Conflict Management, Gossip, and Affective Meaning on Nukulaelae

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This study is a study of the structure and content of talk about interpersonal conflict and its management on Nukulaelae, a Polynesian atoll of the Tuvalu group in the Central Pacific. The main goal of this paper is to outline an ethnography of Nukulaelae conflict and conflict management at the interpersonal level based on analysis of talk about conflict and conflict management. The following questions underlie this enterprise: What type of situation is recognized as an interpersonal conflict? Are interpersonal conflicts on Nukulaelae resolved or managed? How is this achieved? How do the ways in which conflicts are perceived and managed relate to ethnopsychological assumptions (Kirkpatrick and White 1985) according to which Nukulaelae Islanders interpret and evaluate each other’s behavior?

The method adopted here relies heavily on the microanalysis of talk about two conflict situations and their management. Through a detailed study of the strategies used to communicate affective meaning in talk about conflict, I attempt to discover the nature of the norms and cultural processes that come into play in conflict and its management on Nukulaelae.

This study develops as follows. The first section is a discussion of three sets of methodological assumptions that background this paper. Following this is a brief description of the setting of the situations under study. The next section situates the two conflict cases in a general description of conflict management on Nukulaelae from a broad ethnographic perspective. This is followed by the presentation of the conversational data, their analysis, and a discussion of the relationship of the macro-ethnographic analysis of conflict to the microanalysis of the conversational data.
questions of propriety and norm. Gossip, then, is a special case of the politics of language use in general (Myers and Brenneis 1984, Brenneis 1984). Haviland proposes that gossip is "a primary metacultural tool" (1977:170) through which cultural rules are manipulated.  

Through gossip people not only interpret the behavior of others, but also discover other people's interpretations; they can thus learn cultural rules at a distance. Through dialogue, gossip allows rules to change: it redefines the conditions of application for rules, thus keeping them up to date.  

Thus gossip, "at once text and native commentary on texts" (Keeseing 1974:93), is an invaluable context in which to study the ways in which individuals construct their cultural world. Gossip, furthermore, falls into the category of "ethnopsychological discourse" (Kirkpatrick and White 1985). As such, it is a primary source of data on folk theories which are the basis for explanations of, and inferences from, the behavior of others. It is worth mentioning here that this paper is one of the first attempts to analyze the microscopic structure of naturally occurring gossip data. Unlike most analyses of gossip in the literature, which are either based on nonlinguistic data or on elicited linguistic data, this paper is based on gossip data as it occurs in the culture in focus.  

My third assumption concerns the role of affective meaning in language. Irvine (1982), with others before her, recognizes three distinct, but mutually interactive, functional components to meaning: a referential (propositional) component, a social component, and an affective component (Lyons 1977:50 uses the terms "descriptive," "social," and "expressive"). The affective level is that through which speakers communicate feelings, moods, dispositions, and attitudes toward the propositional content of the message, the situation, the social context of the interaction, and so on. As pointed out by Ochs (1986), affective meaning pervades discourse, even where the general tone of the discourse is one of emotional detachment, as in, say, academic writing.  

The three levels of meaning are of course intimately interrelated. Affect may be lexicalized (i.e., communicated through lexical devices whose sole purpose is to encode affect); but it may also be encoded in the syntactic structure of an utterance alongside the referential functions of syntax. Affect communication, thus, is a multichannel phenomenon (Irvine 1982:38–39) intimately (often inextricably) intertwined with referential and social meaning.  

Clearly, the different channels through which affect may be communicated have different characteristics. An affective interjection such as "alas!" or "hurray!" communicates affect more clearly, less opaque, or, to borrow a term from functional grammar (Haiman 1980, 1983), more iconically than syntactic devices with equivalent meanings. This fact appears to hold for all languages and cultures. Thus, the choice of "strategies," "tactics" (Bailey 1983), "channels" (Irvine 1982), or "keys" (Goffman 1974) that speakers of a language are constantly faced with in communicating affective meaning is a loaded factor in and of itself (cf. Bakhtin 1980 on the importance of "the speaker's choice of a language"). For further discussion of language and affect in a Nukulaelae context, see Besnier (1989a).  

I have presented in this introduction three sets of assumptions about seemingly disparate questions, namely, the nature of conflict in the context of social order, the "meaning" of gossip, and the significance of affective meaning in verbal communication. These three notions will be interwoven in this discussion, in which correlations will be established between the speaker's choice of strategy in communicating affect in gossip about conflict and Nukulaelae ethnotheories of interpersonal conflict and conflict management.  

The Setting  

Nukulaelae is a small, isolated atoll of the Tuvalu group (formerly the Ellice Islands). Its population of 310 is predominantly Polynesian in origin, culture, and social organization, although it has received some influence from neighboring Micronesian Kiribati (formerly the Gilbert Islands).  

The population of Nukulaelae is concentrated on the islet of Fagaua, which bounds a circular lagoon to the west. The very small size of the islet (three-fourths of a mile long and 800 feet
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Daily life on Nukulaelae is characterized by a great deal of verbal interaction about other people’s behavior, which I shall refer to as gossip (see Besnier 1989b for further discussion). These interactions usually include statements on specific normative notions, such as what constitutes appropriate reactions to particular situations or appropriate conduct in particular settings. In these gossip events (the term “event” is used here as a particular case of Hymes’s 1974 notion of “speech event”), Nukulaelae Islanders betray a very strong prescriptive attitude toward other individuals’ behavior and an acute sense of ridicule.

The environment in which these interactions take place is carefully controlled. They may only occur between close relatives or within a circle of close “friends,” individuals who perform work and spend leisurely hours together. It is inappropriate to initiate gossip activities in the presence of individuals who do not fit this description. Gossip activities are thus marked as private events. Whether gossip may take place or not thus defines a private arena (to borrow Turner’s 1974 term), clearly distinguishable from a public arena. This public-private distinction is salient in Nukulaelae daily life. In the public arena, interpersonal interactions tend to be preceded and behavior essentially formulaic; spontaneity is associated principally with the private arena.

Attitudes toward gossip activities are ambivalent. While gossip is often condemned publicly as antisocial behavior, the same individuals who condemn it in the public arena often engage in gossip activities in appropriate circumstances. Gossip is a socially accepted activity as long as it is confined to the private arena. Individuals who are in the habit of engaging in gossip activities indiscriminately are strongly stigmatized (pona) as having “talking mouths” (gutu faiyati).

Cultural explanations for the inappropriateness of gossip activities in the public arena typically involve the fact that gossip often leads to interpersonal confrontations. Public confrontations and, more generally, the display of private (personal) identities in the public arena are seen as threats to the established social order. Responsible adults must maintain a state of mutual acceptance.
and general harmony (*fealofani* ‘to feel empathy for each other’, a term borrowed from Samoan) when interacting with each other and must avoid directly confrontative behavior as much as possible. Responsible adults should not let their emotions and internal states interfere with their social relationships and affect others. A responsible person is calm, unemotional, unaffected by the environment, and noninterfering. In contrast, a child or a mentally deviant individual (*fakavalevale*) is erratic and unpredictable, is driven by emotional reaction to the environment, and by attempts to interfere with social order so as to meet individual needs. Variants of the same ideology are found in other Polynesian societies, such as Samoa (Duranti 1984, this volume; Shore 1982), Tahiti (Levy 1973), and, in slightly different terms, the Marquesas (Kirkpatrick 1983).

A consequence of the avoidance of interpersonal disharmonies is the fact that the Nukulaelae social system is not well equipped to handle the interpersonal conflicts that do arise. In contrast to A’ara (White, this volume), Kwara’ae (Watson-Gegeo and Gegeo, this volume), and contemporary Hawaiian cultures (Boggs and Chun, this volume), all of which exhibit well-defined and highly specialized disentangling situations (*graupuatu*, *fa’amanata’anga*, and *ho’oponopono* respectively), Nukulaelae culture does not recognize a “disentangling” context to deal with interpersonal conflicts. There is no clearly recognized event exclusively associated with the resolution of interpersonal conflicts. These are managed rather than solved (cf. Lindstrom, this volume).

Feelings of anger, antagonism, and displeasure directed to another individual as a result of nonmanaged interpersonal conflict are viewed as potentially disruptive, particularly when the individuals involved belong to the same household (*kaaiga*) or broader kin group. The “bad heart” (*loto maasei*, a term used in line 06 of transcript B) that arises between relatives as the result of an inframinilial conflict is likely to affect the outcome of a fishing expedition, for example. Both the display and the harboring of antagonistic feelings are seen as negative and potentially harmful elements on Nukulaelae, as among the A’ara, Kwara’ae, and Hawaiians discussed elsewhere in this volume.

When the conflict is seen as serious, as in the case of theft or of physical wrong, and the interactants do not belong to the same kin group, they usually refer the situation to a Western-style court (*fono fakamasino*). The court is presided over by the island judge (*faamasino*), whose function is similar to that of a justice of the peace in American society. One person takes the other to the monthly court meeting (*ave ki te fono*), where both parties usually end up being lectured by the judge, quite severely at times, and ordered to pay fines and retributions. This type of conflict management will not be discussed in this paper.

Intrafamilial conflicts like the two conflict situations discussed below are kept as much as possible within the private arena. Chambers (1975) reports similar patterns from the northernmost island of Tuvalu, Nanumea. Her discussion stresses the importance of the public-private dimension in the management of conflict on Nanumea:

Relatives are expected not to quarrel with each other, though of course they do from time to time. Quarrels which do occur within an extended family are kept as quiet as possible, as most Nanumeans are reluctant to take a relative to court, even to secure right to land they believe should be theirs. Most of the public quarrels that do occur, however, involve relatives, and both relatives and non-relatives rush to the scene, the former to stop the fighting or to take sides, the latter to enjoy the show. There is little privacy, of course, and extended family groups do all they can to ‘avoid publicity’ in regard to their affairs (1975:43).

An intrafamilial conflict must be managed if it begins to affect other individuals or events not directly related to the conflict situation. Such is the case when individuals from outside the kin group become involved in the conflict or when a cause-and-effect relationship is established between the “bad heart” (*loto maasei*) harbored by an individual and an unfortunate event. Thus, a conflict is recognized as such only when it affects someone or something in the public arena. Only then will an attempt to manage the conflict be made. Thus, as on Santa Isabel (White, this volume), a conflict situation will be disentangled only if there is a specific reason to do so.

Conflict managements of this type usually take place as the individuals involved *faipati* fakai ‘talk thoroughly’ (see transcript A, line 22). This type of interaction is not exclusively associated
with conflict management; faipati 'to make word(s)' is the general term for any talk or conversation focused on a specific topic. This term contrasts with sauttala 'to chat', which refers to interactions not focused on a specific topic. The two transcripts on which this paper is based are of sauttala about faipati fakallei interactions.

The emphasis of conflict management through faipati fakallei is on the reestablishment of a harmonious front between the individuals involved (fealofani 'to feel empathy for each other') and on the fact that the conflict has not succeeded in affecting their reciprocal social identity in the public arena (this fact is stressed at several points in the transcribed narratives in transcripts A and B below). During the management talk, the conflict is typically declared to be off record as far as the relationship of the public identities of the interactants is concerned.

Conversational Transcripts

This section presents the two interpersonal conflict situations on which this discussion is based. Here I introduce the information necessary to contextualize the conversational transcripts on which the analysis is based.

The transcripts are of two spontaneous conversations about unrelated interpersonal conflict situations. These conversations take place between Kelisiano and Feue (Kelisiano's name will be abbreviated to K hereafter, and Feue's to F; all names are pseudonyms). Each of the situations had taken place a few days before. Both had involved K, a man in his forties. Unlike many men of his generation on Nukulaelae, he is not a matai (head of a kin group), because his father, a man of great influence on the island, still holds the position as the senior member of the kin group. K's interlocutor, F, is a matai in his early fifties and a distant cousin of K. F and K spend most of their leisure hours (taafao) together and are fishing partners. Their relationship is one of close friendship, in a pattern characteristic of the rather exclusive interpersonal bonds that Tuvaluans of all ages establish with each other.

Both conversations take place in the storage hut behind F's kin group's kitchen hut. In both situations, F, K, and I had just returned from our daily fishing expedition. The setting is private and very relaxed. The conversation touched on a wide variety of topics, from the most trivial to the most scandalous. The transcripts presented in transcripts A and B are part of a much longer conversation. Topic shifts are usually marked by long pauses (up to twenty minutes of silence) or may be forced by a third party's arrival within earshot. These two interactions are prototypical examples of the casual conversations (sauttala) that occupy an important part of every Nukulaelae Islander's everyday life.

The interactors in the gossip sessions were not aware that their conversation was tape-recorded, but subsequently gave me permission to use the recordings for research. The two interactions were recorded in the general framework of a sociolinguistic study of conversational discourse on Nukulaelae. The story line of the first interaction (transcript A) reads as follows: Luisa, a young woman married to an important member of the community, finds out that several of her banana trees have been chopped down. She knows that K had worked in the vicinity of those trees on the same day and accuses him of having chopped them down, which he has no right to do since he does not belong to same kin group. In fact, the culprits are Maataio and Tito, who belong to Luisa's kai tasi (group of land-owning households) and thus have the right to destroy the trees. Fearing a direct confrontation with K, Luisa goes to an influential member of the community, Saamasone, with the request that K be punished by being barred from taking communion the following Sunday. Timooteo mentions the request to K, who then seeks Luisa. In the meantime, Luisa had learned that her original accusation was false. When she finally meets K at Olataga, a small settlement on an islet across the lagoon from Fagaua, she apologizes to him for her rash conduct.

The second interaction (transcript B) concerns a conflict involving K and a close female relative of his, Saaavae. The conflict takes place in the wake of K's daughter's wedding, which was to involve, like all weddings on Nukulaelae, many days of feasting and entertainment, in which the entire island community participates, and considerable labor (fishing, gardening) and money to purchase rice, kerosene, and other imported goods from the island store. To help with the expenses, relatives of K working on Nauru (a phosphate-producing island in the Central Pacific, on
which small contingents of Tuvaluans are employed as temporary workers) had wired a $150 money order. The money was clearly intended for the fakalavelave 'family event', but was addressed to three people who are closely related to the four senders. One of them is K's father's classificatory sister Saava, who took it upon herself to pick the money up from the telegraph office and to divide it up among the three recipients, including $50 for her own use. She is confronted by her own relatives and is made to return half of the money to K. This forces her to confront K, who subtly ridicules her; she then blames the senders for not having made clear that the money was communal.

Analysis

In this section, the gossip narratives transcribed in the appendix are analyzed with respect to five affective strategies. Patterns are sought in the ways affect is communicated in the gossip session about the two conflict situations. As will be seen, the gossipper uses specific channels to communicate his attitudes and emotions, all of which are characteristically low in iconicity.

**Informational Structure of the Narratives**

Two analytic components to the narratives can be distinguished, as is traditionally done in the literature on discourse structure (Labov and Fanshel 1977, for example): a main story line, what Grimes (1975) calls the "event"; and background materials, comments, and details (or "collateral information"). These two components are interwoven in the conversation, with the hinges easily identifiable. Among other things, the linguistic devices used in marking these hinges change the "footing" (Goffman 1981) of the interaction.

Prosody is the linguistic level at which these changes are most commonly marked. Several examples from the first transcript will serve to illustrate. For instance, an increase in voice intensity (italicized in the free English translation) marks a shift from main story line to background material:9

**TRANSCRIPT A**

15 *Aku muna tiaa, ((laughs)) (2.0) my words hey! I said, "come on, am I crazy or what?"
   * A ko au ne i e. (0.6) e(i) and Foc 1 this Nps
   he tino fakalavelave? (0.6) a person crazy

16 *E TONU laa i Nps true then that au ne sseu i koo. (6.0) I PST hoe at there
   It is true that I gardened in that area. [...] *

Similarly, a change in both tempo and pitch accompanies a turn from a set of collateral remarks to the main event line in the following excerpt:

20 [... ] ko Timooteo e: [ ... ] while Timooteo's
   Foc Timooteo Nps
   nafot ki luga. [banana trees] are up above
   stay to top [on the edge of the garden pit].

21 ((high pitch, fast)) (Ak)u muna i:ot my words yes I said, "all right!"

Nonprosodic devices include changes from direct to reported speech and vice versa, as in lines 36–37 and 39–40.

36 *Au ne toe logo fakamuli ake fua I PST just hear recently then just
   I said just hear recently then just "I heard [the truth] just recently."

37 ((louder)) Peela ko te o-like Foc the
   tena osatiiga [ ... ]
   her attack So that when she got upset, [ ... ]

39 *Logo au kaiga mo ko:: (0.3) ko hear I why? that Foc
   Tito eioa mo Maataio Tito indeed and Maataio
   But more recently, what do I hear? that Tito and Maataio were the ones that [chopped down those trees] [...]


kolaa ne hai nee laaau a:: (3.0)
those Pst do Erg they-2 Cnt

40 Muna mai. Koo heeai- hee:qi he
words Dxs Inc Neg Neg a
mea e: (0.7) onosai e:i:-
thing Nps rancor Anp

(Shesays to me, "there is
nothing, no rancor between
us any more"

Shifts from and to reported speech often interact with turn
changes in the gossip session itself; in the following examples, K
ends his turn with a reported string, and F begins a new turn with
a nonreported string which initiates a clarification (side-com-
ment) sequence:

(TRANSCRIPT A)
41 K: (M)una: a:u, (0.7) fakatau
say 1 exchange
fakamanagalo nei taaaua.
forgive now we-2
((laughter, 1.8))

42 F: (Tee)laa heeai he (t)- koe e:
thus Neg a you Nps
hai mo: (ko) too
say that Foc the+garden
futi o: totoaina. ((laughter))
banana of the+old-man

K: I say, "let us forgive each
other now."

F: So that there is no-...
You should have said that
[you were leaving] the
banana plantation for
[her] old man!

(TRANSCRIPT B)
11 K: Aku muna, ka: ne aa
my words but some what?
laa tsoo pati e hai,
then our-3 words Nps say
((falsetto)) mo koo oti laa ne
because Prf then
vaee vae nee: (0.3) Saavave,
divide divide Erg Saavave

K: I said: "what are we doing
[standing here and] talking
about this, the money has
already been split up
between us by Saavave [of
her own accord]..."

Note that most of the main story line is in the form of directly
reported speech. The story, in essence, is told in the form of a
dialog. What K is performing is what Bakhtin (1978) and others
have called "dialoging." I shall return presently to the significance
of this strategy.

Having established the distinction between main and collateral
information, I shall now turn to the distribution of affective
meaning among these two components. More specifically, I shall
focus on where and how K communicates negative affect (con-
demnation, ridicule, annoyance, and the like) in his account of
the conflict and its management.

The first significant fact to be noted is that K avoids issuing any
overt value judgments on, or condemnations of, his opponents in
the two conflict situations he describes. This is particularly true of
the collateral part of his narrative. At no stage in the course of the
long search of collateral discourse quoted in lines 16–18 of tran-
script A does he state an opinion on the situation described:

16 E TONU laa i a:u ne sseu
Nps true then that I Pst hoe
i koo (1.5)
at there

17 a ko futi kolaa ne hai
but Foc banana those Pst do
eiloa n(ee) Maataio mo:: (0.9)
indeed Erg Maataio and
mo Tito (2.3)
and Tito

18 I a:u hoki eiloa maofaufa
because I also indeed think
that I also thought [as I was
gardening] about– that

But those banana trees were
[cut down] by Maataio and
Tito.

It is true that I gardened
in that area

because l also indeed think
that
peenaa ki:: (0.7) me io
thus about that belong-to
laatou a: futi nee?
hey Cnt banana Tag

those banana trees were
theirs, right?

19 He:ki ai eiloa heaku futi
Neg Anp indeed my banana
ne:: (1.0)
Pst

So I didn’t [chop down] any
banana tree–

20 ne mea i- a ko:
Pst thing at and Foc
futi kolaa ne:: (0.8) ne: laga
banana those Pst Pst drag
eiloa nee au keaate:(a) e
indeed Erg 1 away Nps
io t- Timooteo, (1.1) mo
belong-to Timooteo because
ko olotou futi e tai
Foc their-3 banana Nps almost
ttuu ki lalo ko Timooteo e::
stand to bottom Foc Timooteo
e:: nofo ki luga.
Nps stay to above

The [chopped-down]
banana trees that I dragged
to the side are Timooteo’s;
their [Luisa’s] are down
below [in the garden pit],
while Timooteo’s are up
above [on the edge of the
garden pit].

In contrast, F intersperses K’s narrative with short turns (essentially, verbal “engagement displays”—Goodwin 1981) whose affective meaning is negative in regard to evaluation of the reported events. In line 23 of transcript A, for instance, F punctuates the end of part of K’s narrative with a heavily affect-laden interjection:

23 F: Ttaahht! =
Exc
[Scandalized] That’s outrageous!

In the examples below from transcript B, F is more explicit in his evaluative judgment of K’s opponent and makes a highly normative set of remarks, after which K expresses agreement:

12 F: ((mid-high pitch, falling)) Te
    mea teelao secai sena mea
    thing that Neg her thing
    a ia me se mea //
    of her because a thing
    (i te) fakalave // = // lave ne
    for the family-event Pst
    aumai // loa // kiaa koe.
    send indeed to you

13 K: // Peelaq nee? // // mm! //
    thus Tag Exc
    K: That’s it, right? Hmm!

42 F: [. . .] Te tonuga lo: laa
    the truth indeed then
    te mea laa teenaa see
    the thing then that Neg
    tuku fua kiaa Saavave kae::
    give just to Saavave but
    ttau eiloa o peeofu Kelisiano
    must indeed Cmp pay Kelisiano
    me:: ne aumai ki te
    because Pst send for the
    fakalavelave nee? =
    family-event Tag

43 F: = Mm.
Exc.
K: Hmm.

In several instances, K appears to be about to issue an abstract evaluative judgment on his opponent, an explicit indication of how F is to evaluate matters. In each instance, however, he stops short and replaces the evaluative remark with a conversational device that I have elsewhere called the “three-dot phenomenon” (Besnier 1982); that is, information whose sharedness among the participants in a conversation is assumed and thus need not be stated overtly (see Cicourel 1972 for a discussion of the “unspoken elements” of a social interaction). In line 36 of transcript B, the “three-dot phenomenon” is realized as a chuckle and the
noncompletion of a turn, both at the phonological and syntactic levels:

36 Aku muna koo atuli ciolo a my words Inc chase indeed Cnt ia n(ee) thenahhh ((chuckles)) she Erg her

I figured she got chased out by her ((chuckles)) [i.e., by her family, for having done something wrong).

The only overtly prescriptive pronouncements that K utters are statements through which he establishes his own credibility. Significantly, these are part of the narrative itself, not side comments addressed to I, and they are clearly framed as reported-speech strings; observe, for example, the following two excerpts from transcript A:

15 Aku muna ttoo, ((laughs)) (2.0) my words hey! A ko au nei e- (0.6) ei(i) and Foc I this Nps he tino fakavaveule? (0.7) a person crazy

I said, “come on, am I crazy or what?”

31 Kiloko, (2.2) au he tino ciolo- you-see I a person indeed E ILOA LLEI faeloa née au Nps know well constantly Erg I peela t: (2.0) i luga i oku thus the from my tofi, (1.1) i te mea koa social-position on the thing irr hai née au peela a hee llei. (0.8) do Erg I like Neg good

“You see, I am a man who always knows, like, given my social position, [who always knows] whether what I do is [right or] wrong.

32 Kae iolo née au a futi a and know Erg I Cnt banana Cnt koutou. you-3

And I [also] know which banana trees are yours.”

Furthermore, the credibility-establishing sequence of line 15 is worded as a rhetorical question (“Am I crazy?”), and that of lines 31–32 includes a phrase (i luga i oku tofi ‘from the perspective of my social duties/position’) which, inserted at the beginning of the quoted turn, stresses the socially recognized and nonnegotiable nature of K’s credibility.

The rhetorical strategy of K’s discourse is clear: had credibility-establishing statements been included in the collateral part of the narrative and hence directly addressed to I, his audience might have inferred that K needed to establish credibility in this context. As part of the quoted narrative line, and with the support of the two rhetorical devices noted in the previous paragraph, the only possible inference is that K needs to establish his credibility only for the sake of faithfully reporting his verbal interaction with his two opponents. K’s “assertive rhetoric” (Bailey 1983) is devastatingly powerful.

Prosodic Structure

When K reports his own portion of dialogs, his soft and unexcited prosodic patterns are geared to convey the impression of calm, thoughtfulness, and level-headedness, as in his response to the initial accusation in transcript A:

13 ((mid-high pitch, whisper)) Io? (0.4) “Oh? And why?”

yes

I te aa?

why?

21 ((high pitch, fast)) (Ak)u muna my words i:ō! I said, “all right!”

yes

K’s own reported discourse is characterized by relatively long conversational turns and complex sentence structures uninterrupted by pauses. This is particularly clear in the straightening-out sequence with Luisa.

27 Aku muna Luisa, lle:i, (0.3) I said, “Luisa, good [I am my speech Luisa good glad we are running into
each other], because I very much wanted to meet you on Fagaua but the thing is that you had come over here to Olataga.

I just wanted to talk to you about, like, your complaint that I heard about through Samasone.

K's self-reported discourse thus has many features characteristic of planned discourse (Ochs 1979). The production of spontaneous discourse with planned characteristics is a skill associated with public speaking, which is performed exclusively by senior male members of the community. K's use of planned features in his self-reported turns associates his role in the reported conversation with the social attributes of the most responsible and powerful members of the community.

In contrast, when reporting his opponent's turns, K conveys the impression of an erratic, emotional, unpredictable individual through the use of short stretches of repetitive, choppy discourse, as in lines 29-30 and 40 of transcript A and line 29, transcript B:

[continuation from 28 above]

(2.2) ((high pitch)) Muna mai io, say Dxs yes

((fast)) io- io! ((laughter))

yes

30 (Muna)hh a tou fafi(me)! That's what she said, the say Cnt your woman woman!

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40 Muna mai. Koo hecai- HEE:ai he: [She] says to me, "There is no harbored feeling between us any more.

say Dxs Inc Neg Neg a thing Nps harbor-feelings Anp

mea e: (0.7) monai ei-

((mid-high pitch)) e ssee eiloa Nps wrong indeed

ko: ko lanutou.

Foc Foc they-3

K's communicative intent may be analyzed in the light of the Davitz's (1964) model of affective meaning. Focusing on the subjective perception of affect in discourse, Davitz notes a strong correlation between what is perceived as passive feelings and low pitch, soft voice, and a slow rate of speech; in contrast, subjectively active feelings are associated with high pitch, flaring timbre, and a fast rate of speech.

K exploits these correlations in conjunction with one of the most salient characteristics of dialoging: the fact that, through reported speech, "I can appropriate meaning to my purpose [ . . . ] by ventriloquing others" (Holquist 1983:4; emphasis added). K presents himself as emotionally self-controlled, a characteristic equated with maturity on Nukulaelae, as pointed out above. In contrast, K presents Luisa and Saavave, his two opponents, as erratic speakers, lacking self-control, and, hence, immature.

Word Choice and Syntactic Structure

Two of the most covert and most effective channels for encoding affect are word choice and syntactic structure. The affective component of these two channels is covert because the primary function of words and syntax is the communication of referential meaning. Affect is always present in description, whether of a high or low degree of iconicity. The overlaying of affective mean-
ing in the lexical and syntactic structure of discourse is a tactic that involves what Bateson terms “camouflage” (1972:414).

Next, I shall investigate the affective use of three classes of lexical and syntactic strategies: the marking of syntactic and pragmatic role within the clause; nominal reference; and emphatic and moderating adverbs. (This list by no means exhausts the affective exploitations of lexical and syntactic choice in the two transcripts.)

As described in Besnier (1986), much pragmatic information is encoded in the syntactic structure of a Tuvaluan sentence. The many possible word-order variations, for example, are distinguished from each other by the relative pragmatic salience of the nominal constituents of the sentence and by the semantics of the different case-marking patterns associated with each word-order combination.

One of the main features of this system is the fact that fine distinctions can be made in the degree of agentivity of the subject of the clause (i.e., the degree of responsibility of the agent in the action or state described by the verb). In lines 30–31 of transcript A, quoted above, for example, the ergative case-marker nee denotes high agentivity (Besnier 1986). Its use stresses the high degree of involvement of the agent in the action described. Note that this case-marker is used three times in the same short stretch of reported speech; in each case, the subject is a first-person singular pronoun. The case-marking strategy used in this stretch of discourse stresses the high degree of responsibility of the narrator in the situation described.

Similarly, in Nukulaelae Tuvaluan, the recipient nature of an indirect object may be emphasized through the use of the deictic adverb atu ‘toward the recipient’. This contrasts with the marking of indirect objecthood through overt expression of the noun phrase without the adverb and through presence of the adverb without an indirect object. K uses the “emphatic” syntactic strategy in line 28 of transcript A, where both the adverb atu and the indirect object kiaa koe are present:

28 Ko au fua e faipati atu
Foc I just Nps speak Dxs
kiaa koe ki luga i te: (0.3)
to you about the

"Let me just talk to you about the; like, the complaint that Samasone told me about."

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peelau mo tau: fekau ne avatu
like your message Pst transmit
nee Samasone.
Erg Samasone

Not surprisingly, the subject of this clause refers to K, and the indirect object to Luisa, K’s opponent. This strategy emphasizes the recipient (and, thus, powerless) position in which Luisa finds herself in the reported interaction.

Nominal reference in Tuvaluan may be expressed in a variety of ways, including zero-anaphora, the least “informational” (i.e., the least definite, the most opaque, and potentially the most ambiguous) referential strategy available (Besnier 1985). K makes frequent use of this referential strategy when talking about his opponents, as in the examples below from transcripts A and B:

(TRANSCRIPT A)
25 (high pitch) au naa e vau
1 then Nps come
i te: (0.3) fale o: Elekana
at the house of Elekana
mo Manatu- (high pitch) e nofo
and Manatu Nps stay
atu i el!
Dxs at Anp

(TRANSCRIPT B)
33 Tuku mai te: (high pitch) mea,
hand Dxs the thing
mea, ffuli mai (eiloa) ttua:
thing turn Dxs indeed the +back
koo hano
Inc go

In several instances, the same individuals are referred to by full noun phrases, but K chooses a descriptive noun phrase, tou fafine ‘your woman’, instead of a proper name. This is illustrated in lines 29–30 of transcript A and in lines 16–18 of transcript B below. This expression, which is often used in Nukulaelae gossip along
with its equivalent tou tagata ‘your man’, has clearly sarcastic undertones.

16 Fakaloa au nei ((chuckling)) ki hear I here to te mea a loopu e fai mai the thing of loopua Nps say Dxs kiaa Saavave, (2.0) galo aka to Saavave disappear then I overheard what loopu told Saavave, 

17 (2.0) galo aka tou jafine, disappear then your woman then the woman [Saavave] disappeared.

18 maaua laa mo Lusi e liga we-2 the with Lusi Nps weave pola i tena paa, koo vau baskets at his coop line come tou- tou jafine your woman tou- tou jafine. [Saavave] came by.

Note also the reference made by F to Luisa’s husband as te tociina ‘the old man’ in line 42 of the first transcript. This term, which usually has a neutral connotation, is used sarcastically here, in that Luisa’s husband is neither of an age nor of a social position to be called a tociina ‘elder, old man’.

The connotation of K’s consistent use of referential expressions low in informativeness when talking about his opponents is that, for him, these can be described, like nonhuman entities, with nonproper noun phrases. The general affective perlocution is thus unmistakably negative.

K’s use of adverbials is also striking. When reporting his own turns, he uses in several instances emphatic adverbs: eiloa, loa ‘indeed [etc.]’, faeloa ‘always, constantly’, and llei ‘well, very much’. An example of this occurs in transcript A at the beginning of his report of his straightening-out conversation with Luisa:

27 Aku muna Luisa, (2.0) llei, […] I said, “Luisa, good, […]” my words Luisa good

Other examples occur a little later in the same conversation:

31 Au he tino eiloa E ILOA 1 a person indeed Nps know LLEI faeloa nee au peelaat te:: well always Erg I like the (2.0) i luga i oku tofi, (1.1) from my social-position i te mea kaa hai nee au on the thing irr do Erg I peelaat hee llei. (0.8) like Neg good

33 Tee(l)aa laa ((mid-high pitch)) thus HEEgi eiloa he futi o: koutou Neg indeed a banana of you-3 ne:: n- Pst Pst Pst

“‘I am a man who always knows, like, given my social position, [who always knows] whether what I do is [right or] wrong.”

“So, I did not [chop down] a single banana tree of yours.”

Besides their referential function as markers of emphasis, these adverbs convey the impression of a determined and self-assured speaker, precisely the presentation of self (Goffman 1959) K strives for through his narrative.

In the same manner, K reports Samasone’s original overture by including the moderating adverb hua ‘just, only’, which serves as a dampener on the initial secondhand accusation. This accusation, incidentally, is worded more as a piece of transmitted information than an accusation, thus already putting into question Luisa’s credibility as the initiator of the accusation:

12 ((whisper)) au e ssili atu hua “I just want to ask you I Nps ask Dxs just kia koe i te:: (1.8) feka to you about the message nei a: Luisa ne hai mai […] this of Luisa Pst say Dxs

K presents himself as being on the same footing as Samasone,
who is, as stated earlier, an influential member of the community.

The picture is clear: through subtle lexical and syntactic choices that appear to be dictated by referential considerations, K manages to present himself as having characteristics of a mature and responsible personality. In contrast, the lexical and syntactic descriptions of his opponents' actions and speech are charged with negative affect.\footnote{Conversational Structure of the Reported Interactions}

Conversation analysts have shown that interactors organize their conversations to reflect the relative social power between them (much of the research on this topic is based on data from intergender conversation: West and Zimmerman 1983, Leet-Peligrini 1980, for example). Conversation opening, topic changes, and pair-part initiation, for instance, are predominantly controlled by the interactant with greater power or greater access to interpersonal control. This fact appears to be universal.

Significantly, the reported dialogs that form part of K's narrative have many of the features of an interaction between unequals. K attributes to his own reported turns a number of features of the speech of dominant conversationalists and presents his interactors' turns as those of subordinate interactors.\footnote{In the first transcript, he is the one who opens the reported interactions with his opponents, as in lines 26-27, which is the beginning of the straightening-out dialog with Luisa:}

26  *Maa toun mo Ulii mo Paka. (0.3)  I was with Uili and Paka.*
we-3  with Uili and Paka

27  *Aku muna Luisa, llei, [ . . . ]  I said, "Luisa, good, [ . . . ]."*
my  words Luisa good

Similarly, his last interaction with Saavave in the second transcript begins with a question-answer "adjacency pair" (Schegloff and Sacks 1973), whose first part, again, K utters:

19  *Ia! (1.6) Aku muna, he aah? (1.0)  "Yes," I said "what is it?"*
Exc  my words a what?

Lastly, in transcript A, it is K who initiates the "forgiveness" sequence. He uses a reciprocal clause, indicating that forgiveness is to be "exchanged" rather than addressed to him alone. This is an illustration of what Bailey calls a "rhetoric of compromise" tactic (1983:144–77):

41  *(M)una: au, (0.7) fakatau  I said: "let us forgive*
say  exchange
fakamaaga  nei  taaaua.
now  now-2
((laughter, 1.8))

This short analysis of the structure of the verbal interactions between K and his two opponents as K reports them shows again that, through the covert communication of affect, K presents himself in the narratives as a powerful, self-controlled, and, generally speaking, empathy-worthy individual.

*Laughter*

Finally, K punctuates his narratives with laughter and chuckles in what appears to be a highly systematic fashion, the purpose of which is the communication of an affective meaning congruent with that conveyed by the other factors reviewed in this section.

Many authors have stressed the extreme polysemy of laughter (Apte 1985; Chapman and Foot 1976, for example), a fact that cultural actors are well aware of (as witnessed by the rich conceptions of laughter types found in many cultures). While it is often difficult (if not impossible) to attribute a specific meaning to laughter where it occurs, the very presence of laughter may be interpreted as a significant factor (Besnier 1983a). In particular, affect communication is recognized as the most salient function of laughter.

K both laughs and invites laughter (Jefferson 1979) in two
types of contexts. In one, laughter punctuates a self-reported turn in which he is forced by the conflict situation to issue a face-threatening statement. In line 41 above, for example, K is placed in the face-threatening position (both for him and, in particular, for his opponent) of having to initiate a forgiveness sequence. In the example below (first transcript), he is forced to save his own face in the reported dialog by asking a rhetorical question bearing on his sanity and social behavior:

15 Aku muna tta, ((laughter)) (2.0) I said, "come on, am I crazy my words hey!
   A ko au nei e- (0.6) e(i)
   and Foc l this Nps
   he tino fakavaleva? (0.7)
   a person

In both examples, laughter appears to invite an appreciation of the ridiculous nature of the whole situation Luisa created between them.

The second context type is more transparent. K laughs and invites laughter when reporting an opponent's turns or when describing an opponent's actions as illustrated in examples from both transcripts:

(TRANSCRIPT A)

29 ((high pitch)) Muna mai io-, say Dxs yes

30 ((laughter)) (Muna)hh a tou say Cnt your
   fafi(ne)!
   woman

(TRANSCRIPT B)

36 Aku muna koo atuli elloa a my words Inc chase indeed Cnt
   ia n(ee) thenahhh ((chuckles))
   she Erg her

I figured she got chased out by her [family, for having done something wrong].

In both contextual types, laughter is used as a channel to communicate negative affect. The target is either the conflict situation in general, which, in both cases, was initiated by the other party, or K's opponent.

Discussion

In this analysis I have examined types of affective meaning filtered through five different channels in conversations about two conflict situations. In the following discussion, I bring together the patterns observed in the conversational data with the more general ethnographic description given previously.

How does the channeling of affective meaning reflect the cultural ideologies that come into play in interpersonal conflicts and their management? In this enterprise is rooted the notion that a gossiper is "a complex filtering mechanism" (Haviland 1977:61). In other words, how the gossiper exploits rhetoric (in the broadest sense of the term) for "the conscious manipulation in a covert way of the feelings and sentiments of others" (Bailey 1983:24) is intrinsically interdependent with what a conflict situation represents in the culture in question.

It is important to note, first of all, that the gossiper's rhetorical manipulations are not limited to his audience in the two situations under study. In addition to K's obvious intent to have F believe him and side with him in the two gossip sessions, K also manipulates the presentation of self of his two opponents. Thus, as is the case in dialoging in general (Bakhtin 1978, 1980), K juggles between two contexts of reference: that of the ongoing conversation and that of the reported conversation. Through talk about his two opponents' actions, K modifies at will the nature of their positional identities (or social selves). He is also more or less in control of his audience's affective relationship toward the reported events and its protagonist. The two gossip situations under study are thus prime illustrations of the ways in which reality may be actively negotiated through talk.

The main conclusion that transpires through the analysis of the conversational data is the fact that K carefully avoids issuing any overt judgment on his opponent in the two conflict situations or on the conflicts themselves. Instead, from the beginning of the
gossip sessions, he appears to take for granted the fact that his opponents have presented themselves in a clearly negative light. He then further reinforces this fact through covert affective devices or subtly manipulates his audience (which is only too willing to cooperate) to voice the judgments and articulate the norms at play. Bailey's (1983:223-24) remark that the effects of rhetoric are neutralized once detected as rhetoric is pertinent here. K's rhetorical strategy is to communicate his own feelings and attitudes through covert communicative channels that are low in iconicity. These covert communicative channels are also minimally marked for evidentiality, in that the author of the discourse may not readily be held accountable for the affect communicated in his discourse (Besnier 1983b).

Through the use of these covert affective channels, the presentation of self for the different protagonists of the two incidents is, on the one hand, one of poise, calm, and controlled demeanor for K himself and, on the other hand, one characterized by irrationality, unpredictability, and lack of self-control for his two opponents. As pointed out in the ethnographic characterization of conflict and conflict resolution developed earlier, a responsible adult (i.e., an individual in control of his emotions) does not, by definition, allow interpersonal stirs to reach a level at which they must be managed. Such an individual keeps his private self in the private arena and places above all other concerns the maintenance of harmony (fealofani) in interpersonal relationships in the public arena. In contrast, an irrational, irresponsible, and unpredictable (fakavalevate) individual will let emotions surface and affect events and other individuals. Such an individual fails to recognize the boundary between the private and the public as a fundamental cultural fact.

This is precisely one of the recurrent themes in the two gossip sessions. By initiating the two conflict situations, K's opponents fail to exhibit the interpersonal decorum necessary for the maintenance of fealofani in the public arena. What the disentangling conversations must achieve is the reestablishment of this decorum, which is achieved by declaring the conflict situations as being off record in the public arena.

Conclusion

This study has investigated the common grounds among three areas of inquiry: cultural notions of interpersonal conflicts and their management on Nukulaelae; the role of gossip as data and as a tool for the manipulation of norms; and the communication of affect in verbal interactions. The starting point for this analysis was a characterization of conflict and of the ways in which conflict is managed on Nukulaelae. Relevant to this endeavor is the question of what can be learned about conflict and conflict management from the ways in which they are represented verbally by one Nukulaelae Islander to another. More specifically, I have addressed the role of affect in such a representation.

It was found that attitudes toward interpersonal conflict situations and the cultural processes that come into play in conflict management can be identified through a detailed analysis of conversational interactions about conflict and conflict management. The choice of affective strategies used in such interactions "betray" the norms and processes associated with conflict and conflict management in Nukulaelae. These findings stress the potential importance as ethnographic data of cultural actors' narrative efforts to represent events. Indeed, as shown in this study, the cultural perception and evaluation of a situation, of an individual's behavior, and of the characterization of a cultural event such as conflict are intimately dependent on the ways in which these are verbally represented.

Finally, this study is a contribution to our understanding of the potential disjunction (cf. Ervin-Tripp 1972) of affective and referential meanings. Affective meaning is often opaque and low in iconicity in discourse (compared to referential meaning). This study identifies why and how Nukulaelae Tuvaluans exploit this characteristic of affect to "hide" the gossipers' covert rhetorical manipulation of an audience.
Notes

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1. In the context of this view, the notion of norm sharedness is problematic. Wallace's (1961) theory that norms are "owned" by the individual and not defined by the group is more in harmony with the hypotheses expressed above.

2. The functional account of gossip as a device that defines and maintains group membership, originally proposed by Gluckman (1963), is not at variance with the views expressed here.

3. This view underlies Firth's (1967) functional study of what he terms "rumour" on Tikopia.

4. Irvine (1979) cautions against taking the public-private dimension as a unified and dichotomous descriptive tool in the characterization of communicative events. The terms public and private are used here as labels for two types of communicative event that appear to be socially real for Nukualaeae Islanders. They are primarily defined in terms of setting (home vs. maneapa 'meeting house') and participation (within and without the kin group). The distinction is not claimed to be a valid comparative tool.

5. The same expression is used to refer to individuals who are in the habit of committing blunders, such as cracking risque jokes in the presence of individuals who are in an avoidance relationship to each other (fakamatalu).

6. Local theories on the exact nature of the cause-and-effect relationship between the conflict and such unfortunate events are, however, never clearly articulated.

7. Some of the background details will be kept as vague as possible, as more detailed descriptions would betray the identity of the concerned individuals. A rather large number of individuals are named in the two transcripts; only the individuals with major roles in the two conflict situations are introduced here.

8. Chopping down banana trees has interesting connotations. It is a serious crime on Nukualaeae, not only because bananas, which grow slowly and painfully on coral atolls, are a prized food, but also because chopping them down is an activity that individuals perform in a mood-like fits of rage, which are classified under the rubric of fakavalevale 'demented, inappropriate' behavior on Nukualaeae (see Noricks 1981 for a discussion of fakavalevale on Nuiea, an island of Northern Tuvalu). While the situation reported by K does not involve an accusation of such behavior, this important connotation is worth noting.

9. Transcriptions quoted as examples combine the Tuvaluan orthography devised in Besnier (1981) and the ethnomethodological transcription conventions summarized in the appendix, which also lists the abbreviations used in interlinear glosses. The translation attempts to recreate the general flavor of the conversation and at times deviates from the literal meaning of the Tuvaluan original. To ease the comprehension of certain passages, additional information in the translation is provided in single brackets (such as, for example, at turn transitions in reported dialogs, which are signaled in the Tuvaluan dialog solely by intonation). The two transcripts in the appendix are less detailed than the passages quoted in the paper. Pauses, intonation contours, and voice quality are not marked in these two transcripts. The marking of overlaps and latching, however, has been kept.

10. Other lexical strategies confirm this evaluation, such as, for example, the sarcastic use of the two verbs of motion tete 'to run' in line A:27 and ffullu tauda 'to turn one's heels [lit.: one's back]' in line B:33 to refer to Lousa's and Saavave's movements respectively.

11. It is of course the case that both reported interactions are cross-gender interactions. Other reported conversations in my corpus of gossip data, however, confirm that Nukualaeae gossipers often use the same dominant–subordinate features in the reporting of conversations between same-gender interactors.

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Appendix

Abbreviations

1. Transcription Conventions
   (1.2) length of significant pause in seconds
   word abrupt cut-off
   word forte volume
   WORD fortissimo volume
   hhh exhalation
   .hhh inhalation
   wo:rd non-phonemic segment gemination
   ? rising pitch (not necessarily in a question)
   . slightly rising pitch
   . falling pitch (not always at the end of a sentence)
   ! animated tempo
   = turn latching
   // beginning and end of turn overlap
   ((text)) information for which a symbol is not available
   ((high)) dominant pitch level of utterance string
   ((cranky)) voice quality
   ( ) incoherent string
   (word) conjectured string

2. Interlinear Morphological Glosses
   Art article
   Ben benefactive conjunction
   Cmp complementizer
   Cnt contrastive marker
   Dxs deictic adverb
   Erg ergative case
   Nps non-past
   Prc precautionary
   Prf perfective
   Pst past
   Sbj subjunctive conjunction
   Spc specific
Transcript A

KELISIANO
01 Anuahi eiloa nei faatoaoa fetaui eiloa moaaua mo Luisa.
    Luisa and I finally met just yesterday.

FEUE
02 I hee? =
    Where?

KELISIANO
03 I:: Teelaa // loa i Olataga. // =
    At- over there, on Olataga.

FEUE
04 // I:: Olataga? //
    O:: Olataga?

KELISIANO
05 A ko te mea laa ne: fet- e: hai mai a Samasone, kia aku, koo oti ne
    hano- koo oti ne fano ki Olataga.
    The thing is that we met... Samasone had told me that she
    had gone to Olataga.

FEUE
06 I te aa: loa?
    What for?

KELISIANO
07 I au nua e tipa atu i suaa taeao- te as(o)saa, au e hano o koukou i
    tua, nei fuai.
    (not answering directly) I was walking along the other morning
    on Sunday, I was going to take a bath in the ocean, just recently!
08 Te assaa teelaa ne hai e i te matauupu kiaa Timooteo mo: Teke?
    (remember) that Sunday on we talked about which Timooteo
    and Teke?
09 A ko te suau assaa.
    Well, the following Sunday.

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10 Io oot teenai te asaa eiloa teenaua!
    Yes, that was it! that very Sunday!
11 Hanatu naa au-, i au e sae atu i te fale o: Timooteo i te feituu ki
    tua, a koo fakafetaui ifo Samasone au.
    I was going along-, and then came behind Timooteo's house, and
    (that's where) Samasone came down to meet me.
12 sss! Au e sili atu hia kia koe i te:: fekau nei a: Luisa ne hai mai
    kee taoaf kow i te:: te faamanatuga.
    Hey! (he said:) I just want to ask you about Luisa's request that
    you should be prevented from (taking) communion.
13 Io? I te aa?
    (I said:) Oh? And why?
14 Me i te tala teelaa ne hai i: i: futi kolaa o: loatuu ne taa nee au.
    (He said that) it was about a story to the effect that: that that:
    I chopped down some banana trees of theirs.
15 Aku muna ttaa, a ko au nei e-e(i) he tino fakavaleve?
    I said: come on, am I crazy or what?
16 E TONU LAIA i au ne sese i koo.
    It is true that I gardened in that area.
17 A ko futi kolaa ne hai eiloa n(ee) Maataio mo:: ma Tito.
    But those banana trees were (cut down) by Maataio a::nd Tito.
18 I au hoki eiloa maafaufau peena ki:: me io laatou a: futi nea?
    I also thought (as I was gardening) about- that those banana
    trees were theirs, right?
19 He:ki ai eiloa heaku futi ne:: Ne mea i-
    So I didn't (chop down) any banana tree-
20 A KO: FUTI KOLAA NE:: NE: LAGA ELOA NEE AU KEAATE:(A) e
    io e io Timooteo, mo ko olotou futi e tai ttuus ki lalo, ko Timooteo
    e::: nufo ki luga.
    THE (CHOPPED DOWN) BANANA TREES THAT I DRAGGED TO
    THE SIDE are Timooteo's' their (Luisa's) banana trees are down
    below (in the garden pit), while Timooteo's are up above (on the
    edge of the garden pit).
21 (AK)u muna iot!
    I said: all right!
22 (Te)maa laa au ne: hai kee hano au kee faipati fakalei aki i ei,
    ae logo aka a'u ne ttagi- i te tagi a: Luisa teenaau maa- fooliki-,
    koo:: oti eiloa ne oko ki::
    Then I thought that I should go and have a good talk with her
    (Luisa), but then I heard that Luisa senior- (I mean) junior had
already sent a complaint (and that the complaint) had reached
the ears of . . .

**FEUE**

23 Ttaahh! =
(Scandalized) That's outrageous!

**KELISIANO**

24 = kiaa Tito. Ki:- kee hano ki te faka:-
(reached) Tito's ears, that he should go to the:- . . .

25 Teenaa laa i te- annafi, kkaa aka maatou, au nua e vau i te:: fale o: Elekana mo Manatu- e nofo attu i ei!
So, on- (I mean) yesterday, after eating, I was (walking along
and) came to (the level of) Elekana and Manatu's house, there
she (Luisa) was!

26 Maatou mo Uili mo Paka.
I was with Uili and Paka.

27 Aku muna Luisa, llei, i au ne m- manako loa kee: fetau i tanua i Fagaua kae:- mea aka laa koe koo tele mai ki Olataga.
I said: Luisa, good, I wanted to meet you on Fagaua, but then
you ran over here to Olataga.

28 Ko au fua e: faipati atu kiaa koe ki luga i te: peela mo tau: fekau
ne avatu nee Samasone.
I just (want to) talk to you about the: like, the complaint that
Samasone told me about.

29 Muna mai io-, io- io!
She says, yes- oh, yes- yes-!

30 (Muna) hh a tou faji(ne)!
That's what she said, the woman!

31 Kiloka, au he tino eiloa- E ILOA LLEI faeloa nee au peela te:: i
luga i aku tafi, i te mea ka ha nee au peela hee llei.
You see, (I said,) I am a man who always knows, like, given my
social position, (who always knows) whether what I do is (right
or) wrong.

32 Kae iloa nee au a futi o koutou.
And I (also) know which banana trees are yours.

33 Tee(1)aa laa HEEai eiloa he futi o: koutou ne: ne: n-
So, I did not (chop down) a single banana tree of yours,

34 Futi konaa ne hae eiloa nee Maataio mo:: mo Tito.
Those banana trees were (chopped down) by Maataio and, and
Tito.

35 Muna mai, kiloko, koe e: fakamolemoile eiloa.
She says, look, please do forgive me.

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**Transcript B**

**KELISIANO**

01 A temotou kaaiga i taeao hh, a te mea i Isala, ne tuka i ei kee
hano o sukesake nee ia te: - tupte a maaua mo Saavave teelaa ne
(In) our family this morning, Isala (was angry) because she had
gone to look into that money of mine and of Saavave (the
money) that . . .

**FEUE**

02 // (? teelaa ne) hanatu kiaa Paulo! =
That's why she went to Paulo?

**KELISIANO**

03 = Teelaa! Teelaa: e ha- =
That's it, that's it, she s-

**FEUE**

04 = Saavave Timooteo mo Tema mo:: // Iaopu. //
(It said that the money was for) Saavave, Timooteo, Tema and loopu.

KELISIANO
05 // loopu. //
(And) loopu.
06 Kai laa, muna mai a ia ko ia e maesie tena loto ia Elekana kaati laa hee: hee loto malie ki te mea: (a) Keliiano teelaq loa hee:- We ate, and then she (Isala) she says she feels angry at Elekana because she probably wouldn't agree to do what Keliiano said to . . .
07 Teenaq loa e hano a ia a sili me e isi eiloo te mea a: loopu i:- hai atu laa kiaq Paulo, muna a: Paulo, m(a) ko Timooteo eiloo m( ). Ko Timooteo, ko Tema, ko-
So she went over to ask whether loopu's (money) had (arrived), and Paulo said to her, Paulo said that it was for Timooteo and . . .
Timooteo, Tema, and . . .
08 Hanaifo laa ki gaatii- ka ne vau mua Sina.
She went down toward the lagoon, and then Sina came over.
09 Vau, fai mai kia aku, a ko au laa ne toe logo hoki ia Elekana i tteaco,
She came, and said to me, but I heard again about it this morning from Elekana . . .
10 Hai mai me iaq ia ne logo laa Isala.
He had heard about it through Isala.
11 Aku muna, ka: ne a laa tto pati e hai, mo koo oti laa ne vae nee: Saavave,
I said, what are we doing (standing here and) talking about this, the money has already been split up between us by Saavave (of her own accord) . . .
FEUE
12 Te mea teelaq seeai sena mea a ia me se mea // (i te) fakalave =
= lave ne aurai // loa // kiaq koe.
That thing (the money) is not hers, to take, it is something (that was sent) on account of the family event (the wedding), it was primarily sent to you.

KELISIANO
13 // Peelaa nee? //
That's it, right?
14 // mm!
// hmm!
15 Teelaq laa ko loopu k(oo) kalaga mai telotou me(a).

Conflict Management, Gossip, and Affective Meaning

Then loopu started scolding (Saavave).
16 Fakalogo au nei ki te mea a loopu e fai mai kiaq Saavave,
I overheard what loopu told Saavave,
17 galo aka tou fafine,
then the woman (Saavave) disappeared.
18 Maaua laa mo Lusi e lloga pola i tena paa, koo vau tou- tou fafine.
(Later, while) Lusi and I were weaving coconut-frond baskets near his chicken coop, the woman (Saavave) came by.
19 la! Aku muna, he aah?
Yes, I said, what is it?
20 Konaq te:: tau:: te luafulu lima taalaa.
(He says,) Here are the: your twenty-five dollars.
21 Aku muna tte::
I said, come on!
22 A tino naa kaa lloga mai eiloo i tauh mhheahh (nahh)
You wait, when people start hearing about what you've been up to . . .
23 au e (fai) fakaloilo,
I was just kidding her.
24 Muna mai te seee laa
She says, they were the ones that did something wrong . . .
25 hee: uaelesi mai laa peelaaz::
they didn't cable to (tell us who the money was for) . . .

FEUE
26 (Ei) te mea laa // e hai ki te // aavaga, ka ne aa ana-
Come on! The money was for the wedding, what else does she want . . .

KELISIANO
27 // Aku muna
// I said,
28 A ko: ia Paulo e hai mai mo ko laa- koo: toko tolu eiloo.
And Paulo told me that there were three people (on the telegram).
29 Muna mai heeaq laa hoku seei e ei, e seee eiloo ko: ko laatou.
She says, I did nothing wrong, they were the ones who did something wrong.
30 Uaelesi ma.-
They should've cabled.
31 a ko aku muna- a ko tau pati e (tauagli) mai