

Samoan speechmaking across social events: One genre in and out of a *fono¹**

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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the relevance of a functional approach to the study of speech genres. The range of variation found in spontaneous performances of a traditional genre of Samoan speechmaking (*lāuga*) can be explained and partly predicted by referring to the social and cultural context of speaking. Particular features of variation are attributed to the following factors: (1) the purposes of the social events, (2) the temporal setting of its performance, (3) the range and social identities of the participants, and (4) the weight given to performance as a key for delivering and interpreting speechmaking. (Oratory, ethnography of communication, cross-contextual variation, performance, Samoan language and culture.)

A SOCIOLINGUISTIC APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF SPEECH GENRES

In discussing the notion of speech genre, Hymes (1972:65) pointed out that although genres often coincide with speech events, they "must be treated as analytically independent from them. They may occur in (or as) different events. . . . A great deal of empirical work will be needed to clarify the interrelations of genres, events, acts, and other components."

Within the ethnography of speaking tradition, the study of speech genres² has mostly concentrated on the strict correlation, in a particular society, between a certain genre and a particular type of social event (cf. Abrahams 1976, several of the papers in Bauman and Sherzer 1974, and in Bloch 1975; also Brenneis 1978, 1980; Frake 1964, 1972; Irvin 1979). Despite the fact that ethnographers generally seem well aware of the fact that the same genre is bound to be performed in different ways according to the particular event in which it occurs, who the speaker is, to whom it is addressed, etc., most case studies of speech genres in speech events tend to focus on the relation "one genre:one event" (or, "one genre type:one event type"). Such a perspective, whether motivated or not by the particular culture, suggests a static notion of genre, rather than a dynamic one as originally proposed by Hymes.

In this paper, I will discuss variations in both the content and form of a traditional Samoan genre of speechmaking across (and within) different social events. In particular, assuming Hymes's (1972) SPEAKING model as the back-

ground grid, I will show that Samoan ceremonial speeches, *lāuga* ([la:u'ŋa]), systematically vary along with variations in the following components of the social event in which they are performed:

1. purposes,
2. sequences,
3. participants, and
4. key.

The discussion to follow stresses a *functional* approach to the study of speech genre. "Functional" means that although genres are important components of speech events³ and contribute to defining them, they are also affected by other components with which they co-occur and therefore should be expected to systematically vary from one event to another (or within the same event).

Methodologically, the functional perspective stresses that elicitation in contrived settings is very likely a source of misleading data and that direct observation and recording in spontaneous situations should always accompany the study of speech genres (as well as any study of linguistic forms). Let me stress this point with an actual example from my own field experience.

When I first started investigating ceremonial speechmaking in Samoa, I would sometimes ask a speechmaker to perform a speech for me in front of the tape recorder. One of those times, I also asked the orator to stop every time a part (*vaega*) of the speech was over and another part was about to start. I hoped in this way to gain information on the structural organization of ceremonial speeches. After the recording, I asked the same orator to transcribe and explain to me his speech. While so doing, we discovered that the speech he had performed was a mixture of parts which did not belong to one coherent speech. He had started with a speech addressed to a carpenter who had just finished a house and ended with a speech for an exchange of dowry and bridewealth. My generic request for "a speech" without further specifications, and my demand for repeated interruptions of the performance were probably the factors that had caused the orator, a very knowledgeable speechmaker, to make such a mistake.

ETHNOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

The research on which this work is based was conducted during a one-year period (July 1978–July 1979) on the island of Upolu in Western Samoa, in the village of Falefā, located about eighteen miles east of Apia, the capital.

Falefā is divided into four subvillages, with a total population of about 1200 people. Of these, about one hundred adults, usually over the age of thirty, are *matai*. A *matai* is a person who has been given a title by both titled and untitled people of his extended family gathered in a special session. Such a title gives the holder a number of privileges in the society. A *matai* is a member of the village council (*fono*), has decision-making power in both family and village affairs, can vote for members of the National Parliament, and owns a piece of land (which

the family takes back at his death). Although in principle both men and women can be matai, very few women in fact hold a title. Two categories of matai are distinguished: chiefs (*ali'i*, short form for *tamāli'i*) and orators (*tulāfale*). The number of chiefs is generally lower than that of orators and this seems parallel to the fact that chiefs are by definition of higher rank than orators. However, there are particularly prestigious orator titles that can, on some occasions, outrank medium- or lower-rank chiefs.

Matai do not spend much time in the house. When they do not have a regular job in the capital (although traditionally matai should not work) or are not engaged in village or family affairs, they spend most of their time chatting with other matai in small groups sometimes drinking kava, other times playing cards at someone's house or billiards at one of the village pool halls (*fale piliati*). A few of them go fishing (more rarely hunting) or work on their plantation with the untitled men of their family.

People live either in traditional Samoan houses with no walls (*fale Sāmoa*) or in Western-style houses with wooden walls (*fale papālagi*). Houses are often grouped together in a family compound, typically comprising a house in which people sit during the day and sleep at night, a cooking house (*umu kuka*), and an outhouse (*fale'ese* or *falepisikoa*). A family compound can include one or more nuclear families (father, mother, and children) related by blood and/or marriage. Untitled people (*taulele'a*) do most of the hard work involved in cultivation (of taro, bananas, bread, fruit, coconuts), food preparation, and household maintenance. Young untitled men are also in charge of serving the matai when social engagements require it.

During the morning, children over the age of five years are sent to the village elementary school, while the younger ones stay around the house or accompany their mother or older siblings on errands. Women either stay home to take care of infants or go to work – on the plantation or on the coral reef to collect food, or in the department stores or offices in the capital.

DATA COLLECTION

The data for this study consist of direct (participant) observations, audio recordings and transcriptions (*in loco*) of seven complete fono and several other kinds of social events (see below). In addition, informal interviews were conducted with chiefs and orators who could provide interpretations and evaluations of the speeches as well as insights on the events they dealt with from a Samoan perspective.

There are several different kinds of fono in Samoan society. In addition to the ad hoc, special meetings mentioned here, there are several other kinds of meetings (at times also called fono) of matai or other people in the village who meet on a more or less regular basis. Verbal and non-verbal interaction vary according to the kind of meeting in question. For this and other reasons, some of the

characteristics of the fono discussed in this paper might not be found in similar events in other villages of Samoa (cf. Freeman 1978; Holmes 1974; Keesing and Keesing 1956; Mead 1930; Shore 1977). Only much-needed further work will allow us to establish the features of Samoan fono common across the country, as well as the relevant local variations.

LĀUGA

The term *lāuga* is used by Samoans in a variety of contexts. A basic distinction can, however, be made between two main uses of the term, one more general, the other more restricted. In the more general sense, *lāuga* can refer to almost any continuous stretch of talk by the same speaker, typically longer than a turn in conversation, that makes extensive use of respect vocabulary (cf. Milner 1961), metaphors and proverbs (cf. Schultz 1965), and that defines the interaction at hand as one that evokes positional and public identities rather than personal ones (cf. Irvine 1979).⁴

In the more restricted sense, *lāuga* refers to a well-defined set of types of ceremonial speeches performed by *tulāfale failāuga* (orators speechmakers) according to context-sensitive norms of form, content, length, modes of performance, etc. (see below).

Lāuga in a fono

Given the wide variety of social events and occasions in which *lāuga* can be performed, I have decided to use those performed in one particular kind of social event, the fono, which I have studied in detail, as a paradigm case against which to match the other variants of *lāuga*. Such a decision does not imply, however, that the *lāuga* in a fono should be seen as representing the basic pattern or ideal form.

The Samoan fono I refer to in this paper are meetings of the village matai – both chiefs and orators – specially called for discussion of serious crises in the village life, usually involving the relationship (*vā*) between families or high-ranking individuals. A violation of some social norm by a leading member of the village can upset the social balance and suspend the ideal mutual love (*fealofani*) of the members of the community. The gathering of matai in a fono is the appropriate traditional arena in which conflict is first recognized and a solution to the crisis sought. Before starting the actual discussion (*talanoaga*) of the agenda of the day dealing with the crisis, one or more *lāuga* are delivered. As I have discussed elsewhere (cf. Duranti 1981a, 1981b), the first *lāuga* in a fono momentarily recreates the lost equilibrium among the social forces. As pointed out by Larkin (1971), “A real fono . . . involves real discussions and is full of dissenting voices.” The ceremonial style of the first speech(es) lays the ground for the forthcoming confrontation.

In illustrating the sequential⁵ organization of a lāuga in a fono, I will follow the Samoan view of lāuga as made out of seven distinct parts:

1. Kava ('Ava)
2. Thanksgiving to God (Fa'afetai i le Atua)
3. Mornings (Taeao)
4. Dignity of the Sacred Names (Pa'ia)
5. Formal Greeting (Fa'atulouga)
6. Agenda of the Fono (Mata'upu o le Fono)
7. Clearing of the Sky (Fa'amatafi Lagi)

1. *Kava*: The orator starts his speech by recognizing the work done by the *tufa'ava*, the one who called out the titles and special "cup names" of those who were served kava in the opening kava ceremony. Now that the assembly has shared the kava, the meeting can start.

(Fono April 7, 1979, book II, p. 3)

First speaker: *Ia. Makū fau . . .*
fa'asoa pa'ia i se o ku'ua i le . . .
la ikū vai . . .
kagaka o le Kuiakua ,

. . .
Kau'a'ao ipu o le kaeao . . .
Kaumafa fo'i . . . 'ava o le aofia ma le fogo.

So. The strainer has dried out . . .
 (in) the sacred sharing by the one who comes from . . .
 that side of the water⁶
 people of the King of Atua.

. . .
 The cups of the morning were presented
 the kava of the assembly and of the fono . . . has been drunk.

2. *Thanksgiving to God*: Here the speaker thanks God for His generosity and love – this part is also called "God's love" (*le alofa o le Atua*) – that allows the people present to gather as they had planned. There are several metaphors that convey the one recurring theme, namely, that the matai are happy (and lucky) to be alive and well, given that God may take away their lives at any moment.

(Fono April 7, 1979, book II, pp. 3–4, continued from previous example)

Ia a'o lo kakou kaeao
ia, ua le kugoa fo'i lelei kaeao . . .
Kakou fa'akasi . . .
ogo'o le aofia ma le fogo o le kakou gu'u
pei oga . . . liliu i ai le kōfā ma le- . . . fa'aūkaga fo'i
legā vaiaso ua kuaga'i aku . . .
Ia e::- . . . e ausaga le kū 'a'ao lava

fa'akaugu'uiga ai
le- le kōfā ma le fa'aūkaga
 Moving on to the mornings . . .
 well (they) are very well-known mornings
 of our country
 the morning of the Church
 and the morning (of) the Bible
 Yes . . . real mornings . . .
 Those mornings have gone
 and the mornings that had been indicated
 by the wish of you (chiefs)
 and the hope of us (orators) . . .
 well this is the most important morning
 when we meet in good spirit
 (on) this new morning
 and this new day . . .
 to accomplish
 the decision of the chiefs and of the orators.

4. *Dignity of the Sacred Names:* This is the acknowledgment and restatement of the dignity of the matai, both chiefs (ali'i) and orators (tulāfale). The speaker reminds everyone that the sacredness of the matai of Samoa is something eternal, untouched by current events.

(Fono April 7, 1979, book II, p. 6)

'O pa'ia lava mai le vavau e 'o'o i le fa'avavau
E le ai se kasi ga ke koe koesea se 'upu
pe koe fa'aopopoiga . . .

(they) are very sacred from the past to reach eternity
 No one can subtract a word
 or add (anything) . . .

5. *Formal Greeting:* This part praises and greets all the important matai titles of the village (and sometimes of the whole district), quoting their various ceremonial greetings (*fa'alupega*) in an order that usually reflects hierarchical distinctions.

The word *kulouga* (*tulouga* in its written form, see fn. 1), repeated over and over again in this part, conveys respect to the sacred titles and their historical attributes, but also has a sense of apology for the matai's inconvenience of having to get up early in the morning and attend the meeting – the word *tulouga* being probably related to the expression *tulou!* (pardon, excuse [me!]).

(Fono April 7, 1979, book II, pp. 7–8)

Ia . . . kulouga ia . . . a le aofia ma le fogo.
. . . Kulouga le viligia ma kulouga a le saukia.

le kōfā ma le fa'aūkaga . . .
i le figagalo (o) le Akua.
go'o le alofa ma le agalelei o lo kakou Makai
. . . kakou fesilafa'i i luma o le gu'u
a'e le 'o kua o le gu'u
 (. . .)

And as for our morning,
 yes, there is a reason for this morning . . .
 (when) we gather together . . .
 because of the assembly and the fono of our village
 as it was decided by the chiefs and by the orators⁷
 on the week that has just passed . . .
 And . . . (like) swimmers who cannot touch (with) their feet
 are the decisions of chiefs and orators . . .
 in front of God's will.
 it is because of the love and the generosity of our Lord
 (that) we all meet in front of the village
 and not in the back of the village⁸
 (. . .)

3. *Mornings*: The term "morning" (*taeao*) is a metaphor for important events in the history of Samoa (cf. Milner 1966:224; Love 1979, ch. 1). The image of morning, with its immediate connotation of light (*malamalama*), is associated in the Samoan mind with good deeds and public, socially approved conduct (*aga*) (cf. Shore 1977). The expression *e leai sou taeao*, often heard in a fono (literally, "there is no morning of yours" or "you don't have any morning"), means "you haven't done anything socially useful for the village."

There are several of these mornings or important events that an orator can quote. In a fono, the one usually mentioned is the arrival of the Gospel to Samoa: (Fono April 7, 1979, book II, p. 6)

. . . *O ikū i kaeao, . . .*
Ia 'o kaeao masagi lava
o le aukugu'u
kaeao (o) le Loku
ma kaeao- le Kusi Pa'ia
Ia . . . o kaeao lava . . .
Ua kuaga'i ia kaeao
ma kaeao- fo'i sa fa'asililiga
i o(u)kou figagalo
ma o kakou fa'amoemoe, . . .
Ia 'ae o le kaeao sili a legei
ua kākou aulia maguia
legei kaeao fou
ma legei aso fou . . .

. . . *Kulouga Moamoa 'o kua o Lalogafu'afu'a*
 . . . *Ia. . . . Ka'i maia . . . i lo oukou pa'ia*
ma lo oukou mamalu . . .

(. . .)

Kulouga . . . le Makua o Moe'ogo'ogo . . .
Kulouga Sā-Alo . . . : kulouga Sā-Pulupulu'igiu
ma le nofoaga o ali'i

le liua le pa'ia iā Leukele 'o le kigā o Kupua
 (. . .)

So . . . homage to the assembly and the fono
 . . . Apology for your inconvenience early in the morning
 Homage to (the *malae* of) Moamoa the back of Lalogafu'afu'a
 . . . And . . . Respect . . . to your holiness
 and your sacredness . . .

(. . .)

Homage . . . (to) the senior orator Moe'ono'ono . . .
 Homage (to) the family of Alo . . . homage (to) the family of Pulupulu'iniu
 and the residence of the chiefs

the sacredness of Leutele, the mother of Tupua, does not change
 (. . .)

6. *Agenda of the Fono*: This is the first official statement of the reason for the meeting, the first recognition of the crisis. In announcing the topics to be discussed in the meeting, the speaker is usually very careful not to say too much, given that in a *lāuga* the speaker cannot yet discuss the subject matter.

(Fono March 17, 1979, book I, p. 10)

(Context: From a meeting in which a young orator and a high chief are being accused of public misbehavior and offense to the other matai on the day of the national election.)

Ia o:- . . . pei 'o makā'upu o le aofia ma le fogo . . .
o lo'o iai- . . . ka'akia i pā'aga ia o- o V. (title) lava
ma le afioga iā A. (title) . . . oga'o le aso le paloka
Ia. . . . Ka'ilo gā po 'o iai ma gi si maka'upu, . . .
Ia a'o le 'ā lumamea lava i le aofia ma le fogo
gisi fo'i maka'upu o lo'o . . . iai kokogu o le kakou aofia

So . . . as for the agenda of the assembly and the fono . . .
 there is . . . leave it to the two friends, V.

and His Highness A. . . . because of (what happened) the day of the elections

So . . . Poor me I don't know if there are other topics (to be discussed)

So bring in front of the assembly and the fono

any other topic (that) there is . . . inside of our assembly

The speaker simply implies that "something happened on the day of the elections," without specifying any further. It is the assembly that will have to

clarify, in the discussion part of the meeting, the details of the incident and define individual responsibilities.

7. *Clearing of the Sky*: The speaker wishes good luck to the people present. In so doing he usually uses, among others, the expression *lagi e mamā* (clear skies . . .) which is a metaphor for a life with no problems, the latter being represented by dark clouds.

(Fono January 25, 1979, book I, p. 20)

*Ia. Gi lagi mamā (0.5) i le pa'ia iā ke oukou 'Āiga
(1.0) ma Sā-Fegugu'ivao ma 'Āiga Sa'Alai'a-sā
ma aloali'i (1.2)*

*Ia. 'Aua ge'i usu ia le fogo
pe lafo le fue iā oulua Makua
(. . .)*

So. Clear skies (0.5) to the sacred chiefs
(1.0) and the family of Fenunu'ivao and the family of Alai'a-sā
and the (two) sons of chiefs. (1.2)

So. Don't leave the fono (i.e., may you not die)
or put down the flywhisk you two Matua (i.e., senior orators)
(. . .)

These seven parts can also be summarized in a sort of memorandum form for the speechmaker. They can be seen as seven consecutive steps that an orator must follow in performing a *lāuga* in a fono.

1. Connect your speech with what has preceded you: (a) Mention the kava; and (b) acknowledge previous speakers. Warrant your right to speak. (Kava)

2. Stress of life and human planning (*viz.* the fono) in front of and compared with almighty God. Thank the Lord for satisfying the matai's wishes to have a meeting on that particular day. (Thanksgiving)

3. Establish common historical grounds. Declare that however important past events are, we must now concentrate on the present fono. (Morning)

4. Reaffirm the dignity and sacredness of the matai titles. (Dignity of the Sacred Names)

5. Acknowledge and greet the most important titles represented in the fono, listing them according to families and subvillages in hierarchical order. (Formal Greeting)

6. State the reason(s) for this particular fono; mention the issues to be discussed. (Agenda of the Day)

7. Wish a good and long life to the members of the assembly. (Clearing of the Sky)

With this basic plan in mind, we can move now to discussion of the systematic variation found in the form and content of *lāugas* across different social events.

PURPOSE-BOUND VARIATIONS

The purposes of a social event (both "goals" and "outcomes", cf. Hymes 1972) shape the sequential organization of a lāuga as well as (part of) its content.

The first lāuga in a fono always starts with the Kava, that is, with the recognition of the fact that the kava ceremony has ended and it is now time to hold the meeting. This is a way in which the first speaker connects his speech to the immediately preceding activity. If more than one lāuga is performed, the speakers after the first will start their speech by recognizing the previous speakers. In other events the first lāuga often comes before the kava ceremony. In these cases, the lāuga may start with a sort of introduction (*folasaga*) in which the orator proclaims the day and the house in which the ceremony is taking place to be sacred. This part may or may not be combined with the declamation of the Dignity of the Sacred Names of the matai.

The Formal Greeting, which is performed only in a fono, is both a greeting to the whole assembly of matai and a recognition of the major titles and families represented in the fono and their hierarchies. By listing all the most important titles of the village and sometimes of the whole district, the first orator in a fono reaffirms the traditional hierarchical structure of the village organization, the ties among different groups, and their importance in the history of the country. As discussed in Duranti (1981a, 1981b), this act is very important in a fono because in the discussion that follows the lāuga, those hierarchies and the title-holders' dignity may be questioned or threatened. Before the discussion part of the meeting, everyone must be reminded of who is who and of the implicit risk involved in trying to challenge traditional ties and hierarchies.

In other social events, the focus is usually more on one or two families or groups instead of the entire village. Although the village as a whole is always greeted and acknowledged, this is not done with the long and scrupulous listing of titles typical of a lāuga in a fono. Rather, the ceremonial greetings of the titles of the families involved in the transaction (for example, providing/receiving goods or defining alliances) and some other important titles in the village or in the country at large are mentioned and paid respect to within other parts (for instance, the Kava which is – outside of a fono – a long and complex part). This fact, among others, shows that depending upon the purposes of the event, what is structurally the "same" part is in fact performed with very different spirit and function. Let me further illustrate this by comparing the agenda of a lāuga in a fono with the corresponding part in a *saofa'i*.

A *saofa'i* is the ceremony in which a family confers a matai title to one (or more) of its members and officially asks the village matai to recognize it. The example that follows is taken from the lāuga in a *saofa'i* in which four people (three men and one woman) are given titles. This is the part called *'Auga o le Aso* (Foundations of the Day) in which the speechmaker explains the reason for the

gathering and what it means to become a matai. For the Samoans, this part corresponds to the Agenda of the Day in a fono, when the orator announces the topic(s) to be discussed in the meeting.

(*Saofa'i*, tape 4, side 1, pp. 32-33)

. . . *Iā oukou magakua*

e lua aso kusia

o le lalolagi legei

'O le aso e ke fagau ai

ma le aso e fai ai lau saofa'i

(. . .)

e kusa ma kulaga i oukou igoa kaulele'a

'Oe Kui ma Pai ma Lafai (. . .) ma Seve

O igoa ga fa'akaulele'a

'A'o legei ua fa'apa'iaiga oukou.

(. . .)

Ia. 'O le mea muamua

la 'oukou ko'a'aga i le Loku

la 'oukou faia le figagalo le Akua.

'Aua kou ke solomuli i se mea kasi

e fai . . .

. . . *Ia oukou auauga*

ma le fa'amaogi

i le Afioga iā Salagoa

ma le Makua a Iuli

'ae kaigage a'u le Ga'ukaala

Ia kasi la'u leo

ma fai mea uma

ou ke fai aku ai

(. . .)

Ia oukou alolofa i le galuega

uma le mea ua kou iai fai

auā le mamalu o oukou 'Āiga

e le se mea faigofie

le Makai 'o le mea faigakā

a- a augoa ma le fa'aūkauka o le kagaka

Ia kalofae i loga olaga

ma loga makai . . .

You must remember

two are the days to mind

in this world

The day you were born

and the day you have a *saofa'i*

(. . .)

As for your untitled names

You Kui and Pai and Lafai (. . .) and Seve⁹

Those are names of untitled people

But now you have been made sacred.

(. . .)

Yes. The first thing
 You must be diligent in the Church
 You must follow God's will
 Do not retreat in any decision
 you will take . . .
 . . . You must serve
 and be faithful
 to His Highness Salanoa
 and the Matua (senior orator) Iuli
 as well as to me the Ga'utaala
 My voice is one
 and do all the things
 that I tell you to do

(. . .)

You all must love the work
 everything you do
 because the dignity of you chiefs
 it's not an easy thing
 (to be) a matai is difficult
 without one's prudence
 too bad for his life
 and his title . . ."

In this part of the saofa'i, the speechmaker takes the opportunity to express his own and his group's opinion on the importance of the occasion and to remind the new matai of their new duties. There is both concern and satisfaction in the orator's words. It is an important day in the lives of the people who leave their untitled status and are given the sacred status of matai. Such a day must be remembered and the speechmaker is contributing, by means of his verbal skills, to make the day memorable. But in a fono the reason for the gathering is not a happy one. There is a problem and the matai are gathered in an attempt to solve it, but the result cannot be guaranteed. The village is divided in a fono, whereas it is united in a ceremony like a saofa'i. The saofa'i takes place once both the family and the village have made their decision and decided to confer which matai titles and to whom. During the final ceremony people exchange goods and speeches are performed to acknowledge the importance of the event and the change of status that is taking place. In a fono, except for the kava that is shared, there is usually no exchange of goods. It is not an event to be particularly proud of, it articulates a crisis in the life of the community. Although often necessary and an integral part of the social dynamics of a Samoan village, the meeting of the village council is not something that most people look forward to. Words to be said and actions to be taken may cause resentment and make personal and familiar relationships difficult in the near or even far future. As mentioned

before, the speechmaker who gives the first *lāuga* in a *fono* is well aware of all this and his performance is affected by it. A few words are all he is going to say about the reason for the gathering. Other times, he may even try to skip the mention of the agenda (cf. Duranti 1981a, 1981b).

A reduced version

I will now give an example of the way in which the purposes of the event in which the *lāuga* is performed can affect the speech as much as to reduce it to three parts. The event I will talk about is the *to'ona'i*, that is, the communal sharing of food on Sunday after the morning service by the pastor's family and (some of) the *matai* of the congregation.¹⁰

Usually, in the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa, every other week there is a preacher (*tofi*), either a pastor (*faiife'au*) or a lay-preacher (*a'oa'o*), who comes from another village to perform the church service and/or deliver the sermon. On these occasions, in the *to'ona'i* that follows the church service, several *matai* of the congregation gather in the pastor's house and offer the preacher kava roots, food, and money. After the offering of the kava roots (there is no kava ceremony) and the preacher's acknowledgment of the offer, one of the orators present will deliver a *lāuga* for the preacher on behalf of the village's pastor and his congregation. In such a *lāuga*, the speechmaker may say only three parts: (1) Kava; (2) Thanksgiving to God; and (3) Wish to Good Health.

As in a *fono*, to start with the Kava is a way of recognizing the preacher's previous speech. The Thanksgiving that follows the Kava is usually the longest part of the whole *lāuga*, and this can be explained by the Christian nature of the occasion. Within this part the speaker may also pay tribute to the preacher's sermon, as shown below:

(*Lāuga Aso Sā*, p. 3)

. . . *Maua fo'i e legei Ekalesia-*
Susuga fa'afeagaiga
ma le falekua
ma legei Ekalesia
se lāuga makagofie
ua fofoga iai legei Ekalesia
i legei kaeao.

. . . It has been received by this congregation¹¹
 (by) Honorable pastor
 and (his) gracious wife
 and this congregation
 a beautiful sermon
 to which this congregation has listened
 this morning.

Given the general goal of re-establishing and maintaining the ties among the members of the congregation and the church hierarchies, on this occasion the

reduced version of the *lāuga* can not only be justified, but is also expected. The fact that the speechmaker skips the Mornings and the Dignity of the Sacred Names (both of which he *could* recite) can be predicted on the basis of the religious rather than political nature of the event. Instead of acknowledging, as in a fono, the most important titles of the village and of the district, the speechmaker concentrates on the ministers of the congregation, the head of the church organization, and the general secretary. The same individuals (viz. the matai) who would be referred to as chiefs or orators are in the to'ona'i also referred to as *tiakonolkiakogo* (deacons), their office within the church organization prevailing over their social status as members of the village council and as heads of extended families.

SEQUENCE-BOUND VARIATIONS

Format and content of a lāuga are affected by the relative time at which the speech is delivered

We have already seen two cases in which the *lāuga* starts with the Kava part as a way of linking with the immediately preceding activity or speech. To start with proclaiming the house and the day sacred (as is done when the first part of the *lāuga* is the introduction) is more a way of starting "from scratch," as if there is no need to tie one's speech to what has just preceded. However, within a *lāuga* there are several places in which the orator can refer back to previous acts in the same event.

When more than one *lāuga* is performed, the most common way of referring back is to mention the previous speakers. In a fono the *lāuga* after the first can skip some parts that have already been performed by previous speakers.

Another important difference is that in a fono the number of *lāuga* that will be delivered is not exactly known in advance. It could be only one, or up to the total number of subvillages represented in the meeting.¹² In other events, particularly in ceremonies involving two parties, such as a formal visit of a travelling party or in the ceremonial exchange of dowry and bridewealth, each party gives one *lāuga*, and therefore the total number (two) is known in advance. In other social events such as a *saofa'i*, there is only *one* *lāuga*. Once again, I must stress here that I am using the term *lāuga* in a very restricted sense, and not in the generic meaning of "formal speech." In the ceremony of exchange of dowry and bridewealth for instance, several speeches are delivered, but only two of them are *lāuga* in the strict sense; namely, the two speeches performed respectively by the family of the groom (first *lāuga*) and by the family of the bride (second *lāuga*) before the kava ceremony and the subsequent offer of dowry (fine mats). Later, the two families separate.¹³ The matai from the groom's family gather in another house, where they will discuss how to distribute the bridewealth among the

members of the bride's family (particularly among the orators who had an important role in the ceremony). They will also argue about who will announce the presentation of money and fine mats (*folafola*). However, the speech in which the various gifts will be announced is not strictly a *lāuga* despite the fact that it contains the same expressions found in *lāuga*, and even starts in a very similar fashion. In the example below, we can see the beginning part of the second *lāuga* before the kava ceremony compared with the beginning of the announcement (*folafolaga*) of the gifts (*lafo*):

(<i>Paolo ma Gafa</i> , book I) ¹ A. Second lauga	(<i>Paolo ma Gafa</i> , book II) B. Announcement of lafo
' <i>Ua pa'ia Moamoa</i> ' <i>o kua o Lalogafu'afu'a</i>	(. . .) ' <i>Ou ke kalikogu</i>
' <i>Ua pa'ia fo'i Vaie'ē</i> <i>e afio ai Lealaisalagoa</i> (. . .)	' <i>Ua pa'ia Vaie'ē gei</i> <i>auā o lea e'e ai le</i> <i>kei o Kupua</i> <i>a'o le kamaamālili e fā.</i>
Moamoa is sacred the back of Lalogafu'afu'a	(. . .) "I believe/trust
Also Vaie'ē is sacred where Lealaisalanoa arrived (. . .)	This Vaie'ē is sacred because here came the brother of Tupua and the man of the four malili.

Lines 3 and 4 of the second *lāuga* (A) and lines 2, 3, and 4 of the announcement (B) are somewhat different in their wording, but similar in their content. In both cases, the speaker is saying that Vaie'ē, the house of the high chief Lealaisalanoa (the highest chief of the family of the groom) is sacred. In (A), the house of the high chief is explicitly mentioned, whereas in (B), the chief is referred to by means of the declamation of his ceremonial greeting ("the brother of Tupua," and "the man of the four *mālili*" [a kind of tree]).

This example shows that in order to know whether certain expressions or entire sections of a speech are part of a *lāuga* or not, we need information that goes beyond the linguistic text. The same words can be part of a *lāuga* in one case and part of a speech which is not a *lāuga* in other cases. This implies that one cannot simply present a Samoan orator with a piece of a speech and expect to be answered whether or not the text should be considered as (part of) a *lāuga*. In the case just mentioned, one would also need information about *when* those expressions are used within the event.

PARTICIPANT-BOUND VARIATIONS

Format and content of a lāuga are affected by the people who are present

There are two kinds of participants in a lāuga: (a) those to whom the speech is delivered; and (b) those who deliver the speech.

Let me give an example of how (a) can affect a lāuga. We have discussed above the to'ona'i. One thing that can be added here to that discussion is that the lāuga delivered on that occasion is also conditioned by who is the preacher of the day. If the preacher is someone from a nearby village, or someone who was born in the same village where the church service was held, the speech is less complex and is generally performed in a subdued tone, if at all. When the preacher is thought a special guest, for example, an occasional visitor from New Zealand or a high-ranking representative of the church organization, the lāuga is much more elaborate.

To understand this, we must take into consideration the fact that the ranking of a preacher in terms of his social (or church) status is considered here as (at least potentially) directly correlated with his ability as a speechmaker. The performance of a more complex and "better" lāuga by the orator of the local congregation must be thereby interpreted as anticipation of a following good answer by the guest preacher. The orators of the congregation have several occasions before the to'ona'i for assessing a preacher's oratorical skills, for instance, during his sermon in the church or his verbal behavior at the early morning breakfast held in the pastor's house before the church service.

Selection of the one who will deliver a lāuga in any given situation is, in large part, a function of who is present. At the same time, who is present is, in large part, a function of the occasion or reason for the gathering. The attendance at a fono, for instance, varies according to what is being discussed. Some people stay away from thorny political issues, whereas others are attracted to them. The discussion of some serious offence may attract a large body of matai because of the prospect of a heavy fine to be inflicted on the violators, which will eventually be shared among the participants in the meeting. Whatever the reasons for a large attendance at a fono, the participation of many of the matai in the village enlarges the range of possible candidates for the delivery of lāuga. Greater competition will necessarily force the one who delivers the speech to do well, and not to underplay his performance in front of the other orators from his subvillage and the large audience. As I will discuss in the next section, the official competition (fa'atau) for the lāuga-floor, that is, for establishing which of the potential speechmakers should deliver the lāuga, is absent in a fono, but is an important part of other events. This fact, as we will see, is strictly related to the way in which the lāuga is performed and perceived by the audience in different events, and, more generally, its role in each event.

KEY VARIATIONS

If we compare *lāuga* in a *fono* with *lāuga* in events like *saofa'i* or visits of a travelling party, we find that *lāuga* in a *fono* are less in the domain of performance than those in other events. *Performance* should be understood here as

a mode of spoken verbal communication [which] consists in the assumption of responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative competence. [. . .] Performance involves on the part of the performer an assumption of accountability to an audience for the way in which communication is carried out, above and beyond its referential content. From the point of view of the audience, the act of expression on the part of the performer is thus marked as subject to evaluation for the way it is done, for the relative skill and effectiveness of the performer's display of competence (Bauman 1977:11; cf. Hymes 1975).

The orator who performs a *lāuga* in a *fono* does not need to display too much of his knowledge or skill as a speechmaker. Furthermore, his speech is not subject to evaluation to the same extent to which it would be in other events. The range of his audience is more limited and he seems at times concerned with getting away with his speech as soon as possible, given that more important matters are to come (viz. the discussion of the agenda of the meeting). His audience is hardly listening to him, because most people are thinking about what to say in the forthcoming discussion. They are also trying to assess which alliances have been made and who will go against whom. As mentioned before, the first *lāuga* create(s) an appropriate atmosphere for the meeting, but people can hardly enjoy it – there is nothing to be happy about. In other events the *lāuga* is the climax of an entire ritual. It sanctions the importance of the day, often by defining the new status of (some of) the participants (from untitled to matai [*saofa'i*], from unmarried to married [exchange of dowry and bridewealth]) or by redefining a relationship (friendship [formal visit of a travelling party], membership to a religious congregation [in a *to'ona'i*]). In these ceremonies, but not in a *fono*, the orators have a *fa'atau*,¹⁴ a debate for deciding who, among them, should represent the whole group in performing the *lāuga*. The winner of the debate will have to prove himself skillful (*poto*) in front of his own group and his wider audience. Whereas in a *fono* only matai are usually present,¹⁵ with a few untitled men sometimes sitting outside the house, in ceremonies such as *saofa'i* and *to'ona'i* a much wider range of status is represented, from untitled to women to children.¹⁶ Whereas matai usually do not talk about the *lāuga* performed in a *fono* once the meeting is over, being only concerned with the political discussion, both untitled and titled participants to the above-mentioned ceremonies often discuss and evaluate the beauty of the *lāuga* for weeks or months after the event has taken place. As part of the code-conventions for the performance of a

lāuga in one of those events, the speechmaker usually raises the volume of his voice in such a way that his speech may be heard by as many as possible of the people around. Such a change of volume, which sharply marks the beginning of the speech, can be used as a signal for letting the audience know that what is being said now is "lāuga." Such a signal is not necessarily found in a fono. The speechmaker in a fono may sometimes leave out the mention of the Agenda of the Fono and the chairman of the meeting can ask him, once the speech is already over, to correct his distraction. Such a late correction request is not found in other contexts. It is instead more common to find cases in which the speechmaker is formally interrupted (*seu*) by another matai *during* his performance. Although there can be different reasons for interrupting the performance, often the intervention of another matai to shorten someone's speech is due to some fault in the way in which the lāuga is being delivered (for example, the speaker is saying something he should not say, such as genealogies [*gafa*], he has said something inaccurately, he is taking too long). Such interruptions are, in part, formal evaluations of the lāuga while it is still going on. They also point to the fact that the speechmaker has made himself vulnerable and his performance can be questioned by others.

The various aspects of the lāuga and of the events in which it occurs as discussed in this section should be seen as variations related to the key in which the act of delivering a lāuga is done.

The notion of "key" as a component of speech events was introduced by Hymes as referring to the

tone, manner, or spirit in which an act is done. . . . Acts otherwise the same as regards setting, participants, message, form, and the like may differ in key, as, e.g. between *mock:serious* or *perfunctory:painstaking* (Hymes 1972:62).

Hymes also stresses the fact that key is often dependent upon other components of the event:

seriousness, for example, may be the expected concomitant of a scene, participant, act, code, or genre (say, a church, a judge, a vow, use of Latin, obsequies) (*ibid.*).

If we consider the notion of performance as an example of key, we add an important dimension for understanding the factors involved in lāuga variation across social events.

CONCLUSIONS

As suggested by Hymes (1972, 1974), speech genres must not be identified with speech events. In the case of the lāuga, what is considered as the same speech genre shows systematic variation in going from one social event to another, along with variation in some of the other components of the event. In particular,

a Samoan *lāuga* changes from one type of event to another according to the following factors:

1. the purposes of the social event in which it is performed;
2. the relative time at which it is delivered, for example, whether it follows or precedes the kava ceremony, whether it follows another ceremonial speech;
3. the participants in the event, that is, more specifically, according to the speaker, the addressee(s), and the audience;
4. the extent to which performance should be considered as a key to both delivering and interpreting speechmaking.

The interaction among components of a speech event, although indicated by Hymes as a possible area of research for ethnography of speaking, has not received the attention it deserves in the published literature. This study of Samoan speechmaking across events has stressed the importance and relevance of a functional approach to the study of speech genres. In particular, I have shown that the range of variation found in the performance of a traditional genre of Samoan speechmaking can be explained and partly predicted by referring to particular aspects of the social and cultural context of speaking.

In the case of the Samoan *lāuga*, one might reasonably speculate that the variations found in its performance are strictly correlated to the wide range of uses of *lāuga* in the society. Further research should provide evidence for or against this hypothesis. In particular, one would have to look at other speech genres in other cultures and see whether variation correlates with the range of social events in which a particular genre is used as well as with the allowed variation in the other co-occurring components of the event.

NOTES

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What I know about Samoan speechmaking is due to the generosity and patience of those chiefs and orators who let me attend and tape their meetings and later helped me to transcribe and interpret their talk. In particular, I would like to thank the following matai from the village of Falefā (Upolu): 'Alo Eti, Iuli Sefo, Lua Veni, Savea Savelio, Tula'i Tino, and Tavō Utulei. I also benefited from discussion with Elaine Andersen, Don Brenneis, Loia Fiaui, Edward Finegan, Judith Irvine, Elinor Ochs, Buck Schieffelin, and Bradd Shore. John Haviland, Dell Hymes, Douglas Lewis, and Michael Silverstein provided helpful criticism on earlier drafts of this paper.

1. *Transcription conventions:* As most languages in the world, Samoan is most of the time spoken in a different fashion from the way it is written. The most striking difference between spoken and written language is found in the phonological system (cf. Milner 1966; Duranti 1981a, 1981b; Ochs 1981; Shore 1977). In the written language (as well as in some registers of the spoken related to Western culture, for example, school, church, talking to strangers; cf. Shore 1977), Samoan has an opposition between /t/ and /k/, and /n/ and /ŋ/, for example, *tī*, "tea"; *kī*, "key"; *ana*, "cave" and *aga* (/aŋa/) "conduct". In the spoken language both in informal and formal interaction, those words

that have a written *t* often have a *k* in its place, and those words that have an *n* have a *g* (the Samoan orthographic convention for velar nasal /ŋ/). Thus, the word *kī* can mean either "tea" or "key", and *aga* can either mean "cave" or "conduct". I will keep with the tradition by writing words out of context in their citation form, that is, in the *t/n* pronunciation. At the same time, I will leave the *k/g* pronunciation in the transcripts, if that was the original way in which words were uttered. The apostrophe (') stands for a glottal stop (/ʔ/) and the *g*, as already said, for a velar nasal (/ŋ/). My transcription of Samoan is a sort of compromise between a phonetic and a phonemic one. I tried to keep close, as much as I could, to the Samoan orthography (Milner 1966), and I did not mark certain redundant features, for instance, geminate consonants. At the same time, I have not marked glottal stops and long vowels (which are written with a macron, for example, *ā*, *ē*, *ī*) when I did not hear them, despite the fact that they would show up in (some versions of) the written language.

In the transcripts I have used some of the conventions of Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974: Appendix). Three periods stand for an untimed pause, and three periods between parentheses indicate that part of the original transcript has been omitted. I have used parentheses in the English translation to mark linguistic information not overtly available in the original Samoan utterance.

Frequently recurring terms such as *matai* (titled person, either chief or orator), *lāuga* (the speech genre discussed in this article), and *fono* (meeting of chiefs and orators) have been italicized only the first time they appear in the text.

2. By "speech genre" I mean here a recognized (by its users) unit of discourse with some well-defined features such as sequential organization (viz. which part should come before what), constraints (and expectations) on (some of) its content and form, and socially defined appropriate contexts of use.

3. In this paper I have used both the term "social event" and "speech event" to refer, sometimes, to the same type of activity. The two terms should not be seen as representing an analytical dichotomy, but rather as a way of referring to a perspective of analysis ("speech event" referring to a social event considered from the particular point of view of the verbal interaction within it).

4. Public, positional identities are part of a structured set likely to be labeled and widely recognized in a society (that is, it is widely recognized that the set of identities exists and that persons X, Y, and Z have them). Personal identities, on the other hand, are individualized and depend more on the particular history of an individual's interactions. They are perhaps less likely to be explicitly recognized or labeled and less likely to be common knowledge in the community at large (Irvine 1979:778).

5. Note that this sequence is characteristic of the particular kind of meetings I have observed and audio-recorded, but need not be typical of other (more or less similar) meetings also called *fono*.

6. This and the following expression are part of the ceremonial greeting (*fa'alupega*) of the subvillage from which the *tufa'ava* comes.

7. Despite the English translation, in the original text, there is no direct reference to "chiefs and orators." The two words *kōfā* and *fa'aukaga* are special terms from the respect vocabulary that mean, respectively, "opinion (of chiefs)" and "opinion/advice (of orators)" (Cf. Milner 1961.)

8. The expression "we meet in the front of the village and not in the back of the village" means that it is a fortunate circumstance that people can meet in that part of the village (viz. the front) where good and dignified actions take place, as contrasted with the back which is associated in the Samoan worldview with bad, undignified conduct.

9. These are not the actual untitled names of the four people (three men and one woman) who are being made *matai*, but rather conventional untitled names that can be used to refer to them in this part of the speech.

10. The ritual I am referring to here is what I have observed on several occasions among members of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa. It should not be taken to be also characteristic of other religious groups in Samoa.

11. This is a case of self-correction (see Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks 1977). The speaker starts listing those who enjoyed the preacher's sermon and he realizes that he has not mentioned the pastor and his wife (who are present) first. He repairs by inserting them and repeating the mention of the congregation at the end.

12. The way the first *lāuga* is perceived in a *fono* varies according to whether or not it is followed by other *lāugas*. If the first *lāuga* is also the only *lāuga* delivered for that day, it is then interpreted as a speech for all the subvillages represented in the meeting. If, instead, it is followed by the *lāuga* of the other subvillages, it is interpreted as the *lāuga* of the particular subvillage to which the orator belongs.

13. I am referring here to the ritual followed at the village of the groom's family.
14. The *fa'atau* is conducted in the language of traditional oratory and may or may not have been pre-arranged (that is, people might have previously agreed on who should win the debate). Even when it has been pre-arranged, last-minute afterthoughts can transform an apparently easy decision into a difficult one. This kind of debate can last only a few minutes or even half an hour or more. When the orators seem unable to reach an agreement, one of the high chiefs present can close the discussion by deciding that no *lāuga* should be delivered or by announcing that he will perform the speech (a distinction is made, in these cases, between chiefs who can and chiefs who cannot deliver *lāugas*).
15. An important difference between *fono* and the other kinds of events mentioned in this paper is that in a *fono* only *matai* sit inside the house where the meeting is taking place, whereas in other social events such as *malaga*, *saofa'i*, *to'ona'i*, some untitled people, both men and women, may also sit inside the house.
16. Children are not allowed to be inside the house where the ceremony is taking place, but can hang around near to their older siblings in the cooking houses watching the food being prepared or playing around the cars of the visitors who came from some other part of the island. When the ceremony is over and food distributed to the *matai* inside the house, the children are allowed to go to the edge of the house to get the food that their fathers, uncles, or grandfathers have left for them.

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