SPEECHMAKING AND THE ORGANISATION OF DISCOURSE IN A SAMOAN *FONO*

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The important role played in Samoan society by speechmaking is documented both in early accounts of Samoan way of life (e.g., Brown 1908, 1910; Churchward 1887; Kraemer 1902-3; Turner 1884) and in more recent studies of political struggle and public confrontation (e.g., Freeman 1978; Keesing and Keesing 1956; Shore 1977; Tiffany 1975). Oratory is probably the most sophisticated art form in Samoa and certainly one of the most well-preserved aspects of ancient Polynesia. A good *failāuga* "speechmaker" is a highly respected individual in Samoan society. People look up to him for his mastery of verbal and non-verbal tradition. Furthermore, a good speechmaker is often indispensable to his kin and allies in all sorts of economic transactions and social crises.

Despite some very good work on the "vocabulary of respect" in Samoa (see Milner 1961) and proverbial expressions (cf. Schultz 1965)—both of which are crucial and perhaps inseparable ingredients of Samoan speechmaking—and some discussion of ceremonial and religious speeches (cf. Holmes 1961; Love 1979, ch.1), to my knowledge, no systematic study has ever appeared on the actual structure, content and context of use of Samoan speechmaking in spontaneous settings. This article tries to partly fill this gap by presenting a detailed case study of speechmaking as it evolves in a particular kind of meeting of chiefs and orators in a traditional village in Western Samoa.

This is an essay within the "ethnography of speaking" tradition, as advocated and exemplified in the writings of John Gumperz, Dell Hymes, and their students (e.g., Gumperz and Hymes 1972; Hymes 1974; Bauman and Sherzer 1974). In the spirit of such a framework, I describe and discuss the way in which discourse is organised in Samoan speechmaking as it relates to the socio-cultural organisation of the event in which it occurs. The gradual changes in structure and content of successive speeches within the same meeting are explained by the goals of the social event and its cultural significance.

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 18 miles east of Apia, the capital.

Falefā is divided into four subvillages, with a total population of about 1200 people. Of these, about 100 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 (*'āiga*) gathered in a special session. Such a title gives the holder a number of privileges in the society (cf. Mead 1930). 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 (I saw a woman participating in a *fono* once only. 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 status than orators. However, there are prestigious orator titles that can, on some occasions, outrank medium or lower rank chiefs. This is the case, in Falefā, for the two senior orators (*matua*), Moe'ono and Iuli.

In the daytime a titled man does not spend much time in the house with his wife and children. When *matai* 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, at 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, hunting, or work on their plantations with the young untitled people 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 (taro, bananas, bread-fruit, coconuts), food preparation and household maintenance. They are also in charge of serving the *matai* when social engagements require it.

Data collection

The data for this study consist of direct (participant) observation and audio recordings of *fono* in the village. Informal conversation and ceremonial speeches were also recorded for comparative purposes, and several informal interviews were conducted with chiefs and orators from the village who could provide insights and evaluations of the events from a Samoan perspective. When I felt that recording was not appropriate (because of the situation or the topic discussed), I either took notes during the discussion or wrote a report in my field notes subsequently. Most of these discussions were conducted in Samoan, a few of them in English. If the session was not recorded on tape, I tried, as much as I could, to take notes in the language that was being used. Especially when this had been done in Samoan, the language used was often a good clue to the Samoan viewpoint on the particular matter.

All the tapes from seven important *fono* over a continuous period of four months (January-April 1979) were transcribed by native speakers from the village whom I had trained in the transcription technique. I also checked all the transcripts by listening to the tapes myself. Subsequently, I would re-listen to the tapes with the person who had transcribed them and discuss with him the passages that my ear had heard differently. This would also be the time for discussing the content of the speeches, especially those expressions that I felt needed detailed explanation. The interpretation of the transcripts and, more generally, of the event as a whole (e.g., "What are the participants trying to accomplish" or "Why did so-and-so say that?" and so on) was done at different times and with different people, depending upon the content of the speeches. I tried, as much as I could, to get someone who had participated in the event, and, in a few cases, even the person who had given a certain speech, to give me an interpretation of what was going on. The amount of information and level of sophistication of such a process was a function of several factors that had to do with the person's role in the event, his status, his relationship with me (often the result of a complex system of relations and obligations), his understanding of my goals, his personal interest in my work (some people seemed more keen than others on "helping the stranger"), his ability to remove himself from the situation and look at the topics discussed in the *fono* as not immediately affecting his person or relatives.

Transcription conventions

In the transcripts I have used the conventions of Conversation Analysis (see the Appendix in Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974). In addition, 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 square brackets in the English translation to mark linguistic information which is not overtly available in the original Samoan utterance. As probably typical of all languages, 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 Samoan is found in the phonological system (cf. Duranti 1981; Kernan 1974; Milner 1966; Ochs in press; Pawley 1966; Shore 1977). In the written language (as well as in some registers of the spoken related to "Western culture", e.g., school, church, talking to strangers, etc., cf. Shore 1977) Samoan has an opposition between /t/ and /k/, and /n/ and /ŋ/, e.g., *ti*, 'tea'; *ki*, 'key'; *fana*, 'shoot, gun' and *faga* /faŋa/, 'bay'. In the spoken language both in informal and formal interaction, those words that have /t/ in the written often have /k/ in its place, and those words that have /n/ have /ŋ/ (the Samoan orthographic convention for velar nasal is the letter g). Thus, the word *ki* /kii/ can mean either 'tea' or 'key', and *faga/faŋa* can either mean 'shoot, gun' or 'bay'. I will keep with the tradition by writing words out of context in their "citation" form, that is, in the t/n pronunciation. But I shall break from the tradition by leaving the k/g pronunciation in the transcripts, if that was the way in which words were originally 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 phonemic one. I tried to consistently use traditional Samoan orthography (cf. Milner 1966), and I did not mark certain phonologically redundant features such as, for instance, geminate consonants. At the same time, I have not marked glottal stops and long vowels (which are written with a macron, e.g., *ā, ē, ī,* etc.) when I did not hear them, despite the fact that they would show up in (some versions of) the written language.

I must emphasise here that all the examples of oratorical speeches presented in this paper are taken from audio recording in spontaneous settings. This fact should justify the self-corrections, hesitations, and possible errors found in the examples.

To help those readers who are exclusively familiar with written Samoan, I list here a few correspondences between different versions of spoken and written forms (Figure 1).

THE EVENT

The *fono* I will discuss in this article are meetings of *matai* (chiefs and orators) especially called for discussing some particularly important matter (or event) that has already (or may, in the near future) upset the social equilibrium of the community (for more information, cf. Duranti 1981). It is within a *fono* that the leaders of the community try to over-

Reduced SpokenForms	Careful K/G Pronunciation	Written And Careful T/N Pronunciation
(i) *go'o* [ŋo?o]	*oga'o* [oŋa ?o]	*ona 'o* [ona ?o] 'because of'
(ii) *go'u* [ŋo?u]	*ga 'ou* [ŋa ?ou]	*na 'ou* [na ?ou] 'Past + First person singular'
(iii) *ga* [ŋa]	*oga* [oŋa] ·	*ona* [ona] complementiser

FIGURE 1

come crises over power in the social life of the village, and redefine alliances. In this context, language is not only the most important medium of communication, it is also used to define the event, mark its different phases, and distinguish among the different roles of the participants.

Taking inspiration from Hymes' (1972) work, I shall provide below a definition of the event, *fono*, by specifying those features of the event that would allow us to distinguish a *fono* from other similar events in the society.

Boundaries of the event

In talking about boundaries, we must distinguish between *spatial* and *temporal boundaries,* on the one hand, and *external* and *internal boundaries,* on the other.[1]

The spatial boundaries define the space in which the event is taking place, or, rather, the way in which participants perceive spatial organisation with respect to the outside (namely distinguishing between the space in which the event is taking place and the space in which the event is *not* taking place) and with respect to each other. The first kind of boundaries will be called *external* and the second kind *internal*.

The meetings I discuss in this paper take place inside one house. Both the "inside" and the "one" are important because there are other social events in the community that either take place (partly) outdoors or in more than one house (e.g., the *fono tauati,* cf. Shore 1977). The external spatial boundaries are thus marked by the external poles of the house (if a traditional Samoan house) or by its walls (if a modern Western style house). The internal spatial boundaries are defined by the *seating arrangement* (or seating plan, cf. Shore 1977), which I shall describe briefly below.

Seating arrangement: The way people seat themselves inside the *fono* house is, among other things, relevant to speaking.

The seating arrangement is regulated on the basis of an ideal model (which is rarely actualised) according to which different statuses (chiefs

versus orators) and different ranks (high versus low) must sit in different places inside the house. As I discuss the relationship between the ideal model and the actual seating arrangement elsewhere (Duranti 1981), I shall only give here an example of an actual arrangement. As illustrated in Figure 2, orators sit in the front of the house.[2] The (few) high-rank chiefs sit in either one of the two shorter sides (called *tala*), and the other chiefs and orators sit in the back row.
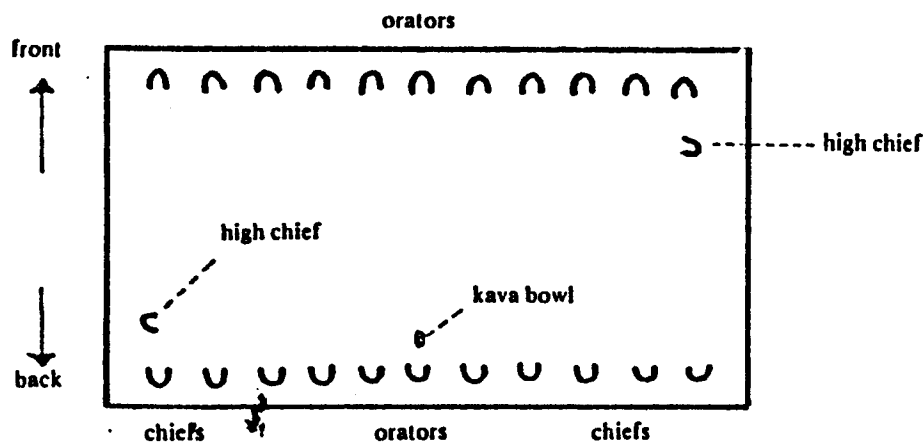

FIGURE 2

Seating arrangement of *matai* in a *fono*
The symbol 'C' (which is taken from child language transcription procedures, cf. Reilly, Zukow and Greenfield, MS; and Ochs 1979) indicates the direction of pelvis (bird's eye view) and, therefore, people's positions with respect to each other and the possible reach of their eye gaze.

The seating arrangement is relevant to verbal interaction within the *fono* because those who sit in the front row are usually the ones who do most of the talking. The high chiefs sitting in the *tala* are expected to speak after the various positions have been heard, towards the end of the meeting. The chiefs sitting in the back can speak, but must wait for the the orators in the front to finish their speeches. The orators in the back row are not expected to have an active part in the discussion (furthermore, they cannot deliver the introductory ceremonial speeches), but they are the ones to take care of the preparation and distribution of kava (see below).

Temporal boundaries refer, for instance, to the beginning and end of the event (external temporal boundaries). The beginning of a *fono* is always signalled by a kava ceremony. Almost any time *matai* get together kava is served. The way kava is distributed is, however, different according to the circumstances. In the *fono* I am discussing here the order of

kava cups in the opening ceremony is peculiar in the sense that it parallels the order of speakers in the meeting. To understand such an order, we must refer to the social organisation of the village, its hierarchies, and the social significance of the event. The end of a *fono* is sometimes marked by another kava ceremony which has, in turn, a different order of distribution. (cf. Duranti 1981, ch.4). Alternative and/or co-occurring final boundary markers are also possible. A very common one is *laughter*. Someone will make a joke, and the laughter that follows it, with the public recognition of that particular speech act as a "joke", signals that the tension is (or, at least, should be) over and people should relax.

Time of the event: The meetings discussed here take place irregularly, depending on the needs of the leaders of the community to solve or to avoid a certain crisis. This feature distinguishes these events from the regular meetings of the village *matai* with the *pulenu'u*, a sort of mayor, who represents the central Government in the village.

Norms of etiquette: Several norms must be followed by the participants in both their verbal and non-verbal behaviour. Since the rest of the paper is devoted to discussing verbal behaviour, I shall here briefly mention a few norms concerning non-verbal behaviour.

(i) Everyone must sit on mats and cross-legged. Chiefs, but not orators (exceptions are possible) can put one foot on the other leg's thigh (this position is called *napevae*), but only while they are not delivering a speech.

(ii) Only for ceremonial reasons, e.g. distribution of kava, can someone walk across the circle of *matai* sitting inside the house.

(iii) While speeches are being delivered, speakers and audience do not engage in sustained eye-gaze with one another. An overt eye-gaze by one member of the audience towards the current speaker indicates intention to interrupt him (a rather rare and complicated procedure).

(iv) The lower status orators who sit in the back row and are in charge of the kava ceremony (e.g. preparation of the kava beverage, calling out of the titles of those who are going to be served, actual delivery of the kava, etc.) do not wear any piece of clothing on the upper part of their body. This norm does not apply to those orators who sit in the front row.

Goals and outcomes: Following Hymes' suggestion (1972: 61), a distinction must be made between the goals of (some of) the individuals engaged in the interaction within a *fono* and the outcomes of that interaction from the point of view of the community. Personal ambition and rivalry among powerful figures of the community are often in the background of the convocation of a *fono*. However, what the society as a whole gets out of these events can be independent from and beyond the

particular goals of a few individuals (or families). From the society's point of view, a *fono* is an institutionalised arena in which to either restate traditional values and alliances or challenge them.

A HOMOLOGY

Several aspects of the linguistic interaction among *matai* in the *fono* house change with the beginning of the meeting, such a change being marked by the opening kava ceremony. Whereas *matai* before the kava ceremony are engaged in conversation, once the meeting starts, turns become much longer, pre-allocation is found for a number of turns, and responses are, to some extent, predictable. Furthermore, the respect vocabulary language affects the syntactic shape of utterances. Finally, morphosyntactic features are found in the *fono* speeches that are either absent or much less frequent in conversational Samoan. All of these features can be taken thus as characteristic of "*fono* verbal interaction". However, when we analyse more closely the language of the *fono* speeches across the entire event, we find that there is a gradual and systematic progression from ceremonial, highly planned and predictable orations to less predictable more conversation like speeches. The key for understanding such a change is given by Samoans themselves in a distinction that they make between two speech genres' used in a *fono: lāuga* and *talanoaga* (hereafter L and T respectively).

A *fono* always starts with a L, a ceremonial speech in which the dignity of the participants as "gods on earth" is recognised and praised, God is praised as the Almighty, and the agenda of the meeting is only briefly and vaguely mentioned. Only in the T, literally 'chat, talk', although maintaining some features of the Ls, can the speakers present arguments, quarrel, accuse, scold, and try to convince one another. T is then in antithesis to L in allowing the expression of disagreement doubts and blame, in recognising conflict and focusing on individuals rather than common interests and collectivity.

I propose here to consider the opposition between L and T as a homology of the contrast between two sets of antithetical concepts embodied in every Samoan *fono*. Some possible candidates for such an opposition are listed in Figure 3.

The opposition between the two sets and each pair of terms must be seen as along a continuum, that is, what is said in a T might not be completely *personal* or in total disagreement with the views of others at the assembly, but it will be *more personal* than what is said (even by the same individual) in an L.

As we shall see, the meeting progresses from one set towards the other. Furthermore, within the same speech, we shall see also a progression

Lāuga	*Talanoaga*
Shared values	Unshared values
Shared information	Unshared information
Predictable	Unpredictable
Common views	Personal views
Common interest	Personal interest
Agreement	Disagreement
Harmony	Conflict

FIGURE 3

Two Antithetical Sets of Concepts and Values in a *Fono*

from one set of concepts and attitudes towards the other. The homology is then extended from the organisation of the *fono* as a whole to the organisation of each particular speech.

In order to understand the opposition represented by the two genres *L* and *T*, we must refer back to the social and cultural aspects of a *fono*. A *fono* is called when a breach of some social norm has taken place or is expected. Such a breach (actual or potential) creates a crisis in which the harmony of village life is disrupted, the ideal mutual love of the members of the community being suspended. For a moment people are not in agreement on some basic issue or norm, life becomes unpredictable, common interest and values are questioned. The first *L* in a *fono* momentarily recreates the lost equilibrium so that the *matai* can talk to one another and work together to restore the social balance of the community. Only when the *L* has been delivered, and hierarchies, social roles, history and beliefs restated, can the real discussion start and the different voices be heard. Only after the *L*(s), can *T*(s) take place.

SEQUENTIAL ORDER OF L AND T

The first speech in a *fono* is always in *L*. It is delivered by an orator from a particular subvillage who sits in the front part of the *fono* house and it is considered as the introduction (*tūvaoga*). It conforms to the basic format of ceremonial speeches performed in other social events, with some differences that I discuss elsewhere (Duranti 1981). The orator must here announce why the *fono* is in session (agenda of the meeting), but he cannot discuss the issue(s).

Once the first L is over, two things can happen: (a) the senior orator who chairs the meeting, will speak, or (b) another orator from the same subvillage will speak. If (a) is the case, there will be no more Ls for the day, given that the senior orator's first speech is always a T and once there has been a T all other speeches after that are also considered Ts. (Notice that *talanoaga* is both the name given to the discussion part of the meeting and to each single speech in that part.) If (b) is, instead, the case, there will be as many Ls as the total number of subvillages represented in the meeting.

THE ORGANISATION OF AN L IN A FONO

Since, as I shall explain, Ls change structure in the course of a *fono*, the organisation that I shall first discuss (Figure 4) must be seen as an ideal model which is at its best followed by the first speaker but less so by the subsequent speakers. Furthermore, one must leave room for individual variation.

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
   tulouga

6) agenda of the meeting
   mata'upu o le fono

7) wish of 'clear skies'
   fa'amatafi lagi

*This 'kava', part of a speech, should not be confused with the kava ceremony.

FIGURE 4

Parts of a *Lāuga* in a *fono*
(vaega o le lāuga i le fono)

Kava: In a *fono* the first L comes immediately after the opening kava ceremony. Instead of the list of the various kava roots offered to the assembly found in Ls in other social events and of the names of the chiefs who will be served to drink, this kava part in a *fono* L consists of the

recognition of the work done by the kava announcer[4] (*tufa'ava*) in the preceding kava ceremony. This is partly due to the fact that in a *fono* the first *L* is delivered after the kava ceremony, whereas in other social events, usually the *L* precedes the kava ceremony. In a *fono*, the orator simply repeats, with different words, what the kava announcer has just said in closing the kava ceremony, namely, that the kava is finished. An example of the transition from the kava ceremony to the first *L* in a *fono* is given in (1) below:

(1) (January 25, pp. 10-11)
    Kava announcer: *Moko le agakogu.*
                   The kava is at an end.

                   Ua makiva le fau.
                   The strainer is poor

                   Ua papa'u le laulau.
                   The wood is shallow.

                   Makou fa'asoasoa
                   We will share

                   i kua gei
                   here in the back

                   ma aga'i-kāgoa
                   with the kava-assistants

                   ma le kaukū o ga koe!
                   and the cup-bearer what is left!

    Audience: *Mālō!*
                   Well done!
                   (8.0)

    (Someone from *Mālie lau fofoga i le kaeao!*
    the back: How nice your crying out in the morning!)
                   (5.5)

    First speaker: *Ia. Ua makū fau*
                   Well. The strainer has dried out

> . . . *i le fa'asoa pa'ia*
> . . . with the sacred sharing
>
> *a se ku'ua i le-. . . 'Āiga Pule . . .*
> by the one who comes from . . . the Family
> with Authority
>
> *Ia . . . (Ua) kapa ipu fo'i lo kākou kaeao.*
> Ia . . . Our morning has had its cups.
>
> *Ua kaumafa 'ava o . . le aofia ma le fogo.*
> The assembly and the *fono* have drunk kava.
>
> . . . *Ia* . . .
> . . . Well, . . .

The first three sentences quoted in (1), which I have arranged in three different lines for convenience, are increasingly opaque in their literal meaning, but all convey the same message, namely, there is no more kava in the bowl. This message is, however, another metaphor for saying that the kava ceremony is over (for there is always some kava left in the bowl for later on). By repeating with different expressions that there is no more kava, the first orator warrants his turn to talk. Since the kava ceremony is over, he can start his *L*.

This way of "looking back", connecting oneself with what has just happened (e.g., so-and-so has spoken) is typical of all *fono* speeches. Every speaker starts by acknowledging the preceding speaker(s). Since the first speaker does not have any other speaker to acknowledge, it seems natural to refer to the kava announcer who has just performed.

Notice that the orator does not mention the kava announcer's name (or title). He uses, instead, a circumlocution that stresses his social identity and social function: "the one who comes from the Family with Authority (*'Āiga Pule*)". This refers to the fact that the kava announcer comes from a particular subvillage, which has the "authority" (*pule*) to decide over the distribution of goods and the amounts of fines.

When several *Ls* are delivered, the speakers after the first do not mention the kava nor the *tufa'ava*, and their speeches usually begin by recognizing the previous speakers. The last one who spoke is the first mentioned, then the one before, and so on. This pattern is shown in the following excerpt from a *fono* in which five *Ls* were delivered. Upu, the orator whose speech is partly reproduced below, was the fifth speaker:

(2) (March 17, p. 26)
　　(The order of speakers before Upu is, starting from the first on,

Taofiuailoa, Alo, Fanua, and Nu'ualitia.)

Upu: *Fa'amālō akū-   (1.0)*
Congratulations to (1.0)

(4th)   *fekalai, Gu'ualikia. 'ikia.*
your speaking, Nu'ualitia. (2.0)

O le Afioga momoli a lea ia Alai'a-sā,
[You] have expressed the message of Alai'a-sā,

Sa'o'ese'ese.
[of] the Sa'o'ese'ese.

(2.0) Fa'aogu'u fo'i ma le Usoali'i.
(2.0) and also of Fa'aonu'u and the Usoali'i.

(3rd)   *(2.0) Ua- (1.0) fekalai fo'i Fagua   (2.5)*
(2.0) Also- (1.0) Fanua has spoken (2.5)

(2nd)   *Ia vu vagaga fo'i iā Alo   (4.0)*
And a speech has come from Alo (4.0)

(1st)   *Ua fekalai le Laukogia i lo kākou kaeao,*
The Lautogia has spoken in this morning of ours,

?:   *Mālie!*
Well said!

Upu: *i sā ma faigakā o Moamoa.*
About the sacred people of [our *malae*] Moamoa.

This passage illustrates a "mirror image" pattern of acknowledgements in an *L*. Given a sequence ABCD of speakers, they will be mentioned by speaker E (who speaks after D) in the inverse order DCBA.

In the same passage we also find further evidence for the tendency, in an *L*, to identify people in terms of their social connections, to refer to them as part of a larger group. Thus, for instance, when the fourth speaker (Nu'ualitia) is acknowledged, a whole section of the ceremonial greeting of his subvillage is quoted. This stresses Nu'ualitia's right to speak only as a representative of all the *matai* from his subvillage. Finally, when the first speaker is mentioned, we find, instead of his title, the title of his whole subvillage, namely, "Lautogia", a term which is synonym with " '*Āiga Pule*" explained before.

Thanksgiving

The second part of the *L* in a *fono* is the "Thanksgiving to God" (*fa'afetai i le Atua*), also called "God's love" (*alofa o le Atua*).

The two main themes are pursued in this part with numerous metaphors of varying contents and connotations: (a) God has the supreme power over all humans and He can terminate our lives at any time, and (b) we must thank Him for letting us gather here this morning as we had planned. The latter theme is usually expanded in various images that illustrate people's happiness for God's love, for His generosity in giving them health and concord. Both (a) and (b) are illustrated, in the reverse order, in the following passage:

(3) (April 7, book II, pp. 3-4)
(First *lāuga* of the day)
T: ((The orator has just finished mentioning the kava))
Ia a'o lo kākou kaeao
And as for our morning,

ia,'ua le kugoa fo'i legei kaeao . . .
Yes, there is a reason for this morning . . .

Kakou fa'akasi . . .
[when] we gather together . . .

ogo'o le aofia ma le fogo o lo kākou gu'u
because of the assembly and the *fono* of our village

pei oga . . . liliu i ai le kōfā ma le- . . . fa'aukaga fo'i
as it was decided by the chiefs and by the orators

legā vaiaso ua kuaga'i aku . . .
on the week that has just passed . . .

Ia e::- . . . e ausaga le kū 'a'ao lava . . .
And . . . [like] swimmers who cannot touch [with] their feet

le kōfā ma le fa'aukaga . . .
are the decisions of chiefs and of orators . . .

i le figagalo (o) le Akua.
in front of God's will.

?:   *Mālie!*
         Well said!

What the orator has said could be rephrased (much less poetically) as the following: "Even if we all decided to meet today for some specific reason, our decision would not matter, if God had not given us the chance to accomplish our plan."

The whole Thanksgiving can be seen as a statement of equality and solidarity of humans before God. It is this opposition between Man and God that allows the whole village in general and the *fono* in particular to be "one", united. The frequent use of the pronoun *kākou*, first person plural inclusive, stresses the unity of the *matai*:

(4) (April 7, book II, pp. 4-5)
     (First speaker, 'Thanksgiving')
     T: *Ua- . . . KĀKOU . . . 'oa'oa i faleseu*
              We all rejoice in the hunter's shelter

              ma ua KĀKOU sa'o i ma'o mālie . . .
              and we all are in good health . . .

              Ia go'o le alofa ma le agalelei o lo KĀKOU Makai . . .
              Yes because of the love and kindness of our *Matai* . . .

              KĀKOU fesilafa'i i luma o le gu'u
              We all meet in front of the village

              'ae le 'o kua o le gu'u . . .
              and not in the back of the village . . .

              leai   *// se kala vale*
              there is no   // unpleasant news
     ?:

                                Mālie!
                                Well said!

     T: *po'o se mea e fa'apopoleiga . . .*
              nor anything to worry about . . .

              . . . ga'o le leo le fiafia
              . . . only the happy voice

ma KĀKOU ke 'ave ai le vi'iga
and we all give our praise

i lo KĀKOU Makai o i le Lagi . . .
to our *Matai* who is in Heaven . . .

This use of *kākou* also used in referring to God (*lo kākou Makai i le Lagi* 'our *Matai* [Father] who is in Heaven') contrasts with the *mātou* ('our' exclusive) found in prayers. Whereas in a prayer the speaker directly addresses God, in a *fono*, he addresses the other chiefs and orators present.

Finally, notice the use of the article *lo* with the *o* of inalienable possession in *lo kākou Makai* 'our (inclusive) Father'. God is everyone's *matai*, almost inherently. His power on all humans cannot be taken away and this makes everyone alike.

Morning

The term 'morning(s)' (*taeao*) is a metaphor for important events in the history of Samoa (cf. Milner 1966:224, Love 1979, ch.1).

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 in Samoa:

(5) (April 7, book II, p.6)
    T: . . . *'O ikū i kaeao,* . . .
              As for the mornings,

              Ia 'o kaeao masagi lava
              well [they] are very well-known mornings

              o le aukugu'u
              of our country

              kaeao (o) le Loku
              the morning (of) the Church

              ma kaeao- le Kusi Pa'ia
              and the morning (of-) the Bible

              Ia . . . o kaeao lava . . .
              Yes . . . real mornings . . .

              Ua kuaga'i ia kaeao
              Those mornings have gone

ma kaeao- fo'i sa fa'asilisiliga
and the very mornings that were selected ·

i 'o(u)figagalo
by the wish of you [chiefs]

ma o kākou fa'amoemoe, . . .
and the hope of us [orators] . . .

Ia 'ae 'o le kaeao sili a legei
well this is the most important morning

ua kākou aulia maguia
when we meet in good spirit

legei kaeao fōu
[on] this new morning

ma legei aso fōu . . .
and this new day . . .

fa'akaugu'uiga ai
to accomplish

le- le kōfā ma le fa'aukaga
the decision of the chiefs and of the orators.

As can be seen in this passage, the *taeao* ends with the emphasis on the particular morning on which people have gathered to take some important decision. That is then the most important morning for the moment. Notice the use of the adjective *fōu*, 'new', that seems to contrast with an unsaid "old" of the history of Samoa. It is the here and now that we should be concerned with, the orator seems to say. It is a change of scene, from past to present, from what has been accomplished by the founders and fathers of the country to what must be achieved in the meeting.

Dignity of the Sacred Names

The *pa'ia* is the acknowledgement of the dignity of the chiefs. *Pa'ia* means 'sacred' and is usually associated with chiefs (*ali'i pa'ia* were the very high chiefs of ancient Samoan history, cf. Brown 1910: 283; Keesing 1934; Sahlins 1958). The corresponding term for orators is *mamalu*. However, in this case, *pa'ia* seems to refer to both chiefs and orators,

ith no particular distinction. Other terms that are found next to *pa'ia* re *sā*, 'holy, forbidden' (*fale sā* is the Church building, a house that canot be violated), and *faigatā*, 'difficult'. These terms remind us of the iniversally recurrent equation of sacred beings as separated beings (Durkheim 1915).

The speechmaker must emphasise that he is not conferring the attribute "sacred" to the *matai*, but rather that they are so from ever and vill always be. No matter what happens or what is said, no one will be ible to subtract anything from the transcendental dignity of the *matai* of Samoa:

(6) (April 7, book II, p.6)
　　　'o pa'ia lava mai le vavau e 'o'o i le fa'avavau
　　　They are very sacred from the past to reach eternity

　　　E le ai se kasi ga ke koe koesea se 'upu
　　　There is no one who could subtract a word

　　　pe koe fa'aopopoiga . . .
　　　or add anything . . .

This kind of statement is clearly used to assure the audience that whatever the outcome of the meeting will be, the sacred names of the village will stay untouched, and no one will doubt their glory and respectability.

Formal Greeting
　　This part is found only in Ls in a *fono*. It praises and greets all the important titles of the village, arranging them in hierarchical order and quoting their respective ceremonial greetings. It usually starts with the mention of the name of the *malae* and ties that name to the name of the *malae* of the village considered as the head of the district. If the orator wishes to do so, he can continue his greeting to include the title of the whole district (he must, however, first finish the greetings of the titles of the subvillages represented in the *fono*).

　　The order in which the various subvillages are greeted matches their hierarchy as defined in Duranti (1981).

　　The word *tulouga* (or *tulouna'*) is, according to Samoans, related to the expression *tuloul* 'pardon [me]!' This etymological tie makes this part of the *lāuga* sound like an apology, a disclosure of the orator's responsibility—and, in fact, we do find such expressions as *tulouga a le sautia ma le viligia* which could be translated as 'apology for your arriv-

ing early in the morning'. However, most of the *tulouga* part is made up
of typical greeting expressions (e.g., *afio mai, 'e'e ta'i mai,* etc.), or by
the expression *lē liua,* 'does not change' followed by the ceremonial
phrases that greet the most important titles.

(7) (April 7, book II, pp.7-8)

> *Ia. . . . kulouga ia . . . a le aofia ma le fogo.*
> So. . . . homage to the assembly and the *fono*

> *. . . Kulouga le viligia ma kulouga a le saukia.*
> . . . Apology for your inconvenience early in the
> morning.

> *. . . Kulouga Moamoa o kua o Lalogafu'afu'a*
> Homage to [the *malae* of] Moamoa the back of
> Lalogafu'afu'a

> *. . . Ia . . . Ka'i maia . . . i lo oukou pa'ia*
> . . . And . . . Respect . . . to your holiness

> *ma lo oukou mamalu . . .*
> and your sacredness . . .

> (. . .)

> *Kulouga . . . le Makua o Moe'ogo'ogo . . .*
> Homage . . . [to] the senior orator Moe'ono'ono . . .

> *Kulouga Sā-Alo . . . kulouga Sā-Pulupulu'igiu*
> Homage [to] the family of Alo. . .homage [to] the
> family of Pulupulu'iniu

> *ma le nofoaga o ali'i*
> and the residence of the chiefs

> *le liua le pa'ia iā Leukele 'o le kigā o Kupua.*
> the sacredness of Leutele, the mother of Tupua, does
> not change.

> (. . .)

This part can thus be seen as more than one act at the same time: a

ormal greeting to the assembly; a recognition of the titles that have the
ight to sit on the *fono*; the reaffirmation of the village hierarchies and
illiances; and an apology for the inconvenience of having to get out of
he house early in the morning for attending the meeting. All of these
neanings seem a perfect introduction to the next part of the speech,
iamely, the official statement of the agenda of the day.

The Formal Greeting reaffirms the Samoan view of the relationship
ietween a title and its holder(s). The title, its attributes, and the
iccomplishments of its holders or originator in the past are beyond
Joubt and discussion. No matter what, they will stay the same as they
.vere. The actions of the individuals who hold the title cannot affect the
Jignity of the name, its past and eternal glory. However, if a titleholder
Joes not behave according to his office, does not honour his *matai* name,
it is the duty of the *fono* to remind him of his tie to that name, to that
past glory. The title becomes then the point of reference, the model, of
appropriate social behaviour. The relationship between the title and the
individual holder can then be seen as parallel (although of a different
'logical type', as Bateson (1980) would say) to the relationship between
the *fono* as an ideal structure and the *fono* as an active body of leading
members of the society engaged in a socially vital endeavour (cf. Duranti
1981; Shore 1977).

The Agenda of the Meeting

Once he has recited the ideal structure of the *fono* and its bonds to the
district, the orator can move to what is perhaps the most difficult part of
his speech, the statement of the agenda of the meeting.

Although everyone usually knows what is going to be discussed, this
first statement is the official announcement of the crisis, the recognition
by members of the *fono* that a violation of the social norms has taken
place and an action must be taken. At times, the *fono* may be called for
simply taking a decision about some future event and no actual violation
can be claimed. The *matai* may all agree on a certain proposal made by
some group or individual. However, even in such cases, I would argue
that the potential for conflict and social distress is there and the
announcement of the agenda is itself a challenge to the ideal social order
of the community. Although in some cases the crisis may be less obvious
or visible than in others, the need for a discussion and confrontation of
ideas and opinions is a threat to the harmony and hierarchy declared in
the preceding parts of the *L*.

In announcing the agenda, the speechmaker must find the right
equilibrium between accuracy and vagueness. If he is too vague, the
chairman may ask him to repeat, more precisely, what the assembly must

discuss. On the other hand, he does not want to be too accurate either, given that it is difficult to say exactly what the problem is without somehow committing oneself to a particular view on the issue. The avoidance of commitment is also seen in the fact that, if there are more than one, the speakers after the first usually either skip the mention of the agenda or simply say that it has been already illustrated by the first speaker.

Wish of "Clear Skies"

After the announcement of the agenda of the meeting, the orator is almost at the end of his speech, and he may say so in various ways: "that was my voice" or "those were my words", and so on. These statements, however, do not mark the actual end of the *L*, which must be completed by the *fa'amatafi lagi*, literally 'clearing [of the] sky'. The name of this part comes from the expression *lagi e mamā . . .*, 'clear skies [to] . . .', which is used as a metaphor for a life with no problems, the latter being represented by the image of clouds that darken the sky. This part is thus a wish of a good, healthy life to all the people present. There are several metaphors that the orator can use in addressing different parts of the assembly. Each metaphor has a connotation with respect to different statuses (namely, chief vs. orator), and two expressions can be also used to distinguish between the whole body of orators and the two senior orators. The last one to be wished a long life is the orator himself:

(8) (January 25, p. 20)
    T: *Ia gi lagi mamā . . .*
        Be clear skies

        i le pa'ia iā ke oukou 'Āiga . . .
        to you chiefs

        . . . Ma Sā-Fegugu'ivao
        . . . and the family of Fenunu'ivao

        ma 'Āiga Sā-Alai'a-sā
        and the family of Alai'a-sā

        ma Aloali'i . . .
        and the [two] sons of the chief.

        'Aua ge'i usuia le fogo pe lafo le fue
        Don't leave the *fono* or remove your fly flapper

iā oulua Matua . . .
from you, oh Matua . . .

Ia laumea lelei a le 'a'ai a Fogokī
And good leaves to the village of Fonotī ((the orators))

Ia ae ou ola!
And may I live!

. . .

?:   *Mālō!*   ┌*// fekalai!*
            Congratulations   │*//* for your speech!
            │
T: └*Maguia le aofia ma le fogo!*
                                Good luck to the assembly and
                                the fono!

        (. . .)

By wishing all the other *matai* a long life ('do not die!' is what the various metaphors actually say), the orator is recognising and creating a dramatic change of scene. The *matai* are now seen as mortal human beings and no more as sacred, unreachable semigods, whose deeds are eternal. They may die. They have then become individuals, men who will have to deal with the fortune and misfortune of living. This happens after the orator has announced the agenda, publicly recognising the crisis and the need for a discussion. The precariousness of the present, of human conditions and contingencies is now on the stage. The meeting is open to expressions of resentment, disagreement, conflict, and anger.

The last line *maguia le aofia ma le fogo!* 'Good luck to the assembly and to the *fono!*' is the most common closure of an *L* and of any speech in the *fono*, in general.

In the *T*s, or even in the *L*s after the first, when the speaker does not have to go through all the parts, the coda can be used not only as a final salutation and signal that the speech is over, but also as a condensed version of the "Clearing of the Sky" part.

A REVIEW OF THE LĀUGA

The various parts of an *L*, in their temporal succession, can be seen as

consecutive steps, a sort of memorandum for the speechmaker, as shown in Figure 5.

I.	Connect your speech with what has preceded you. (a. mention of the kava; b. Acknowledgement of previous speakers) Warrent your right to speak (KAVA);
II.	Stress of life and human planning (viz. the *fono*) in front of/compared with mighty God. Thank the Lord for satisfying the *matai*'s wishes to have a meeting on that particular day (THANKSGIVING);
III.	Establish common historical grounds (MORNINGS). Declare that whatever was accomplished in the past, must now be concentrated on the present *fono*;
IV.	Reaffirm the dignity and sacredness of the *matai* titles (DIGNITY);
V.	Acknowledge and greet the most important titles represented in the *fono*, listing them according to families and subvillages in hierarchical order (FORMAL GREETING);
VI.	State the reason(s) for this particular *fono* (AGENDA OF THE MEETING);
VII.	Wish a good and long life to the members of the assembly (CLEARING OF THE SKY).

FIGURE 5

Lāuga Plan

When there are four or more *L*s delivered, the ones after the first do not have to follow all seven steps outlined above (although their respective order is by and large maintained).

It is up to each orator to decide whether he will skip, or not, some of the parts, and which ones. Usually, however, if the speechmaker decides to skip a particular part, he will announce that he is about to do so by acknowledging that the previous speaker(s) has(have) already spoken about that particular theme. This is especially the case with the agenda of the meeting.

(9) (March 17, book I, p. 22, third speaker)
F: *Oga fa'apea ai a lea o lo'u kaofi, . . .*
       Coming now to express my concern, . . .

       Leai ua lava ma kokoe le fekalaiga iā Loa,
       No. The speech given by Loa will be sufficient and remain

'o lea fo'i ua fekalai iai le kofā iā Alo.
now that also His Highness Alo has also spoken about
it.   .

?:   *Mālie!*
       Well said!

F: *'A 'o le asō,*
       But as for today,

       . . . leai 'o lea ua fa'afofoga le pa'ia i 'Āiga
       . . . no. Now the sacred Family of chiefs

       ma Aloali'i
       and the two sons of chiefs

       o Makua fo'i ma kagaka o le Kuiakua,
       as well as the senior orators and the people of the King
       of Atua have listened

       ua fekalai le Laukogia
       the Lautogia has spoken

       makā'upu o le Aofia ma le fogo.
       about the topics of the assembly and the *fono.*

       . . .

The orator manages, then, not to repeat the agenda of the *fono*. In other cases, however, in acknowledging the previous speakers, the orator may also add a sentence or two that actually constitutes a shortened version of that particular part of the *L*. And, as we shall see later in discussing the *T*, this technique also characterises the speeches at the beginning of the discussion.

TALANOAGA

There are two basic features by means of which one can distinguish between *L* and *T*. They are (1) *L* precedes *T*, and (2) only in *T*s, can the agenda of the meeting be discussed. However, as I will point out in this section, in practice the distinction is not always an easy one to make, given that *T*s are basically shaped on the *L*-plan and use much of the same vocabulary and many of the same expressions.

The Overall Organisation of the Discussion

As I mentioned before, the term *talanoaga* refers both to the whole discussion and to a speech performed within it.

The senior orator who starts the discussion (Moe'ono) has the privilege of introducing the issue(s) and expressing first his opinion on the matter. In this sense, the speeches after his can be seen as answers to his speech, as a vote, in Western terms, for or against his opinion.

If present, the other senior orator (Iuli) will usually follow, and, after him, the other orators will speak. In his first *T*, each orator must speak as a representative of his subvillage, that is, he is seen as the voice of a certain chief or group. If he wants to speak out for himself, he should wait for a second turn, later on.

Chiefs usually wait to speak after the orators, unless one of them feels directly involved in the issue that is being discussed and wants to clarify some points at once. After the various opinions have been expressed and argued for, it will be the chiefs' turn to speak, as a whole.

At this point, the highest chief present will address the audience. He will summarise the discussion and some of the arguments and concerns presented by the parts, and, finally, propose the direction for a solution or conclusion of the meeting (at times, this may simply be the convocation of another, perhaps broader, meeting).

As a *matai* once told me, the chief is here seen as a judge who listens to the contenders and eventually issues the verdict.

Whatever the high chief may say, he will not get into the details of the final decision.

If a fine must be assigned, it will be left to the orators to decide on the exact amount, a high chief being too dignified to get into such trivial matters. If a fine is to be assigned to a high chief, the assembly may leave it to him to decide his own fine; for minor figures of lower rank, instead, the orators in charge will spell out very clearly the exact number of cans of fish or beef or the exact amount of money to be paid to the assembly.

TELESCOPING

I shall propose here that the structural organisation of a *T* as a single speech must be understood as having the *L*-plan discussed above as a reference point.

In the same way in which *L*s vary moving away from the beginning of the *fono*, for which the second or third *L*, if any, may skip some of the parts that must appear in the first, *T*s change as well. The first speeches in the discussion part of a *fono* will resemble more earlier *L*s than later *T*s. They will have a certain *L*-flavour: this will tend to be the case also for the same speaker, for, if a *matai* gives more than one *T* about the

same topic, his first speech will likely be more L-like than the second. I will refer to this phenomenon as "telescoping", meaning the tendency of speeches over time to be more and more reduced versions of the basic L-plan.

The basic structure of a T can be characterised as composed of three parts, with the middle one taking precedence over the other two in terms of importance, time, and complexity.

The first part is the acknowledgement of previous speakers (1), the second part the discussion of the issue at hand (comparable to 6 in the *lāuga*), and the third and last part the good wish to the assembly (cf. 7).

However, as I said, the first *T*s tend to have some other remnants of the L-structure, and we may find a shortened thanksgiving and a mention of the dignity of the chiefs.

In Figure 6 below, I have schematically illustrated the "telescoping" effect in going from Ls to Ts, from the beginning of the *fono* towards the end of the discussion.
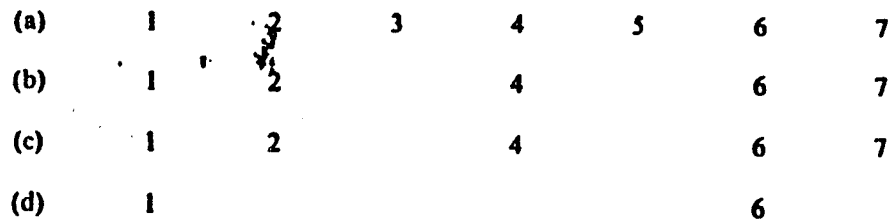
(a)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(b)	1	2		4		6	7
(c)	1	2		4		6	7
(d)	1					6	

FIGURE 6

Telescoping effect from *lāuga* to *talanoaga*

(a) is the typical first L of the day; (b) is a possible format of an L after the first (optional); (c) is a possible speech (*T*) towards the beginning of the discussion; and (d) is a T in the middle or towards the end of the discussion.

We see then in Figure 6 that the last L and the first T are likely to be structurally similar. This may be due to a tendency for different genres co-occurring in the same event to become more similar to one another.

Figure 6, however, gives the wrong impression about the respective weight and length of each part of the speech. I have thus reproduced the telescoping effect in another figure (Figure 7), in which the width occupied by a certain part is proportional to the time spent by the orator in delivering it.

(a)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(b)	1	2	4		6	7	
(c)	1	2	4			6	7
(d)	1					6	

FIGURE 7

Telescoping effect in the time proportions

At the beginning of the discussion, then, we find that *T*s present some of the features characteristic of the later *L*s. One of these features is the need for the orator to refer back to parts of the *L*-plan and to the fact that they have already been mentioned and declaimed by a previous speaker (especially by the first one). Although saying "I don't need to say this again", the speaker is at the same time taking the opportunity to restate some of the points stressed in the *L*.

An example of such a custom is provided in the following passage that illustrates a typical speech immediately after Moe'ono, the chairman, has opened the discussion:

(10)(April 7, book II, pp.14-15)

F: *Ia fa'afekai aku lava Moe'ogo . . .*
        Well thank you very much Moe'ono

        'O lea fo'i ua- . . . 'e vagaga fekalai
        you have also spoken

        ma ua . . . fa'akigo fo'i lou figagalo
        and expressed your preference

        ua fa'auso le fogo . . .
        opening the discussion

        Ia. 'O lea ua . . . uma fo'i oga . . .
        Yes. And also . . . His Highness the Lautogia

si'i e le kōfā i le Laukogia le vi'iga ma le fa'afekai
has raised the praise and the thanksgiving

i lo·kākou Makai . . .
to our Matai (= God) . . .

Ia'o gei lava aso uma 'o aso uma a ga fa'apa'ia e Ieova
since all these days are all days blessed by God

. . .

?:   *Mālie!*
         Well said!

F: *E le koe kau fa'apa'iaiga la*
         I will not try again to mention

         i gi saugoaga ma gi fekalaiga,
         the dignity of the chiefs and of the orators

         Leai ua pa'ia lava le aso ma le kaeao . . .
         No. The day and the morning are sacred

         Kulaga la pei o lou figagalo Moe'ogo . . .
         Issues that you have expressed concern for Moe'ono,

         Ia 'o lea fo'i ua-. . . fa'afofoga lo kākou gu'u
         Yes, our village has listened

         . . .

Notice that after saying that the first orator (referred to as Lautogia) has already said the Thanksgiving to God, the orator adds the line "all these days are all days blessed by God", an expression appropriate for the Thanksgiving. After that, again, he acknowledges the mention of the dignity of the chiefs and orators (*pa'ia*), but then adds that "the day is sacred", confirming it in his own words.

When the *fono* has been going on for some time, the speakers do not need anymore to do much introductory work, and may go on with the discussion of the various points, after a brief recognition of some previous speakers. One way to explain this variation over time, from longer to shorter "prefaces", is to say that *the speakers after the very*

first ones can build on what has been said before, that is, their speech can
be considered as a continuation of previous talk and in this respect they
can take advantage of the introductory work done by those who spoke
before.

Notice, for instance, how, in the following passage, Moe'ono gets into
the discussion of the second topic after only one sentence of recognition
of a (second) kava ceremony that has just taken place:

(11)(April 7, book III, p.2)
    Moe'ono: *Ia ua mae'a lo kākou agakogu . . .*
              Well, our kava is finished . . .

              'O leisi a kākou makā'upu, . . .
              As for the second of our topics . . .

              E fikoikogu iā ke 'oe Savea Sioge . . .
              It concerns you Savea Sione . . .

              ma:- ma . . . o lea ua sau fo'i i le ea . . .
              and . . . It just came on the air

              ua 'e kukulu i le kulāfono . . .
              that you have complained to the court . . .

        (. . .)

Furthermore, we find variation not only from one speaker to another,
but also comparing two speeches of the same speaker. The first one will
usually be more elaborate in the introduction part and in the *lāuga*
expressions than the second one.

HOW TO REMEDY A LOSS OF BALANCE

At this point, we must introduce another factor that will help us to
understand some apparent regressions into *L*-style. In the middle of a
heated discussion, a *matai* may start a speech that for its organisation
and content resembles more a *T* towards the beginning of the discussion.

These are very often cases in which the speaker is trying to recreate a
balance that is being lost. As I explained before, the language of *L*s is
used as a preface to the more direct language of the discussion. The
various messages and values expressed in the beginning of the *fono* are
the necessary foundations for the confrontation arena of the following
part of the meeting. The *L*, as well as beginnings in general, which