

PERFORMATIVE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEXTUAL COHESIVE
STRUCTURES
IN CREEK LONG TALKS

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INTRODUCTION¹

But even their language, on these occasions, seems, by their own admission, beyond the learning of the 'Linkisters'. It is a poetical, mystical idiom, varying essentially from that of trading and of familiar intercommunication, and utterly incomprehensible to the literal minds of mere trafficking explainers (Swanton 1934:183).

At Tukapatchee, 1835
John Howard Payne

An integrated anthropological and linguistic analysis of Creek oratory shows oratory to be part of a ritual cycle which recreates both the fundamental Creek cultural system and the Creek towns, the basic political units of Creek society.² Creek individual and group identities are thus defined and integrated into the Creek political system. This paper describes the performative effectiveness of textual cohesive structures through which Creek oratory functions in its cultural contexts.

Under discourse analysis, Creek oratory shows spatial locatives, deictics, pronominal anaphora, locative verbs, tense, and number interacting to create performative textual frameworks. These frameworks are manipulated in oratory to constitute the Creek town as an animate entity ritually capable of agentive action. As such, each town, by conducting ritual activities in which visiting towns participate, can order an hierarchical relationship between itself and other towns. Successive rituals bring towns into alliances structuring an overarching Creek cultural universe.

The location for ritual oratory is the internal area of the stomp ground, the pasko:fa, externally bounded by a circular terrace. From the center of the pasko:fa outward is a fire, a dance circle, and two to four arbors oriented with the cardinal directions where male town members sit. Visiting town members seated at the pasko:fa's outside edge wait to be selected as dance leaders. Their selection by host town officials is conducted in a circular, counterclockwise, spiralling pattern. This pattern also orients each individual dance as a male leader heads a line of dancers formed by alternating men and women. The leader and his town members constitute the innermost circle closest to the fire and are perceived, with the fire, to be beneath the ground; the encircling dancers spiral upward. (See Figure 1.)

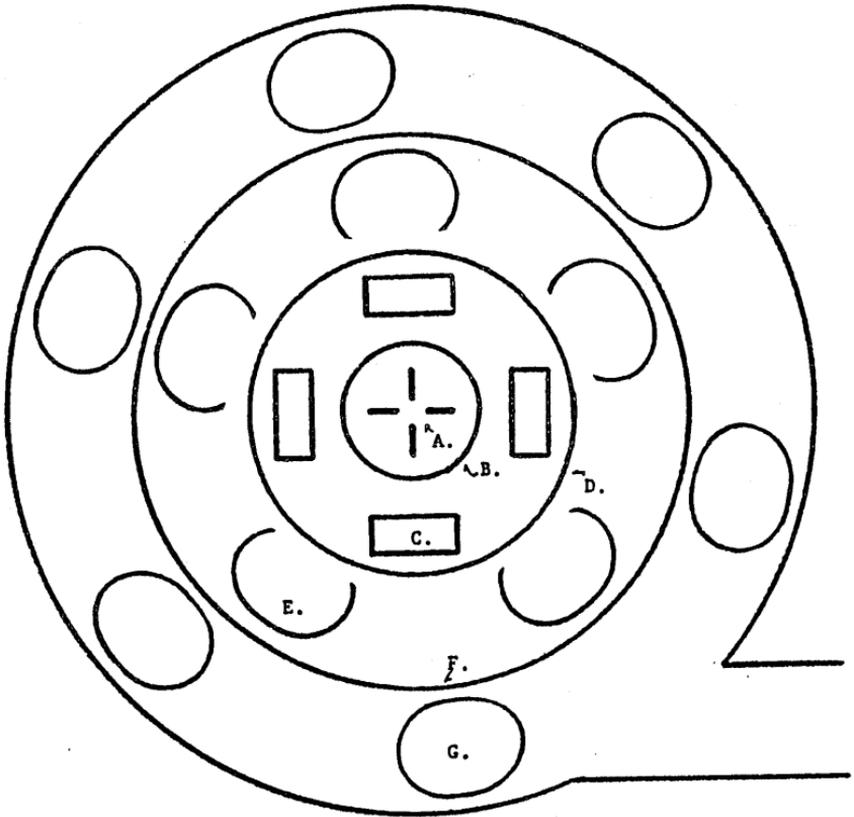
The pasko:fa is ritually marked by an external and internal domain both oriented as circling spirals. The domains interact through ritual as alternating ordering principles--the internally located host town controls selection of externally located visiting town leaders; this order is reversed when each leader enters the pasko:fa to lead a dance. Encompassing control is ritually created through oratory which is delivered inside the pasko:fa by a host town spokesman. At the ritual's beginning and end, oratory first enacts and finally relocates control to the host town, instantiating an ordered hierarchy which ultimately allows each town to interact in an encompassing political alliance.

ICONICITY

Oratory begins when a town spokesman stands at the south end of the west (chief's) arbor, faces inward, and states in loud chanting tone:

1. [I.1.1] mont o:s cey ha:yo:ma:t 'so it is right now'

This opening statement is followed by 312 segments (lines) of 26 sections and two parts. An analysis of the discourse structuring devices used to create the segments, sections, and parts reveals the entire oration as an iconic representation of the pasko:fa, the oration's delivery location.'



- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| A. FIRE | E. SEATING AREA FOR VISITORS |
| B. DANCE CIRCLE | F. BOUNDARY BETWEEN CAMPS AND
<u>PASKO:FA</u> |
| C. SEATING ARBORS | G. CAMPS |
| D. BOUNDARY OF <u>PASKO:FA</u> | |

DIAGRAM OF CREEK CEREMONIAL AREA
FIGURE 1

SEGMENTS

Segments within each section are indicated by syntactic, tonal, and pause characteristics. Following Creek syntax, a segment begins with a noun phrase and ends with a verb phrase. On the final verbal suffix, the speaker uses a rising tone followed immediately by a pause. This differentiates the use of tone as a line boundary from other tonal functions such as those marking aspect and tense.

Segments are often marked by a verb inflected by the suffix -ati:, an evidential suffix used when a speaker refers to an action he did not witness, or the time of the action is either unknown or irrelevant. Referred to as the aorist, historic, or indefinite, -ati: is frequently found in Muskogean folklore. The suffix refers to activity in the distant past; additionally, it indicates that the subject of the verb has no direct personal knowledge of the interaction. In oratory, the suffix creates a context shifting the locus of speaker knowledge to the evidential and atemporal. As a usitative structuring device, this suffix also indexes the remote past from which the Creek ancestors speak. Its broader significance is addressed later in the discussion of speaker roles. An example of a segment using the past quotative follows:

2. [XVIII.9.1] innato:fa tati: Yo:Yit 'his yard [property] used to be, go there'

The 312 segments impart information about significant aspects of ritual and imply an ordering relationship. Specifically, the orator reports in each section what occurred during the ritual. Reported through oratory, the speaker states these as sequential events.

SECTIONS

The temporal and spatial movement of oratory is first created by two linguistic devices: the participle, ha:yo:ma:t, combined with the syntactic principle of verbal inflection. Ha:yo:ma:t combines the demonstrative hiya 'here' and the conditional suffix o:ma:t 'when/if'. Ha:yo:ma:t refers to passage of time rather than a particular unit of time. Since

ha:yo:ma:t does not occur in final discourse position, it always anticipates information to immediately follow, thus indexing a forward motion localized at the speech's place of delivery. Thus, ha:yo:ma:t presents each section as new information. Sections close according to Creek syntactic rules--embedded and sequential clauses are often partially inflected; usually the subject pronoun, tense, aspect, and modes are omitted and the final verb is fully inflected. In this manner, twenty-six parallel sections are created.

PARTS

The two parts end with the formulaic statement:

3. [XXII.14.1] cikeycakin 'to you (pl.) he says it (pl.)'
4. [XXII.15.1] ima:po:heycit 'listen to him'
5. [XXII.16.1] fo:lo:tit o:mi:s cey 'it circles around, it is!'

In example three the third indefinite pronoun 'it' refers back, anaphorically indexes, what was spoken throughout the twenty-two sections. Again, by anaphora, the third person pronoun in example five refers to what was spoken. The locative verb of motion fo:lo:tit of example five indicates what preceded has moved around in a circular pattern. This formulaic ending closes the first part as a circle, and orients the temporal movement of the previous twenty-two sections. Thus, the participle, ha:yo:ma:t, locates the speech spatially and temporally by forwarding the speech's movement through time. With the formulaic closing the oration is revealed as a circular configuration.

Part two immediately begins when the speaker states:

6. [XXIII.1.1] mo:min okhatalako:sa:t o:ka:ti 'and furthermore he means'

This expression [literally: add higher again what has been] contains the locative oh-~(ok-) 'on top of something/higher' to indicate that which follows is spatially higher than that which preceded.'

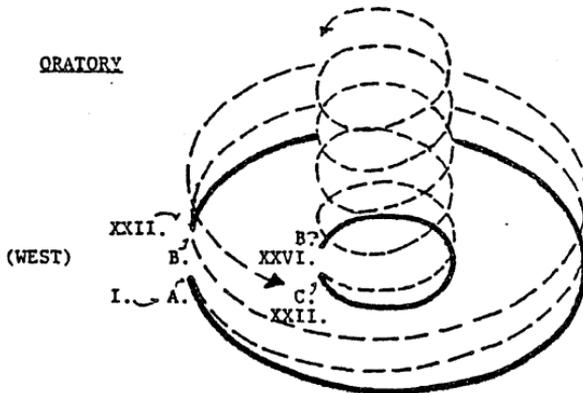
Part two is created by four sections, each beginning with the participle ha:yo:ma:t and closing with a fully inflected verb immediately followed by ha:yo:ma:t. Duplicating the discourse structures of part one, the oration's movement is revealed with the final circular formulaic ending:

cikeycakin	'to you (pl.) he says it (pl.)'
ima:po:heycit	'listen to him'
fo:lo:tit o:mi:s cey	'it circles around, it is!'

At the final formulaic closing, the significance of the opening frame, okhatalako:sat 'add higher to what has been' is revealed. The second part is constructed as a circle above (i.e. higher than) the circle of part one. After part one's formulaic closing, male town members respond with a unanimous ho 'yes, we are in agreement'. Only males internally located within the pasko:fa respond. This internally generated statement of agreement shifts the speech location inward and orients part two within the pasko:fa. Part two is constructed by four sections, suggesting a possible iconic relation to the four arbors within the pasko:fa.

Joined in discourse, both parts one and two are structured as an iconic representation of the pasko:fa--two concentric circles, the first external to the second, the second higher than the first. Ritual action at the pasko:fa is represented by the circular spiralling configuration created by oratory's discourse structuring devices.

In summary, I show linguistic devices creating speech as a diagrammatic representation of the pasko:fa and the ritual movement of dance. (See Figure 2.) I now turn to the second aspect of my analysis--how the pasko:fa is created as an animate agentive entity by pronominal deixis manipulating speech roles. These roles include three speakers: the spokesman as speaker, the chief as speaker, and the town as speaker.



- A. MONT O:S CEY HA:YO:MA:T 'SO IT IS RIGHT NOW'
- B. CIKEYCAKIN 'TO YOU HE SAYS IT'
IMA:PO:HEVCIT 'LISTEN TO HIM'
FO:LO:TIT O:HL:S CEY 'IT CIRCLES AROUND, IT IS'
- C. MO:MIN OKHATALAKO:SA:T O:KA:TI: 'AND ADD HIGHER AGAIN, HE MEANS'

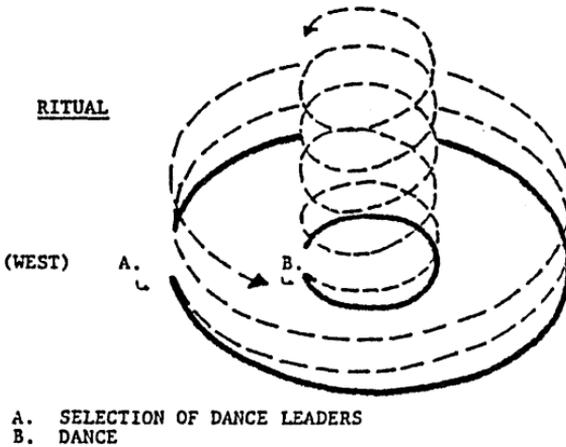


FIGURE 2

SPEAKER ROLES

SPOKESMAN AS SPEAKER

In sections one through three, the orator addresses the audience in his role as spokesman for the town. The speaker uses first person singular pronouns to refer to himself and third person singular pronouns to refer to the host town chief. In section one, the spokesman states: 'The chief and his assistants gave me these words to say'. Throughout the first three sections, the chief's words are reported with quotative doublets:

7. [III.5.1] ma:kit o:mi:s 'he says, "it is"'

8. [III.6.1] ma:kit o:ka:ti: 'he says, "it means"'

CHIEF AS SPEAKER

The spokesman as speaker continues to address the audience until the fifth section when the chief as speaker is created by the following:

9. [V.2.1] mo:min nita kacka tan o:ma:t 'and when the broken days''

10. [V.3.1] a:wa:hi:cayanki: tan o:ma:t 'when I scattered'

11. [V.4.1] istonko:n 'it is good/alright'

Examples nine, ten, and eleven index the chief speaking in the first person singular. The meaning of these examples can be understood in terms of the chief's duties. Only the town chief can invite other towns to participate in a dance. He is responsible for assessing the possible dangers inherent in conducting a dance and only after lengthy deliberation will he 'scatter the broken days', i.e. send out the invitations to visiting towns. Only a chief can determine if it is 'alright' [example eleven] to host a dance.

Section four presents the chief as speaker in a similar trope to that of section five. The chief is referred to by third person singular pronouns:

12. [IV.3.1] ma:ki: o:panka ha:co: tan o:ma:ti: 'he says, "when the dance"'

13. [IV.9.1] nita kacka tan o:ma:t 'when the broken days'

14. [IV.10.1] mo:min imiti:taka:kankit 'they were preparing for him'

TOWN AS SPEAKER

Immediately following examples nine, ten, and eleven ('and when the broken days', 'when I scattered', 'it is good/alright') the town's name is first uttered. This creates the town as speaker in a trope similar to the one creating the chief as speaker:

15. [V.7.1] simino:l yo:fa:la: i:talwa tan o:ma:ti: 'when Seminole-Eufaula tribal town'

16. [V.8.1] mo:min leykit o:mit o:s cey cako:mit 'and sitting here existing, know I am'

17. [V.9.1] mo:min nita kacka tan o:ma:t 'and when the broken days'

18. [V.10.1] immi:kkaki: tan o:ma:ti: 'when their chiefs'

19. [V.11.1] mo:min i:sinwakicho:yat tan o:ma:t 'and when they laid down [the sticks] for him'

20. [V.12.1] mo:min innita tan o:ma:t 'and when his day'

21. [V.13.1] imahanka:tki: 'it being counted for him'

After the town's name is stated [example fifteen], example sixteen immediately follows: 'and I am sitting here existing, know I am'. These two segments create a baptismal effect whereby the town itself is brought into being for ritual (cf. Silverstein 1981). Immediately following are five segments in which the

host town's chief is referred to with third person singular pronouns and the visiting towns are referred to with third person plural pronouns, further indicating the town's role as speaker.

Thereafter, the town speaks in the first person singular and talks about its chief in the third person singular. The town as speaker is also indicated by the following expression, used throughout the oration:

22. [VII.10.1] simino:l yo:fa:la i:talwa to:ya:yat
'Seminoie-Eufaula tribal town, who I am'

The town as speaker also quotes the chief with the doublet:

'he says, "it is"
'he says, "it means"

In the sixth section, the town as speaker indexes its geographical locus with the spatial locative tak-'ground'. This spatial locative is combined with the directional locative a- 'toward' to orient town visitors outside the pasko:fa's external boundary. Thereafter, when speaking to its own members, the town as speaker does not use this directional locative.

23. [VI.2.1] pa:ska ati:kin amatakafikho:nit 'swept
to the edge place, for me [town] on this ground, he
[visiting town] stays over on the other side, here'

The town as speaker uses the verbal dual 'to stand' to signal the host town as a single unit and the visiting town as another single unit. In section twenty-five, the town as speaker addresses the visiting towns as a single hearer and states that 'we' (the host and visiting town) made the rules known to all individuals. During this dialogue, individual town members are referred to in the third person plural:

24. [XV.11.1] taksi:hoki:yanki: tan o:ma:t 'when
we two were standing on this ground'

25. [XV.12.1] inki\kako:si: ha:kati:s o:mi:s 'the
rules were made known to them'

The final section of part one shifts the role of town as speaker back to the spokesman as speaker. This is accomplished by a series of quotatives densely

complex in pronominal deixis:

26. [XXII.11.1] anhickaʔani:t o:mi:s I [town]
will possess it [health].

27. [XXII.12.1] ma:kit nako:mo:lko:sin 'he
[chief] says these things'

28. [XXII.13.1] keyciccatis ma:kkatin "'you
[spokesman] say it," he [chief] said'

29. [XXII.14.1] cikeycakin "'to you (pl.)
[everyone]," he [chief] says it (pl.) [talk]'

30. [XXII.15.1] imapo:heycit 'listen to him
[chief]'

31. [XXII.16.1] folo:tit o:mi:s cey 'it circles
around'

In example twenty-six the first person singular pronoun 'I' refers to the town as speaker. In example twenty-seven the third person singular pronoun 'he' refers to the chief. In example twenty-eight, the second person singular 'you' refers to the the spokesman as speaker and the third person singular pronoun 'he' refers to the chief. In example thirty, the third person singular pronoun 'him' shows again the spokesman is speaker. The final line [XXII.16.1] folo:tit o:mi:s cey 'it circles around', concludes the talk as a circle.

CONCLUSION

This analysis demonstrates first that discourse structures frame the oration as two concentric circles, the first outside the second and above it. Connected in discourse, they form an upward spiral. Oratory thus creates an iconic representation of the cultural configuration encoded both in the pasko:fa and ritual action. Second, by juxtaposing text-internal pronominal deixis, spatial locatives, and metapragmatic verbs such as 'he said', the speaker is created as the town, able to construct a dialogue with another town.

The oration proceeds through its twenty-six sections by detailing the order of ritual activities which constitute the rules to follow so power controlling life and death can be generated. These rules also constitute the process through which oratory

is created. Ordered activities within a pasko:fa generate medicine for all participants; following these rules creates life, neglecting them brings death. Through communal activities at stomp grounds, Creeks create their own town as a political unit ritually able to interact with other towns. Such activities integrate Creek towns into a political process, through which the mutual interaction of towns enable Creeks to define themselves as town members and to regenerate life sustaining powers. By means of oratory Creeks create individuals who are town members, set in a network of other towns to which they can interrelate.

NOTES

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'Although the historic i:talwa, now glossed in English as 'tribal town', was significantly altered because of removal, allotment, and other historic changes, it remains the focal point of Creek interaction. The tribal town's current form is manifested in both Creek churches and stomp grounds which are not permanent residential sites; rather, they are ceremonial loci still referred to as tribal towns. The historic i:talwa consisted of domestic dwellings occupied by women of one lineage, their husbands, and unmarried children. When not hunting or at war, men congregated daily in a centrally located area coko: yakko: 'big house' to conduct ceremonies, entertain male visitors, and discuss town business, often through formal oratory. Creek oratory was used in trade and treaty negotiations during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; because of oratory's lengthy nature, English writers of this period called them Long Talks. Since that time, oratory has continued to be part of Creek culture (cf. Haas 1974; Opler 1972; Swanton 1928). Unfortunately, neither historic nor contemporary documents record these Long Talks in

sufficient detail for an adequate analysis. The data reported in this paper appears to be the first transcribed and translated Creek oration recorded in its ritual context (cf. Bell 1983). The oration discussed in this paper was delivered at Seminole-Eufaula stomp ground on July 18, 1981 by Creek speaker, Spencer Frank. It was the closing oration of Seminole-Eufaula's green corn ceremony, a midsummer ritual held by each stomp ground.

'The bracketed numbers reference a four-level interlinear translation of the entire oration in Bell (1983).

'Following Peircian terminology, an icon is a sign which refers to the object that it denotes merely by virtue of characters of its own, and which it possesses, just the same, whether any object actually exists or not (Peirce 1955 [1940]: 102).

'Creek locatives include:

oh~(ok-)	'high, in the air, above'
tak-	'ground level'
ak-	'underneath, in the water'
a-	'towards/away from'

'These invitations are bundles of sticks; each stick indicates the number of days before a dance will be held. One stick is broken each day by the invited town's chief. When only one stick remains the visitors assemble at the host town. To 'scatter' the 'broken days' states that these bundles have been sent to the other towns.

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