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Babanki logophoricity in a Ring perspective¹

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Abstract

Babanki, a Central Ring Grassfields Bantu language of Northwest Cameroon uses a dedicated grammatical system of logophoricity to mark a pronoun in reported speech as coreferential with the purported source of this quote. Following the typological framework set by Ameka 2017, we examine the central parameters of the logophoric system of Babanki including the logophoric trigger in the matrix clause, the marking of person and number, the syntactic functions of the Babanki logophoric, and the creation of the logophoric domain by the interaction of report opener and report predicates. We also identify recurrent contexts and institutions of “triadic communication” (Ameka 2004) in Babanki culture which frequently involve the reporting of third party speech and thus might be seen as specific conditions that support the maintenance of a grammaticalized system of logophoricity. It is revealed that logophoric forms in the Ring subgroup of Western Grassfields Bantu share a common element *i* which can be identified with the reconstructed Proto-Grassfields Bantu plain third person singular pronoun **i* which serves both anaphoric and logophoric functions in Eastern Grassfields (Hyman 2018).

1 Introduction

Logophoricity, i.e. a grammatical device dedicated to mark a pronoun in reported speech as coreferential with the purported source of this quote, is widespread in Sub-Saharan Africa and has been claimed as a prominent feature of the Macro-Sudan belt (Güldemann 2003, 2008a). Yet, descriptive coverage of logophoric systems across the Macro-Sudan belt remains patchy and the degree of descriptive resolution with respect to crucial morphosyntactic, semantic and discourse-specific parameters in individual systems often remains crude. The present contribution seeks to remedy this situation for Babanki, a Central Ring language of Grassfields Bantu spoken in the Northwest Region of Cameroon (Akumbu & Chibaka 2012). Following the typological framework set by Ameka 2017, section 2 outlines central parameters of the logophoric system of Babanki including the logophoric trigger in the matrix clause (2.1), the marking of person and number (2.2), the syntactic functions of the Babanki logophoric (2.3) and the creation of the logophoric domain by the

interaction of report opener and report predicates (2.4). Section 3 identifies recurrent contexts and institutions of “triadic communication” (Ameka 2004) in Babanki culture which frequently involve the reporting of third party speech and thus might be seen as specific conditions that support the maintenance of a grammaticalized system of logophoricity. The conclusion in section 4 summarizes the main findings with a perspective on the broader situation of logophoricity in the Ring subgroup of Grassfields Bantu.

2 The Babanki logophoric system

Reported speech in which speakers represent what other people are saying, thinking or feeling is a pervasive feature of language use in daily life and languages provide diverse mechanisms to their speakers for indicating what their own utterance is and what the utterance of the source author is (Ameka 2017: 513). As in many African languages, e.g. those of the Macro-Sudan Belt (Westermann 1930, Hagège 1974, Clements 1975, Güldemann 2003, 2008a, 2008b), Ring languages have a paradigm of person markers which indicate coreference with the real or imagined author or source of a secondary discourse. An illustration of this comes from a regular Babanki market scene during which activities are halted at about midday for approximately 30 minutes to allow the Village Traditional Council (VTC) messenger to transmit information from community leaders to those present in the market expecting that the information will be spread to the entire community as people return home. On one such occasion the messenger made the following announcement in (1).

(1) a. *wàyn gà? lá yì dzù-ù á ā-dzè?*
 1.child say QT LOG go-PROG to 5-journey
 ‘The Fon² says he_i (LOG) is going on a trip.’³

b. *yà gà? lá yì sá pfwó dzí-sá m-bán-á tá wóóŋ*
 3SG say QT LOG before return road-10 N-shine-PROG only IDEO
 ‘He_i says that before he_i (LOG) returns all roads should have been cleaned.’

c. *lá vá á fè? à yì ā-sím á ngàm*
 QT 3PL F1 work at LOG 5-farm on 9.week
 ‘That everyone will work on his_i (LOG) farm next week.’

- d. *yà myètà lá yàŋ á k̄s láʔtá ké yén yī*
 3SG end QT 2PL DJ NEG.F1 wait NEG see LOG
 ‘Finally, he_i says it will not be long before you see him_i (LOG).’

The VTC messenger, i.e. the reporter or animator reports what the Fon, i.e. the source author, who is absent from the market scene wants to relay to the intended addressees. The context is established in the main or matrix clause by mentioning the source author in (1a) using the honorific appellation of the Fon, i.e. *wàyn*° ‘child’. Subsequently, the quotative marker *lá* is used to create the reported speech context and introduce the complement clause in the logophoric domain which presents the content attributed to the Fon by means of the logophoric pronoun *yì*. Coreference to the Fon as the logophoric trigger in the matrix clause, i.e. outside the logophoric domain, is made in (1b) by the ordinary third person singular pronoun *yà*, followed again in the complement clause by the logophoric pronoun *yì*. The next complement clause in (1c) begins with the quotative and the verb is followed by a locative phrase headed by the preposition *à* with a complex NP as complement which itself is headed by the noun *àsím* ‘farm’ and modified by the preposed possessive form of the logophoric pronoun *yì*. To end in (1d), coreference in the matrix clause is again made to the Fon by the ordinary third person singular pronoun *yà* and then the non-subject form of the logophoric pronoun *yī* is used in the complement clause to refer to the Fon⁴. The examples in (1) show that the Babanki logophoric pronoun can refer to the person ‘whose speech, thoughts, feelings or general state of consciousness are reported’ (Clements 1975: 141), i.e. the logophoric trigger which occurs as subject in (1a-b), as possessor in (1c) and as non-subject in (1d). The examples also show that the logophoric pronoun is a reference-tracking mechanism which marks coreference with the source in complement clauses.

The report of speech, thoughts and wishes of others, as illustrated in (1) above, generally consists of three components, i.e. ‘the actual speech act, the introduction to the quote, and the quotation itself’ (Wiesemann 1990: 75). A more accurate representation which takes into account the asymmetrical semantic relationship between these components recognizes two primary parts, i.e. the quote margin vs. the quote content (Ameka 2017: 527). The quote margin consists of a report verb such as *gàʔ* ‘say’ in (1a-b) above and (2) below or *myètà* ‘end’ in (1d) and its participants, i.e. a reported source such as *wùwi*° ‘woman’ in (2) below and sometimes also an addressee, e.g. *wàyn*° ‘child’ in (2), and it necessarily includes a report opening marker, i.e. the quotative *lá* whose function is to create the logophoric domain, i.e. the quote content which is the reported proposition.

- (2) *wùwì gàʔ à wàyn lá yì zí-í kàbáyn*
 1.woman say to 1.child QT LOG eat-PROG 7-fufu
 ‘The woman told the child that she_i (LOG) is eating the fufu.’

Logophoric languages differ with respect to various dimensions, i.e. the semantic role of the logophoric trigger in the matrix clause (reported speaker vs. addressee logophoric), the marking of person and number features in logophoric pronouns, the grammatical functions of logophoric triggers and logophoric pronouns and the type of report predicate and report opener which serve to establish the logophoric domain. These dimensions will be discussed for Babanki in the following sections.

2.1 Logophoric trigger in the matrix clause

Most, if not all, Ring languages have a ‘reported speaker logophoric pronoun’ system (Ameka 2017: 517), as demonstrated for Aghem (Hyman 1979: 50-51) and illustrated in (1) above for Babanki. This means that logophoric pronouns refer exclusively to the source of the reported speech, not to the addressee. Thus, the Babanki logophoric pronoun *yì* in the examples in (3a, 4a, 5a) can only refer to the subject of the matrix clause, i.e. *wùwì*° ‘woman’, the source of the reported speech, while the regular third person pronoun *yà* in (3b, 4b, 5b) may refer either to the addressee, i.e. the child, or to someone else, but not to the subject of the matrix clause.

- (3) a. *wùwì gàʔ à wàyn lá yì zí-í kà-báyn*
 1.woman say to 1.child QT LOG eat-PROG 7-fufu
 ‘The woman_i told the child that she_i (LOG) is eating the fufu.’

- b. *wùwì gàʔ à wàyn lá yà zí-í kà-báyn*
 1.woman say to 1.child QT 3SG eat-PROG 7-fufu
 ‘The woman told the child that s/he is eating the fufu.’

- (4) a. *wùwì gàʔ à wàyn lá yì á né pfú dzīn*
 1.woman say to 1.child QT LOG DJ F2 die 9.hunger
 ‘The woman_i told the child that she_i (LOG) will be very hungry.’

- b. *wùwì gàʔ à wàyn lá yà á né pfú dzīŋ*
 1.woman say to 1.child QT 3SG DJ F2 die 9.hunger
 ‘The woman told the child that s/he will be very hungry.’

- (5) a. *wùwì gàʔ à wàyn lá yì tà zèn jàm*
 1.woman say to 1.child QT LOG P2 buy 9.meat
 ‘The woman_i told the child that she_i (LOG) bought meat.’

- b. *wùwì gàʔ à wàyn lá yà tà zèn jàm*
 1.woman say to 1.child QT 3SG P2 buy 9.meat
 ‘The woman told the child that s/he bought meat.’

There are, however, contexts in which a matrix clause can have two sources (Ameka 2017: 526). This is the case of the Babanki perception verb *zù* ‘hear’ in (6a) and the cognition verb *kí* ‘know’ in (6b), where one source is the reported perceiver, i.e. the subject of the matrix clause *wàyn*° ‘child’, and the other one is the source of the perception of the reported perceiver, i.e. Bung, encoded as complement of the ablative preposition *fá* ‘from’ in the matrix clause.

- (6) a. *wàyn zù fá Búnj lá vá tà dzàŋ yì*
 1.child hear from Bung QT 3PL P2 call LOG
 ‘The child_i heard from Bung_j that they called him_{i/j}.’
- b. *wàyn kì fá Búnj lá vá tà wyù jàm à yì*
 1.child know from Bung QT 3PL P2 keep 9. meat for LOG
 ‘The child_i knew from Bung_j that they kept meat for him_{i/j}.’

The logophoric pronoun *yì* in the reported speech licensed by a verb such as Babanki *zù* ‘hear’ is ambiguous in that it can refer to either of the sources, i.e. *wàyn*° ‘child’ or Bung. Ambiguities of this sort confirm that what is crucial in logophoric marking is discourse not syntax.

2.2 Logophoricity marking

Logophoric marking varies cross-linguistically for the pronominal features of person and number. In many languages, logophoric pronouns are restricted to third person reference, while some also allow for second and first person reference, following

Hyman & Comrie's (1981) implicational hierarchy of $3 > 2 > 1$ for logophoric pronouns (Ameka 2017: 523). Regarding number, languages may distinguish logophoric plural pronouns from singulars. The following sections discuss both parameters in Babanki with occasional reference to other Ring languages.

2.2.1 Person

In Ring languages such as Aghem (7), Babanki (8) and Kuk (9), the logophoric pronoun is restricted to the third person singular.

(7) Aghem (Hyman 1979: 50)

- a. *wìzín m̀ dzè jí⁺ á ò m̀ bv̀ ǹ* 'The woman_i said that s/he_j fell.'
- b. *wìzín m̀ dzè jí⁺ á é m̀ bv̀ ǹ* 'The woman_i said that she_i (LOG) fell.'

(8) Babanki

- a. *ẁẁ g̀á? lá ỳ á t̀ f̀ə̀* 'The woman_i said that s/he_j fell.'
- b. *ẁẁ g̀á? lá ỳ á t̀ f̀ə̀* 'The woman_i said that she_i (LOG) fell.'

(9) Kuk

- a. *ũ b̄i l̄ w-i b̀l̄ m̄* 'S/he_i said that s/he_j will beat me.'
- b. *ũ b̄i l̄ z-í b̀l̄ m̄* 'S/he_i said that s/he_i (LOG) will beat me.'

The logophoric pronouns *é* (Aghem), *ỳ* (Babanki) and *z̄í* (Kuk) in the reported speech clauses in (7b, 8b, 9b), respectively, are used to refer to the third person subject antecedents in the preceding main clauses. There are no corresponding logophorics for the first or second person.

The Babanki logophoric pronoun is reserved for third person singular reference (10a). First and second person singular pronouns in the reported speech domain cannot be used to refer to a third person subject in the matrix clause. They always refer to speaker and addressee of the entire speech act which includes the matrix clause, as demonstrated in (10b-c), respectively.

(10) Babanki usage of 1st and 2nd person in the logophoric domain

- a. *wùwìwùwì gà? à wàyn lá yì á né vì nàntfwì*
 1.woman say to 1.child QT LOG DJ F2 come afternoon
 ‘The woman_i told the child that she_i (LOG) will come in the afternoon.’
- b. *wùwìwùwì gà? à wàyn lá mà á né vì nàntfwì*
 1.woman say to 1.child QT 1SG DJ F2 come afternoon
 ‘The woman told the child that I (reporter) will come in the afternoon.’
- c. *wùwìwùwì gà? à wàyn lá wù á né vì nàntfwì*
 1.woman say to 1.child QT 2SG DJ F2 come afternoon
 ‘The woman told the child that you (addressee) will come in the afternoon.’

The first person pronoun *mà* (10b) is used to refer to the reporter, i.e. the current speaker, while the second person pronoun *wù* (10c) is used to refer to the addressee, i.e. the current listener. Neither can be used to refer to the subject of the matrix clause, i.e. *wùwì*° ‘women’, or the addressee of the reported speech, i.e. *wàyn*° ‘child’.

Vice versa, it is also not possible to use the logophoric pronoun *yì* to refer to a first or second person pronoun trigger in the matrix clause. In this case, the first or second person pronoun must be repeated in the reported speech clause (11a-b).

(11) Babanki usage of 1st and 2nd person in the logophoric domain

- a. *mà gà? à wàyn lá mà á né vì nàntfwì*
 1SG say to 1.child QT 1SG DJ F2 come afternoon
 ‘I told the child that I will come in the afternoon.’
- b. *Wù gà? à wàyn lá wù á né vì nàntfwì*
 2SG say to 1.child QT 2SG DJ F2 come afternoon
 ‘I told the child that you will come in the afternoon.’

These Babanki facts align with the implicational person hierarchy for logophoric pronouns (Hyman & Comrie 1981) that third persons are more easily accessible than second and first persons to logophoric marking.

2.2.2 Number

While some Grassfields languages, e.g. Noni (Beboid) have distinct singular and plural logophoric pronouns (Hyman 1981), Ring languages such as Aghem and Babanki have a single logophoric pronoun which is restricted to singular use. In plural contexts, the ordinary third person plural markers, i.e. *yé* in Aghem (12) and *vàwé* in Babanki (13), are used for both logophoric and non-logophoric reference, which produces ambiguity.

(12) Aghem (adapted from Hyman 1979: 51)

yé mō dzè jí⁺ á yé mō bvù nò

‘They_i said that they_j (other people) / they_i (themselves) fell.’

(13) Babanki

vàwé gà? lá vāwé tâ fǎŋ

‘They_i said that they_j (other people) / they_i (themselves) fell.’

In this, both Aghem and Babanki conform with the implicational hierarchy for number features of logophoric pronouns (Huang 2000), captured by Ameka (2017: 524) as ‘if a language has logophoric pronouns it will have a singular pronoun, but not all logophoric pronoun languages have plural pronouns’.

The absence of a dedicated plural logophoric in Aghem and Babanki is probably justified by the need to attribute authorial responsibility in an unequivocal way (Hill & Irvine 1992) which could only be achieved by singular reference. In plural reference, authorial responsibility remains vague and non-personalised, so that no one may accept or take it individually in the end.

2.3 Grammatical functions of Ring logophoric pronouns

In Ring languages logophoric pronouns may vary according to the syntactic functions they can take as subject, object or possessor, as listed for Aghem, Babanki, Oku, and Babungo in table (14).

(14) Ring logophoric pronouns according to grammatical functions

	Aghem	Babungo	Oku	Babanki
subject	<i>é</i>	<i>yì</i>	<i>ʒī</i>	<i>yì</i>
object	<i>yé</i>	<i>yì</i>	<i>ʒī</i>	<i>yì</i>
possessor	<i>yé</i>	<i>wí</i>	<i>í</i>	<i>yí</i>

Different patterns of neutralisations can be observed. While Aghem has a dedicated subject logophoric *é* in contrast to a non-subject logophoric *yé* (homophonous with 3pl subject marker) which serves both object and possessor function, Babungo, Oku and Babanki each have a dedicated possessor logophoric *wí*, *í*, *yí* respectively, contrasting with a non-possessor logophoric *yì*, *ʒī*, *yì* respectively, which serves both subject and object function. The Babanki logophoric form is distinguished only by tone for the different syntactic functions whereas the expression of non-logophoric third person reference maintains more formal distinctions based on segmental contrasts, as indicated in table (15).

(15) Babanki logophoric vs. non-logophoric pronouns according to syntactic functions:

	subject	object	possessor
non-logophoric	<i>yà</i>	<i>àwén</i>	<i>wén</i>
logophoric		<i>yì</i>	<i>yí</i>

The tonal difference on the logophoric forms is also found on non-logophoric forms where subject and object pronouns may bear L or H tones while possessive pronouns have H except in the 2SG (16).

(16) Overview of Babanki non-logophoric pronouns

person	subject	non-subject	possessive
1SG	<i>mà</i>	<i>mò</i>	<i>óm</i>
2SG	<i>wù</i>	<i>wù</i>	<i>yà ~ wù</i>
3SG	<i>yà</i>	<i>àwén</i>	<i>wén</i>
1DUAL	<i>yúwù</i>	<i>yúwù</i>	<i>yúwù</i>

1PL.INCL	<i>vá⁺ yáη</i>	<i>vá⁺ yáη</i>	<i>vá⁺ yáη</i>
1PL.EXCL	<i>yès</i>	<i>yès</i>	<i>yés</i>
2PL	<i>yàη</i>	<i>yàη</i>	<i>áη</i>
3PL	<i>vàwé</i>	<i>vàwé</i>	<i>vàwé</i>

The examples in (17-19) illustrate the usage of Babanki and Oku logophorics vis-à-vis their corresponding non-logophorics in subject (17), direct object (18) and possessive function (19), respectively. First examples in each set contain the non-logophoric third person singular pronoun, representing the constellation of non-coreferentiality with the reported speaker subject of the main clause, while second examples present the logophoric pronoun marking coreferentiality of the reported speaker subject of the main clause with the subject, the object or a possessor in the reported speech clause, respectively.

(17) Logophoric pronoun as subject in the reported speech

a. Babanki

- (i) *yà gà? lá yà vì-i*
 3SG say QT 3SG come-PROG
 ‘S/he_i says that s/he_j is coming.’
- (ii) *yà gà? lá yì vì-i*
 3SG say QT LOG come-PROG
 ‘S/he_i says that s/he_i (LOG) is coming.’

b. Oku (Hyman 2018: 206)

- (i) *èb sōí gē èb gwí yè*
 3SG say QT 3SG come PROG
 ‘S/he_i says that s/he_j is coming.’
- (ii) *èb sōí gē ʒī gwí yè*
 3SG say QT LOG come PROG
 ‘S/he_i says that s/he_i (LOG) is coming.’

(18) Logophoric pronoun as direct object in the reported speech

a. Babanki

(i) *yà gàʔ lá mà tà yèn āwén*
 3SG say QT 1SG P2 see 3SG
 ‘S/he_i says that I saw him_j/her_j.’

(ii) *yà gàʔ lá mà tà yèn yī*
 3SG say QT 1SG P2 see LOG
 ‘S/he_i says that I saw him_j/her_j (LOG).’

b. Oku (Hyman 2018: 206)

(i) *èb sōí gē mé nè ló yèn wīn*
 3SG say QT 1SG PST PFV see 3SG
 ‘S/he_i says that I saw him_j/her_j.’

(ii) *èb sōí gē mé nè ló yèn ʒī*
 3SG say QT 1SG PST PFV see LOG
 ‘S/he_i says that I saw him_j/her_j (LOG).’

(19) Logophoric pronoun as possessor in the reported speech

a. Babanki

(i) *yà gàʔ lá yì yéná fā-nín fā-wén*
 3SG say QT LOG see 19-bird 19-3SG
 ‘S/he_i says that s/he_i sees his_j/her_j bird.’

(ii) *yà gàʔ lá yì yéná fā-nín āf-yí*
 3SG say QT LOG see 19-bird 19-LOG
 ‘S/he_i says that s/he_i sees his_j/her_j bird.’

b. Oku (Hyman 2018: 207)

(i) *èb sōí gē ʒī yéná fē-nún á-wīn*
 3SG say QT LOG see 19-bird 19-3SG
 ‘S/he_i says that s/he_i sees his_j/her_j bird.’

(ii) *èb sōí gē ʒī yéná fē-nún f-í*
 3SG say QT LOG see 19-bird 19-LOG
 ‘S/he_i says that s/he_i sees his_j/her_j (LOG) bird.’

The Babanki logophoric pronoun *yì* varies in tone. In subject position it is always low (17a-ii), in object position it has a L tone which may be realized L (20a), or M (20b, 18a-ii), following HL simplification.⁵

(20) Babanki non-subject logophoric pronoun tone

- a. *yà gà? lá mà tà yàm yì*
 3SG say QT 1SG P2 beat LOG
 ‘S/he_i says that I beat him_j/her_j.’
- b. *yà gà? lá mà tà yà? yī*
 3SG say QT 1SG P2 hold LOG
 ‘S/he_i says that I held him_j/her_j.’

The logophoric pronoun is realized L in (20a) because it is preceded by a L tone verb *yàm* ‘beat’. In (20b) the tone is M because it is preceded by a H tone verb *yà?* ‘hold’, whose H tone is set afloat by the L tone of the tense marker *tà* ‘P2’ following Low Tone Spread. The dislodged H tone of the verb docks rightwards and joins the L of the logophoric to form a HL contour which is subsequently simplified to M.

As possessive marker the logophoric tone is underlyingly H (21a, 19a-ii) and can be realized M (21b), if the noun phrase final enclitic marker is from class 1 or 9.

(21) Babanki possessive logophoric pronoun tone

- a. *yà gà? lá yà kú k̄-kím āk-yí ká*
 3SG say QT 3SG give 7-crab 7-LOG 7
 ‘S/he_i says that s/he_j should give her_i/his_i (LOG) crab.’
- b. *yà gà? lá yì yén-á nàm à-yī*
 3SG say QT LOG see-PROG 9.meat 9-LOG.9
 ‘S/he_i says that s/he_i sees her_i/his_i (LOG) meat.’

The tonal variation in the realisation of the logophoric is the result of morphotonological interaction of its basic H tone with the tones of the noun class agreement prefix, i.e. *àk-* (21a) and *à-* (21b), and a phrase final noun class marking enclitic, i.e. *ká* (21a) and a floating L tone (21b).⁶ The M tone on the logophoric in (21b), therefore, results from HL simplification which occurs after the final floating enclitic L tone combines with the H tone of the logophoric pronoun, i.e. *à-yí`* → *à-yī* → *à-yī*.

The M tone on the agreement marker in (21a) is due to Prefix L-Raising (Akumbu 2019: 6) which raises the L tone of a prefix to M if it occurs between two H tones.

Since this is a general process in Babanki, the prefix of the possessed head noun *kàkím* ‘crab’ in (21a) which happens to be flanked by two H tones is also raised to M undergoing the L-Raising rule.

For a complete view of the Babanki possessive logophoric pronouns the full set according to the noun classes of the language is given in the following table.

(22) Babanki possessive logophoric pronouns

class	LOG	class	LOG
1	à-yī	7	àk-yí ká
2	àv-yí	8	àv-yí
3	à-yí	9	à-yī
5	à-yí	10	àf-í sá
6	à-yí	13	àt-yí tá
6a	àk-myí m̀	19	àf-yí fǎ

The Babanki logophoric *yì* is formally identical with the hearer-proximal demonstrative pronoun *yì*, illustrated in (23a-b).

- (23) a. *wàyn yì t̀ z̀ k̄-báyn*
 1.child DEM P2 eat 7-fufu
 ‘That child (near listener) ate the fufu.’
- b. *kú f̄-nì f-yì à wàyn*
 give.IMP 19-knife 19-DEM to 1.child
 ‘Give that knife (near listener) to the child.’

Whether this is an instance of homonymy or polysemy, remains to be investigated.

2.4 Report opener and report predicates

Regarding the creation of the logophoric domain, i.e. the quote content or the stretch of discourse attributed to the one whose thought or speech is being reported, Ring languages require a report opener, i.e. the quotative particle *lá*, and a licensing verb, as illustrated for Babanki in (24-26). Both items, i.e. quotative and licensing verb, are indispensable in Babanki. It is not possible in Babanki to invoke the logophoric domain by simply using the logophoric pronoun either alone or in combination with other means, e.g. specific categories of verbal inflection such as a conjunctive or subjunctive mood. Verbs that license the use of logophorics (Stirling 1993; Culy

1994; Huang 2000) and thus act as openers of logophoric domains alongside the quotative in Babanki are not restricted to the semantic domain of speech acts, they also include verbs of cognition, conception, volition and perception. The examples in (24) with the logophoric in subject position illustrate the application of the Babanki quotative marker *lá* in its role as report opener that creates the logophoric domain in combination with verbs for speech acts, e.g. *gàʔ* ‘say’ (24a), cognition, e.g. *lyèsà* ‘forget’ (24b), conception, e.g. *kwòʔ* ‘think’ (24c), emotion, e.g. *kòŋ* ‘love’ (24d), and volition, e.g. *dzìm* ‘wish’ (24e). Accordingly, the remaining examples show the logophoric in non-subject (25) and in possessive function (26).

(24) Babanki quotative marker as report opener: subject

- a. *γà gàʔ lá yì vî-ì*
 3SG say QT LOG come-PROG
 ‘He_i says that he_i (LOG) is coming.’
- b. *γà lyèsà lá yì dìʔí zí*
 3SG forget QT LOG COP eat
 ‘He_i forgot that he_i (LOG) has to eat.’
- c. *γà kwòʔ-à lá yì bíná*
 3SG think-PROG QT LOG sleep
 ‘He_i thinks that he_i (LOG) should sleep.’
- d. *γà kòŋ lá yì kíʔí ā-kó*
 3SG love QT LOG have 3-money
 ‘He_i loves that he_i (LOG) should have money.’
- e. *γà dzìm-à lá yì nít mú*ú*
 3SG wish-PROG QT LOG drink 6a.water
 ‘He_i wishes that he_i (LOG) should drink.’

(25) Babanki quotative marker as report opener: non-subject

- a. *γà gàʔ lá mà tà yèn yī*
 3SG say QT 1SG P2 see LOG
 ‘He_i says that I saw him_i.’
- b. *γà lyèsà lá mà tà γòm yì*
 3SG forget QT 1SG P2 beat LOG
 ‘He_i forgets that I beat him_i (LOG).’

- c. *yà kwò?tà lá mà tà yòm yì*
 3SG think QT LOG chew 7-crab 7-LOG
 ‘He_i thinks that I beat him_i (LOG).’
- d. *yà kòŋ lá à-kó n-dì? à yì*
 3SG love QT 3-money N-COP with LOG
 ‘He_i loves that the money should be with him_i (LOG).’
- e. *yà dzìm-à lá mà kú mú[†]ú à yì*
 3SG wish-PROG QT 1SG give 6a.water to LOG
 ‘He_i wishes that I should give him_i (LOG) water.’

(26) Babanki quotative marker as report opener: possessive

- a. *yà gà? lá yì yéná kà-kím àk-yí*
 3SG say QT LOG see 7-crab 7-LOG
 ‘He_i says that he_i sees his_i crab.’
- b. *yà lyèsà lá à dì? kà-kím àk-yí*
 3SG forget QT it COP 7-crab 7-LOG
 ‘He_i forgets that it is his_i (LOG) crab.’
- c. *yà kwò?tà lá yì pfí? kà-kím àk-yí*
 3SG think QT LOG chew 7-crab 7-LOG
 ‘He_i thinks that he_i should eat his_i (LOG) crab.’
- d. *yà kòŋ lá mà zén nà à-kó yī*
 3SG love QT 1SG buy with 3-money LOG
 ‘He_i loves that I should buy with his_i (LOG) money.’
- e. *yà dzìm-à lá mà kú mú[†]ú m-yí m̀*
 3SG wish-PROG QT 1SG give 6a.water 6a-LOG 6a
 ‘He_i wishes that I should give his_i (LOG) water.’

A large set of verbs for speaking, thinking, wishing, conceiving and perceiving are capable of licensing the use of the logophoric pronoun, i.e. speech act verbs such as *fà?tà* ‘tell’, *myètà* ‘end’, *zímá* ‘scream, shout’, *tsèm* ‘whisper’, *kàŋká* ‘rebuke, reproach, reprimand’, cognition verbs such as *kí* ‘know; recognise’ *mó* ‘ignore, not recognise’, *kwò?tà* ‘remember, think of’, *dzìntà* ‘remind’, conception verbs such as *tʃò?sá* ‘trust’, *byímá* ‘accept, agree, believe’, *tsísá dzõm* ‘dream’, emotion verbs such as *bàn* ‘hate’, *sánlá* ‘be(come) happy’, *dzù?* ‘be(come) sad’, *fwàn* ‘fear’, *tómsá* ‘support, encourage’, *fwàn* ‘fear’, perception verbs such as *yén* ‘see’ and *zú*

‘overhear, understand’, and volition verbs such as *káŋ* ‘want, need’. In this, Babanki presents a relatively high degree of grammaticalization of logophoric marking which is in accordance with the hierarchy of logophoric licensors [speech > thought > knowledge > direct perception] established by Stirling (1993: 259) and Culy 1994.

3 Logophoricity in the Babanki culture of communication

Logophoric marking is motivated by specific functions across languages. In general, it is used to avoid ambiguity of reference between the reporter or speaker in a logophoric domain and the real or imagined author or source of the reported discourse. Since the logophoric pronouns signal coreference they stand in opposition to the ordinary third person pronouns that signal disjoint reference. Another function of logophoric markers pointed out by Ameka (2017: 530) following Hill and Irvine (1992) is that they ‘can also be seen as a device that allows the attribution of authorial responsibility in discourse. Thus, a speaker indicates that they are only reporting someone else’s message and the logophoric marker is used to refer to that person. Because of this speakers can distance themselves from the reported content and not assume responsibility for it’.

The avoidance of referential ambiguity and the evidential strategy marking functions (Aikhenvald 2004, Dimmendaal 2001, 2014) can be viewed as cognitive motivations for Ring logophoric systems as in other logophoric systems more generally (Ameka 2017). As in other African cultures logophoricity in Ring languages is an ‘elaboration of a pervasive cultural practice in their grammars of triadic communication, i.e. the art of communicating with another through a third party’ Ameka (2017: 531). Logophoricity marking allows for the possibility to make clear that some information a speaker is transmitting originates from a different source and that the one transmitting the information is only acting as a mouthpiece and is not responsible for the message. A popular Babanki proverb that summarizes this role and liberates the reporter from any possible negative impact of a reported speech is given in (27).

(27) *kwífon á kó tímà pfù ntím*
 1.kwifon⁷ DJ NEG ever die 9.message

‘A messenger cannot be held responsible for the content of a message.’

The proverb is commonly said to encourage the bearer of any unpleasant or negative news to feel free to deliver the message. It is common for family members or individuals to send someone to deliver information since, even to date, letter writing is not commonly practiced in the Babanki community.

Triadic communication, the common arena for acting out logophoricity, is institutionalized in various contexts in Babanki society as in other logophoric African languages. Firstly in Babanki, messengers are sent out from the palace regularly with announcements or invitations to various activities such as community labour (work on roads, in the Fon's farm, at the palace), meetings and religious events, since the Fon and his collaborators, i.e. the VTC members cannot communicate formal messages directly to the people. The messenger would move around playing a gong and relaying the information from specific locations in order to reach the entire community, as illustrated in example (1) above.⁸

Secondly, since sessions in the village court are usually closed to the people who gather outside the courtyard, verdicts and other decisions are announced to them by the court secretary. He may report details about the session including what the plaintiff and the defendant said, as well as the final decision of the court.

Thirdly, marriage negotiations are carried out by representatives of the families of the bride and bridegroom. When a young man settles on the choice of a wife, he informs his parents who then dispatch the boy's aunt(s) to the girl's parents to speak on behalf of the boy. On the day of the traditional wedding the boy and girl remain passive participants and all negotiations are made and sealed by their uncles while their aunts prepare food. Even when they are married and have a problem that causes the girl to return to her parents, the boy cannot go to them himself but must send either his aunt(s), uncle(s) or parents to discuss the problem and seek to reunite the couple.

Related to marriage is birth as well as death which are normally not reported by main person(s) concerned or affected. The information must be taken around by someone else, who in the case of birth must be offered gifts (money or food items) in return since they are a bearer of good news. Gifts are not given in the case of death announcements although the bearer of the news could be offered food.

Another context in which triadic communication is frequently encountered is translation, i.e. when an outsider who cannot speak Babanki has to address a Babanki audience and translation services are required. This is generally the case when government administrators visit the village and it is quite common in churches where the preacher is not of Babanki origin.

The scenarios presented above indicate that the use of intermediaries is an integral part of the Babanki culture of communication. In such contexts there is also the need to protect the intermediary **from from** any negative consequences of delivering unpleasant information from a secondary source to an audience, e.g. insults or

rebukes. In the Ring area, these consequences seem less severe than elsewhere, e.g. among the Yoruba where death, illness and other types of misfortune may affect the messenger who relays the unpleasant message (Bamgboṣe 1986). As in Adioukrou, a Kwa language of West Africa, the preferred method of interaction is for a speaker to assume a neutral third person role and use logophoric pronouns to ‘encode someone else’s speech as a reporter transmitting a message’ (Hill 1995: 93). Therefore, the Babanki use of logophoric pronouns does not only avoid referential ambiguity but also qualifies as a most effective means of transmitting messages without causing conflict or misappropriation of reactions to the contents of the messages transmitted. This might also hold for the other Ring communities, since all of them share the institution of a dedicated logophoric pronoun, as illustrated below, and most of them share a similar social organization and culture (Chilver & Kaberry 1967, Nkwi 1976, Chilver 1993, Di Carlo 2011). Third party communication is, therefore, a common practice in Babanki and other Ring cultures and logophoricity is required to mark information as originating from a secondary source, not from the actual speaker.

4 Conclusion

Following the lines of the typological framework set by Ameka 2017, Babanki presents a ‘reported speaker logophoric pronoun’ system restricted to the third person singular form *yì* in subject, object and possessive functions in logophoric domains opened by the quotative marker *lá* and licensed by verbs of speech, cognition, conception, volition and perception, in agreement with the hierarchy of logophoric licensors established by Stirling (1993: 259) and Culy 1994.

Generally in Ring languages, logophoricity marking seems to be restricted to the third person singular, while there is variation with respect to syntactic functions for which dedicated logophorics are eligible. Some Ring languages have two distinct logophorics with a contrast of subject vs. object cum possessive (Aghem, Men), while others differentiate subject cum object vs. possessive (Babanki, Kom, Oku, Babungo). Table (28) presents a comparative overview of the logophoric vs. anaphoric third person singular pronouns across Ring languages.

(28) Comparison of third logophoric vs. non-logophoric pronouns across Ring languages⁹

	3 rd LOG	3 rd non-LOG
Babanki	<i>yì</i> (S,O), <i>yí</i> (P)	<i>ɣà</i> (S), <i>àwén</i> (O), <i>wén</i> (P)
Bum	<i>yí</i> (S,O?,P?)	<i>wù</i> (S), <i>wūn</i> (O,P)
Men	<i>zì</i> / <i>èzà</i> (S), <i>vēŋ</i> (O,P)	<i>è(vá)</i> (S), <i>vèŋ</i> (O), <i>vēŋ</i> (P)
Kom	<i>yī</i> (S,O), <i>vī</i> (P)	<i>wù</i> (S), <i>ŋwēn</i> (O,P)
Kuk	<i>zì</i> (S,O?,P?)	<i>ù</i> (S), <i>wáí</i> (O,P)
Kung	??	<i>ù</i> (S), <i>wáí</i> (O), <i>ī</i> (P)
Oku	<i>zī</i> (S,O), <i>vī</i> (P)	<i>èb</i> (S), <i>wēn</i> (O,P)
Aghem	<i>é</i> (S), <i>yé</i> (O,P)	<i>ò</i> (S), <i>wín</i> (O,P)
Bu	??	<i>ù</i> (S), <i>wáí</i> (O,P)
Isu	<i>í</i> / <i>iyé</i> (S,O,P)	<i>ù</i> (S), <i>wé</i> (O,P)
Weh	<i>í</i> (S, O?,P?)	<i>tá</i> (S), <i>wí</i> (O,P)
Zoa	<i>yè</i> (S,O,P?)	<i>(m)á</i> (S), <i>wád</i> (O), <i>wáŋ</i> (P)
Lamnso'	<i>wùn</i> (S,O?,P?)	<i>wù</i> (S), <i>wūn</i> (O), <i>vā</i> (P)
Babungo	<i>yì</i> (S,O), <i>wí</i> (P)	<i>ŋwá</i> (S,O), <i>wí</i> (P)
Kenswei Nsei	??	<i>wà</i> (S), <i>wá</i> (O), <i>nú</i> (P)
Babessi	<i>yí</i> (S,O?,P?)	<i>yí</i> (S), <i>ŋá</i> (O), <i>yí</i> : (P)

Despite deplorable gaps in the data base (Kung, Bu, Kenswei Nsei) and an imperfect understanding of tonal and segmental variations observed, the table shows that most of the Ring logophoric forms share a common element *i* which can be identified with the reconstructed Proto-Grassfields Bantu plain third person singular pronoun **i* which serves both anaphoric and logophoric functions in Eastern Grassfields (Hyman 2018). With respect to the issue of the emergence and historical development of logophoric pronouns in general (von Roncador 1992), the Ring subgroup, along with other branches of Western Grassfields Bantu, presents a curious situation: it is not the contemporary logophorics which have been innovated, they rather retain an original third person pronoun form, mostly reflexes of Proto-Grassfields Bantu **i* (Hyman 2018: 203). Instead the plain third person pronouns (for object and possessive functions) have been renewed by grammaticalisation of either proximal demonstratives or the noun 'body', replacing the prior form **i* in anaphoric function and restricting it to logophoric function (Hyman 2018: 204).

While reported speech is an integral part of everyday human interaction all over the globe, sociopolitical institutionalisations of triadic communication (Ameka 2004) such as the ones widely observed in Babanki and other Ring communities might be viewed as supporting, promoting and consolidating the development of grammatical devices such as logophoricity which allows for clear disambiguation between the words of the source that is being reported and those of the reporter her/himself.

Notes

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- ¹ We gratefully acknowledge the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation for a Georg Forster Research Fellowship for Experienced Researchers granted to the first author (2019-2021) and which has allowed for greater collaboration and research on this paper.
 - ² Babanki men (not women and children) can refer to the Fon, i.e. their traditional ruler, as *wàyn* ‘child’.
 - ³ Abbreviations and symbols: † downstep, 1SG first person singular, 2SG second person singular, 3SG third person singular, 2PL second person plural, 3PL third person plural, 1...19 noun classes, COP copula, DEM demonstrative, F1 immediate future tense, F2 hodiernal future tense, IDEO ideophone, IMP imperative, LOG logophoric, N nasal, NEG negative, O object, P possessive, P1 immediate past tense, P2 hodiernal past tense, PFV perfective, PROG progressive, PST past tense, QT quotative, S subject.
 - ⁴ The tonal variation on the logophoric pronoun, i.e. *yì~yī~yí* is discussed in section 2.3.
 - ⁵ In (17a-ii), for example, a general Babanki HL tone simplification process (Akumbu, Hyman & Kießling 2020) applies, such that the L tone of the tense marker *tà* spreads onto the H tone verb *yén* and dislodges the H tone which joins the L of the following logophoric marker *yì* to form a HL falling tone, which is subsequently simplified to M. So in detail the tone changes are the following: *tà yén yì* → *tà yèn 'yì* → *tà yèn yí* → *tà yèn yī*.
 - ⁶ The noun phrase final enclitic marker of class 1 and 9 is a floating L tone while that of class 6a is *mà* and the remaining classes, i.e. 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, 19 have a H tone marker (Akumbu & Kießling 2022).
 - ⁷ In most Grassfields communities, *Kwifon* is the overseer of legislative, judiciary and executive arms of government, reserved for males of all ages (Chilver & Kaberry 1967, Nkwi 1976, Chilver 1993, Di Carlo 2011).
 - ⁸ In the past, a large drum was used to communicate in Babanki but this practice has been abandoned with modernism and advances in technology. Palace messengers are still used, but less frequently as they are now sent out only when there is very pertinent information to be communicated to the people.
 - ⁹ Data sources: Hyman (2018: 208) provides data for Aghem, Babanki, Babessi, Babungo, Men, Isu, Kom, Lamnso', Oku, and Weh. Other sources include: Men (Mua 2015: 27, Schröter 2016: 71-2), and Babungo (Schaub 1985: 111-113).

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