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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.

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Dallas, Texas
January, 1984

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OUTLINE OF A PRACTICAL FRAME OF REFERENCE FOR A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS IN AN AFRICAN CONTEXT

Suzanne Lafage

The relatively recent interest in social patterns of language introduces a new dimension into linguistic research on African languages. It is no longer a matter of postulating the existence of completely homogeneous speech communities, each with its own uniform linguistic code. Rules of language can no longer be considered to be independent of the social context, nor variations in language to be deviations that are theoretically insignificant compared to the norm.

Sociolinguistics[1] calls upon every linguist specializing in African languages to exercise a multifaceted consideration of language, one that is simultaneously sociological, ethnological, economic, and political. This study can take place on a national scale (e.g., Ladefoged, Glick, Criper: Language in Uganda 1971), or at the level of a very restricted geographical area (e.g., Cooper and Carpentier: "Linguistic diversity in the Ethiopian market" 1969, or Johnson: "Stable triglossia at Larteh, Ghana" 1975). Until now, however, whether research has been on a macro- or microsociolinguistic level, researchers seem to have been primarily interested in the situation of multilingualism, a feature common to all Africa. To our knowledge, there are virtually no works, and certainly none in French, on the sociolinguistic analysis of native-speaker behavior within a given African linguistic community. Furthermore, ethnolinguistic works and articles about Africa are still relatively rare.

This article has, then, two purposes. First of all, we want to emphasize the usefulness of such research and its foundational nature for an adequate analysis of the linguistic behavior of an African speaker, both in the use of a local contact language and in the use of a non-African language of wider communication, such as French. Second, we would like to propose an outline for a pragmatic frame of reference for sociolinguistic research within a

particular African language. We also want to make clear that the purpose of this article is much more to draw up a set of questions than to construct a theory or to elaborate patterns applicable to every African speech community. We are basing our comments for now only upon preliminary surveys made in the field, though all the analysis of the data has not yet been finished.

Social Stratification

Beginning with the works of Labov (1966), the relationships between language varieties and social classes (defined as groups of individuals who have the same social and/or economic characteristics) have been amply demonstrated.

However, it is questionable whether the sociolinguistic patterns (Labov 1972), drawn up on the basis of an industrialized, developed, Western society, are directly transferable to the African context. Social stratification, i.e., the hierarchical order of groups in a given society, is based on values and criteria that vary according to cultures as much as according to existing socioeconomic conditions.

Thus sociologists find African contextual conditions so complex to study that "analysis of African societies has not yet shown any evidence to support the existence of a unified system of social differentiation" (Rivière 1975:305). Between pairs of opposing classes (if it is, in fact, possible to apply this term to social groups that hardly answer to the usual Marxist definition), such as managers/managed and exploiters/exploited, there are complex intermediate strata which interfere with other dichotomies by the interplay of their mutual relationships: traditional forces/modern forces, urban world/rural world. The strategies of expedient alliances between social categories are, in each nation, and even at the level of each region, as varied as they are variable, as shown in Table 1 taken from Diop (1971:227-28).

A schema of classes as a possible interpretation of the prevailing dynamics of the strata would be roughly the following:

A. Dominant class

1. ruling layer (those holding political power and top administrators of public affairs and industrial enterprises)

2. managers of the private sector or administrative intelligentsia
   -rich plantation owners[2]
   -merchants
   -Western middle class lifestyle
   -urbanized[2]

Table 1. Relationships between Traditional and Modern Forces in Four West African Countries

after M. Diop

A = Modern forces
C = Traditional forces
B, D, E = Expedient alliances, variable according to country.

Opposing Forces

In Mali

actual power — (C) traditional tradesmen
reserve masses — (C) farmers
} = traditional forces (B)

legal power — (A) intelligentsia
working masses — (A) salespeople, office workers, laborers
} = modern forces

In Ivory Coast

(D) (C) customary chiefs, farmers
(D) plantation owners
(A) intelligentsia, salespeople and office workers, laborers
} (B)

In Senegal

(D) (C) religious chiefs, farmers
} (B)

(A) Senegalese capitalists, intelligentsia, salespeople and office workers, laborers
} (E)

In Guinea

traditional chiefs (nonexistent), farmers
} (B)

(A) intelligentsia, salespeople and office workers, laborers

B. Middle class

3. tertiary sector: employees of government, public service, commercial and industrial enterprises: white collar workers
   -behavior, as of the "lower middle class without the sense of thrift" (Rivière)
   -urbanized, but still tied to the rural world and to certain traditional forces

4. laborers (still few in number)
   -not in danger of becoming poor since they receive a regular wage, which on the average is superior to that of the majority of the population
   -urbanized, but retaining some traditional values (cf. Gibbal 1974)

C. Urban proletariat

5. blue collar workers, illiterate workers, unemployed, various victims of the rural exodus
   -urbanized shantytown dwellers who are rebuilding the family and ethnic structures of the traditional world

D. Peasants

6. customary or religious chiefs
7. notables: farmers-landowners
8. artisans
   traditional merchants
9. farmers who do not own land

"In the traditional rural setting, stratification will be based on other criteria than in the urban setting" (Rivière 1975: 288).

Specifically, stratification will be based on the system of seniority in the family, on classes and lineages, even on social or religious castes, age classes, traditional Islamic hierarchies, etc. Inequalities must be seen much more in terms of prestige and power than in terms of the level of wealth attained.

To this socioeconomic schema must be added, it seems, a sociocultural schema in which the most obvious values are seen by looking at linguistic behavior. But even here the analysis is not simple, since one could observe with M. H. Abdulaziz-Mkilifi (1972), E. O. Apronti (1974), and Bruce Johnson (1973, 1975) that in a large portion of Africa a situation of triglossia is becoming more and more prevalent. In fact, just as Ferguson (1959) introduced the term diglossia to designate a linguistic situation characterized by a particular division of communicative functions between

a vernacular language and a superposed variety, both considered in the community as varieties of the same language, one could say that:

> triglossia refers to a type of language situation characterized by a similar division of communicative functions among three language varieties, the vernacular and two superposed varieties, one of which is an indigenous lingua franca and the other an introduced world language (Johnson 1975:93).

Thus in Ivory Coast, a Senoufo can use his mother tongue when speaking with his family, common Dioula in the market, and French for transactions with the government, assuming he is more or less educated.

The analysis is complicated by the fact that the imported language, in relation to the local languages, can be either (a) used for communication within one language group but not for communication between groups, or (b) not used for communication within one language group but used for communication between groups, depending on whether there does (a) or does not (b) exist in the region an African language suitable for interethnic communication.

Thus in a city such as Abidjan, it is not unusual to encounter individuals who use their mother tongue to speak with their family or others in their ethnic group, Dioula for transactions in the market, a more or less standardized variety of French for relating to the government, and a pidginized variety of French for communicating with an illiterate who does not belong to the same ethnic group.

But social categorization, particularly in an urban setting, seems to be based above all on evaluations of varieties of French according to the following schema.

1. Dominant class elite	⟶	use of "central" French (academic norm)
2. Middle class educated	⟶	use of a regional variety of French (implicit local norm)
3. Middle class little or no education	⟶	occasional use of a pidginized dialect of French
4. Common people uneducated	⟶	exclusive use of the ethnic language or of an African contact language

However, what will the situation be at the village level, where, except for young students, the majority of the population does not speak French? Will a difference really be perceived

between the French of the instructor and that of the old warrior? And if there is a difference, will it not be because of the remarks of some local, educated people? Cannot the prestige of the old warrior be more important than that of another man of the same age and rank in the traditional hierarchy if the latter does not speak French?

On the other hand, a certain use of the mother tongue as a prerogative of the village notables can be considered as a prestigious element among the more or less acculturated urban intelligentsia.

This same variability seems to exist at the level of use restrictions. A newly urbanized illiterate will translate into the pidginized French when he knows certain usage rules that pertain to communication in his mother tongue. Thus one of our language helpers refused to tell a folktale from his ethnic group because c'est pas nuit 'it's not nighttime'.

Then again, if we believe what students tell us, they are criticized in the village because "they don't know how to speak well." This value judgment is made because of certain "White-style" deviations in their behavior: not observing the hierarchical distance appropriate to the social rank of their interlocutor; abrupt affirmation of a fact (as one would do in French) where it would be appropriate to use the allusive neutrality of an image-symbol known by all; and not differentiating between the use of certain types of proverbs (reserved for elders) and sayings (suitable for a young person with little experience).

As we have previously stated, there is a great dearth of sociolinguistic information on systematic variations of discourse in an African language. Most synchronic descriptions, so to speak, strip the language of its social context.

This is why we have thought it essential to attempt a series of preliminary surveys, which aim for a sociolinguistic analysis of monolingual communication among native speakers of an African language. It seems reasonable that this knowledge will allow us to sharpen our macrosociolinguistic observations and better to understand behavior in a European second language, especially in pidginized varieties of French.

Several surveys of languages of Ivory Coast are in progress: Senoufo of Korhogo (P. Coulibaly), Baôulê, Kodé dialect (J. Thymian-Ravenhili), Dioula of Kong (M. J. Derive), Koyo of Fresco (P. Kokora), Bété of Daloa (Zogro), and Ewe of the fishermen of Vridi (S. Lafage). The purposes of these surveys are to determine "who speaks what language to whom and when" (Fishman 1965), to determine which criteria speakers use to judge whether a member of their community "speaks well" or "speaks poorly", to observe the traits that are considered significant to acculturated behavior,

etc.... It is on the basis of the first results obtained there that we have attempted our outline of a practical frame of reference for variables of communication and a typological approach to discourse. Participation in this survey of all the fieldworkers of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) working in Ivory Coast, Togo, and Upper Volta will make possible future verification of this frame of reference in a large number of languages in the Kwa, Kru, Gur, and Manda groups, and the differentiation, if such should prove necessary, of the initial findings according to the cultural models of each of these areas.

Communication Situations

By communication situations we mean a set of extralinguistic elements which, subjectively interpreted by each participant on the basis of notions common to the group of native speakers, determines the form the communication is to adopt. It is evident, of course, that the number of communication situations is impossible to count since the interpretations by the participants (the number of which also varies indefinitely) change from one time to another.

Certainly the most important factor in the communication situation is the human element, i.e., the participants. It is this factor we shall consider first.

Communication mode

Under this heading we place the following variables:

-number of participants
-behavior of participants, which may be active, passive, or active and passive in turn
-speech monopolized or not monopolized by one participant
-channel of communication
-presence or absence of participant(s)

The situation, therefore, is described from the viewpoint of the speaker and of the addressee(s), when necessary. In Table 2, 1 and x symbolize one individual and several individuals, respectively, in the category concerned, with x also representing a variable number greater than one.

Table 2. Participant Roles in Communication Situations

MC	Speaker	Addressee	Example
MC1a	1 present and active (monopolizes speech) →	x absent and passive	announcer of a radio broadcast in a local language
MC1b	1 absent and active (monopolizes speech) →	x present and passive	listeners to this broadcast
MC2a	1 present and active →	1 absent and passive	telephone conversation
MC2b	1 absent and passive ←	1 present and active	(speakers take turns)
MC3a	1 present and active (monopolizes speech) →	x present and passive	griot, priest delivering a sermon
MC3b	1 present and active (monopolizes speech) ↔	x present and passive	congregation
MC4a	1 present and active ↔	x present; active sporadically and according to ritual	storyteller encouraged ritually by the audience
MC4b	1 present and active ↔	x present; active sporadically and according to ritual	audience intervenes ritually in the narration
MC5a	1 present and active but does not have exclusive monopoly of speech ↔	x present and passive but allowed to ask questions	speaker who recites or gives a report, but who also may be questioned by audience

	Speaker	Addressee	Example
MC5b	1 ⟷ x present and active but does not have exclusive monopoly of speech	present and, as a group, passive, but interrupting in turn to ask questions, if they wish	audience whose members have the right to ask questions of the speaker
MC6	x present S ⇄ spokesman ⇄ A Formal situation in which the dialogue organized in terms of social hierarchy is mediated by the official "spokesman" even though the participants are actually present		traditional ceremony a) the chief speaks b) the spokesman delivers the message to the public c) response of 1 or x participants d) the spokesman carries the response to the chief
MC7	2 ⟷ present Each of 2 participants is in turn speaker and addressee (no monopoly of speech) 1 present and active → 1 present and passive 1 present and passive ← 1 present and active		face-to-face dialogue
MC8	⟷ x present Each of the participants can take a turn speaking when he wishes		conversation or debate with several participants

Identity of participants (IP)

In traditional society, the identity of the participants seems extremely important, whatever the topic of the communication may be, and whether it is formal (constrained) or informal. The parameters to be taken into account are:

IP 1 Age. The stratification of society into a hierarchy of age classes, where seniority has predominance, does not give each individual an equal right in communication. Such equality, apparently, can be exercised only between individuals belonging to the same age class (except when the parameters below intervene).

IP 2 Sex. Social roles are divided according to sex. Behavior of men and women is not identical. In certain communication situations, the woman is not allowed to interrupt. Prohibitions and taboos are not always the same for each sex. Whatever her age, a female must speak respectfully to a male. For example, in Ewe country, a mother must not insult her son by calling him a **kãblĩ** 'monkey' when he does something foolish, even when he is very young.

IP 3 Social rank. Social rank has a very great influence on communication. The customary authority (chief) and the religious authority (priest, fetish priest, marabout, imam, hadji, etc.) possess a different social identity from that of the chief of a clan or lineage. These last authorities enjoy a different status from that of heads of families, who themselves are hierarchically superior to the other members of the community divided into classes according to age and sex.

IP 4 Profession. In traditional African society, profession was taken into consideration only with respect to caste (where hierarchical order can vary from one culture to another): the chief, the sorcerer, the fetish priest, the warrior, the hunter, the farmer, the griot (at varying status), the blacksmith (often feared), etc. But only a few professions seemed hereditary and socially unattainable (the shaman, the blacksmith, the chief, the griot,...). Today traditional forces are weakening and modern ones are introducing new castes into the village. It is more prestigious to be a white collar worker than to be a manual laborer or to be educated than to be illiterate, and the politician is in a class above the civil servant. The rich plantation owner, because of his wealth, can be placed at the top of the rural social hierarchy. It is these social categories, rather than professions, strictly speaking, that are ranked in terms of power and money, and consequently prestige.

IP 5 Kinship relationships. Within the extended family, there is a hierarchy of relationships from the head of the family, who directs the community, to sons, who are fathers of families themselves (by order of their birth), to wives, and to children. But

these hierarchies can conflict with other family relationships. Thus communication between grandparents and grandchildren is often more familiar than that between a father and his children. In regard to joking relationships, we must take into account the differences that can result from the ethnic group's being patriarchal or matriarchal, for example in the relationships between a maternal uncle or paternal uncle with a nephew, or the relationship of a father with his children. In the same way, for a correct analysis of behavior we must take into consideration whether the family is patrilocal or matrilocal.

Authority relationships between participants (AuR.)

In light of the above factors, authority relationships are extremely complex and predictably variable according to the specific cultural details of the ethnic group in question. However, what all ethnic groups appear to have in common is that all communication relationships are hierarchical and exert a strong constraining force. It is for this reason that communication situations are formal much more frequently than in a Western context. Very strict rules of etiquette are part of the earliest training a child receives after he has been weaned, from about three years of age. The nuances among which a speaker must make a choice (sometimes difficult for a nonnative observer to grasp) can be roughly summarized by distinguishing three types of authority relationships:

AuR1 superior to inferior
AuR2 equal to equal
AuR3 inferior to superior

But it is important to keep in mind that all the parameters must be taken into consideration and that the time and place of communication reinforce or weaken, or even override, the authority relationships (e.g., drinking games in certain ethnic groups).

Acquaintance relationship between participants (AcR)

Social relationships differ depending on whether the speaker is addressing:

AcR1 close friends (this can overturn the usual authority relationships): ties, for example, which exist between initiation brothers or sworn friends who have made the blood pact (Togo-Bénin)

AcR2 mere acquaintances (apply the AuR)

AcR3 complete strangers. Behavior toward a foreigner in the village or the region is stereotyped.

Gestures of participants (GP)

Here also the situation is complex. A gesture can contradict what is spoken. For each formal situation there is a corresponding set of appropriate gestures, in use of which one must take into consideration the identity of the participants, the authority relationships, and the acquaintance relationships. Therefore a gesture may be proper or improper: even if a child responds respectfully to an adult who has asked him a question, he must not look him directly in the eye. A Senoufo woman crouches to greet a man or to answer her husband. Both hands are extended to receive a gift, etc.

Any other behavior from a member of the community is considered a serious breach of manners, even if the accompanying words are appropriate. Such behavior can bring about an unforeseen change in the attitude of the addressee, who feels insulted.

Place of communication (PC)

The place of communication (PC) seems to impose weaker constraints in a rural setting than in an urban setting. Nevertheless, it can conflict with sex, age, and social rank. We are lacking information in this area. For now, it seems possible to distinguish:

PC1 at home
PC2 at another's home
PC3 in the street or on the path
PC4 in the market
PC5 in a shop
PC6 in a government building
PC7 in a sacred place
PC8 in the public square, under the 'palaver tree'...

Time of communication (TC)

In a rural setting, the time when a communication takes place imposes heavy constraints. Village life follows the sun and the seasons. There is, thus, a well-defined division of the day into time for work, for meals, for 'palaver', for leisure and relaxation, and for sleeping.

The topic of communication is, therefore, often determined by the time of day when it occurs. In any case, the topic also determines the choice of the time a conversation will take place. Thus a story is told only at nightfall, after the evening meal. The exchange of gossip between women takes place when there is collective work: e.g., fetching water or washing laundry at the river. Some songs are characteristic of certain group work projects and are inconceivable at other times. There are times when invectives, jokes, and even insults are permitted, and when

they serve as contests in eloquence in which no one could take offence at what is said. In other circumstances, these same words would cause a scene.

At the present state of our survey it would seem we can distinguish the following times of communication:

TC 1 early morning (5-7 a.m.) for taking care of daily chores
TC 2 individual worktime
TC 3 collective worktime
TC 4 rest time, which breaks up periods of work
TC 5 after work, time of collective discussions (in the village square, under the 'apatam' or 'palaver tree')
TC 6 evening meal
TC 7 leisure time: evening
TC 8 night: time for affairs of state (between 2 and 5 a.m.), sorcery, secret transactions
TC 9 clan or family holidays (including funerals)
TC10 general holidays
TC11 lucky and unlucky days (for example, those chosen for judiciary business among the Baoulé)

Communication and Discourse Types

Discourse is extremely complex, and it is not easy to attempt a typology that will have any claim to objectivity. We have adopted a functionalist approach, which seemed to have the fewest drawbacks of the various classifications considered. This does not mean that we are completely satisfied with it.

We make, then, the following broad distinctions:

1. Discourse of social relationships, which is hierarchically ordered, conventional, and narrowly constrained:
   a. salutations (arrival, departure, meeting, return from a trip, etc.)
   b. apologies (both before and after the fact)
   c. thanks and responses to thanks
   d. ritual speech with religious or magical implication (petitions, prayers, congratulations, condolences, introductory remarks, etc.)

Every ethnologist has observed the importance of verbal ritual and of ceremony in social relationships in traditional African communities.

2. Esthetic discourse, which bears the poetic function of language, in the sense of Jakobson (1970), and is found in traditional culture in well-defined genres:

a. the song, which may be:
   -light (amusement, love, etc.)
   -about war
   -historical
   -about competition or conflict
   -a dirge
   -ritual (initiation, ceremony)
   -religious

(cf. Agblemagnon, 1969)

b. the story, which begins and ends with a formula and in which are mixed songs, remarks, and collective responses from the audience. It can also, like the following genres, take on a didactic function.

c. the fable, shorter and more concrete

d. the riddle and the enigma

e. proverbs and sayings, specifically that which, following Cauvin (1976a, 1976b), we can call 'imaging' thought. A proverb is answered by a counterproverb, refuting the first in a contest of eloquence. Or the response can be a second saying that clarifies the meaning of the first one.

   This type of discourse is as restricted in its content as it is in its form. The content allows only known images without alteration or coining of new ones. The form allows only certain grammatical structures.

In addition to these two discourse types it seems there must be another type with fewer constraints. But we are not yet able to distinguish possible subcategories. Certain stylistic features would suggest a possible dichotomy between:

1. discourse centered on the speaker where he attempts above all to express himself:

   a. by placing himself in relation to events, facts, or people
   b. by asserting himself, his opinions or feelings, in relation to events, facts, people, or ideas
   c. by showing himself to advantage with narrations that fill out the meaning of an action, fact, or event

2. discourse centered on the addressee, where by means of persuasion, argumentation, information, or explanation, the speaker tries to influence another. It would seem then that he adapts the form of his discourse not only to the communication situation but also to the goal he is pursuing and to the kind of influence he wants to exert on the partici-

> pant(s). In some ways, this type of discourse would be more formal than the preceding one and would tend to approximate esthetic discourse.

We have not come to any conclusion concerning the phatic function of language in an African context. Does one talk for the sake of talking? To fill up the silence? The greatest care must be taken here, because only a native speaker can distinguish what is 'ritual' and what is 'social intercourse' in the phatic function of language. Value judgments are too delicate to be made by an outsider to the culture and society under study. However that may be, we do know that some topics that serve to keep French phatic discourse continuing would be considered 'ridiculous' in a traditional African context. 'We don't talk just to say that,' a language helper told us peremptorily. And, in effect, literally to 'talk about the weather' is hardly conceivable in a rural setting. It is either useful information concerning farming, in which case it is discussed in great detail, or it is not a topic of conversation at all. It is true that silence in an African society does not have the negative function that it exercises in European social relations. During a meeting, no one has to ramble on just because it would be impolite to be silent. Quite the opposite, silence is something positive. A child or an adolescent is severely reprimanded if he opens his mouth when no one has given him permission to speak by addressing him with a question. Silence appears as a mark of politeness and respect for others. The spoken word is sacred, and an adult who uses it thoughtlessly loses face.

We are aware of all the gaps in this brief outline. But it seems worthwhile to us to bring together some observations, which constitute a sort of plea for sociolinguistic research from within an African language. As an anthropologist, Ben G. Blount (1972:90) wrote:

> In societal descriptions, religion, kinship, economics and similar topics have their place and importance, but characterizations regarding daily life, how people interact socially on a day-to-day basis and how they view themselves in relation to one another and their society, are more readily forthcoming if one looks at their sociolinguistic systems.

NOTES

1 Cf. Fishman (1972:4) "Sociolinguistics is the study of the characteristics of language varieties, the characteristics of their functions and the characteristics of their speakers as these three constantly interact, change and change one another within a speech community."

2 "The large plantation owners of the rural zones are often descended from the chieftainry or are former merchants or government workers, and possess capital. They derive their wealth solely from their economic ties with the city, where decisions are made, products are distributed and replacement parts are sold" (Rivière 1975:299).

3 In the traditional African context communication channels are particularly restricted: voice transmitted directly or indirectly (telephone), tomtom, gesture, and fixed or animated image (television). Writing is rarely used for the transmission of a message in an African language.

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