1. Endangered discourse practices and their grammar

Recent decades have seen an upsurge of interest in issues of language extinction, leading to increased efforts to describe and document the world's endangered languages. The major adverse effects of language endangerment are often associated with loss of traditional knowledge, erosion of ethnic identities, and cultural impoverishment (Hale et al. 1992). Documentation efforts are typically concentrated on the production of grammars and dictionaries, occasionally accompanied by the development of teaching materials in the endangered language. Yet speakers often express concerns about losing their native "ways of speaking" without any discernible signs of incipient language death, and long before the language can be considered endangered according to any of the criteria established by linguists (Fishman 1991; UNESCO 2003; Krauss 2007). In traditional rural societies of West Africa, the acute feeling of loss is related to the diminishing role played by culturally significant discourse practices: even in communities that retain traditional social organization and economy, modern Western cultural practices seep into daily life with new forms of entertainment (television, radio broadcasts) and education (compulsory Western-style schooling). Under the pressure from these new practices, traditional forms of knowledge transmission – including techniques of storytelling and instruction – become unimportant, and may eventually go out of use; their loss is often accompanied by the loss of linguistic strategies central to the old tradition.

Particularly susceptible to shifts in traditional discourse practice are cultures without an established tradition of writing: without fixation, "linguistically encoded knowledge is always only one generation away from extinction" (Harrison 2007: 147). Sometimes linguistic strategies representative of an oral tradition may become incorporated into the living literary tradition in the form of "register markers". For example, ideophones – words with special syntactic properties that are used in oral narration for vivid representation of actions and qualities – can make their way into literary genres as stylistic markers that contribute a "naturalistic" flavor to speech by illiterate or low-class characters (Nikitina 2012c). More often, however, linguistic strategies that characterize the old tradition do not survive the transition to new forms of textual production and fall out of use, occasionally leaving behind fossils in individual songs, children's rhymes, and other minor forms of folklore.

This project explores the relationship between specific discourse practices and the linguistic strategies they rely on, centering on one particular problem: discourse reporting in traditional oral storytelling. The primary focus of the project is West Africa, the "oral continent par excellence" and the homeland of a rich and vibrant oral tradition (Scheub 1985; Finnegan 2007: 1-2, inter alia). While oral traditions of West Africa have received considerable attention from anthropologists (Finnegan 1970, 2012), their linguistic aspects have not been subject to systematic investigation. Our knowledge of the special ways in which language is used in traditional genres is largely limited to observations of frequent use of special vocabulary and opening/closing formulae (Cosentino 1980), singing (Innes 1965; Burnim 1976; Azuonye 1999), and various forms of repetition (Finnegan 1967: 77-79, 1977: 129-133).

In many local communities across Africa, storytelling is more than a favorite pastime. Viewed as a vital part of cultural heritage, it serves as a central medium for the transmission of cultural knowledge. Storytelling traditions have accumulated special linguistic techniques that respond to the needs of specific practices of textual production and performance. Such techniques are not restricted to such well-known phenomena as the use of ideophones or special rhythmic properties of oral narration; they encompass a variety of subtle ways of organizing the text under the pressure of real-time performance constraints and with a view to meeting cultural expectations. As storytelling traditions vanish with older generations of speakers, they take along with them an array of specialized linguistic tools on which such specialized techniques relied.

Some of the vanishing strategies serve specifically the encoding of characters' speech. In addition to helping distinguish characters from the current narrator, they may serve to encode the narrator's attitude and signal the distance between the moment of narration and the time of the reported events. Two such strategies are at the center of this study. One involves the use of a reporting style that does not fit the European distinction between direct and indirect discourse, but helps speakers manipulate the roles of the narrator and the roles of the story's characters, which in traditional storytelling are played out by the same individual. The other helps the narrator construct the character's identity by manipulating special linguistic features of their discourse or by referring to a complex sociolinguistic situation characterizing the reported events.

Straddling the borderline between linguistics, anthropology, and folklore studies, this research program calls for a genuinely interdisciplinary approach combining rigorous analysis of primary data with meticulous attention to genre characteristics and culture-specific contexts of textual production. Such an

approach requires cooperation of experts that are rarely given an opportunity to collaborate on a major long-term project, even though such cooperation can be expected to contribute to the development of a much needed novel perspective on the study of the interaction of language and culture through discursive practice (cf. Jakobson 1960; Friedrich 1986; Sherzer 1987; Bauman & Briggs 1990; Urban 1991; Lucy 1997; Silverstein 2004, inter alia, on different conceptions of that interaction).

This project proposal is structured as follows. Section 2 describes in detail one characteristic type of a discourse reporting strategy that is intimately related to West African practices of storytelling but does not fit the typology developed based on modern European languages: logophoric reporting cannot be analyzed in terms of direct or indirect speech, nor can it be meaningfully described as an intermediate type. The description is based mostly on my fieldwork among the Wan (Southeastern Mande, Côte d'Ivoire), but similar phenomena are attested in other West African languages, even though they have not received systematic attention from linguists. Section 3 discusses another peculiar phenomenon encountered in a number of West African storytelling traditions: the use of uninterpretable speech, which can be instantiated by the use of foreign, modified or constructed languages. Section 4 introduces the project's comparative component, which aims to shed light on the functioning of similar discourse phenomena outside Africa. Section 5 addresses the project's theoretical significance. Section 6 summarizes the proposed agenda and presents the envisaged budget.

2. Self-reference in discourse reporting

2.1. Logophoricity as a special discourse reporting strategy

Speakers of European languages are so used to the distinction between direct and indirect discourse that they often take it for granted when dealing with other languages or historically remote periods. In direct discourse, the speech of a character is represented from the point of view of the reported speech situation, and all deictic values are defined with respect to the reported situation. In indirect discourse, the deictic values are defined with respect to the situation of speech reporting, resulting in a "current speech moment" perspective:

(1) a. He said: "I'll get you a cab."
b. He said he would get her a cab.

In certain genres, such as modern novel, combinations of direct and indirect reporting can be used to create special artistic effects; this type of reporting is known as discours indirect libre or indirect free style (Banfield 1973, Plank 1986, Günthner 2000, inter alia; also cf. Fludernik 1993). The stylistic effect of such reporting is derived from the fact that the report violates in a subtle way the conventional underlying distinction.

In many other parts of the world, the distinction between direct and direct discourse does not seem to hold. Sometimes the direct or the indirect reporting style is simply missing, and sometimes special "mixed" strategies are used without creating any special stylistic effect; in fact, such "mixed" reporting may even be obligatory (Nikitina 2012a). Deviations from the European standard seem particularly common in areas with strong oral traditions, where oral narrative genres remain a major means of social communication and transmission of cultural knowledge.

One such area is West Africa. In traditional rural communities, stories are performed rather than told: not only does a skilled narrator act out all major characters of the story – he or she is also expected to engage in active interaction and verbal exchange with the audience. The audience or its particular members may be invited to share their remarks, to offer praise or approval or even participate in the performance of certain episodes; the audience may also interrupt or even ridicule the narrator. In the course of this interactive performance, the narrator faces the task of assuming multiple discourse roles. Narrating the storyline, acting out the characters, and interacting with the audience, he or she constantly switches between different personae, juggling a variety of distinct voices that in modern European theater would be assigned to different actors (cf. Urban 1989). The special linguistic tool that responds directly to the needs of such switching is the so called *logophoric* strategy of discourse reporting. That strategy is widely attested in languages of West and Central Africa, and as I show below, it does not fit the European distinction between the direct and the indirect reporting.

The logophoric strategy serves to introduce discourse of participants other than the current speaker. It typically involves the use of special logophoric pronouns that signal reference to the character whose discourse is being reported. In example (2a), from Wan, the logophoric pronoun refers to the person to

whom the discourse is attributed; in (2b), on the other hand, a 3rd person pronoun obligatorily refers to a participant other than the reported speaker.[1]

(2) a. *ɓé* *à* *nɔ̀* *gé* *ɓā* *ɓé* *gōmɔ̄*
then 3SG wife said LOG DEM understood
'then his wife said she$_{LOG}$ understood that'

b. *ɓé* *à* *nɔ̀* *gé* *è* *gā*
then 3SG wife said 3SG went
'then his wife said he$_{PERS}$ left'

In spite of the considerable attention logophoricity has received in theoretical literature, surprisingly little is known about the actual use of logophoric markers in African languages. Theoretic accounts of logophoricity often treat African logophoricity on a par with the use of reflexive pronouns for the marking of co-reference in languages such as Latin, Italian or Japanese (Sells 1987 and references therein), even though in reality the properties of African logophoric markers are strikingly different (see Nikitina 2012b for details). I highlight below four important aspects of African logophoricity that have not received satisfactory explanation and have not been investigated on a sufficiently broad empirical basis.

First, the reports in which logophoric markers appear combine in a peculiar way what from a European perspective are properties of "direct" and "indirect" discourse. On the one hand, logophoric reports do not represent the reported discourse in its original form: what the character would use for self-reference in a direct report is a first person pronoun, not a logophoric marker. In this sense, logophoric reports are not instances of direct speech. On the other hand, the use of the logophoric marker is typically the only feature of the report that is consistent with the indirect discourse interpretation, as all other deictic features are defined with respect to the reported speech situation (von Roncador 1988: 290-93, 1992; Stirling 1993: 256-57). This includes, symptomatically, other person values, so that the resulting combination of person markers is incompatible with either direct or indirect interpretation. The examples in (2) illustrate the "direct" features of logophoric clauses, as identified, for example, in Aikhenvald (2008): the use of interjections (3a), ideophones and vocatives (3b), imperatives (3c), and – most significantly – the obligatory use of 2nd person pronouns referring to the reported addressee (3b-d), and the obligatory use of 1st person plural pronouns to refer to groups of participants including the reported speaker (3e). Note that logophoric reports need not be introduced by an explicit verb of speaking: very often, they function as independent clauses that can only be interpreted as discourse reports based on contextual information (Dimmendaal 2001; Nikitina 2012b).

(3) a. *ɓé* *è* *gé* *ēé!* *ɓāā* *bɔ̄* *á* *dīdīɰ̄* *yɰ̄*
then 3SG said yeah LOG.EMPH passed COP just.now there
'and he said: yes, it was me both$_{LOG}$ who passed by just now'

b. *dègbè,* *mɔ̄-mū* *é,* *ɰ̀ɰ́* *tí* *dé!* *Ké* *lāá*
friend people-PL DEF 3PL+COP many IDEOPH if 2SG+COP
nè, *ɓāá* *nɛ̀* *ɔ́,* *srɔ̀!*
at.place LOG+COP at.place NEG IDEOPH
'Man, those people, they are many! [Even] if you're [staying] here, I$_{LOG}$ am not [staying] here.'

c. *ké* *lā* *zò-á* *ɓā* *biàgà* *nɛ̀,* *zɛ̄* *zānɰ̄* *dì!*
if 2SG come-STAT.PERF LOG wake PURP word true say
'If you've come to wake me$_{LOG}$ up, tell the truth!'

d. *è* *gé* *zò* *ɓé* *lā* *ɓā* *pólì*
3SG said come then 2SG LOG wash
'She said: come and wash me$_{LOG}$.'

e. *ɓé* *gé* *ɓāá* *kɰ̄* *tɔ́gɔ̄lē* *dō* *tɛ́-ŋ*
that said LOG+COP 1PL.EXCL elder.brother one kill-PROSP
'He acted as if he$_{LOG}$ was going to kill one of our elder brothers.'

Systematic mixing of "direct" and "indirect" deictic values is a common feature of logophoric reports across West and Central Africa (Nikitina 2012a; for specific case studies, see Hagège 1974; Hedinger 1984; Boyeldieu 2004). The mixed patterns set logophoric reporting apart from the instances of occasional direct/indirect "hybrids" that appear in certain genres of modern European literature, such as the free indirect discourse of European novel. Unlike the stylistically motivated occasional shifts in deictic values, West African logophoric reporting can be obligatory, and it is generally not associated with any special stylistic

[1] In translations of the examples, I use the subscripts "LOG" and "PERS" to indicate whether the participant is referred to by a logophoric or a personal pronoun. Logophoric pronouns can be translated by 1st or 2nd person pronouns depending on the context, and I do not try to maintain consistency in this respect.

effects. It typically involves a seemingly inconsistent – but systematic and completely predictable – treatment of the same deictic value (e.g., person), rather than of different values. This regularity suggests that the use of logophoric markers qualifies in some African languages as a separate type of reporting strategy that cannot be subsumed under direct or indirect reporting, and cannot be derived from the two types as some kind of a stylistically motivated hybrid.

Second, the areal distribution of logophoric languages strongly suggests that logophoricity spreads through contact. Logophoricity has been treated as a characteristic feature of the languages of the Macro Sudan belt – a contact zone comprising parts of West and Central Africa (Güldemann 2003, 2008a). Closer investigation of individual logophoric systems, however, makes them an unlikely candidate for direct borrowing. Logophoric reports are overall rare in ordinary communication, and their grammar is often rather complex. The low frequency of logophoric markers outside narrative genres makes them rather inconspicuous in everyday discourse, and unlikely to be borrowed directly in contact situations that do not involve deep knowledge of the logophoric language. There is no evidence, moreover, that individual logophoric markers have been borrowed directly from one language to another: in those cases where the logophoric marker's etymology is known, it is normally a result of an independent innovation: logophoric pronouns commonly derive from third person markers, nouns and demonstratives (Dimmendaal 2001). The overall picture suggests that rather than spreading through direct contact, logophoricity develops independently in certain areally prominent genres of discourse (Ameka 2011, Nikitina 2012b). Further evidence for such independent, but culturally motivated development is provided by languages that lack logophoric markers but nevertheless functions in ways parallel to the functioning of logophoric language (discussed below). The spread of folktales, along with storytelling practices, is a likely channel for such indirect borrowing.

Third, logophoric languages with person agreement often display unusual agreement patterns pointing to a mismatch in the person features of the verb and the logophoric pronoun. In Donno So (Dogon, Mali), the use of logophoric pronouns for characters' self-reference is combined with a "direct" use of cross-reference markers on the verb (Culy 1994: 123; Curnow 2002): the reported speaker, introduced by logophoric pronouns, is cross-referenced by 1st person markers on the verb, while the current speaker, introduced by 1st person pronouns, combines with unmarked 3rd person verb forms (examples 4a,b).

(4) a. Oumar [inyemɛ jɛmbɔ paza bolum] miŋ tagi
O. LOG sack:DEF drop left:1SG 1SG:OBJ informed
'Oumar told me that he had left without the sack.'

b. Oumar [ma jɛmbɔ paza boli] miŋ tagi
O. 1SG:SUBJ sack:DEF drop left 1SG:OBJ informed
'Oumar told me that I had left without the sack.'

Similar agreement mismatches have been reported for other logophoric languages with verbal agreement, and a unified account of African logophoricity should be able to explain how such peculiar patterns develop.

Fourth, languages with specialized logophoric markers have traditionally been treated as a separate type, and contrasted with languages that lack such markers. Closer investigation of discourse reporting in non-logophoric West African languages shows that the distinction based on the presence or absence of overt markers is artificial and does not capture the extent of the phenomenon of logophoricity. In particular, a substantial number of languages lacking specialized logophoric pronouns nevertheless display patterns that are functionally equivalent to those encountered in logophoric languages. In the absence of logophoric pronouns, such languages mark the distance between the current narrator and the character whose speech is being reported by using 3rd person pronouns in otherwise "direct" speech. As in logophoric languages, the resulting reports are characterized by a peculiar combination of person values that does not fit the direct vs. indirect distinction. The example in (5), from a Cross River language Obolo (Nigeria), illustrates this characteristic combination (Aaron 1992):

(5) *ògwú úgâ okêkĭtó ító íkíbé gwúŋ̀ kàŋ̀, ɔ̀mɔ̂ ìkâtùmú*
this mother was.crying cry say child 3SG.POSS 3SG not.told
ìnyí ɔ̀wù yê íbé ɔ̀wù kàgɔ̌ɔk ìfít ífît yì
give 2SG Q say 2SG not.follow play play this
'The mother was crying, saying: My child, did I not tell you not to join in this dance group?'
(Literally, "The mother$_i$ was crying saying: Her$_i$ child, did she$_i$ not tell you not to join in this dance group?")

As in the examples from Wan discussed earlier (3a-e), the mother's discourse combines the properties associated with European direct and indirect reporting: it includes an address, and refers to the reported addressee in 2nd person, as in direct discourse, yet the reported speaker is introduced by a 3rd person pronoun ('her child', 'did she not…'), as in indirect discourse. This mixture of person values bears a striking resemblance to examples with logophoric reporting, and can hardly be understood without reference to

logophoricity. In Obolo, as well as in some other West African languages, only the current speaker can refer to him- or herself using 1st person pronouns; story characters refer to themselves using a different form, even though no other deictic value is shifted in their discourse reports. Instead of a special logophoric pronoun, speakers of Obolo refer to reported speakers by regular 3rd person pronouns, and this use – like the use of logophoric reports – results in apparently inconsistent combinations of person values.

Additional evidence for the functional affinity of third person reference and logophoric reporting comes from the diachrony. In languages such as Obolo, third person pronouns referring to reported speakers may eventually become dissociated from other uses of third person pronouns, to the extent that when a new 3rd person pronominal is introduced, the innovation does not affect the forms of reported self-reference. Such changes result precisely in the development of specialized logophoric pronouns (cf. the origin of the logophoric marker in Aghem, Hyman 1979: 51).

Most importantly, the absence of specialized logophoric forms does not preclude languages from using special strategies for distinguishing between the current and the reported speaker. Such strategies start making sense when compared to the logophoric strategy – the use of 3rd person pronouns where 1st person pronouns are expected can be treated as a kind of *latent* logophoricity, which may develop with time into canonical logophoric reporting, i.e. a reporting strategy employing specialized logophoric pronouns. The fact that logophoric reporting strategies do not require the use of specialized logophoric pronouns is consistent with the way logophoricity spreads: what is borrowed from one language to another may be the strategy of avoiding 1st person pronouns when referring to characters, not the actual logophoric markers. The restriction on the use of 1st person pronouns may motivate the independent development of logophoric pronouns in individual languages. Logophoricity as a reporting strategy may develop before the language acquires specialized logophoric markers.

The mysteries surrounding African logophoric markers are not restricted to the five aspects of their use that I can discuss in this project proposal. Some languages, for example, are reported to distinguish between several levels of embedding in a nested speech report. In Yag Dii (Adamawa, Cameroon), the reported speaker pronouns used in simple discourse reports (first-degree logophoricity) are described by Bohnhoff 1986) as different from the pronouns used in reports of reports (second-degree logophoricity). We do not know how such systems function, and no primary data is readily available for those who wish to explore this sophisticated reporting systems.

More generally, thorough study of individual logophoric systems – including the little understood systems with *latent* logophoricity – is the key to addressing all prominent issues in the study of logophoricity. Individual systems, in turn, cannot be studied without specialized data collection targeting storytelling practices. Not only are collections of texts in logophoric languages very limited, logophoric strategies are also systematically edited out – by European editors and sometimes by native speakers – as structures that do not conform to the Eurocentric direct/indirect distinction. The following excerpt from a commentary to a collection of texts illustrates this issue; the text are in Adioukrou, a language with latent logophoricity, which uses 3rd person pronouns for marking characters' self-reference (Hill 1995):

> "l'exemple suivant est extrait de la version enregistrée et non corrigée du conte <…>; il illustre un usage curieux (et non isolé) des personnels de l'énonciation libre, les premières personnes deviennent des troisième personnes comme on s'y attend, mais les deuxièmes personnes restent ce qu'elles sont <…> La version revue et corrigée, jugée plus correcte par notre informateur principal bien que le maintien des 2ème personnes soit tout à fait acceptable, transpose les deuxièmes personnes à la troisième et ce sans aucune ambiguïté de référence…" (Herault 1978: 171-3)[2]

The excerpt makes explicit the editors' motivation behind "correcting" the uses of logophoric strategies, to make them conform to the European direct vs. indirect standard. This attitude renders major collections of texts unusable for the study of logophoric reporting, especially in languages with latent or unconventional logophoricity. Without special effort directed at systematic data collection and analysis, the phenomenon of African logophoricity cannot be studied.

[2] "The following example is an excerpt from a recorded and uncorrected version of the story <…>, it illustrates the curious (and not isolated) use of persons of free utterance, the first person becomes the third person as expected, but the second person remains as is <…> The revised and corrected version, considered more correct by our major consultant, even though the maintenance of the second person is quite acceptable, transposes the second person into the third person, and that without any ambiguity in reference."

3. Uninterpretable speech in discourse reporting

Another aspect of discourse reporting that the project addresses is the way narrators explore switches between languages and more broadly language modification. Many African communities are multilingual, and code-switching between languages is part of the speakers' daily experience. In storytelling, however, switching between languages seems to be used in ways that are radically different from daily practice. Consider the following excerpt from a historical Wan narrative recorded by Philip Ravenhill in the early 1970s, where the lines in bold correspond to a special "language" speakers of Wan describe as *Ancient Wan*; the tentative translation of the lines is the one suggested by a modern Wan speaker who claims not to understand "Ancient Wan".

(6)

ạ̰	bō	ēē	kɔ́	**yā**	**gɛ̄**			
3PL	finish:PAST	REFL	cross	with	here			
'They have finished crossing [the river].'								
ɓé	ạ̰	gé	ā̰	tɛ̄ŋ	ā̰	ŋ	ɔ̰	ɛ̄ɛ̄?
then	3PL	say	2PL	all	COP	PERF	finish	QUEST
'Then they said: Have you all finished?'								
ɓé	ạ̰	gé	èɛ̄ē	**/ạ̰ gè pɔ́ wò lé yɔ̀/**				
then	3PL	say	yes	/ANCIENT WAN/				
'And they answered: Yes, /we have done it/.'								
bèŋ	kɛ̄	é	tɛ̄ŋ	sésé	zō		wānɛ̰	
ethnicity	that	DEF	all	entire	come:PAST		there	
'All those ethnic groups have arrived this way.'								

Only experienced storytellers are reported to make use of "Ancient Wan" in their stories, and no speakers can currently speak or understand the language. Excerpts of "Ancient Wan" can be found in character speech in historical narratives and in tales; typically, they characterize the speech of ancestors, animals or spiritual beings. They are commonly preserved in songs. In (6), the switch to "Ancient Wan" presumably helps the narrator signal the temporal distance between the mythical events reported in the story and the actual moment of narration. Characteristically, the portion in "Ancient Wan" appears at the end of the story's narrative portion (which reports historical events leading to the establishment of the current Wan settlements), and marks the beginning of an evaluation section, which reminds the audience of the question the narrative portion was supposed to answer ('How did the Wan come to live where they are now living?').

Some instances of speech in "Ancient Wan" can be identified as speech in another West African language – normally, it is a language not commonly known by the audience; it is often a corrupted version of a phrase in a language not known to the narrator. Other instances cannot be readily identified; the example in (6), for instance, does not correspond to any of the neighboring languages, and is likely a creatively modified "version" of Wan (since some of the words resemble closely those used in standard modern Wan in the corresponding sentence).

The use of modified or invented languages has been reported for several West African languages, but the extent of this phenomenon is unknown. It is also not known how exactly modified language is used and whether the modification is regulated by any principles or whether it reflects in any way the historical origin of a story. Systematic collection of storytelling data is the key to accounting for the phenomenon of uninterpretable and modified speech, and this project aims at filling the existing gap in our understanding of that mysterious phenomenon.

4. Comparative perspective

In addition to describing strategies for reporting discourse employed in oral traditions of selected West African cultures, the project sets out to compare them to their functional counterparts from a geographically and historically unrelated area. The exploratory comparative part of the project aims at contrasting the West African material with selections from storytelling traditions of Turkic-speaking regions of Central Russia (Chuvash, and possibly Bashkir). The comparison is expected to shed light on the range of cross-cultural variation in the choice of a discourse reporting strategy, and to uncover differences in the underlying distinctions on which discourse reporting is based in traditions with different storytelling practices.

The Turkic storytelling traditions of Russia are good candidates for comparison with African traditions for several reasons. On the one hand, they are relatively well-documented, even though the documentation data is generally not accessible outside Russia or to non-Russian-speaking experts. The study would contribute to making such data widely available and integrated into modern comparative research on

oral tradition. The languages in question are also relatively well-studied, even though little work has focused specifically on discourse phenomena in Chuvash or Bashkir. This would allow us to work with the oral tradition bypassing the stage of analyzing the grammar of the language (even though specific phenomena may require additional work with language consultants, both speakers and language experts are easily accessible to help with the analysis of archival data). The task of analyzing the data will be facilitated by the fact that the project's PI has the basic working knowledge of the two languages and general knowledge of the corresponding cultures, as well as the experience of doing fieldwork at the relevant sites.

On the other hand, the storytelling traditions of Turkic-speaking cultures differ in important ways from those of rural West Africa. In the Chuvash tradition, for example, the storyteller does not engage in any interaction with the audience, nor does he "act out" the characters to the same degree as an African storyteller does, by representing their actions, intonation, and gestures. The narratives typically last longer than West African story performances; they involve fewer culmination points, and the culminations do not involve changes in performance style. The differences in performance can be expected to correspond to differences in the ways similar goals are achieved in the two types of discourse. The comparison would then help estimate the expected range of variation in the use of different discourse reporting strategies and to start searching for universal principles underlying discourse reporting. Any similarities between Turkic and African traditions could be expected to be a result of independent development, as the two areas have never been in contact, and the contact situations in which the corresponding traditions develop are profoundly different.

A preliminary survey of the available materials shows that to signal the distance between the actual narrator and the reported speakers, Chuvash and Bashkir traditional storytellers rely on strategies that seem strikingly different from the ones typical of storytellers of Africa. Rather than switching strategically between different reporting styles – marked by differences in the treatment of deixis – Chuvash narrators achieve similar goals by switching between special indirective and reportive constructions, which are used to mark information acquired from an indirect source, including another person's report (Comrie 2000; Johanson 2000, 2003). While West African storytellers aim at a polyphonic performance and freely take up the roles of different characters, the Chuvash tradition places the narrator in the position of an authoritative detached reporter, not engaged in the narrated events and employing special grammatical means to indicate that his knowledge of the reported events is indirect.

In spite of the superficial differences, however, the distancing strategy of Chuvash storytellers is motivated by their performance style, much as the West African practice of explicitly distinguishing self-reference by the narrator from self-reference by the story's characters is related to the interactive style of their performance. Both provide a means for distancing the speaker/narrator from the text, with respect to those aspects of the text's structure that are most significant in the given tradition. West African interactive performance is dependent on the ability of the speaker to act out characters while effectively distinguishing them from the narrator's self, and the sophisticated strategies used for self-reference in discourse reports respond specifically to this need. The Chuvash storyteller, on the other hand, positions himself as a faithful transmitter of traditional knowledge, and employs special morphosyntactic means to highlight the legitimate provenance of his text.

While Bashkir and Chuvash storytellers have not been reported to use modified or invented language in their characters' speech, they sometimes use, presumably for similar purposes, special forms of code-switching with Russian. In the transcriptions of stories told by a 80 year old professional storyteller, which I examined at the archives of the National Institute for the Study of the Chuvash Language in Cheboksary, Russian elements are in general missing, apart from what can regarded as conventionalized borrowings. They do, however, appear in the speech of certain characters at the points where the character is interacting with the authorities; they are often modified versions of Russian phrases, partly assimilated to the phonology and grammar of Chuvash (for example, adjectives do not agree with the nouns). The role the insertion of such foreign elements plays in the transcripts appears to be different from the role of uninterpretable inserts in Wan: rather than marking the distance between the characters and the narrator or between the reported events and the situation of current narration, the Chuvash storyteller uses elements of Russian to represent the complex sociolinguistic situation that characterizes the events he is describing. A more detailed investigation, however, is needed before any conclusions can be drawn regarding the actual function of such foreign portions, and such investigation is impossible without a systematic approach to data collection with the view of developing a first typology of the phenomenon.

5. Summary of objectives and theoretical significance

The proposed project addresses two phenomena that are characteristic of discourse reporting in a number of African languages. Based on the available data, they can be both described as related to the marking of

distance between the current moment of narration and the reported situation. One part of the project focuses on the use of reporting styles that do not fit well into the distinction between direct and indirect discourse, including, most importantly, the different varieties of the logophoric style attested across West and Central Africa. The other part explores the use of foreign elements in characters' speech – a phenomenon that has not received much attention from linguists but that plays an important cultural role in a number of West African communities.

Both phenomena depend in crucial ways on traditional genres of storytelling, and are affected by their gradual disappearance. The endangered strategies are also under pressure from prescriptive constraints imposed on traditional storytelling practices by linguists documenting the language and educated speakers who have integrated the modern literary standards. As I discussed above, documentation of oral traditions sometimes leads, paradoxically, to the stigmatization of traditional features of narrative language that do not fit the Eurocentric literary expectations, to the point that such features are edited out and explained away as deviations from a newly developed standard.

On the practical side, the project aims at developing searchable corpora of narrative data for a number of understudied African languages. The corpora will include audio and video data, as well as annotation for discourse reporting strategies. By developing the new sources of data, the project will make a contribution to language documentation efforts in the little explored area of discourse phenomena. The project's theoretical component will contribute to the establishment of proper language documentation practices, which should include accurate recording of culturally-significant traditional genres and description of their associated modes of textual production and transmission.

The languages chosen for closer investigation represent different subtypes of logophoric languages, ranging from languages with *latent* logophoricity to reported cases of second-order logophoricity. Based on the primary data from the different languages, complemented by elicitation data where needed and archival data where available, conclusions will be drawn regarding the structural role discourse reports play in the different storytelling traditions, as well as regarding the nature of the variation in the choice of a discourse reporting strategy.

The questions to be addressed include: Are the different types of "mixed" systems represented in these languages really subtypes of the same underlying category of logophoric language? Can the differences between the subtypes be accounted for in terms of different stages in the development of overt logophoricity? How can the different subtypes be described formally; for example, do the languages differ in the meaning they assign to the personal pronouns (cf. Schlenker 1999, 2003) or do they differ in the types of reporting modes or in the rules of deictic remapping (Wechsler pers. comm.)? What structural, lexical, and pragmatic factors underlie the choice between competing discourse reporting strategies in the different languages? Are the underlying principles the same as the principles determining the choice between direct and indirect speech in European languages?

The typological part of the project will be based on the analysis of new primary data from Chuvash and Bashkir, and will rely on close collaboration with experts working on functionally similar phenomena in different linguistic areas. The collaboration will be facilitated by the workshops and working group meetings focusing on the relationship between logophoricity and such phenomena as egophoricity (Floyd et al. to appear), multiple perspective constructions described for a number of Australian languages (Evans 2005), the interaction between discourse reporting and evidentiality (Spronck 2015), and the function of code-switching in discourse reports.

Besides theory-oriented work, the study will produce practical outcomes in the form of annotated corpora of narratives in understudied languages, complete with audio- and video-recordings, and descriptions of various aspects of the grammar of the relevant languages. Where possible, the project will rely on collaboration with the local communities, with the view of producing collections of texts that could be used locally for educational purposes and for the purposes of revitalization. In light of the project's focus on oral traditions, the preferred form of publication of such collections would be on CDs with recorded performances by skilled storytellers, distributed free of charge to local community members, as well as in open access online archives.

6. Research plan

The proposed research program is unconventional in requiring a combination of linguistic and anthropological expertise, as well as familiarity with current theoretical research in oral tradition and discourse analysis. The multidisciplinary approach will rely on collaboration of theoretical linguists and experts in individual languages and cultures. The core of the team will be formed by postdoctoral researchers, carrying out documentation work and analyzing specific West African oral traditions. Each team member will contribute to the development of a publicly accessible corpus of recorded texts, analyzed

and annotated in accordance with contemporary documentation practice. Each team member will be engaged in the description and collection of material in a previously undescribed language with a well-preserved oral tradition.

The research will take into account the existing collections of texts, building on previous research where available. The preferred languages on which the study will focus are Dii (Adamawa; Cameroon), Adioukrou (Kwa; Côte d'Ivoire), Donno So (Dogon, Mali), Obolo (Cross River, Nigeria), and Wan (Mande, Côte d'Ivoire). Team members will be required to spend sufficient time in the field working in collaboration with local communities on the recording and analysis of traditional texts.

The collection and analysis of Chuvash and Bashkir data will be carried out in collaboration with colleagues from the Russian Academy of Sciences, and will rely mostly on archival materials (audio-recordings and their transcripts). The recordings of texts used in the study will be digitized and made publicly available in a transcribed and annotated form.

The principal investigator will be responsible for the theoretical and comparative aspects of the study. Regular working group meetings with invited participants will bring our team members in close contact with leading experts in the related fields and promote theoretical exchange across different approaches. The results of the study will be reported at major conferences, and two workshops will be organized in years 3 and 5 of the project to help the project's participants finalize and disseminate their results.

Due to the project's focus on the oral tradition of West Africa, the LLACAN laboratory of CNRS would provide an ideal environment for the team's collaborative work. In addition to hosting experts in a variety of African languages and cultures, LLACAN is actively involved in the development of annotated corpora in understudied languages, including spoken corpora designed for research on intonation and information structure. In light of that, LLACAN promises to provide our team members with a thriving environment in which they can enjoy collegial interaction, administrative and technical support, and the opportunity to consult with experts in related languages and cultures.

Abbreviations

ALN – alienable possessor, CNJ – conjunction, CNV – converb, COP – copula, DEF – definite marker, DEICTIC.SHIFT – marker of deictic shift, DEM – demonstrative, EMPH – emphatic form, EXCL – exclusive, FRENCH – French word, IDEOPH – ideophone, LOG – logophoric marker, NEG – negation, OBJ – object form, PAST – past tense marker, PERF – perfect, PL – plural, POSS – possessor, PPS – postposition introducing a non-finite complement; PROG – progressive, PROSP – prospective, PRT – particle, Q – question marker, QUOT – quotative, REFL – reflexive pronoun, SG – singular, STAT.PERF – stative perfect, SUBJ – subject form

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