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PRAGMATICS IN NON-WESTERN PERSPECTIVE

GEORGE HUTTAR

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Editors

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PREFACE

As a new field of inquiry develops, it is efficient and therefore fitting to use the most readily available data to test hypotheses, suggest new ones, and build up models of the phenomena under study. Relatively rapid progress can be made simply by virtue of the fact that the data against which an idea must be tested are ready to hand.

Linguistics has in this respect been no exception. Early in this century, when the task of descriptive linguistics was coming to be seen more and more as the uncovering of the varieties of human language structure, it was natural, for example, that linguists resident in North America investigated languages spoken in the same area. Later, when linguistic fashion focused attention on a native competence not directly perceivable, and affirmed that the nature of language could be investigated by examination of any one language, it was nearly inevitable that generative linguistics developed primarily through study of the languages spoken natively by trained linguists--e.g., English, French, Dutch.

Even sociolinguistics and the sociology of language, although receiving their predominant initial impetus from the problems of multilingual developing nations in different parts of the world, developed more rapidly when researchers turned to similar problems within their own borders throughout North America and Europe.

Likewise the field of linguistic pragmatics owes almost all its progress of the last two decades to scholars looking at language use in the communities of which they are native members--usually communities of speakers of English or other European languages.

Having developed our hypotheses, models, and metaphors of language through intense study of the materials we know best--our native languages--we cannot be content to continue within such limits. If our models resemble human language in general, and not only, say, (Indo-)European languages, then they should be readily confirmed in confrontation with phenomena from other families. If they are partly contradicted thereby, then we have an opportunity to correct our models--an opportunity which study of a narrower range of languages failed to provide. In the process, our encounter with the other languages may resolve problems and suggest

answers to enlarge our models in areas where the study of our own languages brought nothing to mind.

For these reasons, then--for confirmation, correction, and expansion of our current models of language and languages as used--we have striven to bring together in this volume descriptions of languages in use in a variety of non-Western societies in different parts of the world. At the same time, we have encouraged a wide range of topics by making little attempt to clearly delimit "pragmatics" from sociolinguistics, semantics, or other areas from which it could for some purposes be usefully distinguished.

We would like to thank Carol and Neil Brinneman and Lynn Frank for their contribution in translating the article by Suzanne Lafage, although we must accept responsibility for the final form of the English version. We thank Prof. G. Manessey, Directeur de Centre d'Etude des Plurilinguismes (IDERIC), and the publishing company L'Harmattan for permission to publish an English version of this paper, which appeared originally in 1979 in Plurilinguisme: Normes, situations, stratégies, edited by G. Manessey and P. Wald, under the title "Esquisse d'un cadre de référence pragmatique pour une analyse sociolinguistique en contexte africain."

Dallas, Texas
January, 1984

George Huttar
Kenneth Gregerson

SOCIAL CONTEXT AND MAMPRULI GREETINGS

Anthony Naden

0 Introduction

In former presentations (Naden 1974, 1980) I have tried to present some analyses of turn taking and interactional structure in the greetings litanies of certain West African languages and cultures. To this end I made use of a flowchart formalism to show how various parameters of the linguistic and nonlinguistic context need to be taken into account to determine who speaks and what he says, yielding in some sense a simplified model of what the actual "member" (in the ethnomethodologists' sense) needs to take into consideration in order to function appropriately in these contexts.

In this paper* I attempt to describe some of the detail on the social side of the inputs, which was necessarily omitted for the sake of brevity in the discussions cited above. Of particular note are what one might call the entry conditions for **greeting**--how the sociolinguistic nexus that constitutes greeting is established and begins to operate--the paralinguistic features of proxemic and kinesic accompaniment to the spoken greetings, and the way in which the greetings litany may function as an integral structural part of a larger unit of interaction. Also, in view of the way in which correct greeting behavior depends on certain pieces of factual knowledge about the interlocutor, it is necessary to consider what happens in cases where this presupposed information is unknown or not correctly understood.

The present account is based on data from the Mampruli language and the culture of the Mamprusi people. The Mamprusi (own name **Nmampursi**; sg. **Nmampurga**) number about eighty thousand; and their homeland is in the northeastern part of the northern region of Ghana, an area about 150 kilometers from east (Nakpanduri at long. $0^{\circ}12' W$) to west (Tantali at long. $1^{\circ}33' W$) and 40 kilometers from north to south (lat. $10^{\circ}35'$ to $10^{\circ}1' N$). The Mampruli language

* This paper has been improved through some helpful comments by Talmy Givón, for which my thanks.

(**Nmampurli**; also called Mamprule or Mampelle) belongs to the western division of the Oti/Volta subgroup of the Gur, or Voltaic, group of the Niger-Congo family (Manessy 1975), and it is closely related to Talni, Kusaal, Hanga, and Dagbani.

1 Mampruli and the Mamprusi

1.1 Economy

The Mamprusi are basically subsistence farmers, growing mainly cereals (millet, sorghum, maize) and some vegetables, and raising poultry for their own consumption, while oilseeds (groundnuts, sheanuts), cotton, and livestock (cattle, sheep, goats) are their main cash-earning produce. The savanna area where they live has for climate a rainy season from May to October, with the rest of the year being absolutely dry. During the rains is the time for intense activity on the farms, whereas the main work of the dry season is the building and repair of houses and the maintenance of social links by visiting, gift giving, and the holding of funeral celebrations for adults who have died and been interred at some previous time.

1.2 History

In precolonial times the Mamprusi Empire, strongly centralized under its paramount chief, the Nayiri (Drucker-Brown [1975] calls the Nayiri a king), maintained a considerable measure of stability and security against the rival African states and marauding slave raiders of the period, and it held a degree of suzerainty over a number of neighboring groups. The population density of Mamprugu (the territory of the Mamprusi) is much less than that of the areas immediately to the north, and substantial groups of neighboring peoples have been allowed to settle in colonies (see Naden 1973:13) in parts of the area (notably Tampulmas, Frafras, Kasena, and Bisa: some figures may be seen in Drucker-Brown 1975:22). The major center for the British colonial administration of the Northern Territories, now called the Northern and Upper Regions of Ghana, was at Gambaga in Mamprusi territory, just five miles from the capital of the Nayiri at Nalerigu.

1.3 Religion

The traditional religion features intermittent consultation of diviners, usually leading to a recommendation to sacrifice to an ancestor, mostly only when unexpected or persistent misfortune is experienced. This traditional complex in most cases has an overlay of Islamic features, falling short of full orthodox Muslim practice.

The general culture of the Mamprusi is, in short, similar to that of their neighbors throughout the region, though in detail even close neighbors are found to differ (see discussion in sec. 4.6).

1.4 Language

The Mampruli language is similar to that of most of its neighbors. It is, however, almost totally unrelated to Bisa, which belongs to the Mande family and is considered, in a recent study, to be a family separate from Niger-Congo (Mukarovsky 1977). This view may be overstated, but it points at least to the peripheral status of the Mandaic languages. In the case of Bisa there are, nevertheless, some superficial similarities to Mampruli, as the group has for some time been isolated from the rest of the Mande group and has been living in a homeland largely surrounded by the very large Mamprusi-related Mossi group in Upper Volta.

In greetings it is noticeable that, whereas most Bisa greetings conform to the normal clause structure of the language, Mampruli has a number of patterns that are partially or wholly restricted to use in greetings. Particularly striking is the prevalence of verbless clauses in Mampruli greetings. In contrast to Bisa, which has no copular verb and uses nonverbal structures for a variety of identificational, descriptive, and classificatory predications (Naden 1970:106ff.), there are very few normal Mampruli clauses without a verb form. In Mampruli greetings, however, verbs are rarely found, and a number of utterances are purely nominal with no overt predicator.

Dasuba. I gyaari. I Tammale dima. Ti maasim.
 morning your welcome your Tamale people our coolness

Ti daba ayi.
 our two days

In other cases the greeting utterance consists of a nominal form with a preposed particle, *ni*:

Ni i tuma. Ni ya goorim.
 (part.) your(sg) works (part.) your(pl) journeying

No comparable structure occurs as a whole predication in nongreeting utterances, though the *ni* may be identifiable with the coordinating/comitative particle:

Man ni m ba kyanni. Soya pobri ni koom.
 'I and my father went.' '(The) paths are running with water.'

The only common formulas with a verbal element have the adverbial interrogative *wula?* 'how?':

I ba be wula? I da kpalim wula?
 your father exist how? you today stay how?
 'How's your father?' 'How was your today's stay?'

Most Mampruli initiatory greetings have a correlative answer, which is the normal response; the interjection **Naa!**, however, is the appropriate answer to all greetings except one (see sec. 5.3). Most greetings may also receive the response **Alaafe!** 'health' (from Arabic via Hausa). Pairing of greeting and answer is further discussed below (see sec. 4.3).

2 Meeting and greeting

2.1 Purpose of greeting

There are three basic social purposes that may underlie instances of greeting:

2.1.1 Cement social relations. The most formal and specific purpose is that in which a greeting is planned and sought as a means of cementing social relationships. The questions "What are you doing?" or "Where are you going?" may validly be answered with "I am going to greet the chief (my mother-in-law/the Nayiri/ ...)." Particularly for those in subordinate social relationships, periodic visits to pay one's respects are required of a dutiful, well-behaved member of society: the other side of the coin is that subordinates who are known to be dutiful and well behaved are more likely to be favorably considered when benefits are being offered. These benefits might involve the senior, as chief or elder, supporting his client in a dispute or in an attempt to win some office, or as father-in-law urging his daughter not to leave the client (her husband); or they may be simply material gifts. Visits in order to greet may lead on to general conversation, but in some cases it may be in order--or indeed required--merely to approach, greet, sit in the background for a while, and depart.

2.1.2 Open way for business. Greeting may also be a prelude to business. If you meet somebody and wish to converse, for gossip, other purely social purpose, or else for some more businesslike purpose, then you will start with a greeting. Particularly if you are seeking a favor, your greeting will be lengthy and effusive: thus, "I have come to greet you" often carries the spoken or unspoken rider, "... and ask you to/for" Even stronger leverage is exerted by first saying, "I have come to greet you and give you this present," and then, "I beg you to/for" The second part of this routine can follow in the same breath, in the middle of a subsequent conversation, or on a separate visit the next day.

2.1.3 Relate casually upon meeting. Lastly, there is casual greeting. Wherever possible one should greet anyone upon meeting him. **Meeting** is defined on a scale of saliency (I owe the use of this term to Talmy Givón: private communication) within which we can identify three major components: the relationships of the (potential) interactants, their separation in terms of distance and

intervening obstructions, and the rating of the place of encounter as one or the other's home ground or as neutral territory:

(1) Personal relationships. These are ranked on the scale of kin, friend, fellow townsman, acquaintance, and other.

(2) Clear range. The possibility of potential interactants being so separated that they are not considered to be meeting is a product of range as sheer physical distance, and the clearness of the intervening space of obstructions, physical or social, which would submerge the persons under consideration from appearing as a functional dyad.

(3) Neutral space. The large, cosmopolitan markets of Nalerigu, Walewale, and Langbinsi are sufficiently public places that no one has the duty of welcoming strangers encountered there. On particularly busy occasions the lorry parks (transport stations) of the two former places and the main north-south road through Walewale may be treated similarly. However, at a crowded function (court hearing, shopping queue, or ceremonial dance) even those present only as spectators are brought sufficiently into relationship to be expected to greet wherever clear range permits.

In the operation of these factors of saliency, the personal relationship hierarchy makes it obligatory to greet anyone who is related, unless clear-range features prohibit it. **Strangers** (see note 5) must be welcomed if one is on one's home ground, but need not be greeted in neutral space. In the bush (including lonely stretches of highway between settlements) clear range extends to the limits of perception, and one should greet anyone within hailing distance, and beyond that, wave to anyone in sight. I do not have sufficient data to be precise on clear range in more crowded spaces. It is certainly not forbidden to greet across intervening persons if the latter are either lower on the relationship or status (sec. 2.2.2) hierarchies than the person addressed or, if higher, have already been greeted. While conversations may be held between persons separated by a barrier to sight, greetings are not normally offered to those concealed from view. An opening greeting and vocative may be called in order to establish whether a person is in the room or behind the wall or whatever the obstruction is, and if someone is there, he will peer over, come around, or otherwise establish sight lines, and then the greeting will be commenced from the beginning. It is in middle distance situations where there are several independent scenes and spaces within reasonable range, around twenty-five meters, that further observation is needed in order to confirm or disprove my intuition that there is no resultant rule: neither greeting nor nongreeting would be stigmatized.

Salience of a dyad must also take into account the ratio between the interactants' mutual relationship and their respective links to the society of the place of encounter. For instance,

people from the same province or subarea would greet one another as related persons if they met at the paramount town, Nalerigu, as would any fellow Mamprusi meeting outside the Mamprusi area. This sort of breadth-of-focus adjustment is probably more or less universal. It is violated by the traditional stereotype of the Englishmen on the desert island who would not speak because they had not been introduced, a situation therefore considered to be humorous. A comparable gestalt pattern is involved in specification of place (Schegloff 1971) and many other such structures, and is related by Cruse (1977) to the Gricean maxim of quantity and the cooperative principle in general.

The few other cases where greeting does not take place are detailed in section 2.3.2.

Thus, it is relevant to note which of the interlocutors is at home and which is visiting, or whether they are both traveling and their paths cross. The person at home may be literally in or around his house; he may be on his farm busy at a waterhole or cutting wood; or he may be sitting selling in the marketplace.

2.2 Relations of interlocutors

In order for the greeting situation to be properly established, it is necessary to consider several relations between potential interlocutors, some of the choices being rather in the nature of a cline than a set of alternatives.

2.2.1 Relationship. Members of one's own household are too close to receive effusive greetings except after a long separation or if met in some location far from home. The same applies to alters from ego's own village, although they are greeted more fully if they are kindred or friends. People from elsewhere are honored and welcomed if they visit ego's house or village, and even more so if they are also friends or kin. On the other hand, if they are total strangers and are encountered in public places, they are more likely to receive only a minimum greeting, if any.

2.2.2 Status. Status involves two major variables, age and office, with secondary consideration being given to other personal characteristics and kinship relations.

(1) Age. Age is to be considered primarily in chronological terms, though within a kinship framework seniority belongs to a member of a line whose linking relative was the elder, and this may be described by members simply in terms of age. Thus, a young boy may be said to be senior brother to an elderly chief because the boy's grandfather was genealogically the elder brother of the chief's grandfather. In general, however, the older the person, the higher the status.

(2) Office. What I am calling **office** (for a comparable, though not identical, use of the term and further anthropological details, see Drucker-Brown 1975: chap. 3) refers to any hierarchically ordered statuses which may be inherited or acquired by an individual, including, in the case of a woman, those reflecting the status of her male guardian. The chief's wife or daughter, for instance, is more important than a commoner's.

There are a number of types of office conveying status, of which the most important and basic is the hierarchy headed by the paramount chief and his elders and the important provincial chiefs, and represented in the village by the village chief who may also have certain elders with named functions. Within the village the chief and named elders are followed in precedence by the male heads of the households that compose the village, amongst whom kinsmen of the chief and members of other chiefly lines (Mampruli 'gates') may have some preeminence.

The offices of 'sexton'² and 'diviner'³ are sought by the candidates themselves by approaching an existing diviner, though the latter may sometimes initiate the process: for instance, if consulted on a question like "Why do all my business enterprises fail?" he may hand down the answer, "Because the ancestors want you (or your son/brother ...) to become a diviner." Magic medicine (either in the form of ownership of a particular type of shrine or other powerful object⁴ or in the form of generalized knowledge or power to discuss and prepare such medicines for others) may be sought in a similar way by consulting, and paying the fees required by, an existing expert.

There are also parallel hierarchies in the modern sphere. Police, soldiers, teachers, medical personnel, church ministers, and national and local government officers have status as such, and each department has its own hierarchy of rank.

Finally, there is a Muslim hierarchy. Most Mamprusi follow some Muslim practices, but only a small minority are orthodox, even by the local standards. Amongst Muslims the **alhajji** has the first place, followed by various individual scholars (**alfa** or **affa** from Arabic (**mu**)'allif 'author, book' perhaps via Songhai) and teachers (**karimba** 'father of reading'), the village **Lumaam**, imam of congregational performances of the Muslim prayers, and then the ordinary orthodox.

(3) Other personal prestige factors. Prosperity and wisdom are other personal prestige factors that may contribute to status. Prosperity includes both wealth--liquid material assets--and headship of a large and flourishing household. A related element is having a large following: a prosperous man may attract a number of clients and junior kindred from outside his own household who

receive practical benefits and reflected honor from their patron and whose support in turn bolsters his status.

A householder is expected to be able to rule his compound in peace and harmony, and the same is expected of the chief in his village. As they have no direct powers of coercion, this means that the sort of success that commands respect and so contributes to status requires wisdom and tact in dealing with business and personal relations (see Naden forthcoming: secs. 2.5 and 3.2). One aspect of this effectual wisdom is the ability to speak well, which even in a junior person may bestow popularity and, thus, some measure of status above one's peers (Naden 1983a).

(4) Kinship relations. The relative status of a particular dyad of members of the society is also influenced by their kinship links. A senior kinsman is given extra respect irrespective of ego's own status. Particular deference is shown to one's own father and mother and one's wife's parents. In the case of grandparents and some same-generation in-laws the respect is mitigated by the conventions of joking relationships (Drucker-Brown 1982). Kinship relationships are discussed in more detail in Naden 1976: part 2. Particularly relevant in this connection is his discussion of authority and respect (Naden 1976:37ff.).

In general, however, according to a Mampruli saying, a son does not rise above his father: he does not become a paramount chief unless his father was one, nor a village chief unless his father has held a chieftainship. A son does not usually set up a separate household near his father's in the latter's lifetime, and if he has one in a more distant location, he will visit his father, rather than the other way around, so that the father's kinship authority is not brought into conflict with the son's headship in his own house. Thus, the kinship dimension usually reinforces, rather than confuses, the other traditional hierarchies.

2.2.3 Priorities amongst criteria. The question arises as to how these different criteria for status are intercalibrated into a protocol to determine the relative importance of any pair of interactants. The first answer is that they are not: it is not possible to state that the status of, for example, a wise but poor young chief is always greater or less than that of an elderly local council officer who is also a qualified soothsayer. This fact arises from aspects of the basic values stance of the Mamprusi culture.

Some societies have an egalitarian mold in which many of the above criteria would be largely irrelevant: it is an oversimplification but not a total distortion to say that in America you can greet anyone with "Hi!" (whether, however, one could say, "Hi, Mr. President, Sir!", "Hi, Ron!", or "Hi, ugly!" would need more careful attention; see, e.g., Ervin-Tripp 1969, 1972; Jonz 1975). This

is borne out in my own experience (see Naden 1980:141). Other cultures are known for a strictly stratified system where some basic grammatical choices may depend on categorical specification of the absolute and relative status levels of the interactants. Two well-known examples are Japanese (see, e.g., Voegelin et al. 1977 and Prindle 1981) and Javanese (see Geerts 1960 and Tanner 1967). Mampruli does not fall into either of these polar categories.

At first sight, from a Western viewpoint, hierarchical status differences seem to be given considerable weight in social intercourse: substantial deference is shown, in both formal etiquette and real submission, to a chief, an elder, or a paterfamilias. A more detailed analysis, however, shows that none of the ingredients of status described above outranks the others in such a way that, for instance, a poor, stupid, incoherent man will, nevertheless, always be obeyed if he is a chief, nor will the possessor of important information be refused the right to speak because he is a minor, or she is a woman. This accords with the general value orientation of the society, which is basically five or six points on a seven-point scale towards the absolutist and crisis/declarative as opposed to the situational and interrogative in behavioral control (Mayers 1978), rather than being placed at the polar extreme: rules should normally be obeyed, but not when obedience would cause more trouble than it is worth, or when following the letter of the law would violate the spirit. A simple example is that while the Mamprusi share the well-nigh universal prohibition of the use of the left hand for eating and social purposes, if a person's right hand is dirty, badly damaged, or missing, he may where necessary use the left--in contrast with absolutist societies where he would have to walk two miles for water to wash his right hand before greeting someone, or have someone feed him all the while his right hand is bandaged. The comparable balancing of the various criteria of wealth, age, ancestry, and wisdom in the selection of a chief is described by Drucker-Brown (1975:103ff.), and the contributory but not overriding role of fluent speech in popularity and respect is analysed in Naden 1983a. A further example of this flexibility in the specific area of greetings management is mentioned below at the beginning of section 6.

In this way precedence due to age, office, or kinship links can be diluted by inadequacies in the other dimensions. Where old age brings senility, the elder is given a token deference. He or she is punctiliously visited and given greetings, but is otherwise ignored or even abused or spoken of slightly in his or her presence. Similarly, a chief cannot be removed from office as a result of handicaps developed after installation, but where a chief is in his dotage or becomes blind or deaf he becomes almost a ritual object whose physical presence is necessary while some kinsman conducts the actual affairs of the village. Conversely,

prosperity, consistent good sense, skill at speaking, and similar traits can earn someone a higher place on the ladder of precedence than his age and office may warrant.

2.2.4 Pride of place. Having recognized this noncrisis stance of Mamprusi society, however, it must of course be realized that there has to be some way of deciding order of precedence in a group of interactants, especially (for the topic under focus in this discussion) since the opening of greeting depends on a criterion of status (see sec. 2.3 and fig. 2). The primary factor in the resolution of noncongruent status systems is the principle that relative status in an actual situation depends to a considerable extent on the locus of the encounter. A person's statuses carry their fullest weight when he is on his home ground: the importance of a chief in his court, a woman in her yard (section of the compound house), or a head teacher in his school is very different from that of the same people in the streets of Tamale, the regional capital, outside Mamprusi territory.

The primary principle of the traditional hierarchy is that every chief is paramount in his own hall--the distinctive chiefly reception room with two doors, one to the outside, or outer yard, and one into the inner part of the house (all other rooms have a single door, facing inwards). He loses little or nothing of his preeminence as he moves out to other parts of his house, into his village, and through the perhaps quite extensive farmland and bush area under his jurisdiction but beyond the bounds of the settlement. A visiting chief yields pride of place to the host chief, even if the visitor is much the superior in wealth, wisdom, age, and aristocratic origins. The paramount chief of all the Mamprusi, the Nayiri, with his senior court elders and the four provincial overlords, outranks the village chiefs in the intrinsic hierarchy of office. (Drucker-Brown (1975:78ff.; chap. 4, pp. 1-5) deals with these offices, but she calls the Nayiri king and the provincials paramounts, which departs from the usual sense of paramount chief as used in Ghana.) When visiting these superiors, even the most substantial village chiefs accord them extreme deference. Even they, however, do not contest the authority of a village chief in his own domain. This is probably yet another reason why the Nayiri plays such an immobile and passive role (Drucker-Brown 1975:160-66)--if other chiefs come to him, his own office, added to his being on home ground, gives him absolute superiority. If he were to enter another chief's domain, there would be a tension between his intrinsic paramountcy and that of the village chief in his own village. This is the same principle as we have seen operating in father-son relationships. Similarly, envoys from hierarchically superordinate personages yield precedence when visiting other chiefs.

In the chief's presence, especially in formal session, the chief is followed in order of precedence by his titled elders (the exact number and titles vary from village to village), and then by the householders in order of age, although prosperity, personality, close kinship to the chief, and other factors may, as we have seen, give greater prestige to a younger man. When joining a session, one first receives the chief's greeting; then he greets the others in this order. This hierarchy also applies in public spaces around the village, but in a house (that is, including the seating places beside and in front of the gate, as well as those inside the compound) the householder is supreme over all but the village chief. After the householder come any adult sons or younger brothers who may head their own subsections of the compound, then other males in order of age.

The women's system of statuses is fairly independent. The head woman of the compound, usually the householder's senior wife, is supreme on the women's side. She is followed by his other wives in the order in which they joined the household, then wives of the other men in the order of these men's precedence. Once again, within her own yard, or room (sleeping room and adjacent suite, which may include cooking corner, bathroom enclosure, and sub-courtyard) a woman is given deferential treatment: she usually retires to the room or just in front of its door to receive any noncasual greeting. After male visitors have greeted the chief, elder, or other householder, they go around the rooms of at least the householder's wives in precedence order to greet the women.

In groups of orthodox Muslims their own hierarchy operates. Vis-à-vis the other hierarchies, however, their position is ambivalent. Most ceremonies and public occasions require a group of Muslims to be present and lead in some prayers, but they are immediately paid off with gifts of money and fried corn cakes, often accompanied by unflattering banter and disputes over the amount and distribution of these gifts. In fact, the whole Muslim community is in a joking relationship with the rest of the people. But on the other hand, as individuals the Muslim elders may be householders of the village and have a normal place in the hierarchy of the community in private life, as it were, when not actually playing the specific role of Muslim to the court, funeral, or festival.

In a school, barracks, presbytery, and so on, the status hierarchy of the educational, military, or ecclesiastical system operates. There are awkward passages when two systems intersect, as when a chief visits a school in his village, or a police officer calls on the village elders on some legal matter. If the person whose status derives from the modern sector has a personal traditional link with the other (the traditional personage is his senior kinsman or the chief of the village where he or his father lives) then the traditional system prevails. Otherwise, the laws

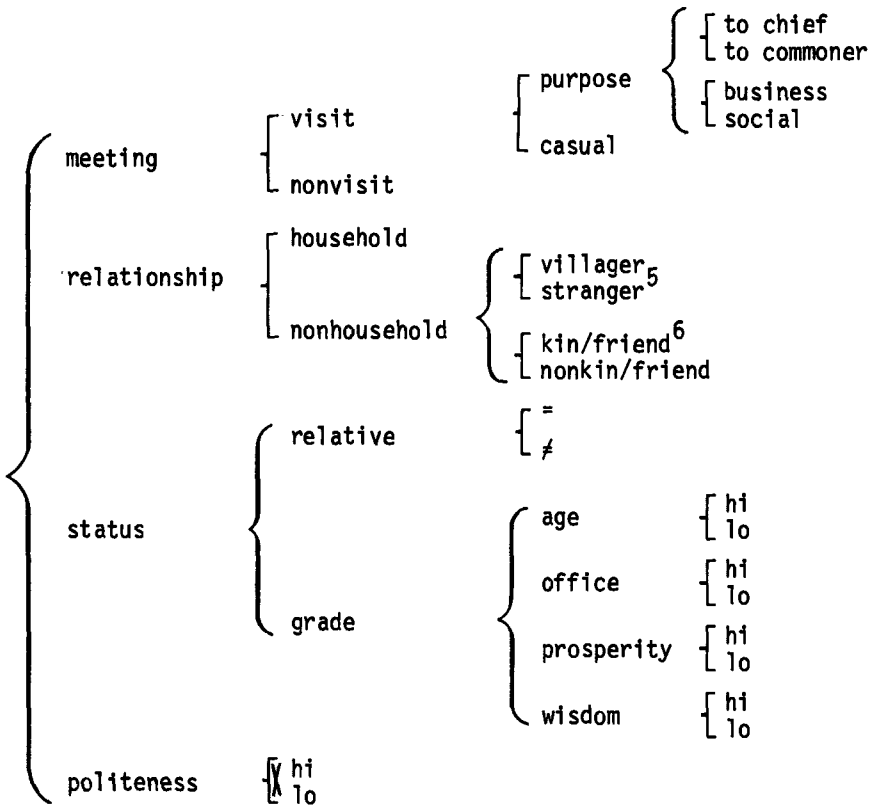
of hospitality to strangers and the supremacy of the home team lead to the visitor's being treated with honor but yielding ultimate priority in matters like greeting to the senior person of the host group. There may nevertheless be some tensions or uncertainties as each ego may partly envy and fear the other for his ability to function in his (alter's) own system, while partly despising him for his lack of competence in ego's sphere. Similarly, a chief and a nonkin policeman, priest, etc., meeting in a public place away from the personal home territory of either, may be uncertain how to behave toward each other. In these situations it is helpful to have a posse of followers--the chief's villagers or the police officer's constables--who constitute a sort of portable home ground and, by giving hometown deference, surround their patron with an aura of importance which may tip the scales in his favor.

A specific study focusing on this area might attain a greater degree of delicacy at this point by following the ethnomethodological perspective and seeing the major "work" accomplished by greetings between people who are not in a well-defined or old-established relationship as comprised of just this negotiation of statuses (see Naden 1983b). There are points at which one can choose to prolong the greeting with the claim, "I am as important as you," or to terminate it with the implication of humility or else of unfriendliness or rank assertiveness, according to further details of the situation. This aspect of greeting in a comparable West African society is discussed in detail by Irvine (1974).

2.2.5 Place of personal choice. The recognition of these formal parameters must not be held to exclude any personal choice. A Mamprusi, as much as a member of any other culture, can be more or less friendly or rude than average; he may be preoccupied by his own immediate joys, problems, or pains; or his social functioning may be hampered by poor sight or hearing. Such factors as personal character, personal relations between the interlocutors, background noise, or time available will determine just how polite the greeting is to be--politeness being largely realized by extra length and effusiveness. The norms this presentation attempts to indicate are still relevant, however, as an unmarked case against which the distinctive attributes of the individual person or interaction may be measured.

2.3 Getting started

On the basis of the above background facts, summarized in the systemic network of figure 1, we can make the decisions that carry us into the beginning of the greetings litany.



Key:

- { alternatives
- { simultaneous choices
- { choice on a cline
- { between extremes

Figure 1. Contextual Basis for Mampruli Greetings

2.3.1 Requisite condition. The entry condition to the whole question of greeting is that a situation of **meeting** has taken place. This is the case when:

(1) A visits B. A visits B, either purposefully (going to his⁷ house) or casually (passing by the place where he is working, resting, or playing). A casual meeting involves passing at a reasonable distance, which is defined as comfortable shouting distance in the open country (e.g., A is going along a footpath beside a field on the other side of which B is working), up to twenty-five meters in a village and with no intervening buildings or functioning social groups, or much closer in crowded situations in a town or market.

(2) Two ... into proximity in a public place. Two individuals or groups of people come into proximity in a public place (distances as above, though one would call over greater distances to greet people on another path through the bush, especially if the greeting commenced while the parties were closer and continued as the paths diverged).

2.3.2 When no greeting is expressed. We have seen (sec. 2.1.3) that a recognized meeting occurs unless the encounter is insufficiently salient and is submerged, socially or physically, by the context. Greeting may, however, be redundant in the case of extended or repeated meeting in the same context: the function of both this redundancy and the saliency factor in suppressing the requirement for greeting "is information theoretically predictable on rather general grounds" (T. Givón: private communication). However, the definition of what is the same context is culture specific (see, for example, Naden 1980:141). We have to take account of the functionally recognized scenes, or situational scripts (Schank and Abelson 1977a and 1977b) or frames (Minsky 1975 and Charniak 1978), of the society. Such scenes in Mampruli culture are enjoying (lit. 'eating') the market, collecting firewood, or fetching water, many of which have specific greeting forms, which both evidences and helps define their status as emic functional units. These greetings are detailed below, especially in section 4.4. The extent of the unitary scenes in time and space may differ considerably; thus a single firewood expedition may involve a group scattering over several hectares of bush for some hours without any greeting being required on reassembly, while someone leaving the house for a half-hour trip to a market five hundred meters away would be expected on returning to greet the household for their staying at home. There are also questions of periodicity: fetching water or bringing in the harvest may involve several journeys but comprise single scenes, which do not require renewal of greetings, while a second trip for firewood in one day constitutes a new scene in which fresh greetings are appropriate.

These cases excepted, failure to greet as is appropriate would be a definite sign of social breakdown--either the people concerned are quarreling or one of them is rude or ignorant of social niceties. A quarrel that leads to refusal to greet is regarded as very serious, and within a household or village such a quarrel will lead others to do their utmost to bring about a speedy reconciliation. It is, in fact, on the comment-worthy inappropriateness of not greeting in various circumstances (and, conversely, of greeting in others, though this is less common, since to give a greeting is the unmarked case) that I base the identification of parameters and rules on which the present discussion is based. This gives an objective backbone to the general--and participant--observation data in the most reliable way for a society where representative controlled statistical sampling is inappropriate.

2.3.3 Variation in effusiveness of greeting. Where a meeting takes place and salutations are indicated, the general character of the interaction is determined by the situational information discussed in section 2.2 above. The main variables are the length and what I call the effusiveness of the greetings litany. These clines can be regarded (to continue the neo-Firthian style of our presentation in figure 1) as prosodies, with the whole greeting as their domain. The following features can be regarded as adding to length: purpose, kin/friend, equal relative status, high age, and high politeness. Effusiveness is high in the presence of the features of purpose, kin/friend, high age, and stranger (if visiting for a purpose). Length is realized by utilizing the loop possibilities of the main greetings networks in preference to taking the exit options at an early stage. Effusiveness is mainly realized by repetition of greeting elements as, for example, *Dasuba, dasuba, dasuba!* instead of just *Dasuba!* 'Good morning!' and by paralinguistic forms (see sec. 3.1).

2.3.4 Group as unit or aggregate of individuals. If a meeting takes place where one or both parties are groups rather than single individuals, it remains to be decided whether a group is to be treated as a unitary participant or as an aggregate of individuals. Mamprusi are much less likely than the British or Americans to use group greetings ("Good morning, ladies!", "Hi, you guys!"); instead, to illustrate their Mamprusi custom, a water-carrying party of ten little girls will walk in single file past where one is working, and each one will say "Good morning!" and expect a separate reply, one after the other. A meeting between two chiefs and their entourages becomes an exercise in mathematical combinations as each member of each group greets every member of the other. The factors that permit group greetings are the reverse of those making for length and effusiveness: casual, nonvisit, stranger (if not visiting), unequal relative status, low age/office, and low politeness. Crowded surroundings and background

noise would also be indicators. Greetings to a group are in the plural grammatical form where relevant; the group usually greets in chorus, though one person may take the lead and the others just chorus responses.

2.3.5 One to initiate the greeting. With these various considerations decided, greeting can commence. Figure 2 indicates the factors involved in deciding who should open: if one partner has been away or has come for the first time, he should be welcomed; otherwise the socially less important will begin to greet, unless he is receiving his superior as a visitor at his own house.

3 Paralinguistic accompaniment

3.1 Bowing and crouching

One of the most characteristic kinesic accompaniments of Mamprusi greetings is the lowering of body posture by one or both interactants. This may range from a stiff bow from the waist, through a crouch with lowered head, somewhat reminiscent of ecclesiastical genuflection, to a low squat with bowed head. The features which promote length and effusiveness (see sec. 2.3.3) are also indicators for increasingly low bowing. If alter is of high status, ego will bow or genuflect: the higher-status interactant will usually give some postural recognition of postural homage, but to a lesser degree than that which he is offered unless both partners are of very high status.

3.2 Handshakes and variants

When meeting takes place between standing interactants, for example, in the market or while walking about the village or along the road, a handshake may accompany the greeting. This is particularly the case with two groups of members, neither of which is central to the mainstream of traditional life. One group, older people under Muslim or Western influence, shake their right hands, often placing the left hand with the palm on the back of alter's right, and, accompanied with greater effusiveness (sec. 2.3.3), this contact becomes a three-to-six beat gentle patting motion. The other group, younger men, particularly those who are better educated or more widely traveled, shake right hands only, often swinging palms into slapping contact with a flamboyant stiff-arm gesture and clicking fingers on release of contact, each man's thumb and forefinger snapping together off the fingers of the other.

When one interactant is a chief or a paramount chief amongst chiefs, the inferiors, crouching or sitting, give a slot handclap while the chief delivers one side of the greetings litany (thus short-circuiting, as it were, the reaction network [see fig. 5c]). When the chief is greeting an individual in the presence of others, the audience also claps.

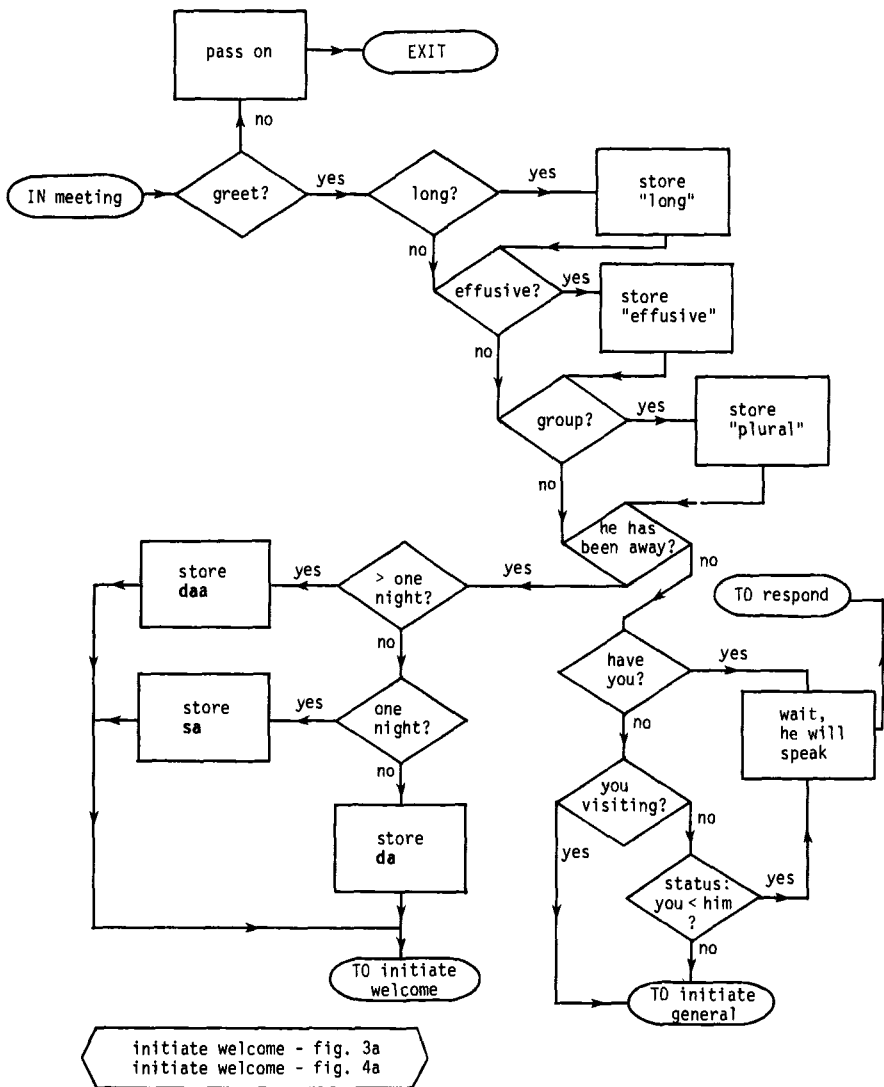


Figure 2. Opening Decision ⁸

3.3 Greeting at a distance

It has been indicated that greetings may be exchanged over considerable distances (sec. 2.3.1). As the separation increases to the limit for a given situation, there is an increased tendency for the verbal element to be accompanied by gestures that are more exaggerated. In the open country or in open spaces between houses this particularly concerns bowing and the use of hand gestures. Where people cross each other's line of sight on the borders of oral communication (around twenty-five to thirty meters), they will particularly use a wave to supplement or replace verbal greeting. The wave involves stiffly holding the right arm with the elbow at right angles and the hand flat with fingers together and edgewise-on to alter. To make the wave one raises the hand and arm until the upper arm is just below the horizontal and then pivots them downwards through approximately 30° once or twice, with concomitant bowing from the neck or the waist. Where alter is a chief or other very important person, ego may crouch and clap from a distance while the chief murmurs a greeting and the whole could look to an outsider more like a benediction than a greeting.

3.4 Proxemics and eye contact

When interactants are free to move into mutual proximity in order to greet (at market, walking about, or traveling on foot), the distance they stand apart is approximately the norm for British culture--face to face and at about arm's length. When a purposeful visit is under way, the person who is receiving the visitor is seated in his normal or convenient place for this purpose--the shade porch, a dais or bench in front of his house, or a dais, chair, animal skin, or woven mat on the verandah of his room or in a shady part of his courtyard--and the visitor is seated facing him, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $2\frac{1}{2}$ meters away, though the physical structure of the location may alter the details of orientation or distance. Where one interactant is settled and engaged in working, selling, or resting and the other passes, or where both are passing without opportunity to approach to greet, the distances over which greetings are called are rather greater than the British norm (sec. 2.3.1).

In Mamprusi greeting, whatever the degree of eye contact necessary to establish greeting (for instance to indicate, possibly along with a vocative nomination by name or title, which member of another group is the intended alter) it is broken as the greeting begins, and the eyes are lowered towards the feet or to one side of the alter. This rule is more strictly applied as the factors promoting length and effusiveness (sec. 2.3.3) increase.

3.5 Voice features

Effusiveness (sec. 2.3.3) may be reinforced by a lengthening of vowels and nasals in the final syllables of greeting utterances,

with a decreasing of volume, lowering of pitch, and laxing of subglottal pressure. A chief and those greeting in his presence keep their voices low in pitch and volume. Apart from these cases the voice features of greetings are not significantly different from those of ordinary conversation.

4 The greetings litany

4.1 Welcomes

As indicated in the network of opening decisions (see fig. 2), the priority consideration is whether a welcome is in order (see the diamond "he has been away?" in fig. 2 (right of center)). If one of the interlocutors has been out of the home village since last meeting or is a total stranger, he must receive a welcome. The person who is welcomed also has responses recognizing the fact that the interactants have been separated and that alter has remained behind. These greetings take into account the length of time the person welcomed has been away: a villager who has been to another village and returned without passing a night away, one who has been away for one night only, one who has been away for more than one night, or one who is a first-time visitor (see figs. 2 (lower left) and 3b (Variables)). The choices are presented formally in figure 3a and the repertoire of welcomes is listed in figure 3b.

4.2 General openings

If a welcome is not in order, priority goes to giving morning greetings if the meeting is taking place as the first between the interactants in the morning (see figs. 4a (top), 6a, and 6b). It is noteworthy that, in Bisa, morning greetings were hardly heard after 11:00 a.m. (Naden 1980:fig. 2), the Mampruli continue to use theirs until noon or after when meeting for the first time in the day.

The next priority involves people on journeys who are actually traveling. If the interactants set out from and arrive at the same locations, but do not travel together the whole time, there are greetings for the one who was ahead or behind. Where one or both of the interactants can be seen traveling on foot, riding a horse, donkey, or bicycle, or waiting to board (or on board) a stationary motor vehicle, there are appropriate greetings (figs. 4a (upper center) and 4b).

If alter has been ill, it is appropriate to use a greeting which inquires after his health (figs. 4a (bottom left), 9a, and 9b); otherwise greetings may be chosen from subsystems referring to health, time of day, and occupation in which alter is engaged (figs. 7a to 9b). The criteria ordering these choices are too fine grained for the present analysis and presentation; there is probably an element of fairly free choice in many cases.

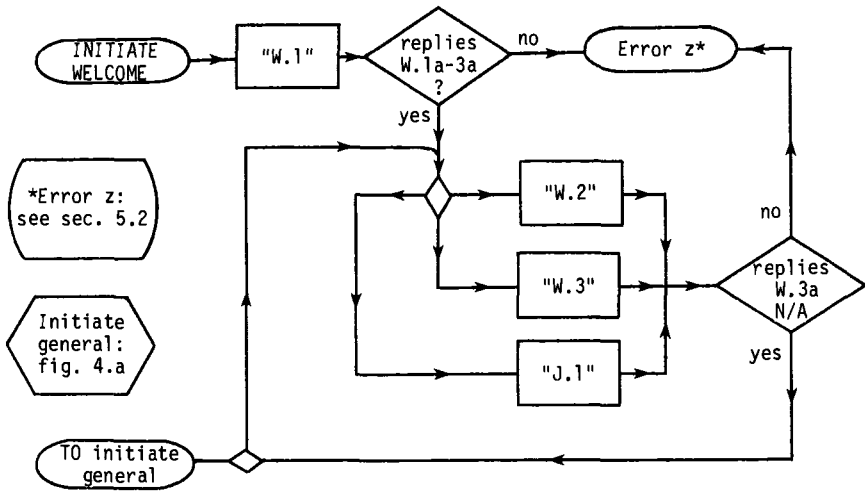


Figure 3a. Initiating Welcomes

Frames:

welcomes

replies

W.1 I* **gyaari.**
your welcome

W.1a **Ti daba ayi.**
our two days

W.2 I* **X*-dima.**
your X-people

W.2a **Ti kyisi taaba.**
we have-missed each other

W.3 I **da* paa* wula?**
you today arrived how?

W.3a I **da kpalim wula?**
you today stayed how?

*Variables:

I (2 sg. pron.): if plural stored **ya**

X name of the place that alter has come from

da **sa** or **daa** if these are stored (**sa** 'yesterday', **daa** 'longer ago than yesterday')

paa may **kuli** ('came-home') if alter is being greeted in his home village

Figure 3b. Welcomes

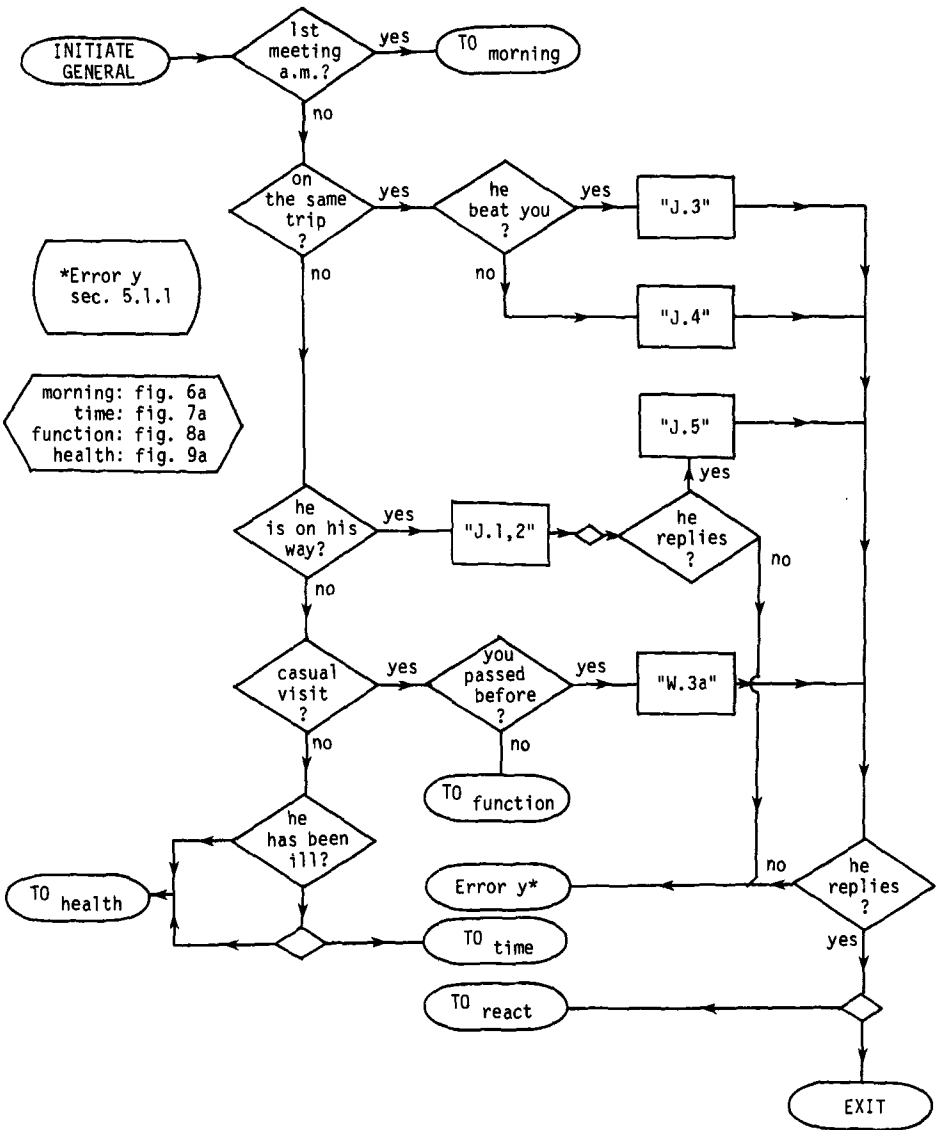


Figure 4a. General Initiating Priorities

Frames:

greetings

replies

J.1 Ni i* goorim.

with your journeying

J.2 I goorim-dima.

your journeying-people

J.3 Ni i toonni.

with your front

J.4 Ni i nyaana.

with your back

J.5 Puusim* { Y*
i X*-dima. }

J.5a O* ni wum.

greet { Y
your X-people }

he will hear

Variables:

I, X: see fig. 3b - Variables.

Y - name of the person or people you expect
alter to visit.

Puusim (2 sg. imperative): if plural stored → Ya puusim

O (3 sg. pron.): if X-dima or a plural Y in
J.5 → Ba (3 pl.)

Figure 4b. Journey Greetings

4.3 Responses

To almost all initiatory greetings (but see sec. 5.3) it is correct to reply **Naa**, or perhaps **Alaafe**. For a number of initiatory greetings there are correlative responses that are the normal response in addition to or instead of these general replies. Though this correlation is not an absolute rule, departure from it would be generally considered unusual, but not erroneous.

A: **Dasuba!**B: **Naa, ti maasim.**

(normal)

Ti maasim

(fairly normal)

Naa**Alaafe (, ti maasim).****Ni i tuuma.**

(unusual)

. . .

To give some indication of this situation, the main response network (see fig. 5a) contains a table indicating most-normal, normal, and less-usual responses to initial greetings, with the implicit rider that other responses that are not absolutely inappropriate (morning or market responses in the wrong time or place) are possible, but at even longer odds.

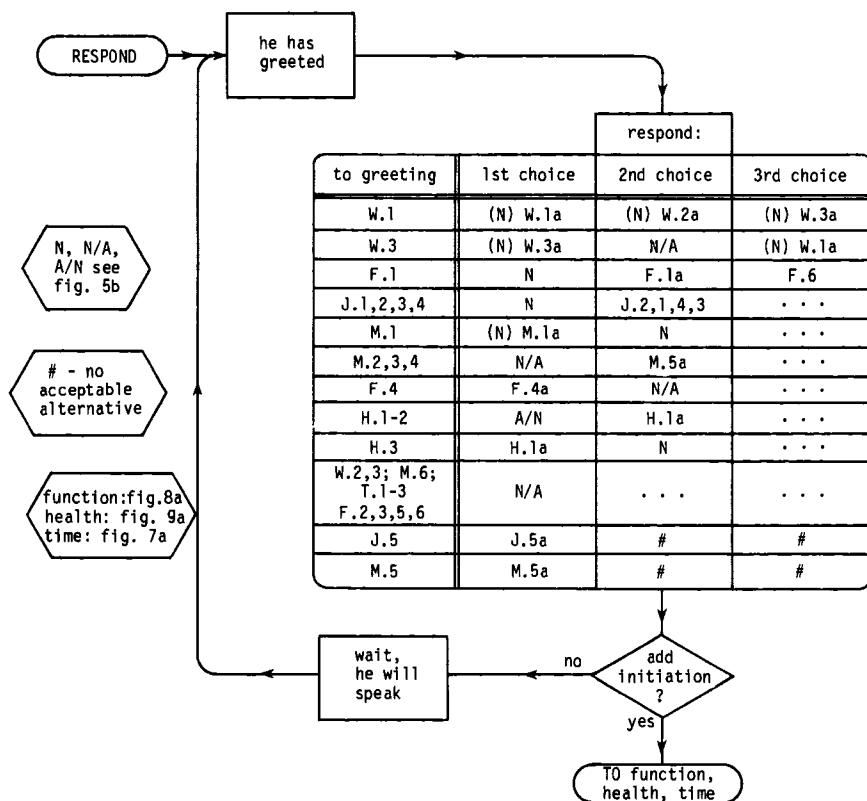


Figure 5a. Response Routines

It is possible to reverse the initiation/response turn-taking structure by following a response immediately by an initiatory greeting of one's own:

- A: Dasuba! B: Naa, ti maasim. (normal)
- A: (Naa) i ba be wula? B: Naa.
- A: Dasuba! B: Naa, ti maasim: i ba be wula? (alternative)
- A: Naa. . . .

This option would normally be taken in cases where the criteria determining the initial allocation of roles are unclear (see secs. 2.2 and 5.1 and fig. 2).

N	Naa	(general purpose response)
A	Alaafɛ	'health' ("I (he/we/they) am well.")
N/A	Naa	or, less frequently, Alaafɛ
A/N	Alaafɛ	or, less frequently, Naa

Figure 5b. Responses

If the role-switching option is not taken, the original initiator continues with a further greeting (fig. 5c) unless he wishes to terminate the greeting and pass on or go into general conversation, length of litany being determined as indicated (sec. 2.3.3).

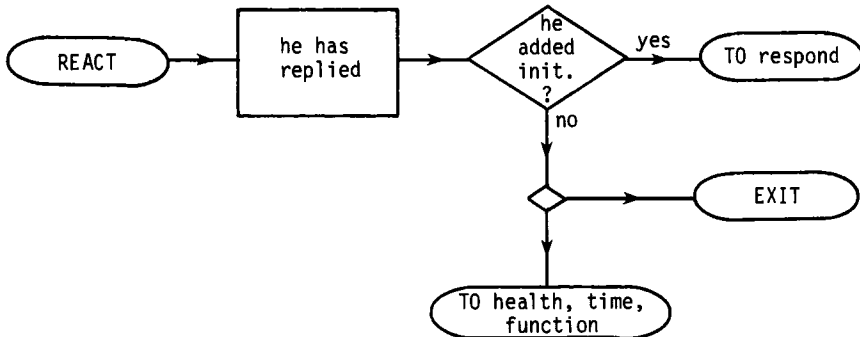


Figure 5c. Reaction Options

There are certain above-random expectancies of sequences of initiations. These are partly reflected in the ordering of items in figures 4b, 6b, 7b, 8b, and 9b (except where mutually exclusive, as in J.3 and 4 of fig. 4b or F.2-5 of fig. 8b), but the levels of delicacy involved in determining the normalcy of such sequences over against others is outside our present scope. The charts admit looping, including repetition of the same greeting several times. But such multiple repetition is unusual, although it is certainly a possibility (one repetition is not uncommon), and we would have to incorporate some kind of statistical indication of frequency to exclude overrepetitious recursion.

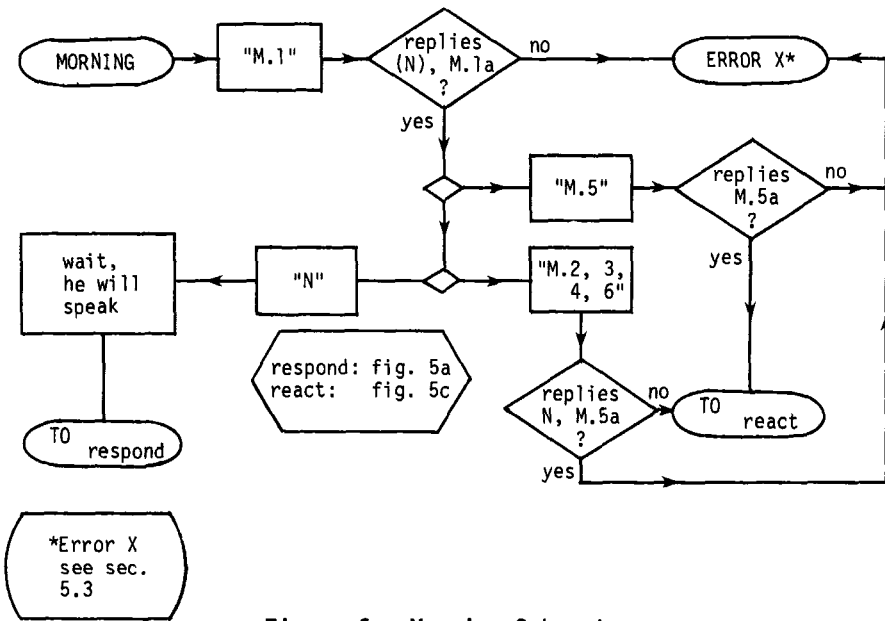


Figure 6a. Morning Subsystem

4.4 Time, function, and health

The remaining subsystems are comparatively nonspecific in applicability. The time subsystem refers to segments of the day after the morning period: midday-early afternoon, evening (to dusk), and night are the three divisions recognized (figs. 7a and 7b). The subsystem which refers to alter's activity (figs. 8a and 8b) is fairly self-explanatory: *kulga* (F.2) is any place one visits for water (river, lake, well, or water hole), and the greeting is offered to those who are at the watering place as well as those returning; the 'woods' (F.3) are stocks of firewood (*doo/daari* 'stick(s)'), not a form of landscape, which would be 'bush'; the market greetings (F.4 and F.4a) may also be given to somebody who is evidently returning from market; the work greeting (F.1) is fairly generally usable, even when alter is obviously not working, so that after *Dasuba!* (M.1) it is the most useful all-purpose salutation. Besides specific cases where alter is known, or looks, to be or to have been sick, greeting for his health and that of his family (figs. 9a and 9b) is a common source of material to provide length of litany where required (sec. 2.3.3): H.1 and H.3 are inquiries about the health of named persons, relatives ('your father/wife/child ...'), or groups ('your house-people/womenfolk ...') and can be repeated ad lib.

Frames:

greetings

replies

- M.1 Daasuba. M.1a Ti maasim.
morning our coolness
- M.2 I* sa doon wula?
you yesterday reclined how?
- M.3 I goom ni (maa)?
your sleep with (the)
- M.4 I goom ziya.
your sleep place
- M.5 I (sa) gbisiya? M.5a (Aay,) goom be ni.
you (yesterday) slept? (No,) sleep existed there
- M.6 I lugri kpeaa?
your side neighbor
(i.e., "How is your bedfellow?")

*Variables:

I: see figure 3b - Variables

Figure 6b. Morning Greetings

4.5 Open-endedness

The question arises as to how far this coverage is, or can be, complete--that is, whether the greeting system is really closed or whether it is open-ended. There are certainly further greetings which recur on limited occasions and could be included except for considerations of scale; for instance, greetings such as 'with your rain' when it is raining, 'with your good head (luck)' when someone has been especially lucky,¹² and 'with our new year' on any festival (traditional new year fire festival, Christmas, January 1st, Muslim 'great feast', etc.). Others have been heard only once; for instance, 'with your(pl.) two shirts', addressed to my wife and myself when we were wearing matching outfits. One could easily generate further items from the same grammatical patterns for any climatic conditions, e.g., 'with our heat' or 'with our fog',¹³ or other circumstances, e.g., 'with your big hat' or 'with your new bicycle', but the rarity with which one hears these originalities (I have spent some fifty-five months in a rural village and heard virtually none) gives them a joking feeling which indicates their basically extrasystemic status.

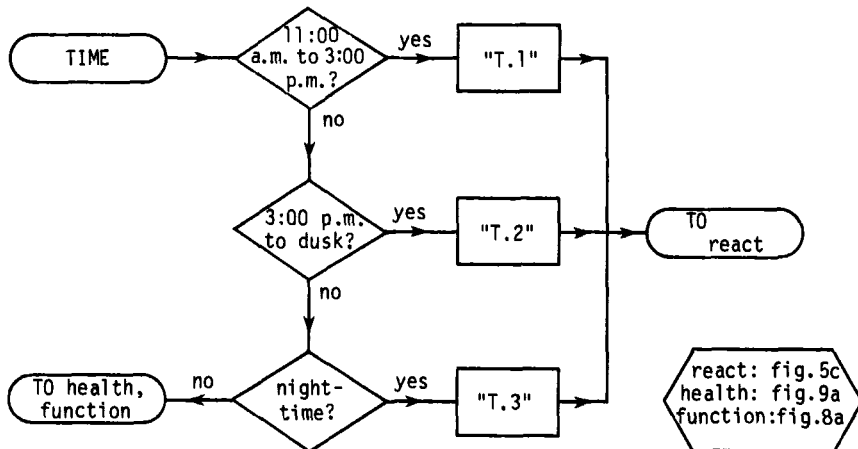


Figure 7a. Time Subsystem

Frames:

greetings

T.1 Ni i* wuntana.
with your sunshine

T.2 Ni i za'anoori.
with your evening

T.3 Aniwula.
night greeting (i.e., in Dagbani
"how is your body?")

*Variables:

I: see figure 3b - Variables

Figure 7b. Time Greetings

4.6 Comparison with Bisa

Comparison of the Mampruli system with that of Bisa (Naden 1974, 1976, 1980) shows evident similarities. This is not merely an artifact of the formalism, for on the one hand, sketched flowcharts for various British and American systems¹⁴ show considerable differences from these African charts, and on the other, a

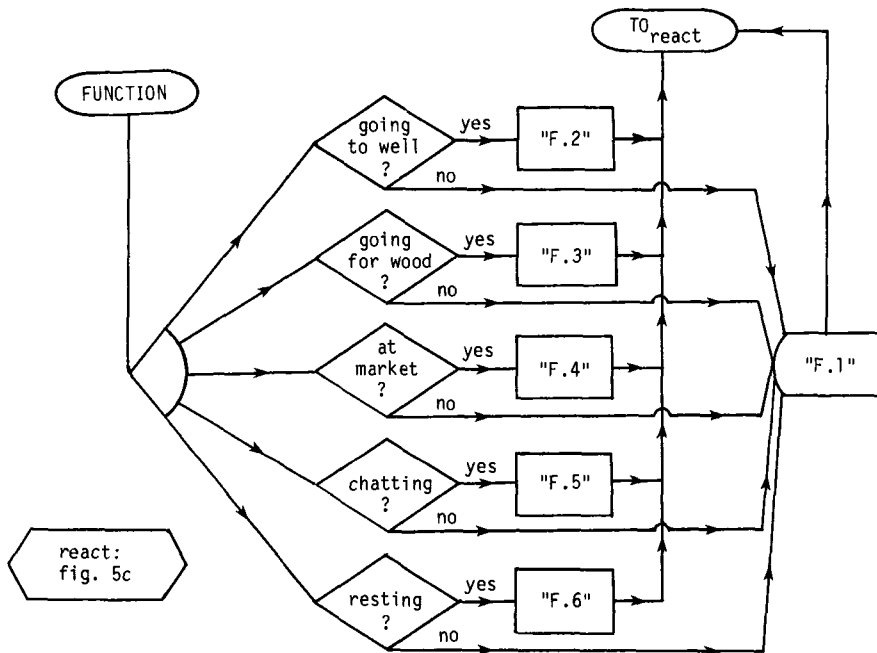


Figure 8a. Function Subsystem

- | | | |
|---------|---|---|
| Frames: | greetings | replies |
| F.1 | Ni i* tuuma (tuuma).
with your work (work) | F.1a Ni i tuuma, (naa).
with your work, (then) |
| F.2 | Ni i kulga.
with your watering place | |
| F.3 | Ni i daari ni.
with your woods (loc.) | |
| F.4 | Ni i daa.
with your market | F.4a I daa-dima.
your market-people |
| F.5 | Ni i sɔsɔga.
with your conversing | |
| F.6 | Ni i gyelinsi.
with your tiredness | |

*Variables:

I: see figure 3b - Variables

Figure 8b. Function Greetings

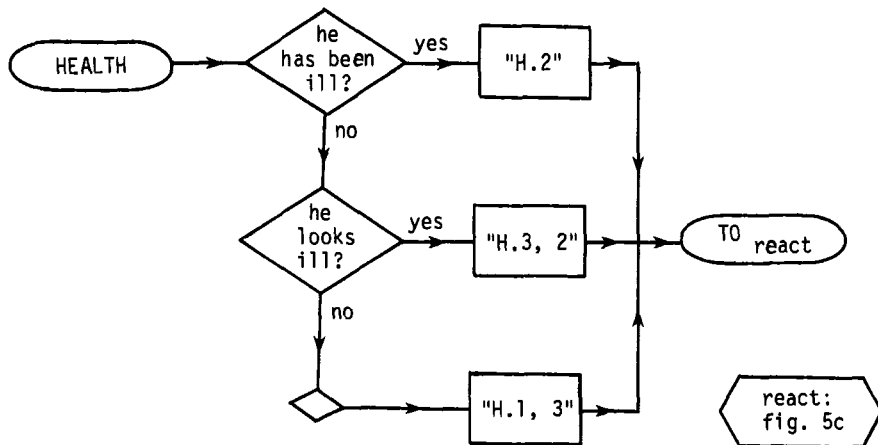


Figure 9a. Health Subsystem

Frames:

greetings

replies

H.1 Y* ((be) wula)?
Y ((exists) how)?

H.1a (Aay,) alaafe be ni.
(No,) health exists there

H.2 I* ningbina ((be) wula)?
your body ((exists) how)?

H.3 I
Y mar alaafe?
you
Y have health?

*Variables:

Y: personal name or kin-term-plus-pronoun

I: see 3b. - Variables

Figure 9b. Health Greetings

tourist's eye view assessment of the Bisa and Mamprusi greeting situations would show them more or less equivalent. Specific differences are apparent, however, which make the two systems quite distinct in detail. At the outset one sees this contrast, namely, that the Bisa superior, or person at home, has to welcome the inferior or visitor, while amongst the Mamprusi one comes into the

presence of one's host or senior with a salutation. The next difference to be noticed is this: Bisa welcomes include welcoming alter from his night's rest in the morning, thereafter the ordinary "good morning" is relegated to the time subsystem (Naden 1980: fig. 2 (top right and lower left)). Beyond the function and time subsystems (Mampruli has a night time greeting and so does not use the conversation function greeting for after dusk as does Bisa (Naden 1980: fig. 2 (bottom)), Bisa has general greetings that include apparent reference to health (though often in a purely nominal way, as in the English "How do you do?"), but which may completely lack this element, for example, 'in peace (all is well)' and 'no trouble', which have no equivalent in Mampruli. Most Bisa responses are sentences (there is no general *Naa* to fall back on) and normally match the form of the initiation. The question/statement transform ("Is all well?"/"All is well.") is a common pattern in Bisa greetings which does not occur in Mampruli.

We see, then, that the overall concept of greeting is very similar in the two cultures--a litany of initiation/response pairs with a possibility of reversal of role (see fig. 5a, and cf. Naden 1980: fig. 4,¹⁶ Pike 1973, and Lowe 1969), and of considerable prolongation under social constraints, greetings for welcome, time, health, and alter's activity, and turn taking determined by status and by who is 'at home'. It is these similarities that make the primary impression on the tourist's eye. When one begins participating in the two societies, however, one finds that a considerable amount of detail needs to be relearned, not only in linguistic patterns but also in structural design.

5 Presuppositions and errors

The above discussion has indicated how correct procedure in greeting in Mampruli depends at numerous points on decisions that require input of factual information about the interlocutor and the social or environmental situation. The question arises as to what happens if the requisite information is not available to the speaker, or if he bases his conduct on an error in such presuppositional material. Errors can indeed occur, but there are fairly well-institutionalized ways of dealing with such occurrences.

5.1 Turn taking errors

One type of failure occurs when the normal turn taking pattern of the litany is disrupted, and we may recognize several specific cases according to the particular phase when the error occurs.

5.1.1 Failure to respond. This is the most common and noticeable break in the social current. If a greeting is offered but not returned, the opening speaker is in an embarrassing position. By-standers will intervene with "He is greeting you!" or the

initial speaker will repeat his greeting more loudly or with more gestural support, or he will come nearer to the person being addressed. Where it does not seem as though the recipient could have failed to have heard the greeting, they may be asked "Are we fighting?"¹⁷ since a social rift is the only recognized reason for not greeting (see sec. 2.3.2) relevant to the case.

5.1.2 Failure to initiate. This error can occur where the social calculations (see sec. 2.3.3) indicate clearly that one member should initiate a greeting and he does not do so. This might indicate some sort of an attempt to claim status (as it is usually the less-important person who opens), unfriendliness, or a breakdown in normal interaction because the person is either impolite or a stranger who is unfamiliar with the proper forms. In general, the value set on greetings and peaceful social relations is such that the person who should, according to the normal rules, wait to be addressed, will open a greeting when it is apparent that alter is not going to do so. The "Are we fighting?" approach might be used to point out in a gentle way that the norm is being violated--perhaps to teach the rule to a child or to an adult foreigner who has reached the stage in learning the social norms where he should know that it is his responsibility to open in the situation. Where alter is by far the social inferior and is definitely failing in politeness (as in the case of young teenagers lounging around one's house or entering a room without greeting the householder or the owner of the room) something more explicit might be said: "You are coming to my house and do not greet me: why?" "Do you people not greet an elder?" or the like.

5.1.3 Premature initiation. A person may commit this error when he opens the greeting in a situation where the norm is that he should wait for the other to speak first. This would usually indicate a stranger's unfamiliarity with the rules or a deliberate or natural self-effacement (the less important opens). It could, however, arise from a desire to establish a polite meeting where alter might not recognize its appropriateness: ego is abnormally friendly and goes further than the norm in greeting strangers in public places, or is an expatriate (who is ex officio important and so should receive the first greeting) who is showing that he can speak the language and wants to follow traditional etiquette. In all cases of this kind the person who receives the greeting gives the minimal response and then immediately reopens with his own initiation to correct the turn-taking role structure:

A: **Dasuba!** B: **Naa. Dasuba!**

A: **Naa, ti maasim!** B: ...

(where the correct would be:

B: **Dasuba!** A: **Naa, ti maasim!**

B: ...)

courtesies. Indeed, one of the things which started me on the study of greetings was that, even in the artificial recording situations, my Bisa helpers often had to bring an audience to respond to their greetings (and generally give feedback) in order to be able to tell a story for the tape.²¹

It is possible to jump from the exit of the greetings litany, as described above, directly into the conversation, narrative, or whatever may be the main content of the interaction--or, of course, to fall silent or depart if the greeting is the sole content. There may also, however, be a transitional state, varying in type according to context. In all casual or nonvisit interactions (see fig. 1) the questions "Where are you going?" or "What are you doing?" as appropriate are so predictable a next step after the greetings litany as to share in its closed, institutionalized character. The immediate answers are usually of a semantically nonspecific nature, and they tend to be rather uninformative statements of what is observable from context:

A: "What are you doing?" B: "Digging my farm."

or

A: "Where are you going?" B: "I'm going to town."

After the bare response, the continuation "What for?" is also fairly predictable. Another such institutionalized routine is used when somebody is obviously coming home from market:

A: "Where have you been?" B: "To market."
 "How was your market?" B: "Fine, thank you."

A: "What did you get/bring me?"

Where storytelling, or a court case, or some other similar more formal type of interaction is intended, then there may be a transition of a backstage nature (Goffman 1971:114ff.), where the participants discuss this, deciding who is to start or whatever is appropriate, before passing to the specific introduction of the first story, case, or whatever.

On the social plane, the main functions of the greeting are the initiation of an occasion of social contact and the establishment of politeness. The courtesy element is so strong that these languages do not have a routine formula for "please" (for the term and some discussion, see Coulmas 1979). Having established politeness with an appropriate, if necessary an effusive (sec. 2.3.3), greeting, one can then proceed in the body of the interaction to request a gift or service with a direct imperative without any further preamble. It is possible to be especially tactful by saying something like "I am begging you," but that is an optional extra for special effect, rather than a formula like English "please", which is required to avoid an effect of rudeness.²² Further details of this function have already been considered in the discussion of greeting as a social end (sec. 2.1.1).

7 Farewells

After the elaborateness of Mamprusi greetings, the farewells are something of an anticlimax. Often at the end of business, interactants drift apart without any formal closure. Such farewells as do exist depend on comparatively modest amounts of social and situational information. Most commonly the person, who is leaving merely says, "I am going home (to market/to ...)"²³ and alter replies Tā! 'O.K.' and perhaps adds, "Greet your house (market/ ...) people!" (cf. J.5: fig. 4b). It is possible, although rather impolite, to suggest that it is time for a guest to leave by initiating one of these farewells. A proverb of the Don't-look-a-gift-horse-in-the-mouth or Be-thankful-for-small-mercies type says, "A small gift is better than "Greet the house!" (i.e., better than dismissal empty-handed).

A more elaborate farewell may be heard in the inverse of a welcoming situation: a visitor from outside the village is going home or a villager is going on a journey. The person leaving may say, "Remain well!" (i.e., have a good staying behind, not "well" of health); and the one staying behind will utter one or more farewells, in the form of commands to greet the people of the place of destination, the chief thereof, and any relatives or friends of either interactant known to be there (J.5: fig. 4a) or, finally, to greet the people met on the journey (J.2), especially where the speaker does not know where the person is going or is not familiar with the place and its inhabitants. The person departing may say, "He/they will hear," to each command as appropriate (J.5a). These items have already appeared because greetings for people passing on a journey collapse welcome into farewell without intervening content.

8 Conclusion

That it is possible for someone coming from outside to function adequately in a new society and language indicates that the whole pragmatic nexus of words, gestures, and social and environmental situations involved in the acceptable use of language is systematic or rule governed. In fact, the learning of a new sociolanguage makes it possible--indeed necessary--to bring into conscious focus many of the elements of this type of system which are learned and practised automatically in our native culture.

I have tried to show here how one can take one of the more restricted subsystems, and by a combination of participant observation and formal analysis, begin to recognize what is involved and to present his results in a manner that can provide insight into the system or guidance for a potential learner, which will relate to sociolinguistic use, rather than mere formal linguistic usage.²⁴

NOTES

- 1 See, however, Drucker-Brown (1975:84ff.) for certain female chieftainships.
- 2 The usual anthropologists' term for the person who is knowledgeable in funeral customs and has various duties at an interment in addition to gravedigging: in modern British English 'undertaker' might be a better translation.
- 3 The anthropologists' term: in local English, 'soothsayer'.
- 4 Often called 'fetish' or 'juju' in local English.
- 5 Parallel systems with a single entry condition (in this case nonhousehold) generate the cartesian product of their terms in n-ary combination (according to the number of systems). That **stranger** can be either 'kin/friend' or not ties in with the semantic range of the Mampruli term **sanna/eaanna**, usually glossed in local English as 'stranger'. This semantic range includes: (1) any person not in his own place of residence, hence one to whom the duty of hospitality is owed by those in whose hometown the meeting takes place, that is, a 'visitor, guest'; and (2) a person not kin, friend, fellow townsman, or acquaintance, encountered on neutral ground, that is, an 'alien, stranger' (in the usual English sense).
- 6 Mamprusi take account of a widely extended range of relatives, while friendship is a formal relationship sealed by gift-giving. If you call someone "my friend," he will reply, "If you are my friend, what will you give me?"
- 7 In general, I use the pronoun **he** irrespective of sex unless the context indicates a male or female referent only. The Mampruli third person pronouns do not distinguish gender, and in most cases the sex of the interlocutors is irrelevant in greetings except where specifically discussed.
- 8 Notes on the charting conventions:
 - (a) Rectangles contain actions.
 - (b) Diamonds represent decisions: if large, a polar choice; if small, an option that is unconditioned at the level of delicacy to which we are working.
 - (c) The fan node (fig. 8a) marks a point with multiple parallel conditioned possibilities.
 - (d) Items in quotation marks: at this point ego utters the greeting so numbered in the lists in figures 3b-9b.
 - (e) Ovals are entries, connections to other subnetworks, or exits. (EXIT means end of greeting: proceed to further business or part.)
 - (f) Commas indicate alternatives: for example, "M.1, 2" means "utter either the greeting numbered M.1 or that numbered M.2."
- 9 Here, as at other points, it may be seen that the formal presentation in this paper is not exhaustive for practical reasons of scale: these other matters could have been dealt with in a monographic type of description. See also section 3.5 of the present paper.
- 10 The **nam baa** or **nam ba** of more northerly groups (Bisa, Naden 1970:191; and Kusaasi and Mossi, Naden 1980:139) is not really a native Mampruli response, though occasionally heard.
- 11 It is also used to thank someone for having done something for one.
- 12 For example, a woman who has passed safely through childbirth, whether the child has lived or not.

- 13 Besides 'rain', 'cold' is also heard: we could add a 'weather' subsystem parallel to 'time' and recognize this as a possible growth point in the system.
- 14 A problem in such analysis of Western cultures is the multiplicity of socioeconomic and regional subsystems. I have recently experienced the difference between northern and southern British cultures: in the north my "Good morning!" to strangers was regarded as overly stiff, the response desired being the less formal "Hello!"; in the south it was considered unduly forward, the response being muttered grudgingly, or even refused. For British/ American differences see Naden 1980:141, 6 (2).
- 15 The Mampruli direct equivalent of Bisa *miisi ba'u'i* 'no trouble' would be *Y la ka ni*, which is never heard in greeting; however, the closely related Kusaal, spoken in the area between Mamprusi and Bisa homelands, uses its own *Y la ka e* in this function very frequently.
- 16 Read "add a question?" (i.e., do you want to add a question?) at right of figure.
- 17 This is normally jocular--a gentle chiding of alter's reticence. Bad feeling serious enough to cause avoidance could not arise in Mamprusi society without both antagonists being aware of the existence of a fighting situation.
- 18 He may also want to put on more-respectable clothes before receiving a greeting.
- 19 On 'nonpersons', outsiders, see Goffman 1971:144, 150ff.
- 20 The same for closely related Dagbani: see Wilson 1972, sec. 4.4.
- 21 The same has since been found with the Mamprusi.
- 22 At least for people of my age and subculture.
- 23 Often in the proleptic or prophetic perfect: *ɲ kuliya* (literally 'I have gone home.' Cf. *m-kuli* 'to go home' and *ɲ kunni ni*, 'I am going home').
- 24 For this distinction, see Widdowson 1979, *passim*.

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