.blaspheme
 ὅτι εἶπον, Υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ εἰμι;
 because I.said Son of.the God I.am

“can you say of the one whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You blaspheme’ because I said, ‘I am God’s Son’?”

Similarly, in (8) (John 13:29), because *δοκέω* ‘think’ requires a complementizer when its complement is verbal and *ὅτι* introduces the matrix thought (*Jesus was telling him...*), the embedded speech (*Buy what we need for the festival*) will not be introduced with *ὅτι*.¹²

(8) τινὲς γὰρ ἐδόκουν, ἐπεὶ τὸ γλωσσόκομον εἶχεν Ἰουδᾶς,
 some for were.thinking since the money.box had Judas
 ὅτι λέγει αὐτῷ [ὁ] Ἰησοῦς, Ἄγορασον ὧν χρεῖαν ἔχομεν
 that says to.him the Jesus buy of.which need we.have
 εἰς τὴν ἑορτήν, ἢ τοῖς πτωχοῖς ἵνα τι δῶ.
 for the feast or to.the poor that something give

For some were thinking that, because Judas had the common purse, Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we have for the festival” or that he should give something to the poor.

Although this stylistic principle accounts for the presence versus absence of *ὅτι* at the beginning of many embedded speeches, there are some notable exceptions.

First of all, on four occasions, a citation from a written source is embedded in a reported speech that is not introduced with *ὅτι*, yet is not introduced with *ὅτι*, either. This is illustrated in (9) (John 6:31).¹³

(9) οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν τὸ μάννα ἔφαγον ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, καθὼς ἐστὶν
 the fathers our the manna ate in the wilderness as is
 γεγραμμένον, Ἄρτον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς φαγεῖν.
 written bread from the heaven gave to.them to.eat

Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, “He gave them bread from heaven to eat”.

Secondly, those assertions that are introduced with the formula *ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι/ὑμῖν* (§3) are arguably to be viewed as embedded, yet the majority are not introduced with *ὅτι*.

Thirdly, several other speeches are embedded in a reported speech that is not introduced with *ὅτι*, yet are not introduced with *ὅτι*, either. One such is illustrated in (10b) (John 7:35-36—UBS text).¹⁴

¹² The second alternative in the embedded speech (‘that he should give something to the poor’) is presented indirectly, with the complementizer *ἵνα* (the speech orienter is elided).

¹³ The others are found in 6:45, 13:18 and 19:21a.

¹⁴ The others are found in 1:15, 1:30, 8:52 (UBS text) and 14:9.

- (10) a. εἶπεν οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς, ... ζητήσετέ με καὶ οὐχ εὕρήσετέ
 said so the Jesus you.will.seek me and not you.will.find
 [με], καὶ ὅπου εἰμὶ ἐγὼ ὑμεῖς οὐ δύνασθε ἐλθεῖν.
 me and where I.am I you not you.will.be.able to.come
So Jesus said, "... You will search for me and not find me; and where I am, you cannot come."
- b. εἶπον οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι πρὸς ἑαυτούς, ... τίς ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος
 said so the Jews to selves what is the word
 οὗτος ὃν εἶπεν, Ζητήσετέ με καὶ οὐχ εὕρήσετέ [με],
 this which said you.will.seek me and not you.will.find me
 καὶ ὅπου εἰμὶ ἐγὼ ὑμεῖς οὐ δύνασθε ἐλθεῖν;
 and where I.am I you not you.will.be.able to.come
So the Jews said to one another, "... What does he mean by saying, 'You will search for me and not find me; and where I am, you cannot come'?"

Finally, in one or two instances an embedded speech is introduced by ὅτι even though another ὅτι precedes it. One such is illustrated in (11) (John 1:50); ὅτι *recitativum* introduces the embedded speech in the UBS text, even though the matrix speech begins with causal ὅτι.¹⁵

- (11) ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ, Ὅτι εἶπόν σοι
 answered Jesus and said to.him because I.said to.you
 ὅτι εἶδόν σε ὑποκάτω τῆς συκῆς, πιστεύεις;
 that I.saw you underneath the fig.tree you.believe
Jesus answered and said to him, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you underneath the fig tree?"

I conclude that there are enough counter-examples to the stylistic principle described in this section to warrant examining the pragmatic motivation for the use before an embedded speech or writing of ὅτι.

2.2. Ὅτι marking the embedded speech as indirect or ὅτι-direct

Most speeches that are embedded within another speech in John's Gospel cite a previous speech. The conclusions of §1 would lead us to expect ὅτι *not* to be present when the reporter purports to cite the original speech verbatim. When the reporter gives only the gist of the original speech, in contrast, he should introduce the speech with ὅτι. Similarly, ὅτι-direct speeches should be the culmination of some unit. And in fact, these principles account for many (but not all) of the speeches and writings that are embedded within another speech.

Example (10b) of §2.1 illustrates the *absence* of ὅτι when the reporter purports to cite a previous speech verbatim. The speech of (10b) cites (10a) (John 7:33-34) word for word.

¹⁶

¹⁵ The other potential example is 3:28a, though the UBS text brackets ὅτι *recitativum*.

¹⁶ See also 1:30 (repeating v. 15 with minor changes), 4:53 (UBS text—repeating v. 50), 6:41 (repeating parts of vv. 35 and 38), 8:22 (repeating v. 21), 8:52 (UBS text—repeating v. 51 with minor changes), 10:34 ((7a) of sec. 2.1, citing a speech in Psalm 82:6), 14:9 (repeating v. 8), 15:20 (repeating 13:16), 16:19 (repeating v. 17), and 21:17b (repeating v. 17a). In the case of 19:21b, the authorities are repeating the exact words that they claimed Jesus had said. In the cases of 1:15 and 1:33, there is no record in the Gospel of the original occasion when the words were uttered.

Similarly, (9) illustrates the absence of *ὅτι* when the reporter purports to cite a written source verbatim. Psalm 78:24 is cited word for word.¹⁷

Example (12b) below (John 18:37b) illustrates the *presence* of *ὅτι* when the reporting of the speech is *not* verbatim. The speech is reported in *indirect* form, with the form of the verb changed from second person (12a) to first person. This embedded speech provides the ground for the assertions of (12c) (v. 37c), so can be viewed as preliminary to those assertions.¹⁸

- (12) a. εἶπεν οὖν αὐτῷ ὁ Πιλάτος, Οὐκοῦν βασιλεὺς εἶ σύ;
said so to.him the Pilate not.so king you.are you
Then Pilate asked him, “So you are a king?”
- b. ἀπεκρίθη ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Σὺ λέγεις ὅτι βασιλεὺς εἰμι.
answered the Jesus you say that king I.am
Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king.
- c. *“For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who listens to the truth listens to my voice.”*

Similarly, though (13a) below (John 8:17) may allude to Deuteronomy 19:15 (“A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses”), it does not cite it directly. In other words, it gives but the gist of the Scripture to which it alludes, so may be interpreted as an instance of indirect reporting.¹⁹ Furthermore, the quotation provides the ground for the assertion of (13b) (v. 18), so may be viewed as preliminary to that assertion.

- (13) a. καὶ ἐν τῷ νόμῳ δὲ τῷ ὑμετέρῳ γέγραπται ὅτι
also in the law and the your has.been.written that
δύο ἀνθρώπων ἡ μαρτυρία ἀληθής ἐστίν.
two of.men the witness true is
“Furthermore, in your law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is valid.
- b. *“I testify on my own behalf, and the Father who sent me testifies on my behalf.”*

Ὅτι also introduces an embedded speech when that speech is not cited verbatim because it was *not uttered on a specific occasion*. This is illustrated in (14) (John 4:19-20); the woman is not thinking of a specific occasion when the generic ‘you’ (Jews) say, *The place where people must worship is Jerusalem*.²⁰

¹⁷ 6:45 is cited verbatim from Isaiah 54:13, and 13:18 from Psalm 41:9, while 19:21a cites what Pilate wrote (see v. 19).

¹⁸ See also 21:23b (alluding to v. 23a and providing the ground for the negative and positive assertions of v. 23c). In the case of embedded speeches involving the same speaker and addressee that are introduced with *ὅτι* and are not reported verbatim, it is unclear whether the speech is in indirect or *ὅτι*-direct form. Most are listed in footnote 23, as they appear to be the culmination of some unit.

¹⁹ Compare France’s (1985:88-89) comment about the allusion to the Scriptures in Matthew 2:23, “The formula introducing the quotation differs from the regular pattern ... it concludes ... with ‘that’ (hoti). This suggests that it is not meant to be a quotation of a specific passage, but a summary of a theme of prophetic expectation.”

²⁰ Commonly, the reputed speaker of such embedded speeches is the generic ‘you’. Further examples of this are 4:35, 8:54 and 9:19. See also 4:37 and 21:23a, both of which cite a saying (ὁ λόγος) that had wide currency at the time.

Incidentally, the only time that *ὅτι* is used in *Revelation* is to introduce embedded speeches that were not uttered on a specific occasion; see Rev. 3:17 (UBS text—following a causal *ὅτι*) and 18:7 (most MSS).

- (14) λέγει αὐτῷ ἡ γυνή, ... καὶ ὑμεῖς λέγετε ὅτι ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις
says to.him the woman and you you.say that in Jerusalem
ἐστὶν ὁ τόπος ὅπου προσκυνεῖν δεῖ.
is the place where to.worship it.is.necessary

The woman said to him, "... and you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem."

Embedded speeches that are *hypothetical* are not uttered on a specific occasion, either, so ὅτι introduces them. This is seen in (15) (John 16:26).²¹

- (15) καὶ οὐ λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐρωτήσω τὸν πατέρα περὶ ὑμῶν
and not I.say to.you that I I.will.ask the father concerning you
and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf;

Example (16c) (John 6:42) illustrates a speech which is reported in ὅτι-direct form because it culminates a reasoned argument. As far as the reporters are concerned, the fact that they know Jesus' relatives (16b) enables them to conclude that his assertion of (16a) (v. 38) is absurd.²²

- (16) a. ... καταβέβηκα ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ...
I.have.come.down from the heaven
"... I have come down from heaven..."
b. καὶ ἔλεγον, Οὐχ οὗτός ἐστιν Ἰησοῦς ὁ υἱὸς Ἰωσήφ,
and were.saying not this is Jesus the son of.Joseph
οὗ ἡμεῖς οἴδαμεν τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὴν μητέρα;
of.whomwe we.know the father and the mother
c. πῶς νῦν λέγει ὅτι ἔκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβέβηκα;
how now.says that out.of the heaven I.have.come.down

and they were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?"

Similarly, several citations from a written source that are presented with ὅτι are "quoted as the final point to an argument" (Levinsohn 1978:29), so I again take them as instances of ὅτι-direct forms. Such is the case with (17b) (John 15:25).²³

- (17) a. "Whoever hates me hates my Father also. (24) If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not have sin. But now they have seen and hated both me and my Father.

²¹ See also 8:48 and 8:55. All the speeches in *1 John* that are introduced with ὅτι are hypothetical ones that are not uttered on a specific occasion; see 1 John 1:6, 1:8, 1:10, 2:4 (UBS text) and 4:20.

²² See also 8:33, 11:40 (UBS text), 13:33 (UBS text) and 16:15. In addition, the following speeches could be interpreted as being in indirect or ὅτι-direct form but, as they are the culmination of some unit, are listed here: 6:36, 6:65 and 12:34b (UBS text). As in Luke-Acts, the culminating citation is sometimes followed by a supporting comment (see Levinsohn 1978:30), such as one introduced with γὰρ or causal ὅτι (e.g. 8:24 and 10:36a).

In the case of 9:41b (νῦν δὲ λέγετε ὅτι βλέπομεν 'But now you say, "We see"'), the speech in ὅτι-direct form occurs as the ground of the concluding assertion.

²³ The Scriptures to which (17b) alludes (Psalms 35:19 and 69:4) express the same thought in nominalized form in both the Hebrew and the LXX (e.g. οἱ ἐκδιώκοντές με ἀδίκως 'the ones hating me unjustly'). See also 19:21b (though a complementizer such as ὅτι may be obligatory when the speech orienter is elided). The quotation in 7:42 ('Has not the Scripture said...?') also concludes an argument, though it cites no Scripture directly.

- b. ἀλλ' ἵνα πληρωθῆ ὁ λόγος ὁ ἐν τῷ νόμῳ αὐτῶν
 but that may.be.fulfilled the word the in the law their
 γεγραμμένος ὅτι Ἐμίσησάν με δωρεάν.
 written that they.hated me without.cause

“Indeed, it was to fulfill the word that is written in their law, ‘They hated me without a cause’.”

Now for the residual examples! First, there are three occasions when a reported speaker quotes himself without introducing his words with ὅτι, yet the report is not verbatim. In each instance, ὅτι occurs in the immediate context, so the stylistic principle of §2.1 would explain why it is not used to introduce the embedded citation. However, the absence of ὅτι may imply that the reporter considers himself to be saying the same thing as before.

This is seen in (18b) (John 3:5-7), where Jesus cites what he said in v. 3 (18a). The stylistic reason for not using ὅτι is that it occurred only two words before. The pragmatic explanation is that, although Jesus uses different words, the absence of ὅτι implies that he considers himself to be saying the same thing.²⁴

- (18) a. ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ, Ἄμην ἀμὴν λέγω σοι,
 answered Jesus and said to.him truly truly I.say to.you
 ἐὰν μὴ τις γεννηθῆ ἄνωθεν, οὐ δύναται ἰδεῖν τὴν
 if not anyone be.born again not be.able to.see the
 βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ.
 kingdom of.the God

Jesus answered and said to him, “Very truly, I tell you, unless a person is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

- b. ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς, ... μὴ θαυμάσης ὅτι εἶπόν σοι,
 answered Jesus ... not marvel that I.said to.you
 δεῖ ὑμᾶς γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν.
 it.is.necessary you to.be.born again

Jesus answered, “... Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’”

Concerning (19c) below (John 18:8), a second reference to the original speech has already been made in (19b) (v. 6), without using ὅτι (at least, in the UBS text). The stylistic explanation for the presence of ὅτι when Jesus himself refers again to the speech is that the matrix speech is introduced without ὅτι. However, the speech of (19d) may be indirect (first person references remain unchanged in embedded speeches when the reporter was also the original speaker). The presence of ὅτι would then mark the speech of (19c) as preliminary to the request of (19d).²⁵

²⁴ The other examples are found in 10:36b and 14:28. Pope (p.c.) comments, “Perhaps the point is that when a speaker claims to cite himself, it doesn’t matter what kind of transforms or summarization he uses, it still counts as citing himself accurately... If this line of argument is correct, any case of ὅτι when a speaker is citing himself would have to be ὅτι-direct not indirect.”

²⁵ A related explanation is one I offered for ὅτι *recitativum* in Luke-Acts, viz., that the speech so marked terminates “a local topic which forms the basis for a larger unit” (Levinsohn 1978:30). In this particular passage, the topic of identifying ‘I’ as the person being sought is terminated, and forms the basis for the request of (19d). See also 1:50 (UBS text).

- (19) a. λέγει αὐτοῖς, Ἐγὼ εἰμι.
says to.them I I.am
He says to them, "I am he."
- b. ὡς οὖν εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Ἐγὼ εἰμι, ἀπῆλθον ...
when so said to.them I I.am withdrew
So when he said to them, "I am he," they stepped back...
- c. ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς, Εἶπον ὑμῖν ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι.
answered Jesus I.said to.you that I I.am
- d. εἰ οὖν ἐμὲ ζητεῖτε, ἄφετε τούτους ὑπάγειν.
if so me you.seek allow these.ones to.go.away
Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go."

Finally, the speech of (20b) (John 4:17) is in ὅτι-direct form, but does not culminate Jesus' argument. The presence of ὅτι is most easily explained by the stylistic principle of §2.1.²⁶

- (20) a. ἀπεκρίθη ἡ γυνὴ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ, Οὐκ ἔχω ἄνδρα.
answered the woman and said to.him not I.have husband
The woman answered and said to him, "I don't have a husband."
- b. λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Καλῶς εἶπας ὅτι Ἄνδρα οὐκ ἔχω.
says to.her the Jesus well you.say that husband not I.have
Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I don't have a husband';
- c. *for you have had five husbands and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!"*

In summary, the absence of ὅτι recitativum before an embedded speech or writing usually indicates that the reporter purports to repeat verbatim what was communicated on a specific, previous occasion. An embedded speech or writing in indirect form does not purport to reproduce verbatim the original words of a specific communication and/or is preliminary to what follows. An embedded speech or writing in ὅτι-direct form usually indicates that it culminates some unit. However, a stylistic explanation for the presence or absence of ὅτι before an embedded speech sometimes seems the best.

3. Ὅτι following ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι/ὑμῖν

On twenty-five occasions in John's Gospel, Jesus is reported as introducing an assertion with the formula ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι/ὑμῖν.²⁷ The norm is for ὅτι not to follow the formula; it is used only seven times.

When ὅτι follows a similar formula in Luke-Acts, it marks the culminating point of a reasoned argument (Levinsohn 1978:28-29). While this does not exactly hold in John's Gospel, it is true that the following assertion "is a commentary on" what has already been stated (loc. cit.). In particular, when ὅτι follows ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι/ὑμῖν, it signals that the following assertion explains,

²⁶ Another instance in which the speech is in ὅτι-direct form but does not culminate an argument is found in 9:11 (UBS text). Pope (p.c.) comments, "I suggest follow variant reading which is also well supported."

²⁷ In addition, Jesus' assertion of 16:7 is introduced with ἐγὼ τὴν ἀλήθειαν λέγω ὑμῖν 'I tell you the truth.'

clarifies or otherwise makes explicit some previous point.²⁸ In contrast, assertions introduced with ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι/ὕμῖν that lack ὅτι typically introduce new points.

This is seen by comparing (21a) (John 10:1) with (21b) (v. 7—UBS text). Assertion (21a), which lacks ὅτι, introduces the topic of “false and true shepherds” (Alford 1863.I:804), together with the image of the gate of the sheepfold. This speech is followed by the observation (v. 6), *Jesus used this figure with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them*. Consequently, the assertion of (21b) interprets the figure for Jesus’ audience. The presence of ὅτι signals that (21b) does not introduce a new point, but makes some previous point explicit.

- (21) a. Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὁ μὴ εἰσερχόμενος διὰ τῆς θύρας
truly truly I.say to.you the not entering through the door
εἰς τὴν αὐλήν τῶν προβάτων ἀλλὰ ἀναβαίνων ἀλλαχόθεν
into the fold of.the sheep but going.up another.way
ἐκεῖνος κλέπτῃς ἐστὶν καὶ ληστής· ...
that.one thief is and robber

“Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit...”

- b. Εἶπεν οὖν πάλιν ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι
said so again the Jesus truly truly I.say to.you that
ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ θύρα τῶν προβάτων. ...
I I.am the gate.of.the sheep

So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep...”

A similar contrast is found in (22) (John 13:18-21). The absence of ὅτι in (22b) (v. 20) is consistent with the assertion not relating closely to the context.²⁹ Its presence in (22c) (v. 21) signals that the assertion makes explicit something that has already been said (22a) (vv. 18-19).³⁰

- (22) a. “I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But it is to fulfill the scripture, ‘The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.’ I tell you this now, before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am he.
- b. ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὁ λαμβάνων ἅν τινα πέμψω ἐμὲ
truly truly I.say to.you the.one receiving whomever I.may.send me
λαμβάνει, ...
receives
“Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me...”
- c. Ταῦτα εἰπὼν [ὁ] Ἰησοῦς ἐταράχθη τῷ πνεύματι
this having.said the Jesus was.troubled in.the spirit
καὶ ἐμαρτύρησεν καὶ εἶπεν, Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι
and testified and said truly truly I.say to.you that

²⁸ I am grateful to Tony Pope (p.c.) for pointing this out to me.

²⁹ “The connexion is very difficult, and variously set down” (op. cit. 838).

³⁰ See also 5:24 and 25 (making more explicit points made in vv. 22 and 21 in support of the assertion of v. 19), 8:34 (making explicit the implication of v. 32 that the hearers need to be freed from some sort of slavery), and 16:20 (vv. 20-22 explain how v. 19 is to be understood). 3:11 (“we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you (plural) do not receive our testimony”) gets “to the heart of the matter” (Pope p.c.) discussed in previous verses, especially the unbelief expressed in v. 9 by the question, “How can these things be?”

εἰς ἕξ ὑμῶν παραδώσει με.
one from you will.betray me

After saying this Jesus was troubled in spirit, and declared, "Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me."

In summary, then, when ὅτι follows the formula ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι/ὑμῖν in John's Gospel, it signals that the assertion concerned makes some previous point explicit.

I conclude that ὅτι *recitativum* is not to be taken as the "equivalent of inverted commas" (Turner 1963:326). Instead, when introducing direct speech, its function is to mark the speech concerned as culminating some unit or, at least, as signaling that the speech makes some previous point explicit.³¹

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³¹ It may be significant that both causal ὅτι and ὅτι *recitativum* relate to what has already been stated in a supportive way.

On the basis of this paper, Pope made a preliminary analysis of ὅτι *recitativum* in Matthew's Gospel, and concluded (p.c.), "Most ὅτι-direct examples in Mt are culminating a unit or providing a strong reply or riposte which stops someone in their tracks. The latter don't fit well into this pattern; they seem to be simply exclamatory and/or shocking. This is related in the sense that they mark strong assertion, just as the climactic/culminating use, but they do not culminate the unit. So these data make me doubt whether your pragmatic explanation in Jn is exactly right. It ought to be broader, I think, and it might be that some of your residue examples would then fit better."

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