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SPEECH, STRUCTURE AND AESTHETICS IN A GBAYA TALE

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The phenomenon of orality has been a subject of considerable interest in recent years, both for its role in the structure and performance of oral art forms and for its use by writers in written forms of art. As world organizations have begun to sponsor international literacy campaigns, efforts have also been undertaken to understand the nature of orality itself. During the past several years linguists, particularly in West Africa, have paid increasing attention to reflections of orality within text in the form of reported speech. In this paper literary and linguistic features of oral discourse are brought together in a discussion of the Gbaya performance of the traditional tale.

Le phénomène de l'oralité a été dans les années recentes un sujet de grand intérêt en raison de son double rôle: dans la structure et la présentation des formes d'art oral, et dans son emploi par des écrivains sous forme d'art écrit. Pendant que des organisations mondiales commençaient à parainner des campagnes internationales d'alphabétisation, des tentatives ont été entreprises pour comprendre la nature même de l'oralité. Depuis quelques années des linguistes surtout en Afrique de l'Ouest prêtent une attention croissante aux reflets de l'oralité dans le texte en forme de parole rapportée. Dans ce document les caractéristiques littéraires et linguistiques de ce discours oral sont présentés à travers l'analyse de la représentation d'un conte traditionnel gbaya.

0. INTRODUCTION[1]

1. **Gɛnɛ! Gɛnɛ!**
Gɛné ge nde?
Gɛné valá dua!
Wěn ge?
Wěn biro!
Weyaa-e! Ɛé kɔ́ k'ɛ́ɛ́ biro kɔ́-mɛ́ ná wó!
Biro kɔ́-mɛ́ dé má-e!

For sale! For sale!
What's for sale?
A billy goat's for sale!
For what?
For a fight!
No-o! We don't like your kind of fighting!
You fight mean oh!

This is quoted speech, but there is no introductory verb and no formulaic tag to mark the opening of conversation, the speaker is

not overtly identified, nor is the addressee and second speaker, there is no concluding formula to mark the termination of conversation either. There is only the context of the speech exchange and its content, together with the syntactic structure and the pause and the stress intonation that identify it as direct speech.

The context of the quotation is a tale performed by a Gbaya farmer named Joseph Doko who lives at Bétaré Oya in east-central Cameroon. The tale was recorded in his home one evening in 1966 as he told it to an audience of about fifteen members of his family and neighborhood (Noss 1973:119-121, 228-230).[2]

It is a tale of the hero of Gbaya tradition called Wanto (cf. Noss 1971) and an adversary identified as Mgbaɗimgbaŋ whom the narrator portrays as a fighter, one whose principle activity is fighting with his peers. His name depicts him as an unkempt, ugly and frightening sort of person. The first part of the compound construction which is his name is an ideophone, **mgbáɗí**, that may be applied to the tail of the baboon or something that is short, ugly and disgusting. The second part of his name **mgbáŋ** is an interjection used in warning, 'Look out!'

That the performance of the tale is an oral event is self-evident. However, there are a number of aspects of orality related to the performance that may not all be as evident as the performance itself. A performance entails a performer and a text that is performed and it normally assumes an audience for whom the performer is performing. The performance is a speech event in which the performer is the sender, the tale is the message and the audience is the receptor. The tale is furthermore set within the framework of transmission, for the performer is transmitting a tale that he has received from previous senders when he was part of the audience.

The tale from which the excerpt quoted above was taken exemplifies a further aspect of orality and discourse. In it, the artist uses discourse as a structural and rhetorical device to provide an overall frame for his performance, to develop his plot, and move it toward a climax and resolution, to lend depth by setting up foils against which his main characters may be seen, and to draw his audience into the performance and the action itself.

The topic of reported discourse in its various forms has assumed increased importance in recent years as both linguists and students of literature have begun to look at it from the vantage point of their separate disciplines.[3] An important linguistic study highlighting the various aspects of speech in narrative is An Anatomy of Speech Notions by R.E. Longacre (1976). A second study that looks specifically at reported speech in oral texts is that of Mildred L. Larson, The Functions of Reported Speech in Discourse (1978).

In Cameroon the work of several linguists has led to a closer look at reported discourse because of a formal distinction that is maintained in the grammar of certain languages. The newly observed phenomenon, in addition to the traditional direct and

indirect speech modes, has been called semi-direct speech (Thomas 1969; Hyman 1979; Wiesemann 1986) and combined speech (Perrin 1974; Hedinger 1984; cf. Stanley 1982).

In this paper I wish first to present the setting of the performance as a speech event, secondly to offer a survey of discourse as it occurs in the Gbaya language of east-central Cameroon and western Central African Republic,[4] and thirdly, to focus on the use of discourse in oral performance as exemplified in the tale of Wanto and Mgbadimgbaŋ in a performance by Joseph Doko.

1. THE TALE AS REPORTED DISCOURSE

The performance is the surface level of speech which is most apparent to the ear, or eye, of the observer. It is also the level of which the audience is most aware, as reflected in the opening formulae that may be sung or declaimed at the beginning of the performance. The narrator may attract the attention of his potential audience by singing the following lines:

2. Young men, listen to a tale!

A tale for fun, for fun,
listen to a tale,
a tale for fun.

Young women, listen to a tale!

A tale for fun, for fun,
listen to a tale,
a tale for fun.

Children, listen to a tale!

A tale for fun, for fun,
listen to a tale,
a tale for fun.

Old people, listen to a tale!

A tale for fun, for fun.
listen to a tale,
a tale for fun.

In the song, the artist invites the members of his community to listen to a tale, and his listeners respond in the refrain that the tale is for fun. By joining in antiphonally, they establish themselves as the recipients of what the performer proposes to offer them, they are the listeners to what he will say.

A further response may be sung by a member of the audience as follows:

3. Your voice is a gong,
your body a termite,
bring it here for me to roast!

This formulaic response to the anticipated opening of the performance focusses on the performer himself in the form of flattery. What is important to the audience is not the body of

the artist but his voice which is a gong or a bell that will ring and resound for the pleasure of the listeners. His body is no more significant than that of the termite which has a large head and a small body. Let the tale be brought forth so that it may be roasted and eaten with the same pleasure that the termite or wild game is roasted and eaten!

The performance is therefore an event of reported discourse by its very nature, and it is this fact that gives it validity. The performer's artistic act in the presence of his listeners may be dramatically successful, he may successfully apply the tale to a local situation, but the basic validity of the tale stems from the fact that it has been received from the fathers out of the past. The performer is not therefore creating his own images or his own tale, but is repeating what both he and his audience may have heard many times before. This discourse frame with its unknown original speaker, setting and audience is therefore of paramount importance in the present speech event that is the performance of the Gbaya tale.

2. THE FORM OF REPORTED DISCOURSE

Within the tale, reported discourse may also play a prominent role. Its role then is not as a frame for the story, but as part of the performance, its function is rhetorical (cf. Larson 1984:334). The speaker does not seek to report the content of speech events (cf. Larson 1984:331), he seeks rather to tell his tale in a manner that will be pleasing and entertaining to his listeners.

Gbaya narrative performers have at their disposal at least five levels of discourse depending on the degree of precision one wishes to introduce into one's analysis:

(i) The first and most immediate level is direct speech in which the actual words of the speaker are purportedly quoted.

(ii) The second level is that of reported thought as though the narrator is reading the sender's mind and putting his thoughts into the intonation of speech without expressly stating the words cited to be the mentally verbalized words of the sender.

(iii) The third level is where an interjection or an indirect vocative is introduced into indirect speech.

(iv) The fourth is indirect speech where the narrator reports a message but from his own or someone else's perspective and not from the perspective of the original sender.

(v) The last and most distant level is non-speech where a speech act is alluded to, but is not reported except in a most general manner.

The first indication of discourse in the tale of Wanto and Mgbaɗimgbaŋ is found in the performer's opening line. It is an example of a non-quote (Wiesemann 1984; 1986:76-77) of reformulated speech (Wendland 1979:853). Discourse is stated to be about to occur, but it is only referred to by the third person object pronoun 'it':

4a. **M'béka tɔ́ a ɗoŋ-áa nyɛ́i ná**

b. **mí tɛ́ tɔ tíkíɗi ɓɛɛ́.**

I won't tell it very long,
I'll only tell (it) a little bit.

The verb tɔ́ 'say, speak' announces a locutionary act, but its object in this case must be understood from the context of the tale-performing session. The object of the verb is the tale which the narrator announces will be short.

A second example of non-speech occurs in the performer's description of how the villain of the tale goes about seeking fights.

5. **a pɛ́r wen wen déá biro**
he bandies words (about) for doing fight

The villain provokes people to fights and his provocations are stated to be words, but the words that he uses are not specified, only their intent.

The first example of direct discourse differs markedly from what would be considered the grammatically normal full form of direct discourse in that it is not directly introduced by any locutionary verb, nor by any tag formula, nor even by direct identification of the speaker or the addressee. The following exemplifies the usual full construction (Noss 1981:128):

6. **ɓɛɛ sáká Wanto tɔ́a há Torndoŋ hee gé ndé:**
Mɛ́ tɛ́ nɛ gía, mɛ́ nɛ́ wí-gbɛ-saɗi ín ŋma-mɛ nde?
And then Wanto said to Cricket said what that:
You are going hunting, are you a hunter like your peers?

In this example, the speaker is identified as Wanto, Cricket is identified as the addressee, the verb of speaking, **tɔ́á** 'said', is stated, and the discourse tag is used with the three items of its full formulaic structure:

7a.	**hee**	defective verb 'say'
b.	**ge**	interrogative pronoun 'what?'
c.	**ndé**	discourse final particle

The defective verb **hee** may occur with another verb of speaking or it may itself occur as the locutionary verb introducing the following discourse. It is a defective verb in that it occurs with the meaning of 'saying' only in the past form.[5] It may take any of three forms depending on speed of pronunciation and articulation, all of which convey the same meaning:

8a.	**Wanto hee....**	Wanto said....
b.	**Wanto he....**	Wanto said....
c.	**Wanto'e....**	Wanto said....

The interrogative pronoun **ge** occurs in the tag between the defective verb and the discourse particle. In occurrence outside the discourse tag, it is a simple interrogative:

9a.	**nɛ́ ge?**	is what?	'What is it?'
b.	**Wanto hee gé?**	Wanto said what?	'What did Wanto say?'

The discourse particle **ndé**, sometimes called a complementizer, may occur with the full or reduced tag construction or it may stand alone after the speaker identification to introduce following speech as exemplified below:

10a. **Wanto hee ge ndé...** Wanto said what that
b. **Wanto'e ndé....** Wanto said that
c. **Wanto ndé....** Wanto that (i.e. said)

It may also occur with extra-high tone to signify a question regarding assumed speech or it may imply an evoked response in order to draw the listener's attention to the discourse that is about to be reported.[6]

11a. **mɛ́ tɛ́ mɛ saayé ndé?**
you will go town (you said?)
'Did you say you're going to town?'

b. **Wanto ndé....**
Wanto said (eh?)....
'What Wanto said was(!)....'

In the tale of Mgbaɗimgbaŋ and Wanto several of the above alternatives occur, although not all. Following the first speech exchange which is introduced neither by a verb of speaking nor by any form of the discourse tag, the performer uses the simple verb to introduce direct speech. Subsequently he uses the verb plus the discourse particle.

12. **bɛɛ́ a tɔ́á: Laáizó, mí kpaa mbúɗi wen h'ɛɛ mɛ́ yɔŋ....**
then he said: Laaizo, I got (a) goat for us to eat....

13. **sáká Mgbáɗimgbáŋ tɔ́a há wa ndé: mɔ tgé sạ́ mɛ́ túɗuyɛ súút....**
then Mgbaɗimgbaŋ said to them that: thing will clear in morning early....

Several times in the tale the performer uses indirect discourse as in the following example:

14. **ɓɛɛ Mgbáɗímgbáŋ ndé mɔɔ́sa túɗuyɛ wí a'i tɛ́ woyo'i wo!**
and Mgbaɗimgbaŋ **ndé** tomorrow morning
he (LOG) would himself (LOG) come
again there EMPH
'then Mgbaɗimgbaŋ said that tomorrow
morning he'd be coming again!'

The discourse tag normally precedes and introduces indirect discourse, although as in the above case it is often the reduced form consisting of the discourse particle alone. Formally, the indirect form of discourse is distinguished from the direct by a shift in personal pronoun. The logophoric pronoun **wí** is used for the quoted speaker in reference to himself. It occurs most often with third person singular reference, but may also occur with second person singular reference.

15a. **Ɗókó'e wí kɔ́ ná**
Ɗoko said himself (LOG) want not

b. **Ɗókó'e ạ kɔ́ ná**
Ɗoko said he (another) want not

16a. **mɛ́'e wí kɔ́ ná**
you said yourself (LOG) want not

b. **mɛ́'e mɛ́ kɔ́ ná**
you said you want not

c. **mɛ́'e mí kɔ́ ná**
you said I want not

In examples (14a) and (14b) above, the logophoric and the second person singular pronoun both represent indirect discourse, in that the original speaker used a first person pronoun. Semantically, however, (14b) carries the impact of direct discourse, whereas (14a) with the logophoric implies speaker distance as conveyed in indirect discourse (cf. Wiesemann 1986:106-107). The use of the first person pronoun as in example (14c) would be understood as indirect discourse referring to the reporter rather than as direct with reference to the quoted speaker.

In addition to the pronoun shift that normally accompanies indirect discourse, indirect speech may also be marked by deixis (cf. Wendland 1979:860ff.) Deictic words or morphemes marking spatial, temporal or referential distance are evidence of the perspective conveyed by indirect discourse.

17. **hégɔ́ ɓɛɛ Mgbáɗímgbáŋ ndé, Ɛ́ɛ́! Biro hií,**
wí dé géé fara ná....
so then Mgbaɗimgbaŋ said, Ɛ́ɛ́! That fighting,
one do plain place not....
'so then Mgbaɗimgbaŋ said, Oh! But the fight
isn't just held any old place...'

The deictic **hií** 'that/there' makes it evident that the quotation is indirect because of the distance that it marks between the speaker and the subject to which he refers. However, example (15) offers evidence of a further phenomenon that has been noted elsewhere (Chatman 1978:200), namely, that interjections can be introduced into indirect discourse. The first word in the clause is an exclamation which denotes immediacy, while the remainder of the discourse is marked by distance.

An alternative discourse particle may also be used to effect closer proximity in indirect speech. The particle **ná** introduces indirect discourse, but it follows identification of the addressee as a form of vocative (Noss 1973:189). Its function is similar to that of the interjection noted above. It does not occur in the tale under consideration here, but the following citation from another tale is an example of its use (Noss 1981:130):

18. **ɓɛɛ́ nɛ kóo hịị tɔ́ ndé,**
há ạ ɗɔɔ́ yi ndé,
a ná, wí kɔ́ kɔ́'í ná.

and then woman there said that,
to him (from) under water that,
he **ná**, herself (LOG) want of herself (LOG) not
'and then the woman spoke from under the water,
addressing him saying that she didn't want to.'

Speech may also be reported within speech in the form of embedded speech which may be in either direct or indirect mode. Only the latter occurs in the tale of Wanto and Mgbaɗimgbaŋ.

19. **La mɔ̀ŋ, mɛ tɔ́ há a ndé,**
mí ŋgói bɔ̌ŋ timbo'ií ɓɔ ná.
Brother mine, you tell to him that,
I want mine fight that more not.
'My brother, tell him that I don't like
that fight anymore!'

In a further example in the text, the performer introduces what appears to be indirect discourse but then shifts to non-speech to explain the content of the words that he would have reported.

20. **ɓɛɛ́ a tɔá, Laáizó, mí kpaa mbuɗi wen h'ɛ́ɛ́**
mɛ́ yɔŋ, wen ndé, Mgbáɗímgbáŋ ndé, bá mbúɗi
tɛ́nɛ́ ndé, wen h'ɛ́ɛ́ mɛ́ de nɛ biro.
Then he said, Laaizo, I got a goat for us to
eat, because that, Mgbaɗimgbaŋ (said) that,
brought a goat (saying) that, for us to fight about.

The artist develops the narration as though Wanto is going to quote someone's words in explanation of the presence of the goat, he then specifies the name of the person whose words Wanto is about to report, he adds the detail that Mgbaɗimgbaŋ brought the goat saying, and then he shifts from reporting the words to giving a summary of their content and the intent of Mgbaɗimgbaŋ.

At several points in his performance, the artist seeks to convey to his listeners thoughts going through the minds of his characters. He wishes to express their emotions and their reactions to the events taking place. The most obvious and direct means of conveying internal perspective is to use direct discourse as he does when he describes Wanto's reaction to Mgbaɗimgbaŋ's arrival for the fight the second time:

21. **Há! Nɛ́ o?** 'Ha! Who is it?'

There is no introduction, no identification and no tag for these words. They are simply given as the response to the villain's call, and the audience knows that they are Wanto's. Whether they were verbalized aloud by Wanto is not stated, they are simply his horrified reaction.

A further method may be used which is similar to Chatman's narrative report (p.200; cf. Wendland 1979:857ff). In the following citations the inner thoughts of the characters are reported.

22a. **Ka To zɔ́k, kâi! mɔ-áa rɛ́m ná.**
When To looked, no! it was too much!

b. **ka mbói-a zɔ́k, i̱í n'aa dé ín To'i ré́m ɓɔ ná.**
when brother-in-law his looked, that which he was doing to To was too much

c. **Hégó ɓaá mbói-a zɔka ré́m ná**
thus then brother-in-law his saw (it) too much

A similar pattern but which is in the category of non-speech is the following where thought and emotions are described without being explicitly reported or stated:

23. **ɓɛɛ mé́ ɗoŋ tíkíɗí, ɓɛɛ kárák! sera Mgbáɗimgbáŋ yima káɗí ɓɛɛ ká a toiá Wanto gúsí nɛ ta....**
'Then after a little bit, then **kárák**! Mgbaɗimgbaŋ had become angry and he tossed Wanto against the rock....'

The ideophone **kárák** expresses the change in emotion in Mgbaɗimgbaŋ as he becomes angry and attacks Wanto.

The feature of mixed discourse also occurs in Gbaya narrative (Noss 1983:190; cf. Biebuyck and Mateene 1971:37-38), although it is not employed by the performer in the tale of Wanto and Mgbaɗimgbaŋ. Mixed discourse is here defined as shifts from direct to indirect and vice versa within a single speech frame. The following examples are taken from tales performed by other Gbaya artists.[7]

24. **Dɛ̱ɛ̱ tɛɛ kífí, ka bó né́ kɔ́ í gá, mí nɛɛ ín mɛɛ.**
Mahogany came answered, if it were up to himself (LOG), I'd go with you.

25. **ɓɛɛ Nám kifa há a̱, ná, mɔ na'i té́ suk nɛ a̱ bó ná, wí dé kɔ́'í né́ zaó-geɗa hɛ̱ɛ̱; too, gé mɔ ge am té́ suk bɔɔ́ nɛ mé́ ge nde?**
Then Buffalo answered him, he **ná**, himself (LOG) had nothing with which to honor him, himself (LOG) of himself (LOG) was just weeding cassava here, so, 'what do I have with which to honor you?'

26. **Hó! Gbasɔ̱'e ndé: Ɛ̱ɛ̱ né́ ge ŋgáiámɔ né́ gé? Dika na !í ɔɔ́ nɛnɛ sókó gbára, ma bí í tɛ́ yak sɛ̌n zu-wí ná, ɛ̱ɛ̱ bém'ɛ tɛá nɛ díe sá yaká nɛné́ sɛ̌n zu wí'ɛ ge?**
Oh! Gbasɔ̱ said: What kind of terrible thing is this? As long as he had been living in the middle of the plain, nobody had gotten by him, so where did this kid come from to get past him?

Of particular interest in (23) is not as much the shift from indirect to direct between two clauses, as the fact that the shift is anticipated by the use of the demonstrative **hɛ̱ɛ̱** 'here' at the end of the indirect clause which should normally require the more distant **híí** 'there'. It could be argued that the mixing is already initiated in the first clause followed by the clearly shifted second clause.

27. **Sáká ó gbadaa tɔɔ́'e, Kóma! Asée!**
ɛnɛ́ maá yi gan wi nde?
'Then the baboons said that, Oh! So!
Do you run faster than themselves (LOG)?'

In this example the baboons address the person spoken to in the second person plural form of courtesy and their remark is reported with the pronoun of their actual speech (Noss 1973:190). However, the pronoun referring to the baboons, which would be the first person plural in direct form, is given in the logophoric form of indirect discourse. Perspective and distance is thus modified within the speech frame by the combining of direct and indirect form.

In addition to the formal levels of discourse described above, further nuancing may be achieved by the performer through his introductions to discourse. He may imply a locutionary or cognitive verb without overtly stating it and he may use shortened forms of the tag or he may omit it entirely. His intonation and stress together with length of pause further heighten the degree of drama borne by his use of discourse.

3. REPORTED DISCOURSE IN PERFORMANCE

The performer's personal character and the style and content of his selected narrative determine to a large degree his choice and his use of the various discourse forms at his disposal. The style of the tale of Wanto and Mgbaɗimgbaŋ as told by Joseph Ɗoko is very dramatic. Out of a total of 43 speech events, 29 are reported in direct discourse, 4 in indirect form, 2 of these being embedded discourse, 7 are non-speech, and 5 are narrative report. Another performance by a different artist may have a very different proportion of reported speech, particularly of direct to indirect.

The most obvious function of reported discourse in the performance of the tale is that of lending realism and vividness to the account. By introducing various forms of discourse, the performer implies that he was a personal witness to the event and can therefore report the speech events as they occurred. By his use of forms such as internal monologue, he implies that he is privy to the thoughts and emotions of the characters of his tale and is therefore capable to bringing his listeners into the secrets hidden in their minds. This, of course, is a rhetorical device.

Another function of the rhetorics of reported discourse in the tale is to add depth and perspective to character development through the use of special dialect forms and even foreign language expressions. In this tale and in others, Wanto is address as **Lám To**, 'Friend To' or 'Sir To' and **La mɔ̂ŋ**, 'Brother mine', both from a southern dialect of Gbaya which, when used in this context, introduces the pathetic and the comic. In the beginning of the tale's final episode, Mgbaɗimgbaŋ announces his arrival in a distorted form of the Fula arrival formula, **Ɗókó wala**! The foreign phrase emphasizes the speaker's marginal relationship to society, the distortion depicts his own aberration as a person.[8]

In the tale of Wanto's son and his adventures in seeking a wife,[9] the narrator recounts his confrontation with the monster Gbasɔ. As he approaches the monster's dwelling place on the waterless plain, he calls out his arrival, **Sámáŋgolo!** to which the monster responds, **Kaka mú na mú mbɛɛ!** The exchange is not understood by the Gbaya listeners, other than to recognize it as a form of greeting. What they do understand is its significance in the plot line. That the monster stands in the way of the hero is clear, that the hero will vanquish him is equally clear, because he addresses the monster in his own language, to which the monster must and does respond. Through the use of discourse in this manner, the performer flashes the outcome of the confrontation to his listeners by implicitly informing them that the monster has more than met its equal.

Throughout the tale of Wanto and Mgbaɗimgbaŋ, the artist makes significant use of reported discourse. It is his most obvious and pervasive rhetorical device throughout his tale. He begins by delimiting his performance, setting it off as a discourse encounter between himself and an unnamed addressee which is manifestly his audience. His opening statement is to refer to his own speech act which will be the telling of the tale, informing his listeners that it will not be long, he will only tell a short tale. The tale is therefore set within the artistic frame of a speech act in which the artist is narrating a tale to his audience. The frame for the performance is expressed in the form of non-speech discourse.

The predominant style of the discourse within the tale is direct, and it is given with a minimum of introduction and discourse tagging. The narrator introduces his two main characters, Mgbaɗimgbaŋ and Wanto, and begins his performance telling of the villain's practice of looking for fights. Then he says, 'And when he goes, "For sale! For Sale!"' Having explained that the villain goes about challenging people to fights, the artist does not introduce the challenge and its response other than to launch into it following a brief pause after 'And when he goes....' The context and the intonation identify the speech as direct. The addressee is not overtly identified except by the context, which assumes him to be anyone or everyone, and the final speech response refers to him as 'we'. The villain goes off. 'For sale! For sale!' The exchange takes place again with others, but the performer only gives the first line, and in their own minds the audience supplies the entire exchange on the basis of the first exchange. This, the performer implies, is repeated indefinitely until Mgbaɗimgbaŋ meets Wanto.

Then the same exchange is given in its full form again, differing little from the first time except in the final response where Wanto accepts the challenge. Wanto then carries on the discourse and the narrator introduces it with a pronoun subject and a verb with the initial item in the discourse being the vocative of the addressee, Laaizo, his wife. In his account to her, Wanto modifies his speech from anticipated indirect discourse, which would

distance him somewhat from the villain's challenge, to a non-speech account of the challenge thereby totally minimizing it and the predicted consequences of his action. What appear to be mental slips on the performers part, or false starts with three-fold repetition in an otherwise fast-flowing performance, are a deliberate device on the artist's part to portray Wanto's bumbling attempts to cover his foolishness in accepting Mgbaɗimgbaŋ's challenge.

Mgbaɗimgbaŋ then unexpectedly reappears on the scene to announce his warning to both Wanto and Laaizo, in the words of the narrator, 'Then Mgbaɗimgbaŋ said to them that, ...'[10] This is the fullest introduction yet used by the artist in the performance for reported discourse, and its purpose is to emphasize the gravity of the villain's warning that is explicitly given to both Wanto and his wife. The response is simple, 'He/She agreed, "You come."' The narrator identifies the sender as being one person, but the Gbaya singular third person pronoun does not distinguish masculine from feminine. It is the audience who supplies the knowledge that the speaker is Wanto.

The action of the tale continues the next day as Mgbaɗimgbaŋ arrives and finds his victim, 'Wanto, let's go.' Again there is no speech introduction or tag, apart from the speaker's arrival on the scene. Wanto agrees to go without verbalizing his agreement, after which the narrator introduces Mgbaɗimgbaŋ's warning with the discourse particle **ndé**. The warning itself is in indirect form with an inserted interjection. The discourse forms in this scene therefore move from untagged direct speech to non-speech to in-direct speech with interjection.

As they fight Wanto shouts his prowess, always in direct form, but with no introduction or tag. In the middle of the fight there is the non-speech ideophone **kárák** alluding to Mgbaɗimgbaŋ's thoughts, shifting the action from Wanto's side to his.

Characteristic of Gbaya narrative performance is song, and the narrator says, 'Then he put his mouth to song, then To put his mouth to song.' The shortened form of the hero's name is used here in a touch of familiarity and pathos. The song is sung by performer and audience. The first line quotes Wanto's cries of self-pity and suffering as he is beaten by Mgbaɗimgbaŋ, the second line is the chorus which recites the name of the villain with its meaning of warning and danger, implying that Wanto should have known what he would face, he had been forewarned by his opponent's name. The third line of the song is Mgbaɗimgbaŋ's justification for the beating he is administering to Wanto. The discourse lines are sung by the performer, the chorus lines are sung by performer and audience. The song is therefore composed of direct quotations from the two fighters as they fight which are reported by the performer in concert with his audience.

As the fight ends and the two characters part, the villain warns again in indirect discourse that he will be back the next morning. But the result of the fight is not pleasant for Wanto. In narrative report form, the performer enables the audience to

understand Wanto's reflections. It is too much. He touches his head and it feels like a swelling that is full of pus. This is his realization, and he announces to Laaizo in direct speech introduced by the simple verb 'said', 'No! Laaizo, I won't stay here any longer, let's leave!' The rhetorical effect of the simple discourse introduction is understatement. The vocative within the quotation again identifies the addressee, Wanto's wife, thereby bringing the audience inside the domestic relationship of husband and wife, with the implied difference of character between the two partners.

When the villain arrives, he calls, 'Friend To! Friend To!' His call is met with silence expressed by the ideophone **sélélé**. But looking around, he sees the traces of Wanto and Laaizo's departure. In narrative monologue form, the performer enables his audience to see the thoughts in the villain's mind which in direct discourse would be, 'Here is the road that they took.' However, the discourse is not introduced by a locutionary verb or a tag, but rather by a cognitive verb 'saw/realized'.

The next discourse sequence harks back in form to the very first direct speech, Mgbaɗimgbaŋ's initial challenge, which was introduced by 'when he goes, ...' Here the performer says, 'when he comes, "Coming!"' The contextual introduction of the direct discourse is identical even to the grammatical form of the verb which in the first case means each time Mgbaɗimgbaŋ goes, while here the same form refers specifically to his arrival this time.

Wanto's response is one of the more complex discourses in the tale beginning with his interjection which may be verbalized aloud or only in his mind, followed by his command to his brother-in-law, 'you tell to him that, I don't like that fight anymore.' The performer here uses the verb of speaking, the addressee of the embedded discourse is identified as 'he' and the discourse particle is used. But when Wanto repeats himself, the introductory verb is repeated while the discourse particle is omitted. The third time Wanto makes his statement, it is no longer embedded discourse for all introduction is gone. It is only his own directly quoted pathetic plea that he doesn't like that fight anymore. 'No way! Give me my goat oh! Give me my goat!' is the villain's response. Once again the performer moves directly from request or proposal to response without formal introduction, marking it only by initial pause and its distinct intonation pattern.

Without any description of the fight itself, the performer introduces narrative report so that the scene might be imagined by the audience through their view into the observer's mind. There follows the song a second time, a repetition of the first time, although without the introductory construction. It is followed by a shortened form of the earlier narrative report which introduces the brother-in-law into the action. The fight is described as it was the first time when Wanto appeared to have the upper hand; however, this time it has a different conclusion. Instead of an ideophone depicting the change of emotion and the decision on the

part of the villain to fight, the performer depicts Wanto's action, 'Wanto burst out! "Laaizo, bring the machete! Laaizo, bring the machete! Laaizo, bring the machete! Laaizo, bring the machete!"' Wanto's courage has returned as he calls for his wife to bring the machete.

The addressee's response is implied action, for the narrator tells us that Wanto grabbed the machete -- 'son of a gun! Laaizo, he'll die today!' he shouts. After Wanto has chopped him, the narrator ends the tale with Wanto's last words which are introduced directly following action, without introductory verb and without formulaic tag, 'Yes, Laaizo! I chopped his eye and it burst! I chopped his eye!'

The artist brings his performance to an end with the words, 'and so, that is the end of my tale,' thereby specifying the referent of the object pronoun of its first line. In his final line, 'It is I, Joseph Ɗoko in Bétaré Oya,' he specifies the referent of the subject pronoun in his opening statement. The sender and his message have now been overtly identified, the artistic frame is closed, the performance has ended. The larger frame of tradition has also been closed for the tale of Wanto and his wife Laaizo received from the fathers has been told to its end and is put away once again in memory until another time and another place when it may again be called forth for a new audience.

4. CONCLUSION

Throughout the tale, one can observe the various forms of discourse used by the artist, those with tags, those without tags, the direct and indirect, the indirect with interjection, the narrative report, and the non-speech. The content of each and the choice of each form and their juxtaposition all add to the development of the plot line.

Their use, then, is not to convey information regarding statements made by other persons. The use of discourse in this tale is at the deep level (cf. Larson 1978). The performer uses narrative as a literary device to develop his plot. He uses the discourse structure of statement and repartee to develop the conflict between the two main characters. The conflict is dramatized by the structure of discourse which inherently features one person standing in opposition to another, one being the sender, the other the recipient or addressee. By the use of proposal and response, question and answer, observation and comment, and sometimes one without the other, sometimes with verbal response, sometimes with non-verbal response, the conflict is developed and moved towards its climax. The use of direct speech without introductory verb and tag in a series of exchanges heightens the tension and clarifies the opposition that is developed between Wanto and Mgbaɗimgbaŋ. The first series of exchanges fades into no conflict as the unnamed addressees respond that they don't like Mgbaɗimgbaŋ's kind of fighting, a fading away that serves to heighten the conflict when Wanto picks up the challenge and accepts its consequences.

The action of the plot line is moved forward by means of discourse structure. The challenge, the conditions of the fight, the venue, Wanto's bravado, his suffering, his wife, his brother-in-law, his brother'in-law's response to his suffering, his final act of heroism and the irony of it in his call to his wife to bring the machete -- all are conveyed by the performer through forms of discourse.

Two aspects of discourse are important with regard to the song. The first is the alternating quotation of the two fighters which mirrors and further develops the theme of opposition and conflict that runs throughout the discourse structure in the prose narrative. The second aspect is that of audience which enters into the performance through the song. While in the narration, the performer is the reporter of the statements made by his characters, in the song the audience becomes an active partner singing the chorus of warning and reminder that Wanto should have known the danger he was bringing upon himself by entering into an agreement with someone whose name was Mgbaɗimgbaŋ.

In this tale the discourse tends to be very direct. For the most part, it is introduced by context and not by specific verbs of speaking and discourse tags. The oral performer is free to avoid redundancy because he can use his voice with his live audience. Through pause and pitch and intonation and stress, he can make it clear when someone is speaking and who is speaking and when someone else begins speaking. The audience is seldom in doubt about identities unless the performer wishes to create ambiguity. In the event of undesired ambiguity, he sees his audience in front of him and their reaction and through the addition of the briefest of allusions, he can clarify what may not have been clear.

Given the different level of discourse together with the nuances that can be expressed by the various methods of introducing discourse, together with the possibilities afforded by mixing and shifting, and finally the subtlety and precision that can be added through voice modulation and pause, the variety of discourse available to the Gbaya oral performer is little short of infinite. The limitations and restrictions lie not in the language, but in the creative imagination of the performer and his mastery of the resources offered by his language. The test of his success is the reaction of his audience to his own speech act in the telling of his tale. The response of Joseph Ɗoko's audience was clear evidence of his mastery of the resources of his language and of his creativity in their use.

APPENDIX

WANTO AND MGBADIMGBAN

I won't tell it very long, I'll just tell it a little bit.

There was a certain person, his name was Mgbaɗimgbaŋ, and there was another person who was Wanto.

Now Mgbaɗimgbaŋ there, his occupation was fighting, he fought regularly with his companions. The way he did his fighting, he took his billy goat, his billy goat like this and he would throw out a challenge for fighting. As he went along, 'For sale! For sale!' 'What's for sale?' 'A billy goat's for sale!' 'For what?' 'For a fight!' 'No-o! We don't like your kind of fighting! You fight mean oh!'

He went on. 'For sale! For sale!'

Just like that on and on and then he met Wanto. 'For sale! For sale!' 'What's for sale?' 'A goat's for sale!' 'For what?' 'For a fight!' 'Sure, give it here, Uncle! What's a fight? I'll eat it. We'll fight with no trouble at all!'

He took the goat and brought it back, 'Laaizo, I got a goat for us to eat because --, Mgbaɗimgbaŋ said, brought the goat saying -- for us to have a fight. I'll butcher it and we'll eat it.' He took the goat, they butchered it and ate it all. Then Mgaɗimgbaŋ said to them, 'Very early in the morning I'm coming to fight.' And he agreed, 'Come.'

They had hardly gone to bed, it wasn't light yet when Mgbaɗimgbaŋ arrived. Mgbaɗimgbaŋ arrived and found him, 'Wanto, let's go!' He agreed, so then Mgbaɗimgbaŋ said, Oh! But the fight isn't just held any old place, it's on top of rocks that it is fought.

So Wanto, so they went together to the rocks and began fighting. He threw Mgbaɗimgbaŋ to the ground, Wanto threw Mgbaɗimgbaŋ to the ground, 'I your husband, Laaizo! I the husband of Laaizo! Your father, Papɔlɔ! Your father, Tikin! Your husband, Laaizo! Your father, Papɔlɔ!' He threw Mgbaɗimgbaŋ, he threw Mgbaɗimgbaŋ to the ground! It was Mgbaɗimgbaŋ who wasn't trying. Then after a little bit, then **kárák**! Mgbaɗimgbaŋ had become angry and he threw Wanto against the rocks, he took him by the feet and pounded his head **kpiím! kpiím! kpiím!** against the rocks. Then he put his mouth to song, To put his mouth to song:

Lama oh your husband!
Lama oh your husband!
Mgbaɗimgbaŋ-gim! Mgbaɗimgbaɓ-gim! Mgbaɗimgbaŋ!

To ate my goat!
Mgbaɗimgbaŋ!
To ate my goat!
Mgbaɗimgbaŋ-gim! Mgbaɗimgbaŋ-gim! Mgbaɗimgbaŋ!

Papɔlɔ oh your father!
Mgbaɗimgbaŋ!
Tikin oh your father!
Mgbaɗimgbaŋ-gim! Mgbaɗimgbaŋ-gim! Mgbaɗimgbaŋ!

Laaiso oh your husband!
Mgbaɗimgbaŋ!
To ate my goat!
Mgbaɗimgbaŋ-gim! Mgbaɗimgbaŋ-gim! Mgbaɗimgbaŋ!

To ate my goat!
Mgbaɗimgbaŋ!
Lama oh your husband!
Mgbaɗimgbaŋ-gim! Mgbaɗimgbaŋ-gim! Mgbaɗimgbaŋ!

Papɔlɔ oh your father!
Mgbaɗimgbaŋ!

On and on and on and they separated. Okay, so then Mgbagdimgbaŋ said the next morning he would be coming again. So it was that day dawned again and he came.

No! When To thought about it, it was too much! His whole head was swollen. When he put his hands to his head, he touched it **gbɔl! gbɔl!** like pus. Then he said, 'No! Laaizo, I won't stay here any longer, let's leave.' So he sent his wife and everything out onto the road and they went off together to his brother-in-law's home. They went and stayed there.

So Mgbaɗimgbaŋ came. When he arrived, he called, 'Friend To! Friend To!' **Sélélé**, they weren't there. He looked and looked. Then he saw here was the road they had taken to go away. So he went, when he came, 'Coming!' 'Ha! Who is it? My brother, tell him that I don't like that fight anymore! Tell him I don't like that fight anymore! I don't like that fight anymore!'

'No way! Give me my goat oh! Give me my goat!' So they -- he went out. No! When his brother-in-law looked, it was too much what he was doing to To!

Lama oh your husband!
Mgbaɗimgbaŋ!
Lama oh your husband!
Mgbaɗimgbaŋ-gim! Mgbaɗimgbaŋ-gim! Mgbaɗimgbaŋ!

Papɔlɔ of your father!
Mgbaɗimgbaŋ!
To ate my goat!
Mgbaɗimgbaŋ-gim! Mgbaɗimgbaŋ-gim! Mgbaɗimgbaŋ!

Laaiso oh your husband!
Mgbaɗimgbaŋ!
Laaiso oh your husband!
Mgbaɗimgbaŋ-gim! Mgbaɗimgbaŋ-gim! Mgbaɗimgbaŋ!

To ate my goat!
Mgbaɗimgbaŋ!
To ate my goat!
Mgbaɗimgbaŋ-gim! Mgbaɗimgbaŋ-gim! Mgbaɗimgbaŋ!

So it was that his brother-in-law saw it was too much, and then, he flicked Wanto out of the way, and then, he started fighting with Mgbaɗimgbaŋ! He threw Mgbaɗimgbaŋ against the ground, he threw Mgbaɗimgbaŋ against the ground, then, he held Mgbaɗimgbaŋ tight, son of a gun -- Wanto burst out! 'Laaizo, bring the machete! Laaizo, bring the machete! Laaizo, bring the machete! Laaizo, bring the machete!'

Wanto grabbed the machete, son of a gun! 'Laaizo, he'll die today!' Then he chopped him, he chopped him, 'Yes, Laaizo! I chopped his eye and it burst! I chopped his eye!'

And so, that is the end of my tale. It is I, Joseph Doko in Bétaré Oya.

NOTES

[1]An earlier version of this paper was given under the title 'Discourse in a Gbaya Tale' at the 17th Congress of the West African Linguistic Society held at the University of Ibadan March 17-21, 1986. A revised and expanded version was presented at the 29th Annual Meetings of the African Studies Association in Madison, Wisconsin, October 30 to November 2, 1986.

[2]The original recordings of all tales cited in this paper, together with complete transcriptions, are on deposit at the Archives of Traditional Music, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

[3]Discourse is used in this paper to refer to all types of speech as recorded in narrative whether in direct or indirect form, whether in the form of verbal or non-verbal expression. Expression in the form of thought, cognition, and belief, whether verbalized or not, as well as intention is considered part of Gbaya discourse patterns (cf. Larson 1984:332-334). Even definition or implied definition may take the form of discourse (cf. Manes 1975).

[4]Gbaya is part of the Gbaya-Mandja-Ngbaka language complex of the Eastern branch of Adamawa-Eastern (or Adamawa-Ubangian) of Niger-Congo.

[5]This item does occur as a regular verb, but with meanings other than 'say/ speak': **hé yílí** 'ululate'; **hé mbéá** 'announce/proclaim a decree'; **hé mɔ** 'crow (of a fowl)'. It would be convenient to analyze the introductory formula as a serial verb construction, but its tonal pattern does not conform to the norm for serial verbs.

[6]The high tone and extra-high tone **ndé** of reported discourse is to be distinguished from the low tone **nde** which is a clause final emphatic interrogative particle as in **gɛnɛ́ ge nde?** 'What's for sale?'

[7]The first example (22) is from a tale performed by André Yadji of Meiganga (Noss 1973:203-208, 237-242), the second (23) is from a tale by the late Peʃangkao Michel of Bouli (Gbaya Collection, Tape 8, No. 1, in Indiana Archives of Traditional Music).

[8]The correct form of the Fula arrival announcement in **Dɔ́n wára.** The Gbaya deformation creates a pun with a double play on language in that **Dókó** is the Gbaya name given to the dance instructor in the Gbaya initiation Laɓi, while **wála** means 'absent' in Fula. Thus, the announcement of arrival calls to mind Gbaya tradition in the form of its initiation dance. In its affirmation of the dance leader's absence, it offers an implicit challenge to Fula speakers and their cultural heritage.

[9]This is the tale told by Peʃangkao Michel referred to in Note 8 above.

[10]Although Gbaya narrative generally adheres to chronological sequence, the performer is not bound by chronology. In this performance the artist deviates from strict time progression to emphasize his characters and their acts.

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