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CODE SWITCHING AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN SAMOAN MULTIPARTY INTERACTION

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Multiparty Interactions in the Field

In studying the details of everyday interaction, in engaging in participant-observation, ethnographers typically alternate between two strategies: We either try to be invisible (by hiding behind our notebooks, pretending to be deaf) or we stumble right into the middle of things (as we clumsily attempt to be “one of them”). In the last few years, scholars have learned to reanalyze the contexts out of which our ethnographies are born. Howe and Sherzer (1986), for instance, have reminded us of how the people we study can create through humor a liminal space where the ethnographer can be located. Our relationships in the field have been reassessed as involving notions of domination, dialogue, and fictionalization (Clifford and Marcus 1986). Ethnographers have been reexamining mistakes and embarrassing moments in the field in search of those magic transactions where a real understanding can be documented (DeVita 1990). These are all attempts at putting the researcher back into the picture, which is an important enterprise, not necessarily because it makes anthropology closer to literature or to psychoanalysis, but because it makes it more honest, more humble, and hence potentially more enlightened. Thus, for instance, when we listen to tapes or transcribe our interactions with or among the people we are studying, we learn an important lesson, namely, that whether we are being talked to or talked about, we are also talked through and around (see Haviland 1986). We, the observers, are often the means through which certain acts of social life get done. In this article, I would like to show that not

only dialogues, as Tedlock (1983) suggested, but also triadic or multiparty exchanges form the thread out of which ethnographies are weaved. Those in search of objective criteria should realize that much can be learned by looking at interactions we might be tempted to ignore because they are contaminated by our presence.

I must stress that my point here is not to encourage introspective analyses of memories from the field or an anthropology of self-reflection. I do not intend to promote the writing of emotional, first-person narratives about ourselves among "the natives" and "the native" in ourselves. My point instead is to show that when we examine the interactions in which we are present, we find recurrent discourse strategies that typically exploit and index the multiparty nature of the interaction, a multiparty framework that we helped to create and sustain. This suggests that when we take ourselves out of the picture (or out of the transcript) to write dialogues without the observer or to create a passage of objective description, we are not simply manipulating the data; we are missing the important point that triangulation, indirection, and multiparty frameworks typically provide the organization for much of human interaction, in particular, for human conflict and reconciliation. It is through the examination of such interactions that we can further refine our methods and test our hypotheses.

The thesis of this article is that our ability to understand or simply describe native strategies for accomplishing face-threatening acts (such as shaming, blaming, complaining, accusing) and, more generally, for dealing with conflict situations requires an understanding of the dynamics of multiparty interactions. In the cases discussed here, the multifunctionality of linguistic forms as realized through situated discourse is largely founded on the possibility of provoking and sustaining multiparty participation frameworks; as often the case in daily verbal interaction, multiple goals may be achieved by addressing, in a differentiated fashion, more than one party at the time (Goffman 1981). This can be done through the strategic use of particular linguistic subsystems such as phonological or lexical registers, affective markers, or pronominal forms (see Ochs 1989). In turn, such subsystems are used and reconstituted precisely through the continuous effort to exploit the varied and choral nature of human communication and public performance, which always implies multiple speakers and multiple audiences (see Duranti and Brenneis 1986; Bogen 1987).

As pointed out by those interested in the details of multiparty conversation, even when speakers seem to be talking to one person, they may in fact make others co-participants, allies, or victims of the social acts

they accomplish through talk (Clark and Carlson 1982; Gumperz 1982; C. Goodwin 1981, 1986; Goodwin and Goodwin 1987a; Haviland 1986). Such strategic multifunctionality of linguistic forms has been discussed with regard to political arenas, where indirection is common (Brenneis 1984, 1987; Myers and Brenneis 1984). Here I look at less formal and less institutionally bound forms of interaction, in particular a conversational exchange carried on at night by a wife, a drunken husband, the ethnographer, and his child. I will discuss three segments from this conversational exchange in which speakers express disagreement.

Disagreement

Students of everyday verbal interaction have argued that in conversation there is a dispreference to correct others and a preference to let others correct themselves (Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks 1977). In requests for action, mitigating forms have been said to be more frequent than aggravating ones (Labov and Fanshel 1977:84-86). It has also been shown that in certain conversational contexts, namely after an assessment, there is a preference for agreement over disagreement (Pomerantz 1978; Levinson 1983). According to Brown and Levinson (1987), when speakers decide to engage in acts that potentially threaten the addressee's "face" (Goffman 1955), they have the option of using a number of verbal techniques that mitigate those acts. Such techniques, which reassure addressees that their territory and freedom of action are not being impinged upon, typically violate Grice's (1975) cooperative maxims (for example, be informative, say the truth, say what is relevant). When about to perform a face-threatening act--by going "on record" --social actors can (1) explicitly express disagreement or imposition of their wants on others (what Brown and Levinson call "bald on record") or (2) act in a seemingly "irrational" manner, that is, violate Grice's maxims of cooperative behavior by making false statements, pretending to be unsure, withholding information, and so forth. The second of these two choices is often claimed to be preferred by speakers in most contexts.

Other studies, however, have shown that disagreement and competitive behavior is not only frequent but interactionally searched, achieved, and sustained as a common strategy to negotiate power, exchange and assess culturally important values, and socialize others into accepted and successful patterns of behavior. This is the case, for instance, in children's interactions (M. Goodwin 1982, 1983; Goodwin

and Goodwin 1987b), in verbal dueling among adult African Americans (Abrahams 1976; Kochman 1979, 1983; Labov 1972; Mitchell-Kernan 1972), in Jewish argumentative style (Schiffrin 1984; Katriel 1986), and in institutional contexts such as courts and political arenas where expression of disagreement and confrontative style is realized through special registers and highly scripted roles (Bloch 1975; Brenneis and Myers 1984).

In this article, I suggest that disagreement can be expressed and at the same time temporarily mitigated and negotiated through the linguistic creation and maintenance of multiparty participation frameworks. Particular linguistic features such as phonological and lexical registers evoke or avoid other parties' involvement and thus redirect potential confrontation. Discussion of these themes is based on fifteen months of fieldwork in a traditional village in Western Samoa and many hours of audiorecorded spontaneous interaction in a variety of sociocultural settings. I concentrate on one interaction recorded at night, while walking on the road. Further discussion of ethnographic and linguistic data on the same field experience can be found in Duranti 1981, 1988, 1999a, 1990b; Duranti and Ochs 1986; and Ochs 1988. First I illustrate the phenomenon of phonological registers in Samoan and then I discuss their functions within a potentially conflictual situation.

Code Switching between “Good Speech” and “Bad Speech”

The Samoan language has two phonological registers, which Samoans themselves call *tautala lelei* ‘good speech’ and *tautala leaga* ‘bad speech’. The basic linguistic difference between the two registers is that in good speech there is an opposition between alveolar and velar nasals (/n/ and /ŋ/—the latter is written as g in standard Samoan orthography) and alveolar and velar stops (/t/ and /k/). In bad speech these contrasts are neutralized: Only /k/ and /ŋ/ (g) are used. Most speakers switch between the two registers from one situation to another or even within the same conversation, as shown below. Table 1 illustrates this contrast with a few examples, including two cases of minimal pairs.

The labels “good” and “bad” for the two registers are potentially misleading. The choice between the two cannot be directly correlated with “proper” versus “improper” behavior or with “formal” versus “casual” speech (although in some cases it may appear so). Equally misleading to the outsider are such categories as “formal” and “colloquial” (Milner 1966) or “literary” and “colloquial” (Hovdhaugen 1986), which have been used and continue to be used in the linguistic literature. Rather, as

TABLE 1. “Good Speech” and “Bad Speech”

Good Speech	Translation	Bad Speech
<i>toe</i>	again	<i>koe</i>
<i>inu</i>	drink	<i>igu</i>
<i>Elenoa</i>	Elinor	<i>Elegoa</i>
<i>tilotilo</i>	watch, stare	<i>kilokilo</i>
<i>tagata</i>	person	<i>kagata</i>
<i>lota</i>	my (inalienable) }	<i>loka</i>
<i>loka</i>	lock (borrowing) }	
<i>fana</i>	gun, shoot }	<i>faga</i>
<i>faga</i>	bay }	

discussed in a number of sources (Shore 1977, 1982; Duranti 1981; Hovdhaugen 1986; Ochs 1988), the opposition between the two registers must be seen in cultural or sociohistorical terms.

Good speech is strongly associated with literacy activities, Christianity, and Western values, whereas bad speech is associated with traditional precontact activities, which include informal household interaction as well as traditional ceremonies and political contests. As in other communities (Blom and Gumperz 1972; Gumperz 1982), Samoans often switch between the two registers within the same interaction, thereby either reflecting or constituting a different interpretive frame for the activity. Thus, for instance, before a meal speakers switch from bad to good speech when they recite a thanksgiving prayer. In example 1 below, speaker Vg. invites an older woman, Vaetolu (Vt.), to perform the prayer. The word *fa'afetai* ‘thanks, thanksgiving’ is pronounced in bad speech (viz. /faʔafekai/) by Vg. before the prayer starts and in good speech (viz. /faʔafetai/) by Vt. in the prayer, because the interpretive frame changes from “conversation” to “(Christian) religious practice.”

- (1) (“Women Eating,” August 1988. Four women are about to have lunch after having cleaned a communal house.)

Vg; *fai se fa'afekai suga Vaekolu.*¹

‘Say the thanksgiving lady Vaetolu!’

Vt; *fa'afetai.* (.5)

‘Thanks.’

fa'afetai Iesū i Lou fa'atasi mai. . . .

‘Thanks Jesus for Your joining us. . . .’

In other instances code switching may coincide with change of addressee. Although not everyone complies, Samoans as a rule believe that foreigners should be addressed in good speech, the register used by preachers and teachers during their professional performances. Those Samoan speakers who try to follow this rule are often forced into repeated code switching when an audience includes both Samoans and foreigners. They sustain co-membership with other Samoans by using bad speech while simultaneously paying respect to guests by addressing them in good speech. This situation is shown in example 2. The speaker Tui, a Samoan chief, switches back and forth from bad speech to good speech depending on whether he is addressing the researcher or the other two Samoan chiefs present. Speaker F., on the other hand, uses bad speech regardless of the social identity of the addressee.

- (2) ("The Watch," 1979. Chief F. and Tui [T.] engage the researcher A. in a joking sequence on the theme of marriage.)

F; [To A.] *fa'apea a'u le'i fai se ko'alua 'oe.*
'I thought you didn't have a spouse.'

(1.)

T; *'ae, magū e fa'aipoipo ma se si keige i gei.*
'But, otherwise he would marry some other girl from here.'

F; *ke lua fa'aipoipo ma le keige o māk-*
'You marry one of ou- girls'
'ae kia'i le fafige le lā.
'and get rid of that woman (you married).'

A; *hhh!*

T; (Laughing) *hehe-hehehehe!*

(3.)

T; *sā faipoipo 'oulua ma Elenoa?*
'Did you and Elinor get married?'

A; *ioe.*
'Yes.'

T; *oh!*

(1.5)

'ae pe 'ā tu'u nā fa'aipoipo (.5) 'aa?
'But what about if you drop that marriage, huh?'
'ae toe fai se fa'aipoipo?
'and instead remarry?'

Differently from speaker F., who uses bad speech with everyone, including the researcher A. (see the word /koʔalua/ with the /k/ in the first line), Tui uses bad speech in the second line when addressing F., a Samoan, and good speech later when addressing A., a foreigner.

Finally, example 3 is taken from a long speech where the orator N. reads from a notebook.

- (3) (“*Fono* at Sanonu,” 1981. The orator N. reads names and amounts of contributions to a money collection.)

good speech	bad speech
N; ‘o <i>Nonu Tapuvae</i> ‘ua iai le <i>kālā</i> ,	
‘Nonu Tapuvae one dollar given.’	
(Lit., ‘Nonu Tapuvae there is a dollar.’)	

The name of the contributor, Nonu Tapuvae, is read from a notebook N. has in front of him, and is thus given in the good speech variety that is appropriate for writing and reading. But the comment about his contribution is given in bad speech, as shown by the word *kālā* ‘dollar’, which would be written and pronounced *tālā* in good speech.

I will now discuss how these variations and choices are played off in a potentially conflictual situation. First, I must introduce the setting.

A Samoan Night

When we were in Western Samoa, Elinor, David, and I were accustomed to retiring early.² “*Manuia le pō!* ‘May the night be healthy!’ ” our friends would shout from the road while we were giving our last glance of the day at village life, before closing the door of our Western-style house, pretending to be going to sleep. That was a special time of day, a time for private talk, for reading novels or writing letters. That was the time for silence, after turning off the gas lamp. It was the night, our night. But what was night like for the other people in the village?

For Samoans, the night is the time when things, especially “bad things,” happen, when people can dare, in the dark. It’s the time when the *komiti*³ might not see you when you slip through the banana trees with a bottle of beer, or when you meet your sweetheart behind the old church, or when you decide to confront your opponent on the beach.

There were times when I wished I could be part of the Samoan night or at least get a taste of it. I would then look for an excuse to go out.

Very much in a Samoan fashion, I would then try to find an ally, a supporter, a *tāpuā'i* (see Duranti and Ochs 1986). One night I convinced David to go out with me and visit our friend Tui.

We left the house and joined Tui's wife, Salu, on the road. She was looking for her husband, visibly upset. The three of us walked together, almost in a line, each of us with our own thoughts. David was carrying a carton of cigarettes I had brought for Tui from Pago; I had with me one of our tape recorders, with a tape inside, switched on--I wanted to capture the voices of the night. Suddenly, Tui came out from behind a bush. He looked unstable on his feet but still fairly in control of his actions. He saw us and joined us, on the way to his house. He was in a good mood. The alcohol in his body made him speak more slowly than usual. He used good speech--the phonological register with t's and n's --as is typical of him in talking to me, his *pālāgi* 'foreigner' friend. I was trying to keep up with the conversation, my Samoan still shaky after only three months in the village.

First Case: Complaining about Drinking

The first case I want to analyze is an utterance produced by Salu right after a relatively successful exchange in Samoan between Tui and me. Although, as shown in the more extended transcript in the appendix, there were two earlier attempts by Salu to enter the conversation between Tui and me, it is only after line 60 in the following excerpt that she succeeds in getting some form of recognition from Tui (see lines 62 and 64 of example 7, below).

- (4) ("At Night," 1978. Chief Tui [T.], his wife Salu [S.], seven-year-old David [D.], and researcher A. are walking on the main road.)

- 44 T; 'a fea ia Elenoa?
'Where is Elinor?'
45 (.3)
46 A; totonu o le fale.
'Inside the house.'
47 T; 'ae e lē ō ō tātou?
'So she is not coming with us?'
48 (.5)
49 A; leai. (.3) malōlō Elenoa.
'No. (.3) Elinor [is going to] rest.'

- 50 T; *'ua uma na fai se mea'ai?*
'Have [you] finished eating?'
- 51 A; *'ua uma.*
'Finished.'
- 52 T; *lelei.*
'Good.'
- 53 (12.0)
- 54 T; [Sigh] *huum.*
- 55 (2.0)
- 56 A; (*Tui*) *'ua uma le galuega?*
'(Tui) is the work finished?'
- 57 (1.5)
- 58 T; *toetiti.*
'Shortly.'
- 59 A; *toetiti.*
'Shortly.'
- 60 S; *e lē koe 'uma 'i le igu pia so'o!*
'It's not finished because of the drinking of beer all the time!'

Line 60 appears to be a complaint by Salu. The first noticeable feature of the utterance is the fact that it is spoken in bad speech, whereas all the prior turns by Tui and myself are in good speech. This is particularly remarkable given that Salu usually speaks to me in good speech, demonstrated in the following exchange that took place half an hour later the same night, at their house. Here if the chief P., a guest, uses bad speech with everyone, whereas Salu switches to good speech when the topic involves me, perhaps as a way of inviting my participation. The segment here is part of a long sequence in which everyone reminisces about a visit a few months earlier.

- (5) ("Later, at Tui and Salu's House," 1978. Chief P., Tui [T.], Salu [S.], and researcher A. remember the heavy rain and the problems starting the car when visiting Chief P.'s village.)

- P; *kele kimu. kele le kimu i kua. leaga kele 'ā?*
'Much rain. Much rain back there. Very bad, isn't it?'
- S; [Laughter] *i:: hihi::!*
'Yesss! Hehe!'

- A; 'a e lelei (l-) tagata.
'But the people were good.'
- (.5)
- S; [Laughter] he-he-he-he!
[
- P; keke kimu. (e) pē ai le ka'avale. 'ā?
'Much rain. The car was dead for it, wasn't it?'
ma'alili ai le ka'avale.
'The car was cold because of it.'
- S; *ma'alili ai le ta'avale le pē so'o.*
'The car was cold because of it. Kept being stalled.'
- A; *ia' ma- ma'alili.*
'Right. So- cold.'

In the penultimate line above, Salu repeats P.'s prior utterance, switching from bad to good speech (from *ka'avale* to *ta'avale*). Having established that Salu is a speaker who typically code switches from bad to good speech when the interaction involves me, let us return to line 60 of example 4. The question is, How can we make sense of Salu's use of bad speech there?

- 60 S; e lē koe 'uma 'i le igu pia
TA NEG again finish because ART drink beer
so'o!
repeatedly⁴
'It's not finished because of the drinking of beer all
the time!'

From the content of the speech act expressed in line 60, Salu seems to be complaining about her husband's drinking habits. The target as well as the recipient of the complaint, however, is not made explicit. They must be inferred from the context and from certain features of the utterance other than its literal content. The only thing that Salu actually says is that "there has been continuous drinking of beer." But she neither mentions who has been doing the drinking nor does she address her remark to anyone in particular (at least verbally). Similar to the use of verbal dueling in African American English (Labov 1972; Kochman 1983), Salu's speech act is directed to whomever finds it relevant. Her husband's name is not even mentioned.

Let us reconsider the grammatical form of the utterance. The nominalization (*le igu pia so'o*) focuses on the act of drinking rather

than on the agent of the act, which is left out. It is in this grammatical context that we may make sense of her use of bad speech. From other studies of code switching (Blom and Gumperz 1972; Gumperz 1982), we know that a sudden change of code in the middle of an interaction may carry social meaning, that is, it may convey a (meta)message regarding some aspects of the speech event (Bateson 1972). In Salu's case the change from good to bad speech may be used to generate an inference about the recipient of the utterance, namely, that what is being said is primarily meant for or directed to her husband and not to me or David. Bad speech here would thus be a potential device for signaling the primary "target" of the speech act (Basso 1979; Haviland 1986). At the same time, in a less apparent but still effective way, the utterance is shaped in such a way as to imply that I am a possible secondary recipient. Salu exploits here what Silverstein (1984), following Jakobson, calls the "poetry of prose": By using syntactic and lexical parallelism, Salu's utterance plays off the trope *'ua uma* '[it's] finished' used in lines 50, 51, and 56 of example 4 by embedding it in a negative assertion (line 60: *e lē koe 'uma* 'it's not yet finished') and continuing with a complex nominalized clause (*le igu pia so'o*),⁵ which parallels the syntactic structures in earlier utterances but introduces the new topic of drinking.

(6) The parallel structures from example 4:

- 50 T; *'ua uma na fai se mea'ai?*
 PST finish COMP do some food
 'Have [you] finished eating?'
- 51 A; *'ua uma.*
 PST finish
 'Finished.'
- 56 A; (*Tui*) *'ua uma le galuega?*
 '(Tui) is the work finished?'
- 60 S; *e lē koe 'uma 'i le igu pia*
 TA NEG again finish because ART drink beer
so'o!
 repeatedly
 'It's not finished yet because of the continuous
 drinking of beer.'

Such parallel structure links the complaint to earlier talk in such a way that the utterance is, or could be, another answer to my question in

line 56 or an expansion of the responses. In this sense, Salu's turn can be seen as evoking my response/involvement. However, it is Tui who speaks next:

(7) ("At Night," continued.)

- 60 S; *e lē koe 'uma 'i le igu pia so'o!*
 'It's not finished yet because of the continuous
 drinking of beer.'
- 61 (.5)
- 62 T; [Laughter] *hhehehehe. he'.*
- 63 (1.5)
- 64 T; *inu pia ananafi.*
 'Drink beer yesterday.'
- 65 (1.0)

Tui first downplays the importance of his wife's complaint by laughing and then admits to having drunk the day before, as if to explain her remark to me.⁶

At this point I get back into the conversation, giving Tui a chance to defend himself:

(8) ("At Night," continued.)

- 66 A; *inu pia?*
 'Drink beer?'
- 67 T; *ioe.*
 'Yes.'
- [
- 68 A; *inu pia aso uma?*
 'Drink beer every day?'
- 69 (.5)
- 70 T; *leai.*
 'No.'
- 71 A; *hhuh lelei.*
 'Huh good.'
- 72 (.7)

Salu's complaint/accusation is thus dealt with partly through the distribution of roles and functions among three parties. In the end I am the one who discusses with Tui his drinking habits and provides a brief eval-

uation of his behavior and of what is acceptable. The confrontation between Salu and Tui is momentarily concluded by a dialogue between Tui and myself (in front of Salu). I believe Salu's utterance in line 60 to be the rhetorical seed that made this resolution possible.

This pattern of evoking and accomplishing other-involvement and cooperation in performing an accusation or in shaming someone is quite common across contexts. It is found in the village *fono* (Duranti 1981, 1988, 1990a, 1990b) and in the household interaction studied by Ochs (1988).

Another point to note here is that Salu seems to be talking as if Tui is not a full-fledged participant. This is even more apparent in the next example, where Salu talks about Tui in the third person.

Second Case: Complaining about the Husband's Choice of Language

Another multiparty involvement is illustrated in example 9, below. Here Salu's turn comes in the middle of an interaction, involving her husband, David, and me. She attempts to shame her husband for trying to speak English. This exchange starts with Tui expressing in good speech his interest in the packet that David is carrying. Once David is brought into the conversation, Tui appears to decide he should use English, probably because David has been in the village for a short time and his Samoan is minimal.

(9) ("At Night," continued.)

82 T; *'o le ā le pepa a Tavita?*

'What is [in] David's packet?'

83 A; [Whispering to D.] (? ? *don't do anything.*)

84 T; [*Devi.*
'David.'

85 (1.0)

86 D; *what?*

87 (1.0)

88 A; *'o le: meaalofa mo Tui.*
'A gift for Tui.'

89 T; *oi=oi.*
'Oh oh!'

90 A; *ia.* [To D.] *give it to Tui.*

- 91 T; *leai*.
 'No.'
- 92 (2.0)
- 93 *alu i fale. totonu o le fale*.
 'Go to the houses. Inside of the house.'
- 94 A; [*i le fale=le fale*.
 'In the house=the house.'
- 95 T; [*alu i fale*.
 'Go to the houses.'
- 96 A; [*wait.*=
- 97 =*wait David*
- 98 T; *David wait*.
- 99 D; *wait?*
- 100 T; *yes*.
- 101 A; *yeah*.
- 102 T; *in the house, ya*,
- 103 (8.0)
- 104 S; *fia gagu ia Kui*.
 'Tui really feels like speaking foreign [speech].'

In line 104, Salu uses bad speech again, but this time the third person description of Tui (pronounced /kui/) makes the speech act even more problematic from a dyadic point of view. It is a description of Tui's preferences and actions expressed in the register appropriate to talking to Tui but not said directly to him (cf. Goffman 1981:124-157). At the same time, it is unlike an utterance with me as a primary audience. Furthermore, it is a negative evaluation. The term *gagu* (*nanu* in good speech) is loaded with negative affect: It means 'foreign speech' and also 'incomprehensible speech'. Note in the next example how Tui interprets the statement as an invitation to reassess his ability to speak English and asks me to give an assessment, which he anticipates with the negative *e leaga* '[it's] bad'. This negative evaluation is supported by Salu's comment in line 107, which answers a question directed to me.

(10) ("At Night," continued.)

- 105 (2.0)
- 106 T; [To A.] *e lelei le nanu a Tui? e leaga!*
 'Is Tui's foreign language good? [It's] bad!'

107 S; *humm vaea!*
 'Huhu [it's] stupid!'

Dialogue between husband and wife is possible here only through a triadic interaction: It is through talking to me or around me that Tui and Salu communicate.

Third Case: Blaming the Foreigners

The third and last case to examine is one in which Salu uses good speech.

Subsequent to the exchange analyzed previously, Tui asks about David's health. It is a polite question that provokes David's interest in the conversation. David's use of English, however, is used by Tui as an excuse to promote Samoan.

(11) ("At Night," continued.)

144 T; *Tavita,*
 145 (1.0)
 146 T; *Tavita,*
 147 *David?*
 148 *you try to speak in- Samoan language. (.5)*
 149 *it's a good- (.3) one for you.*
 150 (2.0)
 151 D; *I'm trying.*
 152 T; *ia. okay.*
 153 (2.5)

At this point I try to get David to show off the few words he has been able to learn in the last few weeks (see appendix, lines 154-189). After such a performance, Tui seems eager to admit David's progress in learning Samoan. His wife, however, disagrees with him once again, this time using good speech (note the words *Tavita* and *nanu*).

(12) ("At Night," continued.)

191 T; *lelei tele*
 'Very good.'
 [

- 192 S; *e le lelei le fa'a Sāmoa a- a Tavita*
 'David's Samoan is not good'
193 *leaga e nanu iai 'oulua.*
 'because you two speak foreign language.'
194 A; *hh!*
195 (1.0)

The switch to good speech this time suggests that the speech act is aimed at me. The pronoun 'oulua 'you two' in line 193, however, indicates that there are two addressees and hence two people to blame. If I am one, who is the other? Before answering this question, let us examine a few more potentially relevant turns. In line 196 below, Salu tries to elicit David's agreement. When she fails to do so, given that David has probably not understood what she said, Salu answers her own question (line 198). At this point David frankly admits his problems with the language and Tui echoes his remark.

(13) ("At Night," continued.)

- 196 S; 'a *Tavita?*
 'Right David?'
197 (1.5)
198 S; *ī.*
 'Yeah.'
 [
199 D; (*I forgot all those words . . .*)
200 *I don't understand (? her/them)*
 [
201 T; *no don't understand (them).*

It is at this point, right after David's admission of lack of competence (lines 199-200), that Tui intervenes to accept and expand Salu's assessment. Salu will shortly shout at him that he should be hiding the bottles of beer he is carrying because people on the road can see him--the first time that she addresses him directly in the last few minutes of interaction analyzed here--while he is engaged (lines 203 and 206) in explaining to David and me what Salu has just said (lines 192 and 193 of example 12). Half in Samoan and half in English, he tells us that Elinor and I are the cause of David's unfortunate situation.

(14) (“At Night,” continued.)

- 202 (2.0)
 203 T; *e e le- te 'oe iā Alesana e-Elenoa*
 ‘Don’t- to you from Alessandro [and] Elinor’
 [
 204 S; (*oi fē*) *kilokilo mai ā kagaka*
 ‘(Oh!) people stare [at us]’
 205 *i au fagu pia. (oga ū).*
 ‘to your bottles of beer. (? ?).’
 206 T; *speak in- English every time (? ?)*
 207 S; *ē!*

In line 193, the dual pronoun *'oulua* could refer to Tui and me, given that we are the only ones present and we have been using some English in talking to David. However, Tui interprets the pronoun as referring to my wife and me.

With the last exchanges, there seems to be a realignment in the participant structure of the interaction: For the first time, in the last few minutes, Salu and Tui seem to agree on something. In fact, this time it is Tui who takes up the role of co-shamer that I had been clumsily fulfilling earlier.

Conclusions

In the last decade or so, many ethnographers have been questioning the authority of their own categorizations and theoretical assumptions. Instead of unexamined monologic descriptions, Tedlock, Rosaldo, Marcus, Fisher, Clifford, and others have been encouraging their colleagues to question their own methodological biases and admit the inherently dialogical nature of ethnographic experience and description. The invitation is to produce a different kind of “script,” one in which our voice does not necessarily overpower those of the people whose minds and actions we are trying to understand. It is in the spirit of this enterprise that I have written this article. I chose a transcript of an interaction that includes me as a naive participant not so much to show, one more time, how inadequate we can be or how truly wise our “subjects” are. I selected a spurious piece of data, with mixed codes and mixed messages, with culturally and linguistically varied participants, with ambiguous messages and even more ambiguous stances, to show how both speech

and ethnographer can become resources in the daily constitution of conflict relations and conflict management. The linguistic and interactional intricacies of multivocal dialogues in which we, more or less reluctantly, more or less competently, participate reveal to a close examination two kinds of orders: the one contained in the available code systems and their oppositions, and the one reproduced and challenged in the live exchanges of everyday life. I hope I have been able to show that to describe such orders we must pay close attention to the form and content of talk.

I have tried to demonstrate how, through various discourse strategies such as code switching and referential ambiguity that involve differentiated participation among the parties present, the speakers succeed in challenging and at the same time recreating alliances within the expected boundaries of the local order. Husband and wife, from being foes over drinking and drunken behavior, become allies--blaming the ethnographers for wrongdoing. The initial conflict between two Samoans has turned into an accusation, however benign, of the outsiders' failure to properly integrate their offspring into the local culture. This is indeed a happy ending for an interaction that could have turned in quite a different direction. From my point of view, incurring blame for not living up to the expectations of our Samoan friends was but a small price for the thrill of being part, even though for a few minutes, of the Samoan night.

APPENDIX

This is the transcript of the first five minutes and sixteen seconds of an hour-long tape recorded in the village of Falefā, Western Samoa, in 1978.

Title: "At Night." Setting: walking on the main road, at night; participants: Chief Tui (T.), his wife Salu (S.), seven-year-old David (D.), and researcher Alessandro Duranti (A.). The names of the Samoan participants, "Tui" and "Salu," are pseudonyms.

- 1 A; 'o le ā le mea e fai?
'What are you doing?'
- 2 (1.0)
- 3 T; tafafao
'Visiting.'
- 4 A; tafafao tele.
'Visiting a lot.'
- 5 T; (oi/leai) 'umi. 'umi 'ā
'(Oh/no) long. Long [visiting], isn't it?'
- 6 A; [a,
'Isn't it?'

- 7 T; *ia' tātou te ̄o i le fale?*
'Well. Are we all going to [our] house?
- 8 (1.0)
- 9 A; *ia.*
'Right.'
- 10 (1.0)
- 11 T; *mālō David.*
'Hello [lit., congratulations] David.'
- 12 S; *'ā lē ̄o i le fale ua ̄o uma kagaka.*
'Why not go home [if] everyone has gone.'
- 13 (4.0)
- 14 T; *kākou ̄o i le fale ā,*
'Let's go home, okay?'
- 15 A; *ia.*
'Right.'
- 16 (1.0)
- 17 T; *David, (2.0) what's happen?*
- 18 (1.0)
- 19 A; [Laughter] *heh.*
- 20 S; [Soft] *e le mālmalama.*
'[He] doesn't understand.'
- 21 T; [Laughter] *humhumhum 'a Davi, (1.5) e iai se mea 'ua tupu?*
'Huhuhu so David, (1.5) anything has happened?'
- 22 S; *'o le 'ā- (.3) 'o le ā le ̄o*
'Why- (.3) why aren't [we] going'
- 23 *oga ̄o aku la'ia iai. 'ae-*
'when (I/we?) come to you but-'
- 24 (1.0)
- 25 T; [Sees tape recorder] *oi! fia- (.3) pu'e se tautala?*
'Oh! (.3) record some speech?'
- 26 A; *ioe.*
'Yes.'
- 27 T; *lelei.*
'Good.'
- 28 D; [Whispers to A.] *should I give it to him now?*
- 29 (.5)
- 30 A; *no.*
- 31 (2.0)
- 32 *pu'e se:-*
'record some-'
- 33 (1.0)
- 34 T; *talanoa i le 'āiga 'ā,*
'Talk in the family, right?'
- 35 A; *talanoa i le 'āiga.*
'talk in the family.'
- 36 (.5)
- 37 T; *māgaia leo 'ua lelei lua fekau ā lea 'ua tele 'upu.*
'Nice voices the time is right for you two there are many words.'

- 38 A; *ia lelei.*
'Well, good.'
- 39 (3.0)
- 40 *fa'afiafia:- (1.0) Salu.*
'Make Salu happy.'
- 41 S; (? ?)
- 42 T; ('a-)
- 43 (2.0)
- 44 T; 'a fea ia Elenoa?
'Where is Elinor?'
(.3)
- 45 A; *totonu o le fale.*
'Inside the house.'
- 47 T; 'ae e lē o tātou?²
'So she is not coming with us?'
(.5)
- 49 A; *leai. (3) malōlō Elenoa.*
'No. (.3) Elinor [is going to] rest.'
- 50 T; 'ua uma na fai se mea'ai?
'Have [you] finished eating?'
- 51 A; 'ua uma.
'Finished.'
- 52 T; *lelei.*
'Good.'
- 53 (12.0)
- 54 T; [Sigh] *hu::um.*
(2.0)
- 56 A; (Tui) 'ua uma le galuega?
'(Tui) is the work finished?'
(1.5)
- 58 T; *toetiti.*
'Shortly.'
- 59 A; *toetiti.*
'Shortly.'
- 60 S; *e lē koe 'uma 'i le igu pia so'o!*
'It's not finished because of the drinking of beer all the time!'
(.5)
- 62 T; [Laughter] *hhehehehe. he'.*
(1.5)
- 64 T; *inu pia ananafi.*
'Drink beer yesterday.'
- 65 (1.0)
- 66 A; *inu pia?*
'Drink beer?'
- 67 T; *ioe.*
'Yes.'
- [
- 68 A; *inu pia aso uma?*
'Drink beer every day?'

- 69 (5)
 70 T; *leai*.
 'No.'
- 71 A; *hhuh lelei*.
 'Huh good.'
- 72 (.7)
 73 T; *yesterday*.
 74 (1.0)
 75 A; *ananafi ma:- ma:-*
 'Yesterday and- and-'
- 76 T; *ua nei*.
 'Just before.'
- 77 A; *ma gāgei*.
 'And later [today].'
- 78 T; *ua nei*.
 'Just before.'
- [
 79 A; [Misunderstands] *nānei. nānei*.
 'Later. Later [today].'
- 80 (20.0) [A truck goes by, children's voices]
 82 T; *'o le ā le pepa a Tavita?*
 'What is [in] David's packet?'
 83 A; [Whispering to D.] (? ? *don't do anything.*)
- [
 84 T; *Devi*.
 'David.'
- 85 (1.0)
 86 D; *what?*
 87 (1.0)
 88 A; *'o le meaalofa mo Tui*.
 'A gift for Tui.'
- 89 T; *oi=oi*.
 'Oh oh!'
- 90 A; *ia*. [To D.] *give it to Tui*.
 91 T; *leai*.
 'No.'
- 92 (2.0)
 93 *alu i fale. totonu o le fale*.
 'Go to the houses. Inside of the house.'
- [
 94 A; *i le fale=le fale*.
 'In the house=the house.'
- [
 95 T; *alu i fale*.
 'Go to the houses.'
- [
 96 A; *wait.=*
 97 *=wait David*
 98 T; *David wait*.

- 99 D; *wait?*
 100 T; *yes.*
 101 A; *yeah.*
 102 T; *in the house, ya,*
 103 (8.0)
 104 S; *fia gagu ia Kui.*
 'Tui really feels like speaking foreign [speech].'
 105 (2.0)
 106 T; [To A.] *e lelei le nanu a Tui? e leaga!*
 'Is Tui's foreign language good? [It's] bad!'
 107 S; *humm valea!*
 'Huhu [it's] stupid!'
 108 T; *leaga le nanu (gāgei) (.5) se'ilogā onā.*
 'The foreign language is bad (?) (.5) unless
 [one] is drunk.'
 109 (1.0)
 110 A; *ona?*
 'Drunk?'
 111 T; [
 'a *Alesana?*
 'Huh, Alessandro? [i.e., What do you think?]'
 112 A; *onā laititi?*
 'A little bit drunk?
 113 T; *onā laititi. lelei Alesana.*
 'A bit drunk. Alessandro [is] good [or, Well done, Alessandro].'
 114 A; *lelei.*
 'Good.'
 115 T; *umm.*
 116 S; (? *nanu?*)
 117 (20.0)
 118 [Pig screams]
 119 A; *ola!*
 120 T; (*pig*)
 121 D; [
pigs!
 122 T; *pigs? (.5) huhu. pig. 'ā?*
 123 A; 'ua *pē le pua'a?*
 'Has the pig died [i.e., been killed]?'
 124 T; *leai.*
 'No.'
 125 (2.0)
 126 T; *le'i tai* [from English *die*] *l(e) pua'a.*
 'The pig has not died.'
 127 (5.5)
 128 T; *mālosi Tavita,*
 '[Is] David healthy [lit., strong]?'
 129 A; *mālosi.*
 'Healthy.'

- 130 T; *ioe.*
'Yes.'
- 131 D; *what does that mean?*
- 132 T; *fiafia?*
'Happy?'
- 133 A; *fiafia.*
'[He's] happy.'
- 134 S; (*kālofa*) *huhuhum.*
'(Poor thing) huhuhum.'
- 135 D; *what does that mean?*
- 136 A; [*he wants to know*] *if you feel good.*
- 137 T; [
are you happy,
- 138 *David?*
- 139 D; *yeah,*
- 140 T; [Laughter] *hehehehehe.*
- 141 D; [
I don't know.
- 142 (12.0)
- 143 *God the moon is up! (1.5) (? ?)*
- 144 T; [
Tavita,
- 145 (1.0)
- 146 T; *Tavita,*
- 147 *David?*
- 148 *you try to speak in- Samoan language. (0.5)*
- 149 *it's a good- (.3) one for you.*
- 150 (2.0)
- 151 D; *I'm tying.*
- 152 T; *ia. okay.*
- 153 (2.5)
- 154 A; *'ua il- 'ua iloa Tavita:- (0.4)*
'David knows- knows' (.4)
- 155 *'upu fa'aSāmoa e: sefulu.*
'ten Samoan words.'
- 156 (1.0)
- 157 T; *oh mānaia.*
'Oh nice.'
- 158 (1.0)
- 159 T; *lelei. it's good.*
- 160 A; [
ia'.
- 161 A; *Da- tel- d- Tui the-*
- 162 *the words you learned in Samoan.*
- 163 T; *tōfā.*
'Bye.'

- 164 (1.0)
 165 A; *heh*,
 166 D; (*hum*)
 167 (.5)
 168 D; *hum:tālofa*,
 'Hello.'
 169 (.5)
 170 T; *tālofa*.
 171 D; *hum: fafetai*.
 'Thanks.'
 172 T; *fa'afetai*.
 'Thanks.'
 173 D; *'aua*.
 'Don't.'
 174 T; *'aua*.
 'Don't.'
 175 (1.0)
 176 *don't*.
 177 (2.0)
 178 A; *and then what?*
 179 (6.0)
 180 D; (*and then*)
 181 (1.0)
 182 A; *how do you say to re(st)? [malolo 'rest']*
 [
 183 D; *manaia*.
 'Nice/ good.'
 184 A; *mānaia*.
 'Nice/good.'
 185 T; *mānaia*, (.4) *good'ā*,
 186 (.5)
 187 D; (*oden*)
 188 (.5)
 189 T; *alu?*
 'Go?'
 190 (1.0)
 191 T; *lelei tele*
 'Very good.'
 [
 192 S; *e le lelei le fa'aSāmoa a- a Tavita*
 'David's Samoan is not good'
 193 *leaga e nanu iai 'oulua*.
 'because you two speak foreign language.'
 194 A; *h h !*
 195 (1.0)
 196 S; *'a Tavita?*
 'Right David?'
 197 (1.5)

- 198 S; *ī*.
'Yeah.'
- [
- 199 D; (*I forgot all those words . . .*)
200 *I don't understand (?her/them)*
- [
- 201 T; *no don't understand (them).*
202 (2.0)
203 *e e le- te 'oe iā Alesana e- Elenoa*
'Don't- to you from Alessandro [and] Elinor'
- [
- 204 S; (*oi fē*) *kilokilo mai ā kagaka*
(Oh!) people stare [at us]'
- 205 *i au fagu pia. (oga ū).*
'to your bottles of beer. (? ?).'
- 206 T; *speak in- English every time (? ?)*
- 207 S; *ē!*
- 208 A; *leaga a'u.*
'It's my fault [lit., I am bad].'
- 209 T; *hum. ia'.*
'Hum. Right.'

NOTES

Earlier drafts of this article were presented at the Conference on Discourse in Its Sociocultural Context, University of Texas at Austin, April 1987, and at the 1987 American Anthropological Association meeting, Chicago, in the session "Dyadic vs. Multiparty Participation Frameworks." I would like to thank the participants in those two events for their comments and criticism. In particular, I am indebted to Aaron Cicourel, Chuck Goodwin, John Haviland, Joel Sherzer, and Michael Silverstein for their support and insightful comments. Special thanks go to Celso Alvarez and Elinor Ochs for their careful reading of an earlier draft. The research on which this article is based was supported by two grants from the National Science Foundation: Grant 53-482-2480 (Elinor Ochs, principal investigator) and Grant BNS-8608210 (Alessandro Duranti and Elinor Ochs, principal investigators). Special thanks go to the people of **Falefā** in 'Upolu, Western Samoa, where I conducted my research, for their friendship and cooperation.

Transcription: The transcripts used in this article were prepared by the author with the help of a program ("SCAN") written by John B. Haviland for personal computer. The conventions are basically those introduced by Gail Jefferson (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974) for conversation analysis of English, with a few exceptions such as my use of the semicolon following identification of the speakers (the colon is instead used to mark sound lengthening). A stand-alone bracket--"["--signals the point of overlap; "=" indicates latching; parentheses indicate uncertain hearing or timed pauses; brackets around English words in translations indicate interpolation to ease understanding or to match Samoan idioms with English ones. Samoan is transcribed according to traditional Samoan orthog-

raphy--i.e., the inverted apostrophe (') stands for a glottal stop, a macron on a vowel (ā, ē, etc.) indicates length--taking into consideration sociolinguistic variation.

1. *Suga* is an informal address term used exclusively with women; Milner (1966) translates it as "lassie."

2. "Elinor" refers to my wife, Elinor Ochs, who was conducting a longitudinal study of child language acquisition (Ochs 1988). "David" is my stepson, David Keenan, who was seven at the time and had joined us after our first two months of fieldwork.

3. An appointed group of *matai* (chiefs) who enforce respect of the social etiquette.

4. Abbreviations used in the glosses: ART = article; COMP = complimentizer; NEG = negation; PST = past tense; TA = tense/aspect marker.

5. In Samoan the nominalized form found in line 60 (*le igu pia so'o* 'the drinking [of] beer repetitively'), contrary to what is said about other languages such as English (Williams 1981), is not more formal than its verbal or sentential counterparts and is in fact quite common in everyday, casual speech. In this context, the important aspect of this utterance is the nonmention of the actor/subject, which gives the addressee(s) more responsibility for deciding whom the speaker is talking about.

6. A linguistic note is necessary at this point. Line 64 does not have a subject expressed: Tui does not explicitly say, "I drank beer yesterday." His utterance in fact parallels Salu's nominalized clause, which was also subjectless. This seems to be a good candidate for one of the strategies mentioned by Brown and Levinson (1987:225): Be vague or ambiguous. Assessing the import of such a linguistic choice is difficult, however, given that in Samoan this kind of ellipsis is used more often than in languages such as English and the referent of the "missing" subject is usually understood from the context.

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