Composing Relationships:
extemporaneous Nanti karintaa poetry in Peruvian Amazonia

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1. Project Overview

My dissertation research on Nanti *karintaa* performances emerges from my ongoing linguistic anthropological research in the Nanti communities of Montetoni and Marankehari on the Camisea River in southeastern Perú. In this project, I will describe the defining characteristics of *karintaa* as a form of verbal art and examine specific *karintaa* performances situated in their sociocultural and spatiotemporal contexts. This research will illuminate the role these *karintaa* performances play in shaping relationships[1] among Nanti individuals and in shaping Nanti society as an enduring[2] network of relationships. At the same time, my research on the mutually-constituting relationship between Nanti discursive practices and social organization addresses fundamental theoretic[3] questions regarding the nature of the relationship between language use and social organization more generally.

Karintaa is extemporaneous chanted poetry presently performed by Nantis exclusively within the social and interactional context of group chanting during community feasting. Informed by the discourse-centered approach to culture, I will describe and analyze the linguistic, musical, sociocultural, and spatiotemporal features that distinguish *karintaa* from other forms of Nanti communicative behavior as a distinct *way of speaking* (Sherzer, 1983). Based on this analysis, I will offer a preliminary theory of the relationships between *karintaa* and other speaking practices that together constitute a dynamic communicative system, or *discursive ecology* (Beier, 2001). In particular, I hypothesize that the *contrast* between *karintaa* and other Nanti ways of speaking is highly salient in Nanti social organization, and that in order to understand contemporary Nanti society we must understand *karintaa* and non-*karintaa* discourse in relation to one another.

This project is part of my longer-term collaborative work to document the range of contemporary Nanti communicative practices, including both formal linguistic description of their as-yet minimally documented language (Beier and Michael, 1998; Beier and Michael, 2001a; Beier and Michael, 2001b), and multi-modal ethnographic description of multi-modal Nanti ways of speaking. From cross-cultural and interdisciplinary perspectives, my research offers a new corpus of data and analyses from (previously undescribed) Nanti society to enduring scholarly inquiries into the nature of the relationships between verbal interaction and social organization. From an activist perspective, my research aims to document and preserve data from contemporary Nanti life for the benefit of present and future Nantis. All of my research activities in the Nanti communities will continue to be shaped by the requests and priorities that my Nanti collaborators express to me.

2. Local research context for the proposed project

2.1 The place

To carry out my dissertation research project, I will return to the Nanti villages of Montetoni and Marankehari on the Camisea River. Montetoni and Marankehari are situated in the headwaters region of the Camisea River, in the foothills of the Andes mountains in the *departamento* of Cuzco in southeastern Peru. My relationship with the Camisea Nantis began in 1995, and I have combined my linguistic and anthropological research on Nanti language and society with my humanitarian work on healthcare, education, land rights, and political autonomy issues each year since 1997.

Montetoni was founded in 1992 and is settled by a number of Nanti families who moved to the Camisea river basin from the Timpia river basin in the late 1980s in search of access to metal tools. For complex political reasons, Marankehari was founded in 1996 and is settled by a subset of the families that first settled in Montetoni. Montetoni is approximately five kilometers upriver of Marankehari. At present,

[1] I discuss what I mean by *shaping relationships* in greater detail in part 2.3.

[2] By *enduring network of relationships* I specifically mean that relationships between and among Nantis 'endure' or continue over time through interactions such as *karintaa*; the network *is* the activity of relating among Nantis.

[3] I use the word *theoretic* rather than *theoretical* to avoid the connotations of 'impractical, irrelevant to everyday experience' that the latter word has in common usage.

Montetoni has approximately 180 residents and Marankehari about 70. Interestingly, as of 2002, another small Nanti settlement has formed at Piriasanteni, several kilometers upriver of Montetoni; the Nantis there also migrated from the Timpia basin and have relatives in Montetoni.

Because of the difficult terrain of the Camisea river basin, the journey to the Nanti communities from Sepahua, the nearest frontier town with a landing strip, takes a minimum of four days upriver and three days downriver under ideal conditions. As a consequence of the difficulties involved in traveling to their communities, the Nantis experience a relatively small number of unanticipated visits from outsiders – this is, in fact, a principle reason for which the Nantis in Montetoni have chosen to remain living in this region and have not moved further downriver.

Due to the length of my stays during my dissertation research, I (and my research partner Lev Michael) will build a new small hut in Montetoni to live in. This will serve as my base of operations; my research activities in Marankehari (and possibly Piriasanteni) will take the form of short or extended 'visits' to these other two settlements. In June 2003, I obtained explicit permission from the *peresetente* of Montetoni, Migero, to build a hut and stay as long as I desire (with the single proviso that I not take up permanent residence in the village.)

2.2 The linguistic environment

The Nanti language is spoken by approximately 500 individuals, about 180 of whom live in Montetoni; about 70 of whom live in Marankehari; and the remainder of whom live in smaller settlements in the Timpia river basin. Nanti is an Arawakan language of the Kampa family, together with Ashéninka (or Asheninca), Asháninka (or Asháninca), Kakinte, (or Caquinte), Matsigenka (Machiguenga), and Nomatsigenka (or Nomachiguenga). (See (Aikhenvald, 1999) and SIL's Ethnologue (www.ethnologue.com) for two other alternative classification schemes). Of these, Nanti seems to be the most similar to the Manu dialect of Matsigenka. In general, in reference to specific interactions, Nanti speakers attest to a higher level of comprehension of Matsigenka than Matsigenka speakers do of Nanti; even under ideal conditions of slow deliberate speech and simple topics, the level of mutual intelligibility between Nanti and Matsigenka approximates that between Spanish and Portuguese. It is worth noting that apart from mere lexical and grammatical issues, Nanti ways of speaking and discourse forms are quite distinct from those of their Matsigenka neighbors; for example, the verbal art of *karintaa* that is the focus of my research is not performed in any Matsigenka village that I have visited. Glenn Shepard, an ethnobotanist who has done extensive research with Matsigenkas in the Manu region, told me that some features of Nanti chanting are found in verbal art forms among the Manu Matsigenka but that the overall genre and performance is quite dissimilar from anything he has witnessed.

Whether in the end it is most appropriate to call the languages of the Kampan family distinct 'languages' or whether they are a set of 'dialects' is as much a political question as an empirical one; in any case, insufficient empirical data yet exist on which to found a definitive opinion. Existing data suggest that these named languages and their variants in fact form a continuum along the axes of linguistic features and mutual intelligibility. For reasons reflecting both the language and political ideologies of the Nantis in Montetoni and against the assimilationist language and political ideologies of Matsigenkas in the region, up to the present I have referred to Nanti as a distinct language.

2.3 Motivation for selecting karintaa as the focus of the project

My interest in Nanti *karintaa* performances emerges from the great interest these performances hold for Nantis themselves. *Karintaa* are performed only during weekly feasts, but they are a highly salient form of interaction among feasters. Feasts are presently the locus of village-wide sociability within the two recently formed Nanti communities of Montetoni and Marankehari. Large multi-family settlements such as these are an unprecedented social configuration for these Nantis and feasting is one of the most significant social innovations to emerge in these new settlements.

Outside of feasting, Nantis have relatively few interactions with individuals who are not members of their own residence groups; the majority of daily subsistence activities such as farming, hunting, and food preparation are organized at the level of residence groups. In my master's thesis, I argued that feasting

both reinforces and generates sociability across residence groups because it is the sole activity in which all residents of the village can and do participate as a group (Beier 2001). It is in this sense of 'reinforcing and generating sociability' that I claim that *karintaa* interactions shape relationships among Nantis.

In the context of this project, I have chosen to use the word 'relationship(s)' to index the networks of interactivity that Nantis continually perpetuate and renew through their communicative interactions. Because the word 'relationship' is a noun, I know that using it may connote a stable, atemporal thing with essential defining qualities. Therefore, I wish to emphasize that in my view, relations among individuals are dynamic, renewed, and changing across experiential time and only exist in the shared experiential world as activity among people.

While doing previous research on Nanti feasting, I observed that certain forms of action and interaction that occur in the context of feasting are entirely restricted to that context – and moreover, that forms of communicative behavior that are highly *marked* (that is, uncommon and/or dispreferred) in non-feast contexts become *unmarked* forms (that is, common and/or ordinary) during feasting. Within the set of social transformations that take place during feasting, *karintaa* manifests a radical transformation of interpersonal verbal behavior through which chanters explicitly express evaluative stances that are not heard in daily spoken discourse. *Karintaa* is *marked* in both form and content; chanters often align their bodies, focus their gaze, and aim their words directly towards others, their utterances are often loud and forceful; and they address topics and sentiments rarely heard in everyday conversation. These reconfigurations of interactional behavior have profound implications for theories of Nanti social organization. Specifically, I have observed that interactions which take place exclusively in the form of *karintaa* have a special salience in establishing the tone and quality of the relationships between individuals and residence groups on a daily basis; and I hypothesize that Nantis strategically exploit this aspect of *karintaa* during feasting. Through the research proposed here, I will test two propositions: first, that *karintaa* provides a unique socially-acceptable medium for expressing sentiments and evaluations and for giving voice to interpersonal and intergroup tensions[4]; and second, that specifically because they are addressed through the medium of *karintaa,* these tensions are often either diffused or re-evaluated.

2.4 Brief summary of historical background of feasting and chanting

Nanti feasting in its present form first emerged in 1996, four years after the founding of Montetoni. At present, two activities define Nanti feasting: sharing and consuming *oburoki*, a fermented drink made from yuca mash; and intensive group chanting that usually continues uninterrupted for 18 to 24 hours. Concurrent with sharing and drinking *oburoki*, feasters form groups, clasp hands, and move about the open areas of the village while chanting. Nanti chanting brings together two genres of verbal expression: simultaneous, asynchronous performance by all group members of short formulas from a large but relatively fixed[5] repertoire and intercalated extemporaneous *karintaa* poetry performed by individuals who compose these lines within the formal constraints set by the formula. Sequences of *karintaa* are often performed interactively such that two or several chanters dialogue through their *karintaa* compositions.

My assertion that contemporary Nanti feasting practices first emerged in 1996 results from various conversations I have had with Nantis now living on the Camisea river, from which I have distilled the following information: Prior to moving to the Camisea river basin from the Timpia river basin, these Nantis lived in small family group settlements of about 15 to 30 people, and had relatively infrequent contact with other such settlements. As such, large feasts involving numerous co-resident family groups could not occur because there were no large multi-family settlements. In addition, Nanti *chacras* on the

[4] I use the word *tension* here rather than *complaint* to index the dialogical aspect of conflicting evaluations by two or more persons of shared experience. As Dr. Keating has suggested, I will need to consider such utterances from both a 'speech act' and an 'interpretive expectation' perspective as well.

[5] By *relatively fixed* I mean first, that the set of distinct formulas that compose the reportoire has not changed substantially since I began documenting it; second, that the distinct formulas themselves have not changed substantially since I began documenting them; and third, that their fixedness contrasts substantially with the extemporaneity of *karintaa* poetry.

Timpia river were much smaller and less productive due to the farming technology then available: sticks for digging, stone axes for cutting down trees, and hands for pulling up small plants. Therefore, large amounts of yuca, necessary to prepare large amounts of *oburoki*, were not available. And finally, on the Timpia River, no one had large vessels in which to prepare large batches of *oburoki*; the acquisition of metal pots and plastic vessels on the Camisea, as well as axes to hew wooden vessels, radically increased the amount of *oburoki* fermentation possible at any given moment. In sum, only since settling in Montetoni, gaining access to coveted metal tools and vessels, and beginning to cultivate large gardens with a surplus of yuca have Nantis been able to feast on the scale and in the manner that they now do.

A number of new social phenomena have accompanied the emergence of feasting. First, in the context of feasting, Nantis now mingle, interact, and communicate with a large number of individuals who are not members of their family or residence group. Second, feasting brings all participating villagers into intense close physical, social, and affective contact. Third, during feasting, *oburoki* is shared among all participants regardless of residence group; this contrasts sharply with quotidian patterns of sharing food and drink. Finally, in chanting and especially in *karintaa* performances, individuals directly address others in a way of speaking that is unique to – and a crucial part of creating – this context (see below).

2.5 Brief sketch of the defining characteristics of karintaa

Nanti *karintaa* is simultaneously highly extemporaneous and rigidly structured. Rigid structure is found in the formal properties that govern the composition of *karintaa*: the sound contours of *karintaa* are determined by the matrix chant formula, as is the metrical pattern. But at the same time, any given *karintaa* performance is highly innovative because its referential content may be, and most of the time is, an entirely original composition. In seeking to understand the relationship between the form and the content of *karintaa* performances, it is essential that I identify and carefully define the formal properties of both the matrix chant formulae and specific *karintaa* performances.

Consider a brief example, which is included in my master's thesis (Beier 2001: 142). This *karintaa* was performed by Tebora at a feast in Montetoni in June 2001. (A simple metrical transcription of the chant formula is included as Appendix 1.)

pantisitirorira **o:**ti:si:
pantisitirorira **o:**ti:si:
pantisitirorira aryoxa **pabi**sa:xi: it could be said you passed by
pantisitirorira **o:**ti:si:

Like many formulae, the possible referential meaning of the sound sequences of the matrix formula, *pantisitirorira otisi*, is not salient in this context; but the rhythmic, prosodic, tonic, and metric characteristics of the formula are salient and serve to shape the extemporaneous line that Tebora has intercalated. The syllables in boldface type are chanted at a higher tone than the rest of the syllables and the syllables marked with a colon receive two beats each. Note that in the segment ***pabi****sa:xi:* Tebora mirrors the structure of ***o:****ti:si:* by assigning a beat to each of two syllables ***pabi*** at the higher tone to match the two beats of ***o:*** and then assigning two beats to each of the two remaining syllables *sa:xi:* to match the two beats in each syllable of *ti:si:*. As brief this example is, it nicely demonstrates the types of features of the chant formulae that chanters exploit in their *karintaa* compositions and that I will describe meticulously in my dissertation (also see (Michael, 2003) for a discussion of the metrical analysis of *karintaa*).

Now consider the social features of this particular performance. The matrix formula was chanted by a large group of feasters, including me, before dusk on the evening of the feast; everyone was still quite sober yet exhilarated as the feasting was gaining momentum. The underlined text is *karintaa* that Tebora directed at me (she directed not only her words but her line of sight as well as her bodily orientation toward me). Though composed of only two words, Tebora's *karintaa* is potentially quite provocative because she articulates, in the presence of a large group of feasters, a negative interpretation of my actions a few days prior.

Briefly, in traveling upriver to Montetoni, my group had stopped for a night in Marankehari. We visited with a few villagers, but most people, including Tebora and her residence group, were out of the village on fishing trips. As a result, we continued our journey early the next morning without having spoken to Tebora or many of the villagers, since they had not yet returned to the village. In daily conversation, the verb stem *abis* implies 'passing by' someone or something due to lack of interest. Tebora's *karintaa*, 'it could be said you passed by,' therefore, suggests that I did not stay in Marankehari and visit her due to lack of interest in doing so. Note, however, that by beginning her *karintaa* with *aryoxa* 'it could be said,' Tebora simultaneously invites the possibility of other things that could be said, thereby diminishing the declarative force of *pabisaxi* 'you passed by.'

Tebora immediately follows that *karintaa* line with another, in which she directly asks me to visit Marankehari again. In her *karintaa*, she uses the first person form of the verb, *nonebi* 'I ask,' which is quite unusual in everyday Nanti speech – and no less unusual in Tebora's speech – since making overt requests is highly marked behavior among Nantis:

pantisitirorira **o:**ti:si:
nonebi pogonxe pogonxera xojani I ask that you arrive, you arrive
pantisitirorira **o:**ti:si:

At the same time, the dialogic nature of *karintaa* affords me the opportunity to reply to her evaluation and request, which I did immediately:

pantisitirorira **o:**ti:si:
arisano no:xamosoti indeed I will visit
pantisitirorira **o:**ti:si:

In a few short seconds, then, Tebora introduces a potentially conflict-producing topic and proposes a course of action; I acknowledge her evaluation and uptake her proposition; and as a result our perspectives are aligned.

This example merits one final but crucial observation; had I not heard, not understood, not acknowledged, or not responded to her *karintaa*, my observations of other *karintaa* performances suggest that the absence of response would not have been socially damaging to either of us; we would all have continued to chant together until the next *karintaa* was performed.

By identifying and describing the formal features of *karintaa*, I will investigate how Nantis actively co-construct this unique discursive space, or 'key this interactional frame' (Goffman, 1974). In evaluating the referential content of *karintaa*, I will closely examine how chanters frame their own experiences in their *karintaa* compositions and how they articulate responses to the framings of others, thereby investigating the dialogical aspects of *karintaa*. *Karintaa* often involves verbal play, teasing, and innuendo-laden banter, but it may also express emotions, evaluations, and reactions that are highly disfavored in everyday spoken discourse. In general, Nantis strongly dislike aggressive[6] speech and actions and carefully avoid interpersonal conflict (Beier and Michael, 1998). Commentary on people's actions and words is almost entirely reportative, rarely evaluative, and never speculative (Michael, 2001b). While *karintaa* compositions typically do not violate these basic discursive constraints, controversial topics and strong affective stances are often articulated. Most often, however, my data suggest that *karintaa* compositions introduce a discursive space in which potential interpersonal conflict is introduced and resolved through subsequent verbal interaction. By examining the trajectories and histories of *karintaa* utterances through space and time – particularly through the use of reported speech and repetition – I will investigate how discourse both reflects and creates dynamic relationships among Nanti individuals within Nanti society.

[6] By *agressive speech* I mean loud, forceful, evaluative, declarative, imperative, and/or exhortative utterances, especially when uttered by one individual directly to another.

3. Theoretic context and disciplinary relevance of the proposed project

3.1 Beginning from a discourse-centered approach to Nanti culture and society

My research on *karintaa* chanting is firmly rooted the discourse-centered approach to culture (Sherzer, 1987), which proposes "that culture is localized in concrete, publicly accessible signs, the most important of which are actually occurring instances of discourse" (Urban 1991: 1) and which "takes [discourse] to be the richest point of intersection among language, culture, social, and individual expression" (Sherzer and Woodbury 1987: vii). In this view, "culture is an emergent, dialogic process, historically transmitted but continuously produced and revised through dialogues among its members" (Farnell and Graham 1998: 412). This approach asserts that actual instances of discourse such as *karintaa* are not only representative of but *constitutive of* the social and cultural life of the community in which they occur and has the tremendous strength of looking *at* rather than *through* discourse to understand specific social and cultural configurations. I wish to emphasize, however, that I view the relationships among discourse, culture, and society as mutually constituting and interdependent, such that recurring social and cultural configurations shape, enrich, and constrain discourse. It is my goal to demonstrate how verbal, cultural, and social configurations are mutually constituting in the contemporary Nanti case.

Because I subscribe to the basic tenets of the discourse-centered approach to culture, I wish to put them to a rigorous test by documenting the place that *karintaa* performances have in producing and maintaining the social relationships and patterns that are observable around them, both spatially and temporally.

In particular, my research on Nanti *karintaa* will demonstrate *how* discourse constitutes culture and society by documenting the trajectories and entailments of specific utterances through time and space. As Urban notes, "an instance of discourse arises only against the backdrop of a continuing history of such instances, in relationship to which it can be situated" (Urban 1991:9). Specific *karintaa* compositions often refer to specific events, shared experiences, and/or knowledge held in common. What are the events, experience, and knowledge people draw on in composing *karintaa*? *Karintaa* utterances are often quotations of other utterances made at other times and places; in addition, *karintaa* utterances are quoted at other times and places. Who quotes whom and how frequently? It is my intention to track chains of repetition and reference in order to discover patterns and correlations between discourse inside and outside of the specific frame of *karintaa*. I am particularly interested in discovering who is quoted by others (and who quotes themselves); what topics and events are addressed (and not addressed) in these chains of discourse; with what frequency (if any) an utterance originally produced as a *karintaa* is quoted as spoken and not chanted; and in what non-feast contexts *karintaa* utterances are most often repeated. If in fact *karintaa* performances are part of a larger system of communication and relationships, traces of them will appear and reappear in other parts of this system.

3.2 The ethnography of Nanti ways of speaking

Ground-breaking work in the ethnography of speaking and ethnography of communication traditions frames my analysis of *karintaa* as a uniquely Nanti *way of speaking* ((Bauman and Sherzer, 1975), (Bauman and Sherzer, 1989 [1974]), (Gumperz and Hymes, 1972), (Hymes, 1974), (Hymes, 1989 [1974]), (Sherzer, 1983), (Sherzer, 1990)). Joel Sherzer characterizes an ethnography of speaking as "a description in cultural terms of the patterned uses of language and speech in a particular group, institution, community or society" (1983: 11), which complements Dell Hymes' vision of the ethnography of communication as

> "a science that would approach language neither as abstracted form nor as an abstract correlate of a community, but as situated in the flux and pattern of communicative events. It would study communicative form and function in integral relation to each other" (Hymes 1974: 5).

It is this sense of *integral relation*, both between form and function within particular communicative

events and across different events, that my research will pursue, describe, and explore.

In a series of publications during the 1960s and 1970s, Dell Hymes elaborated and refined both the goals and the terms that constitute the ethnography of speaking/communication research paradigm. In a book chapter dedicated specifically to articulating the scope of the term *ways of speaking* (1989 [1974]), Hymes proposes this concept as "a productive analytical framework for describing the organization of linguistic behavior" that encompasses the set of "styles" (or "means of speech") together with the "speech economy" of a community. In an analytically powerful turn of phrase, Hymes characterizes the speech community as an "organization of diversity" and posits the speech community as the crucial unit of analysis for the study of communicative behavior.

Hymes discusses in detail the concept of 'style' and how to differentiate between speech styles shared by the members of a speech community. In this discussion, Hymes turns to two simple but powerful analytical principles that were put forward by Susan Ervin-Tripp (1972) as the principles that guide all linguistic description: "rules of co-occurrence" and "rules of alternation". For my purposes here, Ervin-Tripp's key insight is the primary analytical distinction between "co-occurrence" and "alternation;" I consider the formulation of "rules" to be a flawed abstraction from the processes of selection that speakers employ when communicating. The power of these principles in studying a system of communicative behavior is that they provide an empirically robust way to describe patterning across multi-modal, time-bound social phenomena. In using these principles to understand Nanti interactional data, then, I posit that a Nanti *way of speaking* can be identified when most (if not all) of the formal and contextual features – minimally described in etic terms and ideally also described in emic terms – adhere to a particular locally-defined pattern of co-occurrence and alternation.

Before shifting our attention to another level of organization in discourse, I feel compelled to provide local definitions for certain key terms that are used in varying ways in the literature in ethnography of speaking/communication tradition. Within the context of this project, I call those interactions that take place outside feasting (both temporally and spatially), that are the most interactive, least marked, most locally organized, and that have the fewest identifiable formal features *everyday interactions*. I call those components of verbal interactions that have recognizable sets of marked formal features *speaking styles*. For example, among the speaking styles I have thus far identified in Nanti discourse is scolding-talk, in which the pitch, tempo, and loudness of speaking all increase and accompany words of caution, disapproval, or correction to someone, usually a child. I call those speaking styles that are typically restricted to certain social, temporal, and/or spatial contexts *genres*. For example, in addition to the genre of *karintaa*, I have identified the genre of hunting-story-telling, in which a man or group of men produce a narrative of a personal hunting experience for a group listeners while seated close to one another, usually in the cooking hut of one of the storytellers at eveningtime. Note, however, that none of these definitions assumes that their constitutive features are confined to one type of interaction or another; in fact the opposite assumption – that these features are salient within interactions because they typically constitute a particular type of interaction – is fundamental to the notion of discursive ecology.

3.3 Toward a Nanti discursive ecology

In their writings on the large scale patterns of communicative behavior, both Dell Hymes and John Gumperz in their foundational texts in this research tradition ((Gumperz and Hymes, 1964), (Gumperz and Hymes, 1972), (Hymes, 1974), (Hymes, 1989 [1974])), as well as other ethnographers of communication, invoke the concepts of 'economy,' 'ecology,' and 'environment' to characterize the systematicity of these patterns. In using these concepts, various ethnographers of speaking highlight the bounded yet permeable nature of the speech community, the dynamicity of the system over time, the complexity and interdependence of the relationships between the elements within the system, and the contingent nature of communicative activity. Yet these powerful concepts have been largely under-theorized and under-utilized in data-driven ethnographies of speaking and communication. In this project, it is my intention to define, challenge, and substantiate the concept of *discursive ecology* by applying the insights mentioned above to the bounded communicative system shared by Nantis on the Camisea River.

One of the main critiques of the ethnography of speaking/communication tradition has been the

formidable breadth and depth of knowledge that the ethnographer would need, in order to accurately and responsibly describe an entire communicative system – especially when studying a system to which they are not 'native' ((Bloch, 1976), (Duranti 1997)) – and I am extremely aware of both the folly and the hubris that may be seen in my project. However, I believe that by orienting my research around a *single* way of speaking, prioritizing salient elements of *contrast* between this and other ways of speaking, and focusing on thoroughly documenting the *observable relations* among discrete utterances across time, I will avoid some, if not all, of the main dangers of either unprincipled over-generalization or unmotivated particularization.

3.4 Nanti ways of speaking at the intersection of complementary research paradigms

Although in this research project I have chosen to describe Nanti *karintaa* as a *way of speaking* in the ethnography of speaking framework, it is crucial for the success of my project that I use this framework in its widest possible compass. Although most linguistic anthropologists recognize the breadth and flexibility possible within this framework, I wish to articulate explicitly that while describing *karintaa* as a *way of speaking* is the main organizing principle of this research, I do not intend to limit my description of *karintaa* only to its linguistic or spoken features; moreover, a number of theories and analytical tools from other research traditions are essential to understanding *karintaa*.

My understanding of *karintaa* as contextually embedded and historically situated verbal art co-created by performer and receptor/audience is shaped by theories of performance ((Bauman, 1977), (Briggs, 1988)); framing ((Bateson, 2000 [1972]), (Goffman 1974)); genre ((Bauman and Briggs, 1990; Briggs and Bauman, 1992), (Hanks, 1987), (Hanks, 1996)); text and context ((Duranti and Goodwin, 1992), (Hanks, 1989), (Hanks, 2000), (Silverstein and Urban, 1996)), talk-in-interaction ((Goodwin and Heritage, 1990), (Kendon, 1997), (Nofsinger, 1999 [1991]), (Sacks et al., 1974), (Schegloff and Sacks, 1984)); ethnopoetics ((Hymes, 1981), (Jakobson, 1960), (Sherzer and Woodbury, 1987), (Tedlock, 1983)); ethnomusicology ((Blacking, 1973), (Blacking, 1995), (Feld, 1974), (Feld, 1990 [1982]), (Feld and Fox, 1994), (Seeger, 1979), (Seeger, 1987)); and semiotics ((Silverstein, 1976), (Turino, 1999), (Urban, 1991). My theory of *a dynamic system of mutually informing and complementary communicative practices* as a Nanti *discursive ecology* lies at convergence of these interlinked theoretical traditions. By seeking to describe a Nanti discursive ecology, I intend to describe an *additional* level of organization and patterning beyond the levels of formal features, genres, and ways of speaking. Invoking the notion of ecology foregrounds the ways in which these different levels of organization are interlinked and interdependent with one another.

3.5 Describing and analyzing everyday interactions

If the notion of discursive ecology is dependent on an understanding of principled patterns of organization *among* formally defined ways of speaking and everyday interactions, it is no less dependent upon an understanding of principled patterns of interaction *within* ways of speaking and everyday interactions. As such, the analytical tools forged by conversation analysts are crucial to my analysis of Nanti interactions. In fact, three fundamental principles that pervade the theoretical frameworks of my research project were first articulated among fundamental principles guiding conversation analysis. First, the commitment to using 'naturally occurring' discourse as the source for data espoused by practitioners of the discourse-centered approach to culture; second, the commitment to giving analytical primacy to patterning that emerges from discourse data espoused by practitioners of ethnopoetics; and third, the notion that communicative interactions are both 'context shaped' and 'context renewing' were innovations of conversation analysis ((Nofsinger 1999 [1991]), (Goodwin and Heritage, 1990)).

In examining the relationship between *karintaa* and non-*karintaa* interactions, and between *karintaa* and everyday interactions in particular, I echo Robert Nofsinger's observation that, "We learn conversation first and then apply our conversational skills to other forms of interactive talk." (Nofsinger 1999 [1991]: 2) I hasten to add that I consider this observation equally valid if taken to encompass the non-verbal aspects of 'conversation' in addition to the verbal aspects that Nofsinger was specifically indicating. I would also add that in the case of *karintaa* interactions, it is their difference from and

contrast with everyday conversations that is partially constitutive of their significance as communicative action. But at a fundamental level, the point is that all verbal interactions between Nantis – *karintaa* performances included – have certain basic features in common and these basic features are present in everyday forms of interaction. Therefore, using conversation analytical methods to understand the organization of everyday Nanti talk is a necessary precursor to understanding the organization of more formally elaborate communicative interactions such as *karintaa*.

As conversation analysts have demonstrated for other communicative systems, a key element to understanding large-scale patterns of Nanti interaction is understanding how participants organize specific interactions. A seemingly universal characteristic of communicative behavior is that it is always sequential, in as much as interactants always (eventually) alternate their turns at talk. For the ecological approach I am developing, the principles of alternation that are at work across instances of discourse are crucial to the systematicity of discourse phenomena. In examining Nanti interactions, then, I will use the turn as a primitive unit in building my analyses. An important point of departure for analyzing Nanti turn organization is to ask a series of questions based on the work of Sacks et al. (1978):

- what message units constitute a turn in Nanti interactions?
- by what observable means do Nanti interactants negotiate changes in turn?
- what constitutes a 'transition relevance place' in Nanti interactions?
- how do Nanti interactants use and manage overlaps in talk?
- how do Nanti interactants use and manage silence in talk?

It is worth noting that many of the "grossly apparent facts" of conversational interaction that Sacks el al. (1978) use as their point of departure may not turn out to be facts in Nanti interactions; but this does not diminish the utility of these "facts" as guidelines for determining the patterning and principles that are (and are not) in operation in Nanti interaction.

Another organizing principle from the conversation analytical toolkit that I consider crucial to understanding Nanti interactions is the notion of *recipient design* (Sacks and Schegloff, 1979). That is to say, I assume that interactive talk among individuals is always at least partly motivated by the speaker's immediate assessment of the recipients of their talk as well as their sociostructural and historical links to the recipients; and therefore, at least some aspects of the relevance of talk correspond to identifiable features of the immediate situation as well as of the sociostructural and historical links between speaker and recipient(s). Moreover, because in most cases a given relationship will offer a multiplicity of identifiable features as resources for talk, examining which features are in fact deployed in interactions will reveal the ways in which interactants enact and articulate aspects of their relationships through talk.

Identifying recurrent patterns in conversational sequencing, such as adjacency pairing (Schegloff and Sacks, 1984), adjacent placement (Nofsinger 1999 [1991]), and next positioning (Goodwin and Heritage, 1990) will allow me to understand both chains of association that Nantis make in interactions and normative constraints evidenced in talk. Just as observing chains of association between my experiential world and sound sequences – organized at the level of phonemes, morphemes, and utterances – has allowed me to understand many aspects of the formal structure and lexicon of the Nanti language, observing chains of association across series of utterances enables me to understand, at least partially, the ways in which Nantis actively create, maintain, and alter their relationships through discourse.

A significant part of the utility in examining such properties of interaction as turn organization, adjacency phenomena, and alignment strategies such as response and repair is that it is precisely the relational nature of these phenomena that reflect the dynamicity and emergent nature of interaction. The importance of careful description of the dialogic patterns in everyday Nanti interactions is doubly important given that one of the key features of *karintaa* performances is their dialogicality.

An important (if restricted) commonality between the 'outside observer' of an interaction and its participants is that both are actively working to make sense of the words and behaviors of other individuals, to whose internal processes they have no access. If the participants have the advantage of greater 'inside knowledge' of what is going on in the real time unfolding of the interaction, the outside

observer has the advantage of recording that interaction and reviewing it again and again, discovering the multiplicity of possible alternatives that the interactants might have chosen. It is from this perspective that many of the analytical tools in the conversation analysis tradition are so useful to a study of discursive ecology. By identifying recurrent features and organizational patterns at the level of sequential utterances, the observer learns how interactions unfold through the moment-by-moment moves that interactants make; and the processes through which understanding is achieved (or not) are revealed.

3.6 Ethnopoetics

The tradition of text presentation and analysis that has come to be known as ethnopoetics emerged from the Boasian tradition of linguistics and anthropology in the work of Dell Hymes (eg. 1981) and Dennis Tedlock (eg. 1983), who first recognized that existing text artifacts of indigenous verbal art could be rediscovered by seeking patterning within the text itself. Sherzer and Woodbury (1987) explain that ethnopoetic analysts "take Native American discourse seriously as their starting point...[and] as having precise and complex linguistic patterning" (1987: 1). Expanding out of their origins in the analysis of existing Native American text artifacts, the analytical principles of the ethnopoetics tradition have proven useful to scholars studying a wide variety of literatures, both oral and written, primarily because ethnopoetics breaks from, and provides a principled alternative to, long-standing descriptive and analytical frameworks confined by structural and aesthetic principles forged in specific artistic traditions.

Hymes' body of work in ethnopoetics has focused on rediscovering Native American texts by transforming written blocks of oral dictation (originally transcribed for linguistic and ethnological purposes) through reanalysis and retranscription that reveals their poetic form. Tedlock's work has focused on the process of transcribing into written form texts whose primary existence is or was oral; but both scholars "recognized that an important aspect of Native American discourse and a central feature of its verbal artistry is organization into lines and groups of lines." (Sherzer and Woodbury 1987: 1) Taking the line to be the primary organizational unit of Native American verbal art, ethnopoetic analysis seeks to discover and describe *what makes a line a line* in terms of the patterns of recurrence inherent in the form of the text itself; as well in the performance of the text for oral genres.

Sherzer defines the line as "a unit independent of and yet related to conventionally recognized grammatical units such as phonemes, morphemes, and sentences" and observes that in his own work with Kuna ways of speaking, "[i]nvestigation of the structuring of lines in Kuna discourse requires attention to the intersection and interplay of linguistic, sociolinguistic, and poetic structures, patterns, and processes." (Sherzer 1987: 103) The line, then, constitutes an independent level of complex organization that ideally exists in the overlap between emic and etic understandings of form and pattern.

In his ethnopoetic analyses of oral texts, Tedlock has used such features of oral performance as alternation between speech and silence and variations in pitch, loudness, voice quality, tempo, and cadence, to define the line. Hymes, concentrating on written texts, has instead focused on features of the texts such as hierarchic and often numerically constrained rhetorical patterns, repetitions, recurrences in content and syntactic form. Woodbury, whose work with Central Alaskan Yupik also deals with oral texts, summarizes "five potentially independent types of recurrent, hierarchic organization on which poetic representation has been based: pause phrasing, prosodic phrasing, syntactic constituency, global form-content parallelism, and adverbial particle phrasing." (Woodbury 1987: 176)

In addition to the potential utility that the specific features used by Hymes, Tedlock, Woodbury, and other ethnopoetic analysts have for the analysis of Nanti *karintaa* performances, an important analytical generalization emerges from their work on text analysis: ethnopoetic analysts must determine what counts as "the same" across performances and across forms and features based on the patterns inherent in the text, not external to it. In addition, the ethnopoetic perspective on the line in verbal art suggests two important axes on which texts can by analyzed:

1. First, different, discrete, and independent features of patterning and patterning of features co-exist in a particular line and a particular text.

2. Second, more complex patterns of patterning result from interactions across less complex patterns within particular lines and particular texts.

These two axes suggest at least six different levels on which the analyst can seek patterns of organization:

1. Within a single text: features that are defined in universal terms, such as meter, rhythm, and tone.
2. features that are identified by their patterns of co-occurrence and alternations, such as repetition and parallelism.
3. features that are regarded as salient by native performers and audience, such as rhyming and punning (neither of which, for example, Nantis find interesting.)
4. Across a set of texts: patterns that are defined in universal terms, such as numerical patterning and topic orientation.
5. patterns of patterns that are identified by co-occurrence and alternation, such as large-scale form-content parallelism.
6. patterns that are regarded as salient by native performers and audience, such as metacategories or 'types' of song and poetry, like a jig or a limerick.

I see ethnopoetic analysis as primarily useful to my research on Nanti ways of speaking in two domains. First, in as much as ethnopoetics is focused on the two-dimensional representation of forms of indigenous verbal art, it will be useful to my own research in the work of creating transcripts. Second, in as much as ethnopoetics provides a framework for discovering interpenetrating levels of organization within discourse, it will inform the analyses I discuss in other sections of this project.

3.7 Discourse, dialogicality, and dialectics

In applying the discourse-centered model to Nanti culture and society, I draw on theories of the inherent dialogicality of language ((Bakhtin, 1981), (Bakhtin et al., 1986); (Voloshinov, 1973)) and dialectical models of human society ((Gramsci et al., 1971); (Williams, 1977)) to understand the ways in which Nanti discourse is situated in larger patterns of local history and productive activity. These theories – themselves linked to one another within the body of Marxist theories – draw our attention, first, to the multiplicity of meanings and interpretations possible in any particular utterance for both the utterer and the hearer; and second, to the ways in which particular utterances are situated in the historical and social patterns that members of a society continually produce and reproduce.

3.8 A practice-centered approach to discourse

My analyses of specific instances of contextualized *karintaa* performance are deeply influenced by practice theory (which is also a product of the Marxist tradition). The body of work in practice theory that guides my analyses in turn encompasses specific theoretical formulations of human agency, individuality, and community ((Ahearn, 1998), (Ahearn, 2001), (Bourdieu, 1977), (Bourdieu and Thompson, 1991), (Giddens, 1979), (Giddens, 1984), (Hanks, 1987), (Hanks, 2000), (Ortner, 1989)). Practice theory is "a theory of the relationship between the structures of society and culture on the one hand, and the nature of human action on the other" which strives to understand "how persons and human activity can be constituted through the social process, while at the same time society and history can be constituted through meaningful human activity." (Ortner 1989:11). I am particularly drawn to theories of practice because they strive to account for empirical phenomena that often seem contradictory on the surface: durable social, cultural, and historical structures that perpetuate across time on the one hand and the facts of change and novel, creative individual action on the other.

In examining contemporary relationships among Nanti individuals and residence groups within the context of their recently-formed villages, I have proposed that performing *karintaa* provides a unique opportunity for Nantis to verbally integrate novel experiences into existing patterns of social understanding (Beier 2001). In my dissertation research I will draw on this set of theoretic traditions to refine my preliminary analyses of the relationship between *karintaa* as a localizable instance of individual creative expression and the dynamic, dialogic sociocultural and spatiotemporal matrix in which these

instances are embedded.

3.9 Placing Nanti verbal art against the backdrop of areal, typological, and disciplinary interests
Amazonia is both among the most linguistically and culturally diverse areas of the world and among the least understood. The relative dearth of thorough documentation of indigenous Amazonian discourse forms ((Beier et al., 2002)), together with the grave threats to linguistic and cultural diversity ((Grenoble and Whaley, 1998), (Woodbury, 1993)) recently accelerated by globalization, inspire me to contribute a thorough and contextualized study of Nanti *karintaa* performances to the body of literature on Amazonian discourse. My attention to both the areal and typological features of Nanti chanting and its exceptions to areal-typological patterns is informed by key works on lowland Amazonian verbal art and poetics ((Basso, 1985), (Basso, 1987), (Basso, 1995), (Basso and Sherzer, 1990), (Briggs, 1992), (Briggs, 1993), (Graham, 1995), (Graham, 1984), (Michael, 2001a), (Michael, 2001b), (Michael, 2001c), Sammons and Sherzer, 2000), (Seeger, 1979), (Seeger, 1987), (Sherzer, 1983), (Sherzer, 1990), (Sherzer and Urban, 1986), (Urban, 1982), (Urban, 1986), (Urban, 1988) (Urban, 1991)). My deep commitment to preserving linguistic and cultural diversity in indigenous Amazonia frames all of my theoretic inquiry.

Nanti linguistic and social practices offer healthy challenges to the best anthropological theories of discourse, culture, and society; of the relationships between individuals and societies; of speech as social action; and of human agency and sociability. Nantis now living on the Camisea River first established long-term relationships with non-Nantis in the late 1980s. As a result, many aspects of contemporary Nanti society are still uniquely Nanti and provide a particularly well-bounded data set for cross-cultural comparison. My ongoing work with the Camisea Nanti communities promises to offer a wealth of data that will enable us to refine our general theories of human social and linguistic behavior.

4. Research design: methods and techniques

4.1 Concrete research objectives
My concrete research objectives are:
1. first, to thoroughly describe contemporary Nanti *karintaa* performances;
2. second, to confirm my assertion that *karintaa* is a distinct Nanti way of speaking within the context of coexisting social and discursive practices; and
3. third, to generate a description of the relationships among *karintaa* and non-*karintaa* ways of speaking;
4. which I will then use to test my hypothesis that they together form a local discursive ecology.

To meet these objectives, I will record, transcribe, and analyze naturally-occurring *karintaa* performances and naturally-occurring non-*karintaa* discourse data ((Bernard, 2002), (Farnell and Graham, 1998), (Goodwin, 1993), (Ochs, 1979)). In collecting non-*karintaa* data, I will primarily draw on daily conversational discourse but I will also attend to other marked Nanti ways of speaking including leader-talk, scolding-talk, and feast banter. Principled, systematic comparison both between specific data (tokens) and among sets of data (types) across various schemes of organization will be crucial to reaching my analytical goals. Note that in addition to the discussion in this section, further detailed information on my field methods is included in section 9, Plan of Work.

4.2 Data Sets
My two primary data sets will be:
1. extemporaneous *karintaa* performances recorded during feasting in Montetoni and Marankehari; and
2. non-*karintaa* interactional data recorded between and among Nantis and between myself and Nantis.

These new data will expand the corpus of *karintaa* and interactional data that I have gathered since 1997 and which forms the basis for the preliminary analyses that motivate this project. In gathering data for this project, I will rely primarily on audio recording and secondarily on video recording.

4.3 Power sources and computing equipment

My primary base of operations for my research project will be the community of Montetoni; as is perhaps obvious, Montetoni has no source of electricity. Upon first arriving in Montetoni, I will set up a 32-watt solar panel and 2-12 volt batteries as my power source.

My primary tool for data management and analysis, transcription, and writing will be my Apple iBook laptop computer and peripheral equipment. My iBook is equipped with a CD burner, with which I will back up my data, transcripts, analyses and other documents. Peripherals will include an extra battery, an external hard drive and an external USB drive. Due to cost, space, and climatic considerations, I will not have a printer in Montetoni. For linguistic analysis, I will primarily use Shoebox 5.0; for sound analysis, I will primarily use Praat.

Due to various personal experiences with the extreme difficulties presented by the environment in which I will be carrying out this project, I have developed an extremely cautious attitude towards protecting my data and equipment. I will keep my audio recording equipment, my video recording equipment, my original data, my back-up copies of my data, my laptop, and my external drives in (at least) six separate watertight, airtight Doskocil cases.

4.4 Gathering audio data

I will gather *karintaa* data using the recording methodology that I have developed over the years that I have been documenting Nanti feasting. Feast participants, including myself at times, wear an IRU, or Individual Recording Unit: the feaster is fitted with a small waistpack containing a MiniDisc recorder and a stereo lavaliere microphone is clipped to the feaster's clothing. The IRUs I have used previously consist of a Sony MZ-R37 MiniDisc Recorder, a Sony ECM-717 Stereo Lavaliere Microphone and a 74-minute Sony MiniDisc recording in mono mode, which allows 148 continuous minutes of recording. In the context of feasting, the long uninterrupted recording time is a tremendous benefit and the mono mode is of ample sound quality. For this research project, I will build several more IRUs (using Sony MiniDisc recorders, microphones, and MiniDiscs) in order to be able to record multiple individuals at the same time.

The IRU's key advantages are these: first, the recorder goes wherever the feaster goes, and records whatever the feaster says, chants, and hears; second, the equipment is visible so everyone knows at a glance that they are being recorded; and third, the microphone mounted on the feaster selects his or her voice and the voices of those in the immediate vicinity out of the tumultuous sound of many people chanting simultaneously, thus providing clear recordings of monophonic and polyphonic *karintaa*. (Bernard 2002) The microphone may easily be switched off at any time that the wearer chooses to stop recording.

The single disadvantage to the IRU is that because the lavaliere microphone is nearest to the mouth of the wearer, sometimes the recordings of the other individuals with whom the IRU wearer is interacting are difficult to hear and transcribe. For this reason, I intend to use several IRUs at a time during feasts so that when two (or more) IRU wearers interact I will have excellent recordings from both (or all) of them.

I will gather non-*karintaa* discourse data using this same IRU technique, but more often I will wear the IRU. Outside of the complex soundscape of feasting, and during regular conversational interactions, a single IRU makes excellent recordings of all participants. In addition, I will use MiniDisc recorders and stationary microphones to record interactions that take place in stationary social spaces. See the Plan of Work below for my specific goals for audio data collection over the course of my research.

4.5 Gathering video data

I will supplement my audio data with video recordings in order to document the visual, spatial, and gestural aspects of Nanti interactions. My video recording will be primarily take place in common spaces of the village during feasting; it will occasionally include conversations and interviews with Nanti individuals from whom I have acquired prior informed consent. Over the years since I first brought a video camera to Montetoni, I have learned the times and places in which Nantis seem comfortable or

seem uncomfortable with the presence of a camera. Because people that I have videotaped have seen my recordings and have discussed with me the uses to which I have or will put these recordings, most of the residents of Montetoni and Marankehari have an informed opinion regarding when video recording is appropriate. The opinions that they have and will express to me will always guide my decisions to video record or not.

I will record video data using my Sony DCR-TRV120 Digital-8 camera and accessories. See the Plan of Work below for my specific goals for video data collection over the course of my research.

4.6 Backing up original data gathered in the field

While in the field, I will back up all my audio data on CDs and MiniDiscs and permanently archive the original recordings in a dedicated airtight case. Due to practical limitations on space and battery power, I will selectively import segments of my video data into iMovie for back-up and analysis. Once I return to UT, I will back up all of my video data on Digital-8 or VHS cassettes and permanently archive the original recordings.

4.7 Transcription

4.7.1. Transcription as a tool for intersubjectivity

While in the field, I will selectively transcribe salient segments of recorded audio and video data. As an integral part of the process of transcription, I will review these segments with Nanti consultants for the purposes of contextualization and translation into Spanish and English. These consultation sessions themselves will be recorded and reviewed with consultants to maximize multi-leveled intersubjective understanding of the original material ((Bucholtz, 2000), (Duranti, 1997), (Graham 1995), (Ochs 1979)).

In my view, transcription forms the cornerstone in building intersubjectivity with other scholars on my empirical research on Nanti interactional behavior. In my analysis of Nanti interactional data, the explicit purpose of the transcripts I create is to draw attention to specific features and patterns within chosen segments or strips of the multi-modal interactional data that I have recorded in audio and/or video media. In analyzing the discursive practices "used by members of a profession to shape events in the domains subject to their professional scrutiny" ((Goodwin, 1994): 606) Charles Goodwin reflects on his own professional practice and articulates the role that analytical representations can play in fostering intersubjectivity among researchers:

> "Graphic representations, including transcripts of talk, diagrams, and frame grabs of scenes recorded on videotape, are annotated and highlighted in order to make salient specific events within them. Such highlighting guides the reader to see within a complex perceptual field just those events that I find relevant to the points I am developing." (Goodwin 1994: 607)

Goodwin and many other students of human behavior have explicitly addressed the inherently positioned nature of the transcript, pointing out that any transcription necessarily selects and represents some information and omits other information. The evaluative stances these scholars take regarding this issue vary widely, ranging from calling into question the validity of the basic notion of scientific study of human behavior to exhorting practitioners to transcribe with greater theoretical and political responsibility and methodological rigor. In my view, researchers must first explicitly acknowledge and characterize the inherently positioned nature of their transcript; and thereafter make use of its selectivity and positionality as an analytical tool, rather than view this selectivity and positionality as obstacles to analytical precision.

4.7.2. Inherent properties of the transcript

Elinor Ochs was among the first anthropologists to articulate the perspective of 'transcription as theory' and to propose novel ways in which the activity of transcription could be pursued and improved as a result of this perspective. Observing that "[w]hat is on a transcript will influence and constrain what generalizations emerge" (Ochs 1979: 45) Ochs argues for highly detailed yet selective transcripts whose design is motivated by the researcher's theoretical and analytical interests. Ochs' most important insight,

in my view, is that the inherent selectivity of transcription is its greatest strength as an analytical tool (in addition to one of its greatest limitations).

Just as the transcript is an inherently theoretical, Mary Bucholtz (2000) draws our attention its inherently political nature, pointing out the interpersonal, social, and even legal consequences in the transcription decisions that researchers make. While, in my view, Bucholtz' tone is more critical than constructive, her point that the researcher must highly cognizant of the political ramifications of transcription decisions is a crucially important one. When taken together with Ochs' insight regarding the utility of selectivity in creating transcripts, the researcher can then make transcription decision that are sensitive and responsive to political issues – including, for example, the possible decision not to transcribe highly sensitive material at all.

In discussing the transcript as both an inherently theoretical and an inherently political artifact of research, it is worth mentioning that I (and many other researchers) likewise consider the video and audio data we gather to be inherently theoretical and political for similar reasons. That is, who, where, and when I gather data is the result of circumstances, choices, and decisions made by situated individuals, including but not limited to me as researcher. At the most obvious level, for example, the data I gather is oriented toward answering particular questions about Nanti interactional behavior and not oriented toward answering other (equally valid) questions. In addition, which Nanti individuals agree (or refuse) to be recorded at any particular moment is the result of complex circumstances and decisions to which I may not even have access.

The goal I see, then – having decided that the study of human interactions is in itself inherently valuable and worth doing – is to gather, select, transcribe, and analyze data on Nanti interactions fully cognizant of its situatedness and positionality and to make sure that my work is as faithful as possible to the theoretical and political themes it touches. It seems to me that always evaluating my transcripts and other analyses as though a Nanti person – in particular, one who is represented there in the writing – is reading over my shoulder provides an excellent antidote to decontextualized or irresponsible writing. In a similar spirit, Steven Feld set an admirable example for other ethnographers through his decision to discuss, reevaluate, and critique his book *Sound and Sentiment* with Kalulis after its publication, an experience that he discusses at length in a post-script to the second edition of that same book, published in 1990.

4.7.3. The transcripts themselves

I take as a necessary entailment of the inherent selectivity of the transcription process that a single transcript of a strip of interaction will pursue certain, but not all, of the researcher's analytical goals, and as such, several different transcriptions of a single interaction may in fact be necessary to address different phenomena found in the data. In my own work on *karintaa*, I have already found it useful to create separate transcripts of metrical and tonic characteristics, of poetic characteristics, and of referential material and possible translations into English and/or Spanish. The latter type of transcription further splits into transcriptions whose phonetic conventions are geared to either an English-speaking and -reading audience, or a Spanish-speaking and -reading audience. (A simple example is the spelling of *Marankehari* for English-readers and *Marankejari* for Spanish-readers.)

Creating multiple transcripts is made all the more necessary by the use of video data and audio data together. The multi-modal information that I can highlight using frame grabs and other visual transcription techniques will be of crucial importance at times, but at other times, this type of information will not be the focus of my analysis. At the same time, the multiple transcripts that I create of single stretches of interaction have interactive affordances when used together or 'layered' sequentially while building an argument, as Charles Goodwin's work effectively demonstrates ((Goodwin 1993), Goodwin 1994)).

4.8 Coding of transcripts

In order to meet my goal of describing the salient social, linguistic, poetic, musical, and semantic features that define *karintaa*, I will code every transcript for features that I know to be salient because they either

co-occur or alternate within and across Nanti utterances. The codes themselves will primarily be mnemonic codes that I create, based on features that my data demonstrate. The coding system I plan to use will be indexical, correlative, and quantitative (Bernard 2002). Sequentially, I will first code my transcripts to index key features; in the first phase of my research, I will revise my coding scheme and recode my transcripts as necessary. When I am satisfied with the completeness and accuracy of my coding scheme, I will examine these codes for patterned correlations among them; subsequently, as appropriate, I will quantify the occurrences and co-occurrences of features to test the generalizability of my analyses.

I will code every transcript for key interactional features, including participants' identities (anonymized as necessary); participants' relative social positions; participants' roles in the interaction; spatial arrangements among participants; gaze, eye contact, and physical contact among participants; and relevant changes in these across specific strips of data.

I will code *karintaa* transcripts first for formal features of *karintaa*, including phonological and syntactic features; tonic and rhythmic structures; prosodic features; and repetition and parallelism. Then I will code these transcripts for semantico-referential features, including historical references; semantic indices of evaluative and affective stance; and the interactional features mentioned next.

I will code non-*karintaa* transcripts first for interactional features, including turn-taking mechanisms, overlaps, interruptions, simultaneous talk, adjacency pairs, adjacent placement, next positioning, and aligning actions, including repair. Then I will code these transcripts for semantico-referential features, including historical references; semantic indices of evaluative and affective stance; and the formal features listed above as they appear.

4.9 Analyzing coded transcripts

I have identified *karintaa* as a highly marked and context-bound genre because so many of the features which occur in this genre only occur there; at the same time, it is because the set of features that co-occur in this genre is both large and unique that I have identified it as a genre in the first place. If indeed *karintaa* is a distinct Nanti *way of speaking*, then empirically I will find co-occurrences of content and form that are in complementary, or mutually exclusive, distribution between *karintaa* and non-*karintaa* data.

At the same time, I do not posit that the sets of features of *karintaa* and non-*karintaa* interactions are entirely in complementary distribution; rather, these features are resources available for individuals to draw on in their communicative actions. Therefore, I will seek other patterns of co-occurrence among these features both inside and outside of *karintaa* performances to clarify which features if any are in fact restricted to a single genre such as *karintaa*.

Further, if indeed Nanti ways of speaking together constitute a *discursive ecology*, my coded transcripts will reveal patterned correlations among specific ways of speaking, specific social contexts, and specific forms of social action. In discussing the notion of communicative ecology in my master's thesis, I foregrounded the differences between communicative practices at different "levels of social organization" (Beier 2001: 178); in my dissertation I will also foreground the correspondences between and across communicative practices based on a clear and detailed analysis of identifiable features of those practices. Applying the notion of ecology to discourse demands the following:

1. First, discovering links between moments of discourse across time and space,
2. second, seeking multiple, possibly contradictory, patterns across instances of discourse,
3 and third, seeing human communication as a contingent and interdependent system of linked activities.

In analyzing the semantico-referential content of my data, I will track and document chains of interactions, including *karintaa*, through which the actions and words of others are presented and represented. I will identify correlations between events and interactions, and the ways these are presented and represented in individual *karintaa*. I will prioritize tracking discourse that concerns highly salient events in the community. Should they emerge, I will focus on interpersonal or intergroup conflicts and identify if and how these conflicts are addressed, resolved, or exacerbated in *karintaa*. Conversing

regularly with Nanti participants and observers about chains of interactions as they are unfolding is a crucial strategy in documenting the various perspectives and interpretations involved in these events.

5. Previous research experience and its relevance to the proposed project

5.1 Community involvement

My activities over the last eight years demonstrate that I am extremely well prepared to complete the research and to write the dissertation I have proposed here. I have been working on health, land rights, and language rights issues with the Camisea Nanti communities since 1995, primarily through Cabeceras Aid Project, a non-profit organization that I co-founded in 1996 (www.cabeceras.org). My presence in Montetoni is welcome because over the years I have consistently been responsive to their requests and concerns and because I make the utmost effort to participate in village life in an appropriate manner. Nantis of all ages have demonstrated curiosity and interest in my recordings of feasting and *karintaa* performances, and I feel that the data I am collecting will be of value to many Nantis in coming years and generations. I have chosen my research topic because I feel it is a vibrant practice of great interest to the Nantis who practice it and because I feel that Nanti *karintaa* performances embody and express a uniquely Nanti quality.

5.2 Language competence

I am a highly competent speaker of Nanti, an ability that a research project such as this absolutely demands. In effect, all Nantis are presently monolingual, and though a few young Nantis can communicate in Matsigenka, no Nanti speaks Spanish or English. No written materials in or on Nanti existed at the time I first arrived in Montetoni. Consequently, over the years, I have learned to speak Nanti through daily living among Nantis; and the process of learning to speak Nanti has provided the foundation for my own ongoing linguistic analysis of the Nanti language (Beier 2001; Beier and Michael 2001).

On a number of occasions, I have served as a translator – between both Nanti and Spanish and Nanti and English – for researchers who have visited Montetoni and Marankehari. Most recently in June 2003, I worked with representatives of the Peruvian Ministry of Health's Office of Epidemiology to do a baseline epidemiological study, which required a high level of accuracy in translating between epidemiological conceptions of health and Nanti conceptions of health.

At this point, I can also chant competently in Nanti, and I am developing my skills in performing extemporaneous *karintaa*. In addition, my previous linguistic work has given me extensive experience in transcribing recorded Nanti speech, chanting, and *karintaa* performances.

5.3 Historical time depth

Because I have a long-term relationship with the Nantis of Montetoni and Marankehari, I have a substantial knowledge of highly salient events in recent Nanti history. This knowledge, partially documented in the data I have gathered since 1997, provides a valuable longitudinal perspective to my research. In fact, my experiential knowledge together with my existing recorded data are foundational in motivating me to track Nanti discourse across time; I have observed the kinds of trajectories of discourse described above in section 3.1 as well as the social and historical significance of these trajectories themselves.

In addition, I have been involved with Nantis in both Montetoni and in Marankehari since the latter community was founded in 1996, I already have data on and insight into a range of differences between these two communities that are extremely interesting to me from a discourse-centered perspective. In addition to identifying and describing differences between these two communities along a variety of axes, I will use my data sets from Montetoni and Marankehari comparatively to assure that I am not making spurious correlations between feasting, chanting, *karintaa*, and their impacts on interpersonal and intra-village social relations. More importantly, the Nantis I will work with on my dissertation project know me, trust me, and have given me permission to continue my research on feasting and *karintaa* in coming

years.

The field research I conducted for my master's thesis provides crucial context for this dissertation project. My thesis describes and analyzes Nanti feasting practices, which are the social matrix in which chanting *karintaa* are performed. In addition to informing my theoretic approach to the social and linguistic aspects of feasting, chanting, and *karintaa* performance, my previous research on feasting allowed me to develop and refine the research methods, analytical frameworks, and technical strategies described above

Because I have been fascinated by the phenomenon of *karintaa* since I first witnessed Nantis performing it in 1997, I have evaluated my training in graduate school partly from the perspective of its relevance to understanding *karintaa*. My excellent training in formal linguistics has shed light on the affordances and constraints that the structure of the Nanti language itself brings to bear on *karintaa*. Similarly, my training in linguistic anthropological theory and methods has shown me *how* language, and verbal art in particular, can embody more abstract social and ideological phenomena. And my training in social theory has given me intellectual tools to use in understanding the larger-scale phenomena that articulate with discrete speech events and particular interactional configurations captured in my data.

6. Intellectual merit of the proposed research

6.1 Merit of the research at the "macro" level

The Nanti communities on the Camisea River in which I conduct my research were first founded in the early 1990s, when several extended family groups chose to move out of voluntary isolation in the nearly-inaccessible headwaters region of the neighboring Timpia River. Prior to my involvement with these communities, the people there were erroneously presumed to be Matsigenka, both linguistically and culturally, primarily for geographical and political reasons; this assumption was evident in the discourse circulating at all levels, from Matsigenka leaders and local healthcare workers, to missionaries in the region and in Lima, to representatives of national NGOs (and in fact, these were the major links in the chain of misinformation). Crucially, Nantis consider themselves, their lifestyle, and their language to be quite distinct from Matsigenka. My linguistic and anthropological research and advocacy efforts in 1997 and 1998 provided key data to the outside world that has largely erased this misperception (Beier and Michael 1998). Since then, my advocacy efforts have been focused on using my access to discourse and decisions at the regional and national levels to aid the Nantis in defending their autonomy, their health, and their land rights ((Beier and Michael, 2002)).

All linguistic and anthropological research that has been done with the Nanti language and Nanti cultural phenomena has been done by me and my long-term research partner Lev Michael, with the exception of some limited activities by Summer Institute of Linguistics missionaries in the mid-1990s. Michael and I have begun to write a Nanti grammar (Beier and Michael 2001a), which we will complete as part of our long-term work with the Nanti communities; we have produced a preliminary dictionary (Beier and Michael 2001b); and we have begun and will continue to produce pedagogical materials in and on Nanti. All of our documentary and research results are intended for three important audiences: future literate Nantis, if and when they take interest in such materials; the international scholarly community, including linguists, anthropologists, linguistic anthropologists, historians, and other lowland Amazonian specialists; and interested members of the international political community, including indigenous rights activists, language rights activists, and conservationists, among others. As both an activist and a scholar, I am committed to designing, conducting, and completing collaborative research projects that are guided by and responsive to the well-being and self-determined interests of all participants. I deeply believe that high quality and theoretically innovative scholarship can be produced that simultaneously serves the communities who co-author it; thus far, the positive impacts that the multi-faceted work I have done with the Nanti communities has produced have strongly reinforced this belief.

I also share the growing concern among scholars and indigenous people alike that unique, irreplaceable data representing rich cultural and linguistic traditions have too often been lost through accident, carelessness, or neglect on the part of scholars who have worked in indigenous communities.

Therefore, all of my research and academic activities are guided by a commitment to *accessibility* – and in particular, a commitment that all the products of my work as well as my original data will be properly cared for, archived, and made accessible to an international audience. To this end, my dissertation will be fully digital, all of my data will be archived with AILLA in its web-accessible database, copies of any and all materials I produce will be made available to their communities of origin on demand, and I will continue to encourage my colleagues and collaborators to adopt similar practices.

6.2 Merit of the project at the "micro" level

After reading the first draft of this prospectus, Dr. Woodbury posed this question: "Why do a dissertation on *karintaa* when you've already done an MA thesis? Yes there's always more to say...but why that choice?" As this is an excellent question, I wish to provide a set of answers.

First, one of the aspects of feasting and *karintaa* performances that I find most fascinating is how they change (and do not change) over time. I feel the only way that I will really understand Nanti society (or any human society) as simultaneously an ever-changing and an enduring entity is by studying it closely over a long period of time. Although I have been observing feasting and *karintaa* performances since 1996, this is only eight years, a miniscule blip in human history. In fact, I believe that these Nanti practices will become richer and richer material for my research with the passing of time, not the reverse.

Second, the unfolding and development of contemporary feasting practices since they first began to emerge in 1996 is an important facet of Nanti social history and experience. From both my perspective and that of many Nanti individuals, documenting feasting is an important activity in itself. My continuing research provides much of that documentation.

Third, my master's thesis focused principally on feasting practices and addressed *karintaa* performances as part of this larger phenomenon. In my dissertation, I will focus principally on *karintaa* performances and examine them much more thoroughly and in greater detail.

Fourth, at the end of my master's thesis, I presented a list of questions that I wished to answer in future research (Beier 2001: 193). Some of these were:

• How will feasting practices develop over time? In particular, will more drinking and less chanting occur in the future?
• Will present levels of plentitude continue? Any changes in the amount of *sekatsi* available in Montetoni can affect the amount and/or type of feasting that goes on.
• Will villagers continue to participate in group-oriented activities, including the community hunting and fishing projects that presently precede feasting?
• How will relations between Montetoni and Maranxejari and between these two Nanti communities and non-Nantis develop?
• How will feasting practices in Maranxejari develop over time? Will they diverge from the practices in Montetoni?

I am still deeply interested in answering these questions, and I still feel that they are interesting and important questions. Moreover, several of them are questions whose answers will necessarily change with passing years, which makes them all the more interesting topics for future research. Since writing my thesis, I have accumulated a list of far more (and far more focused) questions that demand me to answer them; I have appended just part of that list as Appendix 2.

Finally, there is indeed much "more to say" – but more importantly, many things could be said much better than I said them in my master's thesis. Because of my long-term interest in this topic, I feel my understanding of both its breadth and its subtleties is deepening. As I continue to think about and experience Nanti *karintaa* performances, I discover more and more about them that I wish to understand.

7. Broader impacts of this project and of my overarching research objectives

It is my long-term commitment to the Camisea Nanti communities that has continually served as my

primary motivation to pursue and complete my doctorate. My relationship with these two communities is founded on our mutual interest in seeing these communities achieve their own self-determined goals, and I believe I can most effectively collaborate with these communities toward their own ends as a well-trained anthropologist and linguist. Over the course of the four years since I began my graduate education, I have had numerous experiences that have both confirmed this belief, and that have broadened my understanding of the many ways in which my training in anthropology and linguistics can be of service to indigenous communities in Amazonia – including, but not limited to the Nanti communities to whom my service is promised for as long as they desire it.

Recent global ideological shifts toward recognizing the value of cultural and linguistic diversity simultaneously invite and demand a realistic understanding of human behavioral diversity, such that realistic strategies for promoting and maintaining diversity can be formulated and implemented. In this light, my research activities with the Camisea Nanti communities have already borne fruit, both for them and for several other geographically-isolated communities in Peruvian Amazonia, as a result of my advocacy work and the concomitant reputation I am developing as an expert on isolated indigenous groups in this region. I have already taken advantage of several opportunities to collaborate with other anthropologists working in Peruvian Amazonia and I have been centrally involved in establishing three other field research projects in Perú by young anthropologists who contacted me as a result of my work with Cabeceras Aid Project. I highly value the opportunities I have already had the opportunity to collaborate with Peruvian researchers and scholars, including Dr. Gustavo Solis at the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos in Lima and Sr. Gabel Sotil at the Universidad Nacional de la Amazonia Peruana; as well as indigenous groups and federations; representatives of both the public and non-profit sectors in Peru; and international organizations concerned with indigenous issues. My dissertation research project reflects my broader goal to contribute useful and accurate data to contemporary political and philosophical discourses that affect indigenous people.

I anticipate that the proposed project, together with my other related research activities, will make a lasting contribution not only to anthropology and to linguistics but also to cross-disciplinary discourses concerning diversity; indigenous identity politics; the interplay between language and society; and the nature of interpersonal conflict and its resolution. I have been conducting anthropological research within the context of my relationship with the Camisea Nanti communities over the last seven years and I intend to have a long and productive research career in Amazonia. My overarching intellectual and ethical commitment as a scholar is to document cultural and linguistic phenomena in indigenous Amazonian communities in order to create high-quality documentary resources that support these communities' self-determined interests. In summary, I believe that I am exceptionally well prepared to make a unique and valuable contribution in the course of my career, both to the field of anthropology and to the wider world that anthropology engages.

8. Schedule for the proposed project

01 November 2003	Travel from Austin, Texas to Lima, Perú.
02 Nov 03 – 09 Nov 03	In Lima: Meet with colleagues at Universidad Nacional Mayor San Marcos; meet with colleagues in NGOs and indigenous federations. Make preparations for first research period in Montetoni.
10 Nov 03 – 14 Nov 03	Travel from Lima to Puerto Ocopa by road and from Puerto Ocopa to Sepahua by river.
15 Nov 03 – 16 Nov 03	In Sepahua: make arrangements and purchases for stay in Montetoni.
17 Nov 03 – 22 Nov 03	Travel from Sepahua to Montetoni by river.
23 Nov 03 – 25 Nov 03	In Montetoni: Construction of living quarters and set-up.
26 Nov 03 – 26 Apr 04	**In Montetoni: First phase of research**
27 Apr 04 – 01 May 04	Travel from Montetoni to Sepahua by river; then from Sepahua to Cuzco via Lima, by air.
02 May 04 – 05 Jun 04	In Cuzco: Organize, transcribe, and analyze data; begin writing dissertation.
06 Jun 04	Travel from Cuzco to Lima by air.
07 Jun 04 – 10 Jun 04	In Lima: Meet with colleagues at Universidad Nacional Mayor San Marcos; meet with colleagues in NGOs and indigenous federations.
11 Jun 04	Travel from Lima to Iquitos by air.
12 Jun 04 – 20 Aug 04	In Iquitos and San Antonio: Iquito Language Documentation Project.
21 Aug 04 – 22 Aug 04	Travel from Iquitos to Cuzco via Lima by air.
23 Aug 04	Travel from Cuzco to Montetoni via helicopter
24 Aug – 25 Oct 04	**In Montetoni: Second phase of research**
26 Oct 04 – 30 Oct 04	Travel from Montetoni to Sepahua by river; Sepahua to Lima by air.
01 Nov 04	Travel from Lima to Austin by air.
02 Nov 04 – 30 Nov 04	In Austin: Consult with advisors; continue writing; rest.
01 Dec 04	Travel from Austin to Lima by air.
02 Dec 04 – 09 Dec 04	In Lima: Meet with colleagues at Universidad Nacional Mayor San Marcos; meet with colleagues in NGOs and indigenous federations. Make preparations for third research period in Montetoni.
10 Dec 04 – 14 Dec 04	Travel from Lima to Sepahua by air; Sepahua to Montetoni by river.
15 Dec 04 – 10 May 05	**In Montetoni: Third phase of research**
11 May 05 – 15 May 05	Travel from Montetoni to Sepahua by river, then Sepahua to Iquitos by air via Pucallpa.
16 May 05 – 14 Jun 05	In Iquitos: Organize, transcribe, and analyze data; continue writing dissertation.
15 Jun 05 – 19 Aug 05	In Iquitos and San Antonio: Iquito Language Documentation Project
20 Aug 05	Travel from Iquitos to Lima by air.
21 Aug 05 – 31 Aug 05	In Lima: visit affiliated institutions.
01 Sep 05	Travel from Lima to Austin by air.
02 Sep 05 – 28 Feb 06	In Austin: continue data analysis and dissertation writing.
01 Mar 06	complete final draft of dissertation; submit to committee
02 Mar 06 – 14 Apr 06	make necessary revisions to dissertation
15 Apr 06	defend dissertation
16 Apr 06 – 14 May 06	revise dissertation as necessary; submit dissertation
15 May 06	**Graduate with Ph.D.**
20 May 06	Return to Perú to complete Iquito Language Documentation Project.

9. Plan of Work

9.1 First phase

23 November 2003 – 26 April 2004 (23 weeks)

The primary focus of the project's first phase will be to obtain and review a large corpus of new data in order to formulate a set of clear and detailed hypotheses relating to the ideas put forth in this proposal.

1. Extemporaneous *karintaa* poetry is only performed during community-wide feasts, which are held every six to nine days. During each feast, I will use four IRUs simultaneously for five hours each to obtain naturally occurring *karintaa* data; this will yield 20 hours of data per feast.
2. I will videotape two to three hours during each feast, contingent upon weather conditions.
3. Between feasts, I will use two to four IRUs a day with a variety of consultants for two to five hours each, in order to obtain 8 to 10 hours of naturally-occurring discourse data per day *four* days a week.
4. Except on feast days, I will spend three to four hours each day transcribing and translating salient recorded data into Spanish and English and an additional two to three hours working with Nanti consultants to translate, contextualize, and analyze the data.
5. I will audio-record every consultation session with Nantis; these recordings will be considered new data as well as analytical material.
6. Every evening I will review, duplicate, and permanently archive all new recorded data. I will only work with copies of my recordings.
7. I will gauge my data-collecting activities to the data-processing activities outlined in point 6, such that I do not end up with a backlog of unprocessed original data at the end of the week.

9.2 Second and third phases

24 August 2004 – 25 October 2004 (9 weeks)

15 December 2004 – 15 May 2005 (22 weeks)

The primary focus of the project's second and third phases will be to articulate, substantiate, and challenge the set of hypotheses formulated in the first phase. These phases will be very similar to the first phase except for points 3 and 8.

1. During each feast, I will use four IRUs simultaneously for five hours each to obtain naturally occurring *karintaa* data; this will yield 20 hours of data per feast.
2. I will videotape two to three hours during each feast, contingent upon weather conditions.
3. Between feasts, I will use two to four IRUs a day with a variety of consultants for two to five hours each, in order to obtain 8 to 10 hours of naturally-occurring discourse data per day *three* days a week. I will focus a larger percentage of my time on gathering specific new data suggested by patterns in my existing data.
4. Except on feast days, I will spend three to four hours each day transcribing and translating salient recorded data into Spanish and English and an additional two to three hours working with Nanti consultants to translate, contextualize, and analyze the data.
5. I will audio-record every consultation session with Nantis; these recordings will be considered new data as well as analytical material.
6. Every evening I will review, duplicate, and archive all new recorded data. I will only work with copies of my recordings.
7. I will gauge my data-collecting activities to the data-processing activities outlined in point 6, such that I do not end up with a backlog of unprocessed original data at the end of the week.
8. I will dedicate one full day per week to writing up my analyses of the data gathered to date.

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