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GRAMMAR AND CULTURAL PRACTICES: THE GRAMMATICALIZATION OF TRIADIC COMMUNICATION IN WEST AFRICAN LANGUAGES

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The use of intermediaries in West Africa to channel information between an addressor and an addressee in communicative interaction is well documented in the ethnographic literature and is evident to the most casual observer. Similarly, logophoricity—the use of distinct pronouns or verbal markers to signal or report the speech, thoughts, wants, desires etc. of an individual other than the speaker—has been described for many West African languages. In addition, epistemological particles with functions similar to the logophoric markers exist in some of the languages (e.g. Akan and Sissala). Yet, the links between the cultural practice of triadic communication and these grammatical devices have not been explored. In this paper, I argue that logophoric marking and other forms of responsibility attribution devices found in West African languages are an embodiment in the grammars of the cultural preoccupation with third party communication in the area.

En Afrique Occidentale l'usage d'intermédiaires pour canaliser une information entre un locuteur et un récepteur dans une interaction communicative est bien documentée dans les publications ethnographiques, et se laisse observer par l'auditeur le plus désintéressé. De même, la logophoricité — l'usage de pronoms particuliers ou de marqueurs verbaux pour signaler ou pour rapporter les paroles, les pensées, les besoins, les désirs, etc. d'un individu autre que le locuteur — a été décrit pour plusieurs langues ouest-africaines. De plus, il existe dans quelques langues, dont l'akan et le sissala, des particules épistémologiques aux fonctions semblables à celles des marqueurs logophoriques. Or on n'a encore jamais examiné les liens entre la pratique culturelle de communication par triade et ces outils grammaticaux. Dans cette étude je propose que l'usage de marqueurs logophoriques et d'autres outils pour l'attribution de responsabilités, tels qu'on les trouve dans les langues ouest-africaines, sont une manifestation dans leurs grammaires de la préoccupation culturelle dans la région concernant la communication via un tiers.

0. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper[1] is to explore the following question posed by Whorf (1956:138):

Are there traceable affinities between (a) cultural and behavioural norms and (b) large-scale linguistic patterns?

More specifically, I want to ask whether the cultural practice of triadic communication in West Africa can be correlated with any grammatical patterns in the languages of the area. I claim that the triadic mode of communication shows 'affinities' with linguistic patterns of signalling evidential stance of two types, namely: logophoric markers and epistemological particles. For some, discovering and establishing such correlations can only be a matter of speculation because of the "danger of being either circular or too daring" (Aikhenvald 2000:103).[2] However, as Wierzbicka argues, such dangers have to be faced, albeit cautiously and prudently. She writes:

[2] Aikhenvald was here wondering about the correlations between the existence of a grammatical system of evidentiality and other cultural patterns. She cites in a footnote their conjecture from Aikhenvald and Dixon (1998) that "the use of a grammatical system of evidentials may correlate with such matters as: (i) Whether

Syntactic typology which deliberately closes its eyes to semantic and cultural dimensions of formal diversity of languages is ultimately sterile and unilluminating. The introduction of semantic and cultural dimensions involves certain dangers, but these dangers must be faced. (Wierzbicka 2002:200).

In this paper, I want to proceed cautiously and prudently to show that there is an elaboration of cultural practices of triadic communication in the grammars of West African languages.

The paper is structured as follows: Section 1 sketches the observations that have been made in the literature about the cultural practice and the linguistic patterns that we are concerned with. In section 2, the nature of the grammar and culture correlations subsumed under the term *ethnosyntax* are explained, and the methodological assumptions are outlined. In section 3 I discuss the perspective on grammaticalization that I adopt. In section 4 what is meant by a triadic mode of communication is explained. In section 5 I try to establish, independently of grammar, that there is a cultural communicative institution of using intermediaries in West African societies. The rest of the paper explores the usage effects of this mode of communication on linguistic structure. Finally, it is suggested that some grammatical and lexical patterns in West African languages could be viewed as instances of the cultural elaboration of the triadic mode of communication in these languages, and a typology of these systems is proposed. The paper concludes in section 6 with a summary and discussion of the issues raised by the affinities between the cultural norm and the linguistic patterns suggested.

1. SPEAKING IN WEST AFRICA: CULTURAL NORMS AND GRAMMATICAL SYSTEMS

The use of intermediaries in West Africa to channel information between an addressor (source) and an addressee in formal and informal communicative interaction is well documented in the ethnographic literature. As Yankah (1995:2) observes:

> In studying the socio-cultural norms of speaking in West Africa, the scholar would have inevitably stumbled upon triadic communication—the art of communicating with another through a third party—as a remarkable phenomenon in formal discourse.

Different ethnographers have offered different explanations for this phenomenon. Along the coast, the system is typically said to originate from royal discourse where respect for the king or chief dictates the use of a spokesperson in communicating with him. In the Sahel region, where the societies tend to be stratified into "occupational" castes—nobles, artisans, bards and ex-slaves—the nobles are not allowed to speak in public "because of shame", hence the bards are their spokespersons (cf. e.g. Irvine 1990). Thus along the coast the explanation is in terms of royal distance, while in the

there is a convention that one should be as specific as possible when speaking, or whether a high degree of vagueness is a normal social expectation. (ii) Attitudes to the communication of information—whether one should tell people what they want to know or whether new information should be regarded as prized goods, only to be disseminated in exchange for some appropriate return. (iii) Attitudes to truth, e.g., whether or not telling lies is an accepted social practice".

Sahel region, it is explained in terms of emotion. Ultimately, I believe, the two forms of explanation can be reconciled, but the common element is the use of a third party in communication. Some linguistic anthropologists have pointed out certain effects that this mode of communication has had on language use by those who act as spokespersons in such a communication system (see below). They have, however, stopped short of suggesting any correlations between the triadic mode of communication and grammatical devices used in the languages in the West African region.

Similarly, in the linguistic literature on West African languages, the elaboration of logophoricity—the use of distinct grammatical forms such as pronouns or verbal markers, to report the speech, thoughts, wants, desires etc. of an individual other than the speaker—has been noted. Thus in (1a) below the logophoric pronoun indicates that it is the subject of the matrix clause, Kofi, who wants to leave. In (1b), on the other hand, the use of the regular third person singular pronoun indicates that it is someone else whom Kofi wants to leave.[3]

(1) a **Kofi₁ dí bé ye₁-a-dzó**   (Ewe)
        Kofi want QT LOG-IRR-leave
        Kofi wants to leave.

     b **Kofi₁ dí bé wò₁-a-dzó**
        Kofi want QT 3sg-IRR-leave
        Kofi wants him/her to leave.

The accounts of this phenomenon are either syntactic, or discursive (see for example Clements 1975, Essegbey 1994, Dimmendaal 2001; see also Culy 1994 and 1997, Huang 2000, and von Roncador 1992 for overviews; and see Güldemann 2001 for an areal typological overview).

Some researchers have wondered whether logophoric marking and the triadic mode of communication can be related. For instance, in the early 1980's, the editors of the Mouton Anthropological Linguistics series exemplified the sorts of questions that volumes in the series might deal with by wondering whether the system of logophoric marking found in West African languages could be linked to the practice of communicating with chiefs in this area through a spokesperson. H. Hill (1995), in explaining the choice of pronouns in Adioukrou, a Kwa language of Côte d'Ivoire, suggests that the use of reported pronouns (i.e. logophoric pronouns) is consistent with the triadic mode of interaction in the culture. She explains that a speaker uses reported pronouns when they want to "encode someone else's speech as a reporter transmitting a message... When a speaker is simply a reporter he is assuming the role of the neutral third party. *Using third parties is in accord with the preferred method of interaction in Adioukrou culture*" (p. 93, emphasis added). In this paper it is asserted that a link can be made between logophoricity and the triadic mode of communication in West Africa. It is argued that the use of logophoric markers is not only consistent with a triadic mode of communication, but there are, in addition to the logophoric constructions, various specialised constructions in the area which meet the imperatives of

[3] For the meanings of abbreviations used in the interlinear glosses, please see the list on p. 26. In the Ewe examples, high tones are marked throughout with an acute accent in addition to the customary marking of low tones in the traditional orthography with a grave accent. Ewe orthographic ʄ and ʋ are the voiceless and voiced bilabial fricatives respectively.

the preoccupation with third party communication. Thus it is argued that various mechanisms for signalling reported or represented speech and for the attribution of responsibility in discourse are an embodiment in the grammars of the cultural preoccupation with a triadic mode of communication in the area. In particular, I claim that epistemological particles, or forms which in terms of Relevance Theory have been referred to as *interpretive use* markers, with functions similar to the logophoric markers (Ameka 1994), exist in some West African languages such as Akan (Agyekum 2002; Yelbert 1996, 1997) and Sissala (Blass 1989, 1990)—see (2) below; and constitute one form of the elaboration of triadic communication in the grammars of West African languages. An illustration of this kind of particle is given in (2), where the use of the particle ré at the end of the utterance indicates that the speaker is representing the thoughts and speech of others.

(2)   Náŋá suse. Ba kaa konni yo ta ré.   (Sissala)
     some died they took cut throw leave IM
     Some died and were untied and were left there (it is said).
     (Blass 1990:99, ex. 11.)

The interesting thing is that these two grammatical devices—logophoric marking and epistemological particles—seem to be in complementary distribution in the languages.

There have been several investigations into the correlation between West African languages and West African cultures in the area of vocabulary (such as Breedveld and de Bruyn 1996) and in ways of speaking (for example Irvine 1974, Goody 1972, Ameka 1999). However, linguists and grammarians in particular have generally shied away from the question of whether the grammatical structuring of meaning in a language may be influenced by cultural preoccupations of its speakers. Part of the reason for this lies in the sociological and historical aspects of the discipline and especially in the history of the study of the relation between language and culture. It is generally agreed that words or keywords are emblematic of the cultures in which they are used. This much is now fairly widely accepted. But when it comes to grammar, many people are more speculative. However, a growing body of studies that affirm the idea of cultural elaboration in grammar has appeared in recent times (see the papers in Enfield 2002b, as well as Lucy 1992 for a summary of earlier studies in this area in the Boasian tradition). Studies of that kind on African languages are conspicuously absent. In the next section, the main issues in the study of the relation between culture and grammar are summarised.

2. ETHNOSYNTAX: CULTURE IN GRAMMAR

More than two decades ago, Anna Wierzbicka suggested that "alongside the widely recognised field of ethno-semantics a new field of inquiry should be created and promoted namely 'ethnosyntax'" (Wierzbicka 1979:313-314). By ethnosyntax she meant the investigation of culture-specific meanings encoded in grammatical constructions in various languages. One way to go about this study, in her view, is to investigate the meanings of grammatical constructions in specific languages in a rigorous manner, such that:

The meanings encoded in the grammar of different languages can be compared and the differences between them can be shown explicitly. In particular, proceeding in this way we can reveal areas of special elaboration, areas that a given language seems to be particularly 'interested in' and which it seems to regard as particularly important. (Wierzbicka 1988:12.)

Goddard (2002:53) suggests that the term ethnosyntax should be reserved for such specific phenomena in which culture-related specifiable semantic content is encoded in morpho-syntactic constructions of individual languages. However, he concedes that one can also interpret the term more broadly in terms of the way in which various connections can be made between culture and grammar. Whether construed more narrowly or more broadly, ethnosyntax implies a direct connection between grammar and culture, or a sense of the inter-constitutive nature of both culture and grammar (see Enfield 2002a for a fuller explication, and other papers in Enfield 2002b for illustrations; see also Bickel 2000). For our purposes, suffice it to say that there are different forms in which the grammar–culture relationship can manifest itself. First, some grammatical constructions of a language may encode culture-specific meanings directly. For instance, Wierzbicka (1992:385) argues that the semantics of some expressive derivations in Australian English such as 'prezzie' for 'present' or 'mozzies' for 'mosquitoes' embody "characteristic features of the Australian ethos: anti-sentimentality, jocular cynicism, a tendency to knock things down to size, 'mateship', good-natured humour, love of informality, and dislike for 'long words'". Second, some grammatical constructions or devices may be used in culture-specific ways without having culture-specific semantics as such in some languages. For instance, Enfield (2002a) reports personal communication from David Wilkins suggesting that some languages may use switch reference systems or classifier constructions in culture-specific ways either because of culture-specific pragmatics or worldview, or because of the culture-specific semantics of the lexical items involved. It could be argued that the extended use of logophoric pronouns in self reference in Ewe as well as Yoruba, referred to as "taboo use" by Bamgbose (1986), could be seen as a culture-specific use based on the culture-specific semantics of the logophoric pronouns. Thirdly, grammatical constructions may index socio-cultural distinctions. These are well known from sociolinguistic studies of class distinctions in societies, such as India, correlated with the use of specific grammatical constructions. Fourth, just as cultural contact affects vocabulary, so can it affect grammar. A simple example here is the introduction of grammatical constructions through calquing, although these may not be culture-specific. An interesting example is the use of extraposed complement clauses in Ewe which is a calque on the English construction (see (3)).

(3)   bé ye-wó-á-dzó   lá hiã
     QT LOG-PL-IRR-leave TP become.necessary
     That they should leave is necessary.

The interplay between culture and contact just illustrated has some methodological implications for the study of ethnosyntax. On the one hand, it might lead to a situation where two linguistic communities may have similar constructions but not necessarily similar cultural institutions to support them. On the other hand, some linguistic communities may have similar institutions and particular culturally relevant

constructions may have spread to them. The cultural practice may then sustain and maintain the construction. This is pertinent for the discussion of logophoricity in West Africa because it is possible that the presence of logophoric markers in some of the languages is due to areal contact. In fact, Dimmendaal (2001:152) surmises that logophoricity in Chadic (and Omotic), if not due to inheritance from Proto-Afroasiatic, could have been introduced "as a result of areal contact with Niger-Congo and Nilo-Saharan" languages where they are an archaic feature of discourse "probably going back to their common ancestor" (Dimmendaal 2001:155).[4]

An important methodological requirement in studies of the relation between grammar and culture is forcefully articulated by Hale (1986:233) as follows: "...establishing a connection between a philosophical postulate [worldview / cultural theme—FKA] and a principle of grammar, requires that the two be established independently". This principle is a basic assumption in this paper and its rigorous application minimises the danger of circularity. For this reason, I will first establish the cultural practice and introduce the grammatical patterns and then attempt to relate the two. In such studies, one should also be aware of the fact that "[T]here is an interplay between language structure and language use such that usage properties often have effects or correlates in linguistic structure" (Levinsohn 1988:164–5). In ṕᵻ some of the usage effects discernible from the speech of those who act as intermediaries will be shown. In fact the usage effects may lead to the rise of specialised grammaticalised constructions in specific cultures. It could be argued following Wierzbicka (1991) that WH-imperatives in English of the form 'Can you do X?' 'Would you do X?', 'Why don't you do X?' etc. are, as it were, tailor-made for the culture-specific norm of the principle of personal autonomy in Anglo-Saxon culture (see Goddard 2002). The interrogative structure has the effect of making the command seem more like a question and gives room for the addressee to exercise their own will.

There are various ways in which culture and grammar are related. To understand grammar and the grammatical constructions of a language we should understand how they may be spawned, maintained and sustained by culture-specific practices or values in an inter-constitutive manner.

3. PERSPECTIVES ON GRAMMATICALIZATION

There are different perspectives on grammaticalization.[5] Two views bear on ethnosyntactic issues. One of these is the coding view, where grammaticalization is understood in terms of what must be expressed in the grammar of particular languages (cf. Jakobson 1962, Apresjan 2000, Hale 1986). The obligatory expression of particular grammatical features in a language has consequences for "thinking for speaking" (e.g. Slobin 1996). Logophoric marking and the use of epistemological particles in West African languages are obligatory categories. As such these systems force their speakers

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[4] A limitation on the present study is that it will stop short of a systematic study of the distribution of logophoricity or of the epistemological particles and their different types in the West African region. The paper should be seen as a first step to a more in-depth study of the phenomena.

[5] The classical view of grammaticalization as reflected in the definition by Meillet 1912—the development of a lexical item into a grammatical marker—is not particularly relevant for our present purposes, although it is pertinent for understanding the evolution of logophoric markers and epistemological particles from various lexical sources (see von Roncador 1992 and Dimmendaal 2001).

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to pay attention to whether what they say is a representation of someone else's speech or thought or not.

Another view is where grammaticalization is construed as primarily the emergence of syntactic and structured patterns from fluid patterns of language use (Hopper and Traugott 1993:2). Here grammaticalization is seen as the routinization and fixation of patterns frequently occurring in language use: today's syntax reflects the discourse patterns of yesterday (cf. contributions in Bybee and Hopper 2001 and several discourse grammarians, and also Heine et al. 1991). As one discourse grammarian has observed:

> Syntax cannot be understood or explained without reference to BOTH its evolution ex-discourse and the communicative parameters and principles that govern both its rise out of the pragmatic mode and its selective use along the register of human communication. (Givón 1979:109.)

From an ethnosyntactic point of view, today's grammatical constructions may reflect cultural preoccupations of yesterday, their emergence and their inter-constitutive nature. My concern in this paper is with a view of grammaticalization in terms of (obligatory) expression in grammar and how this expression reflects not only yesterday's discourse patterns and culture but also how it is, as it were, maintained and constrained by today's modes of discursive interaction or language usage and cultural practices in West Africa. The discursive and cultural practice I am concerned with is the triadic mode of communication, which is explained in the next section.

4. THE TRIADIC MODE OF COMMUNICATION

Several authors, especially ethnographers and anthropologists, have observed that a general mode of interaction in West African societies can be characterised as one of 'indirection'. That is, there is a general dispreference for direct, literal and plain talk. Vague and unhelpful as the term 'indirection' may be in cross-cultural studies (see for example Wierzbicka 1991), the scholars give examples such as the use of proverbs, the expression of many things by euphemisms, the use of allusive names and a negative attitude towards talking in plain language as manifestations of this 'indirection'. To crown it all, the triadic mode of communication or the use of speech intermediaries is also cited as a reflection of this general indirection (see Obeng 1994, Yankah 1995 among others, and references therein).

The most obvious domain in which this third party mode of communication is evident is that of formal discourse, as the quote from Yankah cited earlier shows. However, it should be stressed that triadic communication is not restricted to formal discourse. In fact, Yankah himself (1995:17) observes that even though the practice "may have originated within the royal domain, it has spread to all communicative settings where social status and verbal wit can be asserted for social or political advantage". Indeed, as Yankah (1995:182) later notes:

> It would be puzzling if the mode of formal communication remained exclusively within the royal sphere... Outside the socio-political structure the mode of royal oratory discussed here has had a trickle down effect; it permeates all formal encounters involving face-to-face communication.

While it is almost impossible to communicate without an intermediary in formal encounters, informal encounters also use the triadic mode of communication. Thus a discursive interaction between a parent and a child in the home could be conducted in the triadic mode without assuming a formal character.

It should also be noted that just as the term *dyadic* misrepresents the mode of communication used in 'Western' conversation (cf. Goffman 1981; Hymes 1974; Levinson 1988 among others), the term *triadic* is a simplification of the mode of communication that goes on in both formal and informal discourse. There are indeed different forms of this mode; in its simplest form it involves at least three participants fulfilling three roles. I will use the terms for various participant roles which derive from Goffman's work and which have been put on their proper linguistic footing by Levinson (1988); see also Hill and Irvine (1992). Thus, on the production side of the exchange there is a principal who is the source of the message and the intermediary who is the animator or relayer of the message. In the simplest form this animator acts as intermediary for both the principal and the addressee. Schematically this can be represented as follows:

Production   Recipient
Principal   animator/relayer   Addressee/target

More commonly, the target also has an intermediary (cf. Yankah 1995:111), which already calls into question the term triadic since a fourth participant is introduced:

Production   Recipient
Principal   animator/relayer   Addressee   target

Yankah (1995), who subsumes the triadic mode of communication under surrogate oratory, identifies the following five reflexes of surrogation and observes that the first three are the more common forms of triadic discourse in the West African context. Note that his depiction of the reflexes is biased towards the production angle.

1. Principal speaks, mediator transmits the message in embellished form, either through artistic elaboration or paraphrasing.
2. Principal speaks, mediator literally repeats words spoken or part thereof.
3. Principal speaks, mediator ratifies by affirmative formulae, confirming the truth in the principal's word.
4. Principal is present but does not speak, his message is spoken by an orator.
5. Principal is absent from the scene of discourse, his orator speaks on his behalf. (Yankah 1995:13)

In sum, the triadic mode of communication involves the use of speech intermediaries in conversational interchange. It is not a mode restricted to royal or formal domains as the literature suggests, rather it permeates all types of formal and informal encounters. There are variations on this mode of communication and the forms that are found more commonly in West African societies are illustrated in the next section.

4.1 FORMS OF TRIADIC COMMUNICATION IN WEST AFRICA

Given the different reflexes of the use of intermediaries, it should not be surprising that there are different forms of this mode of communication associated with different cultural areas in the West African region. Some of these are:

(i) *An intermediary per party:* In this case each party in the interaction has an intermediary through whom the communication is channelled. This is the commonest form found in royal discourse in many communities along the West African coast (see Yankah 1995:8).

(ii) *Chain of intermediaries:* Here the communication from a source is transmitted to the target through a series of intermediaries. Such a system is reported for the Mossi of Burkina Faso by Tarr (1979), cited in Yankah (1995:8):

> The message to be communicated originates with the source. He whispers it up to his friend, who in turn whispers it to a lesser chief, who in turn whispers it to the big chief's main spokesman who then finally brings the message in an audible voice to the chief's hearing. (Tarr 1979:204.)

(iii) *A social class or a caste institutionalised as speech intermediaries:* This form is widespread in the Sahel region of West Africa[6] where societies tend to be stratified into occupational castes of nobles, artisans, bards or griots and freed people (see Tamari 1991 for a social history of the system). Irvine (1990:145) characterises the cultural imperative of the system for the Wolof community in Senegal as follows:

> If a high ranking person needs to communicate something to a large group or to some other person of similarly high rank, he or she must resort to an intermediary, someone of lower rank (often a griot), to perform the communicative task. The noble says something quietly to the intermediary, perhaps whispering in his or her ear; the intermediary then repeats the message loudly and more elaborately, relaying it to its intended receiver. (Irvine 1990:145).

She adds:

> Not only chiefs, but high ranking Wolof villagers in general rely heavily on intermediaries, occasionally even double intermediaries, in situations they consider formal or important, and when they must address a message to the public, to a stranger, or to someone of equally high rank. For instance, any public announcement (of a birth, a death, a religious celebration, an upcoming meeting, etc.) must be relayed through a griot.

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[6] Tamari (1991:232) notes that the great Moroccan traveler Ibn Battuta observed that during his visit to the Mali empire between 1352 and 1353 the king always spoke through a spokesperson who also organised all musical shows and was the best musician of the court. This is a reference to a bard who served in the royal court. This observation suggests that the system of spokespersons as musicians and of the caste system as such must be very old. Irvine (1990:145) also remarks that the use of speech intermediaries among the Wolof and Manding was attested as early as 1506, when the Portuguese explorer Fernandes observed that in groups as small as three, and even when all parties were present, intermediaries were used.

Similarly, when important visitors come to his household, a high ranking
noble does not greet them directly but calls on an intermediary—a griot,
a slave, a son, a wife—to do so and to mediate the conversation. (Irvine
1990:145.)

(iv) *Intermediary in story telling:* In some communities in West Africa, an intermedi-
ary is employed in oral narrative performance. The principal or performer directs
the story first to the intermediary who relays it to the wider audience. There is
linguistic evidence that such intermediaries are viewed to be the same as the in-
termediaries used in conversational interaction. There is evidence that in some of
the languages both intermediaries are labelled the same way (see Yankah 1995).

The different forms of the use of intermediaries in interaction in West Africa il-
lustrate the institutionalised nature of the triadic mode of communication in these so-
cieties. They also demonstrate the pervasiveness of this mode of communication in
different interactional settings. One may well ask why such a practice should come
about. The different motivations that have been advanced for this system of communi-
cation are outlined in the next section.

4.2 WHY INTERMEDIARIES?

There are two main explanations that have been offered for the use of speech in-
termediaries in West Africa. One of these is that the system enables interlocutors to
keep some distance from the royal, and the intermediary thus serves to protect and
maintain the sanctity of the royal. As Yankah (1995) explains, because the king is sa-
cred, every effort is made to avoid direct communication between him and others and
the intermediary serves as a shield even against potent evil words that might be di-
rected at the king. In sum:

The adoption of various distancing strategies in royal presence is partly
meant to preserve the sanctity of royal space. It insures the royalty against
the perils of face-to-face interaction where his person could be defiled and
where speech directed at him may be spiritually potent. ... the royal sur-
rogate then becomes not only a mouthpiece, but also a buffer on which all
dangerous words are deflected. (Yankah 1995:19.)

Another explanation which is particularly given with respect to the communities
in the Sahel region is that the use of intermediaries is to protect the nobles from dis-
playing emotion in public. Irvine (1990:145) reports that the brother of the village
chief offers the following explanation for why the chief does not speak in public:

He [the chief] ought not to speak in the public plaza, he ought not to speak
in front of many persons. He is a chief and a great *marabout* [religious
leader], and he would be ashamed.

In a sense, the avoidance of the display of emotion in public by the nobles could be
extended to the royal distance explanation. The former is a more specific instantiation
of the latter. However, in the Sahelian communities there is an avoidance behaviour
associated with various castes, especially the nobles, which ties in with the interaction
style in communication. From this perspective it is easy to see how the emotional

expression which is tabooed in other respects too gets a prominent place in the expla-
nations. In fact, the use of the speech intermediaries as a channel for (not) venting
affect is not limited to nobles or chiefs. The Wolof use triadic communication and
intermediaries in the performance of verbal abuse:

In *xaxuar* insult poetry, women in the family to which a new bride has
come hire griots—professional verbal artists—to chant outrageous poems
insulting the bride, her relatives, and other members of the community.
The insults performed in the *xaxuar* are potent. They can destroy careers,
and offended parties have tried to restrict these performances. But *xaxuar*
continues... because it is a wonderfully safe device through which to vent
affect (Hill and Irvine 1992:12).

Thus through the use of intermediaries the responsibility for the verbal abuse is dis-
tributed: the griot is only animator and the principal—the female relatives—are not
authors. The authorial source is difficult to pin down. The third party mode of com-
munication thus serves to protect not only chiefs and nobles, but others as well from
being held responsible. It enables the intermediaries to take an authorial distance from
what is said and to signal through various linguistic devices not only whose speech is
being represented, but also the extent to which they are responsible for animating the
discourse.

4.3 SOME USAGE PROPERTIES AND LINGUISTIC EFFECTS OF TRIADIC
COMMUNICATION

When the speech of intermediaries and that of the principal are compared some
differences show up. The first obvious difference that emerges is that the principal
does not use a reported speech frame. The intermediaries' speech, however, carries
signals of reported speech and of represented speech. Yankah (1995:129), for instance,
points out that different types of texts can be distinguished, each of which may have
its distinct grammatical features. Thus, a distinction can be made between texts ad-
dressed to a chief, text which is an interpretation by a spokesperson and text which is
spoken by a chief. Significantly, he observes that one feature of the intermediary's
speech is that "[i]n his reporting, there is a deictic shift from his principal's first per-
son perspective to third person (in reference to the principal)" (Yankah 1995:129).

In pure logophoric languages[7] like Ewe, this shift in perspective amounts to a
shift from the principal's first person perspective to a logophoric pronoun in reference
to the principal. To give a flavour of the difference we present two texts below—both
taken from a drama based on a historical theme: the one in (4) is the speech by a chief
which includes the opening formula of channelling the speech through the spokesper-
son as well as first person pronouns, and the one in (5) is a speech of a royal surrogate

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[7] Culy 1994, 1997 makes a distinction between pure logophoric languages—those languages in which the
primary and sole function of the logophoric marker is to signal that the thoughts of others are being repre-
sented—and mixed logophoric languages, where the logophoric function and other functions such as re-
flexive are expressed by the logophoric form. The distribution of the two types is interesting: the pure
logophoric languages are only found in Africa and predominantly in West Africa (cf. Dimmendaal 2001 and
Huang 2000).

who has interpreted the principal's message and contains logophoric pronouns in reference to the principal.

(4)   a. Tsiami, se-e   né   wò-a-ɖó   du-megaá̃-wó gbɔ́ bé
         [title]   hear-3sg LINK 3sg-IRR-reach town-elder-PL place QT

         nye-mé-yɔ́ wó ɖé gbe   vɔ̃́ áɖéké dzi   o. ...
         1sg-NEG-call 3pl all voice bad INDEF surface NEG

         Tsiami, hear it and let the elders too hear it that I have not summoned them
         because of any bad intentions or messages...

      b. Fia   Srí tɔ́   ame-wu-ka   vi-nye   Agbakute.
         [title] Sri contact person-kill-charge child-1sg Agbakute
         Fia Sri accused my child Agbakute of murder.

      c. Gaké Máwú ɖi   ná-m   bé ɖeví kúkú   si wò-tsɔ́
         but   God shine DAT-1sg QT child RED-die REL 3sg-take

         ve   bé éya-é   nyé ye ví Adzofia lá,
         come.PRED QT 3sg-aFOC COP LOG child Adzofia TP

         mé-nyé   éya-é   o.   ...
         3sg.NEG-COP 3sg-aFOC NEG

         But I was lucky that the dead body which he brought to say that was his
         child Adzofia turned out to be false.

      d. É-vé-m   bé me-ɖe   así le vi-nye   ŋú
         3sg-pain-1sg QT 1sg-remove hand LOC child-1sg skin

         bé wò-wɔ funyáfunyá-e ... abé hlɔ̃dólá ené. ...
         QT 3sg-do torture-3sg   SEMBL criminal SEMBL

         It pains me that I released my child for him to torture as a criminal.

      e. Mi-se-e   né   wò-a-ɖó   Fia   Srí gbɔ́ bé
         2pl-hear-3sg LINK 3sg-IRR-reach [title] Sri place QT

         agɔ si me-dze   le dzí ta-é   wò-wɔ é-sia
         fault REL 1sg-contacted LOC surface HEAD-aFOC 3sg-do this

         ɖé ŋú-nye lá, wò-a-ɖe   é-me   ná mi
         ALL skin-1sg TP 3sg-IRR-remove 3sg-content DAT 2pl

         du-megá̃-wó né   nye hã má-se   le mia gbɔ́ loo!
         town-elder-PL LINK 1sg too 1sg.IRR-hear LOC 2pl place UFP

         You hear it and let it reach Fia Sri that he should explain to you the elders
         the offence I committed against him for which he has done this against me
         so that I can get the information from you the elders (Kwamuar 1997:6).

In this excerpt the principal himself is speaking and he uses a first person singular
perspective. It is remarkable that he uses a reported frame with a logophoric pronoun

only once even though he uses the switch topic regular 3sg pronoun wò several times
in reference to the protagonist, Fia Sri. By contrast, in the excerpt in (5), which is the
speech of an intermediary, there is abundant use of logophoric pronouns in the short
stretch of discourse:

(5)   a. Míá-ɟé Fia-gá̃ Agɔkɔ́lí ... dó gbe   ná mi.
         1pl-POSS chief-big Agokoli   send greetings DAT 2pl
         Our supreme chief Agokoli ... sends you his greetings.

      b. É-ɓé   gaʃoʃo ene sɔ́ŋ-é   nyé é-si   ye-le
         3sg-QT hour   four INT-aFOC COP 3sg-this LOG-be.at

         miá-ɟé así-nu   dzɔ-ḿ   ko
         2pl-POSS hand-mouth wait-PROG only

         ye-mé-se   nya áɖéké o.
         LOG-NEG-hear word INDEF NEG

         He says he has been waiting for signs from you for four whole hours now
         and he has not heard anything.

      c. Éya ta   é-bé   mía kplé vi-wò-wó   kplé ʋɔnudrɔ́lá-wó
         3sg HEAD 3sg-QT 1pl and child-2sg-PL and judge-PL

         míá-zɔ   afɔ ɖeká á-vá   ye ʃéme fífí laa.
         1pl-move leg one IRR-come LOG house now right

         Therefore he says that we and your children and the judges should come
         together to his house right now. (Kwamuar 1997:15.)

This excerpt is a text of a chief's spokesperson who is here acting as emissary. In this
interaction, the principal is not present but the surrogate presents his message. He first
introduces the chief as the one who sent him by bringing greetings from him. In the
immediately following sentence he introduces the quotative verb bé which creates a
context for represented speech and the coreference to the chief as the subject of the
quotative verb is a regular 3sg pronoun. However, in the content of the verb, he (the
chief) is referred to with the logophoric pronoun. In sentence (5c), where there is a
topic shift, the represented speech context is again created by the quotative verb and
the regular pronoun is used to introduce the principal as the new topic again. He is
subsequently referred to with the logophoric pronoun. In comparison with the text in
(4), the principal's own speech, which makes use of 1sg pronoun to refer to his
thoughts, the text in (5), an intermediary's speech, shifts to the use of a logophoric
pronoun in the representation of the speech of the principal. This difference between
the text types in terms of first person vs represented perspective, with its ramifications
in the choice of grammatical pronouns, is both a property and an effect of the triadic
mode of communication.

      Another effect of the triadic mode of communication involving animators is that
the intermediary must be a good orator and must have a good command of the rhetorical strategies of his or her language. It is probably this property of the intermediary
that is responsible for such people being labelled 'linguists' in Ghanaian English. The
oratorical prowess of intermediaries is evident from the differences that Irvine (1990)

found when she compared the speech of nobles and of griots in Wolof (see table 1).
Interestingly, the griot-like speech is characterised by discourse structuring devices
and the correct use of grammatical devices. It is also richer in rhetorical devices such
as repetition and parallelism—properties which one expects of animators. Griot-like
speech also contains signals of represented speech such as the use of the 'explicative'
auxiliary and of the quotative marker **ne**, which is used to create represented speech
contexts. In short, griot-like speech is more rhetorically embellished while noble-like
speech is rhetorically impoverished.

Table 1. A comparison of noble-like speech and griot-like speech (Irvine 1990:144)

Noble-like speech	*Griot-like speech*
Emphatic devices	
Unmarked (subject-verb-object) order of constituents; sparse use of focus markers.	Left-dislocation, cleft sentences; heavy use of focus markers (subject focus, object focus, and the 'explicative' verbal auxiliary).
Sparse use of spatial deictics and determinants.	Frequent use of spatial deictics, especially their emphatic forms.
Sparse use of modifiers.	Ideophones (intensifiers) and greater use of the verb complement construction **né____** , which often convey details of sound and motion.
Parallelisms	
Little use of parallelisms.	Repetitive and parallel constructions (e.g., parallel clauses).
Few reduplicated forms, especially in verbs; no novel use of morphological reduplication.	Frequent use of morphological reduplication, especially in verbs, including novel word formations.
Disfluencies	
Noun classification system: choice of 'wrong' or semantically neutral class markers, avoidance of markers when possible; incomplete or inconsistent concord. Incomplete sentence structures; false starts.	'Correct' class markers, principles of consonant harmony and semantic subtlety; more use of markers; consistent and complete concord. Well formed sentence structures.

5. ELABORATION OF TRIADIC COMMUNICATION IN WEST AFRICAN LANGUAGES

In this section, I demonstrate that the cultural interactional practice of triadic
communication is elaborated or reflected at different levels in various languages of
West Africa. Its elaboration in the lexicon both in terms of vocabulary terms for the
institutions of intermediaries and in terms of speech formulae is illustrated first. This
is followed by a discussion of grammatical constructions that have semantic features
of triadic communication in their meaning.

5.1 LEXICALISATION

The institution and office of the (royal) spokesperson has lexical expression in
several languages of the area. For instance, two types of spokesperson are reported for
the Fon (Benin, Togo) each with its distinct name: The spokesperson who channels
information from the king or chief to the people is **meu**, and the one who channels
information from the people to the king is **migan**. Unlike Fon, many languages have
just one term for the spokesperson irrespective of who the principal is. In Akan, the
term is ɔkyeame. In Ewe and in Ga, two groups that have been influenced by Akan
royal practices, the term for spokesperson is a phonologically adapted borrowed version of the Akan term, namely: **tsiami** (Ewe) and **tsiame** (Ga). Yankah (1995) suggests that many Ghanaian societies borrowed the system of triadic communication
from Akan. It is not entirely clear if this is the case. Even though the Ewes, for example, use an Akan borrowed word for the office of spokesperson, it would appear that
the use of intermediaries in communication is a pan-Gbe feature since the system is
available in Aja and Fon as well. As such the Ewes must have had a form of it before
they came in contact with Akan modes of royalty and borrowed from it. This would
explain why the name of the intermediary can be traced to Akan. But the institution
and practice of triadic communication as such would have been old.[8]

In the Sahelian languages also there are distinct names for the categories of the
castes of bards or griots who are the intermediaries. In some cases there are several
terms for this class, for instance, in Songhay, Tamari (1991) records four terms for
bards, namely: zémmúków, jèsérè, gáwlà, and maabe; while there is only one term
recorded for the subcategory of blacksmith and of leatherworker. The sheer number of
terms is indicative of the salience of this group and their function both as musicians
and animators or intermediaries in the community.[9] A similar situation of multiple

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[8] Some Ewes would question the idea that the word tsiami is borrowed from Akan. In a now defunct Ewe
monthly newspaper—*Nyaseto*—of March 1994, a contributor R. K. Anyidoho poses the question: Gbe kae
nye tsiami? (p. 7), 'What language is tsiami?' He suggests that the word tsiami is not of Akan origin but is
a condensation of the Ewe sentence: Tsi-i ná mí (tell-3sg DAT 1pl), 'Tell it to us'. He claims that the n of
the dative preposition as well as the 3sg object pronoun were elided in fast speech, giving rise to the present
form. He even creates a scenario for this taking place and attributes the thought to an old person who gave
him this wisdom. This can best be treated as a folk etymology, while language internal and external factors
point to it being a borrowed word.
[9] Apart from the salience of the office of the spokesperson as reflected in the lexical items for the caste of
griots in Songhay, the language also has a grammatical elaboration of triadic communication in the form of
the use of logophoric pronouns. In a recent description of one variety of Songhay, Heath (1999:323) notes

terms for this caste obtains in Manding, Soninke and Fulfulde. In some other lan-
guages there is one term for the group, as in Wolof, where they are designated géwel;
or in Jula, where the term jèli actually covers both bard and leatherworker.

5.2 SPEECH FORMULAE FOR TRANSMITTING MESSAGES

Apart from vocabulary items, speech formulae for the transmission of messages
through a third party have become entrenched in several of the languages. Such formu-
lae are typically based on expressions that involve calling the relevant intermediary to
attention and inviting them to listen to the message and pass it on to the relevant parties.
In Ewe, for instance, the frame for these formulae can be schematically represented as:

     X (intermediary) HEAR   IT   Purpose introducer REACH Y (target) ...

The simplest instantiation of this involves situations where there is just an addressee
as a target, as is the case in sentence (4a) above, and similar structures below.

(6)   a. **Tsiami Kofitse, se-e**   **ná du-megá-wó bé ...**
         [title]   Kofitse   hear-3sg give town-elder-PL QT
         Tsiami Kofitse, hear it and pass it on to the town elders that ...
         (Bidi Setsoafia 1982:19)

     b. **... se-e**   **né**   **wò-a-de**   **Tɔ́gbúi gbɔ́ ...**
         hear-3sg PURP 3sg-IRR-reach chief   place
         ... hear it so that it will reach the chief (that) ...

The basic formulae can be iterated or chained in such a way that the spokesperson is in-
vited to channel the information to the target but also to other ratified participants such as
other hearers. Such a strategy is employed in (4c) above by the principal, who addresses
the elders to question Fia Sri about why he has behaved towards him the way he did so
that he, the principal, will also hear it from them. In this case Fia Sri would have to an-
swer the elders as the target; but the principal who is the speaker and source in (4) be-
comes a ratified participant. Sometimes the setting up of such ratified participants is done
more directly with a sequence of such formulae, as presented in a skeleton form in (7).

(7)   **se-e**   **né**   **wò-a tu**   **X,**
       hear-3sg PURP 3sg-IRR-contact X

       né   **wò-a-ɖó**   **Y gbɔ́**
       PURP 3sg-IRR-reach Y place

       né   **Z tsyé ná-se**   **ɖe**   **le**   **é-me ...**
       PURP Z also SUBJUNCT-hear some LOC 3sg-content

       Hear it so that it will reach X, and it will land at Y, and Z too will hear some
       of it ...

Yankah (1995:115) also describes similar relay formulae used in Akan. Some of
these are as follows (my numbering):

(8)   a. **Okyeame, tie ma ento Nana se.**
         Okyeame, listen so it may reach the chief...

     b. **Wobete ma Nana ate.**
         You will listen so Nana may hear.

     c. **Okyeame kyere Nana se.**
         Okyeame tell Nana that.

The third party pattern of interaction and the associated linguistic routines have
been transferred to the varieties of English in the West African region. It is not un-
common to find stretches of discourse of the following kind in interactions in English,
which have also made their way into literary works in English.

(9)   "Is Katoko there?" Avinu began. "Hear it and let it reach them that..."
       (Egblewogbe 1998:69)

From a segment like this we understand that Katoko is being assigned the function of
intermediary while Avinu is the principal. The target is represented by the pronoun
'them' in this case, which from the context are the family elders who have been sum-
moned by the principal.

5.3 ROUTINISATION IN THE GRAMMAR OF REPORTED/ REPRESENTED SPEECH FEATURES

Having looked at aspects of the lexicalisation and the routinisation in speech
formulae of triadic communication, we now turn to its routinisation or fixation in
grammatical structures. Given the ubiquitous nature of third party communication in
West African modes of interaction, it would be puzzling if it did not leave any foot-
prints on grammatical structures. I submit that various grammatical constructions that
are associated with attributing authorial responsibility in discourse are a reflection of
the cultural practice and pattern of third party communication in West African lan-
guages.

First, there are structures for creating a reported or represented speech frame
through the use of quotative verbs and complementisers (cf. Wiesemann 1990). This
in itself is not unique. However, some features emerge which seem to be relevant for
attributing discourse to others. In some of the languages, for example, Engenni, an
Edoid language of Nigeria, there are two complementisers, ga and na. The former is
used in situations where the speaker wants to attribute discourse to someone else and
the latter is used in situations based on the speaker's direct perception (see Thomas
1978). A second feature worth mentioning is the grammaticalization of specialised
structures for "rumour-mongering". The semantics of such structures includes the
denial of responsibility on the part of the speaker or reporter for what is being said. In
addition, such structures keep the source of the information vague or impersonal and
attribute it to a group of unidentified people. The forms in (10a) and (10b) are used in
Ga and Akan respectively in such contexts.

(10)   a. **a-ke a-ke**   (Ga)
         4-QT 4-QT
         They say They say

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that "The most systematic indexical shift in reported speech is the replacement of original first person pro-
nouns by a type of pronoun known as 'logophoric', which is used only for this purpose".

b. **ye-sii**   **ye-sii**   (Akan)
1pl-QT   1pl-QT
We say   We say

The repetitive structure used in these rumour-introducing constructions is, I suggest, iconic of the multiple sources that one wants to indicate. The difference between Ga and Akan in the person of the pronominal that is used to represent the source (an impersonal in Ga and a 1pl in Akan) is also striking and deserves further investigation. A similar syntactic idiom—a calque of the Ga—has developed in Ghanaian English, namely, "they say, they say" with the same function, i.e. for spreading rumours.

Moreover, the quotative marker or represented speech context opener (cf. Dimmendaal 2001) in some of the languages belongs in a heterosemic set with the (utterance-final) epistemological particles that signal the evidential stance of the speaker with respect to the content of the utterance, as is demonstrated in the next subsection for Sissala and Akan.

5.3.1 Epistemological particles for distributing responsibility in discourse

As I have indicated earlier, some languages in the West African region have distinct particles for signalling the evidential stance of the speaker. I suggest that the function of these particles, which tend to occur at the margins of sentences, is to signal that the responsibility for this utterance lies elsewhere. Thus they are used in several contexts that have to do with reporting or echoing the thoughts, speech and desires of others. Curiously, although not surprisingly, these particles are intimately related to quotative markers or represented speech openers in some of the languages in which they occur. As noted earlier, these particles have been called interpretive use markers in Relevance-theoretic literature (see e.g. Blass 1990). However, such a term does not uniquely identify this class of particles, since the quotative markers or complementisers, which they are intimately related to, are also said to have 'interpretive use' functions, and could thus be described as interpretive use markers—as Agyekum (2002) in fact does with respect to Akan. In my view, the function of the quotative markers or complementisers is different from that of the epistemological particles, and they should not be confounded. It is for this reason that both forms can occur in the same utterance, as illustrated for Sissala in (11) below.

(11) ʋ sɪ́ɛ mehɛ́ anɛ rɪ́   luk má kó   rán ré   (Sissala)
It so ⁞ seems like COMP Luk also come here ⟨M⟩   ~Cmp Avenua mates
It seems as if Luk has also arrived. (Blass 1989:316; ex. 27.)

In example (11) above there is a complementiser and an epistemological particle (or interpretive use marker à la Blass), which underlyingly have the same form. The surface realisations depend on the position of occurrence, constituent internal vs constituent final, and more importantly on the vowel harmony feature in the environment. Both the complementiser and the epistemological particle, according to Blass, probably evolved from the locative demonstrative ré, 'here, this', in the language. In example (11) the complementiser is used to introduce a clause after a complement-taking verb meaning 'seem', and the epistemological particle is used to indicate that the content of the clause is based on inference, hence marking the evidential stance of the speaker. In example (2) above, repeated as (12) below, the use of the epistemological

particle in the context of a kind of hearsay is illustrated. Here the particle alone is used. Example (13) shows the use of the complementiser introducing a direct quote.

(12) **Náŋásʋsɛ. Ba kaa konni yo   ta   ré.**   (Sissala)
some died they took cut   throw leave IM
Some died and were untied and were left there (it is said).
(Blass 1990:99, ex. 11)

(13) ʋ háálɔ́ ná lɔ́ bʋl rí   ŋ-ŋ́   mú ŋ bozɔ́ŋ dihí ní.
his wife DEF left said COMP 1-1pl go my lover place SDM
While leaving his wife said, "I am going to my lover". (Blass 1990:98, ex. 7.)

Blass points out that the epistemological particle and the complementiser occur frequently in proverbs as well as sayings—contexts in which one is echoing the thoughts of others in general or attributing a thought to another person.

Parallels of the Sissala situation with respect to a complementiser and epistemological particle heterosemy with similar functions and usage occur in Akan as well. The form in Akan is sɛ. This form is a complementiser, as in (14), which is used to introduce various complement clauses after verbs of saying, thinking, wanting, etc. The form sɛ is also an utterance-final epistemological particle, as in (15), where it is used to indicate that what is being said is something that everybody can vouch for. As such the speaker is taking an evidential stance with respect to the utterance (see Yelbert 1996, 1997 for an analysis of this form in the framework of Culioli; and see Agyekum 2002 for an 'interpretive use' analysis of the complementiser).

(14) **O-kae   kyeree   yen sɛ   o-be-ba.**   (Akan)
3sg-say.PAST show.PAST 1pl COMP 3sg-DIR-come
He told us that he would come. (Yelbert 1997:1, ex. 4.)

(15) **O-tu mmirika sɛ.**   (Akan)
3sg-V race   PARTICLE
He is known to be an accomplished runner. (Yelbert 1997:1, ex. 5a.)

I submit that the epistemological particles that occur utterance-finally in both Akan and Sissala are devices for attributing responsibility in discourse, and are thus a reflection of the cultural practice of triadic communication that is found in these cultures. It seems that these particles are functionally equivalent to the logophoric markers that are found in other languages (see Ameka 1994). It is striking that the languages that have these particles do not, as far as I know, have any special marking that distinguishes who is being reported from who is not being reported, as is the case in languages with logophoric marking—the device to which we now turn.

5.3.2 Attributing responsibility through reference tracking mechanisms

Different forms of reference tracking in represented speech contexts are also devices for distributing responsibility in discourse. The most prominent of these are the logophoric marking systems: pronouns and other markers that are used to signal the person whose thoughts, words, etc., are being reported. It has been noted above that the epistemological particles and complementisers are found in proverbs and wise sayings where thoughts are being echoed or attributed to some character. In such contexts, too, we find the use of logophoric markers, as illustrated in the following Ewe proverb:

(16) Kese   bé ye   nyó   ḍeká   (Ewe proverb)
      monkey QT LOG be.good one (=manly beauty)

      éya ta   ye-fé   mo   wɔ globoo.
      3sg HEAD LOG-POSS face do hollow

      The monkey says he is too handsome that is why his face is hollow.

Dimmendaal (2001:135ff.) suggests that logophoric marking in Niger-Congo and Nilo-Saharan languages "serves a crucial role as a strategy for reducing ambiguity in reference tracking" and that "logophoricity in tandem with quoted speech marking operates as an evidential hedging strategy". These explanations are based on discourse-functional and cognitive factors. What I am adding here is that the use of these forms has a cultural basis and that a holistic explanation of logophoricity in West Africa must take account of both the cognitive and the cultural factors. I maintain that it is the tri-adic mode of communication that nurtures and sustains this grammatical feature.

In a sense, anti-logophoric markers are also a system of distributing responsibil-ity, because they signal the one whose thoughts and speech are not being reported. As H. Hill (1995:95) notes with respect to the Adioukrou forms: "To clarify the reference of third-person pronouns, many languages use a logophoric pronoun in the Q[uote] C[ontent] that has a special form and marks coreference with the speaker of the Q[uote] M[argin]. Adioukrou, however, solves this problem of third person reference in a different way. It has a special form to mark DISJOINT reference with the speaker of the QM." Thus the anti-logophoric markers serve a similar function in reference tracking, and I am suggesting that they also have a similar cultural basis: namely, they help in third party communication to pinpoint the locus of responsibility for what is being represented. Consider the following example from Adioukrou, adapted by Culy (1997) from H. Hill (1995):

(17) a. li_i   dad eke in_{i/k} im dabu   (Reporting SUBJ pronoun)
         3sgFP said that 3sgRP went Dabou
         He_i said that he_{i/k} went to Dabou.

      b. li_i   dad eke ow'n_k im dabu   (Anti-logophoric)
         3sgFP said that DSRP went Dabou
         He_i said that he_{k≠i} went to Dabou.

Another variant of logophoric marking has been reported for Chadic languages (see Frajzyngier 1985). In some of the Chadic languages (e.g. Angas, Goemai, Mupun) there are special addressee pronouns that are used only in reported speech contexts. Consider the following examples from Goemai (B. Hellwig, p.c.), showing the femi-nine, masculine and plural forms of the addressee logophoric pronouns respectively. The addressee logophorics are glossed as LogB and the speaker logophorics as LogA.

(18) S'a muk   b'am d'i   sek masha hok. (...)
      hand 3sg.POSS stick LOC.ANAPH BODY friend.f DEF

      Yin pa   goe nyet s'a ji.
      saying SGf.LogB OBL leave hand SGm.LogA.POSS

      His₁ hand stuck there to the girl-friend₂. (...) (He₁ said) saying, she₂ should leave his hand₁ (FUAN.)

(19) Ba   doe   de   goesha muk. (...)
      return.sg come.sg DIRECTION friend.m 3sg.POSS

      Yin gwa   dok   kat ndoe bi   d'i
      saying SGm.LogB PAST.REM find INDEF thing LOC.ANAPH

      ndûûn bang hok a?
      INSIDE gourd DEF INTERR

      Mûai yin   hai   ji   kat ndoe bi   ba.
      friend saying INTERJ SGm.LogA find INDEF thing NEG

      He₁ returned (and) came to his friend₂. (...) (He₁ said) saying, did he₂ find anything inside the bag? The friend₂ (said) saying, he₂ did not find anything. (MOESHA.)

(20) Sai k'ur   ba   yong mûep d'oot,
      then tortoise return.sg call 3pl softly

      yin nwa   goe doe ntyem.
      saying PL.LogB OBL come front

      Then the tortoise₁ returned (and) called them₂ softly, saying, they₂ should come first. (KUR.)

Significantly, these languages do have speaker logophoric forms (the LogA forms in the examples) as well. Thus, they not only have ways of indicating whose thoughts are being reported, but also the person to whom the thought was addressed. What I am asserting is that these are all forms that reflect a preoccupation with channelling in-formation through intermediaries, and therefore constitute an instance of the gram-matical elaboration of a cultural theme in West Africa.

6. BY WAY OF CONCLUSION: LINGERING QUESTIONS

To summarise, I have demonstrated that there are lexical and grammatical pat-terns in West African languages that have affinities with the cultural practice of triadic communication. I have exemplified this from the lexical names for the institutions of intermediaries such as the spokespersons, or for the caste of intermediaries in stratified societies. Another lexical feature that correlates with the behavioural pattern is the routine expressions used for transmitting messages through a third party. In terms of core grammar, I have suggested that constructions involving logophoric markers—speaker logophoric pronouns and addressee logophoric pronouns, verbal markers of logophoricity and anti-logophoric markers (or disjoint reference markers in reported speech contexts)—as well as epistemological particles, have an inter-constitutive rela-tion to the triadic mode of communication in West Africa.

Some readers may already be raising eyebrows and saying: I know of languages that have logophoric marking but no triadic communication. As I hope the discussion has illustrated, there is no expectation that there is a one-to-one correspondence be-tween the cultural practice and the linguistic form. The language may have acquired the logophoric marking through contact, or it may not be a pure logophoric marking sys-tem. Von Roncador (1992:174) suggests that "translation borrowing might ... explain

the areal distribution of logophoric marking across unrelated or only remotely related languages". Thus other factors may be responsible for the presence of grammatical constructions in specific languages.

As noted earlier, the presence of logophoric marking in Chadic languages could have been an innovation in that family, or the languages may have acquired them through contact. Irrespective of what the exact factor is, it is instructive that in some of these Chadic languages there is the practice of triadic communication, even if it seems to be restricted to formal or ritual situations, as seems to be the case in Goemai, where during funerals spokespersons are appointed for channelling communication. I suggest that given such a cultural disposition of the communities, it is plausible to see how logophoric marking systems can either be innovated language internally or developed through metatypy or grammatical construction borrowing.

One may also wonder whether it is possible to correlate a typology of systems of triadic communication with a typology of grammatical reflexes of that cultural theme. There is no expectation that there would be a correlation. Two societies—the Fon and the Akan, both of which have kingdoms with a long history and employ a similar system of triadic communication that derives from royal discourse—have different reflexes of the system in their grammars. The Fon use a logophoric marking system similar to the Ewe system; while Akan, as we have shown above, uses an epistemological particle strategy.

Even though such questions may be raised, they can only be fruitfully addressed if we have descriptions that pay attention to the meanings and cultural import of constructions in the languages. There is an urgent need for detailed studies of the systems of evidential stance marking, especially in the languages that employ the markers I have called epistemological particles, and also of the modes of communication in the different speech communities in order for the correlations between patterns of grammar and patterns of behaviour in this domain to be more firmly established. The foregoing has been a first attempt to highlight an area of culture and some areas of grammar that are linked. Future research can fine-tune these lines of inquiry. It is my hope that in the new millennium a new wave of studies of the grammatical semantics and of ethnosyntax of West African languages will emerge.

GRAMMATICAL ABBREVIATIONS

1 ....first person
2 ....second person
3 ....third person
4 ....impersonal pronoun
aFOC ....argument focus marker
ALL ....allative
ANAPH ....anaphoric
COMP ....complementiser
COP ....copula
DAT ....dative
DEF ....definiteness marker
DEM ....demonstrative
DIR ....directional

DS ....disjoint singular
f ....feminine
FP ....free pronoun
HAB ....habitual
IM ....interpretive use marker
INDEF ....indefinite
INT ....intensifier
INTERJ.............interjection
INTERR............interrogative
IRR..................irrealis marker
LOC ....locative
LOG................logophoric pronoun
LogA..............speaker logophoric pronoun

LogB ....addressee logophoric pronoun
m ....masculine
NEG ....negative
PL/pl ....plural marker
POSS................possessive
PRED ....predication marker
PURP ....purpose clause introducer
QT...................quotative marker
RED ....reduplicative
REL ....relative marker

REP ....repetitive
RP ....reporting pronoun
SDM ....specific discourse marker
SEMBL............semblative
SG/sg ....singular
SUBJ................subject
SUBJUNCT........subjunctive
TP ....terminal topic particle
UFP ....utterance final particle

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