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Directives in Lingala:
Participation and Subjectivity
in a Congolese Women's Church Group

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requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Linguistics

by

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for the arrangement of a myriad of details and probabilities
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Though this dissertation is not a product of my own isolated thinking, I take responsibility for the words I have written, the perspectives, conceptualizations and claims I lay out; any shortcomings and faults are mine.

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Abstract

Directives in Lingala: Participation and Subjectivity
in a Congolese Women's Church Group

by

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This dissertation explores directives in Lingala as expressions of subjectivity during participation in social activities. The linguistic forms of directives and their distribution in interaction reflect the group members' concerns for how an activity is to proceed and how each one will participate. Directives are subjective in that they reflect participants' perceptions and judgments (cf. C. Goodwin 2007; M.H. Goodwin 1990, 2006a, 2006b). Speaker subjectivity affects the distribution and function of three verbal suffixes in Lingala; these reflect the speaker's degree of certainty concerning the management of participation in an activity. Finally, this study examines the cumulative effects of the use of directives on the social organization of a Congolese women's church group.

Lingala is a Bantu contact language spoken by over ten million first- and second-language speakers in the Congo basin of western central Africa. The data were gathered from a multilingual, multiethnic group of women who are members of an African Indigenous Church in the Republic of Congo. Ethnographic methods

governed how the data were collected; the transcription of conversations and meetings served as a first step in analysis. I relied on principles of conversation analysis, discourse analysis and the analysis of the frequencies and distributions of types of utterances to determine the grammatical forms of directives and the patterns of their use in three interactional contexts.

The study begins with a description of the ethnographic context, including the region's history, the languages and gender of the participants and the religious context of their interactions. The analysis focuses on three directive forms: rhetorical questions, coordinating commands and ritual language used in prayer. For each type of directive I discuss the relationship between the form and its interactional context and provide examples that illustrate its structural features and how participants recognize them as directives, as well as discussing the source of their directive force. The use of these directives requires experience in the church context, knowledge of the interactional practices of the group and accompanying linguistic skills, which are unequally distributed among the group's members and produce a social organization dominated by the most knowledgeable and experienced members.

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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS AND TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

Abbreviations Used in Glosses

1	first person	LOC	locative
2	second person	NAM	proper name
3	third person	NEG	negation
ADV	adverb	N-HUM	non-human
AFF	affiliative token	OBJ	grammatical object
ART	article	PART	particle
CAUS	causative	P	plural
CL	noun class prefix	PFV	perfective (aspect)
COMP	comparative	POSS	possessive
CONJ	conjunction	PREP	preposition
CONN	connective	PRN	pronoun
COP	copula	PROX	proximal
DEM	demonstrative pronoun	PRS	present (tense)
DF	disfluency	PST	past (tense)
DMKR	discourse marker	RECP	reciprocal
EMPH	emphatic, insistence	REL	relative clause marker
GEN	genitive	S	singular
HAB	habitual (aspect)	SBJV	subjunctive
IMP	imperative	TITLE	title (e.g., father, mother, sister, mister)
INF	infinitive form		
IPFV	imperfective (aspect)		
ITJ	interjection		

Abbreviations Used in Transcription

I used the transcription system of the University of Santa Barbara Department of Linguistics (cf. Du Bois 1991; Du Bois, Cumming, Schuetze-Coburn and Paolino 1992), in addition to official orthographic symbols for Lingala established by UNESCO in 1986. This includes marking only high tone on the vowel with the symbol /'.

Items in parenthesis represent phonemes and/or morphemes that were elided or under-represented in colloquial pronunciation; they were added to the transcription to help other Lingala speakers read it. For example: *e(z)a(li)* 'it is'.

The following additional transcription symbols were used:

<C >	sung lines
<FR>	French
<LIP>	noise made with lips as air is sucked in through them, usually expressing disapproval
<VOX>	special voice quality
.	short pause of 10 milliseconds or less
..	short pause of 20 milliseconds or less
...	short pause of 30 milliseconds or less
(.5)	time of pause in seconds
::	prosodic lengthening
!	heightened pitch
[]	overlapping speech
@	pulse of laughter
=	latching
h	out-breath
hx	breath intake
(X ... X)	uncertain hearing

Chapter 1

Introduction:

Participation and Subjectivity

1.1 Introduction

This dissertation explores directives in Lingala as subjective evaluations of the participation of the self and others in social activities, and the cumulative effects of the use of directives on the social organization of a Congolese women's church group. It also demonstrates that speaker subjectivity in these directives influences the choice of mood inflection. Lingala is a Bantu contact language spoken by over ten million first- and second-language speakers in the Congo basin of western central Africa. The data were gathered from a multilingual, multiethnic group of women who are all members of an African Indigenous Church in the Republic of Congo.

Participation is a public, interactive process that cyclically constitutes and reiterates the subjectivities and ideologies of group members. Crucially, it involves the coordinated talk and behavior of multiple speakers who must display to one another what they are doing and how they expect others to join them in the activity of the moment (C. & M.H. Goodwin 2004:222). Subjectivity concerns the attitudes, perceptions and judgments of an individual (cf. Du Bois 2002, 2003, 2007; Englebretson 2007; C. Goodwin 2007; Keisanen 2006; Shoaps 2004). One way that speakers linguistically display their subjectivity is through the grammatical marking of aspect and mood (Comrie 1976:21-24, 28; Lyons 1977: 710, 845, 849). Epistemic

markers, for example, display how certain the speaker is of his or her assertion. Another example is the imperative mood, which indicates the speaker's perception or attitude that the addressee is obligated to perform what the speaker commands (cf. Bybee 1985; Bybee and Fleischman 1995; Palmer 2001). My goal in this dissertation is to investigate the effects of directive forms on the social organization of a Lingala-speaking women's group and what the use of directives tells us about the function and meaning of three verbal suffixes in Lingala.

My general argument consists of two parts. First, I argue that patterns of use and forms of directives reveal a social structure in which authority is held by a limited number of participants. Directive use is indicative of participant roles and the configuration of the participation framework in moment-by-moment interaction (cf. Goffman 1974, 1981; C. Goodwin 2007; M.H. Goodwin 1990, 2006a, 2006b; Irvine 1996). Over time, as certain directives become associated with certain activities in a Community of Practice (Lave and Wenger 1991; Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992) they contribute to the construction of genre while also serving as an interpretive resource for the participants concerning the nature and sequence of actions and activities (Bauman 1977; Bauman and Briggs 1990; Briggs and Bauman 1992; Duranti and Goodwin 1992). Each sort of directive analyzed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 occurs in a different genre of interaction and requires different knowledge, skills and experience in order for participants to use it successfully. Those who use directives most frequently make a claim to an authoritative and influential position in the group. In this way, the use of a directive indexes epistemic and social authority. The

social structure that emerges based on the unequal distribution of directives among participants in interactions is dominated by a limited number of the group's members.

Second, I argue that for each directive form the high correlational frequency of patterns of use and contexts of occurrence of three verbal suffixes reveals as yet undescribed functions and meanings of those suffixes. While there are differing analyses of the Lingala verbal suffixes that indicate tense, aspect and mood, most of these analyses have focused on the interpretation of tense and aspect without consideration of the correlation with modal meanings, such as degrees of speaker certainty (cf. Dzokanga 1979; Meeuwis 1995, 1997, 1998, 2001; Motingea 1996a, 1996b; Mufwene 1978; Nurse 2000). Mood is a grammatical expression of the speaker's attitude towards a person, action or even social convention such as formality or politeness (Bybee and Fleischman 1995; Palmer 2002). Both perception and attitude affect the speaker's formulation of an utterance, in this case, of directive utterances. The directive forms presented in this dissertation involve three suffixes previously interpreted as denoting perfective aspect, imperfective aspect and imperative mood, though scholars are not in agreement in their analyses of forms and functions (Bwantsa-Kafungu 1982; Dzokanga 1979; Meeuwis 1998, 2001; Motingea 1996a, 1996b; Mufwene 1978). I argue that all three forms can be understood as indicating the level of speaker certainty based on evidential sources that range from presupposed-as-shared knowledge to the deductive reasoning of the speaker (mood), in addition to other meanings already documented.

In this group of Congolese women, authority is constructed cumulatively in local interactions and indexed by linguistic forms that reveal speaker judgments and perceptions; it does not necessarily reside in social statuses linked to power and prestige. Expressions of certainty include the frequency of directive use as well as the epistemic stances indexed by their grammatical forms. Directives construct speakers as experienced and knowledgeable persons of authority. Moreover, for these women it is only possible to accumulate this kind of authority in the context of group activities. This implies that authority is a social construct that relies on negotiation in interaction to balance the cooperation necessary to achieve mutual goals and the competition necessary for an individual to gain more experience and competence than others.

In the central African context, authority is a kind of currency. With it a person may acquire both wealth in people (followers) and wealth in material objects; these in turn increase knowledge, skills and ability, themselves indicators of authority (Guyer 1995). While cultural anthropologists have used etymologies, diachronic developments of the lexicon of central African languages and mythological narratives to describe the history and development of social organization in the Congo basin (cf. Guyer and Belinga 1995; Vansina 1990; see Landau 1995 for southern Africa), this is the first study I am aware of to use synchronic and interactional linguistic data to investigate the relationship between everyday language use and social structure in central Africa.

Another contribution of this dissertation involves theoretical approaches to the study of the forms and meanings of directives. Studies of directives by linguists emerged from the refutation by philosophers of language of the claim that all utterances are propositions that are either true or false (Austin 1962; Searle 1969, 1976). However, in escaping one set of confining assumptions linguists may have fallen into another, notably Western, understanding of power and solidarity (Brown and Gilman 1960) or politeness (Brown and Levinson 1978), which formed the foundations of research questions for the seminal studies of Ervin-Tripp (1976) and Labov and Fanshel (1977). Though other researchers effectively challenged those assumptions, their studies were mostly limited to providing contradictory evidence to the claims of connections between mitigation and politeness, or indirection and politeness, that are related to the notion of face (cf. Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989; Field 1998; Owusu-Ansah 1992; Upadhyay 2003; Wierzbicka 1985). This dissertation moves beyond discussions of power, politeness and face in directive forms to investigate how the women in this Lingala-speaking group indicate to each other what they are doing and how they manage and negotiate their participation in group activities. The directive forms identified through my analysis include commands, as might be expected, but also less expected forms such as rhetorical questions and statements marked with imperfective aspect (but see Schieffelin 1990 for the use of rhetorical questions in the socialization of Kaluli children, and Field 1998b for the use of statements marked with imperfective aspect in Navajo). A contribution of this dissertation in the study of directives, then, is the claim that

directives index speaker subjectivities and display ways that individuals manage participation in group activities.

A third contribution is in the area of mood and modality, the grammatical forms and linguistic systems that encode culturally relative facets of speaker perspective (cf. Bybee 1985; Bybee and Fleischman 1995; Givón 1994; Klinge and Müller 2005; Palmer 2001). Modal forms are often considered in isolated utterances with the result that meanings and functions that arise in intersubjective negotiation in interaction remain undetected and understudied (Guo 1995). This is the case for Lingala, a language which has received considerable attention for the practical purposes of language standardization and use in educational settings (cf. Meeuwis 2001; Nzete 1993; Woods 1999), as well as for its artistic expression in poetry, novels and other oral traditions, but for which the functions, meanings and uses of morphological and syntactic forms in social interaction have not yet been fully explored. Furthermore, while M.H. Goodwin's (1990, 2006) studies of directive use by children in America have already demonstrated the value of meanings and functions that arise in intersubjective negotiation for studies of social organization, because she is an anthropologist using principles of conversation analysis and ethnographic research she attends less to the specific linguistic forms and morphological composition of directives than to interactional features such as their sequential placement. In addition to attending to the sequential placement of directives in stretches of talk and their effects on the social organization of the group, my approach also includes the investigation of the morphological and syntactic

forms of directives in Lingala and the relationship between linguistic form and interactional context.

1.2 Context, form and meaning

Bauman and Briggs (1990) rightly point out that *context* is impossible to define so that it is a universally applicable concept in social, cultural and linguistic research. Scholars in various areas have recognized this challenge, and have developed a number of related notions to grapple with the multidimensional complexity of context. The Goffmanian notion of frame, for example, is a conceptual tool to describe and explain how participants use features of the physical setting, the actions of other participants, socialized experience, knowledge, language and gesture to interpret and construe meaning in social interaction (Goffman 1974, 1981). As Tannen (1979) explains, a frame is an interpretive resource based on socialized experience with others. It allows a hearer to know, for example, that the statement just uttered was not intended to be taken seriously or that a question delivered from the lectern did not end the speaker's turn at talk and transfer speaking rights to the audience. A frame provides a delimiting border and a scaffold of meaning for the participant as well as for the analyst. The related concept of the contextualization cue refers to a speech gesture in interaction that displays the speaker's interpretation of the context or frame and is available to other participants to use to interpret the actions and project the intentions of others (Gumperz 1971, 1977, 1982, 1992). The continual indexical association of contextualization cues or other social and linguistic features to arrays of participants and to kinds of goals and situations is

necessary to interpret a frame as a genre, i.e., a certain kind of frame including a set of linguistic features (cf. Bauman 1977, 1990; Bauman and Briggs 1990; Briggs and Bauman 1992). In this dissertation I examine directives that are used by a group of Lingala-speaking women in three genres of social interaction: committee meetings, singing rehearsals and prayer meetings. In order to discuss and describe the relationship between context, form and meaning, I rely on theoretical concepts such as the Community of Practice, participation framework and participant roles, voice, the situated activity system and adjacency pairs. As I discuss in greater detail below, each one of these concepts highlights a different facet of what researchers recognize as context. Because of the way these concepts and terms are related and the ways in which I have applied them to my research, I first discuss terms and concepts that refer to the people in the interaction and then to those that refer to their actions.

1.2.1 The People in the Interaction

The notion of the speech community allows the researcher to delineate group boundaries based on the idealized notion of a single shared language and to compare and contrast supposedly homogenous groups of speakers (cf. Anderson [1983] 1991; Gumperz 1962; Hymes 1972; Labov 1972; Pratt 1987). However, the notion of the Community of Practice (abbreviated CoP) directs the researcher's attention to the mutual engagement and collaborative practices of members of any sort of group, and most importantly, their ways of participating, beliefs, values and power relations that emerge in regular routinized interaction (Bucholtz 1999; Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992; Lave and Wenger 1991). One advantage for the application of the CoP

model in the setting I describe in this dissertation is that the group is difficult to characterize by any description other than that its members interact in regular and purpose-driven ways. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet argue that "language is a key symbolic and communicative resource," and that it is "central to developing the ways of thinking and doing" of a group of people, whoever they may be (1992:483). As I will describe in Chapter 2, a common language of contact and regular attendance at religious meetings are the only common features for the group of thirteen women whose language practices and social organization are the focus of this study. Furthermore, it is the mundane and ordinary, repetitive acts that are the most pervasive and powerful in the life of a group. The CoP model helps to focus attention on what people do together regularly and what the consequences of their interactions are for their language and social order. This includes mutual socialization into routines and conventions such that ideologies about what is normal and appropriate for the group's members emerges through their practices (Ochs 1992, 1996, 2002; Schieffelin 1990). Considering the group of women who produced data for this dissertation as a Community of Practice provides a way to include the dialogicality, intertextuality, history and relational complexities of their interactional practices in considerations of how they deploy and formulate their utterances. By *dialogicality* I mean an engagement between the words of speakers in dialogic interaction that includes the recycling of lexical items and grammatical features (Du Bois 2001a, 2002; Voloshinov [1930] 1986). *Intertextuality* refers to the use of prior texts as resources in interaction (cf. Bakhtin 1981; Du Bois 2003; Irvine

1996; Lucy 1993). For both dialogicality and intertextuality, a socio-communicative history of some sort is necessary in order for speakers to draw upon past utterances for present contingencies. Further, the concept of the CoP avoids the imposition of the researcher's pre-ordained social categories on the group. Instead, it provides a means for a definition of the community to emerge from the words and actions of the members of the community themselves – an important analytical and methodological consideration that I will discuss in the next chapter. Finally, the CoP concept has important implications for a relatively limited and synchronic study such as this one. Because the practices I observed, learned and participated in were grounded in the history of the group's interactions and modeled on communicative strategies and routines developed together that follow consistent types or patterns, even a relatively small sample of representative utterances may be used to support reasonably broad and generalized claims.

The next theoretical concepts that are useful to my analysis and description of these data are the participation framework and participant role, proposed by the sociologist Erving Goffman, whose influence on researchers of interactional practices is profound and widespread (cf. Goffman 1967, 1974, 1981; see also Bauman 1977; Drew and Wootton 1988). Goffman defined the participation framework as the structural possibilities of a given social situation: how someone participates at a moment in interaction and what his or her status is relative to the utterance, whether that person is the speaker, hearer, overhearer, ratified or unratified participant in the conversation and so on (1981:3, 137, 153). The participation

framework comprises an array of participant roles as well as their respective rights and forms of participation. It is not an enduring monolithic structure, but a constantly negotiated, dynamic, emergent construct. The application of the notion of the participation framework to my data allows me to consider how an address term, for example, ratifies a participant as a member of the group and identifies her as a core rather than a peripheral participant. This turns out to be important for the interpretation of the form and meaning of the directive uttered with the address term.

Participant roles, then, are components of the participation framework. Scholars such as Bakhtin (1981), Voloshinov (1930) and Goffman (1967, 1974, 1981) describe language and social interaction at times through the theatrical metaphor of role, as if persons in social life were actors on a stage, assuming various roles with their related speech styles, memorized lines, routines and postures. Goffman's contribution includes breaking down the speaker-hearer communicative model into finer roles such as the *principal* and *animator*, further elaborated by Levinson (1988) and Irvine (1996). The principal is the originator of the words, akin to the author or composer; the animator is the one who physically speaks the words. The same individual may or may not inhabit or claim both roles when he or she speaks, and may signal this fact through the prosodic or grammatical form of the utterance, including its modality, an important consideration for the analysis presented in Chapter 6. In this dissertation I have found it more useful to keep the label *speaker* for the one who produces an utterance and adopt the notion of *voice*, described in the next paragraph, to explore the representation and construction of

responsibility and authority in the words and/or person of the speaker. The term *recipient* refers to the participant role of a person who may also be described as the *addressee*, a means to deconstruct the *hearer* into several participant roles. While *addressee* differentiates the individual targeted by the speaker from others who may hear the utterances, e.g., overhearers or eavesdroppers, the use of the term *recipient* by conversation analysts implies agency and the dynamic of rapidly shifting speaking and hearing or receiving roles in talk in interaction (cf. C. Goodwin 1979; Pomerantz 1984; Sacks 1995; Schegloff 1986, 2007 inter alia). This understanding of the term is not the same as the canonical patient-based understanding of recipient that grew out of the work of Dell Hymes and others (cf. Gumperz and Hymes 1972; Hymes 1974). This is why throughout the dissertation I will refer to those who produce directives as *speakers* and those who are targeted by them as *recipients*. Deconstructing speaker and hearer into finer participant roles is useful in order to explore, among other phenomena, how one person may physically utter words yet not claim responsibility for their truth-value. I find participant roles and the notion of voice especially useful in exploring the source of compelling authority behind directives.

Bakhtin's (1981) description of voice is closely related to Goffman's conceptualization of the multiple possible participant roles an individual may inhabit in interaction. Bakhtin uses voice as a way to discuss the consciousness behind an utterance, though linguists after him have interpreted it as the linguistic construction of a social persona (Keane 2001:268). Voice, then, is a term that highlights the

indexical nature of language, while a participant role focuses the analyst's attention on the participant's social function and responsibility in interaction. Voice has been analytically useful when applied in studies involving, among others, folklore and narrative, represented or reported speech, identity, evidentiality, morality and directives (cf. Agha 2005; Bauman and Briggs 1990; Bucholtz 1999; Günthner 1999; Hanks 1996; Hill and Irvine 1992; Irvine 1996; Lo 2004; Lucy 1993; Ochs 1992; Shoaps 1999, 2004; Silverstein and Urban 1996). Participant role and voice are powerful conceptual and analytic tools. They provide a means to deconstruct the words of a single participant for comparison and contrast of virtually any juxtaposed social, ideological and linguistic categories. For example, in Chapter 5 of this dissertation the question of what role an individual is inhabiting when uttering a directive during a singing rehearsal provides the key to understanding how participants use directives to coordinate their actions. Likewise, in Chapter 6 I describe how participant role and voice allow the words of multiple participants in a prayer meeting that are uttered in unison or at least concurrently to be considered as embodying a single voice or inhabiting a single role. I also use voice to explore sources of directive authority. Grammatical mood in Lingala appears to be a significant resource used by speakers to indicate their level of knowledge and its evidential source, i.e., how certain they are of their assertion. The grammatical marking of a speaker's personal level of responsibility and certainty regarding a given utterance is crucial to the study of the social construction of authority and the effects of language on social organization.

The use of participant role and voice further emphasizes the importance of dialogicality as it is conceptualized in the writings of Voloshinov (1930) and Bakhtin (1981). Like frame, dialogicality is a pervasive concept in this dissertation. It presupposes that there is no such thing as an isolated speaker or an isolated utterance. Rather, every utterance is formulated within and reflects the multiple dialogic dimensions of situated moments, from intersubjectivity to intertextuality to diachrony. The enormous complexity of the multidimensional systems of human sociocultural interaction – which includes participants and their roles and voices in the actions and interactions of a community of practice – makes context difficult to capture systematically and methodologically. Another important analytical perspective on context involves examining what the participants are doing.

1.2.2 Utterances, Actions, Activities

Whereas in the discussion above I considered terms and concepts that I will use in this dissertation to discuss the participants in an interaction, here I turn to notions useful to an analysis of their actions, including utterances, adjacency pairs and situated activity systems. An utterance is at once a linguistic and social action. It may be categorized syntactically as declarative, interrogative, and imperative, or socially as statement, question and command. In the presentations of data my use of *interrogative* versus *question*, for example, is intended to highlight the grammatical structure versus the social function of the utterance. When utterances are studied in pairs, the analyst can observe the utterances of more than one speaker and the relationships between complementary linguistic forms and social actions. For

example, Du Bois's (2001a, 2001b) analytical model of dialogic syntax is a way to study structural linguistic relationships that obtain between pairs of utterances. Conversely, conversation analysis uses the term *adjacency pair* for certain kinds of utterance pairs (cf. Atkinson and Heritage 1984:5-7; Goodwin and Heritage 1990:287-88; Sacks 1995:521-32; Schegloff 2007). An (unexpanded) adjacency pair is one way to conceptualize a limited interactional context. It consists of two utterances, each by a different speaker, that are chronologically and relevantly sequential.¹ In addition, speakers recognize them pragmatically as pairs; if one part of the pair is uttered, the existence of the other is projected. In this way, by asking a question, for example, typically the most obvious and appropriate next conversational move is for the next speaker to answer it (cf. Raymond 2003; Sacks 1995:533-41; Schegloff 2007:13-27; Turk 2006). For example, as I demonstrate in Chapter 4, the Question-Answer adjacency pair, though somewhat idealized in some discussions, is nevertheless a useful tool to discover the directive source of an assertion presented syntactically as an interrogative.

Another kind of bounded context that focuses on the actions of the participants is the situated activity system. This concept was first proposed by Goffman and later empirically applied and elaborated by C. Goodwin and M.H. Goodwin (C. Goodwin 2007; M.H. Goodwin 1990; 2006a, 2006b; Goodwin and Goodwin 1992b). M.H. Goodwin notes that a situated activity system is a "social object" like activity, used by Sacks as a basic unit of analysis, or the sociolinguistic model of the speech event (M.H. Goodwin 1990:8-9; Gumperz and Hymes 1972;

Sacks 1984:24-25). While the use of the speech event model may focus attention on what was said, how it was interpreted and what similar features occur again and again in a predictable manner, the model of the situated activity system (like the participation framework) focuses attention on participation and how it is organized, the multimodal practices, procedures, attention and mutual monitoring (C. Goodwin 2007:69). Crucially, it involves a bounded stretch of talk, sometimes called a *sequence*, and goal-oriented activity by multiple participants. Goodwin and Goodwin emphasize cognitive, linguistic and bodily postures that signal that multiple participants are joined by a single focus of attention – a goal, an action – such that there is a “heightened mutual relevance” of each utterance, turn at talk, gesture or posture, and so on (M.H. Goodwin 2006:122). The situated activity system is thus a context delineated by the physical positions of the participants’ bodies, their eye-gaze, and their use of material objects (C. Goodwin 2007). These physical and material entities contribute to the participants’ shared single focus of attention, the mutual relevance of acts, and mutual monitoring (M.H. Goodwin 2006a). Goodwin and Goodwin have fruitfully applied the model of the situated activity system to studies involving group practices, socialization, and most importantly for this dissertation, directives. Their studies indicate that social characteristics such as gender or relative social authority (for example, the relative power and authority of a parent as compared to a child) are less important for the interpretation of directive utterances than is the configuration of the participant framework and the situated activity system.

Together, all of these concepts – the Community of Practice, participation framework, participant roles, voice, utterances, adjacency pairs and situated activity systems – are ways in which scholars have grappled with definitions of and perspectives on context in order to study its impact on linguistic and interactional forms and the meanings achieved and constructed in joint participation. The relationship between context, form and meaning is significant for this study. As M.H. Goodwin noted for her own work, the linguistic form, sequential placement, meaning and effect of a directive varies according to participant roles, participation framework and the situated activity as participants “make bids for how the activity should proceed” (2006a:136-137). The directives presented in this dissertation are not simply a collection of linguistic forms but meaningful social actions that have an effect on the world.

The reminder that speakers effect change in the world through language was one of speech act theory’s great contributions to linguistics. Austin (1962) was intrigued by utterances that could not be fruitfully analyzed in terms of their truth value, but instead appeared to accomplish an action in the social world. He worked primarily through a set of verbs that could be combined with *hereby* to categorize them and to examine what effect their production might have, e.g. *I hereby dub thee Sir Arthur*. On the other hand, Searle pointed out that utterances have an effect on the world even if it is not precisely labeled through the use of a verb. This is an important point for directives because, as I have mentioned, they come in a variety of forms, and often do not contain an equivalent of “I hereby command...” In my

analysis, I am most interested in the sociocultural and linguistic mechanics of how speakers affect recipients through directive utterances. I examine the conditions that may explain why the recipient cooperates or does not cooperate with the directive, and what this says about authority and the social organization of the group on one hand, and the grammatical forms that signal speaker subjectivity such as modal markers on the other. As we will see, these are similar to issues that have been considered in previous studies of directives but with different assumptions and theoretical framing.

1.3 Directives and Social Organization

Directives were first proposed as a speech act category by Austin, though as a category called *Exercitives* (Austin 1962:150, 154-156). By 1968, Ross had renamed them directives, and that label continues to be used in sociocultural and linguistic research (cf. Bax 1986; Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989; Ervin-Tripp 1976; Ervin-Tripp, Guo and Lampert 1990; Field 1998a, 1998b; M.H. Goodwin 1990; Hill et al. 1986; Labov and Fanshel 1977; Pearson 1989; Obeng 1994; Olájubù 2001; Poncin and Rieser 2006; Upadhyay 2003; Wierzbicka 1985; Yaeger-Dror and Sister 1987). Austin's category name indicates that he was concerned with utterances that exercise authority or influence in some way; he lists possible kinds of exercitives such as *order, command, direct, plead, beg* (1962:150). Austin's insight that words accomplish action in the sociocultural world has had an immeasurable effect on linguistic research. Though he examined language in his philosophical analysis, he mainly focused on classes of performative verbs most often used in

relatively formal institutional settings. As I mentioned above, one result of this perspective was that speech acts that can be accomplished without explicit naming such as boasting or threatening are not always considered in studies based on speech act theory. In addition, the analytic focus is necessarily drawn to a single speaker, i.e., his or her intentions, the meaning he or she hopes to convey, and the speaker's action or the effect of the words. These factors have a limiting effect on the application of speech act theory, especially in interactional and sociocultural linguistic research, and they seem to have contributed to the emphasis on power and formality in classic studies of directives (Ervin-Tripp 1976; Labov and Fanshel 1977; Yaeger-Dror and Sister 1987). Moreover, the categorical approach of speech act theory tends to downplay the highly subjective nature of directives. Though Austin must have drawn on his own experiences as a socialized speaker, his analysis is based on isolated examples from his own imagination that are fit into orderly categories, and therefore his approach missed the point that directives are interactional resources for participants in activities who are like "players in a ritual game" (Lyons 1977:727 citing Wittgenstein 1953/1969) as they cope, negotiate and manage "the judgmental contingencies of the situation" (Goffman 1967:31).

A directive is a social and linguistic construct. Further, the various linguistic forms that a directive can take provide evidence of subjective judgment shaped by social and cultural convention. This study examines individual subjectivity channeled through grammar and molded by social and cultural convention, whereas

previous studies of directives have taken social categories, situations and speech events as starting points.

Ervin-Tripp's (1976) work, for example, explores the variation in the linguistic form of directives according to physical location and social variables such as the gender, relative age and institutional rank of each participant. She also examines the form of the directive with respect to its pragmatic framing, e.g., expressing the directive as a statement of need, a question that asks permission, or an imperative embedded in a question, and so on. She found correlations between social contexts and linguistic forms such that an utterance that asks permission may be interpreted as a directive. In my data, social variables such as relative age and institutional rank are not explanatory for the syntactic forms of directives, e.g., whether a question or an imperative is used. However, there is a correlation between the form of the directive and the task-oriented activity in which the speakers are engaged. Ervin-Tripp admits that a gap in her data was directives in task-oriented talk in activities. M. H. Goodwin's (1990) study of the talk of inner-city children targets that gap. In her studies of children at school and in family interactions, she focuses on the question of how directives organize context (M.H. Goodwin 1990, 2006a, 2006b; see also C. Goodwin 2007; Goodwin and Goodwin 1992b). Her ethnographic approach, which examines the emergence of participant roles and authority structures over time, is a valuable contribution of her work.

The relationship between speaker and recipient is a major focus of many studies of directives. As Guo notes, interactions require speakers to attend to the

regulation of the interpersonal relationship as well as to the power of language (1995:229). Pronouns, for example, are one index of the relationship between speaker and recipient. The seminal study of Brown and Gilman (1960) emphasized pronoun usage as a reflection of the relative hierarchical relationship between speaker and hearer. That a linguistic form could index and construct a social relationship was as far-reaching a claim as Austin's and Searle's claims that language effects change in the social world. Like speech act theory, however, the examples of pronoun usage limit the applicability of the precise claims of their study. For one thing, not all languages use pronouns or even verbal inflections as German and French do to index social status; Lingala is a case in point. For another, not all asymmetries in social relations involve relative influence or power grounded in social categories such as age, gender or social class. My findings indicate that relative influence or power may also be grounded in socialized knowledge and experience. Corroborating evidence for this conclusion comes from studies of cultural ideologies and social organization that reveal a tendency of those who have (or who claim to have) more knowledge and experience in the situated activity of the moment to take initiative, and for those who recognize that they are less knowledgeable and experienced to defer to them (Basso 1988; Briggs 1986; Burke 2001; Capps and Ochs 2002; Duneier 1993; Field 1998a; M.H. Goodwin 1990, 2006; Hoehler-Fatton 1996; Landau 1995; Ochs 1996; Phiri 2001; Rumsey 2003; Schieffelin 1990; Shoaps 2004; Vansina 1990).

If modality is so sensitive to context and speaker subjectivity, as I discuss below, we should be wary of the claims of any study of directives based on data not produced in sociocultural interactions motivated by speakers' needs, desires, goals and longtime relationships, or for which these details are not recorded. An elicited directive more than likely reflects the researcher's socialized knowledge and linguistic imagination translated literally into the target linguistic form by an obliging speaker consultant.² Likewise, a linguistic form grammatically identified as a directive in texts available to the researcher may be understood as something else by local competent speakers. Much depends on the context and local understandings of the directive, for example, the situated activity and participation framework. As I describe in Chapter 3, I took care to investigate and understand local perceptions and interpretations in order to identify the directives in this study and to interpret the data.

Even so, my methodology did not resolve every challenge posed by relativity in forms and meanings. Similar forms may not have similar meanings because the unique, local, moment-by-moment interactional context provides some of the meaning of every linguistic form. Moreover, within a group there may be various forms used to claim authority such that each person's accumulation of authority is through a different repertoire of devices.

As I will describe in Chapters 2 and 3, the strength and validity of some of the claims of this dissertation rest on the fact that circumstances allowed me to be a validated adult participant in a group of women with religious ideologies similar to

my own despite large cultural and linguistic differences between us. In analyzing their talk, I did not begin with definitions of power, authority, politeness, mitigation or indirection, which may not be universally applicable. Instead I used Searle's definition of a directive as an utterance used by a speaker to "get somebody to do something" as a starting point in the study of my recorded data (1976:10). This meant that I identified the directive through the interactional posture of the speaker and the reaction of the recipient instead of through my own preconceptions. As a result, the linguistic forms I discovered that the women were using to direct each other were not those I would have suspected; in addition to the expected grammatical imperatives, they used rhetorical questions, assertions and propositions with verbal suffixes indicating different levels of speaker certainty, declarative statements and invocations. Their distribution varied depending upon the genre of the activity. This finding supports the claim by Ervin-Tripp (1976) and M.H. Goodwin (2006) that the linguistic form of the directive will vary according to the type and phase of the activity.

All of the directives in this study were issued by speakers in order to achieve needs, desires and goals, though not necessarily personally their own. Within group-oriented activities, notions of convention and habit, i.e., "how we do things," seemed to dominate and thus disguise most but not all personal needs, desires and goals. The notions of socialized routine and convention that are included in the theoretical framework of the Community of Practice are another critical point for the interpretation of the data used in this study, specifically as it concerns what the

women know about conventional ways of doing things and how their certainty may be signaled through modal suffixes. The participants' personal estimations of their own and others' knowledge are signaled through their subjectivity, which is reflected and indexed in the linguistic forms of the directives and in their patterns and relative frequency of use. So while specific directive forms are distributed according to genre, they are also distributed according to the speaker's degree of ability and willingness to give directives. This also is corroborated in M.H. Goodwin's (1990, 2006) findings. Moreover, it is through the frequency, sequence and shape of the claims of participants that she discovered the hierarchical organization of groups of American children. In this study, those same phenomena reveal the social organization of a group of African women.

An additional issue raised by the data for this study is that each directive used in a given genre of activity reveals a different kind of individual claim of power and influence that determines the shape of the social organization of the group. Rhetorical questions demonstrate knowledge and the ability to persuade (Chapter 4). Commands demonstrate the ability to identify the moment and type of next relevant action, and they play an important role in the coordination of multiparty activities (Chapter 5). Declarative statements, invocations and petitions demonstrate knowledge of ritual scripts and the ability to mediate them for ritual performances (Chapter 6). These differing claims make it difficult to identify the cumulative effects of the participants' claims to positions of authority and influence within the group. The use of each of the forms listed above is dependent upon how long an

individual has been a member of the Community of Practice, her accompanying socialized and experiential knowledge, her opportunities to practice and her individual personal skill and competence in each genre. Those with longer histories, more accumulated knowledge, more practical experience and skill may therefore be more certain that they are following and fulfilling sociocultural conventional rules and requirements as they participate in a variety of group activities and contexts. Their certainty is reflected in their willingness and ability to give directions to others in the largest number of genres and contexts, as well as in the grammatical features of the directive, for example, the epistemic and evidential mood markings on the verb.

The resulting hierarchical shape of the womens' social organization is neither dominated by a single powerful participant nor is it egalitarian; it is headed by the limited number of women who are the most experienced and able in the most genres and in the widest number of contexts. In this view, directives are less about categories of social status and asymmetrical relationships and more about participation, subjectivity and the interactionally negotiated constitution of social order.

Speakers' subjectivities involve two kinds of certainty. One is the sort that comes from being a socialized, enculturated member of a community, having learned and mastered routines and having been confirmed through experience, observation and relationships with other members as a competent member of the group. This type of certainty is related to the level of knowledge of the individual and manifests

itself through the use of directives (as compared to women who participate but do not make bids to direct the actions of others or the unfolding of the activity). The other type of certainty is expressed through grammatical markers of epistemic modality and also indexes the evidential source of authority for the directive. The Lingala language does not have the morphological complexity for which some Bantu languages are known (cf. Hombert and Hyman 1999; Nurse and Philippson 2003), and thus there is no morpheme with a one-to-one form-function mapping for epistemic modality. Nevertheless, an examination of the linguistic forms of the directives discussed in this dissertation reveals that three Lingala verbal suffixes identified in previous work as marking aspect and mood pattern in such a way that they denote epistemic and evidential modality. These verbal suffixes encode three evidential and epistemic stances.

1.4 Subjectivity: Modal Expressions of Speaker Certainty

Grammatical modality is an expression of speaker subjectivity (Lyons 1977:710, 845, 849). Subjectivity is personalized relativity expressed through linguistic form, though as Hill and Zepeda remind us (1992:223), our culture and socialized practices influence what individuals attend to and how they interpret meaning (see also Du Bois 2003; Whorf ([1941] 1956). I claim that the patterning of three verbal suffixes in directives produced in the group of women in my data demonstrates an indexical relationship to an ideological structure that correlates evidential and epistemic stances of certainty with authority. This is not a new kind of claim. Recent work in language and interaction has demonstrated a close relationship

between stances of epistemic certainty and evidentiality to cultural and moral authority (cf. Fox 2001; Heritage and Raymond 2005; Lo 2004; Shoaps 2004). In this case, modality is the linguistic resource used by speakers to construct an interactional identity for themselves as people who are experienced and knowledgeable, and therefore certain of situations and actions.³ Experience and knowledge, as Guyer (1995) and Vansina (1990) also argue, are the cultural prerequisites for authority in central African social structures.

Authority is a sociocultural construct that emerges when individuals mutually consent to attend to and ascribe greater influence to the spoken and physical actions of some members of society over others. The differences in influence are sometimes reflected in modal constructions in language (cf. Owusu-Ansah 1992). The connection between language and authority in directives drew my attention to modality in Lingala. With the exception of one article describing the grammaticalization of a verb of volition and brief examples in grammatical descriptions (Meeuwis 1997), there is virtually no published work describing mood and modality in Lingala.

Modality is “a complex, multi-dimensional semantic-pragmatic domain” (Givón 1994:307). Palmer (2001) describes modal systems in language as primarily involving notions of realis or irrealis, though speaker perceptions and judgments about propositions or events may also be included. No two languages mark the same range of functions and meanings as concerns relevant, imagined or future events, certainty, possibility or necessity, because no two groups perceive or make

judgments concerning reality, events and situations in the same way.⁴ In the language of a Community of Practice, routinized subjective perceptions and judgments may be grammaticalized as modality (Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca 1994:176; Lyons 1977:746, 786, 845, 849).

Modality in languages of the world may be understood with respect to two broad categories (Palmer 2001).⁵ Propositional modality is generally concerned with knowledge – how a speaker knows something, how certain he or she is of a proposition, what evidence he or she has for the proposition. Event modality has to do with the speaker’s subjective disposition towards an event, whether it is possible, obligatory, necessary or promised. It may also be an indication concerning the speaker or recipient’s ability or willingness to perform an action. Studies of directives, as mentioned above, have most often focused on event modality, i.e., obligation and necessity, and tied the linguistic expression of event modality in directives to social status and power. Propositional modality, i.e., evidential and epistemic modality, is most relevant to my data and provides the best explanatory basis for the relationship between linguistic form and context with respect to directive use among members of this Community of Practice. Epistemic modality is a linguistic index of certainty or uncertainty among members of the group. Furthermore, expressions of certainty and those that index the evidential source of socialized cultural convention are means by which speakers signal the authority of their assertion or proposition.

One difficulty with the categories of propositional and event modality is the question of how to classify possibility. Possibility may be an indication of the speaker's knowledge and deductive reasoning, i.e., propositional modality, or it may be defined as the speaker's subjective disposition toward an event, i.e., event modality. As I will argue in later chapters, an interpretation of the modal meaning that references knowledge and an evidential source aligns with indicators of the participants' own interpretations and the patterns of use and frequency in the data. Further, this interpretation of possibility places it somewhere between propositional and event modality so that it shares some features of both and excludes some features of both.

Lingala grammatical descriptions all list the verbal suffixes /-a/, /-i/ and /-á/, though depending upon the tone of the person prefix and verbal root, scholars interpret their meanings and functions differently. For example, Dzokanga (1979) interprets the suffix /-a/ as indicating subjunctive mood (and therefore low speaker certainty) when there is high tone on the person prefix. Motingea (1996), on the other hand, interprets the same form accompanied by the same person prefix, as optative mood (also expressing low speaker certainty). Mufwene (1978) makes a connection between aspectual and modal meanings for what all other grammatical descriptions label as imperative mood, the suffix /-á/ (Bwantsa-Kafungu 1982; Dzokanga 1979; Meeuwis 1998, 2001; Motingea 1996). He claims both volitional (modal) and perfective (aspectual) meanings for this form (1978:104). My data support a claim of deduced possibility over volition for this suffix. Bwantsa-Kafungu

(1982), Meeuwis (1998) and Motingea (1996b) all describe it as the imperative mood suffix /-á/; Dzokanga (1979) specifies that it is the *l'impératif momentané*, which he distinguishes from a habitual imperative. By deduced possibility, I mean that the speaker infers a conclusion from general sociocultural knowledge, but that the conclusion is one of several possible options and therefore she cannot be completely certain of her conclusion. Finally, no description of Lingala grammar relates the verbal suffix /-i/ to a kind of certainty based on the presupposition of shared knowledge, though this is a robust pattern in my data. I understand these three verbal suffixes as indicating presupposed-as-shared certainty (indexing the group as the evidential source), deduced certainty (indexing the speaker as the evidential source) and low personal responsibility (indexing ritual convention as the evidential source).

Abangma's (1985) discussion of aspect and modality in the Cameroonian Bantoid language Denya is another illustration of the elusive functions of verbal suffixes that seem to carry both aspectual and modal meanings. In his description of hortatory discourse between a mother and son, he notes that the mother's directives are marked with perfective aspect that reflects her certainty that the son will carry out her orders, though the future time when they will be accomplished is unknown. Abangma goes so far as to question whether there is a real distinction between mood and aspect, perhaps due to the importance of speaker subjectivity for both grammatical phenomena.

In summary, the distributional patterns in my data indicate two kinds of speaker certainty: the first is based in long-term experience in the group (sociocultural certainty) and the other is evidential and epistemic certainty, signaled by modal suffixes. Sociocultural certainty is indexed by the frequency and the number of genres in which participants demonstrate the willingness and ability to direct actions; evidential and epistemic certainty in the proposition or action proposed by the directive is indexed by modal suffixes. Authority constructed through certainty in participation and grammar is thus a determining factor in the shape of the group's social organization.

1.5 Summary

In this dissertation I argue that participation and subjectivity reflected in the routinized, socialized linguistic and interactional practices of a CoP are keys to the discovery of the relationship between language and social organization. Focusing on a Congolese women's church group, my data support the conclusion that the most experienced members give the most directives, while the least experienced members participate but do not direct or make proposals for how an activity should proceed. Moreover, modal suffixes on the verb communicate subjective expressions of certainty, varying predictably with the syntactic and interactional contexts of directive use.

The directives analyzed in this dissertation are integral to the interactional contexts constructed by the practices of the women's group. But the interactional contexts described in this dissertation in turn have their own broader context, and so

the next two chapters provide an overview of the national and regional ecologies that influence the participation and subjectivities of the speakers and my own perspective as a researcher. Chapter 2 serves as an introduction to the sociocultural world of central Africa, including necessary background information specific to my interpretation of the data. Chapter 3 describes how the research developed and how I collected and analyzed the data.

In Chapter 4 I argue that rhetorical questions are used by experienced and knowledgeable group members to direct the actions of others. These questions derive their directive force from embedded assertions based on knowledge that is presupposed as shared among the group's members. They are marked with the verbal suffix /-i/, which indicates epistemic certainty. In Chapter 5, I will demonstrate that commands are significant resources to coordinate multiparty activity. They are used by participants whose experience and knowledge equip them to predict the appropriate moment for a relevant action. These commands are marked with the verbal suffix /-á/ to indicate the almost-certain occurrence of the action and to index the speaker as the evidential source. In Chapter 6, I examine the complexity of embedded frames in the women's ritual of corporate prayer. The discussion includes a contrast of two directive forms: declarative statements used by a speaker who is not claiming responsibility for the utterances, and the elaborate invocations and petitions of individuals' prayers. Both practices require knowledge, experience and skill with ritual conventions.

Ultimately, the person with greater sociocultural certainty as reflected in her participation and greater evidential and epistemic certainty as reflected in the linguistic forms of her directives has greater authority in the group. Access to knowledge and experience is not equally distributed among the members and thus the most experienced and skilled women form a subset of participants who head the social organization of the group.

Notes for Chapter 1

¹ The utterances may belong to two speakers or to two voices (see Du Bois 2008 and Voloshinov 1930:21).

² As Welmers illustrates for the neophyte Africanist, often even what the researcher thinks is possible to say in English, i.e. the elicitation phrase, may be as meaningless as the alleged equivalent supplied by the African language consultant (1973:345).

³ See Bucholtz and Hall 2004, 2005 for discussions of subjectivity and identity in interaction. See also Du Bois 2003; Englebretson 2007; Goffman 1974; Goke-Pariola 1993; Irvine 2001; Schiffrin 1996; Shoaps 2004; Silverstein 1976, 1979, 1998; Voloshinov 1930.

⁴ Our ways of physically and socially being in the world involve culturally constructed social and individual morality, a recurring theme in studies of linguistic evidentiality (Hill and Irvine 1992), socialization of children (Rumsey 2003; Schieffelin 1990), and the construction of moral personhood through genres of discourse (Shoaps 2004).

⁵ But see discussions in Bybee (1985), Bybee and Fleischman (1995) and Palmer (2001) for other categories used to understand modality, such as speaker-oriented and hearer-oriented modality.

Chapter 2

The Ecology of the Congolese Women's Church Group

2.1 The Ecological Environment of the Community of Practice

A Community of Practice provides a local sociocultural and linguistic ecology for the interactional routines and linguistic repertoires of its members. Likewise, no Community of Practice exists in a social or linguistic vacuum. Because the relationship between syntactic forms and functions and their discursive and social context are important factors in interpreting the data and assessing the claims of this study, and because the reader may not be familiar with the geographical, linguistic or religious contexts in which these interactions took place, in this chapter I discuss the sociocultural and linguistic ecological environment of the Congolese women's church group that provided the data for this dissertation. Though I describe the immediate discourse context of each example that illustrates points of my argument in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, it will be helpful to have a broader acquaintance with the everyday world of the participants in order to understand the interpretive resources they use in their interactions. In addition, the generalizability of the claims of this dissertation depends on how representative the group of women may be with respect to their language use and social context. I argue that the social and linguistic composition of the group is not so very different than that of the town, nation and region of the world in which they live and that therefore the findings of this dissertation go beyond this small Community of Practice.

Haugen's (1972) metaphor of language as an organism within an ecological environment provides the analogy for the way this ethnographic description is organized (see also Mufwene 2001, 2003; Mühlhäusler 1995). I begin with the larger context of the Central African region in which the Lingala language is spoken, and move to a discussion of Lingala's place within the multilingual ecology of the Republic of Congo. From there, I describe one administrative region in that nation, with special focus on the human ecology of the town in which I conducted the fieldwork for this dissertation. The women who provided the data belong to a religious group not familiar to many researchers even in Africa. Therefore, I briefly describe the wider religious ecology of Congo-Brazzaville before focusing on the women's church. A fourth ecological sphere in which these data were produced is affected by gender. In this section, I describe both my husband's and my own gendered experiences as resulting in two different perspectives on Lingala and the community of the northern Congolese town of Ouessou where this research took place. I argue that though the group of women who are the focus of this study live in the same historical, religious and linguistic world as their male counterparts, their gender focuses their attentions differently and thus alters their relative life experience. Finally, I describe the individual women in the group and discuss the problems with initial hypotheses I generated early in my research about the forms and uses of directives among such speakers based on social categories such as age or ethnic affiliation.

2.2 Linguistic, Human and Religious Ecological Systems

The research for this dissertation took place in the Republic of Congo, not to be confused with its larger, more publicized neighbor to the east, the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaïre). The two nations are often distinguished by their capital cities: the Republic of Congo is designated “Congo-Brazzaville”, while the Democratic Republic of Congo is called “Congo-Kinshasa”. Congo-Brazzaville and Congo-Kinshasa belong to the geographical, ecological and cultural area that is the Congo River Basin. Straddling the equator, it is one of the largest remaining rainforest areas in the world, though there are areas of higher elevation that form more arid plateaus between the networks of tributaries and wetlands. It is home to an estimated 300 ethnolinguistic groups (Ethnologue database 2006; Harrison, Harrison and Lebold 2007).

2.2.1 Linguistic Ecology and Lingala

Congo-Brazzaville hosts between 60 and 80 languages spoken by a population of 3.6 million according to 2006 estimates of the Centre National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques (National Center for Statistics and Economic Studies) (see also ALAC 1987; Gordon 2004).¹ Growing urbanization during the twentieth century has resulted in two-thirds of the population living in the four most populous cities. One effect of the redistribution of Congo’s population has been the spread of Lingala. Lingala is a Bantu language spoken by over 10 million first- and second-language speakers in Congo-Brazzaville, across the Congo River in the Democratic Republic of Congo, northward in Central African Republic, and to the

south in Angola. The core area of its use is in northern Congo-Brazzaville and northwestern Congo-Kinshasa, as indicated by the darker area on the map in Figure 2.1.²



Figure 2.1 Lingala in Central Africa (Wikipedia 2008)

Some descriptions of Lingala place it in Guthrie’s classification scheme of Bantu languages as a language of the Bantu C30 group (C36), thus making a claim as to its origins and genetic relationship to Bobangi and, some say, Mangala (Sebastian Elion, personal communication, June 2007; Maho 2003; Nzete 1993; Van Everbroeck 1985). However, in his Lingala dictionary Guthrie identifies it as “une langue universelle,” that is, a language that is independent of any particular ethnolinguistic group. He describes Lingala as originating in incomplete and erroneous European acquisition of Mangala (1939/1966:ix; see also Samarin 1986). This is similar to the claim that Lingala is a restructured language, beginning as a simplified version of Bobangi that was used as a language of contact between inhabitants along the Congo River where it forms a triangle with the Ubangi in the

northwest quadrant of the present-day Democratic Republic of Congo (cf. Meeuwis 1998, 2001; Mufwene 2003; Nurse 2000). Nevertheless, originating as it did among speakers of Forest Bantu languages (Guthrie's groups A, B and C, though classifications also include groups D and H; cf. Maho 2003; Nurse and Philippson 2003), it shares phonological, morphological and syntactic reflexes common to those languages that often differ significantly from other Bantu languages (Guthrie 1953; Nurse and Philippson 2003, 2006).

A key period in Lingala's development arrived with the Europeans and their mercenary troops who had been recruited from the western and eastern coasts of Africa. Some of these Europeans and Africans already spoke Kiswahili, Kikoongo, English, French, Portuguese, and probably other African languages, and they added the new contact variety to their repertoires. By 1884 the glossonym *Bangala* appears in colonial correspondence. This name was modified early in the 20th century through the linguistic intervention of Egide De Boeck and other members of a group of Belgian Roman Catholic missionaries: The first syllable /ba-/ of *Bangala* seems to have been confused with the plural noun class prefix, and so the singular /li-/ prefix was substituted to form *Lingala* (Meeuwis 2001:151-152).

These missionaries sought to standardize and write prescriptive rules for a language they perceived as needing grammatical and orthographic improvements for general use (Meeuwis 2001:152). Some dictionaries and linguistic descriptions, most modern schoolbooks, one translation of the Bible, and other literature use this form of Lingala today. But the language standardization efforts did not keep up with the

dynamic spread of the spoken language that had reached Leopoldville (modern-day Kinshasa) at the turn of the 20th century. Spoken by colonial administrators to communicate with their Congolese employees, and between Congolese of many ethnolinguistic groups, Lingala became Kinshasa's primary language within a few decades of its arrival. It has since spread east and west, north and south; today it is spoken in a geographic area more than one-fourth the size of the United States (CIA Factbook 2008; Meeuwis 1998, 2001; Samarin 1986, 1990/91). In addition to being an important language of wider communication in the Congo River basin, it plays a significant role in the linguistic ecology of Congo-Brazzaville.

There are three sociolinguistic strata that correspond to patterns of use and perceptions of prestige in the multilingual system of Congo-Brazzaville. The former colonial language, French, has the advantageous position in the top stratum. French is the language of international access, of education, and of economics. It dominates print journalism, political speeches of the country's top officials, and other situations where wealth, power, and cosmopolitan prestige are evident. Leitch (2005:5) observes that French also unites the northern and southern sections of the country, each of which tends towards a different national language: Lingala in the north, Kituba (also referred to as Munukutuba) in the south (see also Woods 1999). The black line on the map of Congo-Brazzaville in Figure 2.2 represents the approximate linguistic areas of the two languages. Though French may seem like a neutral and uniting language as well as an attractive, prestigious one, memories of colonial domination give a pejorative connotation to its use in some circumstances, such as

when a demonstration of pro-African or pro-ethnic affiliation is expected (Leitch 2005:5). Even so, as I will demonstrate in Chapters 5 and 6, speaker motivation for the use of French is often pragmatic, without necessarily appropriating its prestige.

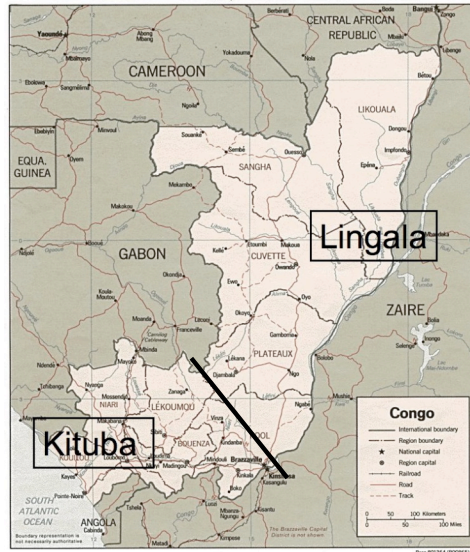


Figure 2.2 Approximate Lingala and Kituba Language Areas (adapted from Leitch 2005)

The second stratum in Congo-Brazzaville’s multilingual system is occupied by Lingala and Kituba, two languages originating in the Congo basin that have been altered by their use as vehicular languages by many language groups in the area. Unlike Lingala’s development, which was described above, Kituba developed through situations of language contact among groups of the Kikoongo language continuum (Bantu H). As the Europeans forced their way from the western coast into the central African interior, they met with so many cataracts on the Congo River that they were unable to bring ships up the river. Instead, they began a major railroad project at the beginning of the 20th century, bringing laborers from a wide radius,

thus providing the social ecology for the emergence of a new contact language (Mufwene 2003; Woods 1999).

Significantly, both Lingala and Kituba are learned in everyday contexts: in the street, on the playground, at the market. It is not necessary to attend school in order to learn these languages as it is for French. Moreover, Lingala is related to most of the languages in northern Congo that are Forest Bantu languages of Guthrie's (1953) groups A, B and C, while Kituba grew out of contact between the Kikoongo groups (Bantu H). Because of this, Lingala is relatively easy for speakers of Forest Bantu languages in northern Congo to learn, while Kituba is relatively easy for Bantu H speakers in southern Congo to learn. I discovered this during my own apprenticeship in Lingala and my research involving languages from those groups.³ Though there is not necessarily a diglossic distribution of French and the two languages in the second stratum, there is a relatively obvious functional distinction. One of my language consultants told me that Lingala is for speaking and French is for writing. In addition, Lingala is associated with the thriving music and popular culture of Kinshasa, as well as with pro-African development. Though the institutional support for Lingala in Congo-Brazzaville is relatively weak, it is much stronger across the river in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where it is the language of instruction in primary school as *Lingala ya leta* "State Lingala" (Leitch 2005; Nzete 1993). This factor adds to Lingala's prestige. Kituba, meanwhile, is the dominant language of Congo-Brazzaville's oil-rich coast. Thus, both languages of the second stratum carry their own kinds of prestige and are not burdened with

negative connotations of colonial legacy, though both were affected by the languages of the colonial powers (Mufwene 2003). Finally, as Congolese national languages, they are not perceived as a threat to the lowest languages in the multilingual system, though they are spreading at their expense (e.g., see Igboanusi and Peter 2004 on a similar situation in Nigeria).

At the bottom of the linguistic hierarchy are the language varieties indigenous to Congo-Brazzaville, the “village languages” or *banzinga ya mboka*, as they are referred to by the Congolese. (Throughout this dissertation I will refer to indigenous minority Congolese languages as *village languages* in accordance with this practice.) In some parts of the country they may properly be called “mother tongues,” as children are said to learn their mother’s language first or at least early in life. In other parts of the country, they may be more accurately “father tongues,” as the father’s language is privileged in the home, especially in intergroup marriages. I discuss this phenomenon further below in the description of the human ecology of the town where I did my fieldwork. Though village languages are a source of symbolic pride and identity, they are also often associated with old and “backward” ways.⁴ In urban areas, children often gain competence in Lingala or Kituba before they learn a village language. There are also families who deliberately speak only French at home in order to assure scholastic, and therefore, it is hoped, economic success for their children.

Nevertheless, some village languages may become dominant in a region due to their political histories or sheer population size. For example, speakers of Teke

varieties (B70) form the majority on the central plateau of Congo-Brazzaville. They are descendants of a powerful kingdom that stretched from present-day Gabon in the west into the Democratic Republic of Congo in the east. In the northwest of the country, where I did my fieldwork, speakers of Bekwel (A85) and Njyem (A84) are the most numerous, and their languages overshadow those of smaller populations.

Congo-Brazzaville has apparently never been a very highly populated area.⁵ Given the percentage of people living in urban centers, much of Congo's countryside is only sparsely populated. Even so, almost everyone I know in Brazzaville has relatives in smaller regional centers and in villages. Moreover, everyone I know in Ouessou, a regional center in northern Congo, has some relative in Brazzaville, as well as in the smaller villages of their home region. As a result, there is a constant exchange of money, goods and people between the cities, towns and small villages. This has the effect of spreading Lingala and Kituba, but it also means that parents send their children to be cared for by relatives in the villages during certain periods in their lives, thus giving children exposure to the village languages. For example, one of my neighbors in Ouessou was caring for her grandson whose mother worked in Brazzaville but could not afford to care for him at the time. The implications for this pattern are that many people have a limited speaking ability or only a passive knowledge of the language that serves as the symbol for their primary ethnic identity, the language of their family and heritage, while their more fluent language skills in Lingala or Kituba may serve them in a wider number of contexts. This is especially true in towns like Ouessou in the north of Congo-Brazzaville.

2.2.2 Human Ecology of Ouesso and the Sangha Region⁶

Congo-Brazzaville is divided into ten *départements* or administrative regions, each with a *chef-lieu* or administrative seat. The research described here took place in the *chef-lieu* of Ouesso in the Département de la Sangha (Figure 2.3), a town of approximately 24,000 inhabitants ([www.citypopulation.de/ Congo.html](http://www.citypopulation.de/Congo.html), data from 2005).



Figure 2.3 Département de la Sangha (Source: Ministre de Recherches Scientifiques et de Réforme, République du Congo)

The journey by road between Brazzaville and Ouesso 800 kilometers north is difficult in part because of the challenges of yearly jungle growth, river crossings, and lack of road maintenance. For those traveling by public ground transportation, a river crossing where passengers must dismount and carry their luggage for about a kilometer on either side of the Makoua ferry crossing dissuades merchants from transporting large quantities of goods. River transport between Brazzaville on the Congo River to the port city of Mossaka and from there north on the Sangha River

may take between three and six weeks. The Malaysian-Korean Resource Consortium, in pursuit of Congo-Brazzaville's hardwood riches, recently conducted a feasibility study for the construction of a railway between Ouessou and Brazzaville (Reuters 2007). Until the railway is completed, public air transport from Brazzaville is the quickest and most convenient way to arrive in Pokola or Ouessou in the Département de la Sangha. Transportation into the Sangha from southern Cameroon and the Central African Republic is relatively easier, with constant small boat traffic on the Sangha and Dja Rivers and a road built and maintained by French and Congolese timber companies that export their goods through the Cameroonian seaport of Douala. Many of the goods for sale in Ouessou, then, come from Cameroon and Nigeria instead of from Congolese companies in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire.

The Département de la Sangha is sparsely populated (55,795 square kilometers for an estimated 71,000 inhabitants, or an average of 1.27 inhabitants per square kilometer), with large tracts of forest inhabited only by nomadic pygmy⁷ bands and a wide variety of wildlife, including many types of monkey, gazelle, antelope, birds, insects, elephants and the lowland gorilla (Figures from the Centre National de la Statistique, République du Congo, 2005). The ecological management of cocoa, rubber, banana and palm plantations, timber, mineral and wildlife resources has brought foreign agencies into the Sangha region to participate alternately in the preservation and the exploitation of the natural riches. Pygmies groups who belong to different lineages and who speak different languages are most likely the original inhabitants of the area.

Vansina estimates that the Bantu expansion, the southward migration of Bantu peoples from their original homeland on the present-day Nigeria-Cameroon border into the forests of central Africa, brought populations into the area between 1500 and 1120 BC, often along the rivers and their tributaries (1990:49-54). Migratory histories that I collected from representatives of the Pomo, Jasua, Bekwel, Ngundi, Bomassa, Bomwali-Lino and Njyem peoples reveal that most of them came from areas north and west of Ouesso, some following waterways and others searching for new areas in which to hunt and cultivate. European intervention began in this region with the Germans, who moved south from their colonial territories in the (then) Cameroons in the late 19th century, and continued shortly thereafter with the French, who were establishing administrative outposts in their territory of French Equatorial Africa (l'Afrique Equatoriale Française). The town of Ouesso was established in 1891 in an area still disputed by several ethnic groups.⁸ The colonial powers recognized the natural richness of the land and the possibility of taming its resources for their exploitation. Probably following the examples of crops cultivated by the Bantu populations, they established cocoa, rubber and later palm oil plantations in the Sangha, bringing in large numbers of workers from surrounding areas. For example, Mr. Antoine Pako, traditional chief of the Mboko federation (representing the Mboko, Bakota, Mongom and Lingati peoples in Ouesso), told me that his people are recognized as experts in palm horticulture, and so were brought north into the Sangha from their home region in the Cuvette Ouest (southwest of Ouesso and the Sangha – see Figure 2.3) to work the plantations.

The 20th century saw the arrival of Swedish evangelical missionaries from the south, and the expansion of the Catholic diocese of the Likouala from the west. The Swedes came by boat from the Congo River in 1922 and turned north onto the Sangha River. When they arrived at the level of Pikounda (see Figure 2.3), they established a missionary outpost among the Bongili people. When the colonial administration finally granted them permission to enter Ouessou, they also established a church and school there that are still in vibrant operation. This brought numerous Bongili families to Ouessou. The Catholics also established a church and school, and were the first to bring Congolese priests and deacons from other areas of Congo-Brazzaville and Congo-Kinshasa to the Sangha.

Personnel policies of the national government and of several church denominations continue to bring government workers, teachers and clerics to the Département de la Sangha whose home areas are in other parts of Congo-Brazzaville. It seems to be common for employees from the north of Congo to be given southern postings, and those from the south to be given northern ones. For example, Pastor Edouard Bom, who is the head of the Eglise Evangelique du Congo (Evangelical Church of Congo, or EEC), is originally from Sembé, a town west of Ouessou, but spent a large portion of his pastoral career at churches in the south of Congo.⁹ In August and September 2006, three new EEC pastors were received into service for postings in the Département de la Sangha. All of them were southerners. In one of the most pressured instances of language acquisition I have observed, the newly ordained pastor of Ouessou's main EEC church delivered his inaugural sermon

in Lingala to a congregation of an estimated 500 people. As a Kituba speaker from the south, he was not accustomed to delivering his sermons in Lingala and frequently had to pause to ask the primarily Lingala-speaking congregation for vocabulary with which to communicate his message.

African migration into the Département de la Sangha continues with lumber workers, gold miners, and since 2006 skilled construction workers from Cameroon and the Central African Republic. West African Muslim traders from as far away as Mauritania, Mali and Niger have set up successful shops and businesses, as well as a large mosque in Ouesso. The successive waves of immigration as well as the continuing employment opportunities have made the Département de la Sangha, and particularly its most populous town, Ouesso, a highly multilingual, multiethnic area.

The highly multilingual and multiethnic character of the area was confirmed to me through three kinds of information that I gathered in connection with other research projects in the area. First, a small survey that my SIL colleague, Jessica Lebold, and I conducted to check the diversity of our social networks revealed people from 25 different ethnic affiliations. Of the 46 people interviewed, 21 came from ethnically mixed parentage and 24 were in ethnically mixed marriages. Second, local perceptions of the multiethnic nature of Ouesso recognize 12 ethnolinguistic groups. We interviewed the traditional chiefs of all of these groups. One of the most striking pieces of information from these interviews is that all of them come from ethnically mixed unions. Though in each case, their ethnic identity and primary linguistic allegiance come through their father, all of them reported spending time

with their mother's families when they were children and learning their mother's language. Almost all of these men had an excellent command of French, and also spoke Lingala, often in addition to other languages. For example, Mr. Albert Lemba, traditional chief of the Pomo, who has a Bekwel mother, is a former diplomat who also speaks English and German, having served at the United Nations in New York and Bonn (Germany). Furthermore, most of these men were married to women from ethnic groups different from their own, raising their children in a multilingual environment that included the languages of both parents, Lingala and French. Finally, while collecting language data from representatives of the Bomassa, Ngundi and Jasua ethnolinguistic groups, I found that they were all related to each other through their mothers or other marriage alliances. In short, patterns of high multiethnic contact, multilingualism and intergenerational transmission in Ouesso indicate a long-term and robust pattern of speakers with linguistic repertoires that include two or more Forest Bantu languages, as well as languages of contact including Lingala and French. While the French language serves as an international language of economics, politics, education and development, the Lingala language does the same for the national administrative systems and ethnolinguistic groups in the Congo Basin.

Thus far I have described the linguistic and human ecologies of Congo-Brazzaville with special attention to Ouesso, the administrative seat of the Département de la Sangha. Two important points that have been brought out are the role of Lingala in this multilingual society and the patterns and motivations of its

spread, and the high levels of multilingualism due to the high incidence of multiethnic contact including intermarriage. The implications for both of these points are that residents of Ouesso, including the women from whom I collected data for this dissertation, are surrounded daily by speakers of many languages and may themselves speak three, four or more languages. At least two of those languages are probably Forest Bantu languages (including Lingala) that have common linguistic genetic roots and that belong to cultures with similar patterns and principles of interaction. It is possible, however, that these speakers have not mastered any of those languages at the level of an educated mother-tongue speaker. Despite this possibility, we may safely assume that a speaker's linguistic repertoire is deployed according to whichever context and activity in which she finds herself. Furthermore, I did not discover indications for prestige associated uniquely with any of these languages in such a way that directives given in them or speakers from these language groups would have any more force or influence than directives given by anyone else.

The next contextual feature necessary to set the scene for a description of my fieldwork and lay the groundwork for the data analysis is an understanding of the religious ecology of Congo-Brazzaville, with special attention to Ouesso.

2.2.3 Religious Ecology: Congo-Brazzaville and African Instituted Churches¹⁰

The Republic of Congo transitioned from a Marxist model of governance that strictly regulated religious groups to a more open republican model in the early 1990s. During the Marxist era (from the early 1970s to the 1990s), only four

Christian organizations were permitted to function: the Evangelical Church of Congo (established by Swedish missionaries), the Catholic Church (established by Portuguese and French missionaries), the Salvation Army (from British and American traditions) and the Orthodox Church (from eastern European traditions). All other Christian religious gatherings were prohibited. In spite of this, the Republic of Congo is highly Christianized, with at least fifty percent of the population claiming affiliation to a Christian organization. Other religious movements include Islam at approximately two percent and growing, and traditional African religions mostly related to healing and prophecy (Johnstone and Mandryk 2005; Müri 2004; Byron Harrison, personal communication, July 2007). The figure for Christian organizations does not include those in the Kimbanguist or other African prophetic movements considered by many mainline denominations to be outside the range of traditionally acceptable dogma. It also does not include an adequate sample from so-called “Eglises de Reveille” or Revival Churches that have been growing quickly since the 1990s. While some of the Revival Churches are Christian denominations such as the Assemblies of God or Christian and Missionary Alliance which originated in America or Europe, many are African Instituted Churches (AICs).

The African Instituted Church movement is unique to the African context. This phenomenon is neither Protestant nor Catholic in tradition or dogma, and it originated outside the sphere and scope of missionary activities (though sometimes as a reaction to them). The African Instituted Church movement can be seen as early as the beginning of the 18th century in central Africa when the Catholic and

Portuguese civil authorities burned Africa's "Joan of Arc," Doña Beatrice, at the stake in 1706 (Alexandre 1982; Daneel 2001a). Most of the scant research concerning this movement has tended to focus primarily on two periods: the colonial period (approximately 1880-1960), and the postcolonial period, especially the 1980s to the present. These churches are commonly referred to as AICs, though the few scholars who focus on them choose varying terms for the "I" according to their historical perspective and analysis, so that it varyingly stands for "Indigenous" (Robert 2006), "Instituted" (Mahmoud 2005, Ositelu 2002), "Initiated" (Daneel 2001), or "Independent" (Sackey 2006, Walls [1996] 2003).

The church in which I conducted my research is an AIC. Founded in 1993, the Eglise de Philadelphie (Philadelphia Church) in Ouessou is one of at least five daughter churches or "annexes" of the Eglise de Philadelphie in Brazzaville. There is at least one annex in Brazzaville in addition to the mother church and one each in Pointe-Noire, Nkayi, Ouessou, and Pokola. Ngodi describes the Eglise de Philadelphie as "transnational" (2005:3), which suggests that there are more churches not only in Congo-Brazzaville, but most likely in Congo-Kinshasa as well. The mother church was founded by three Congolese men who began a prayer group in approximately 1989 after having a spiritually significant experience together. When government restrictions were eased in the early 1990s the Eglise de Philadelphie was officially recognized. Today two of the three men continue as head pastors over a growing number of pastors and evangelists as well as a training school.

In addition to Bible studies, prayer meetings, bi-weekly church services, choir rehearsals and live outdoor concerts, many of the church's activities demonstrate concern for the community. After-school tutoring is available for schoolchildren, and collections are taken up regularly to furnish the under-privileged with food and school supplies. Successful businessmen and businesswomen of the Eglise de Philadelphie have formed an informal employment network, and regularly announce employment opportunities and coach job applicants through training and interviewing. Marriage negotiations and weddings (described below) are considered the responsibility of the entire church, with pastors and lay leaders sometimes taking part in the negotiations between families, as well as raising funds and providing gifts for the dowry and celebrations, just as members of extended Congolese families do. In October 2007, the main Brazzaville congregation considered raising the approximate equivalent of \$1,000 US, a significant sum for them, in order to send a representative from the congregation to a church member's wedding in Paris, France.

Women's groups provide support and counsel from older to younger women in spiritual matters as well as practicalities such as lessons in ironing clothes. Men's groups emphasize warrior-like prayer, and spiritual and moral strength and purity through retreats and fasting. Prayers for healing and the exorcism of evil spirits are regular practices during many of the meetings, along with lively music and vigorous praise offerings of dance and clapping. The Eglise de Philadelphie is a social as well as religious structure that reproduces many of the support systems traditionally available through family and clan. The Eglise de Philadelphie in Ouesso reproduces

many of the same culturally relevant support systems despite having a much smaller membership than the mother church.

The congregation of the Eglise de Philadelphie in Ouesso includes people from many ethnic origins and languages, a demographic reflection of the town. Services are conducted in French and Lingala. French is used for some singing, and is the preferred language for “high” functions such as the sermon and public reading of the Bible. There is also some praying in French, though this tends to be limited to well-educated male church leaders. Lingala is used for singing and worship, group and spontaneous individual prayer, and most announcements. The sermon is generally simultaneously translated into Lingala from French, though the orator may sometimes make important points in Lingala himself.¹¹

The church is under the care of a *pastor-coordinator* who is also responsible for looking after the other annexes of the Eglise de Philadelphie in the Sangha Region. Pastor Garyzas is the third pastor-coordinator since the church was founded in 1993, having received three years of theological training at the school run by the mother church in Brazzaville. He was appointed to the position by the pastors of the church in Brazzaville in part because he was a native of the Sangha region from the extended family of the chief of the Bekwel, the majority ethnic group in the area. The pastor-coordinator is helped in his duties by the *berger* or shepherd – a lay-leader without official theological training – and by an advisory group known as “elders” made up of senior men of the church. There is also a church treasurer who is a layperson. The current office-holder is a government employee whose secular

position gives him the bookkeeping skills he needs in order to keep the church's financial records.

An important aspect of this leadership structure for the purposes of this study is that though a husband may be the official title holder – be it pastor-coordinator, shepherd or elder – his wife is co-titular in the sense that she can be addressed as “Mrs. Pastor” or “Mrs. Shepherd,” though a woman cannot be the primary officeholder. (It is a widespread practice among conservative Christian groups that a woman cannot hold a church office.)¹² The co-titular wife may also be complimented or berated for her husband's actions as if she were as responsible as he.¹³ The co-titular status of the wives is a consideration when examining the forms and uses of directives among members of the women's group because it appears to bestow higher religious status on some women over others.

The structures for leadership and participation are reflected in the physical arrangement of areas where different kinds of activities are conducted. This becomes especially pertinent for the analyses presented in Chapters 5 and 6 because of how the use of ritual space indexes authority. Figure 2.4 maps out the interior of the Eglise de Philadelphie in Ouesso. Of note is the difference between the dais at the front of the church, shown at the top of Figure 2.4, and the area where the congregation sits. The participants who are most active and recognized as leaders or as exercising some special ability related to the ritual proceedings of the Sunday morning meetings stay mostly in this area. It is where the choir sits and sings, where the pastor-coordinator and shepherd sit with their wives, and also take positions

standing behind the lectern or the pulpit, or somewhere else designated by the central rectangular area. The congregation, on the other hand, sits on chairs and benches in the main section of the sanctuary. The front row of chairs, illustrated in the figure through smaller rectangles, is reserved for congregants with special status. For example, Marie-Claire, the President of the women's group, sits in the chair that is the farthest to the right of the front row each Sunday during worship as well as during all meetings of the women's group. Makwala, a participant in the women's group and wife of the church treasurer, and her husband sit in two chairs opposite the lectern and pulpit.

Though there is a side door, indicated on the diagram by a small rectangle on the left side, the main entrance into the building is at the back, marked by a small rectangle on the bottom right-hand side of the diagram. Next to the main entrance there is a stool where the "protocol" sits on Sunday mornings. As I will explain in Chapter 4, the protocol is a person or persons charged with the function of maintaining order and ensuring the seating of participants according to their role and status in the church. For other meetings in which I participated, such as Bible studies, intercessory prayer meetings and the women's meeting, no one exercised that function at the time of the meeting.

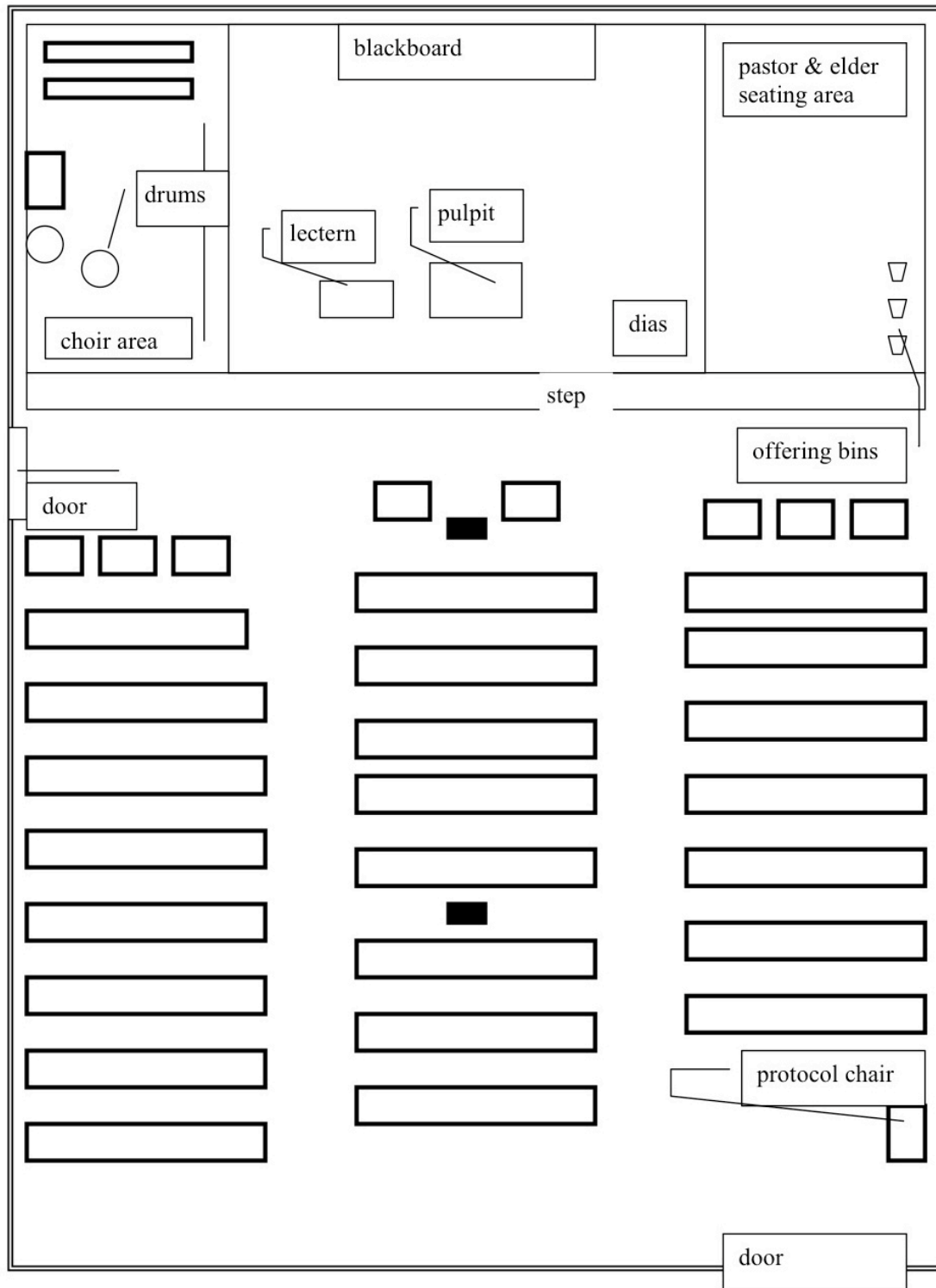


Figure 2.4 Diagram of the Interior of the Eglise de Philadelphie, Ouesso

As in the case of the mother church in Brazzaville, the Eglise de Philadelphie in Ouesso holds Bible studies, prayer meetings, and choir rehearsals. They collect alms and distribute them to needy families, visit and pray for the sick and house-bound elderly, and encourage those in a position to do so to help the sizeable number of those who are underemployed and unemployed to find jobs. One area where the church, or rather the pastor, has been growing in reputation is as a spiritual resource in the area of fertility and childbirth. According to the testimony of several church members and women from other AICs in Ouesso, Pastor Garyzas prayed regularly for women who were having difficulty conceiving and/or delivering a live child. Within less than two years, at least five or six women were able to conceive, and as of November 2007, all had safely given birth to healthy babies, not a small feat in a country where 81 of 1,000 babies die in infancy (based on UNICEF 2006 estimates). The pastor's own wife had a difficult gynecological history, including an operation for a condition she described as fibroid growths in the womb that caused a miscarriage. With prayer, she successfully conceived and bore a daughter. During the time I lived in the pastor's home, a woman in the congregation who had also had difficulty conceiving came almost daily to receive prayer and then continued to come for blessings for a safe delivery. She bore a healthy baby boy.

The actions of the pastor and the women in his church confirm that bearing children has high value in this society, perhaps in part because of the harsh results of childlessness, e.g. social ostracism and potential rejection from the network of family and friends that provides such necessities as food, shelter and employment,

but also because of economic and political traditions that count people, i.e., children, followers and subjects, as objects of wealth and power (Guyer 1995; Guyer and Belinga 1995; Vansina 1990). Furthermore, Kahiga (2005:189) states, “As an African woman to be barren is to lose one’s ontology which essentially is grounded on fertility and ability to transmit life. Children are guarantors of personal ontological immortality and without them, one is as good as a non-being, nothingness or dead” (see also Ombolo’s (1990) work on sex and society in central Africa). It is not unheard of for a man to divorce his wife or to take additional wives if she does not bear a child or enough children. Women need access to land in order to cultivate food and other products that may be exchanged or sold, but land is controlled by men. Women also need access to cash for some goods and services; cash is not always easily obtainable in an economy that remains partly based on a barter system. Women thus rely on men for land ownership and cash-earning ability; producing children in some sense is the required “payment.” Children advertise the prized attribute of fertility, a promise of more children, and the future of the lineage. They are also the workforce of the home and the social security system of aged parents.

The importance of the pastor’s ministry of prayer and of his reputation as an effective spiritual intercessor for women’s concerns cannot be overestimated. Descriptions of growing and successful AICs regularly include mention of healing ministries; official consideration of the needs of women, children and childbirth are among the leading concerns (cf. Daneel 2001; Hoehler-Fatton 1996; Landau 1995;

Mukonyora 2007; Phiri 2001; Phiri and Nadar 2006; Sackey 2006; Steady 1976). In order to make valid interpretations of the language and interactional practices of the Eglise de Philadelphie women's group, we must understand more of the world of women in central Africa.

2.3 The World of Women

Thus far I have described the general ecology of Ouesso with respect to history and ethnicities, languages, and religion. But this is a relatively neutral description compiled through books, interviews and observations as someone of either gender may experience it. What remains is to attempt to enter the social world inhabited by the women of the Eglise de Philadelphie.

Remarkably little is known about women's lives in either everyday or more formal contexts, nor about their language use in the central African context. Even the ethnography of reference for central Africa, Vansina's *Paths in the Rainforest* (1990), admits an absence of ethnographic data on women and women's groups: "There are very few female authors and hence the corpus shows an obvious lack of data about women, their lives, and their points of view. Not a single text about women's associations in Cameroon, Gabon, or Congo comes from a woman, and, in consequence, very little is known about them, since men were prevented by their gender from learning about them.... Gender thus has affected the record ... by leaving obvious gaps..." (Vansina 1990:25). There are some studies of women's linguistic practices from West and East Africa (cf. McIntosh 2005; Niang 1995; Paasch 2005), but the apparent tendency among sociocultural linguists is to consider gender as only

one of several social factors affecting phenomena such as language attitudes, language choice, code-switching and ethnic identity (cf. Adebija 1994; Cook 1999; Irvine [1974] 1989; Myers-Scotton 1993; Russell 1982). This is certainly due in part to the theoretical paradigms and research questions of these researchers: because all but one of them are women, their gender would not have prevented them from having close access to women's everyday lives and language use. But Vansina's observation that men are prevented from learning about women's groups is also pertinent. The researcher's gender has both advantages and disadvantages in ethnographic and linguistic research. My gender was not the only key to my access to the Eglise de Philadelphie women's group, but it was a necessary and significant one, as I will make clear below.

2.3.1 Gender Spheres

Though it was not my original intention to record conversational interaction in a women's group, I arrived in the Republic of Congo in January 2006 with the intention of identifying a group in which I could carry out ethnographic fieldwork that would include audio recordings of and participation in conversational interactions. Realizing that this would require me to have facility in at least one of the national languages of Congo-Brazzaville, I began studying Lingala with a private tutor in Brazzaville before traveling to the northern part of the country where I could learn through immersion.¹⁴ Once in Ouesso, my husband, Byron, and I began Lingala language and culture learning separately with Jean-Pierre Mopiane Dia (a Bekwel speaker) and his wife Lili (a Njyem speaker). My husband had met Jean-

Pierre through SIL and Evangelical Church of Congo contacts when he visited Ouessou in April 2006, and it was through these contacts that we were able to secure housing and find language consultants. Within a week or two we both noticed that the kinds of things Jean-Pierre and Byron talked about during their sessions together were not the same topics Mama Lili and I talked about. This had an effect on the vocabulary we were learning, but it also had the effect of creating a much different context for our respective Lingala language and culture learning sessions. Jean-Pierre and Byron talked about community affairs, and took walks together that introduced Byron to community members and to locations where men socialized. Mama Lili and I stayed in her courtyard where she did chores related to food preparation (and sometimes allowed me to help): chopping firewood, cleaning and sorting cassava leaves for a sauce, and preparing the cassava root itself – a labor-intensive process that leaches harmful arsenic from the cassava root through soaking, boiling, mashing, straining, kneading and finally rolling the cassava pâte known as *kwanga* into banana leaves. I watched and listened as she cleaned, bathed and played with her young son; I gossiped with her and her neighbors, and learned playground songs from her and some middle-school girls who were her neighbors. Mama Lili taught me the language of hearth and home, while Jean-Pierre taught Byron the language of public networking. We were learning the same language from the differing perspectives of our respective genders.

At about this same time, I visited the women’s church group of the Eglise de Philadelphie at the request of Pastor Garyzas, who had become a friend of my

husband. Through them I began learning about the culture of women in church – the ways they participated in the life of the church, the meetings they attended, what they did in those meetings. It seemed that the church served as a “home away from home” where the language of hearth and home still occupied a central topical space, and where women from many homes shared their concerns for their families and thus for the community. Meanwhile, my husband was getting to know pastors and other community leaders; the different employment opportunities in the region; how supplies of fuel, water and food arrived in the area and were regulated; and what healthcare was available. In short, he gained an operational and pragmatic perspective on the community. The same community took on different appearances according to the perspectives of the two genders.

I also learned, as I had learned previously in West Africa, that meetings of men and women who are not married to each other should be held in view of the public or else they are interpreted as romantic trysts, and that a woman’s presence when men are discussing community affairs does not grant her equal participatory status in the interaction. Cross-gender relationships beyond the level of acquaintance are formed either because the two people are related to each other, for example as siblings, cousins or in-laws, or because the two are sexually involved. While there are many exceptions to this broad rule of thumb, a friendship between a man and a woman who are neither in a consanguine nor a sexual relationship is often reformulated in terms of the family, for instance through the use of the address terms ‘brother’ and ‘sister’, or as in-laws, i.e., as though the man is primarily a friend of

the husband or the woman is primarily a friend of the wife. Men and women generally belong to social networks of different memberships and relationship configurations.

Men and women, then, are relegated to different life spheres through the differences of their daily preoccupations, separate social networks, and differences in the public status of their genders. It is no wonder that male ethnographic and linguistic field researchers have thus far been unsuccessful in studying women's groups in central Africa. The phenomenon of separate gender spheres may also account for the limited success of other sociolinguistic research projects I worked on during this time in five language varieties of the Sangha region. In these cases my gender worked to my disadvantage because I did not have the same social network contacts or social status as my husband. Nevertheless, though men and women appear on one hand to lead separate lives, the points at which their gender spheres intersect may become daily preoccupations.

2.3.2 The Intersection of Gender Spheres

As I indicated above, home life, including male and female relationships and children, was a common topic of gossip, small talk and prayer among the members of the Eglise de Philadelphie women's group. And while I participated in relatively frequent conversations about these topics with men I knew, my male interlocutors often seemed to reinterpret them as having the underlying purpose of teaching me, the foreign woman, how to behave properly in their society, or telling me what I should say to my Congolese female friends to encourage them in correct behavior.

Some conversations degenerated into frankly prescriptive discourses on female behavior, illustrated with anonymous negative examples of sexually unfaithful women who did not correctly care for their husband and children. Upon one occasion, after enduring a long lecture from the brother-in-law of one of my female acquaintances, I asked the three women with me as we walked away from the house out of earshot of the man if they agreed with his conclusions. All of them agreed emphatically, despite the fact that many of the brother-in-law's assertions seemed to me to be demeaning of women. In addition, they encouraged me to tell other women in the community what the man had said. As a foreigner, they told me, I could speak more forcefully than they, and women would listen more carefully to what I said. Though my position as an outsider may have shaped their responses, I concluded from interactions like this one that these men and women were concerned with the protocols and prescriptive cultural rules that govern contexts where the gender spheres intersect, that is, in circumstances when women attend to the physical needs of men, and to rearing their children. For this reason, the social institution of marriage and the care of children are dominant social themes for the women of the Eglise de Philadelphie, and their linguistic and social practices reflect their concerns. Further, these concerns motivate a high frequency of directive forms in activities relating to marriage and children.

Weddings in particular became the focal point of the group's talk and activities when it was announced in January 2007 that Eugene, one of the church's elders, would marry Nicole, his longtime companion and the mother of his children,

including their sixteen-year-old daughter. The legal recognition of a man's responsibilities to a woman and the children she bears him is ritually important in Christian teachings. That the Eglise de Philadelphie as an African Instituted Church accepts the ramifications for these teachings in their sociocultural context is indicated by recent concerns that church leaders be legally married. This is a long and complex process.

The social institution of marriage in Congolese society has been complicated by layers of tradition, a legal system borrowed from colonizers, and the moral authority of the church. I first began learning about these layers in July 2006 when I returned to Brazzaville from Ouesso for a workshop. One of my Congolese co-workers there invited me to her niece's wedding. My mind conjured up pictures from weddings I had attended in Burkina Faso and Niger during the five years I lived in west Africa from 1995 to 2001: crowds of family members, colorful outfits with colors and designs according to whether one was with the bride's or groom's family, and especially the young virgin secluded in her room being comforted, counseled and entertained by female friends and relatives while the actual wedding ceremony took place mainly among the men. The dowry and other negotiations concerning the exchange of goods and services between the two families usually took place on different occasions and with a more limited number of onlookers. They were not considered activities for the wedding day celebration.

Instead, I found that the niece's wedding was the last of three ceremonies associated with traditional marriage arrangements, and the first of three kinds of

ceremonies that bestow different marital statuses on couples in Congo-Brazzaville. Rather than a young virgin, a matronly woman with two children sat ceremoniously on an overstuffed couch in a courtyard filled with plastic chairs where guests were seated to watch the drama and enjoy free refreshments. The father of her children and the man whose life she had shared for ten years or more sat next to her. Neither of them spoke, but both listened while representatives from each of their families gave eloquent speeches, and haggled and postured over the monetary amount of the bride-price and the list of gifts demanded of the groom's family, as well as the gifts from the bride's family to the newlyweds. It was the *troisième vin* or "third cup of wine", the last of three traditional ceremonies in a long and expensive process of negotiation between two families in order to assure the future of a lineage.

At other wedding ceremonies I attended in Brazzaville and in Ouessou, various tricks were played on the groom, apparently to test his mettle. For example, the bride was hidden and a price demanded for a fictional taxi to go and find her. At another wedding, the groom was required to pay for a member of the bride's family to shine his shoes, and at still another, the groom was required to answer riddles before the final negotiations could begin. These public ordeals are said by married couples and friends I talked with to be nerve-wracking for the groom, who can never be certain that all of the effort and expenses to obtain the traditional accord for the marriage will be successful until the very end of the *troisième vin*. Even then, the bride's family may only consent to the marriage if the groom promises to continue paying up to an agreed-upon sum after the ceremony on an installment plan. Though

there are undoubtedly processes specific to ethnic groups in different parts of Congo-Brazzaville, wedding ceremonies I attended in both the northern and southern parts of the country were structurally similar. Despite the variation in the details of marriage customs and ceremonies from group to group within the Republic of Congo, my limited experience attending ceremonies in both the north and the south indicates that a kind of national tradition is emerging styled on the *trois vins* model, i.e. the official negotiation ceremonies require three “wines” or ceremonial meetings in which the bride-price and payment plan is negotiated, a dowry is given and finally the bride and groom are recognized as husband and wife.

The traditional wedding process is a legal prerequisite in Congo-Brazzaville for the state civil ceremony, the second kind of wedding. The civil marital status is inherited through colonial authorities from the French legal system. An additional “permission” clause in the civil code will not allow a couple to marry without a representative from the families to testify to the correct fulfillment of all traditional negotiations, payments and ceremonies. The civil wedding consists of a brief exchange of vows in the city hall before representatives of the mayor. While in the traditional ceremony the bride wears clothing made of colorful African cloth, for the civil wedding she wears a white gown and veil and carries a small bouquet, in a style reminiscent of European and American tradition.¹⁵ The traditional and civil weddings involve a very expensive and time-consuming process through which a man and his family may spend up to the equivalent of two or three years of his

salary. Neither the civil ceremony nor the church wedding itself is expensive, but the clothing, gifts and refreshments for each special day may be.

In order to be officially married in the eyes of church authorities, a couple must have fulfilled the requirements of three types of marriage procedures: the traditional, the civil and the religious. The church authorities will not conduct religious ceremonies without a document certifying the civil marriage. Given the tremendous outlays required with respect to protocol and finances, it is not surprising that during the nineteen months I lived in Congo-Brazzaville no one that I or anyone in my expanding network of friends and acquaintances knew had a church wedding. To my knowledge there is no ceremony necessary to initiate a co-habiting relationship, though the man's recognition of the woman's pregnancy has preceded two instances I am aware of when couples began openly living together.

The preparations for Eugene and Nicole's wedding were a primary focus of the meetings I recorded of the Eglise de Philadelphie women's group. The women spent a lot of time discussing the details of their involvement in the wedding celebration (these were in addition to the preparations of the prospective bride and groom). The group took responsibility for cleaning and decorating the interior of the church, locating guest lodging, and cooking and cleaning for honorary guests. They also had a part in the entertainment for the wedding celebration, which included preparing snacks and performing song and dance routines in coordinated outfits.

For public activities such as weddings, funerals or civic events, groups in many parts of Africa collectively buy cloth and make outfits to wear at the event

much in the way that matching t-shirts are worn by groups in America and Europe. Procuring the cloth may be a complicated process. Sometimes it involves submitting a design to the textile manufacturer that includes mottos and emblems for political parties, associations or businesses; the submitted design may also include photographic images of a deceased relative or of the president of the country. In the case of groups with more limited means, ready-made cloth may be purchased in bulk, which necessitates only that individuals can agree on a choice. For wedding parties, the bride may designate two cloth designs – one of expensive cloth for her well-to-do friends and relatives, and one of less-expensive cloth for those with limited means. While everyone uses the same cloth, they are free to have whatever kind of outfit they wish made from it. The abundance of beautiful cloth and the availability of many tailors means that both men and women have clothing made with every imaginable design of neckline, sleeve, length, edging, buttons, and so on. Group clothing is a phenomenon at the intersection of conformity and individuality in African social life.

The Eglise de Philadelphie women decided that we would buy cloth together to make outfits to wear during the festivities, both as a show of solidarity and to identify them as entertainers. Chimene, the pastor-coordinator's wife, volunteered to have one of her sisters in Brazzaville buy enough cloth for everyone, and the women spent quite a lot of time discussing and arguing about how much they were willing to pay for the cloth, what colors it should be, and whether they should also have to pay for the transportation of Chimene's sister to go and get the cloth and the costs to

send it to Ouesso, in addition to much talk about the merits of various tailors and clothing designs. The wedding was cancelled at the last minute due to disagreements between the groom and the bride's family; however, by that time we had all already had our matching outfits made.

According to the plans and preparations for the day of the church wedding, after completing the civil ceremony at the city hall, the bride and groom were to come to the church, where an additional solemnizing of their union would be presided over by the pastor-coordinator and one of the head pastors of the Eglise de Philadelphie in Brazzaville. Following this, there would be entertainment that included singing and dancing both by the church choir and by the women's group. Snacks would be provided for everyone, and then a slightly more select group of people would go to a local restaurant for a banquet with more entertainment and merry-making. The inclusion of plans for a meal at a restaurant was considered by the women's group to be overly ostentatious. They preferred the arrangements of the previous year's wedding of the church's shepherd and his wife for which the women of the church had prepared all of the food and drink themselves.

It may be in part because of the rigors of becoming a legally recognized married couple through all three ceremonies that the percentage of couples in the Eglise de Philadelphie who have completed them is not very high. The church only recognizes two of the eight men in the leadership group as being married. In the only study of Congolese marital rates I could find, Antoine and Nanitelamio (1991) cite statistics for 1984 that show that seventy percent of the women in Brazzaville are

married by the time they are in their thirties, while admitting that variability in how respondents determined their marital status adds some unreliability to their figures. Even so, only two of the sixteen women in the women's group of the church were recognized as married; another woman had been married only through the traditional procedures and a fourth was widowed. The low rate of legally recognized marriages becomes an important issue for the church, whose teachings require that a man and woman be recognized as married before cohabitating and producing children. This is a current concern for the Eglise de Philadelphie and its leadership group. As is the case for the mainline Protestant denominations in Congo-Brazzaville, men in the Eglise de Philadelphie are not permitted to exercise the role of church pastor unless they have completed all three kinds of weddings. Because of this, Pastor Garyzas is one of the only men in his church who is recognized as married, though he is also younger than the shepherd and several elders. Because of the different lives led in their respective gender spheres, it is not a given that couples attend church together. My research focused on the women's group, and therefore I did not count the number of married men in the church, nor did I consider women who attend church on Sundays but who are not involved in the women's group.

In 2005 there were several strong teachings given on the sacredness of marriage at the church by visiting church leaders and prophets. Since that time, Pastor Garyzas has been urging the men in church leadership to marry.¹⁶ In May 2006, the shepherd married his wife of many years (they were grandparents at the time of the church wedding ceremony). As I explained above, during my fieldwork,

the church was looking forward to the wedding of the first elder and his consort, a member of the women's group.

The women's group of the church was particularly excited and interested in this event. I have already described the important role they would have played in organizing housing, meals and entertainment if the wedding had taken place. In addition, one of the founding pastors from Brazzaville's church (a charismatic figure with celebrity-like status) was expected to attend, and this generated speculation about when he would arrive as well as discussions about the roster of women who would cook and clean for him during his stay. Preparations for the wedding made extra meetings necessary to organize details and prepare songs for the great day. These meetings, held two to four times a week over a six-week period in April and May 2007, gave me an opportunity to record the women's conversations, planning and singing. These were purpose-driven gatherings in which the women used linguistic resources to accomplish goals and tasks, including getting others to do things.

My research focus on the Eglise de Philadelphie women's group was enabled in large part by the phenomenon of gender spheres that I described above, as well as membership in a local network of Christian friends.

2.3.3 The Women's Group

The demographic profile of the Eglise de Philadelphie women's group reflected the ethnolinguistic diversity and multilingual system that I described above for the Département de la Sangha and for Congo-Brazzaville. It reflected as well the

social, political and economic patterns that have historically brought workers and their families into the Sangha. The women's group included about sixteen women from a slightly larger number of women who attended Sunday services at the Eglise de Philadelphie. These sixteen women were regular attendees for meetings during the week, a demonstration of a higher level of involvement in church life than for those who attended only on Sunday mornings. During the time of my involvement from June 2006 to July 2007 the largest group meetings involved thirteen women, while the lowest attendance was two (including me), though usual attendance was around ten women. All of the women had children, which was especially apparent in the cases of those who came to the meetings with babies and toddlers or those who were expecting at the time due to the prayer intervention of Pastor Garyzas. Almost all were living with a man within a larger family context, though as I explained above, very few were married according to Congolese law. A few of these women were related to each other or came from the same ethnolinguistic group, some were neighbors, and some were colleagues at the same work place. Most of the women interacted with each other in multiple roles in different places over the course of a day or week, in visits to each other's homes as friends, in the market as buyer and seller or as competing merchants, and at church as an adult choir member and as the director of the children's choir. The women were also of varying religious backgrounds. Thus, the only things they all appeared to have in common were their gender and their current membership in the Eglise de Philadelphie.

Table 2.1 summarizes pertinent information about the fourteen women who were present for most meetings and rehearsals, and whose utterances figure most frequently in the data set. (Excellence, the choir director's companion, and Nicole, the bride-to-be, were in Brazzaville during the time I recorded and so they are not included in descriptions of the group.) I have included their names and four social factors that were found to affect both the roles and authority of participants in other studies and the interpretations of directives by other scholars: their approximate age, village language, marital status, and "religious status," including recognition by other church members for special talent and whether they were co-titular with a man in church leadership.

Actual names of participants are listed; the participants in the women's group of the Eglise de Philadelphie wanted to be recognized for who they are. I discovered this in the process of negotiating permission to record and use recordings of the meetings for this study, which will be discussed briefly in the next chapter.

#	Name	Approximate Age	Village Language	Marital status	Religious status
1	Aude	30-35	Bekwel (A85)	co-habiting	recognized singer, wife of an elder
2	Calmette	20-25	Mbete (B61)	co-habiting	church member
3	Chimene	30-35	Teke-Eboo (B74)	married through all ceremonies	pastor's wife
4	Claudine	50	Mboshi (C25)	married through all ceremonies	shepherd's wife
5	Elodie	25-30	unknown	co-habiting	church member
6	Estelle	30-35	Mboshi (C25)	co-habiting	recognized singer, wife of an elder
7	Ladi	25-30	Kikoongo (H)	co-habiting	recognized singer
8	Lydie	35-40	Bongili (C15)	co-habiting	church member
9	Makwala	40	unknown	unknown	church treasurer's wife
10	Mapasa	40-45	Laari (H16)	traditional marriage	church member
11	Marie-Claire	55	Bekwel (A85)	separated, widowed	women's group leader, church council member
12	Mireille	35-40	Bekwel (A85)	co-habiting	church member
13	Rosine	30-35	Ngundi (C11)	co-habiting	recognized singer
14	Virginie	25	Bomitaba (C14)	co-habiting	church member

Table 2.1 Participants in the Women's Group

As can be seen in the third column of Table 2.1, the women's ages varied from early twenties to middle fifties. The fifth column shows that all but one lived in

a household with a man whose children they bore and cared for; only two were married through all ceremonies and thus met standards for positions in the church hierarchy. Religious status, reported in the last column, was accorded to the group leader, Marie-Claire; Chimene, the pastor's wife; Claudine, the shepherd's wife; and Makwala, the church treasurer's wife. Aude and Estelle were both wives of church elders in addition to being recognized by church members for their musical talents. Ladi and Rosine also seemed to have a special status related to their singing talent.

The women all spoke some French, evidence of formal education, though the majority of the group's interactions were in Lingala. In addition, they spoke at least eight different village languages, as indicated in the fourth column.¹⁷ Ladi identified her village language by the name Kikoongo, which could mean any one of up to thirteen linguistic varieties in the continuum of that name.¹⁸ The large number of village languages means that only a few of the women shared a single village language. This in turn assured that Lingala and French as contact languages were the only ones available to all of the women as a group. As I described for the linguistic ecologies of Ouessou and Congo-Brazzaville, these women may have had a number of languages in their repertoires, but spoke none of them at the level of an educated mother-tongue speaker.

The geographic locations of the village languages listed for the members of the women's group are shown in Figure 2.5 below. In addition to emphasizing the ethnolinguistic diversity of the group, this figure allows a glimpse of where these women might still have had family connections. As I described for the multilingual

system of Congo-Brazzaville, almost everyone I knew in Ouessou had family in Brazzaville as well as in village language areas. This situation facilitated the transfer of money, goods, people and language varieties between different areas of the country. An additional issue is that the interactional patterns and routines documented here may be areal rather than specific to one language or one ethnic group.

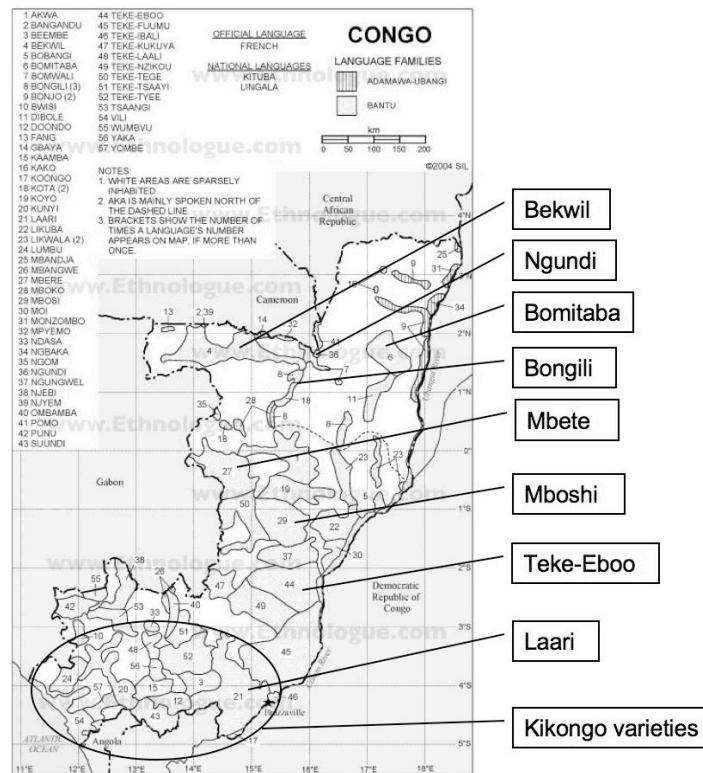


Figure 2.5 Members' Village Language Areas (map from Gordon 2004)

For the first several months of my involvement with the women's group I assumed that Marie-Claire, who held the title of President, was the single authority figure for the group. She had a role in the pastor's advisory group though she was not an elder. Women were not allowed to hold positions of official church leadership except as co-titular with their husbands, as previously mentioned. Marie-Claire was

an older woman who had had a husband at one time but no longer did – whether because he left her or because he died, I was not able to ascertain. Her leadership role seemed to be validated through her seniority in the church as one of the first members, her social status as an older woman with children and grandchildren, and her status as a woman with a reputation for spiritual authority and power both in her pre-Christian and Christian lives. Burke (2001) and Hoehler-Fatton (1996) found similar social factors for women in church leadership in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Kenya respectively. Further, Vansina's etymological study of Bantu roots found such social factors as economic status, age, wisdom and fertility in semantic ranges for leadership status terms (1990:274-276). Marie-Claire's official role in the group and these social factors explained, for example, why she was the one to chair committee meetings, or why she frequently took a position on the dais at the front of the church building to pray or to exhort the women to obey their husbands and consorts and to care for their children. However, many other women also appeared to exercise authority as they led discussions, group singing, and even prayer meetings. During the singing rehearsals, women I had not previously considered as holding a position of authority in the group (Ladi, for instance) took active roles in song composition and directing other women's actions in song and dance. This raised the questions for me of what the social organization of the group was, and how it emerged and was maintained through linguistic practices, in particular, through directives.

2.3.4 Initial Hypotheses

Besides providing an overview of the group's members for this ethnographic description, I initially used the social categories in Table 2.1, such as age and village language, to try to understand the linguistic practices and the social organization of the group during my fieldwork. In particular, I wanted to understand the relative statuses of various members in the group, the forms and patterns of their use of directives and the consequences for the hierarchical shape of their social organization. I therefore attempted to formulate hypotheses linking directive use to social categories. Age was the first social category I investigated because it is a reasonable hypothesis in the African context to assume that the older a person is, the more status she has in the group. This did not explain, however, why the participation in singing and dancing of much younger members such as Rosine appeared to override Marie-Claire's presence and influence in singing rehearsals in spite of the fact that she was twenty to twenty-five years younger than Marie-Claire. A second hypothesis concerned religious status. It would be reasonable to suppose that Chimene, the pastor's wife, would be of higher status than Makwala, the church treasurer's wife, because her husband's status is higher than that of Makwala's husband. However, as I will demonstrate in Chapter 4, Makwala's use of directives to Chimene contradicted patterns of politeness and deference that have been demonstrated in other studies of interactions between persons of higher and lower social status (cf. Brown and Levinson 1978; Ervin-Tripp 1976; Obeng 1994; Yaeger-Dror and Sister 1987). My third hypothesis concerning status was that speakers of

the majority language group of the area would benefit from the prestige of their language. While this seemed to account in part for Marie-Claire's and Aude's statuses in the group since they were both speakers of Bekwel, one of two dominant languages in the northwest of Congo-Brazzaville, it did not explain instances when Ladi's directions to the group trumped Aude's. Ladi was not even from northern Congo where Lingala dominates, but spoke a Kikoongo variety from the south as her village language. Finally, I predicted that marital status would give more authority to some women rather than others. For example, Mapasa was married through the traditional ceremony, but Lydie was not married to the man she lived with. A possible hypothesis was that Mapasa's participation would somehow be more valued or active than Lydie's because of the differences in their marital statuses. But that was not the case: Mapasa played a more passive role, especially in singing rehearsals, while Lydie was an active singer-dancer.

Because these social categories were not informative for women's relative statuses and the social organization of the group, I then examined whether membership in other groups within the Eglise de Philadelphie might make a difference in a woman's status or authority within the women's group. In Table 2.1, four women are listed as having musical talent that was recognized by other members of the church: Aude, Ladi, Rosine, and Estelle. Of these four women, only Estelle is a member of the church choir. The other three women, Aude, Ladi and Rosine, were all former members of the church choir. Aude also reported to me that she and Rosine were two of the founding members. She blamed the current choir

director for having forced her out of the choir, though the story and the reasons for his actions were not entirely clear to me. Aude and Ladi in particular were very active in the composition of lyrics for wedding songs and in initiating songs during singing rehearsals, whereas Estelle was only the lead singer for one song, which happened to be a popular one in her village language. Moreover, most of Estelle's attempts to influence the selection of songs for composition and rehearsal were unsuccessful. It appeared that membership in the church choir did not confer any special authority or influence within the women's group. On the other hand, having a recognized talent or ability did seem to make a difference in a woman's directive actions. This idea is further developed in Chapters 5 and 6 of the dissertation.

Thus, none of these initial hypotheses hold enough explanatory power to adequately describe the interactions and directive forms of this group. Instead, the data reveal a strong correlation between the form of the directive and kind of activity the group was engaged in, not the status of the speaker. Accordingly, in Chapter 4, I describe directives that are rhetorical questions and occur in the context of disagreements; the discussion in Chapter 5 concerns commands that occur in informal contexts and during singing rehearsals; lastly, in Chapter 6, I describe calls to corporate prayer and directives in invocations and petitions used during prayer meetings. When approached from this perspective, two further patterns emerge: the first concerns the form of the verbal suffix which displays the speaker's evidential source and degree of certainty; the second concerns the group's social organization,

which is dominated by a limited number of the most knowledgeable, experienced and skilled women.

2.4 Summary

In this chapter I have described the social, linguistic and religious ecologies of the world in which the women of the Eglise de Philadelphie live and form a Community of Practice. Relatively few ethnographic studies focusing on contexts with these multilingual and religious qualities exist for central Africa, especially those that consider the perspective of women. This limited description, then, is a contribution towards filling the gap in the ethnographic record.

I began the chapter with a brief description of Congo-Brazzaville and the multilingual system, which includes the Lingala language. I then turned to a description of the Sangha region in northern Congo-Brazzaville where this research took place, giving attention to factors that have resulted in a high degree of multilingualism and inter-ethnic contact in the region in general and to the town of Ouessou in particular. The multilingualism and inter-ethnic contact of the town and region are reflected in the members of the women's group that produced the data for this dissertation. Next, I briefly described the religious ecology of Congo-Brazzaville with respect to African Instituted Churches (AICs) like the Eglise de Philadelphie, the church in which I conducted my fieldwork.

After this, I described how my husband, Byron, and I discovered the different social and linguistic spheres inhabited by men and women in this part of Congo-Brazzaville. Weddings are one occasion where these gender spheres intersect; I

described the complex process of weddings in Congo because the meetings and activities that I recorded as a member of the Eglise de Philadelphie women's group were motivated by preparations for a wedding between two members of the church. I dedicated the rest of the chapter to a description of the members of the Eglise de Philadelphie women's group and to a discussion of the various hypotheses based on the women's social categories that I initially used during my fieldwork to try to understand the relationship between the forms of the directives used by the women and the social organization of the group. I discovered that the relative social statuses of the speaker and recipient do not affect the forms of the directives. Instead, the activities in which participants are engaged and their subjectivities as reflected in verbal suffixes are the most important factors in determining the forms and uses of the directives described in this dissertation. In the next chapter I describe how I came to be a member of this group, how the data were gathered, and how they were analyzed.

Notes for Chapter 2

¹ Official demographic figures published through the Centre National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques at www.cnsee.org, also available through www.congo-siteportail.info and www.citypopulation.de/Congo.html.

² Speaker numbers are difficult to establish both because of Lingala's status as a language of wider communication and because of the growing number of first language speakers. Moreover, some children in urban contexts learn Lingala before they learn their language of ethnic affiliation, and this makes it difficult to decide which is their "first language" or "mother tongue."

³ SIL-Congo's attempt to assess community levels of Lingala bilingualism using the Sentence Repetition Testing method (Phillips 1992; Radloff 1991) fell prey to the difficulty noted by other linguists: "Contiguous forms of Bantu are generally so similar in basic areas of lexicon as to be nearly mutually intelligible and phonologic differences are rarely so great that regular correspondences are not transparent to the native speaker.... A natural consequence is a very high degree of 'intimate borrowing' and areally directed evolution that can only rarely be detected" (Bennett 1976:151 quoted in Hinnebusch 1999:196).

⁴ For example, the colloquial expression *mbóka-mbóka* (literally 'village-village') refers to some work or arrangement that is shoddily done and that demonstrates a lack of technological savvy and finesse.

⁵ The language map in Guthrie's 1953 description of Forest Bantu languages shows a population distribution remarkably similar to the 1995 population density map created by MARA/ARMA, a project that maps malarial risk in Africa (www.mara.org.za).

⁶ Some information in this section comes from official web sites for the Republic of Congo (www.congo-siteportail.info, www.congopage.com). The rest comes from interviews I conducted with a variety of people, including Nestor Kouffa, whose uncle, Daniel Bokangue, was one of the first converts of the Swedish missionaries, and who translated the Bible and whose biography and history of the region Mr. Kouffa was kind enough to lend to me (Åhman 2003); Albert Lemba and Bernard Koutangoye, statesmen with excellent knowledge of local history and politics; Etienne Garyzas, who is of the Bekwel royal family and vice-president of the Fédération des Eglises de Reveille; Gaston Akoula, Norbert Ayela, Antoine Baina, Jean-Pierre Mouganga, Gaspard Bambaywar and Jean-Claude Mokabisi, who regaled me with elaborate stories of many kinds and of many ethnic origins; and Edouard Bom, Stig Hatmark, John Phillips and Bishop Yves Monot, who provided information on contemporary Ouesso and its place in the infrastructures and events beyond national boundaries in the region. Keith Beavon was an important source of information concerning cross-border language groups from Cameroon.

⁷ I do not mean anything derogatory by the term *pygmy*. I am aware of negative uses of this term and its French and Lingala equivalents; however, I do not know of any other term that can be substituted for it.

⁸ Several traditional chiefs I interviewed provided me with stories of how their people came to be in this area. Two in particular, the Bomwali-Lino and the Ngundi, recently waged a legal battle over accusations of slander concerning their ancestral ties to the area. I also recorded folk etymologies of the name *Ouesso* from several groups, which are used to claim ancestral land rights.

⁹ Pastor Bom's long-term southern postings probably saved the life of his son, who was caught by soldiers in the south looking for northerners to kill during the national turbulence of the 1990s. From Pastor Bom and from other friends and acquaintances, I learned that it was common practice for soldiers to discover a captive's ethnic affiliation through tests of linguistic repertoire and skill. People from both southern and northern Congo often had to pass for someone of a different ethnolinguistic group in order to save their own lives during the conflicts that raged between the south and the north in the 1990s and early 2000s.

¹⁰ Much of the information in this section is from Byron Harrison, whose research projects from 2006 to the present include religion in central Africa with special attention to African Instituted Churches.

¹¹ I observed this tendency to conduct "high" church functions in French in other Eglise de Philadelphie churches, and in churches of other denominations. It should be noted that the pastor-coordinator recently begun preparing and preaching his sermons in Lingala in an effort to better communicate Biblical teachings with the congregation (personal communication, September 2007).

¹² In the First Epistle to Timothy chapter 2, verses 11 and 12, the Apostle Paul tells his young associate that he does not allow a woman to have authority over a man. This biblical reference is one of several used by many Protestant, Evangelical, Charismatic and Pentecostal groups to justify the claim that only men can be official church leaders.

¹³ Brusco (1994), Hoehler-Fatton (1996) and Sackey (2006) describe this same phenomenon operating in Colombian Pentecostalism, Kenyan Roho religion and Ghanaian AICs respectively. The one exception to the co-titular practice may be the wife of the choir director. Since she was out of town for several months while I was conducting fieldwork, I did not have enough opportunity to observe her.

¹⁴ My tutor, Georges-Henri Mbembe, formerly taught Lingala to Peace Corps members in Congo-Brazzaville and is one of the founding members of an organization that promotes the documentation and intergenerational transmission of Congolese languages.

¹⁵ The men in all of the ceremonies I attended and photographs that I saw were dressed in western-style suits regardless of whether the ceremony was the traditional or civil one.

¹⁶ A frequent biblical citation for this teaching comes from the writings of the Apostle Paul, in which he says that church leaders must be “the husband of one wife” (First Epistle to Timothy, chapter 3, verses 1 and 2).

¹⁷ Ironically, the linguistic dominance of Lingala entailed the interpretation of English as a village language, a minority language in the context of the group’s activities. When we took turns singing verses of a song in our village languages, the other women wanted me to sing a verse in English.

¹⁸ It is not unusual for speakers of Kikoongo language varieties to use *Kikoongo* as an umbrella term rather than to give the distinct name of the variety they speak. Further, when Ladi sang in her village language, my Congolese transcriber, who is originally from the north, identified it as Kituba. It may be that Ladi is one of a growing number of ethnic Kikoongo who now speak the contact language Kituba as a village language.

Chapter 3

Data and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I describe how I dealt with the challenge of discovering an insider's perspective on the data. This included finding a point of entry into the Eglise de Philadelphie women's group, becoming a validated participant and deciding how to make the collection and analysis of streams of interaction manageable and legitimate in order to assure the validity of my interpretations and conclusions. I turn first to what other scholars have said concerning the issue of a foreigner analyzing conversational interaction. Though I do not consider myself to be a conversation analyst, I relied on many of the methodological principles of conversation analysis in order to interpret my data.

3.1.1 The Analysis of Conversational Interaction

The analysis of conversation can be very revealing for linguistic description (cf. Du Bois 1987, 2001; Du Bois, Kumpf and Ashby 2003; Ford, Fox and Thompson 2002; Ochs, Schegloff and Thompson 1996; Park 2001). Just as discourse analysis has informed the study of grammatical features operating above the level of the clause (cf. Longacre 1983; Levinsohn 1994; van Dijk 1997), the analysis of conversation touches the intersections between language and society as well as culture and cognition. How speakers manage the flow of information, the organization of their thoughts, their relationships with interlocutors, and their values

and agendas are revealed in conversational interaction. The challenge of how to get into speakers' heads is met by the insistence of conversation analysis that conversational interaction realizes much of what the speaker thinks and knows as he or she deploys cognition and competence in dialogic performance.

There has been some disagreement among practitioners of conversation analysis concerning whether the analyst must be a mother tongue speaker of the language in which the conversations took place. They are not alone in this concern. As Gumperz's (1971, 1977, 1982, 1992) work in conversational inference has demonstrated, there may be frequent misunderstandings based on very subtle interactional practices even among speakers of the same language who come from different sociocultural traditions. On the other hand, Moerman (1988, 1996) argues that the foreign analyst has the advantage of peering into a situation which is already acknowledged as strange, whereas the researcher working in his or her own language and culture may all too easily overlook important discoveries because of familiar assumptions.¹ He cautions, however, that the foreigner should avoid working apart from cultural insiders and should also resist the temptation to invoke the general notion of culture as an explanation for why a particular utterance was produced at a given moment in conversation because in doing so he or she may overlook important linguistic and interactional patterns.

In the methodologies I employed in collecting and analyzing conversational Lingala data I take Moerman's warnings to heart. Circumstances provided me with a unique vantage point from within a local social network and with cultural and

linguistic insiders to work with on the analysis of the conversational and ethnographic data I collected. The audio recordings of interactions between members of the women's group were made at a propitious moment in the group's history when they had a large and complex task before them. In order to accomplish the task together, it was necessary for them to make explicit what they hoped for and expected from each other. As I described in the previous chapter, Eugene and Nicole's upcoming wedding and all the preparations necessary for the festivities motivated the scheduling of extra meetings. The wedding gave them a goal and a set time period in which the details of entertainment and hospitality for the church celebration had to be decided upon, delegated and accomplished. They knew what was expected of them as women of the Eglise de Philadelphie, why they were holding meetings, who would be involved, when they would meet and what their deadline was, but how everything would be coordinated and accomplished was as yet unrealized. The "how" is crucially important because it reveals the ways in which the women used directives.

3.2 Description of the Data

The directive data comes from a larger data set consisting of field notes, records of interviews, journal entries, reflexive and analytic memos, and digital audio recordings that were gathered over a thirteen-month period between June 2006 and July 2007. An intensive period of fieldwork took place from January to May 2007, during which time I lived in the home of a member of the Eglise de Philadelphie. I gathered the data through immersion language learning, participant-

observation (Spradley 1980; Lassiter 2005), reflexive ethnography (Charmaz 2001; Davies 1999; Duneier 1993; Smith 1987) and audio-recording of daily activities. As described in the previous chapter, in April and May, the women's group added to their regular Wednesday prayer meetings two additional kinds of meetings: committee meetings to discuss the logistics of the work they would contribute to the upcoming wedding celebration, and singing rehearsals during which they composed songs and practiced their compositions for the entertainment at the wedding celebration. Over a six-week period I recorded 14.4 hours of informal conversations, organizational meetings, songs and prayers. The women primarily speak Lingala in these recordings, though there is some code-switching and mixing with French, in addition to songs sung in seven of their village languages as well as verses sung in my "village language," English.² Ironically, the local linguistic dominance of Lingala entailed the interpretation of English as a village language because it was a minority language in the context of the group's activities. Since the women did not speak each other's languages, they mimicked words sung by the native speaker. I also took field notes that recorded details of my conversations and visits with family and friends as well as my participation in meetings.

By the time I had begun recording the women's church meetings, I had learned enough Lingala to be able to conduct sociolinguistic interviews and language elicitation research in that language (because my language consultants, for reasons unknown to me, either refused to speak to me in French or did not control French well enough to work in it). In addition, for five months I lived with the Garyzas

family, whose home language was Lingala. This also enabled me to unobtrusively gather significant ethnographic data and to make audio recordings of women's meetings.

In the recordings, the women sometimes seem to interact as if I were not there (they may not have realized how much I could understand them at the time, nor how much the transcription and analysis of their interactions would help me understand them later). However, at other times they treat me as a ratified participant, for example, assigning me to take a turn singing a verse of a song in my village language, or indicating that it was my turn to close a meeting with prayer. The recordings are rich in interactional detail: interjections, exclamations, questions, observations, opinions, whispers, shouts, singing, and ritual language. As I explain below, part of the ordinariness of the women's language use in my presence may be due to circumstances that provided me with a culturally recognized identity in their group, a factor crucial to the ethnographic methodologies I used in collecting and analyzing the data.

3.3 Methodology for Data Collection

3.3.1 A Place in the Network

Two factors influencing the quality of ethnographic research are the community's acceptance of the outsider researcher and the researcher's ability to integrate into the target group. In her pioneering use of social networks as an explanation for patterns of language variation and change, Lesley Milroy (1980) discovered a useful research tool for the integration of the researcher into the

network as “a friend of a friend.” This status provides a socially validated place in the group, allows access to homes or other intimate situations normally off-limits to outsiders, and mitigates the “observer’s paradox” (Labov 1972). My introduction into a Congolese social network took place on November 21, 2006, when I became more than a friend of a friend: I became a member of the Garyzas family as the *ndoyi* of the family’s infant daughter. *Ndoyi* is a Lingala term that refers to a dyadic relationship of name-sharing and identity-sharing. The phenomenon of *ndoyi* is part of central African social structures. Vansina names twelve ethnolinguistic groups for which he traces the verb root /*-dok/. He asserts that it is most likely a proto-Bantu root and mentions its importance because of the belief among northwest Bantu groups that two people with the same name share a single social identity (1990:277-78). The nominal form *ndoyi* seems to be a modern Lingala development of the proto-form.

That I became *ndoyi* to the daughter of Pastor and Mrs. Garyzas was due to several factors: the openness and generosity of the Garyzas family; the friendship between Pastor Garyzas and my husband; and the fact that the baby was a girl rather than a boy. Pastor Garyzas told us that he and his wife had discussed the baby’s name and their hopes for her before her birth, and decided that we were suitable candidates to be the *ndoyi* of their child. Had she been a boy, the child would have been named after my husband, Byron. However, because the baby was a girl, I was given the role of the *ndoyi*.

An adult *ndoyi* is part namesake, part godparent. In addition, there seems to be a belief that in allowing her (or his) name to be given to the newborn child, the *ndoyi* has also bestowed her own personality traits and features of her background upon the child via a social-genetic connection. For example, during the first months of baby Annette's life while I lived in her family home, the child's mother would often link her daughter's current behavior to my own babyhood through questions about whether I cried when I got my first immunization shots, or whether I preferred corn cereal to rice cereal when I first started eating solid foods. Her questions indicated to me that she believed her daughter's genetic pre-dispositions to be the same as mine, not hers. She even asked me to ask my mother questions about my behavior as a baby in order to explain some things she was seeing in her own daughter. I also discovered that the character trait of race was in some way transferred from me to the baby. One day while leaving church, I was standing next to my *ndoyi*, who was strapped to her mother's back, when a woman came up and started talking to the baby, addressing her as *mondele*, the Lingala term for a white person, and the same term that would be applied to me. This happened more than once, to the extent that sometimes neighbors passing the house would call to the baby, addressing her as *mondele*. Moreover, the family claimed that the baby imitated my adult behavior. During the week before my husband's work assignment required him to return to Brazzaville for a time, the family teased me about crying when he left. If I cried, they said in French and Lingala, Baby Annette would cry, too: *Les Annette vont pleurer, bakolela* 'The Annettes will cry, they will cry.' My

new identity as *ndoyi* affected my husband's identity as well. Our host sometimes joked that he had a white son-in-law. Now that his daughter shared my name, it was as if we shared a oneness that made us simultaneously daughter of one man and wife of the other, creating a family tie between the two men.

I knew only one Congolese *ndoyi* pair: the two Mama Thérèses. In this instance, the *ndoyi* relationship appeared to be a recognition that the two women shared proclivities, interests and occupations that made them socially very similar, if not identical in some senses.

This induction into the Garyzas family placed me in closer relationship to their social network ties than any friend-of-a-friend introduction. Moreover, it gave me a locally understood category of identity. It was no longer necessary to go into long explanations about why I was in northern Congo and what I was doing (which often was met with some disbelief), for I could invoke the *ndoyi* relationship and everything was clear, my interlocutors satisfied. My new identity category also created a set of expectations about my behavior, i.e., that I would visit women who were friends of my *ndoyi*'s mother, attend the same church services and other meetings, participate in family events such as funerals (two members of the extended family died while I lived in the Garyzas home), and be privy to more intimate details of the lives of family and friends than would be shared with acquaintances. In that context I also observed and interacted with the five children in the Garyzas household – who ranged in age from my *ndoyi*, who was only a few months old, to a fourteen-year-old girl – as well as with neighborhood children and adult friends of

Pastor and Mrs. Garyzas. My presence in the social network of the Garyzas family ultimately provided me with the ideal cultural identity for ethnographic research. It allowed me to observe, learn and participate as a valid and validated member of the group.

3.3.2 Participation and Reflexivity

Participation and reflexivity are important aspects of ethnographic research. Through participation in the activities of the Eglise de Philadelphia women's group, I learned more about how they organized their activities than I would have known to ask. This is reminiscent of Briggs' (1986) experience in that his informants preferred to involve him in their actions and activities rather than to answer his questions. I learned about meetings, for example: how women assemble for them, the ways in which the official beginning of a meeting is signaled and the various ways that women participate in discussions and other activities, as well as how they present their points of view. The latter is significant for my discussion of rhetorical questions in Chapter 4. Moreover, I could have asked any member of the group what time the meetings began, but it was only through attending the meetings myself that I experienced the period of small talk and inevitable waiting that I describe in Chapter 5, and also how the same participants shift their focus of attention from the informal activity of small talk to the more formal activity of a committee meeting. This became important to me in deciding how and what to record, as I discuss below.

Ethnographers agree that participation with observation is more informative for the researcher than observation without participation (cf. Davies 1999; Dunier

1993; Emerson 2001; Lassiter 2005; Spradley 1980). Participation provides a vantage point for observation that is like that of the other participants. I experienced this when I joined the women in preparing songs for the wedding entertainment. Observation alone would have told me that dancing goes with singing, but only participation in the dance movements taught me the double necessity to watch and to listen for some signal to begin moving as well as to monitor other participants in order to align my movements and voice with theirs. It is doubtful I could have given a detailed description of the movements as I do in Chapter 5 without having performed them myself innumerable times. My own memories served to reconstruct movements that could not be captured in audio recordings. Finally, as a participant researcher I was able to evaluate and reflect on what I experienced.

Reflecting on one's experiences in participation is a method called reflexivity. It means that the researcher is cognizant of her place in the research situation, of her effects on it and of its effects on her. Reflexivity is a means to openly use one's own subjectivity and participatory experience in a search for insight and explanation to accompany the description of an event or situation. In the cases of code-switching that I describe in Chapters 5 and 6, for example, it was necessary for me to reflect on whether my presence was a motivating factor in the switch from Lingala to French (I found no evidence that it was). Another example involves my personal experiences and practices in various Christian settings, which enabled me to compare and contrast what I know of other groups with the ways in which the women's group of the Eglise de Philadelphie organized their group prayer

practices. It also allowed me to reflect on the effects their prayer practices had on me. This reflective process was necessary for the discussions in Chapter 6 as well as in the description of Christian practices and beliefs related to morning devotional meetings, church leadership and weddings in Chapter 2. Moreover, reflexivity contributed significantly to my discovery of a Congolese translation for western research ethics which I explain in the next section. At the same time, my role as *ndoyi*, as described above, created a depth of relationship between me and the Eglise de Philadelphie women's group that crucially underlies ethical considerations for ethnographic and linguistic research (cf. Cameron et al. 1993; Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 1995; Wolfram 1998).

3.3.3 Cross-cultural Research Ethics

More than the normalcy of my presence in various situations, my relationship within the Garyzas family's social network created a bond of trust and friendship that affected the way in which I obtained permission to record and use data from the women's group at church (see Vigouroux (2007:92) for a similar consideration between western researchers). Though perhaps unusual from the perspective of American Institutional Research Boards, the members of the Eglise de Philadelphie women's group preferred to give their agreement for me to record their meetings orally and as a group. The oral agreement is understandable in a society where reading is not something people often do, though Congo has a relatively high literacy rate (for French) when compared to other Francophone countries in Africa.³ But one of the more crucial reasons for the oral agreement concerns how trust is established

and agreements are carried out in northern Congo. Through conversations with Congolese colleagues and friends, professors at the Université Marien Ngouabi in Brazzaville, and my Congolese family, I came to understand that abuses of trust and confidence in Congo's history often involved an individual's being forced to sign a document or acknowledge its contents. These abuses were all too common in the hegemonies of 19th- and 20th-century Central Africa, and therefore I was advised not to seek written informed consent.⁴

Giving informed consent as a group is also unusual from an American or European perspective. However, due to the importance of the group in African society in general, and in northern Congo-Brazzaville specifically, this was a culturally appropriate action. The welfare of each member of the group was inextricably linked to that of the others and the consent of one member involved the others as well. When they accepted me as the *ndoyi* to the daughter of the pastor's wife, the group gave initial implicit consent even for me to join them as a member. Then, as a member of the group myself, my obligation to care for their well-being was enhanced.

The respect and protection of the research subjects' privacy is another ethical consideration that is important for Americans and Europeans, but which is interpreted differently in the part of Africa where I conducted my research. All of the women agreed that they wanted the name of their church as well as their own names to be used openly in my dissertation. When I explained to my *ndoyi*'s mother (for the second or third time) the potential risks of my research to her and her friends and

described the use of pseudonyms, she responded that the women hadn't done anything wrong, so she didn't see why they would have to use "secret" names. Later, I realized the strong association in her culture between secrecy and witchcraft, and with the insight of hindsight, I reinterpreted many of my experiences in Africa when my American "private space" was invaded by people who otherwise were kind and considerate to me. It seems most likely that they were protecting me against accusations of witchcraft. In summary, taking individuals aside apart from the group and asking them to sign a piece of paper and select a pseudonym are practices that in the African cultural context indicate that the two sides do not trust each other and that there is sure to be abuse because of an imbalance of power. In fact, my host family and I came to the conclusion that I am under a burden heavier than a consent form to protect and respect the identities and contributions of the participants in my study. The accountability of the social network and relationships that I formed in Ouesso are stronger and deeper than a signed piece of paper. The women are proud of their contribution to the scholarship represented by this dissertation.

It is for these reasons that the three-letter abbreviations used as speaker labels in the transcriptions represent the names of the women as they addressed each other in their interactions. These names are listed in Table 2.1 of Chapter 2. I learned over time, however, that naming practices in many African societies involve the public use of "socioonyms," or names that are recognizable to those who share membership in the same social network or Community of Practice but that would probably be impossible for strangers to trace. For example, mothers of twins are called *mapasa* in

Lingala in honor of the woman who, according to some local creation stories, bore a series of twins that populated areas of present-day Congo (Vansina 1990:120). The individual in my data called Mapassa is the mother of teenage twin girls; I was given no other name for her, either in introductions or in interactions in which I participated. Thus, though she is personally identified, her socionym masks her precise identity for outsiders. Similarly, the names of husbands, fathers or children may be adapted for social use by women. This was the case for Calmette, who was sometimes called *Mama Jeremie* after her consort, and for Virginie, who from time to time was called *Mama Mika* after her young daughter. Again, these naming practices created situations in which participants were recognizable to fellow members of their immediate community but were camouflaged for outsiders. The desire for their names to be used publicly in combination with the naming practices of their society thus provides a kind of community-level identity protection for the women in this study. Though I could have pried further into the legal names of the members of the women's group, I chose to respect their use of names and local naming practices in how they are represented in these data.

In essence, by relying on the advice and counsel of the participants and other Congolese researchers, I discovered a Congolese "translation" for American ethical practices. In the American form, written explanations, signatures and pseudonyms construct the confidence and privacy necessary for trust between researcher and researched. In Congo-Brazzaville, personal relationships, public accountability and local naming practices provide the same.

As the above discussion indicates, the methodology used to collect the data was ethnographic, involving language and culture learning, observation and participation as a group member with a socioculturally defined identity. Over the months I lived in Ouesso, I was constantly listening to, watching, participating with and learning from people around me, relying on them for direction in all these activities and in my relationships with others. One area where I had to rely on some educated trial-and-error was in the details of audio-recording interactions of a relatively large group of people.

3.3.4 *Recording Talk in Action*

Technical considerations for recording conversational interactions include the placement of the microphone so that each participant's speech is clearly recorded. Recorded telephone conversations have formed the data sets for many analyses of talk-in-interaction (cf. Atkinson and Heritage 1984; Nofsinger 1991; Pomerantz 1984; Sacks 1995; Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974; Zimmerman 2004). Such interactions have the great advantage of limiting the number of participants to one speaker and one recipient at a time, not to mention keeping the mouths of the speakers close to the microphone. Recordings of friends or a family around a table have similar benefits. Though the mouths of the speakers are not as close to the microphone as they would be for a phone call, by centering their interaction around a table, for the most part, the participants remain within an acceptable radius of the microphone. John W. Du Bois and the team of researchers who gathered recordings for the Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English (Du Bois, Chafe, Meyer

and Thompson 2000; Du Bois et al. 2003; Du Bois and Englebretson 2004, 2005) used a system whereby the recorder was hung around the neck of the primary speaker or was placed in a central location on a table for an extended period of time in order to capture as much spontaneous interaction as possible. On the other hand, interactions in institutionalized settings such as medical or psychological consultations have the advantage of limiting the space in which participants may move and provides some predictability of the routines in which they engage so that recording equipment can be placed appropriately (cf. Hoenes de Pinal 2008; Labov and Fanshel 1977; West 1990; West and Fenstermaker 2002). Public broadcasts of talk shows and news interviews provide excellent audio- and video-recording quality while also narrowing the focus to the core participants of an event, usually the interviewer and interviewee (cf. Clayman 1990; Jaffe 2000; Shoaps 1999). Other publicly broadcast events such as political rallies include very large numbers of participants. In these cases, the words and actions of the main speakers are most readily available for analysis, though the audible and visible audience responses are also of interest (cf. Atkinson 1982; Heritage and Greatbatch 1986). Recording interactions of multiple speakers who move around adds another set of logistical challenges that have been met by Charles Goodwin and Marjorie Harness Goodwin in their studies of children at school, families at home, and scientists at work through, among other things, turning the researcher in effect into a mobile stand for the recording device (cf. C. Goodwin 1993, 1997; M.H. Goodwin 2006a, 2006b).

In preparing to record the interactions of the Eglise de Philadelphie women's group, I had to decide when and how to do so. This involved considering the adequacy of my equipment, the spaces in which participants interacted, what the participants were doing as they talked, how much they moved around, and if I wanted to focus on capturing the utterances of only a few participants or of all of them. These considerations were crucial not only to the mechanical quality of my data but also to the sampling of the women's interactional and linguistic repertoires. As sociolinguistic researchers demonstrated long ago, the predictive power of the relationship between form and context shapes the conventions and expectations for all participants in interaction. For example, deferential and polite forms are predictable in formal contexts while colloquialisms and stronger regional accents are expected in informal ones (cf. Brown and Gilman 1960; Downing 1980; Ervin-Tripp 1976; Gal 1978; Labov 1966, 1972a, 1972b). Not knowing precisely what to expect even after some months of personal experience with the women's group, I provisionally defined the beginning of the events that I would record as the moment Chimene, the pastor's wife, and I left home to go to the church, and the end as our return home. Chimene and I were seldom alone in either direction; it was quite common for women who were our friends and/or neighbors to join us. By recording the ten- to fifteen-minute walk to the church and the usual ten- to sixty-minute waiting period before the beginning of the meeting, I captured the kinds of small talk that are characteristic of informal interaction as well as the participants' shifts in attention and comportment that produced the more formal context of the meeting.

Likewise, by leaving the recorder on as we ended the meeting and left the building together for the walk home, I captured the shifting contexts and interactional styles involved in moving out of the institutional setting and into a more informal one. The providential scheduling of Eugene and Nicole's wedding required that different kinds of one- to two-hour meetings would be held, so I was able to capture multiple genres of group interaction within the social, institutional and physical boundaries of the church.

I was fortunate that the built-in microphones of my digital recorder were adequate to the task. It was not necessary for me to carry large amounts of equipment strung together with cords, which would have made my recording more obtrusive. While walking to or from the church I carried the recorder at my side or in front of me. During prayer meetings and committee meetings, I selected a bench to sit on that would be surrounded on at least three sides by other members of the group, placing the recorder near me on the bench. During some of the waiting periods, I got up and left the recorder on the bench while I walked to the back of the church or outside the building. During singing rehearsals, I placed the recorder on the pastor's podium, which was roughly in the center of the space the women used.

In the evenings after the meetings, I listened to the recordings and made notes of what I remembered seeing people doing as they spoke. Thus, the recordings first served as a mnemonic device for field notes before they became the source of written transcripts. Reviewing the events of the interactions and meetings in this way also allowed me to ask my host family and other members of the group questions

about things I had seen and heard while these happenings were still fresh in their minds. The recorder automatically segmented the audio files into five-minute intervals, and this served to give me a chronologically timed notation as well. I gave cassette copies of the recordings to Chimene as a representative of the group and one of the only members who owned a tape recorder. This reminded all of us of my accountability to them, and it also occasioned requests to record interactions of their choosing, primarily other singing rehearsals and performances.

The diversity of interactional genres ranging along a continuum of contextual formality provided me with recorded data that consist of a variety of hundreds of action sequences involving thousands of dialogic exchanges in situated local moments. The analysis began in re-listening and seeking to understand these exchanges and continued as I worked through the recordings in order to identify instances when one woman overtly influenced the next action of another. When I began the arduous process of transcribing the women's interactions, I entered into yet another methodological and interactional framework.

3.4 Analysis through Transcription

The danger in any analysis of a transcript is that the analyst may prioritize the written representation of the data over the audio recording, which itself is only a pale reflection of the locally occasioned, interactionally managed, and situationally interpreted talk of the speakers. It is for this reason that conversation analysts insist on working with the original recordings in addition to the transcripts. Transcriptions are a form of analysis because they involve categories, choices and interpretations

made by the transcriber; they are categorized and abstracted representations of the original interaction (Bucholtz 2000, 2003; Du Bois 1991; Ochs 1979; Vigouroux 2007). A transcript is a way to manage the recorded interactional data and to safeguard the analyst from either of two extremes: getting lost in the myriad details of live interaction or believing her own initial impressions.

3.4.1 Transcription Procedures

The difficulty encountered in transcribing interactions in cross-cultural research is that it requires two important skills not always found in the same person: native speaker competence and analytical competence. This is one reason why conversation analysts are often reluctant to stray from an analysis of their native tongues, but it is also why discoveries of interactional principles and patterns in English are often implicitly claimed as generalized human behavior (but see Moerman 1988, 1996; Sidnell 2001, *inter alia*). To solve the transcription dilemma, I worked with a team of Congolese transcribers, all men, recruited through a network of university friends, who had the computer skills and language skills necessary to make a broad orthographic transcription. The leader of the transcription team was Guy Kouarata, one of my Congolese SIL colleagues and a doctoral candidate in Linguistics at Marien Ngouabi University in Brazzaville. The second member of the team, Styven Itoua, was an Economics major and Tony Bokale, the third member, was a Linguistics major. All three were from ethnic groups whose village language area is in the northern half of Congo.⁵ At least two of them spoke Lingala before they learned their village language. Their ethnic and linguistic profiles, then, were

very similar to the profile of the women's group. Analytically they had the academic skills of university students and the necessary elementary computer and typing skills. No female university students with these qualifications were available at the time. These qualifications provided the best of two worlds: the ability to listen as native or near-native speakers and to make judgments based on that competence, and the ability to work at the level of abstraction required in order to translate living streams of speech into categories and patterns on paper.

Haviland's (1996b) insightful discussion of naive transcription practices in Tzotzil resonates with my experience with Guy, Styven and Tony. Working from audio segments that I selected based on my fieldnotes, Guy, Styven and Tony produced three lines of transcription for each speaker's turn in the audio-recording: the first line was what they heard on the recording, transcribed orthographically with additional notation for regional variation in pronunciation; the second line was a regularization of the first line into standard Lingala. The third line was a free translation in French. The second line of the transcription was a concession to the men's prescriptive language ideology, a symbol of the success of standardization and educational efforts in Congo-Brazzaville and Congo-Kinshasa. It gave me valuable insights into the ways in which colloquial speech varied phonologically, lexically and grammatically from the standard norm. In addition, the regularized Lingala line and the line of free translation in French revealed interpretive judgments on the part of the transcribers that were valuable later in my analysis of sequences containing directives. The way in which the transcription process was also a data-gathering

process during which the transcribers taught me more about Lingala forms and uses resonates with Vigouroux (2007). For example, the transcribers pointed out linguistic cues such as the vowel quality of affirmative response tokens that they used to judge the ethnolinguistic origin of the speaker. I also asked the transcribers to attend to changes of speaker, change in language, i.e., French, Lingala or village languages, silences, laughter and singing versus speech.⁶ Guy Kouarata transcribed and translated songs in Mboshi, his village language. Roch Beapami, another colleague and friend, helped me to understand the background of one of the songs. Bekwel transcription and translation was done with the help of Pastor Garyzas and one of the women in the group, Aude, both Bekwel speakers. Styven Itoua transcribed and translated the Kikoongo songs. After the broad transcription was done, I went back through it, identifying the speakers' voices, timing pauses, and making preliminary decisions about the boundaries of intonation units and turns. Finally, using grammatical descriptions, dictionaries, and my own and my husband's language learning notes and attending to the translations of Lingala into French made by the Congolese transcribers, I added a line of morphemic glossing. In short, it took an entire multilingual and multicultural team to study the audio recordings and produce transcripts for further analysis. This analysis began with deciding how to interpret speaker utterances.

3.4.2 Interpreting the Interpretation

A methodological strength in conversation analysis is the insistence on the examination of an interaction one speaker turn at a time. This includes constant

reminders that the interaction represented in the transcription unfolded in real time and that at the moment of the first speaker's utterance, its interpretation and fit to a second utterance by someone who has not yet been selected to speak has also not yet been fully realized. Moreover, this approach insists that unless the participants themselves correct, question or clarify an utterance or action, each speaker's turn is coherent and relevant in its local context. In effect, conversation analysis prioritizes the conversational participants' interpretation(s) of an utterance over other possible interpretations by anyone else (Schegloff 1997).⁷

As I indicated in Chapter 1, the verbal (and physical) reactions of recipients to the original speakers were important clues as to how utterances were interpreted by participants and what consequences the subsequent talk had for either continuing a line of action or remaking the previous utterance into something else. Crucially, I used the interpretations of the participants as displayed in their actions and reactions to decide what linguistic forms they used as directives. In other words, instead of searching the data for utterances that have been identified as directives in other languages through other studies, i.e., imperatively marked clauses and indirect questions (cf. Ervin-Tripp 1976; Labov and Fanshel 1977; Yaeger-Dror and Sister 1987), I relied on the women's own reactions to identify directives in their interaction.

The overt reaction of the recipient of an utterance reveals her interpretation of what the speaker is doing through her words. It categorizes the speaker's action as being of a certain kind; this is part of the logic behind the adjacency pair model in

conversation analysis (Schegloff 2007:13-57). As briefly explained in Chapter 1, the definition of an adjacency pair involves the notions of temporal contiguity, interactional relevance, discourse coherence and stochastic constraint, i.e., a very high likelihood that one of a very limited number of options will be chosen. Questions, requests and invitations are common first-pair parts; answers, acceptances and refusals are their second-pair counterparts. For example, when someone asks a question she opens and defines an interactional place in the next moment that can be filled by an answer. If an answer is given, the pair is complete and the interaction continues with another utterance. If instead of answering, the addressee also asks a question, his move may be interpreted as either putting off an undesirable answer or seeking clarification before he is able to answer. To identify an utterance as a first- or second-pair part of an adjacency pair is to assert that speakers follow conventional practices in interaction and that the recognition of one part of an adjacency pair identifies the other. In order to identify directives in my data that did not always have the linguistic forms that I would have predicted, I used the methodological principles of attending to participants' actions and reactions in real time and of considering that actions and reactions might be pairs of conventionalized practices.

I created a database that tracked the linguistic forms of directives and the kinds of actions they accomplished in situated and local interactions. As I collected more and more examples of correlations between linguistic forms and responsive actions, I also coded the type of response, for example, whether it was the directed action, an acquiescence to a persuasive point, open refusal or a move that delayed

compliance. In addition, I noted the distance between the directive and the responsive action – was the response immediately in the next turn or delayed by one or two speaker turns, possibly by other intervening speakers? Finally, I recorded the kind of meeting in which the interaction took place and features of the discourse context, such as the topic of discussion in a committee meeting or whether the directive was uttered during small talk or corporate prayer.

Identifying speaker and recipient was not always straightforward because of the number of participants. Some of the recordings were not transcribed due to the tumult of ten or more voices, or because of laughter, screams of delight, and the frequent competition of the drum of the choirmaster outside the building. Even when interactions involved fewer speakers, at times there was still considerable speaker overlap. To determine who was talking to whom, I used clues such as address terms, the volume of voices indicating the proximity of speakers to each other and to the recorder, and field note entries that mention where participants sat or stood or what I observed happening at the time. I also included silences that indicated someone was deliberately withholding her turn at talk and that this was acknowledged through the tacit complicity of other participants who did not self-select as next speaker. In some cases there were multiple recipients, or it was not possible to positively identify the recipient, for example, because of lack of information in both the recording and my field notes.

As I worked with the data, I also coded utterances for their tense-aspect-modality (TAM) marking and syntactic type, i.e. whether the clause was marked as a

question, imperative or declarative statement; I additionally coded person-marking on the verb phrase and whether other elements such as address forms, adverbials or full pronouns were used. I also began noting my interpretation of whether the directive form seemed aggravated (i.e., short, direct, possibly with emphatic particles or other exclamations) or mitigated (i.e., with many elements besides a verb phrase and with some indirect meaning). In sum, I coded directives for the kind of action carried out, the speaker and recipient, the type of reaction and length of time to reaction, the meeting type, the local context, and the linguistic configuration of the directives. In all, I coded 267 directives with their response pairs, taken from 64 data excerpts that range in length from 2 to 47 speaker turns.

3.4.3 Patterns in Interaction

In Chapter 2, I described my initial hypotheses, which were based on social characteristics of members of the women's group that have been found in other studies to predict the linguistic form of a directive. These hypotheses – and others I tested on my data set – are based on concepts such as aggravation and mitigation, direction and indirection, imbalance of social power or some other difference in status. All hypotheses based on social characteristics failed at some point for lack of support or too many counterexamples. This is perhaps to be expected given that the institutional setting for the group and the gender of the participants has a leveling effect, such that the women are peers despite social characteristics that may become salient and distinguish them somehow in other institutional settings. The acknowledgement of their peer status is perhaps best illustrated through the use of

address terms extended from the family unit such as *soeur* ‘sister.’ I discuss the use of address terms in Chapter 5.

The failure of hypotheses based on social characteristics led me to consider the distribution of syntactic forms and social actions within prayer meetings, committee meetings and singing rehearsals. I found robust patterns of distribution and frequencies that led me to conclude, as M.H. Goodwin (2006a: 136-137) did, that the form of the directive reflects the participants’ concern with how an activity is to proceed. As I described above, the cultural and institutional contexts provided much of the knowledge and information that the Eglise de Philadelphie women’s group needed in order to begin preparing their part in the upcoming wedding. This included how they would proceed in planning their individual and collective contributions to the many tasks that were necessary. All of the social moves and actions of this set of activities were mediated through the women’s linguistic repertoires, of which Lingala was primary. The patterns of distribution support the conclusion that each directive was designed for a kind of social action that in turn was suitable for the kind of activity taking place.

3.4.4 *The Presentation of Patterns*

Each of the following three chapters describes an interactional context, the linguistic form of a particular directive used in that context, and the source of its directive force. Chapter 4 concerns rhetorical questions, Chapter 5 examines commands, and Chapter 6 analyzes statements that guide ritual prayer as well as invocations and petitions. These forms all reflect and reinforce the expression of

subjectivity in group participation and the resulting form of the group's social organization.

During committee meetings, when the women were primarily making suggestions about what they should do, who would do it, what resources would be needed and how they would obtain them, hints and suggestions conveyed various personal perspectives and bids for group action. Rhetorical questions (Chapter 4) stood out as a powerful persuasive device, not only to rally as many people as possible to one perspective, but also to induce another participant to accept a responsibility. Rhetorical questions were used to persuade another woman to make a public choice.

During singing rehearsals the women composed, rehearsed and selected songs to contribute to the entertainment at the wedding celebration. There were discussions concerning lyrical choices, which songs to sing in which order, and who would lead a verse or verses of a chosen song. Much of this was accomplished through remembering songs, suggesting words or prompting someone else's memory, humming tunes or singing snatches of song, and suggesting and proposing the sequence of songs and languages in which they would be sung. This process also determined who would be the lead singers for each song. The biggest challenge was in the actual rehearsal: how to coordinate the voices and movements of ten to twelve women. Command forms (Chapter 5) were most frequent in these and other contexts where the actions of multiple participants needed to be coordinated. The women

used command forms to configure the participation framework as well as to signal the moment to begin the coordinated action.

During prayer meetings, some social characteristics of religious status may have influenced who filled some participant roles, though knowledge and experience with the ritual script were stronger factors. The ritual actions of the group were moderated by one participant who animated the script. Declarative statements (Chapter 6) used in the animation of the script were interpreted by the group members as directives. In addition, individual prayer actions provided an arena for the display of knowledge and ability with regards to the ritual genre of language, including invocations and petitions designed to direct the actions of God in order to assure the group's success. Rhetorical questions, commands and prayer actions, then, were each designed for and suited to a different kind of meeting.

3.5 Summary

One of the many dilemmas for the cross-cultural researcher is how to discover the insider's perspective and approximate that vantage point in her choices surrounding data collection and analysis. In order to manage this dilemma in the collection and analysis of the data for this dissertation, I used ethnographic methods such as language learning, participant observation and reflexivity to gather and organize cultural, social and linguistic data. In addition, I had the privilege of being drawn into a socioculturally validated position as an *ndoyi* in a social network comprised of many gracious and generous people who provided much of the data. Through them, I discovered a culturally appropriate way to obtain informed consent.

The data collected from the vantage point I have described provided experiential and documented observations for testing hypotheses and drawing conclusions at a broad level of analysis.

As discussed above, the methodological approach for the microanalysis of linguistic forms and interactional practices of the target group involved audio-recording selected gatherings and events. These data were then transcribed by a multiethnic, multilingual team of research assistants whose insider knowledge and linguistic competence, computer skills and analytic training provided roadmaps for the recordings and a first set of interpretations of the interactions. From there I continued listening, cataloguing, coding, and sorting data in order to test hypotheses and look for patterns of correlation between linguistic forms and social and contextual variables.

The conclusions of this analytical process concerning Lingala directive forms and their contexts are thus informed by robust patterns at both macro- and micro-levels. Details of the methodological approaches and procedures I used are presented here so that other researchers may attempt to reproduce a similar study in a similar situation elsewhere. In this way, we will discover how widely applicable this set of methodological approaches is. This in turn will tell us how generalizable the findings and conclusions of this dissertation are. I present these findings in the next chapters.

Notes for Chapter 3

¹ See also Labov (1972b) for a similar argument from a slightly different vantage point.

² Occasionally a Bekwel speaker makes a comment in Bekwel to one of the other two Bekwel speakers. However, these were often “under-the-breath” kinds of comments that my transcribers had difficulty hearing well enough and so I was unable to have them transcribed and translated.

³ Literacy rates for French in Congo-Brazzaville are 62 to 80 percent as opposed to 13 to 15 percent for the Republic of Niger and 19 to 30 percent for Burkina Faso, for example (Gordon 2004).

⁴ For the perspective of Congolese sociolinguists about obtaining informed consent, see methodological description in Ndamba, Missakiri and Ntsadi 1992.

⁵ Transcripts completed later, from December 2007 to January 2008, were transcribed by Styven Itoua, Fanel Ngakosso, Staylor Itoua and Mesmin Opani, again under the direction of Guy Kouarata. I have not met Fanel, Staylor or Mesmin, and so cannot comment on their sociolinguistic profiles.

⁶ The transcribers did not know the women. I instructed them only to start a new line of transcription at the change of speaker voice. They had a high degree of accuracy, though sometimes when a speaker reset the volume or pitch of her voice for emphasis they labeled the voice as belonging to another speaker. They almost always labeled my own voice correctly, though I felt a certain sense of triumph when I came across one of my contributions to a decision-making discussion late in the recording period that the transcribers labeled as that of a Congolese participant. It was then that I realized they had most likely identified me based on my beginner’s Lingala competence more than on voice quality.

⁷ Conversation analysts are not alone in this approach. Linguistic anthropologists and discourse-functional linguists also stress the importance of considering one speaker turn at a time and the priority of participants’ interpretations.

Chapter 4

Rhetorical Questions: Direction Through Persuasion

4.1 Introduction

I begin my analysis of directives used by the women's group of the Eglise de Philadelphie by looking at their use of rhetorical questions, because these are the most frequent directive forms used when the women were trying to decide what activities they would carry out, how they would be accomplished, who would be involved, how each person would be involved and so on. Moreover, a description of rhetorical questions is necessary for an understanding of some features of the other two types of directives considered in this dissertation that would not be apparent without comparison and contrast to the use and modal marking of rhetorical questions. Such questions were a directive device used in discussions of how different women would participate in the wedding preparations and activities. Furthermore, their meanings and content were not based on decisions about an imminent action, as were commands, nor on ritual convention, as were prayer actions, but on the opinions and stances of the women in the group. In other words, rhetorical questions were clear expressions of individual subjectivity. Further, of all the directive forms I discuss in this dissertation, they display the highest degree of speaker certainty in their verbal mood marking. They illustrate one answer to Wittgenstein's question as to how certainty is manifested in human action (1969:225).

Du Bois' (2002, 2003, 2007) work on stance and intersubjectivity is a pertinent framework for this analysis because of the way the opinions and stances of the speakers, i.e., their certainties, meet in socio-cultural context, and I benefited from models such as the stance triangle as I worked through the data. On the other hand, I am concerned here with the "how" and the "why" of directive forms, that is, how speakers can recognize and use them and why they are effective, in addition to the linguistic forms of stance-taking and the effects of speaker stances in interactional context. My search to discover the directive force of rhetorical questions required me to situate this work in relation to other theoretical perspectives, though with a view to contributing to the development of Du Bois' articulation of stance and intersubjectivity in conversational interaction.

I have identified certain rhetorical questions as directives because of the clear connection between their use as persuasive devices and the results of persuasion in the interactional context (cf. Du Bois 1986:323).¹ It is apparent in the data that these women use rhetorical questions to argue for their point of view, and moreover that they are doing so in an attempt to persuade others to accept the same point of view. If the speaker is successful in causing the recipient to adopt her point of view, the recipient is further obliged to carry out any responsibilities associated with that point of view. In this way the women use rhetorical questions to direct the actions of others.²

It appears that the tactic of using questions to assert and to persuade is widespread, perhaps even universal, though so little is known about the use of

rhetorical questions in non-Indo-European languages and cultures that much work remains. The use of rhetorical questions is of course not limited to the European descendants of the Greek and Roman rhetoricians. Speakers of languages as diverse as French, Japanese, German, Hindi, Chinese, Italian and Kaluli make use of rhetorical questions (Frank 1990; Han 2002; Schmidt-Radefeldt 1977; Schieffelin 1990; Sprouse 2007). Schieffelin's (1990) study found that rhetorical questions are used along with imperatives in the socialization of Kaluli children in Papua New Guinea. Her study is unique since studies of rhetorical questions tend to focus on the rhetorical or persuasive effect of the logico-semantic proposition of the question. Moreover, the data in studies of rhetorical questions are most often isolated sentences constructed by the analyst (cf. Han 2002; Sadock and Zwicky 1985; Schmidt-Radefeldt 1977).

Another perspective on rhetorical questions examines their relationship to indirect speech acts. This is related to the issue of how rhetorical questions allow speakers to manage face-threatening acts (cf. Frank 1990; Schmidt-Radefeldt 1977). Despite diverging perspectives, scholars agree that rhetorical questions are structurally and distributionally different from information-seeking questions, that they involve presupposition and the assertion of propositions, and that any directive force they may carry is located in implicature (Cruse 2000; Levinson 1983). My analysis in this chapter confirms that rhetorical questions in Lingala are distributionally and structurally different than information-seeking questions. Rhetorical questions are most frequent in contexts of disagreement, and their

formulation as topic-comment sentences is syntactically marked through the use of pre-verbal noun phrases and subordinate clauses that are rare in other kinds of questions.

On the other hand, implicature alone is an insufficient explanation of the rhetorical question's directive force. There are other aspects of the sociocultural and interactional context to consider; it is not only the implicature of the rhetorical question that puts the onus on the recipient. The work of a number of scholars demonstrates that knowledge and evidentiality are social phenomena, and this work offers insights as to how the social distribution of knowledge may be a source of directive force (Chafe and Nichols 1986; Fox 2001a; Heritage and Raymond 2005; Hill and Irvine 1993; Lo 2004; Shoaps 2004). First, the speaker's presentation of the asserted proposition as presupposed shared knowledge exerts pressure on the recipient to comply with the implicature of the rhetorical question. This indicates that grammatical modality as well as the social context are vital to the directive force of the rhetorical question. Additionally, the structural cohesion of questions and answers makes an unanswered question interactionally marked (Sacks 1995; Schegloff 2007), and the possibility of social censure makes non-conforming answers or actions undesirable for the recipient (Pomerantz 1984; Raymond 2003). The directive force of rhetorical questions in these data, then, derives from the grammatical modality of the question, the social qualities of knowledge, i.e., facts and perspectives that are shared among members of a community, and the

interactional structure of the question and answer, not simply the logico-semantic properties of the isolated utterance.

4.1.1 Questions as Directives

Previous sociocultural linguistic work on directives has revealed that questions may be used as a strategy to mitigate the force or aggravation of an imperative (Ervin-Tripp 1976; Labov and Fanshel 1977). In light of this finding, many analyses focus on the use of requests like “Could you close the window?” This kind of directive appeals to the ability of the recipient to perform the action and thus raises the possibility that she or he will carry it out. In my Lingala data, I did not encounter such directives. On the other hand, there is a clear pattern of questions in my data that give or demand a reason for an answer, especially in situations of disagreement or conflict (cf. Heritage 2002; Keisanen 2006). These questions, then, are not mitigated but openly forceful directives.

While persuasion seems to fit best under Austin’s (1962) category of Expositives, or utterances that expound a view, Searle (1976) holds that Austin’s taxonomy follows the form and meaning of English verbs too closely. He argues that a more appropriate taxonomy is one based on dimensions related to the utterance’s status in a given social context as well as its propositional content and its ties to the immediate discourse context. As his argument centers on the mismatches between performative verbs and the illocutionary effects of utterances containing them, he does not specifically discuss rhetorical questions and the directive force of persuasion.³ Likewise, M. H. Goodwin (2006a) notes the rhetorical effect of

questions on conversational sequences involving oppositions between participants but does not specifically discuss rhetorical questions in her analysis. She instead focuses on the ways that assertion and justification are used in disagreement and correction sequences (2006a:152-153, 175).

Both of these scholars raise points that are important to the present analysis. First, the mismatch between a formal property of an utterance and the social context of the discourse indicates to Searle that there is more to the classification of speech acts than the semantics of a verb. In this case, there is more to the classification of rhetorical questions in Lingala than their interrogative marking; though rhetorical questions are syntactically (and sometimes prosodically) interrogatives, they neither seek information nor request an item or action. Instead, as Goodwin observes, rhetorical questions present information, and with it an assertion of a position or justification for a stance in contexts of disagreement or opposition. But because of the strength of interactional adjacency, the occurrence of a question, even a rhetorical question, prepares a place in the turn-taking order for an answer or a response of some kind. It is one thing to assert a proposition, but it is another thing to achieve another participant's compliance with the implications of the proposition. An important consideration for rhetorical questions, then, is where they locate the authority of their assertions.

4.1.2 Questions of Authority

Assertion and justification are ways in which speakers muster the authority and directive force necessary to persuade or oblige another participant to acquiesce

or cooperate with the speaker's goals (cf. Buttny 1985, 1987, 1993; M.H. Goodwin 1990, 2006). Crucially, rhetorical questions manipulate known facts or depictions of a given situation in the same way that assertion and justification do (Frank 1990; Schmidt-Radefeldt 1977). As I demonstrate below, rhetorical questions may be used to justify a speaker's stance or position on an issue. They may also depict a situation, or more crucially the recipient, using known facts and information linked to expected behavior, for example that the pastor's wife should take the lead in activities involving church members. What is important about these two uses is that they locate the evidential source of the shared knowledge in the recipient (as well as other participants), through the speaker's certainty that the assertion or justification is evident to all, i.e., "common sense." This claim contradicts assumptions regarding the source of authority in many other studies of directives because it suggests that the authority to direct another person's actions may be found outside of the speaker. The rhetorical questions presented below do not rely on a social status attribute of the speaker (or of the recipient) for their directive force. Instead, the grammatical form of the rhetorical question indexes social ideologies through features such as topic-comment structure, evidential marking and lexical choice, with the result that the recipient's own socialized moral agency contributes the directive force needed for compliance with the implicature of the rhetorical question.⁴

It is part of the persuasive force of a rhetorical question to present a proposition as old information, shared information and commonsense logic. If the recipient does not share the same assumptions, knowledge and logical connections

that are meant to lead her to action, she may be persuaded to adopt these as her own because of the certainty displayed by the speaker. As a logico-semantic analysis would predict, the asserted proposition of the rhetorical question is important to its authority as a directive (Han 2002:202; Sadock and Zwicky 1985:179-180). However, this is not because of the supposed logical perfection of the proposition but because of the way propositions and their grammatical forms index the knowledge and reasoning of the local community.⁵

The speakers in my data primarily used rhetorical questions when they were making a decision. Decision-making as a group requires discussion, which entails stances. For the purposes of this analysis, opposing stances are of particular interest because opposition may require persuasive tactics with a view towards consequences in the real world of group projects, such as the wedding preparations the women were planning. The rhetorical questions described in this chapter are both persuasive and directive. They occur when there is disagreement of some sort, and are used by speakers to position themselves and present a presupposed perspective on the situation. Speakers reference shared knowledge in a question-answer structural context with the result that their rhetorical questions have directive force.

The following discussion first examines how group participants recognize rhetorical questions. This contributes to an understanding of how verbal suffixes in Lingala index epistemic certainty. Next I demonstrate how speakers embed presuppositions and index ideologies such that their rhetorical questions have directive force. This issue is relevant to my larger claim that the social organization

of the Eglise de Philadelphie women's group is shaped by the cumulative use by its members of all the directive forms discussed in this dissertation.

4.2 Characteristics of Rhetorical Questions

It is crucial to the directive force of rhetorical questions that participants recognize them as rhetorical and not information-seeking. In this section I demonstrate that syntactically interrogative forms are recognizable as rhetorical questions through the context of their use and through their topic-comment syntactic structure. Further, I show an example of the visible consequences that follow from their use within interaction.

4.2.1 The Context of Rhetorical Questions

The example below serves to illustrate important points about the context in which rhetorical questions occur and how they are structurally different from other questions. There are two common features in the contexts of all of these questions: first, either they are anaphorically linked to a public stance or they take a stance through presupposition; second, they are asked at a point when a disagreement is surfacing among the group's members. The utterance or action is generally a decision put forward for the group's ratification, i.e. one of the two competing positions that are necessary for a disagreement. That directives would occur in this context is not surprising, for as M.H. Goodwin notes, decision-making is "a critical site for the examination of directive use" (2006:137). More specifically, Frank notes that either a context in which speakers make strong assertions or a sequence of

speaker turns involving persuasion is a primary indicator for the identification of rhetorical questions (2002:737).

During a meeting early in the planning stages for the wedding, Marie-Claire, the group's president, led a discussion with the goal of assigning women to committees in order to share the large amount of work involved in the wedding celebration. She sat at the front of the church in her usual chair and turned sideways so that she was looking towards most of the women sitting on benches behind her. Then she took out a small notebook and proceeded to lead the women through a series of discussions according to committee type, e.g., food preparation, hostess duties, decorations. As an opening move for each discussion, she announced the name of the committee and then solicited from the group the names of women who would be suited to serve on it.

When the issue of the Kitchen Committee arises, Aude immediately responds that all of the women should be on the Committee and supports her answer through the use of a rhetorical question. Her anticipation of disagreement with her answer is well-founded, for Makwala contests Aude's assertion.

(1) Who? Who?

1 Mar: Commission de cuisine.
<FR committee CONN kitchen FR>
Kitchen Committee!

2 Banani,
CL.PL-who
Who all (should we put down for it)?

3 banani?
CL.PL-who
Who all (should we put down for it)?

- 4 Aud: Bamama tout.
 CL-woman <FR all FR>
All the women.
- 5 Makambo wana [e(z)a(li) na banani?]
 CL-matter DEM 3s.NHUM-be-PFV CONN CL.PL-who
Who all are these affairs for? (lit. These affairs it is for whom(pl)?)
- 6 Mak: [Na ::ni?]
 CL.who
Who?
- 7 ...(.67)
- 8 Mar: Natia ka(ka) toutes les mamans?
 1s.put.IPFV ADV <FR ADV ART woman.pl FR>
I just put all the women down?
- 9 Chi: Ee
 AFF
Yeah
- 10 Aud: Mais soki yo (o)boyi ngai pe naboyi,
 <FR CONJ FR> CONJ 2s.PRN 2s-refuse-PFV 1s.PRN ADV 1s- refuse-PFV
But if you refuse, me I'll also refuse.
- 11 Biso tout toboyi
 1PL.PRN ADV 1PL-refuse-PFV
We all refuse.
- 12 Aude [Yo o(z)a(li) mama ngai pe na(z)a(li) mama]
 2s.PRN 2s-be-PFV CL.WOMAN 1s.PRN ADV 1s-be-PFV CL.woman
You are a woman, I'm also a woman.
- 13 Mak: [Bongo e(z)a(la)ki,
 CONJ 3s.NHUM-be-PST-PFV
Even if it were so,
- 14 e(z)a(li) mari]age na ngai?
 3s.NHUM-be-PFV <FR wedding FR> CONN 1s.PRN
is it my wedding?

The wh-questions Marie-Claire asks in lines 2 and 3 of this example are primarily information-seeking. On the other hand, there is a directive quality to the combination of her announcement *Commision de cuisine* ‘Kitchen Committee’ as the first utterance in a turn that continues with a request for names *Banani, banani* ‘who,

who?’ (lines 2 and 3). Marie-Claire’s turn opens the floor for discussion leading to a decision.

In contrast to Marie-Claire’s questions in lines 2 and 3, the question in line 5 of Aude’s turn, *Makambo wana ezali na banani?* ‘Who all are these affairs for?’ is not information-seeking. One basis for this analysis is that the answer to the question in line 5 is the utterance in line 4 *Bamama tout* ‘All the women’. If Aude’s question was truly information-seeking, she would not have provided the answer to it before she asked the question. In addition, Aude’s utterance in line 4 provides the answer to Marie-Claire’s questions (*Banani, banani* ‘who, who?’ in lines 2 and 3), and in doing so makes the assertion that ‘these affairs’ — i.e. the wedding and the preparations surrounding it — are for ‘all the women.’ Aude’s question in line 5 is not information-seeking, then, but an assertion embedded in a rhetorical question. She is not seeking information but giving it. Further, whether or not she is seeking information is only recoverable through an assumption that her turn has relevance to Marie-Claire’s original questions and that the utterances within her turn are relevant to one another. In other words, the persuasive force of Aude’s rhetorical question requires information from the discourse context and not just the logico-semantic content of an isolated utterance.

As mentioned above, assertions are relevant actions in a discourse context in which speakers offer their perspectives as they work to reach a decision. Conversely, as speakers present their views, it is likely that disagreements will surface in the interaction.

4.2.2 *Disagreement as a Context for Rhetorical Questions*

Persuasion is often cited as the reason for using rhetorical questions.

Disagreement, for its part, is a context that makes persuasion relevant. Aude's justification of her answer *bamama tout* 'all the women' with *makambo wana ezali na banani?* 'these affairs it is for whom(pl)?' suggests that she is aware that her assertion may trigger disagreement. Even had she not been aware of the emerging disagreement, Makwala's question *Nani?* 'who?' (line 6) and Marie-Claire's question *Natia kaka toutes les mamans?* 'I just put all the women down?' (line 8) are portents of possible conflicting sides to the issue. While it is possible that Makwala is only seeking clarification, the affect carried by the lengthened vowel and sharply rising intonational contour of [na ::ni] 'who' and the expansion of the question-answer sequence indicate potential non-alignment.

Subsequent actions by Chimene and Marie-Claire indicate that they perceive disagreement in Makwala's stance, if not in the precise grammatical form of her question. Chimene's confirmation to Marie-Claire in line 9 that Aude's position is the one she should adopt indicates that she recognizes an emerging disagreement. Chimene treats Marie-Claire's question *Natia kaka toutes les mamans?* 'I just put all the women down?' as requesting confirmation of Aude's stance instead of asking for clarification because of communicative trouble. Confirmation of Aude's stance presupposes the existence of an opposing stance but one that is not yet fully articulated. It is important to understand Chimene's response to Marie-Claire's question as one that aligns with Aude's stance. This makes clear that Aude's

continuing argument that all of the women should be on the Kitchen Committee (lines 10-12) is not directed at Chimene or Marie-Claire, but at Makwala. Makwala's oppositional stance, though not fully discernible through the audio recording, is nonetheless perceived by the participants in the interaction. I will explain below the linguistic evidence for this claim. First, however, I describe some of the extralinguistic information that I and the other women know about Makwala and use to deduce that she opposes Aude in this instance. This information indicates that she may consider the hard work of kitchen duty to be beneath her.

Makwala was married to the church treasurer, a man who was well-positioned in the government apparatus of the Sangha region and who therefore received a relatively stable cash salary. This was in contrast to most church members, who did manual labor or other work that was remunerated at lower rates and without the consistency of government salaries. Makwala and her husband had reserved seats in the church sanctuary for Sunday morning worship, painted chairs in the very front row at the center of the church, as compared to other church members who sat on unfinished benches. Thus, Makwala may have felt that kitchen work was incompatible with her socio-economic and religious status. Additionally, there is also the possibility that she simply preferred to have things her own way. She is involved in the majority of the exchanges involving rhetorical questions in the data. Her disagreement with Aude may be based on a personal proclivity for argument.

In any case, in Example 1, Aude's next action indicates that something in Makwala's comportment has communicated disagreement to her. That Makwala's

question in line 6 is interpreted by Aude as indexing disagreement is clear in her utterance (lines 10-12) that begins *Mais soki yo oboyi ngai pe naboyi* ‘But if you refuse, I will, too.’ The combination of the French *mais* and Lingala *soki*, conjunctions that both communicate contrast, creates polar opposition to the stance that Aude interprets Makwala as taking. In addition, Aude designs the utterance in line 10 with the optional full second person singular subject pronoun *yo* (*Mais soki yo oboyi...* ‘But if you refuse...’). Full subject pronouns are not frequent either in my recorded data or in my experience with Lingala. Thus Aude’s use of *yo* in lines 10 (*Mais soki yo oboyi...* ‘But if you refuse...’) and 12 (*Yo ozali mama...* ‘You are a woman...’), and her use of the first person plural pronoun *biso* in line 11 (*Biso tout toboyi* ‘We all refuse’) are both marked. That Makwala interprets Aude as addressing her becomes clear when she responds in lines 13 and 14 (*Bongo ezalaki, ezali mariage na ngai?* ‘Even if it were so, is it my wedding?’). Discordant stances for Aude and Makwala emerge in this exchange through assertion (line 4), justification (line 5), the marked features of double contrastive conjunctions (line 10), and full subject pronouns (lines 10-12). The stances create the context of disagreement that provides a habitat for rhetorical questions.

It is not surprising, then, that Makwala’s turn in lines 13 and 14 includes such a question. She first references Aude’s line of argumentation in line 13 *Bongo ezalaki* ‘even if it were so’ and then formulates a predication about it, *ezali mariage na nga* ‘is it my wedding?’ The rhetorical effect of the question is plain in that the wedding is indeed not her own, and this fact is clear to all the women who have

gathered to plan the entertainment surrounding the church ceremony. Makwala's question is an implicit assertion of shared knowledge, a feature of the rhetorical questions in these data that is key to their directive force. Moreover, her own certainty in her assertion is indexed in the suffix /-i/ on the verb phrase *ezali* 'it is' (though the English gloss does not fully communicate its meaning), which frames the situation as a process that has been completed or a state that has been achieved. Despite the fact that other discussions of the perfective suffix /-i/ focus on its aspectual meaning (cf. Meeuwis 1995, 1997, 1998, 2001; Mufwene 1978), I argue that in these data it evidentially marks high speaker certainty. This claim is supported throughout the rest of this chapter with other examples of rhetorical questions from the data, including the same verb phrase *ezali* 'it is' used by Aude in line 5 of Example 1. As a final note concerning Makwala's rhetorical question, her use of the conjunction *bongo* (line 13) creates a point of engagement and resonance with the conjunctions Aude used in line 10, though her utterance displays an opposing stance (Du Bois 2001a, 2007). The use of material from another speaker's previous utterance, or reference to it, is a frequent feature of the rhetorical questions in my data. The significance of this claim will become clearer in the discussion of their topic-comment structure below.

A final observation about Example 1 is that rhetorical questions are persuasively effective. The discussion of membership on the Kitchen Committee becomes very argumentative after the end of Example 1, with a great deal of overlapping speech and raised voices. Marie-Claire is eventually successful in

directing the women's attention to a different issue. Later, she returns to the topic of who will be on the Kitchen Committee, yet she begins with the presupposition that all of the women will be on it. In doing so, she indicates tacit acceptance of Aude's earlier assertion (Example 1, line 4) concerning who should be on the committee as well as the justification embedded in Aude's rhetorical question *Makambo wana ezali na banani?* 'These affairs it is for whom(pl)?' It is worth noting here that Aude is Marie-Claire's adult daughter and that both of them have been members of the women's group longer than Makwala has, though Makwala is also a long-time member. The length of time different women have been part of the group correlates with their use presupposition and information they know to be shared by other members of the group. The issue that Marie-Claire raises next is who should be assigned to work in pairs on given days when food will need to be prepared not only for the wedding itself but for important guests coming from Brazzaville. While Aude's rhetorical question may be considered persuasive only in its immediate context, in the larger scheme of group decision-making it resulted in the adoption of her position.

This impact of speech on action in the social and physical world in these data is significant even though there were relatively few audio-recorded instances when the implied action was performed. This is due to the fact that rhetorical questions are used by several women to argue their positions on the same topics, and the group generally accepts only one position at a time. Nevertheless, there are real social and material outcomes that can be traced to the use of rhetorical questions in

argumentation. Furthermore, there is a pragmatic fit between the contexts of decision-making, which include disagreement and argumentation, and the form of a rhetorical question. And as if the context as a means for interpreting a question as rhetorical were not enough, the syntactic form of the rhetorical question in Lingala is markedly different from that of information-seeking questions.

4.2.3 *The Form of Rhetorical Questions*

Of my sample of 267 directive forms, only 40 are syntactically interrogative but non-information seeking. Besides the 10 I identified as directive, rhetorical questions are used by the women to shame, tease, and hold others accountable.⁶ One reason for such a limited data set has to do with the context of argument in which these questions are found. Of the 14.4 hours of recording, there are few arguments, an observation also reflected in my fieldnotes over a much longer period. In addition, most of the arguments are difficult to transcribe as they often involve five to nine speakers in highly engaged, loud, overlapping talk. Despite the small sample size, the syntactic pattern of nine out of ten of these questions is the same. The rhetorical questions used to shame, tease and hold others accountable show the same syntactic pattern, indicating a robust finding.

Rhetorical questions in these data tend towards contentful syntactic structures that reference a topic in the subject position, e.g., *Makambo wana* ‘these affairs’ from line 5 of Example 1, followed by a comment as a predication, e.g., *ezali na banani* ‘it is for whom(pl)’ from the same example and line. In addition, if the rhetorical question takes a stance in response to another speaker’s stance, there is

often a contrastive conjunction in the initial position of the sentence.⁷ This is because, as I have mentioned, rhetorical questions emerge in contexts of disagreement. Examples 2 and 3 below illustrate these features. Each rhetorical question was produced as part of an argument within a decision-making process. The first, second and fourth lines of transcription are the original Lingala, morphological glossing, and English translation respectively. The third line indicates the subject noun phrase that references the topic and the verb phrase that encodes the comment.

(2) Discussing the Kitchen Committee

Aud: Makambo wana e(z)a(li) na banani?
 CL-matter DEM 3s.NHUM-be-PFV CONN CL.PL-who
 -----Topic----- -----Comment-----
Who all are these affairs for? (lit. These affairs, it is for whom(pl)?)

(3) Discussing the Protocole ‘host(ess)’

Chi: Bo(ng)o Eglise (y)ango e(z)a(li) ya nzambe té?
 CONJ <FR church FR> DEM 3s.NHUM-be-PFV CONN CL-GOD NEG
 -----Topic----- -----Comment₁-----
Since this church, it is of God, no?
 E(z)a(li) ya nga?
 3s.NHUM-be-PFV CONN 1s.PRN
 -----Comment₂-----
Is it mine?

Both of these examples depict a question that begins by referencing a topic: *makambo wana* ‘these affairs’ in Example 2, *eglise yango* ‘this church’ in Example 3. The latter was produced in response to another speaker’s stance and so includes a conjunction *bongo* ‘since/because’ that ties it to the previous stance. Though a prepositioned verb phrase may also reference a topic for comment, what makes the form of these questions remarkable is the full lexical noun phrase that depicts the topic.

Questions with full lexical noun phrases in the sentence-initial subject position are possible in Lingala, but they are scarce. One likely reason for this is the referencing function of question words like *nini* ‘what’, *nani* ‘who’, *wapi* ‘where’, *boni* ‘how’ or *pona nini* ‘why’ (lit. ‘for what’). These question words may occupy the subject slot, as in Example 4.

(4) Where?

Rog: Wa(pi) Ma(ma) Claudine?
 where TITLE NAME
 Where (is) Mrs. (lit. mother) Claudine?

In this example *wapi* ‘where’ is in the subject slot. There is no verb; the existential predication is represented through the juxtaposition of *wapi* ‘where’ and the name of the person sought, in this case Mama Claudine. This is a frequent form used to ask where someone is. On the other hand, Example 5 demonstrates the possibility for a question word to fill the noun phrase slot as part of the predicate of a question. This is the more prevalent pattern in the data.

(5) Who?

Lad: E(z)a(la)ki nani?
 3S.NHUM-be-PST-PFV who
 Who was it? (lit. It was who?)

In this example, the verbal prefix *e-* references a third person non-human subject ‘it’ while the question word *nani* ‘who’ is in the post-verbal position. Examples 4 and 5 are both substantially shorter than the rhetorical questions in Examples 2 and 3.

Longer question forms do occur, but the most prevalent pattern is for the subject to be represented only through a person prefix on the verb phrase. Example 6 is representative of this pattern.

(6) Water

Chi: Balobi ba(k)ope(s)a lelo?
 3_{PL}-say.PFV 3_{PL}-FUT-give today
 They said they'd give (it) today?

The lack of a subject noun phrase in Example 6 is striking compared to the pattern of full lexical subject noun phrases of the rhetorical questions in Examples 2 and 3.

Likewise, though it is possible for other questions to have full lexical noun phrases, question words such as *wapi* 'where' or *nani* 'who' usually fill that slot as in Examples 4 and 5. Both of these patterns make the full lexical subject noun phrase a marked feature of rhetorical questions. As Examples 5 and 6 demonstrate, a full lexical noun phrase pre-posed to the predicate is not necessary for a well-formed verb phrase, which requires a person prefix. The potential for high resonance in conversation constructed through situational and conversational context, including anaphoric and cataphoric reference, also makes full lexical noun phrases in the subject position redundant (Du Bois 2001a; Du Bois, Kumpf, and Ashby 2003).

Though this analysis has concentrated on full lexical noun phrases positioned before the predicate, it is the topic-comment structure that accounts most fully for the data.

A lexical noun phrase may depict the topic as in the examples above, or the topic may be referenced through a verb phrase as in the example below.

(7) Discussing the Kitchen Committee

Mak: Bongo e(z)a(la)ki, e(z)a(li) mariage na nga?
 -----Topic----- -----Comment-----
 CONJ 3s.NHUM-be-PST-PFV 3s.NHUM-be-PFV <FR wedding FR> CONN 1s.PRN
 Even if it were so, is it my wedding?

Example 7 is slightly different from the previous examples in that the topic is resumed in a subordinate clause. *Bongo ezalaki* 'even if it were so' references

Aude's reason that all of the women should be on the Kitchen Committee. Whether the topic is in the form of a subject lexical noun phrase or a subordinate clause, the identifying structural characteristic of rhetorical questions remains the topic-comment form. This form is marked in contrast to other kinds of questions in Lingala through the relative absence of subject noun phrases or subordinate clauses that are positioned before the verb phrase of the main clause.

The topic-comment structure as a grammatical phenomenon carries socially significant and relevant meaning for assertion in the context of disagreement. In particular, the lexical formulation of the topical noun phrase reflects the speaker's perspective on reality. The comment then says something about this perspective. Crucially, both the lexical formulation of the topic and the form of the comment are expressions of speaker subjectivity. A prevalent pattern in these data is a comment involving the verb 'to be', usually in its third person singular (non-human) perfective form *ezali* (Examples 1, 2, 3, 7 above). This commonly occurring verb is a semantically significant element for expressions of speaker subjectivity that link the topic of the sentence to a comment about it. 'To be' asserts an existential equivalency between the topical subject and the predicative complement. In addition, the verbal suffix /-i/ on the verb phrase *ezali* 'it is' also indexes a mood of high epistemic certainty. Givón has found that perfects "in general tend to distribute with high frequency in grammatical environments that tend to be presuppositional" (1994:309), i.e., in environments in which speakers mark their assertions as known and obvious facts. The occurrence of the verbal suffix /-i/ in every rhetorical

question in this data set is thus an expected though striking finding. As I will demonstrate in the next two chapters, other directives in Lingala are not presuppositional and have verbal markings indicating lower speaker certainty and difference evidential sources. This is what makes the use of the suffix /-i/ in rhetorical questions stand out as also indicating high speaker certainty.

In summary, rhetorical questions are structurally and distributionally different from information-seeking questions. The data demonstrate that rhetorical questions are most often found in contexts of decision-making and, more specifically, in contexts where persuasion is necessary because of disagreement. The topic-comment structure of rhetorical questions sets them apart from information-seeking questions, and provides a structure for the semantic content necessary for the implied assertion. The asserted proposition of the rhetorical question is noteworthy because it reflects one of many possible perspectives of a situation and is therefore an expression of speaker subjectivity, yet it is evidentially marked in such a way that it communicates high speaker certainty. Asserting a proposition even with great certainty is not the same thing as directing someone else's actions, however. As mentioned above, the directive force of these rhetorical questions originates in the ideologies indexed through their propositional content as well as their grammatical form.

4.3 Interpretation and Directive Force

It is one thing to be able to correctly interpret a directive form in a given context; it is quite another to cooperate or comply with the directive. Much of the

research on directives includes references to asymmetry of some kind, i.e., in social status and the power that often accompanies it, as the basis for the authority of the speaker to direct and the obligation or necessity of the recipient to comply (Ervin-Tripp 1976; M.H. Goodwin 1990, 2006; C. Goodwin 2007). This is also true of the literature on language and gender (e.g., Smith 1992; West 1990). However, I can find no supporting evidence in my data that asymmetries of social status and accompanying power over others play a role in the outcomes of rhetorical questions as directives for the women's group. It seems that the women are far more subtle in their dealings with each other than to openly impose personal advantage in contexts of disagreement. Instead, they rely on assertions that involve knowledge shared by group members. These assertions are key to understanding rhetorical questions as directives because of the ways they are used to characterize the recipient and to hold her accountable for her actions in the social world.

4.3.1 Using Shared Knowledge and Implicature

Scholars have long recognized that though rhetorical questions are syntactically interrogative, semantically and pragmatically they are assertions (Han 2002; Schmidt-Radefeldt 1977). Frank (1990) goes so far as to say that rhetorical questions allow speakers to make more powerful assertions than could otherwise be made in statement form, in part due to the mitigating effect of the interrogative syntactical form. I have already discussed the context in which rhetorical questions most often occur in my data and described their structural properties in Lingala. Now I turn to the meanings that are asserted, implied and constructed based on knowledge

shared by members of the group through the use of rhetorical questions. Identifying the assertion, or more properly, the implicature of a rhetorical question is nothing new, nor is observing the cognitive results of persuasion (cf. Frank 1990; Han 2002; Meibauer 1986; Schmidt-Radefeldt 1977; Sprouse 2007). On the other hand, much less has been said about the social and interactional impact of rhetorical questions.

Participants in these interactions interpret rhetorical questions as assertions that carry implications for their personal actions in the social world. To illustrate this claim, I return to the disagreement between Aude and Makwala reported in Example 1. Aude uses a combination of a statement *Bamaman tout* ‘All the women’ and a rhetorical question *Makambo wana ezali na banani?* ‘These affairs it is for whom(pl)?’ in order to assert that all the women should be involved in the wedding preparations because it is a celebration for all of them. In this case, Aude explicitly names in her declarative statement the piece of information that is available through the implicature of her rhetorical question. Makwala counters Aude’s assertion with one of her own, couched in the rhetorical question *Bongo ezalaki, ezali mariage na ngai?* ‘Even if it were so, is it my wedding?’ Makwala’s implicature that the wedding is not hers relies on Aude’s previous assertion to build the further implicature that because it is not her wedding, she need not be involved in the preparations. This turned out to be the case: for the next four weeks Makwala did not attend the prayer meetings, singing rehearsals or committee meetings of the women’s group. It appears that in order to not comply with the directive implications of Aude’s rhetorical question, Makwala physically removed herself from

involvement in the wedding preparations. Aude and Makwala, and indeed all of the women who witnessed their exchange, shared the knowledge that to be physically present at the women's meetings was to agree to participate in all of the wedding preparations.

The notion of shared knowledge and its social consequences intrigued Harvey Sacks (1979, 1995), and he eventually developed the theoretical model of "membership categorization devices" as a way to account for the phenomenon. He puzzled over how lexical items such as *hotrodder* or *teenager* could carry weight such that their use would have import for social meanings and interactional structures. He described these lexical items as denoting a "type" or category to which people in the social world are assigned either by themselves or by others (1995:170-174). When considered from a semantic perspective, these categories involve shared knowledge that can be expressed as presupposition and implicature. There are social consequences to being assigned to a category that represents a body of shared knowledge. When a person is recognized as a member of the category "teenager," for example, others monitor his or her actions and activities in light of what they know about the type or category. When the "teenager" fails to perform in ways that correspond to this knowledge, he or she is held accountable for these lapses (cf. Goodwin and Goodwin 1992a; Schegloff 2002; West and Fenstermaker 2002). The next example demonstrates how membership categorization devices in rhetorical questions supply directive force.

The following example took place during a relatively heated discussion concerning who should act as hostess for the upcoming wedding celebration. As in Example 1, Marie-Claire had announced the topic for discussion, and the women spent a significant amount of time arguing over it. The host(ess) or *protocole* is a relatively prestigious position in church circles. He or she is assisted by a group of helpers who are also included under the title *protocole*. In many of the Congolese churches I visited, the *protocole* corps was responsible for welcoming and seating worshippers according to their relative (religious) rank and their participation in the service.⁸ They also maintained watch over the proceedings during worship services, bringing chairs as needed, getting out the receptacles for the offering, and ushering participants to the front of the sanctuary for participation in the offering, communion, or other ritual activity. In addition, they kept order in the services, for example, poking parishioners who dozed off or escorting people from the sanctuary if they became unruly. When I spoke as a guest or represented SIL-Congo within the context of the church, it was necessary for me to first contact the *protocole*, who would then guide me to the appropriate authorities or otherwise assist me and seat me in the appropriate place.

The bride-price negotiations and wedding ceremonies that I attended (briefly described in Chapter 2) are similar with regards to the functioning of the *protocole*, who is again assisted by helpers. The *protocole* seats guests with respect to rank and relationship to the families of the bride and groom, supervises distribution of refreshments, and gives permission for activities such as photographing parts of the

ceremony. In both contexts, the *protocole* is a visible participant, accorded a significant level of authority in order to ensure the smooth logistical functioning and proper procedure of ceremonial events.

From my interactions with the women at the Eglise de Philadelphie, including the discussion that is the context for the next example, I understood that the office of *protocole* was of high standing and thus desirable. However, a person should not be perceived as seeking out the position for herself. At the same time, the example demonstrates that eligibility for the *protocole* position may be related to one's connection to other membership categories. Just before Example 8, the women's discussion has revealed that the current *protocole* of the church is out of town, and it is not known when she will return. As her absence disqualifies her from participation in the wedding celebration, Makwala argues that Chimene, the pastor's wife, should be the *protocole*. Her reasons include logical connections between the women's church group and the upcoming wedding, weddings as ceremonies connected to the church, pastors as responsible for the church, and by extension, pastors' wives as people well-suited for the job of *protocole* at weddings. These reasons (as well as Chimene's rebuttal) are all given in the form of rhetorical questions. More significant, however, is the introduction of the membership category of "pastor's wife" and the implication that Chimene is best suited to take the position of *protocole* for the wedding.

(8) Weddings, wives, pastors and churches

- 1 Mak: Awa ye likambo (y)a mariage e(z)a(li) té?
 here 3s CL-matter CONN <FR wedding FR> 3s.NHUM-be-PFV NEG
 -----Topic----- -----Comment-----
Here it (is) a matter of the wedding, isn't it?
- 2 Bongo ye a(z)a(li) mwasi (y)a nani?
 CONJ 3s 3s-be-PFV CL-woman CONN CL.who
 Topic -----Comment-----
Since she, she is the wife of whom?
- 3 Mak: Mwasi ya mokambi té?
 CL-woman CONN CL-director NEG
 -----Topic----- Comment
Wife of the pastor, no?
- 4 Eglise (y)ango e(z)a(li) ya nani?
 <FR church FR> DEM 3s.NHUM-be-PFV CONN CL.who
 -----Topic----- -----Comment-----
This church, whose is it?
- 5 Chi: Bo(ng)o église (y)ango e(z)a(li) ya nzambe té?
 CONJ <FR church FR> DEM 3s.NHUM-be-PFV CONN CL-GOD NEG
 -----Topic----- -----Comment₁-----
Since this church, it is of God, no?
- 6 Chi: E(z)a(li) ya ngai?
 3s.NHUM-be-PFV CONN 1s.PRN
 -----Comment₂-----
Is it mine?

Makwala delivers her rhetorical questions in lines 1-4 very rapidly, with no pauses or breaths. Chimene's response matches the tempo of Makwala's turn. The two speakers orchestrate their rapid-fire exchange perfectly as the floor passes from one to the other. Though scholars assert that rhetorical questions "expect no answers" (Frank 1990:723; Han 2002:202), rebuttals are common in argument. And as I will demonstrate below, the formulation of a question sets up a place for an answer in the interaction. This is an essential part of the explanation of how rhetorical questions can be used as directives. First, however, it is important to

discuss the assertions made by both speakers, and how they make use of membership categorization.

The topic-comment structure is put to work by Makwala as she formulates a series of rhetorical questions to argue that Chimene is the best choice for the *protocole* position. Her line of reasoning is that Chimene is a member of a category (pastor's wives) that is affiliated with pastors, who are connected to churches, which are connected to wedding celebrations. Makwala's first question presupposes that the current discussion about the *protocole* is in the context of planning for a wedding. Her second question calls attention to Chimene's categorization as someone's wife and the third question identifies that person as the pastor of the church. Here rhetorical questions are used to emphasize an established fact (Meibauer 1986; Schmidt-Radefeldt 1977:379). Makwala first substitutes the question word *nani* 'who' for the key element ('the pastor's wife') in line 2, and then supplies that element through the yes/no rhetorical question in line 3. The alternation of yes/no and question-word rhetorical questions allows Makwala to string together a series of facts and emphasize the one that is key to her argument. Moreover, her facts are presented as presupposed-as-shared knowledge with high speaker certainty through the verbs *ezali* 'it is' (lines 1, 4) and *azali* 's/he is' (line 2), both marked with the verbal suffix /-i/.

In effect, Makwala's argument hinges on the identity of the pastor and his responsibilities. This can be seen in her fourth question, which implies that the pastor is responsible for the church, again substituting the question word *nani* 'who' for the

element she wishes to emphasize. Emphasizing a fact by omitting information may seem counterintuitive when linguistic forms are analyzed in isolation, especially in a view of language that emphasizes the individual speaker without reference to others interactionally present (cf. Harrison 2004). But this argument is not constructed by a single speaker, though Makwala is the one talking. When she asks a question and omits a piece of information, she marks that information not only as important but also as knowledge shared by the group. In effect, the question word interactionally indexes the answer, thereby making it part of the discourse context through the presupposed voice of another. This becomes crucial in locating the evidential source of the knowledge, a point which will be taken up below. Moreover, the choice of which piece of information is important is highly subjective. By emphasizing one presupposed item of knowledge over another, Makwala presents her subjectivity as if no other perspective were available.

The relationship between the role and responsibilities of the pastor and those of his wife, Chimene, was discussed in Chapter 2, where I described how in this church context wives of religious leaders are co-titular with their husbands. The fact that a pastor's wife is co-titular affiliates her with the "pastor" membership category. This allows Makwala to assess Chimene's behavior with regards to how she fulfills her responsibilities to the group as if Chimene were the pastor herself (Schegloff 2002; West and Fenstermaker 2002). Thus, the pastor membership category along with the group's knowledge about pastors and their responsibilities is laminated or transposed onto his wife (with a small leap for the gender mismatch) (Goffman

1974, 1981). Makwala's argument, then, is formulated in order to hold Chimene accountable for what the former perceives as a lapse on the latter's part. As the pastor's wife, she is obligated to step forward for the leadership position of the *protocole*. I saw no evidence in the recording to indicate whether Chimene wanted the *protocole* position or not. Conversely, a whispered comment from Aude that she knew someone who could help Chimene with the role indicates that Aude interpreted the reason for Chimene's reluctance to volunteer for the job to be that she did not know how to do it. Despite her position as the wife of the pastor, Chimene had only been married to him for three years and thus she was a more recent member of the group than both Aude and Makwala. By embedding Chimene's membership category in her series of rhetorical questions, Makwala constructs a compelling directive stance. Yet she herself is not the powerful figure behind the directive; instead, she relies on the ideologies of the group and Chimene's recognition of them to persuade all the participants to join her in her stance, ultimately directing Chimene's actions. The consequences of this include the ability of the group to assess Chimene's behavior as a member of the "pastor's wife" category and to hold her accountable for any perceived lapses in her responsibilities.

Chimene's immediate answer in lines 5 and 6 (reproduced below along with Makwala's final question for the convenience of the reader) demonstrates that she clearly understands the implication of Makwala's questions, i.e., that she will be held accountable if she does not act as a pastor's wife should and accept the position of the *protocole*. In addition, her answer demonstrates an awareness of the social

import of membership categorization. In order to overcome Makwala’s reasoning, she must focus her rebuttal on the notion that the church is presumed to belong to the pastor (and by association, his wife) and is therefore his responsibility.

- 4 Mak: Eglise (y)ango e(z)a(li) ya nani?
 <FR church FR> DEM 3s.NHUM-be-PFV CONN CL.who
 -----Topic----- -----Comment-----
This church, whose is it?
- 5 Chi: Bo(ng)o église (y)ango e(z)a(li) ya nzambe té?
 CONJ <FR church FR> DEM 3s.NHUM-be-PFV CONN CL-GOD NEG
 -----Topic----- -----Comment₁-----
Since this church, it is of God, no?
- 6 E(z)a(li) ya ngai?
 3s.NHUM-be-PFV CONN 1s.PRN
 -----Comment₂-----
Is it mine?

Chimene engages both the structure and content of Makwala’s final rhetorical question to reject the implicature that the pastor (and by extension, his wife) is responsible for the church. Adding only a conjunction at the beginning of her utterance (line 5) in order to build coherence between Makwala’s question and her own, she adopts the subject noun phrase and verb of other woman’s question, but alters the verbal complement, substituting *nzambe* ‘God’ for Makwala’s indexical *nani* ‘who’ and adding a negative polarity marker *té* to transform Makwala’s wh-question into a yes/no question. In this way she alters the nature of the question from one that omits information in order to emphasize it to one that stresses the truth value of the assertion that the church is God’s responsibility. Chimene’s dialogic engagement with Makwala’s words and her rebuttal to the other woman’s argument are depicted as the diagraph in Figure 4.1 (Du Bois 2001a).

4	Mak:		Eglise <i>church</i>	yango <i>this</i>	ezali <i>it.is</i>	ya <i>of</i>	nani? <i>who</i>	
5	Chi:	Bongo <i>Since</i>	église <i>church</i>	yango <i>this</i>	ezali <i>it.is</i>	ya <i>of</i>	nzambe <i>god</i>	té? <i>no?</i>

Figure 4.1 Dialogic Engagement in Disagreement between Makwala and Chimene

By removing the pastor as a category in Makwala's line of reasoning, Chimene also severs the connection between the wedding and herself that would obligate her to serve as the *protocole*. Substituting God as the one responsible for the church challenges the reasoning that puts Chimene in that position, and her last rhetorical question emphasizes this move: *ezali ya ngai* 'Is it mine?' A rhetorical question with positive polarity such as this one projects a negative answer (Raymond 2003). In addition, the religious knowledge that these women expressed each Sunday and Wednesday in church denies that anyone could claim what is God's or in some other way share a category with the Supreme Being. Chimene thus successfully derails the implicature based on Makwala's use of membership categorization devices and deflects the other woman's attempt to direct her actions.

Later in the argument, Makwala returns to the set of assertions that situate Chimene in the pastor category, doing so through the use of rhetorical questions. However, the women seem to tire of the dispute, and it lapses, to be replaced by a new topic. No decision was apparently made, though Chimene later organized the purchase of cloth so that we could all have matching outfits made, and she took an active role in the composition of songs for the wedding entertainment. The

cancellation of the wedding, however, makes it impossible to know whether Makwala's rhetorical questions were ultimately successful as directives.

While the assertions of rhetorical questions are a necessary part of their directive force, membership categorization devices in rhetorical questions are also a powerful source of directive social action. In both episodes analyzed thus far (Examples 1 and 8), speakers make use of categories such as *bamaman* 'women,' *mokambi* 'pastor' and *mwasi* 'wife' to direct the actions of others, actions that are expected based on knowledge shared by members of the group about the membership category, including social ideologies. The power to enforce the directive is not located in the social status of the speaker but in the ideologies of the group: both their knowledge and expectations and their ability to censure inappropriate behavior. Even so, in order to wield this directive influence, a woman must know about relevant membership categories as well as the actions expected of members of those categories, and she must be able to communicate her perspective at appropriate moments and with epistemic certainty. The question remains, however, as to why speakers would resort to a syntactically interrogative form for their assertions. One possibility is that the demand for an action in the form of a question is only presupposed and implied, minimizing threats to face while strengthening directive effect, as Franks suggests (1990:726, 737). Another possibility is that a question positions the recipient and other hearers as evidential sources, and that this is another source of the rhetorical question's directive effect.

4.3.2 Interrogative Marking and Evidentiality

As discussed above, the implicature of a rhetorical question is recoverable through access to presupposed knowledge shared by members of the group – the speaker, recipient, and all other participants. The issue remains as to why an interrogative form is used for the implicature. First of all, I suggest that the question carries a presupposition that directs the recipient's response. In addition, it indexes shared knowledge and expectations of the group. In other words, the speaker's question locates the evidential support for her claim in the body of knowledge available to the recipient (and to other participants). Moreover, when a question is asked it opens a relevant place in the interaction for an answer, and the preferred type of answer is one that aligns with the speaker's agenda (Pomerantz 1984; Raymond 2003; Sacks 1995; Schegloff 2007). If the recipient can be portrayed as having access to the knowledge needed to interpret the implicature of the rhetorical question and hence of the speaker's and the group's expectations for her behavior, she is then open to censure for her non-compliance. Earlier in this chapter, I described the phenomenon of membership categorization devices and how they are used to categorize an individual and then hold her accountable for what is known about the behavior of members of that category. This vulnerability to censure puts pressure on the recipient and provides the directive force to motivate the recipient to comply with the implicature of the rhetorical question.

The implicature of a rhetorical question must contribute a key piece of the argument in order to persuade. In Examples 1 and 8 above, Aude and Makwala

organize turns containing rhetorical questions so that certain answers are highlighted or made obvious, while others are made irrelevant or incoherent. For example, in her turn emphasizing that all of the women should be on the Kitchen Committee, Aude asks the rhetorical question after she has given the answer. Likewise, Makwala supplies the answer to her question about the identity of Chimene's spouse (*bongo ye a(z)a(li) mwasi (y)a nani?* 'since she, she is the wife of whom?') with her next question *mwasi ya mokambi té?* 'wife of the pastor, no?' Her first question could have received multiple answers in keeping with the many ways that Chimene's husband is known, e.g. by his first and/or last name, as his father's son, as his children's father, by his position as the vice-president of a local pastors' association and so on. However, none of these answers would have contributed to the direction of her argument in the way that the membership category of pastor and the associated category of pastor's wife do, and so she is careful to single out that particular answer. As I have already mentioned, the choice of what information to present and its presentation as presupposed are both evidence of speaker subjectivity. Though the knowledge necessary to reconstruct the implicature of a rhetorical question is shared by members of the group, the best answer for the speaker's argument must be presented as if it were obvious or self-evident in order for the argument to succeed. The speaker's subjectivity must be clearly formulated and presented as if it were knowledge easily accessible to all. This is where the importance of the interrogative form comes in.

Answerless questions are marked both because of the ubiquitous nature of adjacency pairs and because question-answer adjacency pairs are a very common type within this phenomenon (cf. Atkinson and Heritage 1984:5-7; Goodwin and Heritage 1990:287-88; Raymond 2003; Sacks 1995:521-569; Schegloff 2007). Adjacency pairs are fundamental to the structural organization of conversation. As I described in Chapter 1, they consist of pairs of utterances, typically produced by alternating speakers, that are structurally relevant and contiguous as well as semantically and pragmatically coherent. Their structural relevance is based on the frequent co-occurrence in interaction of matching pairs of utterances and by the fact that participants in conversation may hold each other accountable for mismatched pairs of utterances or for first utterances that lack a matching second utterance (Sacks 1995:521-569; Schegloff 2007:13-27). Heritage has noted that these conversational structures shape the expectations, understandings and actions of the conversational participants (1984:247). An answer, then, is an expected and relevant next action to a question. The expected contiguity of answers to questions opens a place for them in the structure of the interaction. Furthermore, the semantic content of the answer is available in the body of knowledge shared by the participants, including phenomena such as membership categorization devices. The expected and relevant provider of the answer is the recipient of the question (and perhaps other participants who hear it). Through the structure of expected contiguity and alternating speakers, the recipient is constructed as the one holding the answer. The

speaker thus locates the evidential source of the rhetorical question's implicature in the recipient.

The construction of the recipient as the evidential source is powerful in three ways. First, a question positions the recipient as the one who is obligated to supply an answer. Second, the one who supplies the answer is responsible for its content. Third, the answerer is also responsible for any further action that is tied to the implicature of the original question by phenomena such as membership categorization devices. The recipient (or answerer) has not chosen her status of responsibility but has been identified or indexed as knowledgeable and responsible by the first speaker's use of a question toward her.

Rhetorical questions are a kind of interactional 'sight-of-hand'. Their syntactic form appears to do one action, i.e., seek information, at the same time that they impose a conclusion via implicature on another participant. Further, the interrogative form constructs the recipient as the evidential source of the implicature and the responsible agent for any action that follows from it. This is accomplished through the speaker's selection of the specific information that should be in the answer, and through the complicity of the question-answer adjacency pair in indexing both a place in the structure of the conversational sequence for an answer and the recipient's responsibility to produce one. The implications in the answer for the actions of the recipient are enforceable through the construction of the recipient as responsible to the original speaker. In addition, when the question-answer exchange takes place in a public arena, the other participants who witness it may also

hold the answerer responsible for her answer and any expected actions that follow from it. Thus, an utterance dressed as a question becomes a directive tool with the force of personal responsibility and public accountability. In summary, the source of the force of directive rhetorical questions in these data stems from the use of implicature, the constraint of the question-answer adjacency pair and the presence of other participants who can hold the answerer accountable for her actions.

4.4 Conclusion

Rhetorical questions encode speaker subjectivity through implicature. In addition to revealing the presuppositions and shared knowledge of group members, they are used to influence and direct the participation of others. The women's group of the Eglise de Philadelphie used rhetorical questions most frequently during disagreements, usually when they were making decisions. While rhetorical questions are well-known as a persuasive device, the fact that these women interpreted them as directives can be seen by ensuing actions that are traceable to the implicatures in such questions. After describing the contextual distribution of rhetorical questions, in this chapter I considered how these women recognized that a question was rhetorical. I showed that in addition to the relatively restricted distribution of rhetorical questions, their syntactic form is significantly different from that of information-seeking questions. This is important, because a rhetorical question must be identifiable as non-information-seeking and must be interpreted as making an implicature in order to be relevant and coherent in the context of an argument.

Furthermore, I found that these Lingala speakers made use of presupposition, implicature and group expectations as important sources of directive force. Membership categorization devices are another way to direct the actions of others. Ultimately, however, it is not only shared knowledge that supplies the directive force of a rhetorical question. Instead, I argued that speakers select a particular piece of knowledge and make use of the interrogative form to construct the recipient as the evidential source, and therefore as the person in a position to carry out implied actions. This portrays the recipient as knowledgeable and responsible, and holds her accountable as a moral agent.

Other studies both of directives and of rhetorical questions have suggested that using an interrogative form for an assertion is a way to mitigate aggressiveness, thereby minimizing the risk to face in interaction. However, Frank (1990) argues that the interrogative form of a rhetorical question may in fact strengthen its directive effect. My findings indicate that the interrogative form of the rhetorical question neither mitigates its aggressiveness nor minimizes the risk to face. Instead, it strengthens the directive force and does so, as I have described, through the construction of the recipient as a moral agent. Rhetorical questions are consequential social actions masquerading as interrogatives.

One effect of the use of rhetorical questions as directives is the appearance of an egalitarian form of social organization. No single person in this group has more power or authority than the others, but any member who can formulate a rhetorical question may, in principle, use it effectively to direct another. However, the

formulation and interpretation of rhetorical questions requires access to knowledge – presuppositions and ideologies shared by other members of the group – and it is likely that the distribution of knowledge among the group’s members is not perfectly equal. Members who have a longer history with the group have amassed more knowledge than those who are more recent members. They are, therefore, well-equipped to impose their subjectivities on younger, less experienced members and to dominate in making bids for how activities should proceed. This is reminiscent of the hierarchical structure of initiation societies described in Vansina’s (1990) classic ethnography of central African peoples in which men amass knowledge and skill in areas such as jurisdiction, war or religion and then use their expertise to attract followers. Thus, knowledge and experience as a means to achieve positions of influence over others is a phenomenon that is indigenous to the sociocultural history of the area. The way in which presupposition and implicature, i.e., ways of using knowledge, are used by the women’s group points to the value of a more comprehensive study of rhetorical questions as well as other kinds of questions used by Lingala speakers, and the consequences of their use for socialization and social organization.

Finally, in addition to what they show about the social organization of the group, directives in Lingala reveal the grammatical functions of morphemes as speakers use them in the construction of semantically, pragmatically and interactionally meaningful utterances. The suffix */-i/* as it is used on verb phrases in rhetorical questions indicates the speaker’s high level of epistemic certainty in her

implicature and the evidential source of ideological phenomena such as membership categorization devices.

In the next chapter I turn to an analysis of command forms in Lingala. As the quintessential directive, these command forms include verb phrases marked with the imperative mood as well as others marked with presupposed certainty. Again, as we might predict from the interaction between language and authority that molds the form of the group's social organization, it is not social status or power that lends directive force to commands, but knowledge of group activities and procedures.

Notes for Chapter 4

¹ Other rhetorical questions in my data are used to shame and tease rather than to direct. Though I considered them in my analysis, they do not figure in this discussion.

² For a similar analysis of the connection between rhetorical devices and results in the social world, see Heritage and Greatbatch (1986).

³ For example, Searle notes that an announcement is never only an announcement but also a statement (1976:8); hence utterances with the verb *to advise* should not always be classified as Representatives because an utterance can be designed and used in a social context that makes it a Directive, e.g., “Passengers are hereby advised that the train will be late” is a Representative; “I advise you to leave,” an utterance with the same verb, is nevertheless a Directive (1976:22).

⁴ There may be some connection to the similar phenomenon of “discernment” described by Hill, Ide, Ikuta, Kawasaki and Ogino (1986:348) for Japanese society as “the automatic observation of socially-agreed-upon rules.”

⁵ Rhetorical questions reveal relativity in logic: the reasoning of the local community involves conventionalized connections between observations about the world and appropriate attitudes and actions of social actors.

⁶ Frank’s (2002) study of rhetorical questions from corpora of conversations in English reveals a similarly low frequency and similar contextual distribution.

⁷ Han (2002) mentions similar logical connectors as identifying marks of rhetorical questions in English and Italian and asserts that information-seeking questions with this kind of connector do not meet well-formedness conditions.

⁸ For example, my husband and I were often seated in the first row of the sanctuary, or on the dais, in keeping with my husband’s rank as an ordained pastor. Conversely, when I visited a church alone or with a younger female colleague, we were often seated several rows from the front in keeping with our rank as foreign visitors, or even in a row in the middle of the sanctuary when we were deemed ordinary worshippers.

Chapter 5

Commands and the Coordination of Group Action

5.1 Introduction

As I showed in the previous chapter, in my data directives in the form of rhetorical questions are effective in persuasion and direction because they index presupposed-as-shared knowledge and ideologies that motivate action by the recipient. Commands, on the other hand, act on participants on the verge of action and thus are effective in my data in coordinating the physical movements and verbal actions of more than one person at a given moment. Again, the shared knowledge and experience in the group plays an important role in the use of these directives, and this is how these utterances influence the social organization of the group. Women with the most knowledge and experience are able to use commands more frequently and successfully than the more junior members of the group. With this in mind, I also claim that the Lingala suffix that has been analyzed in previous studies as marking imperative mood also indicates subjective judgment, i.e., the deductive reasoning of the speaker concerning an imminent action.

5.1.1 *Commands: Power and Politeness or Action Coordination?*

In the introductory chapter of this dissertation, I briefly discussed how the theoretical constructs of face (Goffman 1967), politeness (Brown and Levinson 1978) and direct and indirect speech have been used fruitfully to predict and explain the use of commands versus more mitigated acts such as requesting and suggesting

(cf. Blum-Kulka et al. 1989; Ervin-Tripp 1976; Labov and Fanshel 1977). However, these constructs are not universally tenable in the ways they have been discussed based on data from English and other closely related languages and cultures (cf. Wierzbicka 1985). Upadhyay (2003) notes, for example, that the model of mitigation for politeness is not valid for command forms in everyday Nepali contexts. As a result, the hypothetical link between linguistic indirectness and politeness cannot be supported by an analysis of conversational data recorded in multiple Nepalese settings in spite of a relatively elaborate system for honorific and polite speech involving choices of pronouns and verbs in Nepali. I note a similar difficulty in the assumptions of a concern for face or politeness strategies for the analysis of directives in my Lingala data from the women's group of the Eglise de Philadelphie.

In Chapter 2, I discussed my initial hypotheses concerning the social organization of the group that were based on social categories such as age or marital status that others have identified as indicators of power and status in the central African context (cf. Vansina 1990). As I indicated above, the assumption of asymmetrical power between speaker and addressee was not a helpful starting point for the analysis of command forms in my data; however, the description of the interactional achievement of leadership status through the frequent use of commands was useful. M.H. Goodwin's (1990) study of directives among African American children in a Philadelphia neighborhood, for example, reveals that those who claimed leadership positions or were otherwise regarded as leaders tended to use

more directives than the others. This fact has two points of application for my study and leads to a third point.

First, experienced members of the women's group used more commands than the younger, more inexperienced members of the group, but they also talked more. The higher number of commands by experienced members seems to be a function of greater number of utterances generated. Thus, turn frequency may be an indication of a claim to leadership status or at least seniority in the group. Secondly, experienced members also give commands at a greater rate than inexperienced members. This suggests that the ability to successfully use a command is related to the ability to judge correctly how and when to utter them. In turn, this means that speaker subjectivity is an important consideration in participation in group activities. After considering how commands are used in the group, it becomes clear that more turns at talk and a higher rate of commands are both indicators of positions of influence in the group. Finally, the role of speaker subjectivity in giving commands turns attention to how it is signaled in the grammatical form of the commands. I argue that meanings associated with the imperative verb suffix in Lingala include an indication of the speaker's relative certainty of their judgment. To begin the presentation of an analysis that leads to these conclusions, it is necessary to recognize that the use of commands indicates a concern for the coordination of an activity, especially with respect to who does what and when.

5.1.2 Coordinated Actions: Who and What

In these data the context of a situated activity, such as the rehearsal of a song, and its participation framework has already determined the participants and the actions to some extent (cf. Duranti and C. Goodwin 1992). Therefore, the analytic approach to commands suggested by M. H. Goodwin, to look at the participants' concern for "how the activity should proceed" (2006a:136-137), is most useful. This allows the dual analytic focus on what is being done (the situated activity system) and who will do it (the participation framework).

As I described in Chapter 1, the situated activity system focuses attention on participation and how it is organized. It is a means to delineate a stretch of talk that involves a goal-oriented activity by multiple participants who are joined by their single focus of attention. Furthermore, this implies that each action during the situated activity is affected by a close scrutiny of its mutual relevance to other actions. This seems to be a difference in degree and not in kind of the way that the relevance links together the acts in any conversational sequence. It is important to bear in mind in the analysis of the commands in this chapter that they are part of a situated, goal-driven activity that is itself part of a series of interactions of a period of several weeks which have the larger goal of preparing for the upcoming wedding of two church members. Who will take part in each activity and how they do so are questions that the participation framework treats (cf. Goffman 1967, 1974, 1981). I give a fuller description of participation frameworks when I apply this concept to each example below.

One way to discover what is being done and who will do it is to consider whether the activity is formal or informal. Atkinson (1982) describes formal contexts as those for which the “what” and the “who” of an activity are pre-established. He also notes that notions like frame and script (cf. Bauman 1977; Bauman and Briggs 1990; Bauman and Sherzer 1974) are helpful tools for the analyst to express what participants in a formal setting – a courtroom, for example – know in advance of their involvement about who performs certain kinds of actions and in what order the turns at talk are assigned. In my data, however, nearly all of the commands occur in informal interactions for which there are neither pre-established roles nor pre-ordered turns at talk. They are not scripted or performed but are often rehearsals for a performance. While the women probably had ideas about how songs would be composed or rehearsed, the uncertainty regarding exactly how these would be accomplished is an important consideration for this analysis. Furthermore, the uncertainty about how they would coordinate their actions and accomplish their goals was compounded by the fact that in most meetings there were at least twelve women present. Because of this, I found it helpful in my analysis to take into account what other scholars have discovered about group actions.

5.1.3 Collective Action

Close to half of the meetings I recorded included sessions in which ten to fifteen women collectively organized their movements as they practiced songs and dances for the upcoming wedding. In order to determine what kinds of signals members of other large groups use to coordinate their actions I turned to studies of

collective behavior, that is, multiple participants speaking, moving or acting as if they were one (Atkinson 1982; Clayman 1993; Heritage and Greatbatch 1986). One possibility suggested in the literature for how collective behavior is accomplished is that multiple participants independently make individual decisions that coincide in the moment of action. Another possibility is that they mutually monitor each other in order to coordinate their actions. However collective action is achieved, Atkinson (1982) argues for the practical necessity to establish the joint attentiveness of the participants. Thus, some sort of recognizable signal is needed. Heritage and Greatbatch's (1986) study of audience response to speakers at political rallies argues that prominence and projectability play a vital role in the audience's collective response to the speaker. Though they do not give a precise operational definition of prominence, the rhetorical devices they describe such as antithetical contrast and a declaration which follows an announcement of the declaration all stand out in the discourse context. From a linguistic point of view, prominence is a significant concept in studies involving phonology and prosody. It generally involves acoustic features such as contrastive pitch, length and volume (cf. Chafe 1994; Fougeron 1999; Ladd 1996). As I will demonstrate below, these are all features of prominence in Lingala command forms.

The second phenomenon that Heritage and Greatbatch (1986) identify as necessary for the organization of collective behavior is projectability. Projectability is fundamental to the analysis of interaction, whether from the theoretical perspective of conversation analysis or interactional sociolinguistics (cf. Chafe 1994;

Clayman 1993; Hopper, Koch and Mandelbaum 1986; Ochs, Schegloff and Thompson 1996; Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974; Schegloff 1986, 2007; Sidnell 2001). It involves the recipient(s)'s orientation to a possible relevant completion point of the speaker's turn at talk. Generally this orientation is shaped by a point of prominence such as a rhetorical or prosodic device as described above. Collective behavior, whether through coinciding individual decisions or mutual monitoring, relies on a prominent utterance and a projected response point.

Prominence and projectability are important features in the design of commands in these data. As I will illustrate with examples below, command forms in Lingala are phonologically and morphologically marked so that they are points of prominence. Moreover, I argue that the prominence of command forms allows the women to project the kind of action required of them as well as the timing of its inception. However, prominence and projectability do not explain instances when a command is issued for an action that is already underway. One explanation for these utterances is that they construct an action by one participant as part of a collective achievement, or as corresponding to ideologies of group identity. A possible analogy is that such utterances are like cheers for a teammate at an athletic competition. They are phatic expressions in that they have to do with the social relationship between participants. Epanga (1988) argues for the crucial role of the phatic dimension in African social relations. Building on Jakobson (1963/1990), he describes how routine, predictable utterances, many of which are "semantically empty", are nonetheless crucial in establishing and maintaining rapport between speakers.

Further, he asserts that negative social consequences ensue from the absence of phatic forms.

In summary, the coordination of an activity involving multiple participants and more than one possible action without a pre-specified sequence requires communicative tools. It also requires experience in similar situations and with similar participants in order to gain the necessary interactional competence. In these data, I am focusing on the competence to use commands to coordinate the collective action of ten to fifteen participants in situated activities. In what follows, I argue that the command forms used by the women in this group including verb phrases marked for imperative mood and those that include the grammaticalized stem of a motion verb, as well as short noun phrases pronounced with heightened pitch and volume, provide the prominence and projectability crucial to the coordination of collective action. I first demonstrate how an everyday activity carried out by only two participants is mediated through a command, and then go on to demonstrate how command forms establish and reify the configuration of the participation framework, including commands that are qualitatively phatic. Next, I discuss the issue of timing a collective action, and how prominence and projectability are part of the designs of various command forms used by this group. Through examples of three command devices in the group's repertoire from Lingala data and a description of the contexts of their use, I argue that commands are crucial to the coordination and achievement of simultaneous collective action.

5.2 The Contexts of Coordination

I found the majority of the commands in the data in two contexts: during the women's small talk as we waited for everyone to arrive at the meetings, and during singing rehearsals.

As an introvert I found the group orientation of life in a Congolese household and church activities to be rather draining. In everyday life it seems that people are rarely alone and rarely do anything alone.¹ This is in sharp contrast to life in a country like the United States where cooking a meal or cleaning the house is often accomplished by one person working alone, or to academic work where a person may spend hours reading and writing in seclusion. Everyday life in Ouesso meant a series of activities, all involving multiple parties cooperating to achieve the task at hand, from getting water for cooking and washing from the well or pump to caring for the younger members of the household.

The group-oriented nature of activities in this sociocultural context meant that there was a lot of waiting. The women's group meetings were scheduled for four o'clock in the afternoon, but I soon discovered that the "four o'clock" specification mostly meant that women stopped what they were doing in their homes at around that time, and that often they were not all assembled at the church building before four-thirty or five o'clock. The waiting period often provided the best time for me to record everyday talk. The women entered the church singly, in pairs or in threesomes, greeting each other, exchanging small talk, and calling out to new arrivals. They often gossiped together or discussed current events, such as the lack of

water from the local processing plant or cosmopolitan news from Brazzaville.

Women with children often had a friend hold a very young child while the mother adjusted her own hairdo or clothing. Some mothers sent an older child to buy a drink of water from a local vendor before the meeting. These kinds of actions often involved commands.

The other context in which commands were frequent was during singing rehearsals. As I described in Chapter 3, the purpose of many of the meetings I recorded was to rehearse songs for the upcoming wedding of Nicole and Eugene. This entailed choosing known songs and altering a few lyrics, or choosing known melodies and composing new lyrics to go with them. It also included deciding where women would stand, who would begin singing first, how many verses would be sung, in which languages various women would sing, and so on. The unfolding process of decisions to be made about a song was punctuated by assertions, challenges, suggestions, teasing, and commands. One predictable place for commands was just as a consensus was being reached. One or more participants would express their desire to begin singing, usually through an utterance like ‘sing’, ‘start’ or ‘we go,’ (i.e., ‘Let’s go’).

The morpho-syntactic design of the commands in these data reflects and constructs the participation framework for a given action; it also provides a point of prominence in a sequence of talk and action that projects the moment for the next relevant move. Commands are fitted to the immediate local context and moment of production in that their design may highlight the identification of a participant over

the moment of action, or highlight the action and its imminence over the identification of one or more participants. Further, some commands are designed for a single action that is the joint attention of two participants, while others are fitted to an action or the starting point for a sequence of actions carried out by larger numbers of participants. Finally, some commands are uttered after an action has already started. These phatic commands affect the participation framework by ratifying participants and their actions, promoting group cohesiveness and reinforcing ideologies of group identity.

5.3 Commands and the Participation Framework

There is a close correlation between the form of the command and the participation framework. This is seen in Lingala commands through person marking on the verb: first or second person, singular or plural. Other qualities of the participation framework may also be subtly marked in the command. For example, the physical distance between participants may be signaled through the use of address forms and by the intonation-unit final vocal interjection *ee*. Likewise, differences in participation status may be signaled, for example, whether a participant is part of the action central to the moment or a member of the audience. All of these possibilities are illustrated and discussed in this section.

5.3.1 *An Activity Built for Two*

To begin my explanation of the coordinating function and forms of commands used by this group, I turn to a common and perhaps prototypically recognizable command and its context. In the example below, two women, Aude and

Virginie, are sitting in close proximity and their joint attention concerns the care of another woman's five-month-old baby girl. This exchange takes place on a hot and humid afternoon, fifteen minutes after several of us had arrived and were sitting and waiting for the others so the meeting could start. Aude takes Chimene's baby onto her lap. While holding the baby and playing with her, Aude begins to undress her because of the heat and humidity. Then Aude directs Virginie, sitting next to her, to remove the baby's socks. Nothing is said for a moment as Virginie complies with Aude's request. Then Virginie comments on the difficulty of getting the socks off, framing the situation as if the baby were refusing to cooperate.

(1) Take it off

1 Aud: Longolá ye chaussette (w)ana
 remove-IMP 3S.PRN <FR SOCK FR> DEM
Take her sock off. (Lit. Remove that sock away from her.)

2 X: (sound of someone unzipping a purse .41)

3 ..

4 Vir: Ye aboi
 3P.PRN 3S-refuse-PFV
She refuses/ed.

This situated activity of caring for a baby and its participation framework are signaled through the context, i.e., the comparative helplessness of the baby and the physical proximity of the two adult participants. But how an action is assigned to a participant and its timing projected must be communicated somehow between the participants.

Aude's utterance in line 1 is composed of a verb marked for imperative mood *longolá* 'remove' with a verbal complement specifying what needs to be removed;

the identity of the referent of the third person pronoun *ye* ‘her’ is available contextually both by the presence of the baby and by virtue of the fact that the baby is the only one wearing socks. The verb has zero second person singular marking. The second person singular imperatively marked verb phrase in Lingala stands out as the language’s shortest possible utterance involving a verb. This has significance when considering the importance of prominence and projectability in the coordination of action. Further, most verb roots in Lingala are monosyllabic or bisyllabic, guaranteeing a limit on the number of syllables in a second person imperative command. The command form that includes a verb marked for second person singular and with imperative mood has prominence by virtue of its brevity (i.e., contrastive length) and the high tone on the final vowel. Moreover, the imperative mood suffix indicates a subjective judgment on the part of the speaker that the action is desirable, necessary or obligatory, as well as projecting its imminent realization by the recipient.

That the imperative mood involves the notion of irrealis may be historically significant. Both imperative mood and imperfective aspect are related through the notion of irrealis: the imperative mood displays the subjectivity of the speaker towards an unrealized action while the imperfective describes aspectually an action that has not yet been completed. Moreover, in Lingala the imperative suffix /-á/ differs from the imperfective suffix /-a/ only by one phonological feature, that of high versus low tone. There is a possible historical relationship between the two Lingala suffixes based on the link between volition, futurity and inchoation found in

other African languages, including other languages of the Bantu C group of which Lingala is prescriptively a member (Bybee et al. 1994; Heine et al. 1993; Meeuwis 1997; Wetshemongo Kamomba 1998).² I suggest that this link is not accidental; the coordination of an action by multiple participants has much to do with the speaker's volition, the projected imminence of the action and the subjective judgment required to identify both the timing and relevance of the action. Consequently, the morphological form labeled as denoting the imperative mood in almost all of the grammatical descriptions of Lingala (with the exception of Mufwene (1978)), may be better analyzed as a kind of a very close future temporal reference with epistemic modality that reflects deductive reasoning. According to Bybee, the imperative is never only an isolated mood, but is often "related to or expressed by a subjunctive," and she notes, for example, that in Tiwi, an Australian language, the "so-called Future prefix" marks commands (Bybee 1985:173-4). Further, in later work with Perkins and Pagliuca, Bybee suggests that some "immediate futures" involve "other modal or aspectual nuances that are difficult to describe" in addition to a temporal distinction (1994:245). The patterns of use of the verbal suffix /-á/ in these data indicate speaker volition and an estimation of the necessity of action that would be common meanings involved in a definition of imperative mood. Additionally, this definition includes the projection of the immediate futurity of the action and the speaker's deduction that the appropriate moment for the action is at hand. I suggest then that the imperative mood marker in Lingala indexes speaker subjectivity. Significantly, it does not index asymmetrical social status between speakers in these

contexts, and thus the interpretation of commands in this sociocultural context differs from analyses of English, for example (cf. Ervin-Tripp 1976; Ervin-Tripp, Guo and Lampert 1990; Labov and Fanshel 1977; Yaeger-Dror and Sister 1987).

The absence of other morphemes besides the imperative that are dedicated to mood marking in Lingala results in a seemingly limited modal system or indicates a possible gap in many grammatical descriptions. On the other hand, some scholars have noted the modal meaning of low speaker certainty in the imperfective suffix /-a/ (Dzokanga 1979; Motingea 1996), but only Mufwene claims both modal and aspectual meanings for the imperative suffix /-á/ (1978:104). My interpretation differs from his, however, in that I believe epistemic certainty based on the evidential source of the speaker's deductive reasoning to be part of the modal meaning rather than volition; it accounts for the patterns in my data better than volition does, as I demonstrate below. As I explained in Chapter 1, though possibility may be analytically categorized in either propositional or event modality, based on my analysis of these data I consider the meaning of possibility indicated by the imperative morpheme to indicate the speaker's subjective judgment as well as the evidence for it. Crucially, it indicates less than full certainty and indexes the evidential source as deduction through personal reasoning, a kind of reasoning based on experiential knowledge.

Based on these observations, the absence of a morphological form dedicated to any other mood in Lingala and the patterns of use in these data, the imperative mood marker in analyses of Lingala grammar may be more properly labeled as

epistemic and evidential mood reflecting the speaker's judgment of the imminent possibility and necessity of the action. The speaker's certainty is not as strong as the presupposed certainty denoted by the suffix /-i/; there is an element of the unknown since the speaker cannot know for certain if others will agree that an action is possible and necessary and therefore will comply. The robust pattern of use of a command by participants who have been monitoring the attention and activities of others suggests that the use of the suffix /-á/ reflects speaker judgment that something is about to happen and that a coordinating signal is relevant and appropriate. This will become more apparent through discussion surrounding the examples in this chapter. For clarity in the discussion I will continue to refer to the suffix /-á/ as the imperative suffix, with the understanding that it belongs within a system of propositional and not event modality.

To complete the discussion of Example 1, it is important to notice that Virginie does not respond verbally to Aude's command but simply complies. The moment of silence and Virginie's comment on the baby's reaction to the undressing process are the audible clues to her aligning action. Sixty-three percent of the imperatives in my data receive physical compliance like this as a response, as compared to 14% of responses that verbally refuse, redirect or otherwise re-define the situation to put off the command.³ The strikingly high compliance rate indicates that most commands are perceived as justifiable, expected, or somehow appropriate to the interactional context and for the participants implicated in the action. The examples that follow illustrate that the perception of the need for coordination in

multiparty activities is one explanation for the high rate of compliance to utterances that select a participant and project the moment of and kind of relevant action.

In Example 1, Virginie's close physical proximity to Aude supplies the necessary identification of her as the one Aude was speaking to, though there were other women sitting nearby. If the identity of the recipient is clear from the participation framework (and perhaps signals such as eye contact), it is curious that address terms are so prevalent in the commands in these data. I suggest that the reason is related to the physical distance between the speaker and recipient, as well as to the ideologies of identity indexed by the form of address.

5.3.2 *Address Terms*

Forms of address in these data co-occur more than three times as frequently with commands as with all other directive forms combined. The two most frequent forms of address are *Mama* 'mother' and *Soeur* 'sister'. As mentioned in Chapter 2, *Mama* is a conventional deferential address form for any adult woman in Congolese society. Neither the relative ages of the speakers nor whether the woman has actually borne any children affect its use. As Muasya (2003:16) explains, in Bantu cultures the term communicates the speaker's intention to attribute to the recipient the same love and consideration he would give to his own mother. Example 3 below involves the use of the address term *Mama*. *Soeur* is the conventional address term for an adult woman who is a member of a Christian institution, regardless of her age, marital status or other social factors. It is worth noting that there is a difference in meaning and use between Catholics and other Christian groups such as Evangelical

Protestants, Pentecostals and members of African Instituted Churches. Whereas *Soeur* is used by Catholics predominantly to refer to women in holy orders who have taken vows of poverty, celibacy, and so on, in other Christian groups it is used by adult men and women to address Christian women who are peers.⁴ In Example 2 I discuss the use of the address form *Soeur*. In the context of the family, *Mama* and *Soeur* index two different kinds of relationships between individuals. It is a logical conclusion that the use of the two terms would index two kinds of relationships or at least relationships of different statuses, but so far I can find no evidence for either of these conclusions in my data. The only commonalities are that *Mama* and *Soeur* both convey some amount of politeness in their use as titles, but that the metaphorical extension of family relationships into other spheres of interaction alleviates the social distance sometimes created in the use of a title.

It was by investigating possible reasons for the use of an address term that I discovered their marked frequency with commands. The two most coherent explanations I can give for this phenomenon are the physical distance between speakers and the phatic function that initiates and maintains relationships. The phatic function of these commands is significant because it relates to how people become ratified participants in a participation framework.

The example below illustrates the use of the address form *Soeur* with a command that can be explained by the physical distance between speaker and recipient. The context of the example is as follows: Claudine, the secretary and treasurer of the group, had not arrived for a meeting. Marie-Claire insisted that

Claudine's presence was necessary for the meeting to proceed because she was the only one with the notebook recording the names of all the women who had paid their dues and had contributed to the cost of the wedding gift. This information was needed for what Marie-Claire wanted to discuss with the group. After a lengthy wait during which everyone else arrived, someone proposed telephoning Claudine to find out where she was and if she would be coming. I offered my phone, but I did not have Claudine's number; neither did Chimene, Aude or Marie-Claire. Ladi thought that Estelle might have her number. (Estelle and Claudine shared a stall at the market where they sold ingredients necessary for the sauces basic to most meals. They were also of the same ethnolinguistic group.) Estelle was outside the building with the other members of the choir, which often practiced during the women's meetings. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, Estelle is the only member of the women's group who is also a member of the choir. On Wednesdays, while the women met inside the building, the choir met in the small courtyard just outside the main entrance to the building. Estelle divided her participation between the two groups by moving back and forth between the women's meeting inside the building and the choir rehearsal outside the building. Ladi calls to Estelle, telling her to come immediately.

(2) Sister Estelle

1 Lad: Soeur Estelle ee.
 sister NAME ITJ
 Sister Estelle-oh!

2 ...(1.56)

3 Lad : Soeur Estelle!
 sister NAME
 Sister Estelle!

4 Est: Oui?

yes
Yes?

5 ...

6 Lad: Yaká náani.

2s-come-IMP first.of.all.
Come immediately.

Line 1 includes the title *Soeur* with Estelle's name, indicating a peer relationship in the Christian context. In addition, Ladi uses a vocalic interjection *ee* that is used to call over a distance, with increased pitch and volume (Epanga 1988). The interjection *ee* maintains a heightened pitch at the end of the intonation contour. The next relevant utterance would be a reply from Estelle indicating her attention to Ladi, but none is forthcoming. After a pause, Ladi calls again; the pitch and volume of her utterance remain at levels close to her previous utterance, but this time the intonation contour on *Estelle* drops (line 3). The prosodic effect of the two utterances approximates one that English speakers associate with list intonation, i.e., multiple utterances that remain at approximately the same overall pitch level followed by one with a noticeably falling pitch contour; from this perspective, Ladi's second call to Estelle carries list-final prosody. This time Estelle responds (line 4), indicating that she has aligned as a recipient for Ladi's next turn. (It is not clear to me why she responded in French, but her language choice does not appear to have immediate relevance to this discussion.) Ladi then commands *yaká náani* 'come immediately.' The form of the verb is familiar from the explanation in Example 1: zero second person marking on a verb with the suffix of imperative mood /-á/. The second word, *náani*, was almost always translated for me as the French *d'abord*, a conjunction

often used in the organization of discourse to indicate a first point in a list or argument. When it is used in Lingala, however, *náani* indicates preeminence, primacy, and immediacy. It marks an action that is to take priority and precedence over whatever the other person happens to be doing at the time. I often heard it used in commands by members of the family I lived with, for example, when one of the children needed immediate help lifting a heavy object, or if the mother needed someone to get something and bring it to her quickly. By the actions of the recipients, I concluded that the addition of *náani* to a command is interpreted as increasing its urgency, telling the recipient to immediately stop what he is doing to comply with the command.

The peer relationship indexed through *Soeur* indicates that address forms used with commands in these data have less to do with power differential or mitigating politeness strategies proposed in other analyses and more to do with how someone is included in the participation framework. In fact, all that I know about Ladi and Estelle concerning social categories such as age, marital status and so on, indicates that they are socially equivalent. Estelle was not originally in the participation framework: she was not involved in the discussion about Claudine's absence and her telephone number. When Ladi calls her name, she brings her into the participation framework of the search for Claudine's telephone number by making her a recipient as well as a potential speaker. The use of an address form indexes the ratification of someone in the participation framework. This is not the only way a person can become a ratified participant, but the frequency of address

forms with commands indicates that this essential function is part of the coordination of multiparty activities.

Example 2 illustrates the use of an address term to bring a participant who is physically separated from the speaker into the participation framework. The use of the person's name, a title, and an interjection for distant calls identifies her and indexes the physical distance between her and the speaker. Conversely, Example 3 illustrates a phatic command. Phatic commands fulfill the function of initiating and maintaining social contact through the ratification of a person's inclusion in the participation framework and also emphasize aspects of her social identity that are important to the group's ideologies. This instance stood out as marked in my data because of the multiple parties calling to the same person, using similar command formulations with the same address term. While it would be expected that one person might command several people to do something, this is an example of several people commanding a single person to do something she is already doing.

This example is illustrative of many that I heard and used during the time I spent with this group, though it is the only one I have identified in my recorded data. As we were waiting one day for a meeting to start, Calmette entered the room and was met by a chorus of commands from Makwala, Chimene and Ladi. It is worth noting here that Calmette was one of the youngest and most inexperienced members of the group, and that I do not have any examples of the use of a command by her. Calmette lived with a man named Jeremy, a member of the intercessor's group at the

church and the father of her young son, Son.⁵ It is likely that this was the basis for the choice of the address term used for her.

(3) Jeremy's woman

1 Mak: Jeremi yaká Mama.

NAME 2p-come-IMP TITLE

Jeremy come mother.

2 ...(.54) ((other voices in parallel conversation can be heard))

3 Chi: Mwasi (y)a Jeremi yaká ee

CL.woman CONN 2p-come-IMP NAME ITJ

Jeremy's woman come-oh.

4 Lad: Yak(á) awa ee

2p-come-IMP PROX ITJ

Come here-oh.

In line 1 Makwala addresses Calmette by her consort's name, not an unusual practice in a culture where people are routinely identified through relational titles, as I noted in Chapter 3. She also adds the command *yaká* 'come' and a second address term, *Mama* 'mother'. After a pause during which it seems that Chimene is turning from listening to a parallel conversation, she follows with a command to come, addressing Calmette as *mwasi ya Jeremi* 'Jeremy's woman'. Some westerners may find addressing a woman by the name of the man who fathers her children and benefits from her labor but has not yet made a public, legally binding commitment to her somewhat demeaning. However, titles like 'mother' and the use of a father's name in an address term seem appropriate to a culture in which a woman's ability to bear children is crucial to her position in life; they celebrate her procreational and social successes. As discussed in Chapter 2, childlessness entails severe social penalties in Congolese society including the loss of male consorts who are valued for

their cash-earning ability and land ownership. The penalty of childlessness is felt even more keenly in a society in which children are the social security system of aging parents. Makwala's and Chimene's choices of address terms for Calmette celebrate her social status and index the procreational ideology associated with women in Congolese society in general and with this women's group in particular. Their commands to her were an acknowledgment of her arrival, while the address term celebrated an ideological facet of her identity. After these utterances, Calmette chose a place to sit, took her son off of her back and straightened her clothing in preparation for the meeting, while the other women returned to their small talk.

Both Chimene and Ladi's utterances in lines 3 and 4 include the distal interjection *ee* described above. As with Ladi's call to Estelle (Example 2, line 1), *ee* indexes the physical (yet diminishing) distance between the interlocutors. But the meaning of the predicate is problematic. All three women command Calmette to *yaká* 'come' although she has been approaching them since even before they saw her, walking towards the church, entering through the door, and then walking toward where the other women are seated on benches waiting for everyone to arrive. I interpret these utterances as phatic commands, command forms that ratify a person's participation and also her action. These commands are phatic in that they do more to establish and maintain social contact than to insist on the performance of a specific action. Epanga notes that a question used as a greeting in Lingala like *obimi?* 'you are out?' fulfills the crucial social function of establishing a relationship at the first meeting of the day (1988:82-83). The question has less to do with verifying whether

someone has come out of their room or out of their house and more to do with an encounter between individuals. The chorus of commands by Makwala, Chimene and Ladi to Calmette ratifies her as a participant with them, celebrates her social position as a mature woman with children, and affirms her action of coming to the meeting. They are phatic commands that initiate and confirm social contact between the women; they validate Calmette as a member of the group and endorse her arrival among the others.

Phatic utterances, including address terms and commands, are one possible prerequisite for the constitution of the participation framework of a multiparty activity. Before actions are initiated, participants must be socially validated and ratified as part of the participation framework. Another command form that indicates information about participant relationships is that marked with the second person plural subject prefix /bo-/. While the second person singular zero prefix indexes a participant who is ratified and active within the participation framework, commands marked with /bo-/ index a difference in the participation statuses of the speaker and recipients.

5.3.3 *Participation Status*

The participation framework accounts theoretically for the roles of participants engaged together in an activity or social situation. For many of the activities the women's group engaged in, some participants were more focal or central to the activity than others, resulting in the relegation of others to a more marginal or peripheral participation status. This difference in participation status,

i.e., focal or peripheral, is evident in the kind of role each person has, i.e., singer-dancer or audience. For instance, in the context of singing rehearsals, the nine to thirteen women on the dais who sang and danced were focal participants, while the other women seated on benches, watching and commenting on the rehearsal and watching children, were peripheral participants. Moreover, a participant carrying out the relevant and expected action of the moment is more focal than one for whom the action is pertinent but who for some reason has not yet joined the others in carrying it out. A command marked with the second person plural /bo-/ is given to persons whose participation status is different than the speaker's: if the speaker is a core participant and the recipients are peripheral or if the speaker is peripheral and the recipients are core participants.⁶ In this case, what I find noteworthy is not that a command creates a difference in participation statuses, but that the commands marked with /bo-/ in my data are used when there is already a difference in participation statuses. This is significant in that speakers seem to be using the linguistic form to index their subjective judgment concerning the participation of other members of the group in the activity of the moment.

The example below comes from one of the early rehearsal sessions in the period when the women were preparing for the wedding. We had just finished an impromptu composing session in which potential lyrics and wordings were suggested by various women to be sung with a known melody. Then we prepared to sing the song, which included moving together rhythmically while singing. Twelve women made their way to the dais in the front of the church to stand in a rough semi-

circle facing the benches where Marie-Claire, Mapasa and Elodie were sitting. There was a lot of murmuring, some muffled directions, some laughing, shuffling of feet, bodies getting into position, mothers handing their young children over to members of the audience to hold, or propelling them out of the way of the semi-circle of rehearsing singer-dancers. Over the course of the example, the gradual collective coordination of the women is evident. Between shortened and slightly muffled utterances, one person, then two, then several, begin clapping; the tempo becomes more regular, and the imminent commencement of the singing is projected as the women coordinate their postures, movements and attention. Given the flurry of activity, I was unable to positively identify all of the speakers and exactly who is clapping. Letters such as U, V and W stand for those unidentifiable participants. Utterances in parentheses with ‘X’ (see line 1) represent uncertain hearing; the symbol ‘@’ represents a pulse of laughter. The complete list of transcription symbols is on page xviii.

(4) Getting it together

1 Ladi: (X Ndenge nini? X)
 CL-thing what
 How?

2 (Ladi): ((first clap))

3 Ladi: Boye?
 ADV
 Like this?

4 ...(.36)

5 U: Ee
 AFF
 Yeah.

- 6 V: (X ...X XX [XXXXXXX...] X)
- 7 U: [(clap)]
- 8 W: [(clap)]
- 9 Aud: (X Tobeta maboko X)
 1_{PL}-beat-IPFV CL-hand/arm
We clap (our) hands.
- 10 U, W: ((clap))
- 11 Cla: (X Tochanger quand? X)
 1_{PL}-<FR change when FR>
When (do) we change?
- 12 Aud: (X Aya(ka) X)
 3_S-come-IPFV
She comes.
- 13 X: (X ... il faut ... X)
 <FR 3_S.PRN necessary-3_S FR>
It is necessary/one must...
- 14 U,V,W : ((clap))
- 15 ...(.41)
- 16 Lad: Bobetá mabo[ko].
 2_{PL}-beat-IMP CL-hand/arm
Clap (your) hands.
- 17 Chi: [To]kei náani.
 1_{PL}-go-PFV first
We go immediately.
- 18 ...(.3)
- 19 Several: ((clap))
- 20 Ladi: Gladis!
 NAME
Gladys!
- 21 ... (1.05)
- 22 Several: [(clap)]

23 Y: [@] @@@@ @@@@

24 All: ((clap))

This example begins with Ladi verifying how she is to move (lines 1 and 3). I am also relatively certain that the first hand clap is hers because of its timing between her utterances and because she frequently was the one to begin clapping or initiating a dance step for the group. Ladi's movements are affirmed in line 5, and another person begins clapping in lines 7 or 8 to join Ladi. Aude comments on the on-going hand clapping in line 9; this may be a kind of encouragement to the other women to begin clapping, similar to the declarative statements used as directives that I will describe in Chapter 6. It also suggests that she is one of the people clapping. In lines 11 and 12 Claudine checks on the relative sequencing of singers, and Aude answers her. (It had already been decided that we would take turns singing this song in our village languages, and Claudine needed to know after whom she would sing.) By line 14, another person has joined the clapping. Then in line 16, Ladi commands *bobetá maboko* 'clap your hands'. Her voice is louder than the others. Chimene matches Ladi's volume and overlaps with the end of her utterance with *tokei naani* 'we go immediately'. These two utterances are key to my claims that commands are designed for and index the configuration of the participation framework and that their forms also index physical or participatory distance.

I have already mentioned that by the time line 16 is uttered, at least three of the twelve women have already been clapping (possibly Ladi and Aude, and a third unidentifiable person). Thus their posture, movement and attention signaled their

readiness to sing and dance. Aude encourages hand clapping in line 9, but then in line 16 Ladi gives a direct command, presumably to the rest of the women who have not yet joined in the clapping. It is highly likely that Ladi is already clapping when she gives this command; this makes her a core participant because in her movements and attention she is embodying the role of a singer-dancer. The command juxtaposes, and thereby highlights, her movements and attention with those of the other women who may be standing on the dais but who have not yet joined their movements and attention with the clapping singer-dancers. Thus, though it is true that a command form marked with the second person plural verbal prefix /bo-/ is the most appropriate one to address more than one participant, the difference in participation statuses between the speaker and recipients is also noteworthy. The use of the /bo-/ verbal prefix indexes the plurality of the recipients as well as the discrepancy in participation status between core members whose posture, movements and attention are already aligned in readiness to sing and those who are not yet aligned and participating.

Clapping rhythmically in unison is the sign that all of the women are poised and ready for the song to begin. It is a way for them to gradually coordinate their movements and attention as well as an action that shapes the participants' expectation that the focal action is about to begin. Clapping in rhythm projects a point of prominence and a place for relevant action. One could in fact argue that it is the clapping and not Ladi's command that provides the point of prominence and projection necessary for the coordination of group action. I argue, however, that they

are complementary in that both of them furnish points of prominence and shape expectations in the projection of the timing of the next relevant move. Ladi's command also urges participants who are not yet fulfilling their roles to begin doing so. When everyone is standing, clapping and moving together, their joint attention is focused on the moment when the singing will commence. Their joint posture, movement and attention are parts of the necessary preparatory state for coordinated group singing. Chimene's utterance (*tokei naani* 'we go immediately', line 17) contributes to the building expectation that the lead singer will begin. The word *naani*, as mentioned above, communicates priority, immediacy and thus urgency for an action to be executed. Seconds after everyone claps together in line 24, at the end of this example, Chimene begins singing.

While Ladi's /bo-/ command in line 16 indexes a difference in participation status, Chimene's /to-/ statement in line 17 indexes the inclusion of multiple participants in an action. To use a first person plural form here implies an assurance on the speaker's part that others are jointly attending to the activity along with her. The physical proximity and physical orientations that allow Chimene to monitor other participants, and recognition of ratified statuses in a participation framework are two indicators for this assurance. I will return to this idea in the discussion of mutual monitoring in prayer ritual in Chapter 6. The first person plural form *tokei* 'we go,' then, indexes physical proximity and inclusion in the same participation framework.

The grammaticalized form *tokei* is an interesting hybrid in that it is an assertion that an action has already been completed but is still relevant, in addition to its use here as a command. I have not yet seen this form described in any study of Lingala. *Tokei* is a shortened colloquial form of *tokende*, composed of the first person plural suffix /to-/, the verb stem /kend/ from *kokende* ‘to go’, and the perfective aspect suffix, which through morphophonological processes is lowered to /-e/ from /-i/. Though apparently a statement concerning mutual or collective movement forward, *tokei* is used to urge coordinated inchoation of the action of two or more people. Like a command, it fulfills the role of highlighting a point of prominence and projecting of the moment of action. In addition, Mithun (1995:377) notes that marking commands as realis (in this case with perfective aspect) implies certainty that they will be carried out. Abangma’s (1985) study of Denya revealed the same phenomenon. For these reasons, I classify the grammaticalized *tokei* as a command device in the same way that an imperatively marked verb phrase is a command device.

As mentioned in the introductory section of this chapter, multiple participants may independently make individual decisions that coincide in the moment of action, as in an audience that applauds together after the use of a rhetorical device in a political speech (Heritage and Greatbatch 1986). Or multiple participants may monitor each other in order to coordinate their actions, as in booing as a negative reaction to a political speech (Clayman 1993). It seems that in the case of these data there is a combination of independent decisions and mutual monitoring in the

achievement of collective action. While in Example 4 at least three women began clapping, presumably making individual choices to do so, it was not until Ladi noticed that the other women were not clapping and commanded them to do so that the movements and attention of all of the women aligned in readiness for the initiation of a collective action. Joint attention and physical readiness are the prerequisites to any collective action (C. Goodwin 2007). But even before progress can be made toward joint attention and physical readiness, participants must be included and ratified in the participation framework, as I demonstrated in the discussion of Examples 2 and 3.

Thus far I have demonstrated how command forms are shaped for the local contingencies of the participation framework. Second person singular commands for an action are used in everyday life for such things as child care, and call upon a proximal individual who is a participant by virtue of physical proximity and availability (Example 1). Commands become more morphologically and syntactically elaborate when the participant is farther away, as we saw in Example 2 when Ladi used the distal marker *ee* and Estelle's name and Christian title *Soeur* when she called to her from the interior of the church building. This command brought Estelle into the participation framework of the discussion concerning Claudine's phone number. Likewise, commands may have a phatic function as they ratify and celebrate a participant's inclusion in the framework, as well as demonstrating approval for an action (Example 3). Finally, command forms index physical and participatory proximities: the /bo-/ command form indexes distance or

difference in participation status, and the *tokei* ‘we go’ command form indexes physical and participatory proximity (Example 4). Both of these forms also address multiple recipients. Commands, then, are highly informative as to the physical locations of the participants and their membership and status in the participation framework. By the same token, they are the means by which participants construct and configure the participation framework of a situated activity system.

As mentioned above, one consideration that has not been elaborated upon in the model of the situated activity system is how multiple participants time individual acts in order to achieve a collective and simultaneous action. Two requirements for collectively coordinated action are prominence and projectability.

5.4 Prominence, Projectability and Action Initiation

We have seen thus far that participants’ concern for how an activity unfolds includes the membership in the participation framework and the roles and statuses it assigns. I turn now to the question of how participants reach the inchoative moment of an action. This includes monitoring for joint attention and readiness, as well as individual decisions to initiate an action. It also includes telling someone else to act so that the attention and actions of participants propel them to the inception of a collective action. Example 4 provided one such instance of participants who gradually align their postures, movements and attention to collective action. The next two examples illustrate how commands are used as points of prominence that project the moment for the next relevant action. The first example involves another /bo-/ command, which again indexes a difference in participation statuses in addition to

directing the participation of another woman. The second example involves a second person singular command with address form, which urges the initiation of an action by all recipients regardless of their participation status. These examples support the claim that commands in these data furnish the necessary points of prominence to project the timing of the next relevant action necessary to coordinate simultaneous collective action.

5.4.1 *Constructing Prominence*

The linguistic points of prominence that I have illustrated so far include the morphology of imperative mood, shortened forms, and heightened pitch and volume. With data from the next examples I will illustrate participants' use of these and other linguistic forms to create points of prominence that project the timing of the next relevant action.

In Example 4, Ladi's *bobetá maboko* 'clap your hands' called attention to participants who were not yet aligned with those who were clapping, as well as adding fuel to the growing expectation that singing would begin. The next example takes place in circumstances similar to those surrounding Example 4. Before the example begins, the women were deciding which song to sing next. We were farther along in the rehearsals than in Example 4: the repertoire of songs had been composed and practiced, and at this point we were working towards establishing the order of their performance. Mireille (whose part in the discussion is not shown in the lines below), Ladi and Lydie were three of the core participants in the semi-circle on the dais at the front of the church. Mapasa was a peripheral participant, this time

sitting in the front row with a baby on her lap. Mireille, Lydie and Ladi wanted to sing a song that featured everyone’s village language. It seemed they were particularly interested in singing a song in which I sang a verse in English, but they couldn’t quite remember which song it was.⁷ Mapasa, who was listening, grew impatient with the prolonged discussion and urged them to start singing.

(5) So Sing!

- 1 Lad: Ndjembo o(y)o y(e) ayembaki ya français wana,
CL-song DEM 3s.PRN 3s-sing-PST-PFV CONN French DEM
That song, her, she had sung in that French.
- 2 Lyd: E(z)a(la)ki ndjembo na ye y(a) anglais.
3s.NHUM-be-PST-PFV CL-song CONN 3s.PRN CONN English
It was her song in English.
- 3 Lad: Y(a) anglais wana
CONN English DEM
In that English.
- 4 Map: Ee bon ti boyembá.
AFF good EMPH 2PL-sing-IMP
Yeah, good, so sing.

Ladi’s allusion to ‘that French’ in line 1 is a mistaken reference to my village language, English. Lydie corrects Ladi in line 2, and Ladi revises her original utterance. However, it is Mapasa’s utterance in line 4 that is the focus of analysis.

Mapasa begins with an affirmative token *ee*, distinguishable from the distal morpheme *ee* by utterance-initial position and lower pitch. She follows this with the French *bon* ‘good’, used in colloquial French as an affirmative discourse marker and turn-initial particle. The particle *ti* is used for emphasis. Through these utterances, Mapasa recognizes and affirms the preceding discussion. Then she utters a phrase marked for imperative mood: *boyembá* ‘sing’. Mapasa’s command is another

instance of the /bo-/ command form. It is directed towards the three recipients Mireille, Lydie and Ladi. Furthermore, the participation status of the speaker and recipients is not the same. Mireille, Lydie and Ladi are singer-dancers, that is, core participants, while Mapasa is an audience member, i.e., a peripheral participant. In addition to indexing differences in participation status, the combination of her ratification of Mireille, Lydie and Ladi's conversation and her subsequent command marks a discourse boundary between the moment of decision and the inexorable progression to the moment of singing. That Mapasa's utterance marks a turning point in the interaction sequence is borne out by what happens next: shortly afterward, Ladi initiates the actions of clapping and moving with rhythmic steps that are the prelude to group singing.

In addition to indexing differences in participation status and addressing multiple recipients, Mapasa's command forms a peak of prominence in the ongoing discourse. The utterance of the command signals that the time of discussion should be over, or very nearly over, and that the preparatory sequence to singing should be initiated. The prominence of the utterance, then, projects a moment for the next relevant action sequence of the group. The next example features a command that forms a peak of prominence at the end of a prelude and projects the lead singer's action as the next relevant one.

5.4.2 *Projecting the Inchoative Moment*

The next example provides another case in which the occurrence of the command provides a point of prominence in group interaction. Frequently during

singing rehearsals the talk, teasing and laughter between songs reached such a pitch that some sort of call to order was needed to reconstruct the necessary joint attention of the group. One way this was accomplished was for the lead singer for that song to lead out with the first line. Another way was for someone to issue a command like 'start' or 'sing.' I could not discern a regular pattern as to who uttered commands like these. Their occurrence appeared to issue from an independent decision made in conjunction with mutual monitoring, as in the cases of Ladi's command in Example 4 and Mapasa's command in Example 5. Women in the group appeared to be attentive to the length of time or amount of talk occurring between songs and used a command to mark the boundary between an interlude and a prelude to group action.

In the example below, the women had just decided which song to sing next, and a few of them were trying to work out the movements that would go with it. Chimene and Aude were standing near each other on the right side (stage left) of the dais. They were friends who frequently sat together, walked to and from meetings together, met often at the market and exchanged regular visits to each other's homes. Where Chimene and Aude were standing is significant in determining the order of lead singers, as it was most often one of the women on that side of the dais who began as lead singer, with the lead position rotating around the semi-circle counter-clockwise towards the left side (stage right) of the dais with each change in verse. When the example begins, the attention of the ten women is not jointly aligned. The larger participation framework has fragmented into smaller ones according to several smaller situated activities involving women next to each other in the semi-circle who

are trying dance moves, singing snatches of verse or chatting and laughing. A few women start clapping rhythmically. It is at this point that Chimene tells Aude to start, and Aude begins singing.

(6) “Start”

1 Chi: Soeur Aude bandá

TITLE NAME start-IMP

Sister Aude, start.

2 Aud: <C Bobianga molimo santu

2PL-invoke-IMP CL-spirit holy

(singing) Invoke the Holy Spirit

3 Ayaka kopambola bamarié C>

3S-come-IPFV FUT-bless CL-bridal.pair

(that) he will come to bless the bridal pair

As was the case in Example 1, the speaker issues a command and the recipient embodies the response. Chimene’s use of a title for her friend represents a return to the participation framework associated with an activity in which all of the women in the group are engaged together, as opposed to the current state of multiple smaller participation frameworks and activities. The rhythmic clapping by several of the women is also an important mechanism for drawing the attention of all the women back to a single situated activity. *Soeur* ‘sister’ indexes Aude’s status as a peer with all of the other women present, and so indirectly calls attention to them. The use of the address term effectively transposes Chimene and Aude from the co-presence of multiple participation frameworks to the reconstructed participation framework that includes all of the women in the room. Chimene’s utterance gets Aude’s attention as well as indexing her ratified status as a participant in a participation framework that includes all of the women present. *Soeur Aude* also

functions in a manner similar to Ladi's command (Example 4) that urged the non-aligned women to take up the action in harmony with their role (Example 4). The phatic and discourse functions of the address form initiates and maintains contact, reifies Aude's participant role, and reconstructs a participation framework that has fragmented into smaller ones.

Conversely, Chimene's command *bandá* 'start' provides a point of prominence and projectability. As discussed for Example 1, the second person singular imperative form is conspicuous in discourse as the only type of verb phrase without a person prefix. In addition, the high tone of the imperative mood suffix makes it stand out phonologically. A second person singular command is thus both phonologically and morphologically prominent in Lingala discourse. Moreover, as I argued above, Lingala's imperative mood suffix indexes the subjectivity of the speaker with regards to the inception of action.

If prominence and projectability (and not just verbal morphology) are the fundamental aspects of utterances used to coordinate action in this group, we should expect to find linguistic forms other than imperatively-marked verb phrases that are used in collective action. As we saw with Chimene's *tokei* 'we go' in Example 4, this is the case. As I mentioned above, I have not seen this form described by any other scholar of Lingala, and my initial hypothesis is that it is a grammaticalized form. The regular form of 'we go,' *tokende* is marked with the allomorph /-e/ of the perfective aspect suffix (Dzokanga 1979; Meeuwis 1998; Motingea 1996a). The final vowel has been raised from /e/ to /i/. The acoustic effect of this change raises

the relative pitch of the vocalic segment. One possible explanation for this change is that it is designed to mimic the high tone on the imperative mood suffix /-á/. In addition to this morphophonological alteration, the verb root *kend* ‘go’ has been semantically bleached and generalized to express futurity. The development of future meaning from verbs of motion has been documented before (cf. Bybee et al. 1994). The contribution of this analysis is to suggest that prominence and projectability for the organization of collective action played a role in the grammaticalization of *kende* > *-kei*. Furthermore, though the shortened verb stem *-kei* is also used with other person prefixes, it seems to be more frequent and most widespread in use with the first person plural prefix /to-/, though further research is necessary for confirmation of this impression.

In short, *tokei* is a command form especially suited for projecting the inceptive moment of a relevant action by multiple participants because of the phonological prominence of its form and its future meaning. A final example that indicates how fundamental prominence and projectability are for coordination through commands involves a case of code-switching between Lingala and French.

5.4.3 Prominence and Code-switching

In the discussion above, the shortness and relatively high pitch of a morphological form are interpreted as prominence in command forms. Verb phrases marked for perfective aspect as well as for imperative mood in Lingala are both candidates for commands provided that they meet the prominence criteria of brevity and relatively high pitch. Lexical items are a third form that meets these criteria.

Multilinguals control a diverse linguistic repertoire from which various elements may be drawn to meet local interactional contingencies. This includes such phenomena as the indication of a transition between formal and informal situations and other contextual factors related to prestige, ethnicity, gender, age, and so on (cf. Blom and Gumperz [1972] 1986; Gardner-Chloros 1997; Hill and Hill 1986; Myers-Scotton 1993b; Niang 1995; Shenk 2007). In this case, I suggest that the contingencies of the moment-by-moment coordination of a multiparty action are met by substituting a French lexical item for a Lingala one.

The next example occurs in chronological sequence directly after Example 5 and it is also situationally similar to Example 4. Mapasa has just commanded Mireille, Lydie and Ladi to start singing with *ee bon ti boyembá* ‘yeah good, so sing!’ Ladi obliges by setting into motion a series of actions to achieve readiness to sing as manifested in the posture, body movement and joint attention of the eleven other singer-dancers. As mentioned before, Ladi often begins a dance motion in preparation for group singing. In this case, she is trying to get us all to step forward with the left foot, step past the left with the right foot, step almost in place with the left foot, then bring the right foot back to the original position behind the left foot. These rhythmic steps are accompanied by swinging of the hips and shoulders, with arms bent to a near ninety-degree angle, bending forward and back at the waist, and tilting the chin up. It is a common dance movement for this group; the challenge is to coordinate the movements so that everyone is performing them identically and simultaneously.

(7) Left

1 Several people: @@@ (.96)

2 Lad: Gauche ee?

<FR left FR> AFF

Left yeah?

3 À gauche!

<FR PREP left FR>

On/at (the) left!

4 ((clap))

In lines 2 and 3 Ladi calls out which foot we should use to begin the steps. In line 2, she follows this with an affirmative token with rising intonation: *gauche ee* ‘left yeah?’ and in line 3 she adds a preposition, *à gauche* ‘on/at (the) left’. *Gauche* is French, not Lingala. Moreover, the previous discussion was in Lingala and the first verse of the song we were going to sing was also in Lingala, which raises the question of what motivates Ladi’s use of French here. I propose that it is the requirement for prominence so that the attention of all the participants will be fixed on the same event, enabling each one to project the moment for action and thus achieve it together.⁸ The feature of prominence highlighted here is morphological brevity. In Lingala, the expressions of the spatial concepts LEFT and RIGHT are metaphorical extensions of gender identity. *Lokolo ya mwasi* ‘woman’s foot’ designates the left foot, while *lokolo ya mobali* ‘man’s foot’ denotes the right foot. Such periphrastic expressions for a left or right body part are necessarily long. Further, if *lokolo ya mwasi* ‘left foot’ were somehow shortened, it would become unclear. To call out *lokolo* ‘foot’ is not precise enough to designate which foot; to call out *mwasi* ‘woman’ in a group of women is equally unclear as a signal for

action. It seems that Ladi's language choice for this command is motivated by the relative clarity of expression and morphological brevity of *gauche* over *lokolo ya mwasi*.

In addition, both of Ladi's utterances have high pitch. She achieves this in line 2 through the rising question intonation of *ee*, and then re-sets the pitch of *à gauche* to an even higher level. The pitch augmentation is accompanied by an increase in volume. Neither of these utterances corresponds to the definition of a command limited to a verb phrase marked with imperative mood. On the other hand, they both illustrate the pragmatically required features of prominence for commands in Lingala: brevity and (relatively) high pitch. Moreover, their forms correspond to the contingencies of the local event, providing the prominence necessary for twelve women to temporally and physically project the action to be collectively executed.

Whether through mutual monitoring or independent individual decisions, multiple participants require a prominent sign that projects a moment to begin in order to achieve a collective action. In the above examples, I have described how a point of prominence is constructed, the corresponding design features of command forms and the results of the command upon the discourse context. In Example 5 Mapasa's multi-part utterance constructs a boundary between the moments of decision and the forward progression in time towards singing. Example 6 illustrated how the use of an address form (re)keys a participation framework. This example also reviewed the importance of the features of shortness of form and heightened pitch as morphophonological marks of prominence. This was followed by a return to

the non-imperatively marked verb phrase *tokei* ‘we go.’ From this point, I developed the argument that the morphophonological marks of prominence take priority over the precise aspectual or modal suffix on the verb phrase, or even the word class, of commands in Lingala. The use of *gauche* in Example 7 drew attention again to the pragmatic importance of morphological brevity and heightened pitch as markers of prominence. In all, this section described three command forms used to project a moment of coordinated action for multiple participants: a verb phrase marked with the imperative mood suffix /-á/, the grammaticalized *tokei*, and a lexical item fitted to the description and timing of the collective action and pronounced with heightened pitch and volume. In summary, command forms in Lingala serve the needs of the participants by identifying who will participate, how they will do so, what exactly they will do, and when they will do it. Commands in these data are used to coordinate collective action. Further, the successful use of commands indicates interactional competence and the frequent use of commands indexes a position of influence in the group.

5.5 Conclusion

5.5.1 Summary

Command forms in Lingala coordinate participation and subjectivity in group activities. They indicate configurations of the participation framework as well as subjective judgments on the part of individual speakers concerning the imminence and relevance of verbal and physical actions by the group. Unlike rhetorical questions or prayers (as we will see in the next chapter), the directive effect of these

commands derives from their coordinating effect in collective action rather than from individual dominance over others.

Three concepts that are crucial to the analysis of Lingala command forms used by the Eglise de Philadelphie women's group are the participation framework and the prominence and the projectability of individual actions so that they can be achieved collectively. The participation framework calls attention to how participants negotiate membership and status in relation to activities involving multiple participants. Prominence and projectability reveal how individuals' independent decisions and mutual monitoring result in a joint action. By means of Examples 1 through 4, I demonstrated how the form of the command reflects and reiterates the configuration of the participation framework. This was followed by a consideration of how a point of prominence is constructed and what its linguistic features are, illustrated by Examples 5, 6 and 7. This allowed me to identify three command forms that are points of prominence in interaction and thus provide the means for participants to identify and project the timing of the next relevant action. The command forms are verb phrases marked with imperative mood, the grammaticalized *tokei*, and descriptive lexical items selected from a multilingual repertoire and pronounced with a relatively higher pitch and volume than the surrounding speech.

As Muasya (2003) demonstrated for KiSwahili, I have shown that Lingala command forms are not all marked with the imperative mood. I have also argued that the projection of asymmetries of power and status onto the speaker who issues the

command and the recipient who complies is not an accurate representation of how the women in my data use commands. This chapter includes two contributions to the interactionally situated, pragmatic study of commands. The first is a development of Epanga's (1988) notion of the phatic command, a command that initiates contact, draws a participant into the participation framework, and maintains contact through the ratification of her participant role and/or actions. The second is the attention called to the crucial role played by prominence and projectability to achieve actions of multiple participants beyond the context of a persuasive speaker with an audience. The concept of the situated activity system has been developed to include physical postures and positioning, cognition and joint attention, stance and affect (C. Goodwin 2007; M.H. Goodwin 2006a, 2006b). The interactions studied by Goodwin and Goodwin include roughly two to six participants, and so issues related to how multiple participants coordinate their actions are well developed. On the other hand, their data do not include groups of ten or more participants acting collectively as do mine. It is perhaps for this reason that though their studies consider the importance of mutual monitoring and the relevance of next acts moment by moment in a sequence of actions, their studies have not examined the importance of prominence and projectability as this one has. In addition, my analysis is oriented to linguistic as well as sociocultural discoveries, and so I have described the phonological, morphological and prosodic features of commands. This has enabled me to propose hypotheses concerning the grammaticalization of a Lingala command form and to consider the semantic and pragmatic motivations for the form of the imperative

mood suffix in Lingala. I argued that this suffix, /-á/, represents the speaker's relative epistemic certainty concerning the imminent occurrence of an action and indexes the speaker's deductive reasoning as an evidential source. This is why more studies of command forms in interactional data, and especially of those involving imperative mood markers, would be pertinent.

5.5.2 *Commands and social organization*

The meaning and function of the imperative suffix and other command forms in Lingala is directly related to what commands indicate about the social organization of the group. Like knowledge of membership categories and their attendant expectations and ideologies discussed in the previous chapter, ability or willingness to participate is not equally distributed. As I described in Chapters 2 and 4, some women removed themselves from some activities or limited their participation. Makwala absented herself from the majority of the rehearsals; Mireille, Rosine, Calmette and I only led a verse for a few songs and had very limited participation in the composition of lyrics; Marie-Claire, Mapasa and Elodie relegated themselves to the peripheral participation status of audience members and guardians of children while the singer-dancers rehearsed. It seems likely that Makwala's absence was related to idiosyncratic reasons. The limited participation in song composition and singing and dancing by others appears to be related to a lack of recognized musical talent and experience (and linguistic ability), as well as considerations of health and age. Elodie's advanced stage of pregnancy limited her physical movements somewhat. She also predicted that she would give birth on or

around the date of the wedding and thus would not be available to sing on that occasion. Mapasa and Marie-Claire were among the oldest members of the group. In addition, both were heavy-set. Marie-Claire complained to me about her ankles, knees and hips, and so it is not surprising that she abstained from singing that was paired with dancing. On the other hand, as described in Chapter 2, Aude, Ladi and Rosine were recognized by church members as talented singers and composers; they were certainly given free rein and encouraged to maximum participation by other members of the group. In summary, in these data, the ability and willingness to participate has roots in the physical and material world.

On the other hand, volition and perceptions of ability may be culturally constrained. Hill et al. (1986) describes the phenomenon of “discernment,” conformity to expected norms by members of a given society or Community of Practice, which could also be interpreted as the application of group ideologies to individuals’ actions. Once again we are confronted with ideologies that govern cooperation and convention as an explanation for aspects of social organization and socially organized activities and interaction. Some participants in this group appear to be more adept at judging the (ideologically) suitable moment for an activity to move forward or for an action to begin. Those with the most experience with the activities and actions, as well as those who know the other participants the best, are in the most advantageous position to issue commands with certainty that others will comply, because the commands reference relevant and appropriate actions for the moment. In other words, their judgments are deferred to because others recognize

them as knowledgeable and experienced. Further, knowledge and experience provide the ability and willingness to participate. Indeed, as indicated earlier, the members of the group with the most seniority do the most talking and therefore give more commands than the others, while less experienced members such as Calmette do not participate as openly and, significantly, do not give any commands. As with directive rhetorical questions, unequal distribution of knowledge and experience contributes to the hierarchical social order. Both rhetorical questions and commands indicate ways in which individuals participate in the life of their Community of Practice and their forms display the subjectivities of the speakers. Such linguistic forms thus establish and reinforce a social organization in which a limited number of the group's members direct the others.

While the analysis of this chapter took the social consequence of a command as a starting point and worked backwards to discover what mechanisms were involved in the production of collective action, the next chapter begins with a focus on the personal source of the directive in order to discover the relationship between directives and social organization in the context of the ritual activity of prayer.

Notes for Chapter 5

¹ The anomaly of an individual spending time alone was brought home to me when I overheard the explanation the children in my Congolese family gave to neighbors for the prolonged periods I spent reading and writing in my bedroom: I was sleeping. Apparently they could not conceive of any other reason for me to be alone in the room.

² Nurse and Philippson (2003, 2006) and Maho (2003) classify Lingala as C36d. With regards to Nurse and Philippson's (2006:158) description of common tense-aspect markers in Bantu languages and their historical development, the verbal suffixes /-a/ and /-á/ mark past reference. They note, however, that this is not the case for most Forest Bantu languages, including Lingala. Some other Bantu languages include notions of imperfectivity and progressivity in the meanings of these forms (2006:160-163). Conversely, Nurse and Philippson note that a plausible explanation for non-past meanings resides in the relationship of anteriority between the two (2006:159). The notions of anteriority and imperfectivity may explain the apparent development in colloquial Lingala of /-á/ as a close or imminent future while /-a/ in combination with the verbal prefix /ko-/ references a more distant future. Another possible path of development is through the /-ka/ form, which in some Bantu languages denotes a far future. Many intervocalic voiceless velar stops are elided in the speech of the women in my data, and so it may be plausible that what I posit as the far future /-a/ was not so long ago /-ka/, an observation also made by Guthrie (1971, cited in Nurse and Philippson (2006) and re-confirmed by Nurse and Philippson (2006:166). Obviously there continues to be a need for the study of the historical development of Lingala tense-aspect forms, despite some previously published work (cf. Meeuwis 1995, 2001; Nurse 2000).

³ The remaining 24% had no verbal signals accompanying the response or were not in my fieldnotes, and so I could not confirm how the recipients responded.

⁴ There are several reasons why the French form *Soeur* is used for this function rather than a Lingala term like *ndeko* 'sibling.' One may be the practicality of gender marking on the French term, which is absent in Lingala (the French *Frère* is used in Christian contexts for men). Another reason may be its introduction by Francophone priests and other missionaries.

⁵ Intercession is a Christian prayer practice that involves fervent and specific prayer on behalf of others

⁶ For some of my examples it is not clear in the recording if there is only one recipient or multiple recipients. In addition, while a speaker may have intended her command to be received by multiple participants, the rapidly shifting and sometimes simultaneous activities resulted in situations in which someone for whom a command was intended was attending to something else as it was issued. The point

is then that the difference in participation status between speaker and recipient is a key to the patterned use of commands marked with /bo-/.

⁷ The women enjoyed having the ability to sing in English, laughing and practicing “I Love You and You Love Me” (The English translation of a song they had composed in Lingala) on the street as we walked home from rehearsals. At one point they joked that they were ready to go to England with me because of this new skill. (Several of the women consistently misunderstood where I was from. Some thought I was French because I speak French. When they heard me speak *Anglais* ‘English’, they decided that I must be from *Angleterre* ‘England’. This in spite of the fact that Chimene and I had both told the group on separate occasions that I am from the United States.)

⁸ Ladi’s verbal command is not the only resource the women used to coordinate their movements. We are also watching Ladi and matching our movements to hers.

Chapter 6

Directives in Prayer: Ritual Participation and Individual Subjectivity

6.1 Introduction

Prayers and other religious language may be among the most subjective in sociocultural and individual expression, as well as figuring on the list of those that require the closest attention to the management of participation (cf. Keane 1997). It is for that reason that I conclude my analysis of directives used by the Eglise de Philadelphie women's group with an examination of their prayers. As we saw in the previous chapter, how the activity should proceed is very important for this group; in this chapter we will see that correct procedure in religious ritual is perhaps of even greater concern.

As I described in Chapter 3, during the time that I audio-recorded their talk the women of the Eglise de Philadelphie added to their regular Wednesday prayer meetings two additional kinds of meetings: committee meetings to discuss the logistics of the work they would contribute to the upcoming wedding celebration, and singing rehearsals during which they both composed songs and practiced their compositions for the entertainment at the wedding celebration. The two previous chapters have discussed directives that occur in the contexts of those meetings. The topic of this chapter concerns directives used in the ritual context of prayer meetings.

Prayer meetings were organized into at least three segments. During the first segment, the women prayed together according to a pre-established list of topics; during the second, they listened to an exhortation given by one of the leaders of the group; during the final segment, they engaged in a specialized kind of praying called intercession, a form of prayer on behalf of others that targets specific needs with great fervency. Prayer meetings were not the only time the women prayed, however. They also prayed before beginning singing rehearsals and committee meetings. These times of prayer involved forms such as invocation and petition, as well as prayers of praise, thanksgiving and confession.

Invocations and petitions are directives, albeit of a special kind because they are made to spiritual beings, unseen participants whose presence is projected by the religious practitioners (Hanks 1996; Keane 1997). One topic of scholarly interest in religious language concerns its formal characteristics and how they might differ from those of other kinds of utterances (cf. Du Bois 1992; Keane 1997; Samarin 1976; Wheelock 1982). Moreover, Samarin notes that the ritual framing of prayer promotes the interpretation that the language itself is the source of power to effect change in reality (1976:11). The relationship between the formal properties of an utterance and its effect in the world is also a fundamental interest in research on directives.

Accordingly, this chapter is again concerned with two issues: the form of directives and the source of their directive effect. The two forms that are the focus of this chapter are those that mediate and coordinate the prayers of multiple participants and the invocations and petitions used by individuals to address God in prayer. They

are different, as might be expected, and this applies to their sources of directive effect as well. In Chapters 4 and 5 I showed that the social organization of the Eglise de Philadelphie women's group is headed by those who have the knowledge, experience, ability and willingness to direct the others. In addition, the epistemic stances and evidential sources indexed by the grammatical forms of rhetorical questions and commands reveal modal functions of verbal suffixes not previously documented for Lingala. In this chapter I argue first of all that the frame and the voice that mediate the prayer ritual explain the grammatical forms and directive force of statements that in isolation would appear to be descriptions of unachieved or continuing action. Next, I present examples of individual invocations of and petitions to God and discuss the effects of religious language skill on the social organization of the group. Both practices – the mediation of prayer ritual and personalized individual prayer – rely on the management of subjectivity and participation in religious ritual.

6.1.1 *Prayer as Social Action*

Religious practices such as prayer are embedded within the realm of human sociality (Baquedano-López 2001; Ochs and Capps 2001). Evidence of what literary scholar and Christian apologist C.S. Lewis (1970) calls the “amphibious” nature of human existence, prayer is visible representative and public action at the intersecting point of the social, cognitive and spiritual dimensions. Prayer embodies the psychological and spiritual realities of the participants such that they are available both for co-construction and for scrutiny (Ochs and Capps 2001; Shoaps 2002). In

other words, the ways in which the women in my data participated in their sociocultural world displayed their subjectivities, i.e., their perceptions and beliefs of what was materially and spiritually real (cf. Keane 1997; Kearney 1984; Kraft 1979, Ward 2006). In addition, their prayer practices demonstrated that ritual action as a group was important to them and also demonstrated their belief in the existence of an omnipotent spiritual being. Crucially, their prayer practices revealed that they believed communication with this being was a necessary and important component to the success of their activities. This made group participation in ritual activity as well as individual performance of prayer vitally important, and thus a context where participants revealed their concern for appropriate form and procedure.

Prayer as practiced by the Eglise de Philadelphie women exemplifies the dialogicality of human social experience. Their public prayer ritual consisted of two laminated prayer actions. The first was between one individual who mediated the ritual script of the prayer procedure and the group of women who responded. I will refer to this as *corporate prayer*, a term borrowed from Christian practices that emphasizes the coordinated group-oriented nature of the prayer ritual. In these data, as well as in other instances of corporate prayer in which I have participated, a single participant mediates the prayers of many participants by voicing them aloud or otherwise representing their content, either through a request or announcement for prayer before group intervention or through a public prayer that summarizes a number of individual prayers. The second kind of prayer in these data is a personal interaction between each individual practitioner and God. In the case of this

women's group, prayers were simultaneously voiced by all of the participants; this made each woman's individual prayer available to be overheard and monitored by the women around her. The individual prayer was embedded within the activity of corporate prayer. The focus of the analysis in the first section of this chapter is a description of the two prayer frames and the ritual script the women followed in their prayer meetings.

In this chapter I will demonstrate that for these participants prayer involved ritual procedures to render it effective and meaningful communication addressed to God, whom they believed to be a valid recipient. The features of their language reflected their belief that it was their duty to pray and that God heard them as they spoke. Though the exact outcome or action was not certain at the moment of prayer, their prayer language revealed the belief that there would be results from their prayers. How they went about ensuring results is revealing for the study of directives because their practices involved recourse to voice and genre as indexes of authority (cf. Agha 2005; Bakhtin 1981; Bauman and Briggs 1990; Briggs and Bauman 1992). In my analysis, I use the Bakhtinian concept of voice to determine the evidential source of utterances, which is related to their source of directive force in the corporate and the individual prayer frames. The concept of genre becomes important in the examination of the religious language of individual prayer. The analysis of these two practices reveals how spiritual authority was managed and enacted by the participants and what consequences this had for the social organization of the group.

6.1.2 *Language, Authority and Prayer*

Samarin suggests that the “most explicit expression of belief in the power of language as a force” may be found in religious rituals such as prayer (1976:11). This statement is crucial for the interpretation of my data: each example I present in this chapter includes evidence that the speaker (and other participants in the ritual) is taking care to use the proper forms, physical postures and other expressions of appropriate subjectivity in order to move the hand of God and secure the desired outcome of the prayer ritual. The ideological conviction that not every member of society is endowed with or knows how to use the power of prayer is reflected in sociocultural practices to select and train religious professionals as well as in socialization practices that train ordinary (lay) participants in what is expected of them (cf. Burke 2001; Capps and Ochs 2002; Du Bois 1986; Hanks 1996; Samarin 1976; Wheelock 1982). Hallmarks of ritual utterances include highly symbolic language and the use of specialized vocabulary, vocal qualities and grammatical structures indexical of religious genre and ritual context. Du Bois (1986, 1992) describes possible characteristics of ritual register including archaistic and borrowed elements, euphemism and metaphor, opaque meanings, and evidential markers that remove agency and intention from the speaker. Repetition is another index of the management of authority in ritual performance. Olájubù (2001) describes the influence of Yoruba command forms on prayers specifically with regards to repetition as a means of constructing intensity and force in prayer. A religious professional, then, is one who has mastered a complex and difficult genre of

language (among other practices) designed for authoritative action directed towards the supernatural realm.

While there are certainly shifts in voice quality and vocabulary among members of the women's group to mark participation in the frame of corporate prayer, there is no professional Christian religious representative among the members of the group. I described in Chapter 2 how no woman was allowed to hold a position of religious leadership in the church, and mentioned that the pastor-coordinator was the only one with any specialized Christian religious training. In order to appropriate the spiritual authority of religious professionals the women adopted a participant role from the ritual practices of the Sunday morning service. The moderator, as I will explain more fully in this chapter, animates the voice of religious authority and ensures a sequential ordering of prayers for maximum ritual efficacy. As Shoaps (2002:45) explains for a similar animation of the voice of religious authority in American Pentecostalism, the words derive their power from a belief that locates authority in the original divine source, or in the professional ritual representative who mediates the authority of the source. Given this implicit recognition that members of the women's group themselves did not have sufficient spiritual authority to move the hand of God through prayer, it is noteworthy that they nevertheless engaged in simultaneous extemporaneous individual prayer.

The fact that each individual member prays aloud in the instances I illustrate below should not detract from the observation that they are doing it collectively. The group orientation to prayer is ethnographically significant. While practitioners of

Christianity in North America and Europe are encouraged to supplement weekly corporate gatherings such as the Sunday morning church service with daily private devotional actions, the latter are practiced corporately by members of African Indigenous Churches (AICs), including the women's group of the Eglise de Philadelphie (cf. Daneel 2001; Hoehler-Fatton 1996; Mukonyora 2007). Indeed, solitary ritual activities are assessed negatively and the practitioner may be suspected of harmful witchcraft (Shanklin 1994). For example, instead of the daily devotional practice including private reading of Holy Scripture followed by prayer, which is encouraged for North American and European Christians, AIC congregants gather around six o'clock each morning, i.e., at sunrise in equatorial and tropical regions, for public recitation of Scripture accompanied by prayers and singing.¹ The spiritual authority in the simultaneous individual prayers appears to originate in the collective quality of the action, while also ensuring that no single person can claim that their specific prayer was more effective than anyone else's.

The management of authority and responsibility inherent in this practice is reminiscent of Irvine's (1996) description of Wolof insult poems in Senegal. Because they are composed by multiple authors and involving multiple performers and multiple recipients, the synchronic and diachronic distribution of responsibility for the precise words and meanings of the poems is complex. Her work as well as Du Bois' (1986, 1992) study on ritual speech and evidentiality supports Goffman's proposals (1974) for participant roles that are differentiated by their degree of responsibility for the authority and/or meaning of an utterance. While the author may

have composed the words, it is the animator who physically utters them, and the principal who is the source of their authority. Therefore, an important way to understand these prayer sequences is by asking whose voice is speaking, or what participant role is being enacted at each moment (Bakhtin 1981). Identifying the roles and voices will allow us to determine in which prayer frame – corporate or individual – the participants are operating, what the participation framework looks like, and how religious authority is being indexed and managed through directives.

I begin the presentation of the data and analysis with an overview of how the women went about the business of prayer, the two kinds of prayer actions that they engaged in, and the directive utterances used to guide them through the ritual. In particular, I use the Goffmanian models of frames and participation frameworks to tease apart the two prayer actions in order to describe their interrelatedness and interdependence. Next, I explore the notions of voices and participant roles and what they reveal about the source of directive authority in prayer.

6.2 Frames and Scripts

The prayer sequences enacted by the women's group followed a ritual script that required linguistic features and structures of interaction that belonged to a specific frame (Bauman 1977; Goffman 1974; Irvine 1996). Performances of ritual rely on established patterns and stereotyped behavior (Wheelock 1982:56). A frame provides a "structure[s] of expectations," involving a specific kind of relevance projection (Tannen 1979:137). The frame must be keyed so that the participants recognize it and adjust their actions to its prescriptive norms. It thus provides a script

for participants both to enact and to use when reading meaning into others' actions. Speakers use various physical and verbal cues to maintain the frame as well as using the frame to interpret the utterances of others (Bauman 1977; Hymes [1974] 1989; Irvine 1996; Tannen 1979).

How participants enter and exit embedded prayer frames is significant. Capps and Ochs (2002) note how practitioners signal entry into and exit from the frame of prayer. However, their analysis focuses on the socialization of children into the proper postures and language of the prayer itself, and not on the frame for corporate worship (though their description of Sunday School classes in the United States indicates a frame encompassing the prayer). In this discussion, I describe how the women prepared and entered into a frame of corporate prayer, entered the embedded frame of individual prayer, and then left it to return to the frame of corporate prayer, a cycle that continued throughout the initial prayer segment of the women's Wednesday prayer meetings as well as at the beginning of committee meetings and singing rehearsals.

6.2.1 The Corporate Prayer Frame

The initial prayer segment of a Wednesday afternoon prayer meeting consisted of an opening, the group prayers, and a closing. Marie-Claire was often the person who led the group through these steps, though Chimene, Claudine and Aude also filled that role. To initiate prayer Marie-Claire usually got up from her chair and moved to the dais at the front of the church (see Figure 2.4 in Chapter 2 for a diagram of the church interior). She often stood behind a lectern used on Sunday

mornings by the moderator or *modérateur* (*modératrice* for a woman), who assisted the pastor or lay leader responsible for preaching that morning as a kind of “master of ceremonies.” The moderator led the congregation in a time of singing and prayer before the sermon and afterwards often gave a synopsis of the sermon. He also made announcements and supervised the taking of the offering. The moderator stood on the raised dais at the front of the building; the group or congregation sat on benches facing her or him. As moderator for the women’s group, Marie-Claire (or whoever was in this participant role on a given day) called the group to order and announced topics for prayer. She also sometimes led some group singing and took an offering, though for the purposes of this analysis I have limited my attention to the group prayer.

Before a prayer topic was announced, there were various signals to the participants that prayer was about to begin. One was the movement of the moderator to the dais. Another might be a statement from the moderator indicating that the women should close their eyes. The moderator also sometimes began a worship song, alerting the other participants to attend to what she was doing and adjust their joint attention to the activity of prayer. (This is similar to Aude’s action in Example 6 of the previous chapter, in which beginning a song was a way to re-establish the joint attention of all of the women to the task of rehearsing it.) These signals drew the attention of other participants to the necessity of preparing for prayer and of entering a mental posture for prayer, which was often accompanied by a physical posture or action. In addition, familiarity with prayer frames allowed the women to

interpret the moderator's movement onto the dais or a statement like *tokanga náani bamiso na biso* 'We first of all close our eyes' as keys for the corporate prayer frame. When the moderator was assured that the women were prepared for prayer, she announced the first prayer topic. Thus began an interactional rhythm of exchange between the speaker who announced the topics and the group who responded in prayer.²

The prayer topics followed a similar order in each meeting and included prayers invoking the Holy Spirit, prayers announcing the purifying effect of the blood of Christ on the church building and on the participants, prayers confessing God's supremacy, prayers asking for forgiveness, prayers for the church as a community of believers, and so on. Example 1 is typical of these topical prayer announcements.

(1) Prayer Topic Announcement

- 1 Mar: Na tango (oy)o tokoremercier Nzambe na biso,
CONN time DEM 1PL-FUT-<FR thank FR> CL.GOD CONN 1PL.PRN
At this time we are going to thank our God
- 2 oyo abateli biso butu movimba.
DEM 3s-protect/preserve-PFV 1PL.PRN CL.night entire
who (lit. this one) protected us throughout the night.
- 3 Apesi biso bomoyi,
3s-give-PFV 1PL.PRN CL-LIFE
He gives us life
- 4 Apesi biso lisusu makasi po tokutana lisusu na bisika oyo,
3s-give-PFV 1PL.PRN CL-again CL.strength CONJ 1PL-gather-RECP-
IPFV CL-again CONN CL-place DEM
He gives us renewed strength so that we can meet together again in this place.

5 Topamboli Molimo na ye tobondeli na kombo na Yesu.
 1PL-bless-PFV CL-Spirit CONN 3s.PRN 1PL-intercede-PFV CONN
 CL.name CONN NAME
We bless his Spirit, we intercede in the name of Jesus.

This announcement contains references to various kinds of prayer actions, namely thanking God (*tokoremercier*, line 1), blessing or celebrating the Holy Spirit (*topamboli*, line 5), and intercession or supplication on someone's behalf (*tobondeli*, line 5). It is directive in that it describes why and how the women should pray. This is noteworthy in the context of religious ritual because it demonstrates a concern for how the women participate as well as reinforcing ideologies that shape individual subjectivity. These ideologies include belief in a deity who has personal characteristics such as emotion and will, as well as beliefs regarding the proper forms, postures and subjectivities necessary to approach Him.

God is consistently mentioned through lexical references for all members of the Trinity, i.e., *Nzambe na biso* 'our God' in line 1, *Molimo na Ye* 'his Spirit' in line 5, and *Yesu* 'Jesus' in line 5, and through the 3rd person pronominal prefix /a-/ on the verb, for example, *abateli* 'he protected/preserved' and *apesi* 'he gives' in lines 3 and 4. God's actions are marked with the verbal suffix /-i/, which as I showed in Chapter 4 indicates epistemic certainty and presupposed-as-shared evidentiality on the part of the speaker. This is one way in which the moderator projects the presence of God in the participation framework while also reminding the women of reasons why they should thank God, bless Him, and address their supplications to Him.

The prayer actions *pamboli* 'bless' and *bondeli* 'intercede' in line 5 are also marked with the presupposed-certainty suffix, again indicating the subjectivity of the

speaker in judging the appropriateness of the prayer actions in light of God's care and concern for the women (which are also presupposed). The verb in line 1, *remercier* 'thank' in French, retains the sound of the French infinitive ending /-er/ rather than a Lingala suffix. In line 4, the verb form *tokutana* 'gather' is marked with the imperfective aspect suffix /-a/ in a resultative clause linked to the first clause in the sentence through the conjunction *po* 'so that'. The use of imperfective aspect marks the speaker's interpretation that the action of gathering is still going on through the continued co-presence of all of the women. The form may also function as a disclaimer of personal responsibility for the declaration because of the way it indexes a remote evidential source for its authority, though this is a pattern that requires the additional examples below to demonstrate more convincingly.

There are two points to be made concerning the references to the unseen God in the third person. First, the fact that He is consistently referenced in the third person maintains His status as 'other' with reference to the group. This is the only linguistic indication that His participation status during the prayer announcement is outside the core activity of the speaker and recipients (perhaps as the audience or an overhearer). Secondly, Marie-Claire consistently ascribes agentive actions to Him: *abateli biso* 'He protected us' (line 2); *apesi biso bomoyi* 'He gives us life' (line 3); *apesi biso lisusu makasi* 'He gives us renewed strength' (line 4). These agentive formulations of His actions contribute to the ideology of Him as a deity with personal human characteristics. Moreover, while God is the agentive subject in three of the five lines of utterance, the women of the group are referenced collectively as

the objects of God's actions through the 1st person plural pronoun *biso*. Further, all of the actions of the women described in lines 1 and 5 with the first person plural person prefix on the verb /to-/ are in response to God's actions, e.g., *tokoremercier* 'we will thank' (line 1), *topamboli* 'we bless' (line 5) and *tobondeli* 'we intercede' (line 5).

All six lines of this announcement form a gestalt directive; each statement combines to construct an utterance that defines an appropriate response or action on the part of the women. The distribution of aspectual reference is noteworthy because it metapragmatically represents the accomplishment of the women's prayers, a formulation that Silverstein argued gives directive power to ritual speech (1981, cited in Keane 1997:54). The speaker begins with an action projected into the future (*tokoremercier* 'we will thank' in line 1) and ends with actions formulated as certain (*topamboli* 'we bless', *tobondeli* 'we intercede' in line 5). The prefix to the verb root /-ko-/ in *tokoremercier* signals futurity and the verbal suffix /-i/ on *tobondeli* is the marker of presupposed-as-shared certainty. In addition, it prepares interactional space for a next relevant action similar to the way in which command forms were used in the coordination of the actions of multiple participants as described in the previous chapter. Yet if this is the case, the moderator's use of the first person plural pronominal prefix /to-/ and the corresponding pronoun *biso* rather than the second person plural markings of the verbal prefix *bo-* and/or the corresponding pronoun *bino* are curious. It is possible that this use corresponds to the "royal *we*" found in languages such as English as a means to impersonally formulate a statement or

command. Another possibility is that the first person plural markings are a kind of “let’s” suggestion formula. These possibilities will be taken up later in the discussion of roles and voices. What is significant for this analysis is that the use of the first person plural pronoun distributes responsibility to act to all of the women, including the speaker. This interpretation is further supported by how the prayer topic announcement constructs prayer as a response to something God has done for them, e.g. He gives life and strength (lines 3 and 4). In other words, the announcement tells them why, how and with what topic to take their turn in an on-going dialogue with God. It makes a prayer the next relevant action (the “what”), it constructs every member of the group as an agent responsible to act (the “who” and the “why”), and it gives specific information about how to go about the prayer action. In this way, the prayer announcement shows explicit concern for correct ritual procedure, including the participation and subjectivity of all of the participants. The completion of the prayer announcement marks the moment of transition into the individual prayer frame.

6.2.2 The Individual Prayer Frame

After the announcement of each topic, a chorus of individual prayers begins. Each woman prays her own extemporaneous prayer aloud at the same time as the others according to the topics in the announcement, often following the vocabulary and order of the announcement. This simultaneous praying was generally very noisy, although in my recordings that include prayer, usually one or two women were close

enough to the audio recorder that their words are distinguishable for transcription. I will present an analysis of two individual prayers in a later section of this chapter.

The participation framework for the individual prayer frame is composed of one woman and the God she addresses. Because of this, it is more helpful to speak in terms of multiple, simultaneous individual prayer frames rather than a single individual prayer frame or even a single collective frame. In other words, each individual is carrying on a private conversation with God who is fully present with her, and further at least a dozen of these private conversations are occurring simultaneously. In addition, a consideration of each individual participation framework as part of a greater whole, the corporate prayer participation framework, reveals the embedded and interrelated qualities of the two frames and their corresponding participation frameworks. As we each voiced our prayers aloud I often had the sense of being in two simultaneous and intersecting frames – one in which I was acting corporately, that is, in a joint effort with other participants and focused on the same task, and one in which I was acting individually, that is, carrying out my own dialogue with God. This effect captures the embedded and interrelated qualities of the two prayer frames. In addition, it illustrates the transforming effect of collective participation in religious ritual on individuals' subjective states (Keane 1997:53)

The prayer topic announcement illustrated in Example 1, then, exists as the first utterance of a pair. The dialogic response to it is the collective action of the group's simultaneous individual prayers. At the same time, the simultaneous

individual prayers are first pair parts that open a place in interaction for a response from God, the unseen participant. In this way, the collective response in the form of individual prayers is a lamination of the first and second pair parts of two adjacency pairs that belong to two different frames.

As mentioned above, the simultaneous and collective quality of the individual prayers lends persuasive or directive force to them. The prayer topic announcement assures that all of the women are beseeching God along the same lines. Rather than repetition as the source of directive force (as in the Yoruba prayers described by Olájubù (2001)), collective action becomes the source of directive force. I mentioned above that the simultaneity of the prayers ensures that no single person can claim that their prayer was more effective than others in moving the hand of God. However, there are ways for an individual to design her prayer in order to differentiate herself from the group and to be overheard by others: the prayer may be somehow longer, louder and more linguistically elaborate than the others' prayers. As I will discuss below, this kind of action may be interpreted as a display of ritual competence or even expertise that may be interpreted as a claim of directive influence on God and also of a position of influence within the group.

As we have seen thus far, the women's prayer ritual begins with a topic announcement that directs the participants' actions. The corporate prayer frame is keyed through the physical locations and utterances of the moderator, and the topical prayer announcement keys the frame of the individual prayer. Participants monitor

each other's actions as they proceed through the alternating ritual scripts of announcements and individual prayers.

6.2.3 *Joint Attention and Mutual Monitoring*

While participants in simultaneous individual prayers did not outwardly appear to be attending to anyone around them, my observation from participation in weekly services at many churches using this form of prayer is that they nevertheless consistently completed their prayers within tenths of seconds or so of each other. This is evidence of mutual monitoring. The moderator also monitored the prayers of the group. After having announced the prayer topic, the moderator prayed her own individual prayer aloud while all the other women were also praying and then began to announce the next prayer topic just as they were finishing their prayers. Though there was occasionally overlap between the moderator and a lone participant who allowed her prayer to continue longer than the others, this situation occurred so infrequently and without being obviously corrected by any of the other participants that it appeared that the one still praying prolonged her prayer precisely in order to be heard by the others. My interpretation here is based on the reasoning that speakers in interaction rarely make mistakes and so an action that appears to be out of the ordinary and which is also not corrected by other participants is mostly likely purposeful and meaningful. As already mentioned, reasons why this may be so are related to the display of spiritual authority and religious authenticity. For example, in the prolonged prayer the participant could make an exhibition of affect to mark sincerity that is indexical of authenticity for some religious groups (cf. Shoaps

2002), or to demonstrate ritual skill in the use of specialized language or ritual style (cf. Du Bois 1986; Hanks 1996; Wheelock 1982). As I will argue below, demonstrations of skillful ritual language were one way women in this group could make claims of knowledge and experience in order to enhance their hierarchical position. However, the ability to enact the ritual script established religious authenticity for members of this Community of Practice and was a prerequisite to the claim of authority in elaborate individual prayers. Religiously authentic members of this community knew how to enact the script.

The physical movements and verbal actions of the women reflected socialized experience that provided implicit direction and minimized explicit direction. For example, when the corporate prayer frame was keyed, the participants began to execute a finely tuned script. As they did so, their bodies drew closer together as did the focus of their attention. During corporate prayer the women were not widely distributed throughout the whole sanctuary as they were on Sunday mornings, when there were many more people in attendance. Once the moderator moved from her seated position on a chair or bench in the sanctuary onto the dais at the front of the church, the women drew together without explicit verbal direction from her. For example, the women seated at the very back of the sanctuary or alone on a bench matched the moderator's movement onto the dais with a movement of their own to join another woman or women on a bench in the front stage-left quadrant, with the result that the group's seating arrangement during the corporate prayer frame put them in close physical proximity to each other. Sitting together,

they could hear each other and even sense the movements of other women who sometimes stood or paced the aisles instead of remaining seated while praying (demonstrations of religious fervor and of sincerity in prayer). Their physical proximity allowed for the joint attention and mutual monitoring necessary to collectively enact the ritual script.

While Communities of Practice such as the women's group of the Eglise de Philadelphie develop locally specific scripts for the activities in which they regularly engage, it is noteworthy that corporate prayer belongs to a script that transcends local norms. Other similar yet unrelated groups in the Republic of Congo that I visited over a period of more than a year manifested adherence to the same script of an announcement followed by group simultaneous prayers. Further, the equivalent prayer topics used in the same or similar order by groups unrelated except in their adherence to Christian doctrine also made the relative order of topics predictable. I realized this when I was able to follow the topic announcements in Lingala even with only a very rudimentary vocabulary set, as well as topic announcements in Bekwel and Kikoongo, two other Bantu languages (Groups A and H respectively), though I did not know either of those two languages. The occasional use of a Christian term whose root or borrowed form resembled English, French or Lingala and the alternating rhythm of topic announcement and collective prayer were the only signals I needed to keep my bearings in the progression of prayer topics. Through all of these practices I was becoming socialized into the specificities of local Christian ritual scripts.

As another example, the meaning of an utterance such as *Aleluya* ‘Allelujah’ (a widely known and widely used ritual Christian term) pronounced by the moderator to key the corporate prayer frame and the expected corporate response *Amen* (in perfect unison) was comprehensible for me only through participation. The example of the other participants was available for me to follow; no one ever explained the procedure. Moreover, there seems to have been an assumption that if I were an authentic Christian then I would be familiar with and able to execute the script. If I could not perform the ritual properly with the others, this would reveal a lack of religious authenticity on my part.

In conclusion, the individual prayer frame depended upon the corporate prayer frame for its keying and participants, while the corporate prayer frame depended on the individual prayer frame as the joint responsive actions of those same participants. Procedural knowledge necessary for participants to recognize the keys to each frame and the ability to carry out the ritual scripts without explicit direction authenticated each participant as a member of the Christian group. This basic level of knowledge and experience was insufficient, however, to achieve a position of influence or status within the group. For that, participants had to be able to demonstrate further expertise in ritual form and procedure involving the enactment of specific roles through voices of directive authority and linguistic skill in religious expression.

6.3 Roles and Voices

A valuable clue to the interpretation of directive force concerns the identity of the voice of the utterance with respect to the participant role rather than the specific individual inhabiting the role. The Bakhtinian concept of voice shares many similarities with Goffman's notion of participant roles (Bakhtin 1981; Goffman 1969, 1974, 1981). Most significant for this analysis is that more authority, and therefore more directive force, is imputed to some roles and voices than others. This is especially salient in the realm of religious activities and ultimately has an effect on the social organization of this church group.

Given the concern I have already noted that the members of the women's group exhibited for proper ritual procedure in prayer, we would expect that they would carefully manage expressions of religious authority, most likely through roles and voices indexed by the linguistic forms of directives used in the corporate and individual prayer frames. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, none of the women in this group had the specialized religious training that was required in this context for a religious professional. Additionally, no single individual took the role of the moderator all the time. I observed Marie-Claire, Chimene, Claudine and Aude in the role of the moderator at different times. Among them, Chimene was the only woman co-titular with a trained religious professional. But a visitor could also fill the role of the moderator. The first time my American colleague Jessica Lebold and I were invited to a prayer meeting as special guests, Chimene told Jessica (who attended a different church in Ouesso) that she should moderate the meeting and that

I should give the exhortation. In hindsight I recognize that it was not any personal qualification that suited us for these participant roles, but that Chimene assumed that if we were authentic Christians we would know how to carry out the ritual script for the prayer meeting. It is clear, then, that the authority of the moderator to direct the meeting did not derive from personal or social characteristics, but from another source. That source was the voice of the ritual script.

This is not surprising given the common ritual ideology noted in the introduction to this chapter that the power of the words resides in the author or textual source rather than in the speaker (cf. Hanks 1996; Irvine 1996; Keane 1997; Samarin 1976). Moreover, this is what allowed various members of the group (and visitors) to direct the ritual proceedings while denying their own authority or personal responsibility for the words (cf. Irvine 1996; Keane 1997:58). In the case of these data, however, the “text” was conventionalized procedure, the ritual script of corporate prayer that emerged through the religious practices of the group as members of the Eglise de Philadelphie.

6.3.1 Animating the Script

When the moderator signaled entry into the prayer frame and announced prayer topics she was animating the script. This interpretation accounts for the use of the first person plural referential deixis, and also as we will see, the verbal suffix /-a/ indicating a remote evidential source. In the description of the frame and script of corporate prayer above, the moderator keyed the corporate prayer frame through physical positioning of the body or through an initiating utterance. The example

below illustrates my claim that the source of authority for the moderator’s utterances lay not in some personal or social quality but in the conventional moral authority of the script. Thus, even a declarative statement that might in other contexts be understood as describing an action was interpreted as a directive for that same action in the frame of corporate prayer.

Just before the following example, Marie-Claire had moved to the front of the church, but her movement was not noticed by all of the women who were dispersed throughout the building and outside the back door, chatting and waiting for the other women they expected to come to prayer. For some time previous to this, Chimene and Aude had been encouraging Marie-Claire through hints and teasing to begin the prayer meeting so that they could get on with the business of rehearsing songs for the wedding. Marie-Claire finally complied, moving to the front of the church and telling the others to close their eyes. Relatively few women were positioned to hear her, and so Claudine got up and alerted the other women that the prayer meeting was starting.

(2) We close our eyes

1 Mar: Tokanga náani bamiso na biso
 1PL-Close-IPFV ADV CL-eye CONN 1PL.PRN
We first close our eyes.

2 ... (5.91) ((Audible shuffling of feet)).

3 Cla: Les prières bandeko (X...X)
 <FR ART prayer-PL FR> CL-sibling
The prayers, sisters.

Three linguistic and contextual features of Marie-Claire’s utterance in line 1 identify it as an animation of the script for corporate prayer: the first person plural

prefix and imperfective aspect suffix on the verb, the relationship of the propositional content of the utterance to the physical posture of readiness to pray, and Claudine's reaction. I first identified this and other similar forms as directives precisely because of reactions like Claudine's. The way that she alerts others that prayers are beginning is evidence that she interprets Marie-Claire's utterance as the beginning of that ritual; she interprets *tokanga náani bamiso na biso* 'we first close our eyes' as a directive.

'We first close our eyes' is highly reminiscent of some directives involving first person plural reference from American parents and adult caregivers who are socializing children into correct postures and subjectivities for prayer, for example "David, ready to say *our* prayer?" and "*Let's* pray together. Remember *our* praying hands and Atrium voices?" (Capps and Ochs 2002:43, 45, emphasis mine). These are explicit instructions to guide others into proper behavior for religious ritual just as the actions that key the corporate prayer frame are for this group. Further, it is evident that Marie-Claire includes herself in the first person plural reference because as she pronounces the utterance she accomplishes the action. It is evident then that she is animating a script for conventionalized prayer procedure that includes entering the frame of prayer by physically positioning the body through such postures as folded hands and closed eyes (cf. Capps and Ochs 2002).³

With this in mind, the suffix /-a/ on the verb *tokanga* 'we close' carries modal meaning, described as "potentiel" (Bwantsa-Kafungu 1982), "optatif simple" (Motingea 1996b) and "subjunctive" by Dzokanga (1992) and Meeuwis (1998).

While it is the case here that the action of closing the eyes is as yet unachieved for the group (since most of them are not yet aware of Marie-Claire's statement at this point), it is significant that what she says she also does and that these actions are part of the preparation for prayer in the ritual script. Mufwene (1978) argues that imperfective aspect implies remote evidentiality, while Givón (1994) prefers the interpretation that it indicates low certainty on the part of the speaker. In this case, I suggest that the use of the suffix /-a/ indexes an evidential source of authority beyond Marie-Claire: the power of ritual script and proper religious language. Marie-Claire is not speaking for herself in this case; she is in the role of the moderator as she utters these words. As I described above, the moderator animates the ritual script; she physically utters the prayer topic announcement yet claims no responsibility or authority for it because she is only embodying the role of the religious authority.

While Marie-Claire's movement to the front of the church is apparently not seen by many participants, her audible statement describing the physical readiness to pray is heard and recognized by Claudine, who announces *les prières bandeko* 'the prayers, sisters' to women in the back of the church. The quality and volume of Marie-Claire's voice is not intense or loud, as we might expect with a command or an announcement, and it contrasts with the intensity and volume of Claudine's subsequent announcement to the participants who have not attended to Marie-Claire's action and utterance. The remote evidentiality signaled by the verbal suffix /-a/ on the verb *tokanga* 'we close' indicates that Marie-Claire is simply carrying out

a procedure mandated by some other authority. In other words, she is modeling the procedure through her body and naming it through her words. That this is part of a sequence is demonstrated by her use the modifier *náani* ‘first of all’. In modeling and naming the procedure, she animates the portion of the script in which the women physically ready themselves for prayer. Claudine’s cooperation in calling other women’s attention to this verbal signal of the prayer frame is a confirmation that she recognizes the initiation of the script and the necessity for all the women to join the enactment, entering the corporate prayer frame. The authority for Marie-Claire’s utterance that gives it the force of a directive, then, comes from the script – the ritualized, expected sequence of the corporate prayer frame.

Another way to initiate the prayer actions of the script was by beginning a song or a prayer. The script’s conventional authority again endowed these actions with directive force. Viewing actions and utterances that called participants to readiness for prayer as animations of the script may also explain the choice of songs that moderators used. I noted in the previous chapter that multilingual participants had a large repertoire from which to select forms of meanings suited to the contingencies of the moment. Though the song in the next example was not part of the fixed ritual script, it reflects the choice of the moderator to draw the rest of the group into prayer through a song that replicated the alternation of the topic prayer announcement and group response, thus animating the ritual script through song.

6.3.2 *Singing as Script and Prayer*

The well-known French praise song selected by Marie-Claire in the next example combines the authority of the script with a calming tempo to lead the group further along the script of corporate prayer. Marie-Claire begins singing it immediately after Claudine's utterance in the example above. The use of a song to alert participants to the imminence of a prayer and to lead them into a state of readiness was noted above in the list of possible strategies, which includes physical movement, prayer announcements and other animations of the script, illustrated in previous examples. While the choice of a particular song may appear to be motivated by some inaccessible reason in the mind of the moderator, or perhaps even to be a somewhat random selection, I suggest that this song was chosen by the moderator as a way to continue animating the section of the script during which participants began to pray. The fact that it is in French instead of Lingala is incidental in this case. Its structure mimics the alternating rhythm and content of a prayer topic announcement and individual prayer in the corporate prayer frame, though unlike the announcement, it is addressed to God. (The entire next example is sung.)

(3) Thank you, Lord

- 1 Mar: <C Nous te disons merci, Seigneur,
1PL.PRN 2S.PRN say-1PL.PRS thanks TITLE
We say thank you to you, Lord,
- 2 All: Merci, Jésus
thanks NAME
Thank you, Jesus
- 3 Nous te disons merci, Seigneur
1PL.PRN 2S.PRN say-1PL.PRS thanks TITLE
We say thank you to you, Lord,

- 4 **Merci, Jésus**
 thanks NAME
Thank you, Jesus
- 5 Mar: **Comment ne pas t'adorer Jésus**
 how NEG NEG 2s.PRN worship NAME
How (would it be possible) to not worship you, Jesus?
- 6 All: **Alléluia**
 Allelujah
Allelujah
- 7 **Jésus, le roi des rois**
 NAME ART king ART.GEN king-PL
Jesus the king of kings
- 8 **Le seigneur des seigneurs. C>**
 ART lord ART.GEN lord-PL
The lord of lords.

The structure of alternating lines sung by a leader and chorus is an example of the musical phenomenon of call-and-response (Nketia 1974). The call is a mechanism used in group singing whereby a person sings a verse alone and then sings part of a line from the refrain in order to signal when the chorus should start singing. Lyrical content from the verse and from the beginning of the refrain also sometimes indicates specific lyrical content for the rest of the refrain (Nketia 1974:236). Call-and-response is a common pattern in African music (including the songs composed and performed by this group).

Specifically, lines 1-4 are a kind of call-and-response in which the chorus responds to the leader, i.e., *Merci, Jésus* 'Thank you, Jesus' in response to the leader's *Nous te disons merci, Seigneur* 'We say thank you, Lord', and then repeats both of those lines. It is similar to the "Exact Imitation" type of call-and-response documented by King (1999:61-62). The next four lines correspond to the type of

call-and-response that King labels “Respond-and-Conclude” (1999:69-71) (see Nketia 1974:140-146 for a similar description). In line 5 the leader calls out a question (*Comment ne pas t’adorer, Jésus* ‘How (would it be possible) not to worship you, Jesus?’) to which the chorus responds in line 6-8 with words of adoration: *Alléluia* ‘Allelujah’, *Jésus, le roi des rois* ‘Jesus, the king of kings’, *Le seigneur des seigneurs* ‘the lord of lords’. It is noteworthy that the action called by the leader is enacted through the responding words of the chorus. In line 1, ‘we say thank you to you, Lord’ is met by the chorus with ‘Thank you, Jesus’ in line 2. Likewise, when the leader rhetorically asks how it would be possible not to worship Jesus, the chorus responds with words of adoration, ‘allelujah’ and honorific titles for Jesus, ‘the king of kings’ and ‘the lord of lords.’ These are scripted words, learned by the women for successful enactment of the preparatory steps in the corporate prayer frame. In addition, the call-and-response pattern reflects and projects the alternating rhythm of the corporate and individual prayer frames.

Sung prayers are ancient forms that and are also used today. For example, Capps and Ochs describe the use of a song as part of American children’s socialization into prayer before family meals (2002). For some families in their study the prayer before meals may take the form of a song. I know families from France, Germany, Switzerland, and Great Britain who sing prayers before meals as well. Thus, a song led by the moderator in this women’s group may contribute to the posture of readiness to pray as well as teaching a pattern for prayer. The crucial points for this analysis are that the lines sung by the leader animate a script that is

then acted out by the chorus, that the structural result is a form of call-and-response, and that both the structure of the song and meaning of the lyrics serve to socialize the procedure and content of prayer. This is the same phenomenon that occurs when the moderator guides the women into a posture of readiness for prayer (Example 2) and when a prayer topic is announced (Example 1). The animation of the script coupled with the acting out of the script by the participants creates a call-and-response structure, one uniquely suited to collective participation and ideological reinforcement of individual subjectivities that are required for the efficacy of the religious ritual procedure.⁴

In the above discussion I have described how the directive authority of the moderator's utterances originates in the script and not in the person inhabiting the role. The moderator physically embodies and announces each step in a sequence that keys entry into the frame of corporate prayer, prepares the participants to pray, and directs the content of their prayers and the time allotted to pray as individuals before the next prayer announcement. Up to this point I have considered the collective ritual actions the women perform in unison. I turn next to a consideration of the spontaneous, simultaneous individual prayers. The participation framework of individual prayer is different than that of corporate prayer. In addition, while a place for individual prayer is part of the script of corporate prayer, the precise formulation of the prayer is up to each individual. This means that one concern of the individual praying is the adoption of subjectivities that will move the hand of God, whether through the appeal to piety and sincerity or through the authority of ritual language.

6.4 Invocations and Petitions

In the case of the corporate prayer frame of the women's group, God is perceived as the audience for the performance of ritual. But in the individual prayer frame, he becomes the recipient of directives. The care with which the women attended to the corporate prayer ritual suggests that its proper performance for God, the audience, was believed to yield benefits in the second frame in which he was the recipient of the women's invocations and petitions. The change in frame did not remove the concern for properly performed ritual, however, at least on the part of some members of the group. As we will see in the example below, stylistic elaboration in the performance of prayer appeared to be one tactic through which an individual could appropriate or approximate the ritual authority of convention while at the same time demonstrating her mastery of the language of prayer.

Wheelock (1982) describes ritual utterances (including prayer) as highly symbolic utterances not addressed to anyone. Conversely, the descriptions of prayer by members of African Indigenous Churches in Olájubù (2001) and Mukonyora (2007) assume a divine presence, and describe prayer as a consultation in which one receives strength and wisdom. Likewise, Hanks's (1996) description of a Yucatan Mexican prayer-like exorcism ritual includes triadic communication of sorts that includes healing benefits to the patient from spiritual entities invoked by the shaman. Even though the patient and shaman stand very close together and are visible to each other, they do not directly interact through each other but with and through non-

human invisible beings. These studies indicate that prayer is a genre of communicative action with unseen participants.

Unseen participants present a layer of complexity to models like the situated activity system or participation framework because their forms are not available for contact through eye-gaze or touch, and physical gestures by multiple participants towards an unseen participant require at least an indexical projection of the deity's location in order to coordinate the direction of the gesture (cf. Goffman 1974, 1981; C. Goodwin 2007; M.H. Goodwin 2006). In these data, the women construct God as present and real through expressions that reveal they expect to see his compliance with their directives in the social and material world (see also Hanks 1996:178 for another example). Furthermore, it seems that the use of specialized ritual linguistic forms may be perceived as a means to appropriate conventional ritual authority, as well as an opportunity to publicly demonstrate individual ritual skill.

The example below begins with a topical prayer announcement by the moderator, again Marie-Claire, that occurred two weeks after the day on which Examples 2 and 3 took place. Though this example occurred on a Wednesday, the usual day for prayer meetings, the wedding was only a few days away and there were still some details to discuss and songs to rehearse in addition to the regular prayers. As soon as the prayer announcement ended the women responded collectively, and the murmur of several indistinct voices could be heard. Makwala timed her prayer to begin just seconds after the other women had begun praying. She also spoke much more loudly than the others so that much of her prayer was clearly

recorded (even though at least two other women were sitting closer to the audio-recorder than she was). In addition, for a short time it was possible to make out Marie-Claire's voice in the recording. She seemed to be speaking slightly more loudly and more clearly than the other women so that her words were also discernable for a time above the murmur of simultaneous prayers. Both women addressed God along the lines of the content given in the prayer topic announcement, yet each designed her own invocations and petitions. Example 4 begins with the topic prayer announcement by Marie-Claire and continues through the first fifteen lines of Makwala's and Marie-Claire's prayers. (Even though Makwala's and Marie-Claire's voices often alternate in time and thus in the lines of the transcript, it is clear from the forms and content of their utterances that they are not talking to each other.)

(4) Invoking the Holy Spirit

- 1 Mar: Na pokwa (y)a lelo,
CONN CL.afternoon/evening CONN CL.today
This afternoon,
- 2 oyo nionso tokoloba na bisika oyo,
DEM ADV 1PL-FUT-talk CONN CL-place DEM
all that we will say in this place
- 3 ...(.64) e(sengeli) tozala conduit na kati na Molimo na Nzambe,
3S.NHUM-need-PFV 1PL-be-IPFV <FR led.PST FR> CONN ADV
CONN CL-Spirit CONN CL.God
it is necessary (that) we are guided in the Spirit of God
- 4 ...(.33) tobeleli Molimo na ye,
1PL-hail-PFV CL-Spirit CONN 3S.PRN
we call upon (or hail) his Spirit
- 5 ... na kombo na Yesu
CONN CL-name CONN NAME
in the name of Jesus.
- 6 (2.63) ((murmur of multiple voices that continues throughout next utterances))

- 7 Mak: Molimo na bwania!
 CL-Spirit CONN CL.wisdom
Spirit of wisdom!
- 8 Mar: Tobeledi Moli[mo na yo,]
 1PL-hail-PFV CL-Spirit CONN 2s.PRN
We call upon (hail) your Spirit
- 9 Mak: [Molimo oyo] soki eza(li) =
 cl-Spirit dem conj 3s.nhum-be-pfv
 =[na kati ya moto seke moto a]za(li) kotambola malamumu
 CONN ADV CL-person CONJ 3s-be-PFV INF.walk good
The Spirit who is only within the one who walks in righteousness.
- 10 Mar : [(X na kati X) ya bisika oyo au nom de Jesu]
 CONN ADV CL-place DEM CONJ.ART <FR name GEN NAME FR>
(to be) in the midst of us in the name of Jesus.
- 11 Mar: Et que nionso oyo [tokosala na bisika oyo Seigneur,
 CONJ REL.PRN ADV 1PL-FUT-do CONN CL-place DEM NAME
And that all that we will do in this place, Lord,
- 12 Mak: [Molimo oyo ezali kokimisa mbindo na masumu!
 CL-Spirit DEM 3s.NHUM-be-PFV INF.run-CAUS
 CL.filth CONN CL-sin
O Spirit who makes filth and sins flee!
- 13 Mar: ...55 (X Ezala X) na biso Nzambe
 3s.NHUM-be-IMPV CONN 1PL.PRN CL.God
Be with us God.
- 14 Mar: Nabeledi [semence na yo na kati ya bisika oyo]
 1s-hail-PFV <FR fruit FR> CONN 2s.PRN CONN ADV CONN
 CL-place DEM
I invoke your fruit in this place.
- 15 Mak: [Molimo n(a) oyo ezali kosunga biso tango nionso na kati
 na mi]kumba na moyini,
 CL-Spirit CONN DEM 3s.NHUM-be-PFV INF.help 1PL.PRN
 CL.time ADV CONN ADV CONN CL-battle CONN CL-enemy
The Spirit who is helping us all the time in the combat with the enemy.
- 16 Mak: Eeh!
 ITJ
Oh!
- 17 Mar: Parce que ozali N[zambe]
 <FR CONJ FR> 2s-be-PFV CL.God
Because you are God.

- 18 Mak: [Yee.]
ITJ
Ah!
- 19 Mar: Mapamboli na yo [(X X)]
CL-blessing CONN 2S.PRN
Your blessing ...
- 20 Mak: [Bisika oyo Nzambe yo opepa lisusu,]
CL-place DEM CL.God 2S.PRN 2S-flow(air)-IPFV CL-again
In this place God you flow again.
- 21 Mak: ... (.65) bisika oyo Molimo na Nzambe opepá!
CL-place DEM CL-Spirit CONN CL.God 2S-flow(air)-IMP
In this place, Spirit of God, flow!

As mentioned before, the language these women use in prayer reflects a concern for proper procedure and appropriate participation to ensure the successful outcome of their activities. Marie-Claire's metalinguistic reference to the women's words in line 2, *oyo nionso tokoloba na bisika oyo* 'all that we say in this place', and the use of a complex predicate in line 3, *e(sengeli) tozala conduit na kati na Molimo na Nzambe* 'it is necessary (that) we are guided in God's Spirit' construct the forthcoming prayer as a solemn ritual action and emphasize everyone's duty to seek divine intervention. The need for divine intervention was felt in this case because of the few days remaining before the wedding ceremony and the number of details that needed to be discussed and the songs to rehearse before the big day. The modal verb *kosengela* 'to have need of' (in the form *esengeli* conjugated for third person non-human and marked with perfective aspect) carries a range of meanings from necessity to obligation, while *tozala* 'we are' in Lingala and *conduit* 'guided' in French describes the needful, obligated action. Once again the verbal suffix /-a/ is used, in this case on the verb *tozala* 'we are' (line 3); here Marie-Claire is not taking

personal responsibility through assertion but animating and indexing the authority of ritual convention. The inference of her statement is that each woman should do her best to convince God to grant success for the women's group in their preparations for the wedding. Because each woman is free to compose her prayers as guided by the topical prayer announcement, the authority behind the words of the prayer is no longer fully derived from the script, but additional resources may be brought to bear by each speaker according to their ability with ritual language.

After the first five lines of the prayer announcement, the interaction becomes difficult to follow. Makwala (Mak in this transcript) and Marie-Claire (Mar in this transcript) are both addressing God at the same time, but independently of each other. Makwala's utterances tend toward the eloquent and dramatic, with vocatives that name a divine characteristic (lines 7, 9, 12, 15), affective exclamations (lines 16 and 18) and encouragement (line 20), culminating in a command (line 21). Her prayer is an example of the religious fervor and sincerity that marks religious authenticity, and as I argue next, it also indexes ritual convention as a source of religious authority.

Makwala's invocations of God's Spirit such as *Molimo na bwania!* 'Spirit of wisdom!' (line 7) and the more elaborate *Molimo oyo ezali kokimisa mbindo na masumu!* 'O Spirit who makes filth and sins flee!' (line 12) are utterances designed to get a response or reaction from God by referencing personal characteristics such as wisdom and the power to banish filth and sin. This practice stems from ancient Semitic beliefs adopted by Christians that God's honor resides in the close

connection between His named attributes and his actions.⁵ By naming a characteristic, the person invoking God is also subtly directing Him to act in accordance with it in a way notably similar to a membership categorization device (see discussion in section 4.3.1).

These kinds of invocations project God's presence as a participant in the interaction as well as constructing his character. Moreover, these utterances are audible and available for the other women to hear and monitor, publicly identifying Makwala as a skilled and sincere petitioner. This is important when considering the presumed power of ritual language itself. The micro-processes in interaction establish forms and voices in distinct social situations that then come to be indexical of categories of people, i.e., sportscasters or military people, according to Agha (2005). Further, these socially "enregistered" voices in the performance of religious register or linguistic genre then become associated with and indexes the evidential authority of convention just as the enactment of a ritual script does.

Makwala continues her invocations through non-lexical exclamations: the one on line 16 sounds like a cry for help, while the other (line 18) sounds like a groan. Acting out helplessness through cries and groans is another persuasive, i.e., directive, tactic addressed to God.

In line 20, Makwala chooses another directive maneuver with the declaration *bisika oyo Nzambe yo opepa lisusu* 'in this place, God, you flow again'⁶ followed by the command *Molimo na Nzambe opepá!* 'Spirit of God, flow!' (line 21). Her use of the imperfective aspect suffix /-a/ on the verb phrase *opepa* in line 20 representing

unachieved action followed by the suffix /-á/ indicating her deduction of imminent action on the verb phrase *opepá* in line 21 constructs a metapragmatic representation of the impending accomplishment of God's action. (Her use of the second person singular verbal prefix /o-/ with the imperative suffix is perhaps for emphasis or perhaps another indication that "imperative" is not the most appropriate category label for this form and that more naturally occurring data is needed to determine the suffix's function and meaning.) This is similar to Silverstein's (1981) proposal of the metapragmatic representation of accomplishment mentioned earlier.

Makwala's use of the verbal suffix /-a/ on the verb phrase *opepa* 'you flow' in line 20 is noteworthy for an additional reason. Given what I have already described concerning how speakers in this context animate a ritual script and thus do not claim personal responsibility for an utterance (see Examples 1 and 2), Makwala's choice to mark this utterance with the suffix /-a/ also appears to involve a strategy to manage responsibility and authority in the ritual context. In effect, Makwala has appropriated the religious authority of the proper religious subjectivity indexed by grammatical forms and vocabulary.

The affect and grammatical design with respect to the use of verbal suffixes of Makwala's invocations and petitions identify her as a verbally skilled practitioner, able and willing to direct God in prayer. The form and performance of her prayers are designed for the maximum directive effect by indexing ritual convention as a source of spiritual authority. The religious ideology at work here is that the proper forms and subjectivity are required in order for the prayers to be efficacious

(Samarin 1976). There is no overt evidence in my data of uptake or comment by other women about Makwala's prayer. It may be that a different kind of data, such as that of interviews, would draw out more explicit commentary. Nevertheless, as I mentioned earlier, there is evidence for mutual monitoring by all of the participants during these prayer actions.

Marie-Claire's prayer, or what can be heard of it, is much less dramatic as she invokes God's presence and its beneficial effects for the women. The referential shift from the third singular person *ye* to the second person singular *yo* marks the shift in frame. The moderator's topic announcement in line 4, *tobeledi Molimo na Ye* 'we call upon His Spirit,' becomes the words of Marie-Claire's prayer *tobeledi Molimo na Yo* 'we call upon Your Spirit'. Likewise, the references to actions in this place are taken from line 2 of the topic announcement and reformulated for prayer in line 11. *Oyo nionso tokoloba na bisika oyo* 'all that we will say in this place' becomes part of a petition addressed to God through the French honorific *Seigneur* 'Lord': *Et que nionso oyo tokosala na bisika oyo Seigneur* 'all that we will do in this place, Lord'. (The change in order from *oyo nionso* to *nionso oyo* was likely motivated by the addition of the French complementizer *que* in line 11.) This portion of Marie-Claire's prayer enacts the script of the topical prayer announcement, drawing on its conventionalized authority to direct the actions of God. But then she continues her prayer with her own elaborations in petitions such as *ezala na biso Nzambe* 'be(ing) with us, God' (line 13), and invocations such as *nabeledi semence na yo...* 'I invoke your fruit...' (line 14), a metaphoric reference to the blessings and

presence of God. Marie-Claire's use of the verbal suffix /-a/ on the verb *ezala* 'be(ing)' in line 13 again appears to index the evidential authority of ritual convention. These last two utterances are examples of the enregistered voice of ritual also used by Makwala to index religious convention as the authority of the directives. All of Marie-Claire's utterances reflect the oratory skill necessary for the ritual of prayer, including honorifics, specialized verbs such as *kobelega* 'call upon or hail', and symbolic language, including metaphor (cf. Agha 2005; Capps and Ochs 2002; Du Bois 1986; Hanks 1996; Keane 1997).

The opportunity for individualized prayer within the arena of corporate prayer provides participants with occasions to monitor the actions of others and learn the specialized vocabulary and other linguistic features of the religious genre from their prayers. It also is the ideal situation to display individual competence in features of the enregistered ritual voice: it is one occasion in which individual creativity is encouraged rather than discouraged as part of collective action (see also Shoaps 2002). Furthermore, utterances in prayer with the verbal suffix /-a/ such as Makwala's (Example 4, line 20) reveal how this remote evidential mood marker is used to index religious authority of ritual.

The simultaneous speaking and mutual monitoring of the individual prayer frame contributes to the socialization of group members into the use of the skilled ritual practitioner voice as well as obvious demonstrations by those who claim that knowledge and ability. The women thus mutually contribute to and reinforce a linguistic repertoire and other conventionalized resources for the practice of prayer

and the appropriation of the authority of religious convention. The individual subjectivities constructed through corporate and individual prayer practices are the authentic believer and the ritual practitioner. Thus, directives in the prayer rituals reflect not only a concern for proper procedure, but also for appropriate subjectivity.

The Eglise de Philadelphie women's group takes participation in prayer very seriously. The group's ethos is represented in Marie-Claire's assertion above:

e(sengeli) tozala conduit na kati na Molimo na Nzambe 'it is necessary (that) we are guided in the Spirit of God (Example 4, line 3). This statement reflects the belief that all of the activities the group undertakes must have God's guidance in order to succeed, with the understanding that the way to secure God's guidance is through the ritual procedures of corporate and individual prayer. Thus, a large part of the identity of the group is appropriately demonstrated by their prayer activities. An even more explicit statement of self-identification is from another occasion when Ladi told me, *Biso tobondelaka. Biso to(z)a(li) bamama ya mabondeli* 'Us, we always intercede. Us, we are women of intercession'.

6.5 Conclusion

Directives in the prayer rituals of the Eglise de Philadelphie women's group reveal their concern for appropriate participation in collective ritual action as well as authentic individual and ritually authoritative subjectivities. This analysis has revealed that individual prayers provide a forum for the exhibition of ability and skill in religious practice, which has consequences for the social organization of the

group. Part of this skill involves the management of personal responsibility and ritual authority through the use of the remote evidentiality suffix /-a/.

In this chapter I have described two frames for prayer used by the women of the Eglise de Philadelphie: the corporate prayer frame and the individual prayer frame. Each is identifiable through the participant roles and voices that comprise its participation framework. In my examination of the role and voice of the moderator in the corporate prayer frame, I described how the moderator animates the script through verbal and physical action, and how the authority of the conventional ritual script endows declarative statements with directive force. In the individual prayer frame, on the other hand, each individual musters her own verbal skills in the joint effort to move the hand of God. While some of the directive force in invocations and petitions derives from the skill of the individual, there is also directive effect in collective action.

As in the cases of rhetorical questions and commands, the management of participation and authority in ritual prayer actions is revealing for the social organization of the group. The authority of the moderator in directing the actions of the group derives from the script. However, it is highly likely that the limited number of women who filled that role during the time I participated in prayer meetings were recognized by the group's members as knowledgeable, skilled and authoritative religious practitioners. Furthermore, though it may not be possible to identify any one prayer in the individual prayer frame that has more directive effect on God than any other, the appropriation of conventional religious authority through

skillful language use nevertheless indexes a claim to a position of influence within the group. We are again dealing with an unequal distribution of knowledge and ability. Some participants have more exposure to or are more successful at learning the ritual scripts and linguistic resources for individual prayer than others. The distribution of knowledge and skill in the group results in a hierarchical social organization that is evident in both the corporate and individual prayer frames.

At the level of grammatical form, three of Lingala's verbal suffixes are important indicators of speaker certainty as well as indexing the sources of authority and directive force. I argued that the suffix /-a/ carries modal meaning related to evidentiality. Examples throughout the chapter demonstrated that speakers used this form to disclaim their personal responsibility for an utterance while indexing the authoritative source of ritual convention. In addition, the use in corporate and individual prayer frames of the presupposed-certainty modal marker /-i/ was consistent with the meanings illustrated in Chapter 4, i.e., it marked presuppositions presented as given, shared information. Likewise, the imperative mood marker /-á/ was used to indicate the subjective judgment of the speaker that an action was about to begin.

In each type of directive described in this dissertation – the rhetorical questions of Chapter 4, the commands of Chapter 5, and the prayers of this chapter – knowledge and experience are key to the level and quality of each member's participation as well as the ability and skill they manifest at each task. Those who demonstrate higher levels of knowledge and ability, then, form a small and

influential group whose verbal and physical actions direct the actions of the rest of the group. In the next chapter – the final chapter of this dissertation – I discuss the principal findings of this study and some their possible applications.

Notes for Chapter 6

- ¹ This is reminiscent of descriptions of early Christian practice that focused on corporate recitations of Scripture as well as corporate singing (cf. Foster 1988; Sittser 2007).
- ² The alternating effect is akin to the musical rhythm established by a “call” in call-and-response singing (Nketia 1974:177).
- ³ Compare Aude’s statement *Tobeta maboko* ‘We clap (our) hands’ (Example 4 in Chapter 5) as the animation of the script for group singing.
- ⁴ Call-and-response has also received attention as a style of preaching in African American churches and as an educational resource for teachers because of the structure of interactional engagement it provides for preacher or teacher and congregation or class (Foster 1989, 2001; Pawelczyk 2003; Sims Holt 1972; Smitherman 1977).
- ⁵ See the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 4, verses 24-31; the Book of Daniel, chapter 9, verses 4, 9; the Book of Judges, Chapter 13, verse 17; the Book of Proverbs, Chapter 18, verse 10. For a description of the cultural connections between honor and name see DeSilva 2000. See Shoaps (2002:54, 56) regarding the use of the title *Father* to construct earnestness in American Pentecostalism.
- ⁶ The verb *(ko)pepa* refers to circulating movements, usually of air or of something gliding in the air. Though there may not be an actual etymological connection between this verb and the word for wind *mopepe* (also *mompεπε*), the numerous passages in the Bible that describe the physical manifestation of the Spirit of God as wind or breath (Hebrew *ruach*) may be an explanation for Makwala’s use of the command *opepá* ‘flow!’ to invoke the powerful presence of God’s Spirit.

Chapter 7

Conclusions

7.1 Principal findings

The goal of this dissertation was to investigate the effects of directives on the social organization of a Lingala-speaking women's church group. I argued that directives have to do with how the women participate in group activities and further, that the grammatical forms of the directives index speaker subjectivity. In other words, the participants' social and interactional concerns affect their use of directives and how they formulate them both syntactically and with regards to epistemic and evidential modal marking. I gathered the data for this study through ethnographic methods such as participant observation and through audio recording meetings and activities of the Eglise de Philadelphie women's group. Based on these data, I conclude that the social organization of the group is headed by a limited number of participants who are more knowledgeable, experienced and skilled than the others. These participants use directives to influence how the women in the group make decisions, coordinate their physical actions and carry out religious ritual. Their use of directives constructs and reflects their positions of authority within the group.

One foundational assumption for this analysis of directives is that though an utterance is a singular event, shaped by individual subjectivity for the moment of its production, the same social and linguistic resources are deployed time and time

again in ways that resemble each other. This implies that even a few instances of a given phenomenon most likely represent an exponential number of them uttered by similar kinds of people in similar contexts of daily life.

In this study, I examined three interactional contexts and the various grammatical forms that the members of the Eglise de Philadelphie women's group used to get each other to do things. The directive forms include rhetorical questions that assert presupposed-as-shared information, commands that coordinate the actions of multiple participants, statements that guide collective ritual procedure, and invocations and petitions used by individuals to move the hand of God. Each of these forms requires experience in the church context and with the interactional practices of the group. The forms and uses of directives involve knowledge, experience, ability, willingness and procedural and linguistic skills which are unequally distributed among the members and produce a social organization that favors those with more knowledge and skill. While the use of each of these directive forms says something about a woman's abilities, the frequency of use cumulatively makes a claim to an influential position in the structure of the group's social organization.

In these data authority is socially constructed through language in interactional practices involving evidential and epistemic modality. As shown in Chapter 4, the use of rhetorical questions follows a general pattern in which assertions involving shared knowledge index high speaker certainty. They are marked with the suffix /-i/, which signals epistemic certainty and the evidential source of presupposed-as-shared knowledge. The modal expression of certainty

explains why, in Chapter 5, verb phrases such as *tokei* ‘we go’ could be used as coordinating commands. In addition, I argued that the imperative suffix /-á/ also signals the speaker’s relative epistemic certainty, i.e., her subjective judgment, and her deductive reasoning as an evidential source for her conclusion that the moment for appropriate and relevant action has come. In Chapter 6, animations of the ritual prayer script and the invocations and petitions of individuals made use of a range of forms, from verbal suffixes that index high certainty to specialized vocabulary and symbolic devices such as metaphor. Furthermore, I argued that the suffix /-a/ also indexes a remote evidential source, a proposal first made by Mufwene (1978). In the context of prayer this evidential marker and the ritual register both index the authority of ritual convention.

Directives construct the goals, intentions, perceptions, desires and abilities of some individuals as more valuable and of higher priority than those of others; this endows them with the social power of authority. Modal suffixes and ritual language are indexes to an ideological structure that correlates epistemic stances and the evidential sources of the group’s knowledge, practices and conventions with authority. Essentially, in each of the interactional contexts examined in this dissertation, the frequency of directives and their expressions of certainty in propositional knowledge, coordination and timing, or ritual convention construct a position of authority in the group. Authority is thus a sociocultural construct that emerges through language in interaction. Moreover, social authority requires the acquisition of shared knowledge, experience and abilities in a Community of

Practice. All of the directive practices described in this dissertation are weighted in favor of the older and more experienced members of the group. The longer her history with the group, the more opportunities a member has to observe as well as practice expected ways of doing things. This implies that more recent and more inexperienced members are mostly silent, watching and doing anonymously, while more experienced members of longer standing drive most of the action. Silence by the group's younger members is a kind of negative proof that is difficult to document. It may only be evident in examples such as in the case of Calmette in Chapter 5. She was the recipient of commands from Makwala, Chimene and Ladi, but she did not say anything at that time and I noted in the presentation of the example that there is no command by her in the audio recordings. In summary, for this group knowledge is power. With more knowledge and experience comes more authority to direct; with increasing ability and willingness to participate as a core participant comes more opportunity to suggest actions such as dance moves and to take a turn at leading, to participate in creative actions and so on; with more participatory experience in prayer one learns more thoroughly the ritual procedures and enregistered voices of authoritative prayer practices.

7.1.2 Implications of the Findings

The connection made in this study between directive utterances and linguistic indexes of speaker certainty takes the study of directives in a new direction. It is a confirmation that what M.H. Goodwin noted for American participants is also valid for Congolese participants: the management of participation in group activities is a

concern for speakers, which results in the use of directives in these situations. Further, the uneven distribution of directives among speakers ultimately affects the social organization of the group because some speakers have more influence or authority than others. It remains to be seen how many other groups may demonstrate this same concern for the negotiation and management of participation and what linguistic forms are used as directives.

In Chapter 2, I argued that the multiethnic, multilingual nature of this group of church women is not unique to the group but appears to be characteristic of the wider society in the Congo basin. For this reason, it is highly likely that the findings in this dissertation are applicable to other groups in this area. Expressions of speaker certainty, especially those in task-oriented talk which index the authority of personal experience and cultural convention, whether in terms of the frequency of directives or as signaled by epistemic and evidential mood markers, most likely affect the social organization of other groups in this area, regardless of language or ethnic affiliation(s). This raises the possibility that this dissertation has in fact documented an areal sociocultural phenomenon, a possibility that seems to be corroborated by Vansina's (1990) findings about the development and structure of social organization in central Africa.

Vansina's work includes historical-comparative lexical data from 147 central African languages (1990:267), as well as written ethnographies, archeological findings, oral histories and any other published material for equatorial Africa (this includes all or part of the present-day nations of Cameroon, Central African

Republic, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Angola, the Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo) (1990:19). It is a study of enormous proportion. One focus of his study is cognitive categories as they are reflected in lexical items related to leadership. The meanings of lexical items such as 'leader,' 'religious expert' and 'war expert' and others involve meanings including age and experience, knowledge, wisdom and skill (1990: 275, 276, 282, 198). Further, as he describes the emergence of leaders of lineages and kingdoms in several regions, Vansina notes that cooperation was necessary for individuals to agree to come together under one leader, but that leaders emerged through competition with each other, competition that involved displays of knowledge and skill (1990:95-97, 120-123, 146-149, 180-182). There are two points at which my data complement Vansina's. First, his data provide a broad, macro-level perspective and mine include micro-level interactional examples. Secondly, as I mentioned in the introductory chapter, he notes the absence of studies about women and leadership in the central African context (1990:25). My study is a contribution toward filling that gap. It seems, then, that from both the macro- and the micro-sociocultural perspective there is a significant correlation of knowledge, experience and skill with leadership in the social organization of groups in central Africa.

The sociocultural value of shared convention in these societies, whether expressed as presupposed-as-shared knowledge, knowledge based on experience and practice, or knowledge of ritual scripts and voices, may be a significant factor in the development and grammaticalization of linguistic forms in more languages than just

Lingala. Based on the findings of this dissertation, I would expect speaker subjectivity to be expressed in a similar system of modal suffixes in other Forest Bantu languages, though the exact morphological forms may differ. Furthermore, the areal sociocultural correlation of knowledge, experience and skill with positions of leadership may be a motivation for the patterns of use and functions of modal suffixes. What I have documented here may also help to explain the difference in historical development between the Forest Bantu languages and Bantu languages of other areas (Nurse and Philippson 2003:5, 2006:158). The modal systems of most of the Forest Bantu languages have not received much scholarly focus in published work, and the findings of this dissertation may serve to guide hypothesis testing for projects of language documentation and linguistic analysis.

The findings reported here build on the broad principles, theories and documented findings of scholars in a number of fields. The observation that the situated activity and joint attention of participants in task-driven activity produce directives designed for the context was proposed a quarter of a century ago (cf. Goffman 1974, 1981; C. Goodwin 2007; M.H. Goodwin 1990, 2006a; C. & M.H. Goodwin 2004). Subjectivity and certainty in social interaction were noted by Wittgenstein (1969), and the more recent development of the theoretical framework of stance reflects the renewed attention to subjectivity in interactional studies (cf. Du Bois 2002, 2003, 2007; Englebretson 2007; Goodwin and Goodwin 1992a; C. Goodwin 2007; Keisanen 2006; Shoaps 2004). That language use in society affects form and function, motivating historical linguistic changes including

grammaticalization, has been recognized for at least a century (cf. Lehmann 1992; McMahon 1994; Meillet 1921). Finally, the proposal that those with more opportunity and motivation to observe and practice may become the most highly skilled was an early proposal in the field of language acquisition and is a foundational assumption of language socialization as well as concepts such as the Community of Practice (cf. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992; Lave and Wenger 1991; Ochs 1984, 1996, 2002; Radloff 1991).

Ethnographically grounded studies of directives in interaction are important for understanding language in sociocultural context as a resource deployed by individuals who are players in the game of life (Wittgenstein 1969:167-169, 225). Concepts such as participation and subjectivity should continue to be applied in research in language, interaction and social organization. As we understand the players and their surroundings better, we will perhaps identify many more ways in which language is used to influence the actions of others and the consequences for social organization and for grammar.

7.2 Directions for Further Research

Through this research project I have become skeptical of descriptions of aspect and mood markers in Lingala and other Bantu grammars. Felix Ameka's (2008) most recent project on aspect and modality in Kwa languages confirms that I am not alone in this skepticism of linguistic descriptions too closely modeled on Indo-European grammatical templates, which are themselves rooted in Indo-European social and cultural perceptions of reality. This study has demonstrated that

studies of language in interaction can reveal valuable insight into linguistic forms and inform grammatical theory. A deeper understanding of aspect and modality requires more studies of language and social organization that attend to speaker perspective and how it is linguistically formulated. During my fieldwork I was repeatedly struck by the arrangement and categorization of grammatical descriptions of Lingala that seemed to follow a template more suited to Indo-European languages than to Niger-Congo ones. Templates such as these are a helpful starting point and do not require the same time and emotional commitments as ethnographically based analyses of interactional data, but the latter offer a means of necessary analytic and descriptive refinement both for the templates and for the grammatical descriptions.

In Congo-Brazzaville in particular an admirable amount of language documentation has been accomplished that includes phonological and some morphological and syntactic phenomena. However, the social, cultural and interactional contexts of these languages are still largely undocumented and poorly understood. Lingala is a case in point. While I benefited greatly from dictionaries and grammatical descriptions, the forms given in the descriptions lacked any explanation of how they might be used and distributed in interactional contexts. This provided a place for me to contribute to the understanding of epistemic and evidential modality in Lingala, a project that could continue in a number of directions through the investigation of other sorts of speech acts and interactional contexts as well as through speakers' depictions of states, events and situations, and knowledge and certainty in conversational interaction.

A second direction for further research concerns rhetorical questions and their use in socialization and directive practices. Schieffelin's (1990) study of Kaluli children in the Pacific found that imperatives and rhetorical questions figure heavily in socialization. It would be interesting to know if Bantu-speaking peoples use similar strategies. Because there are so many Bantu-speaking peoples, it would be interesting to compare their in-group use of rhetorical questions as well as to observe more uses of rhetorical questions in multilingual contexts.

Third, comprehension across linguistic boundaries is a significant interest for scholars of language contact phenomena in Africa (cf. Bouquiaux, Guarisma and Manessy 1980; Creissels 1982, 1991; Dumbrowsky-Hahn 1999; Heine 1979, 1986; Leitch 2004; Mufwene 2001, 2003; Myers-Scotton 2002). Similar or recognizable interactional practices may contribute to comprehension between speakers of related varieties. Methods of assessing inter-variety comprehension using narrative texts have been in use for some time (cf. Blair 1990; Casad 1974), but to my knowledge there has been no successful development of methods that rely on conversational practices. Would someone who has a very limited understanding of a language due to divergent phonology and grammar nevertheless recognize and understand the social move of a rhetorical question? If so, this is another indication that our understanding about what really goes into comprehension across linguistic boundaries remains very limited. Comprehension may be more than phonology, morphology, semantics and grammar; it may extend to the interactional level where

social moves whose precise linguistic forms are incomprehensible are nevertheless understood because they are comprehensible at the level of social interaction.

Code-switching, another language contact phenomenon, may benefit from an analysis of conversational interaction that accepts the situated activity or participation framework as prior to demographic social categories such as the age, sex or educational level of the participants, as examples in Chapters 5 and 6 demonstrated.

Fourth, we have a very limited understanding of how language and social organization interact in the African context, especially with regards to interactional practices. As Sidnell (2001) demonstrated for Caribbean English Creole, the organization of conversational interaction involves both cultural and linguistic relativity. Further research in African languages and societies holds discoveries to enrich theoretical understanding of the structures and practices of talk-in-interaction.

Finally, as the first interactional study of women in central Africa and of women in AICs, this dissertation points to the analysis of linguistic forms as a component that complements understandings gained through ethnographic research. There are many opportunities for scholars of language and gender, and of language and religion to contribute to the documentation of women's lives in Africa.

7.3 Conclusion: For the Women of the Eglise de Philadelphie

Last, but certainly not least for the women of the Eglise de Philadelphie, how does this dissertation respond to their interests, and what does it contribute to them and the growing number of women in the African Indigenous Church movement? It

will not increase their fertility, help them to keep their children healthier, or heal them of physical ailments or social woes, though all of these contributions have been documented for African women in Christian movements (cf. Hoehler-Fatton 1996; Mukonyora 2007; Nyansako-Ni-Nku 2004; Phiri and Nadar 2006; Sackey 2006; Steady 1976). It also will not bring them fame and fortune from their musical talents, though I hope that the pastors of the Eglise de Philadelphie and any other organization who partners with an African Indigenous Church will use music and creativity in composition as a centerpiece of their projects and programs.

Conversely, I anticipate that the findings of this dissertation will serve the women in this study by increasing the understanding of people and organizations outside the women's immediate sociocultural context concerning the forms of directives and appropriate contexts for their use to make decisions, coordinate their actions and activities, and engage with God in prayer. As outside agencies and individual scholars gain an increased understanding of socialized processes relating to decision-making, the preparation for socioculturally important events such as weddings, and ritual practices, they will be able to more effectively share products and practices that will benefit the women of the Eglise de Philadelphie.

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