

## **Tropic Extensions of the Speech Act Scene in Karitiâna**

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### *Abstract*

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In Karitiâna, certain pervasive morphological and syntactic patterns of voice are best understood in the light of socio-culturally oriented background information relevant to the speech setting. When such information is taken into account, it is evident that “exceptions” to certain structural patterns are actually tropic extensions of the speech act scene, which is frequently highlighted by particular voice alterations. Such tropic extensions may be used to demonstrate social alignment between the speaker and a given 3<sup>rd</sup> person referent. The data explored here illustrate the continual need for wedding linguistic analyses with a more holistic understanding of the socio-cultural contexts of described utterances.

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### **I. Introduction**

Karitiâna is a Tupí language of the south-central Amazon, spoken in the state of Rondônia, Brazil. It was not systematically documented until the 1970’s. Since that time, the language has received some attention in the linguistic literature, most notably in Landin (1984), Storto (1999), and Everett (2006). The language is typologically remarkable in a number of ways. With respect to its sound system, it exhibits unusual patterns of nasality, which have pervasive effects on the language’s phonology (cf. Everett 2008, Everett forthcoming). With respect to morphosyntax, there are several

typologically remarkable constructions characterizing certain voice-related modulations (cf. Everett 2006).

Despite previous work on the language, there is one pervasive pattern of morphosyntactic variation characterizing many Karitiâna declarative clauses, which is poorly understood. One goal of the present work is to provide a novel analysis of the relevant patterns. The ultimate goal of this study, however, is to demonstrate how an understanding of aspects of the Karitiâna socio-cultural milieu is crucial to understanding the grammatical variation in question. Certain previously mysterious morphosyntactic modulations can be characterized not as exceptions to a structurally-oriented account, but as cases of tropic extensions of the grammatically delineated ‘speech act scene.’ Such extensions may be used by speakers in order to index affiliation with a given 3<sup>rd</sup> person referent.

It is worth clarifying from the outset what is meant by ‘tropic’ in this case. Broadly defined, tropes are usages of language in which speakers intentionally do something unpredictable with the form of their utterances for a particular social effect. In other words, in some cases the structure of the language (e.g. a morphological paradigm) predicts a certain form, but a speaker may intentionally utilize another seemingly infelicitous or ungrammatical form for a particular purpose. For example, Agha (2005:48) describes a situation in which a male Lakhota speaker, who is expected to use a particular morpheme when addressing another male speaker, intentionally employs a different morpheme, typically used with female addressees, while addressing a young male. In such cases, according to Agha, the “semiotic co(n)text” predicts one form, but the actual form employed violates expectations. When social factors are considered,

however, a straightforward interpretation of the putative violation follows, e.g. the Lakhota speaker may be playing with the connotations of the female form employed. In a similar vein, I will suggest below that there are numerous cases in my data in which Karitiâna speakers violate structurally based expectations for the usage of a particular morpheme. In the words of Agha, the semiotic co(n)text predicts one form, but another form actually surfaces. The motivations for the putative violations are once again understood when relevant facts about the social contexts of each utterance are understood.

The relevant tropic usage in the cases described below does not relate to something as overtly social as the gender of the addressee. Instead, the tropes described below are implemented in more subtle ways, which are nevertheless demonstrably social. More specifically, we find that tropes are used by Karitiâna speakers in order to metaphorically draw a 3<sup>rd</sup> person referent into a speech act scene, treating the given referent as though s/he were co-present at the time of utterance. Crucially, these tropic extensions of the speech act scene may serve to index social alignment between the speaker employing the trope and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person referent being talked about.

The case described here is of interest for several reasons. First, it adds to the body of literature on the creative ways in which speakers index social affiliation in language (cf. Hanks 2000). It also represents a clear case in which a particular structural paradigm is used tropically. The paradigm in this case relates to voice categories (e.g. passive, direct, inverse, etc.). I am unaware of any studies in the literature on the tropic manipulation of voice categories. Furthermore, this appears to be the first documented case in which social indexing is accomplished via the manipulation of voice categories.

As Hanks (2000:125) notes, indexical relations are typically established via pronouns, demonstratives, and deictics. Finally, the case described is noteworthy because it demonstrates how certain shortcomings of previous structurally-based accounts of Karitiâna, including a previous account by the author, are eliminated once certain socio-cultural factors are considered alongside the relevant structural factors.

Before discussing in greater detail the actual tropic extensions of the speech act scene in Karitiâna, some relevant morphosyntactic data must be presented. In the following section I describe how the speech act scene is typically indexed via a pervasive voice alternation in the language, so that in subsequent sections I can contrast this typical pattern with those cases in which the speech act scene is extended tropically for social purposes.<sup>1</sup>

## **II. Summary of the Relevant Morphosyntactic Data**

### ***A. The Inverse-like ‘Speech Act Participant’ Voice***

In this section I outline a basic aspect of Karitiâna grammar, namely a series of morphemes that are generally used to express particular categories of what is often referred to as voice. Voice categories in language include the passive, antipassive, direct, and inverse. (Cf. Shibatani 2006) I will first demonstrate that the relevant morphemes in

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<sup>1</sup> The data presented in subsequent sections were collected in the field from 2006-2007, in the city of Porto Velho. The clauses were recorded digitally onto a Mac Powerbook laptop. The transcriptions are my own. The majority of the clauses were recorded during elicitation sessions. Clauses 24-26 are taken from a recording of two Karitiâna women.

Karitiâna are used to reveal a distinction that is broadly similar to the direct-inverse distinction evident in many languages. The purpose of this section is to provide a structurally oriented account (based on Everett 2006) of the relevant forms in the language. In the following sections, I will show how this account does not paint the whole picture, and how we cannot completely understand the distribution of the relevant forms without appealing to socio-cultural factors relevant at the moment of particular utterances. Conversely, we cannot understand how the relevant forms are exploited for social purposes without a basic understanding of the morphological paradigm being manipulated by speakers in such cases. Thus, a description of the relevant morphological minutia is in order.

In Karitiâna, declarative verbs are typically prefixed with one of two mutually exclusive voice morphemes, **na(ka)-** or **ta(ka)-**. (Cf. Everett 2006) The **na(ka)-/ta(ka)-** alternation is evident in the following four sample clauses:

- |    |                |   |                                   |             |            |
|----|----------------|---|-----------------------------------|-------------|------------|
| 1. | i<br>3         | <b>naka-m</b> <sup>o,n</sup> , <sup>∞</sup> -t<br>NSAP-hit-NFUT   | o,n <sup>∞</sup> ,<br>DEM.DIST    | taso<br>man | aka<br>DET |
|    |                | “He hit that man.”  |                                   |             |            |
| 2. | ka/it<br>today | <sup>^</sup> - <b>taka</b> -mbik-t <sup>∞</sup> , <sup>∞</sup> -a,-t<br>1S.ABS-SAP-sit-PROG-NFUT                                    | <sup>∞</sup> , <sup>∞</sup><br>1S |             |            |
|    |                | “Today I’m sitting.”  |                                   |             |            |
| 3. | ka/it<br>today | <sup>∞</sup> , <sup>∞</sup> - <b>naka</b> -m <sup>∞</sup> , <sup>∞</sup> -t <sup>∞</sup> , <sup>∞</sup> -a,-t<br>NSAP-hit-PROG-NFUT | <sup>∞</sup> , <sup>∞</sup><br>3  | i           |            |
|    |                | “Today I’m hitting him.”  |                                   |             |            |
| 4. | a,n<br>2S      | <b>naka</b> - <sup>^</sup> -j<br>NSAP-eat.TR-FUT  | kojpa<br>pineapple                |             |            |
|    |                | “You will eat the pineapple.”   |                                   |             |            |

Each of the above highlighted morphemes (glossed as SAP or NSAP<sup>2</sup>) has one alternate allomorph. Specifically, both **taka-** and **naka-** also occur without their final syllable, as **ta-** and **na-**, respectively. As Landin notes (1984:225), these reduced forms occur prior to unstressed syllables. Word-level stress is typically root-final in Karitiâna, so the **ta-** and **na-** forms generally occur prior to bisyllabic roots while **taka-** and **naka-** are attached to monosyllabic roots and any polysyllabic words with secondary stress on an initial syllable, e.g. many trisyllabic words. (For more information on stress in the language, see Everett 2006.) This is apparent in the following examples, in which the relevant morphemes occur adjacent to unstressed syllables, unlike the above examples with monosyllabic verb roots:

- |    |  |                                   |      |  |
|----|--|-----------------------------------|------|--|
| 5. | $\hat{\text{ta}}$ -aŋgaR-i<br>1S.ABS-SAP-stand.up-FUT<br>"I'm going to stand up."            | $\text{Æ},n$<br>1S                |      |  |
| 6. | $\text{Æ},,n$ <b>na</b> -k $\text{Æ},,ndop$ - $\emptyset$<br>1S NSAP-open-NFUT               | kaRa,ma<br>door                   | to,m |  |
| 7. | $\hat{\text{ta}}$ -k $\hat{\text{sep}}$ - $\emptyset$<br>1S.ABS-SAP-jump-NFUT<br>"I jumped." | $\text{Æ},n$<br>1S                |      |  |
| 8. | i <b>na</b> -okow-i<br>3 NSAP-break-FUT<br>"She's gonna break his arm."                      | i <sup>-</sup> o,No,<br>3.GEN-arm |      |  |

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<sup>2</sup> SAP refers to 'Speech Act Participant,' since verbs with this prefix typically involve 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person absolutive referents, though as we will see below there are interesting exceptions to this pattern. NSAP refers to 'Non Speech Act Participant,' since verbs with this prefix involve 3<sup>rd</sup> person absolutive referents, i.e. they are not part of the immediate speech act. Here I am defining a speech act scene, simply, as the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person referents and their immediate context. Apart from SAP and NSAP, which I am employing for the sake of consistency with Shibatani (2006) and with previous work on Karitiâna (Everett 2006), the glosses in this paper adhere to the Leipzig glossing conventions suggested by the Max Planck Institute for linguistic fieldwork transcriptions.

When examples 1-4 are contrasted with examples such as 5-8, we see that the presence of **ka-** can be explained according to the above phonological factors. For this reason, this form will be ignored for the present purposes.

The **na(ka)-/ta(ka)- (na-/ta-** henceforth) verb prefix set plays a prominent role in Karitiãna, and frequently occurs in naturalistic corpora. Nevertheless, the function of this prefix set is not entirely understood. It should become clear in subsequent sections that part of the reason this prefix set has not been understood properly is that some social factors have been ignored in the postulation of structurally-oriented rules that attempt to describe the behavior of the prefix set. Before turning to the relevant social factors, though, it is worth summarizing the previous attempts to describe the prefixes.

Storto suggests that the prefix set is simply attached to verbs in “declarative” (1999:163) clauses, while Landin classifies the prefixes as “affirmative” (Landin 1984:225) markers. The variation between the **na-** and **ta-** forms is ascribed to different motivations by the two researchers. Landin (1984:225) suggests that **na-** is used with verbs following ergative pronouns, while Storto (1999:163) suggests that **na-** is the default form and that it is changed to **ta-** when preceded by an absolutive prefix. As is noted in Everett (2006), exceptions to Landin’s generalization include clauses such as 8 in which **na-** follows a non-ergative pronoun.<sup>3</sup> Exceptions to Storto’s generalization include clauses such as 9, in which **ta-** does not follow a person agreement prefix:

- |    |                      |                             |
|----|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 9. | cali <sup>-</sup> os | <b>ta</b> - <sup>R</sup> -t |
|    | Carlinhos            | SAP-arrive-NFUT             |

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<sup>3</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns of Karitiãna exhibit ergative-like tendencies and Landin (1984) considers these pronouns to be ergative. Example 8 contains a clause with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun, which does not exhibit ergative tendencies at all, and could not be considered an ergative pronoun under any analysis. For an analysis of grammatical relations in Karitiãna, see Everett (2006, Chapter 15).

“Carlinhos arrived.”

Exceptions such as 8 and 9 are not altogether uncommon and hint at the true role of **na-**/**ta-** variation in Karitiâna discourse, described more fully below.

Everett (2006:409-424) adopts a functional-typological approach to the data, more specifically Shibatani's (2006) cognitively oriented approach to voice patterns. While this approach is useful in delineating the basic patterns associated with **na-/ta-**, I will suggest that, even under this non-formalist approach, many of the variants in my corpus of transcribed Karitiâna discourse cannot be completely elucidated until social factors are delineated and incorporated into the relevant account. This is significant, I believe, since it demonstrates how a very basic aspect of Karitiâna morphosyntax cannot be accurately described, even in terms of its structure, without appealing to such factors. This is perhaps most significant since the grammatical domain in question, voice, is not generally thought to be employed in indexing social concepts such as those described below.

Everett (2006) stresses that verbal agreement prefixes in Karitiâna only denote 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person referents, and suggests that the fact that **ta-** generally occurs after person prefixation, as Storto notes, is epiphenomenal. Instead, the **na-/ta-** alternation is oriented according to the status of a clause's absolutive nominal as a speaker or addressee, since **ta-** only occurs after prefixal arguments that represent either a 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> person referent (speech act participants), while **na-** occurs after free nominals denoting a non-1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> person referent (generally non-speech act participants).

Shibatani's (2006:5) typologically based framework for investigating voice phenomena suggests that voice patterns are generally used to highlight aspects of the

origin, development, or termination of an action. Adopting this framework, Everett (2006:420-424) suggests that absolutive nominals can be understood to represent the termination points of given actions, whether they are the S's of intransitive clauses or the O's of transitive clauses. Thus, one way of capturing the **na-/ta-** alternation is by stating that the choice between these forms depends on the person status of the *termination point* of a given action. If an event denoted by a given verb terminates in a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> person, which I am referring to simply as speech act participants, then **ta-** is employed. If the event terminates in a referent that is not a speech act participant (3<sup>rd</sup> persons), **na-** is employed. For this reason, **ta-** is glossed in Everett (2006) and here as SAP, and **na-** as NSAP (as mentioned in footnote 2 above).

In other words, according to Everett (2006), the distinction between **na-** inflected verbs and **ta-** inflected verbs is in many ways similar to the basic distinction evident in some languages between direct and inverse voices. As many typologists have noted (e.g. Comrie 1989), the direct voice in many languages is employed when the agent or subject of a transitive action is higher on the empathy hierarchy (see Silverstein 1976) than the object, i.e. when the agent is a 1<sup>st</sup> person referent and the object is a 3<sup>rd</sup> person referent. Conversely, the inverse voice is often invoked when the reverse situation holds. A similar distinction to the direct-inverse dichotomy is apparently at work in Karitiãna. The **na-** direct-type voice and the **ta-** inverse-type voice are represented again in 10-13.

10.    nelson    **naka**-o~t-Ø                      ipso,´  
      Nelson    NSAP-catch-NFUT                  piranha  
      “Nelson caught the piranha.”
  
11.    Nelson    a-**taka**-o~t-Ø  
      Nelson    2S.ABS-SAP-catch-NFUT  
      “Nelson caught you.”

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12. a,n     **na**-pimbop-Ø                             epesap keReRa  
2S     NSAP-loo Karitiâna for-NFUT     leaf     green.PL  
“You looked for the money.”
13.     cecilia    ^j-**ta**-pimbop-Ø  
Cecilia   1PL.ABS-SAP-find-NFUT  
“Cecilia looked for us.”

Another interesting factor related to this morphological choice, evident in 10-13, is the constituent order inversion that characterizes the **ta**- construction. In clauses with **ta**- verb prefixation, the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronominal form takes the form of an affix occurring *before* the verb.<sup>4</sup> In clauses with **na**- verb prefixation, the 3<sup>rd</sup> person referent takes the form of an NP or the 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun **i**, and in either case occurs *after* the verb. This correlation between semantic-pragmatic inversion and word-order inversion suggests another similarity between the transitive construction with **ta**- verbal inflection and many inverse constructions in the typological literature (see e.g. Comrie 1989, Givón 2001).

Crucially, the choice between **na**- and **ta**- does not depend at all upon the status of the agentive nominal (A) of the transitive clause, only on the status of the more patientive of two nominals (O) in a transitive clause, or the status of the only nominal in an intransitive clause (S). In that sense, the distribution of this prefix set is *dissimilar* to the distribution of inverse markers in many languages. As Givón (2001:155-156) suggests, inversion is typically triggered when the patient (O) of a given clause outranks the agent (A) according to some measure of topicality. Similarly, Shibatani (2006:32) suggests the following in describing the inverse voice:

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<sup>4</sup> As Van Valin (2005) notes, there is significant typological evidence suggesting that such person affixes serve as the true predicate arguments within the clause’s core.

The event configuration  $SAP \rightarrow 3/N^5$  is realized as an unmarked expression: a direct form in the direct/inverse system.

The event configuration  $3/N \rightarrow SAP$  is realized as a marked expression: an inverse form in the direct/inverse system.

The inverse-like **ta-** marking of Karitiâna calls to mind the suggestions made by researchers such as Givón and Shibatani. However, it does not correspond completely to the inverse voice they describe, since **ta-** inflection in transitive clauses surfaces independent of the topicality of the agent. Nevertheless, Everett (2006:412) adapts Shibatani's above characterization of the inverse voice to describe the relevant morphological variation in Karitiâna *transitive* clauses:

The event configuration  $X \rightarrow 3/N$  is realized as an unmarked expression: the direct form prefix **na(ka)-** is attached to the verb. **X** refers to any nominal, from any portion of the topicality hierarchy.

The event configuration  $X \rightarrow SAP$  is realized as a marked expression: the inverse-type form **ta(ka)-** is attached to the verb.

Interestingly for our purposes, this morphosyntactic variation also surfaces in intransitive clauses. Based on the typological findings on inverse systems, we would also not expect such clauses to evince direct/inverse-like alternations. As we see in the following examples taken from Everett (2006:414), however, this is in fact the case.

14.     **na**-<sup>^</sup>R<sup>^</sup>t-Ø                    i  
          NSAP-come-NFUT            3  
          ‘‘They/she/he came.’’

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<sup>5</sup> Here, 3/N represents a 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun or any other noun phrase.

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- |     |   |                             |
|-----|---|-----------------------------|
| 15. | aj- <b>ta</b> - <sup>ˆ</sup> R <sup>ˆ</sup> t-∅<br>2PL.ABS-SAP-come-NFUT<br>“You guys came.”                  | (a <sup>ˆ</sup> tSa)<br>2PL |
| 16. | <b>na</b> -aNgat-∅                    i<br>NSAP-stand.up-NFUT            3<br>“They/she/he stood up.”         |                             |
| 17. | <sup>ˆ</sup> <b>ta</b> -aNgat-∅                    (Æ,n)<br>1S.ABS-SAP-stood.up-NFUT      1S<br>“I stood up.” |                             |

As we see in 14-17, **ta-** is usually attached to intransitive verbs that have SAP referents (1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> person), while **na-** is attached to intransitive verbs with non-SAP referents. “Exceptions” to this pattern, which turn out to be quite revealing, will be discussed shortly. However, to be clear, the following account of **ta-** and **na-** prefixation offered in Everett (2006) and alluded to above is generally accurate for the distribution of these morphemes in most transitive *and* intransitive clauses:

When a described event terminates within the ‘speech act scene’ of discourse, that is, in a Speech Act Participant (1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> person), it is prefixed with **ta(ka)-**.

When a described event terminates outside the ‘speech act scene’ of discourse, that is, in a non-Speech Act Participant (a 3<sup>rd</sup> person referent of any kind), it is prefixed with **na(ka)-**.

This account adopts a broad definition of the termination of an action, which consists of S and O arguments. Crucially, the **na-/ta-** variation is sensitive to whether such absolutive arguments (S and O) are members of the ‘speech act scene,’ i.e. are 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> person referents. Karitiâna consistently indexes the speech act scene via this morphological distinction.

This structurally oriented account is generally accurate for the Karitiâna data, and relates the data to typological findings presented by authors such as Givón and Shibatani. Nevertheless, there are various instances of transcribed Karitiâna discourse in which the variation in question surfaces in ways that are not predicted by a typologically oriented account of the data, since (as I will show below) the variation is due to the tropic extension of the speech act scene, i.e. a 3<sup>rd</sup> person referent is treated metaphorically as a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> person referent. In other words, indexing the ‘speech act scene’ via **na-/ta-** is not an algorithmic-like process, and often constitutes a creative act involving socially oriented background knowledge. As we will see, who is indexed as a speech act scene participant cannot be defined in an *a priori* manner (such as e.g. “those people present at the time of an utterance”), and may instead be reanalyzed/reconstituted by the speaker through creative usages of the **na-/ta-** morphology.

### ***B. Exceptions: Simple Manipulations of the Speech Act Scene***

There are cases in my data in which the **na-/ta-** morphological choice and the concomitant syntactic changes do not superficially index the ‘speech act scene.’ However, upon closer inspection I believe that these superficial exceptions reveal further the importance of indexing the speech act scene in Karitiâna discourse, and in fact demonstrate the way in which this speech act scene can be tropically manipulated by Karitiâna speakers.

The exceptions to the account occur in many intransitive clauses, but not in clauses with 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> person absolute referents. That is, if a semantically intransitive

verb describes an action affecting a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> person, **na-** is never prefixed to the predicate, at least not in my data. The converse correlation is not without exception, however. That is, in clauses with semantically intransitive predicates describing an event affecting a 3<sup>rd</sup> person, **ta-** prefixation can take the place of the predicted **na-** prefixation in some cases. Exceptions include cases such as 18-19, which can be fruitfully contrasted with 14 and 16, respectively:

- |     |  |   |
|-----|--|---|
| 18. | <b>ta-<sup>h</sup>R<sup>h</sup>t-Ø</b> | i |
|     | SAP-come-NFUT                          | 3 |
|     | “They/she/he came.”                    |   |
| 19. | <b>ta-aNgat-Ø</b>                      | i |
|     | SAP-stand.up-NFUT                      | 3 |
|     | “They/she/he stood up.”                |   |

Such cases, which are not uncommon, contradict previous structurally oriented accounts of the prefixation. Nevertheless, they are grammatical productions. Significantly, though, when presented in isolate such clauses may be considered ungrammatical by Karitiâna speakers. That is, when speakers are asked to make grammaticality judgments about such clauses, without being provided the context, they may consider the clauses infelicitous. Such tokens *are* grammatical in particular contexts, however, as we will see shortly.

To a field linguist transcribing such forms, it may seem (or at least seemed to me) that forms such as 18-19 should not be there, since they violate an account based on evidence such as lists containing dozens of transcribed tokens like those in 14-17. After considering such lists, surveying the typological literature, and analyzing the denotational/structural properties of the forms in question, one’s impulse may be to group cases such as 18 and 19 under the rubric of ‘exceptions’ to the rule/generalization that accounts for the majority of the data.

While confounding initially, examples such as 18 and 19 turned out to be particularly elucidative, once I was able to recognize the inherent limitations of my structurally oriented account. There are obviously limits to considering lists like those above, taken out of context, transcribed on notebook paper. As Kockelman (2004:130) notes, linguistic anthropologists have long been aware of the danger of establishing artificial dichotomies between, for example, indexical and denotational semiotic functions. As Voloshinov once stated, it is dangerous to establish a disjunction between “referential meaning and evaluation” (1973:105, see also Jakobson 1960). Examining tokens such as 18 and 19 in isolate (i.e. apart from the social milieu in which they were actually uttered) does in fact create an artificial disjunction between denotational and indexical functions. In order to account for such a disjunction, I have analyzed tokens such as 18 and 19, considering them on a token-by-token basis and examining the social contexts in which the utterances were produced, as best as the context can be recreated. When this is done, the conflated denotational and indexical functions of the **ta-** prefixation (and syntactic concomitants) have begun to crystallize in ways they could not have with my previous methods.

When considering such tokens, I initially sought to elicit from Karitiãna speakers the motivations for the acceptability of utterances such as 18 and 19. As Silverstein (1981:400) notes, however, “we can best guarantee native speaker awareness for referential, segmental, presupposing functional forms in his or her language.” The sort of variation I sought to explain was not easily amenable to metapragmatic judgment, given its predominantly non-referential function. Nevertheless, some assessments of the function of **ta-** (in examples such as 18 and 19) were offered by insightful language resource personnel. One Karitiãna friend suggested consistently that examples such as 18

and 19, when contrasted with their **na-** counterparts, depict events which have the following two important characteristics:

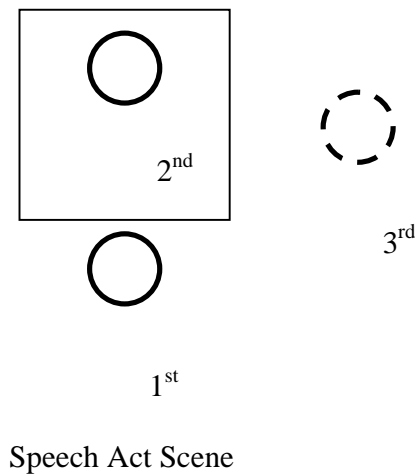
- A. It is an event that can be seen, or it's as though it can be seen.
- B. It is an event that the speaker is certain of having happened.

I should note that many Karitiâna speakers are unable to offer such metapragmatic evaluations. Characteristics A and B are clearly interrelated, and seem to suggest that **ta-** serves some sort of function similar to those served by many evidential markers crosslinguistically. (Cf. Chafe and Nichols 1986, Willett 1988) Significantly, Karitiâna employs two optional evidential suffixes, one an epistemic evidential and the other a hearsay evidential, as evidenced in 20 and 21:

- 20. a-**taka**-tat-son-Ø  
2S.ABS-NSAP-go-EPISTEMIC.EVID-NFUT  
"I think you went."
  
- 21. i            **naka**-p<sup>h</sup>dn-saR<sup>h</sup>t-Ø            bola  
3            NSAP-kick-HEARSAY.EVID-NFUT        ball  
"I heard he kicked the ball."

Obviously, the **ta-** prefix associated with a prefixal voice alternation is not part of the same evidentiality paradigm. Nevertheless, metapragmatic judgments such as A and B above seem to suggest that exceptional cases such as 18 and 19 are used to express epistemic certainty of some sort, in a manner we might expect of evidentials. (Cf. Fox 2001) Crucially, this greater certainty appears to be due to the fact that **ta-** prefixed verbs are construed as if they are performed within the speech act scene.

It was suggested above that the speech act scene is constantly indexed in Karitiâna interaction, via **na-/ta-**. If an intransitive event is performed by a 3<sup>rd</sup> person referent, it is depicted as though it is outside the speech act scene consisting of the interlocutors. This fact is reflected by **na-** prefixation and is depicted schematically in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** A schema depicting the speech act scene, as it determines **na-** selection for intransitive clauses.

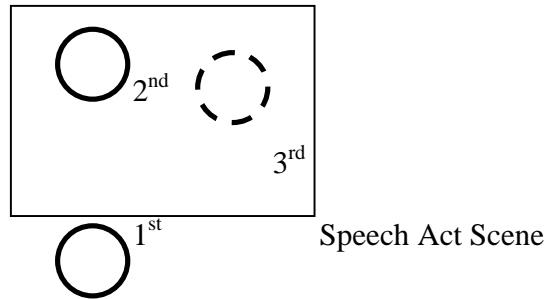
If **ta-** inflected verbs are construed as occurring within the speech act scene in Karitiâna, then it follows that cases such as 18 and 19, in which **ta-** is not predicted but occurs, involve an extended or manipulated usage of the speech act scene. In other words, in cases such as 18 and 19, the data suggest that the 3<sup>rd</sup> person referent is treated in some sense as though it is a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> person referent, i.e. it is part and parcel of the speech act scene. This perspective is supported by characteristics A and B mentioned above.

In the majority of the tokens I have analyzed in which **ta-** is used with a 3<sup>rd</sup> person S, as in 18 and 19, the 3<sup>rd</sup> person referent is near the speaker at the time of the utterance. Of course if the 3<sup>rd</sup> person is present, then the event naturally has characteristics A and B above. For instance, consider the following case in which a Karitiâna speaker described a child playing a game within several yards of the interlocutors:

22.     **ta-po,ma,-t**                   o,wa,  
          SAP-stand.up-NFUT       3  
          “The child is playing.”

When asked if the **na-** variant could have been used in this case, the speaker suggested that it could. Significantly, the speaker would not use the **ta-** variant when describing a child playing dozens of yards away, on the other side of a wall (out of sight). So while **ta-** is not required in cases such as 22, it is grammatical in this case and reflects the speaker’s treatment of a 3<sup>rd</sup> person referent as part of the speech act scene. This is not merely a matter of highlighting physical proximity either. Significantly, Karitiâna exhibits a rich set of proximate demonstratives, which could be employed for such purposes (cf. Everett 2006:325-326).

While **ta-** does not function as an evidential or a demonstrative, it clearly overlaps with the semantic domains of such forms, in that it can be used to denote the proximity to the speaker of a 3<sup>rd</sup> person referent and the event authored by the 3<sup>rd</sup> person. This is true in cases such as 18, 19, and 22. In such cases, the speaker appears to tropically manipulate the speech act scene, via **ta-** usage, so as to include the 3<sup>rd</sup> person referent. This tropic extension is depicted schematically in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Schema representing a manipulated speech act scene, e.g. the **ta-** prefixed verb in 22.

The effects of employing **ta-** with 3<sup>rd</sup> person S's are evident to some extent in characteristics A and B above. These are not the only effects of such usage however, and the speech act scene can be tropically extended in less obvious ways than it is in utterances 18,19, and 22. In the following sections, we will see that a Karitiâna speaker can use **ta-** in order to socially align herself with a non-present 3<sup>rd</sup> person referent, through the tropic extension of the speech act scene.

### **III. Relevant Aspects of the Socio-cultural Context**

The preceding section allows for some understanding of how the speech act scene in Karitiâna is malleable, susceptible to reconstruction according to contextual factors that are not immediately evident in transcriptions. Such micro-level/contextual factors are

crucial to understanding the variation. Put another way, just as Agha (2005:38) notes that macro-level changes in register cannot be understood without understanding micro-level processes of register use in interaction, so the patterns of tropic extension associated with **ta-** usage in Karitiâna cannot be understood without examining micro-level cases of speech act scene manipulation in interaction.

Furthermore, examples such as 22 help us to understand that Karitiâna speakers manipulate this speech act scene in some cases in order to reveal greater epistemic certainty regarding an event, by incorporating a 3<sup>rd</sup> person referent in the “speech act scene.” However, this understanding is not comprehensive in the sense that other cases in the data cannot be accounted for so simply. Consider the following short clause:

23.     <sup>^</sup>-s<sup>^</sup>p   **ta**-p<sup>^</sup>so-t                     kan kere,m-t<sup>^</sup>  
          1S.GEN-father(female speaker)     SAP-take-NFUT                     land-OBL  
          “My father took the land.”

In this case, we see that **ta-** is used when the absolutive nominal refers to a 3<sup>rd</sup> person. Significantly, however, when this clause was produced the 3<sup>rd</sup> person referent was not near the speaker. We will return to this example below, to show why **ta-** is employed in such a case. In fact, 23 is one of several examples taken from a segment of discourse in which the **na-/ta-** alternation plays a prominent role. To examine such a segment, however, a fair amount of elaboration of relevant aspects of the socio-cultural context is required. As Hanks (2000:125) notes:

... processes of indexical anchoring are more subtle and complex than hitherto appreciated, and they cannot be understood without relatively deep analysis of the social and cultural contexts of speech.

For this reason, I will limit my discussion of the socio-cultural context to factors that are demonstrably relevant to an understanding of the discourse segment from which 23 is taken.

The first factor that needs to be addressed is the basic distribution of the Karitiâna population, both demographically and geographically. According to Everett (2006:458), there were 260 Karitiâna in 2005, based on data gathered by a Brazilian health agency. Most of the Karitiâna live in a large village on a government reservation demarcated in 1977, approximately 90 km (by road) south of Porto Velho, the capital city of the state of Rondônia, Brazil. Many of them also spend time in government housing in the city of Porto Velho, where they maintain a store selling artifacts.

Given the ongoing encroachment of the local Brazilian population, it is not surprising that Karitiâna culture is changing. This is evidenced by the fact that young adults are generally more fluent in Portuguese than older adults. Nevertheless, the children learn Karitiâna as their first language, and all Karitiâna I have observed speak the language amongst themselves in most contexts, though some code-mixing does occur.

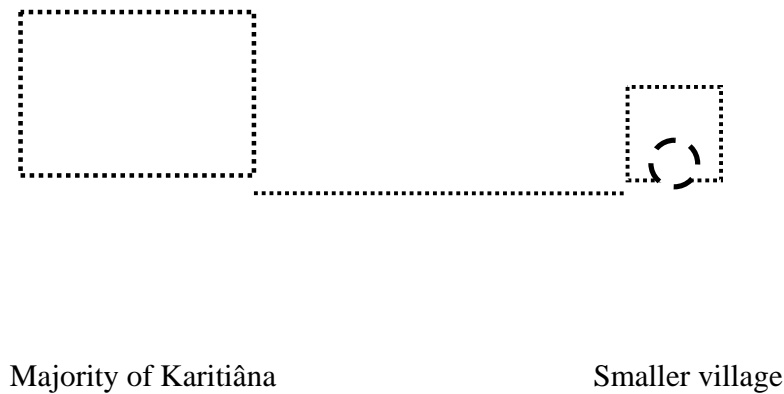
One of the most significant aspects of the social context, for our purposes, is the religious shift that has occurred since the seventies and eighties, when many of the Karitiâna began adopting Christianity. There are three churches in the primary village, associated with separate denominations. Some of the people have voiced opposition to the spread of Christianity, but they are in the minority. Perhaps not surprisingly, one of the opponents is a man referred to as the shaman, who is still considered an important figure by most members of the community.

The shaman is a man in his 50's, making him relatively old. Everett (2006:459) includes a brief demographic analysis of the people, suggesting that while the population has grown from 65 in the 1970's to the present number of 260, the vast majority of Karitiâna are children. In fact, their average age is 19 and there are only 14 Karitiâna older than 50. The children are being raised, to a large extent, in a church-going environment. Not surprisingly, some of the traditional beliefs and practices maintained by the shaman are not being accepted by subsequent generations. To cite one example, polygamy is now stigmatized by the younger Karitiâna, though three older men are bigamous, and one, the shaman, lives with three wives.

The shaman and some members of his family are generally disappointed with the growing influence of Brazilian society on Karitiâna culture. This fact has become increasingly evident in the last two years or so, since the man and his wives, as well as a few siblings, have moved out of the main village. The shaman and his wives have started a second village near the city of Candeias, about 20 miles east of Porto Velho. Their hope is to keep Brazilians from settling land near the new village, land which they maintain belongs to the Karitiâna.

All of the Karitiâna are aware of the new village of the shaman, however he remains generally isolated in his efforts to seize the land in question. He had hoped to be joined by more of his tribe members, however given a host of factors it appears unlikely that this will occur.

The shaman's isolation is widely known to the entire population. Given that these facts are understood and shared amongst the entirety of the culture, we might simply represent the situation schematically as in Figure 3.



**Figure 3.** A schematic representation of the residence pattern known by all Karitiâna.

The circle represents the shaman.

The schema in Figure 3 simply represents in abstract fashion a situation that is crucial to understanding the current social milieu of the Karitiâna. The new, smaller village is not where most of the people reside, since the vast majority live in the main village or split their time between the village and Porto Velho. Out of 260 people, around one dozen were living in the new village at the time the data analyzed below were collected. These included the wives and some children of the shaman.

There are differences of opinion within the population as to the widespread shift to more western ways, and there are differences of opinion as to the physical isolation of the shaman and his family. The shaman has several adult children, many of whom live in the main village. These children and some of their kin are not pleased with the isolation of those in the smaller village. Figure 3 represents on some simple abstract level the

shared knowledge of the Karitiâna vis-à-vis the present residence pattern of the group.

While not linguistic in nature, the knowledge represented by this schema turns out to be relevant to interactants in certain discourse settings, and affects the **na-/ta-** selection in fascinating ways in particular contexts, as we will see shortly when analyzing one particularly clear case.

#### **IV. Examining a Microcontextual Case of Interaction**

During the course of my fieldwork among the Karitiâna, I recorded various conversations between speakers while I was not physically present. This was done by first obtaining the interactants' consent and then leaving a digital recorder in their midst. These recordings were later transferred to a computer and analyzed. The clauses I will analyze next were taken from a conversation between two females, one a twenty-five-year-old and the other an adolescent. Significantly, the twenty-five-year old woman was one of the daughters of the shaman. Both of the interlocutors in this case divide their time between the main Karitiâna village and the city.

The conversation, which lasts approximately five minutes, begins with a discussion of the Karitiânas' current situation and the economic burden facing many of them. Shortly thereafter, the older speaker abruptly shifts the topic to her father, the shaman. She becomes somewhat agitated, as evidenced by increasingly exaggerated clausal pitch contours, as she discusses her father's situation. (Much of the information she discusses is not novel to her interlocutor.) She describes her father's efforts to take land that should rightfully belong to the Karitiâna, by establishing the new village.



isolation or, put another way, she invokes the information represented by the schema in Figure 3 above, which was no doubt familiar to her interlocutor.

The many examples in my data such as 18, 19, and 22 above reveal that the speech act scene in Karitiãna is malleable. Examples such as 24-26 help reveal the extent of this malleability. What we find, in fact, is that the speech act scene can be tropically extended to include 3<sup>rd</sup> person referents that are not even present in the immediate physical environment. However, this is not done randomly, as close inspection of the context of utterances such as 24-26 demonstrates. It is likely that the presence of **ta-** in such tokens is only initially puzzling to those like myself, confronting the linguistic data without some basic socio-cultural background information shared by members of the Karitiãna community. It is worth stressing, though, that such cases are uncommon to the extent that an account formulated primarily according to structural factors (such as that in Everett 2006) accounts for the vast majority of **na-/ta-** alternations. This fact is worth recalling since it makes instances such as 24-26 all the more salient. As mentioned previously, cases such as 24-26 may be judged to be infelicitous by other Karitiãna speakers in the absence of utterance-specific contextual information, such as the identities of the speaker and “father” referred to in the clauses.

What I am suggesting is that the occurrence of **ta-** in examples such as 24-26 can in fact be understood to reflect a manipulation of the speech act scene. Much as the previous examples of such manipulation demonstrated, **ta-** is used in this case to highlight the epistemic certainty of the shaman’s daughter. Just as she varies her pitch dramatically to convey her emotion vis-à-vis her father’s situation, she varies the voice prefix in order to convey epistemic certainty vis-à-vis her father’s situation. That is, she

depicts the events in question as though they were occurring within the speech act scene, contiguous with the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> persons.

Interactions such as that denoted in 24-26 can only be explicated if we appeal to relevant aspects of the socio-cultural milieu. When we understand the shaman's situation vis-à-vis the remainder of the population, the motivations for the daughter's usage of the **ta-** morpheme crystallize. We begin to understand why the daughter treats her father as though he were sitting next to her at the time of the three utterances. The examples suggest that the speech act scene can be metaphorically and tropically extended, by incorporating someone outside the physical context, including the shaman as depicted in Figure 3.

Usages of **ta-** such as those in 24-26, of which there are several in my data,<sup>6</sup> might be considered a type of "entextualized voicing effect," (Agha 2005:48), or more specifically they might be deemed *speech act scene tropes*. As mentioned in the introduction, they are tropes since the particular tokens of speech act scene reference in such cases contradict expectations based strictly on the semiotic co(n)text, i.e. those expectations based on linguistic form alone. The text in these cases could be understood to be incongruent, with respect to the semiotic co(n)text (in a similar fashion to that described in Agha 2005, see above). However, this does not mean the linguistic signal cannot be parsed, and ungrammaticality in contexts such as that represented in 24-26 does not result. Instead, such speech act scene tropes reveal the malleability and adaptability of the speech act scene to Karitiâna speakers. The speech act scene is based on which referents are indexed as 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person referents or contiguous at the time of

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<sup>6</sup> Given the amount of elaboration of the social context required for each case such as that represented in 24-26, I am restricting my attention to one particularly clear example here.

utterance. As Hanks suggests, however, “Ultimately, the concept of contiguity on which indexicality is based must be defined relative to local standards of copresence and relevance.” (2000:125) The concept of contiguity relevant to the speech act scene cannot be succinctly delineated via non-local standards such as ‘speaker’ and ‘hearer.’ Instead, the speech act scene is malleable and is defined/created in tokens of reference to it.<sup>7</sup>

To be clear, these cases are speech act scene tropes because the semiotic co(n)text predicts a certain token (**na-**) in the voice paradigm. Instead, though, a different token is produced (**ta-**), and the interlocutor is forced to reconcile the actual usage with relevant contextual factors, which in this case are perceivable even to a novice of the Karitiâna context like myself. Such tropes call to mind the register tropes of Lakhota (Agha 2005) or Lhasa Tibetan (Agha 1993), among others. Agha’s comments vis-à-vis Lhasa Tibetan are prescient:

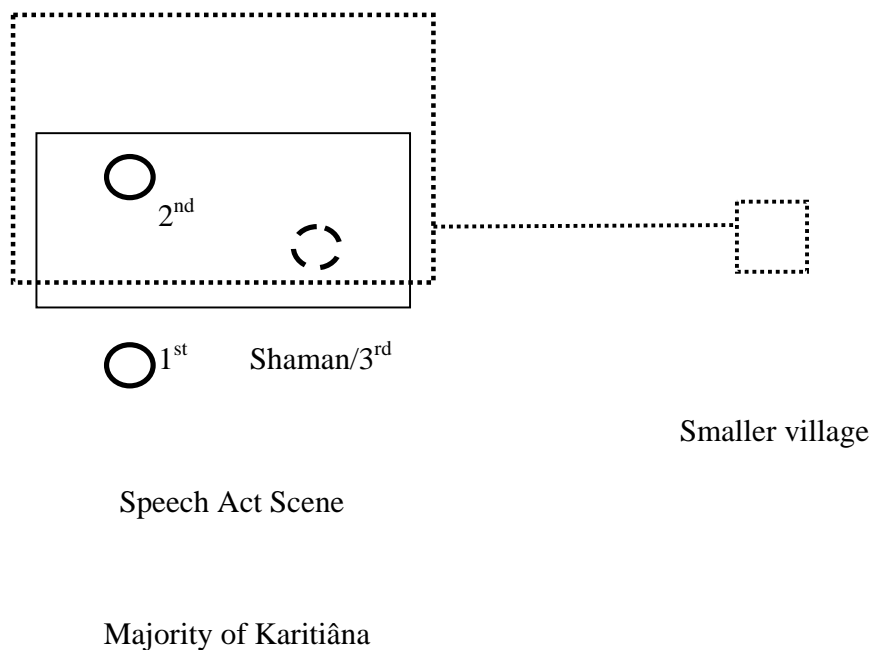
...the interpretability of such interactional tropes involves appeal to aspects of the discursive interactional event that lie beyond the limits of indexical convention, even if, as we have seen, the very possibility of these tropes depends on the existence of such conventions themselves. (1993:159)

Just as example 22 (in which a child is seen playing) represents a tropic usage of the default speech act scene depicted in Figure 1, so examples 24-26 represent a tropic extension of the speech act scene. However, the extension in 24-26 is tropic in two

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<sup>7</sup> A reviewer insightfully points out that it may be that the Karitiâna speech act scene is not being extended in cases such as e.g. 24-26, but that the speech act scene in Karitiâna may simply include 3<sup>rd</sup> person referents aligned with the speaker, i.e. it is not dyadic-oriented from an emic perspective. While this is not an implausible interpretation of the data, I think examples such as 24-26 are best considered extensions of the speech act scene because, first, while not uncommon they are nevertheless exceptional in terms of overall frequency, and second, there is no way to clearly predict when **ta-** will be used in the manner evident in such examples. That is, while all similar usages of **ta-** in my data are amenable to an account based on the tropic extension of the speech act scene, we cannot easily predict when such usages will occur.

senses. First, the speaker indexes the 3<sup>rd</sup> person referent as though he were a member of the speech act scene, as in Figure 2. In doing so, she also treats him as though he were a member of the spatially contiguous Karitiâna community, tropically considering him copresent with the majority of the Karitiâna. This ‘double trope,’ as it were, can be represented graphically if Figures 2 and 3 are combined as in Figure 4.



**Figure 4.** Schema representing a tropic extension of the speech act scene, evident in 24-26.

It may seem odd that such a seemingly esoteric aspect of Karitiâna grammar be employed in such a tropic manner. However, the motivation for such a tropic extension is fairly self-evident in this case, given the elaboration of the social context above. Furthermore, it seems that the **na-/ta-** alternation is often employed in such tropic

fashions.<sup>8</sup> There are various similar cases evident in my data, and no doubt to a Karitiâna speaker there are more in the data than an outsider such as myself can readily perceive. As Malinowski once noted (1978:53, see also Agha [1993:131]), “in all communities, certain words are accepted as potentially creative acts.” In the case of Karitiâna, the usage of the relevant voice-related morpheme set seems to be accepted as a potentially creative act. It helps to create and manipulate the speech act scene, defining the participants, sometimes for social purposes that are evident once relevant contextual factors are considered.

The data suggest not only that **ta-** used to index social information, but also that **ta-** is employed as a stance indicator, a “semiotic resource for marking the speaker’s stance or attitude toward a narrated states of affairs.” (Kockelman 2004:129) If we consider the case at hand, in which an adult daughter of the shaman is tropically extending the speech act scene to include him, we can, once the contextual factors delineated above are considered, see how in so doing she aligns herself with him. Her motivations for doing so are by now clear, and are reflected explicitly in other portions of the relevant discourse segment. She is strongly motivated to depict herself as one who is in some sense copresent with her father, despite his very real isolation. This fact, reflected abstractly in Figure 4, is further denoted by her stated wishes, in the same discourse segment, that others would join her father. It would not be a stretch to suggest

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<sup>8</sup> A reviewer asks whether the alternation is ever employed in an exclusionary manner, i.e. in such a way that, rather than extending the speech act scene to include someone else, a 2<sup>nd</sup> person referent is treated as though s/he were outside the speech act scene via the usage of **na-**. This is an interesting question, to which I do not have a definitive answer. As mentioned in section II, however, there are no cases in my data in which a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> person referent is referred to as a 3<sup>rd</sup> person referent, either via a 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun or via the **na-** morpheme. The absence of such cases in my data implies that such exclusionary usages are perhaps not employed, or are at least less common than the tropic extensions discussed here.

she is joining him “in spirit”, since she makes specific reference to the fact that he has not been emotionally supported by the majority of the Karitiâna.

## V. Conclusion

Two socio-culturally oriented factors were described above vis-à-vis examples 24-26. One of these is metalinguistic (the relevance of the speech act scene) and one relates to the isolation of the shaman and his cohorts. Such factors are, it turns out, crucial to understanding certain interactions in the language. Such concepts underscore the fact that, when approaching novel linguistic data in a culture foreign to the researcher, the sorts of relevant concepts at play in linguistic interactions between members of that culture cannot be defined on an *a priori* basis. When I initially confronted cases such as 18, 19, 22, or 24-26, my reaction was to exclude them from the general account to which they superficially provide exceptions. Only through increasing exposure to such “exceptions” did the social factors at work in the morphosyntactic patterns crystallize.

The true function of the **na-/ta-** variation can only be understood once we see that the effects of **ta-** usage cannot be defined independent of context. The usage of this morpheme is “in play” in interactive contexts, implemented as it is during the alignment of the speech act scene with an event or entity outside that scene. That alignment may be spatiotemporal (i.e. with a concurrently visible 3<sup>rd</sup> person) or social (i.e. with someone outside the speech act scene who is socially identified with by the speaker).

Simply put, micro-contextual socio-cultural data are crucial to understanding these Karitiâna forms. What is particularly interesting about this case of variation is the way in which the relevant forms relate to a structural paradigm that is unexpected (based

on the typological literature on voice-related patterns) to index social affiliation in the way illustrated here for Karitiâna. Such a paradigm is also not generally the source of indexical reorientation crosslinguistically.<sup>9</sup>

The voice forms in question can in most cases be explained without appealing to the local context, and previous structural accounts explain the majority of tokens of the relevant forms in the data collected in the field. It is only in the exceptions to such accounts, however, that certain features of the phenomena in question surface. As Haviland (1996:316) suggests in discussing transposition, “It is precisely when indexical signs project a space that differs from the immediate, unmarked, and taken-for-granted contextual surroundings that the transposed features spring to attention.” In Karitiâna, when **ta-** is used in cases that superficially seem to violate the taken-for-granted contextual surroundings, other features of **ta-** usage spring to attention. Only in such cases does the tropic extension of the speech act scene surface.

I should note that the general suggestion made here that participation in a speech act is not strictly limited to a simple speaker/hearer dichotomy, and that such participation can be reframed in different ways, is not novel and is in fact consistent with previous work in linguistic anthropology. (Cf. Haviland 1996) Nevertheless, I am unaware of any other documented cases in which the speech act scene is malleable in the way described here for Karitiâna. It is unclear at this point if patterns similar to those delineated in this article are present in other Tupí languages, or other Amazonian languages for that matter.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> For example, voice-related phenomena are not discussed in helpful studies such as Hanks (1990), nor in Haviland’s (1996) examination of deictic transpositions.

<sup>10</sup> It is worth mentioning, however, that other areally and/or genetically affiliated languages display interesting morphosyntactic phenomena that are oriented according to the speech-act status of a given

Finally, as this case and many others in the literature have demonstrated, a structural account can sometimes only take us so far when analyzing the actual usage of morphosyntactic alternations. When the structural account and a socially oriented account are synergistically employed, however, the result may be a much richer understanding of the patterns in question.

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referent, i.e. display grammatical evidence of a 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> person grouping. Not surprisingly, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person grouping surfaces in some cases with respect to grammatical relations. It has been established for some time that 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns, which according to the nominal hierarchy first made famous in Silverstein (1976) are more likely to be A's than O's (see also Everett 2009), are often grouped together with respect to grammatical relations. This has been found in languages such as Dyirbal and Cashinawa (see e.g. Dixon 1994:86), and some researchers (DeLancey 1981, Wierzbicka 1981) have suggested that 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns should be grouped together on the hierarchy. Evidence for the grouping of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> pronouns in grammatical relations in Amazonian languages comes from, for instance, Kamaiurá, a Tupí-Guaraní language (Seki 1990:384) and Tupinambá (Rodrigues 1990:402).

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