Finally, rhetorical questions are often, as in English, posed in the negative:

(10)   Didn't I tell you to take out the trash?

Again, with the appropriate intonation and in the right context, this clause would be likely to express an intensive assertion "I told you to take out the trash!" or imperative "Take out the trash!"

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What are the discourse functions of the various referential devices? That is, which code highly continuous referents, and which code highly discontinuous referents?

Related questions: how are referents introduced into narrative and/or conversational discourse?

Are referents introduced differently depending on whether or not they are "destined" to figure prominently in the following text? (That is, does the language clearly distinguish introductions of "discourse manipulable" referents?)

Are there different coding devices used to introduce referents that have some honorific status?

How is tense/aspect marking deployed in discourse? (Answer will probably vary according to genre.)

What morphosyntactic devices are used to signal the "events" in a narrative discourse? What about the "non-events," i.e., collateral descriptive material? What devices are used to ascribe special prominence to portions of text? Can you isolate the *kinds* of prominence that the language is sensitive to? Are there special morphosyntactic devices characteristically used at the climax or peak of a narrative?

Is there a recognizable peak in other genres?

Are rhetorical questions and/or negation used as "highlighting" devices in discourse? Give examples.

12.2   Genres

The following sections constitute a possible list of genres, with well-known examples from the English tradition, and/or questions you might ask to elicit texts of various genres. Beware, however, of texts elicited in this manner. It is always better to record a text in its natural setting, e.g., when a father actually *is* exhorting his son prior to marriage, rather than in a hypothetical context. However, such opportunities are frustratingly rare,

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12.2.1   Conversation

Conversation is probably the universal default discourse type. However, conversation does not easily qualify as a "genre" in that there is no consistent and obvious "organizational parameter" that provides its structure. Rather, any and all of the organizational parameters that define the other genres are used cooperatively or competitively by the various interactants in a conversation as each sees fit. In fact, most discourse employs a combination of organizational principles. Conversation, however, takes this truism to an extreme.

The most obvious structural feature of conversation is the **turn** (see Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974). A turn is a contiguous portion of a conversation in which one participant speaks. A coherent conversation consists of a series of turns taken by the various conversational particip- ants. Communities (if not languages) typically employ various morphosyn- tactic and gestural devices to initiate, nurture, yield, and hold a turn.

Turn-initiating devices are signals used to indicate that a particip- ant has a contribution to make. Another way of stating this is that the par- ticipant "wants the floor" (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974). In English such signals include inhaling audibly, raising the eyebrows, and using inter- jections such as *but . . ., well . . .*, etc.

Turn-nurturing devices are used by conversational participants who do not have the floor to encourage those who do have the floor to continue. In English such devices include the ubiquitous *Uh huh . . .* as well as less stylized expressions such as *Really?, Cool*, or just an interested look. In many speech communities, nurturing devices appear to be more central to all kinds of discourse than they are in European communities. For example, in many languages, it is common for an interlocutor to repeat the entire expression or portion of the contribution of another to encour- age the other to continue. This phenomenon is so common in languages we have worked with in both Americas and in Africa that we are tempted to call it a universal of storytelling style. For example, the following was recorded in Panare. A and B represent the two participants in the exchange:

(11)   A: He was picking fruit.
        B: Ummmmmm
        A: Big fruit.
        B: Big fruit.

A: Bigger than around here.
B: Ummmmmm
A: Like this big.
B: Big.

Panare consultants often had difficulty recounting stories unless there was another Panare speaker who could provide encouragement and ask appropriate questions to keep the turn-taking rhythm of the narrative alive.

Turn-yielding devices include special intonation patterns and even grammatical particles. These are used to signal that a participant is finished with a particular contribution, and that the floor is open for others. Question intonation is often used to elicit a response from an interlocutor, even if the clause is not an actual question.

Finally, floor-holding devices indicate that a speaker is not finished with his/her contribution. Often speakers need a chance to formulate their thoughts, but do not want to "give up the floor" while they are thinking, so they use "fillers" or "hesitation particles" to occupy their turn while they are pondering the rest of their contribution. In English such particles include: *er, um, well uh, so*, etc.

12.2.2   Narrative

Narratives are stories. That is, they are portions of discourse in which a speaker describes a set of events in the real world or some imagined world. The events of a narrative are usually (but not necessarily) related to one another according to time, i.e., chronologically prior events are described before other events. The following sections describe some common subtypes of narrative. There may be additional types that have not been listed.

12.2.2.1   *Personal experience*

Some examples of personal experience narratives are:

(a) How I spent my summer vacation.
(b) What happened on my hunting trip.

Ways to elicit personal experience narratives:

(a) "Did you ever have an experience where you almost died?"
(b) "Tell me about your trip to . . ."
(c) Take advantage of significant events in the community, e.g., "Tell me about

the fire at Vicente's house," or "Where were you when the lights went out/earthquake struck/hurricane hit?," "What did you do for Carnaval?," etc. Try to be as specific as possible, and to focus on activities that are especially important to the consultant. For example, "You killed eleven monkeys? That's amazing. How did it happen?" is better than "Tell me about what you did yesterday."

12.2.2.2   *Historical*

Some examples of **historical narratives** are:

(a) War stories. Most areas of the world have experienced significant violent conflicts within the lifetime of living individuals. These are especially rich sources of personal experience and historical narratives. Stories that "go the rounds" may have become polished and stylized. Such stories may provide valuable insights into the characteristics of planned speech – the precursor to a written narrative tradition. However, these stories are not likely to reflect everyday narrative style.

(b) "What was life like under the colonial government?" This is especially relevant for Africa and insular Asia. However, the results may be politically sensitive, especially if the person says that life was better under the colonial system.

(c) "How was this community founded?"

12.2.2.3   *Folk stories*

Technically, folklore consists of stories about real or imagined ancestors. Folk stories may contain supernatural elements, but are not primarily concerned with explaining natural phenomena. They are the stories that define a community. Counterparts in the English-language tradition would be King Arthur, Robin Hood, Daniel Boone, and Davy Crockett.

Questions to ask:

(a) "Do you know any stories about the ancestors?"
(b) "Was there ever a time when animals could talk?"

12.2.2.4   *Mythology*

This genre may merge with folklore. In some communities there is a recognizable distinction. In such systems mythology would consist of stories that rely heavily on the supernatural and which typically deal with explanations for the current state of the world. Folklore, on the other hand,

consists of tales that rely less on the supernatural, and do not necessarily purport to explain anything about the world. Some examples of mythological narratives are the Greek myths, Paul Bunyan, and the first eight chapters of Genesis.

Questions to ask:

(a) "Was there ever a time when animals could talk?"
(b) "What is the origin of X?" (where X is a culturally significant plant, animal, body part, geographic landmark or group of people)
(c) "How did the world begin?"
(d) "Was the world ever covered with water?"

12.2.3 Hortatory

Hortatory discourses are attempts on the part of the speaker to get the hearer to do something, or to act in a certain way. Languages differ as to how hortatory discourse is handled. Some (especially in West Africa) have specific "hortatory" constructions; others use commands; still others use first person plural forms. For example a North American parent is likely to be heard saying something like the following to a child: "We don't throw food at mommy." Some examples of hortatory discourses are didactic sermons, and scoldings or parental lectures.

Questions to ask:

(a) "What would you tell your daughter/son just before marriage?"
(b) "My kid is doing terribly in school. What should I tell him?"

12.2.4 Procedural

Procedural discourses are instructions on how to do something. This is seldom a natural genre. Beware of elicited procedural discourses. Attempts to elicit procedural discourses are likely to result in hortatory speech. Procedural discourse, like narrative, is usually organized according to time. The foregrounded portions of a procedural text are the clauses that refer to the "steps" in the procedure.

Examples of procedural discourse include recipes and instructions on how to assemble a swing set.

Questions to ask:

(a) "How do you make a blowgun?"
(b) "Great meal! How did you cook it?"

12.2.5 Expository

Expository discourse is an attempt to explain something. This is another uncommon genre. Attempts to elicit expository texts, especially around topics related to cosmology, are likely to result in folklore or mythology. Expository discourse may be organized according to location if the subject matter is concrete, or logic if the subject matter is an abstract or technical concept. Examples of expository discourse include expository sermons and technical articles/textbooks.

Questions to ask:

(a) "Why do you hunt when the moon is full?"
(b) "Which animals do you hunt at night? Why?"
(c) "Where are your gardens located? Why?"
(d) "What is this thing? What is it for?" (demonstrating some complex object, idea, or organism)

12.2.6 Descriptive

People occasionally want to describe the characteristics of something, someone or some abstract concept. This is another uncommon genre, and you may have difficulty eliciting clear examples. Some examples of descriptive discourse are a classified advertisement for a house and the scene-setting section of a novel or short story.

Questions to ask:

(a) "What is the place you grew up in like?" (or "What is community X like?"),
(b) "What is your house like?"
(c) "What is your father/brother like?" (Be careful here: male researchers especially should be careful not to appear nosy with respect to females.)

12.2.7 Ritual speech

Ritual speech consists of prescribed discourse types used in religious or other ceremonial contexts. This is a very common genre, but can be difficult to elicit. Some examples of ritual speech are prayers, religious liturgy such as might be heard at weddings, funerals, coming-of-age celebrations, healing rituals, and rituals employed in conflict resolution. In the Philippines and Indonesia, as well as other areas of the world, poetry and song are commonly employed as means of resolving local conflicts.

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What discourse genres are demonstrably distinct in this language? Exemplify and discuss the significant characteristics of each.

12.3   Miscellaneous and conclusions

What else is particularly interesting about this language? The following sections provide some suggested headings. However, any particular grammar sketch should not be limited to these headings.

12.3.1   Idiomatic expressions / proverbs

Idiomatic expressions are turns of phrase that mean more than what the actual words contained in the expression would lead one to expect. There may be a fine line between idiomatic expressions and proverbs. Some languages (especially in Africa) place great importance on verbs. For this reason they may function almost as idiomatic expressions. Some common English idiomatic expressions are: *to get dolled up, to fathom (I can't fathom that)*, etc.

Proverbs: *Look before you leap, A stitch in time saves nine, the calm before the storm, The grass is always greener, birds of a feather, Haste makes waste*, etc.

The following are a few of the thousands of proverbs that exist in Sùpyìré, a Senoufo language of Mali, West Africa (from Carlson 1994). Carlson provides literal translations of these proverbs, but few interpretations. This is because the functions of most proverbs are highly context-dependent, i.e., there is seldom one objective "meaning" of a proverb apart from a specific conversational context. For some of the following proverbs, however, readers will be able to infer possible contexts:

(12) Sùpyà lù-wùlì-gé   puní ɲyè na   u   tà-à   mé.
person water-bathe-DEF:CLS   all   NEG PROG CLS get-IMPERF NEG
"All of a person's bath water doesn't get on him/her."

(13) Nɔɔ-gɔ   jyì-fóó   u   kú bérè.
wound-CLS wash-AGENT CLS CLS cause:pain:in:wound
"The one who washes a wound causes pain."

(14) Ntasɛ̀nmìi naha-fóó   ɲyè na   fyàà   mé.
toad:CLS herd-AGENT NEG PROG hurry NEG
"A toad herd doesn't hurry."

(15) Mu ahá kàkɔɔ̀ ɲyè ú   u   kùlùshì-bire   jòólì, u ɲyì-i
you COND lizard see CLS:COMP PROG trousers-short:CLS sew CLS eye-CLS
màha mpyì `nɛŋ-ké   tà-fworoŋ-ké   na.
HAB be tail-DEF:CLS LOC-go:out-DEF:CLS on
"If you see a lizard sewing trousers, his eye is on the hole for his tail."

12.3.2   Sound symbolism

All languages have some words that are supposed to sound like the concept they express. Some such words in English include *splash, thud*, and *flutter*. Sometimes words expressing sound symbolism are described as **onomatopoeic expressions**, or as **ideophones**. In many languages, such expressions are more common in discourse, especially narrative discourse of various types, than they are in the European languages. Often such expressions are characterized by unusual phonological properties, and may even exhibit reduced inflectional possibilities. For example, Yagua contains a number of sound-symbolic expressions. Many of these expressions have highly specific functions in discourse. The following are a few of many possible examples:

(16) pʉʉ   "thump" (an animal or person falling down)
pɔɔ   (sound of a spear or arrow)
tyɛ́ɛ́   (sound of someone hitting something with a club)
juus   (sound of someone blowing)
róó   "scrape"
siyóó "slice" (through flesh)
kanekïï (sound of someone tumbling into something)
típye "crash" (something hard, with many parts falling, e.g., a tree or a house)

The following words are obviously sound-symbolic in origin, but no longer have a meaning that can be directly associated with a particular sound. Comparable expressions in English might be *phew!* to express the idea of a narrow escape or *tsk, tsk* (a tongue tip click) to express disgust:

(17) jiiin   "yikes!"
jayo   "ouch!"
vañu   "let's go/hurry."
kíí   "huh?"
tiiy   "no soap" (expression of unfulfilled expectation)