1. Introduction

There is widespread agreement among linguistic anthropologists that societies differ in how intersubjectivity and its manifestations are construed and enacted. One of the relevant areas of difference that has been much discussed in recent anthropological publications, including all the articles in the present collection, concerns what Robbins and Rumsey (2008) have called the ‘doctrine of the opacity of other minds’ – the widely attested claim from various locales around the world that one can never really know what other people are thinking – and associated forms of practice that seem to evince an adherence to this doctrine.

A related dimension of cross cultural variation that had been much discussed by linguistic anthropologists during the 70s and 80s concerns local understandings of the role that is or is not played by intentionality in human interaction. For speech act theory as developed by J. L. Austin and John Searle and for linguistic Pragmatics as developed by H.P. Grice and his followers, intentions were considered to be fundamental, as that which had to be ‘expressed’ (Searle 1983:11) or ‘recognized’ (Grice 1957) in order for there to be a successful execution of a speech act or instance of communication. Based on a more broadly comparative, anthropological take on the matter, Michelle Rosaldo launched a critique of these views, charging their advocates with, among other things, overemphasizing the speaker’s psychological state, with a “corresponding inattention to the social sphere,” and seeing this as a reflection of “our relatively individualistic (and sociologically problematic) view of human sociality and communication” (Rosaldo 1982:227–8; cf. Rosaldo 1984).

The anthropological critique of “personalist” or “intentionalist” accounts of meaning and communication was perhaps most extensively developed by Alessandro Duranti, on the basis of his work on political oratory and disputation in Samoa (Duranti 1993a, 1993b). Duranti has recently changed his views, based both on ethnographic evidence suggesting that he had been ‘conflating differences between qualitatively distinct ways of making inferences about what others are up to’ (Duranti 2008:487), and also on his more recent immersion in the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl, which has convinced him that intentionality and intersubjectivity are much deeper, more pervasive and multilayered phenomena than he had realized (loc. cit. p 491-3; cf. Duranti 2006, 2009). The same conclusion is supported empirically by recent work in developmental psychology showing that the capacity for discerning the intentions of our conspecifics – and the related ability to share and exchange intentions and perspectives with them – begin to develop in very early infancy and are among the most distinctive attributes of the human species (Trevarthen and Aitkin 2001, Tomasello et al 2005, Hobson 2004).

The empirical evidence that Duranti draws upon in support of his (2008) revisionist position is, however, not psychological but ethnographic, some of it coming from the Ku Waru region of Highland Papua New Guinea, as discussed in Rumsey (2008). There I point out that although Ku Waru people in their explicit metapragmatic discourse often espouse versions of the ‘opacity doctrine’, it is inconsistent with some of the other things they espouse, including: 1) the idea that
A woman, wanting to get her reluctant child to follow, tells it: come along, we are going to eat (when the child would have liked this, but this was not at all the immediate purpose). Or a woman tells a child whom she wants to persuade to go down to the Kailge display ground: People are going to give out money down there! (ibid)

These ‘casual observations’ have since been corroborated by extensive study of Ku Waru child language socialization that I and my Ku Waru assistants have been engaged in since 1997. In our recordings and transcripts of interactions involving children there are numerous examples of such quotidian deception, and also examples of children being prompted to practice it on others. An
example is shown in (1), from a transcript of interaction between a Ku Waru woman Wapi and her two-year old son Jesi¹:

1. (a) Wapi: ana kola naa ti-o nya
same.sex.sibling cry not do:JUS.SG-VOC say:IMP.SG
Tell your brother not to cry [lit: ‘Say “brother, don’t cry” ’].

(b) Jesi: ana kola naa ti-o
same.sex.sibling cry not do:JUS.SG-VOC
Brother don’t cry.

(c) Wapi: kali pabiyl-o
kalyke go:OPT:2DU-VOC
Let’s go to Kailge.

(d) Jesi: teka pabi-o
kalyke pabiyl-o
Kailge go:OPT:2DU-VOC
Let’s go to Kailge.

(e) Wapi: sispop lyabiyl pabiyl-o
Cheesepop get:OPT:2DU go:OPT:2DU-VOC
Let’s go get some Cheesepops.

(f) Jesi: titopa-ti nabi
sispop-DEF nabiyl
Cheesepop eat:OPT:2DU
We’ll eat a Cheesepop.

(g) Wapi: pabiyl
go:OPT:2DU
Let’s go.

(h) Jesi: pebil-o
pabiyl-o
go:OPT:2DU
Let’s go.

(i) Wapi: kola naa ti-o
cry not do:JUS.SG-VOC
Don’t cry.

(j) Jesi: pike naa ti
bighead not do:JUS.SG
Don’t be a bighead.

¹ The reader will note that in some lines of the children’s transcribed speech (e.g., 1d, 1f, 1h) there is a second tier of Ku Waru. In such cases the top tier shows what the child said and second tier shows what my language assistants offered as the equivalent forms in ‘normal’ or ‘adult’ Ku Waru.
As became clear later on in this interaction, there was actually no serious prospect of going to Kailge to buy Cheesepops (a kind of packed snack food) for Jesi’s crying brother Alex. Rather, Jesi was being prompted to propose such a trip in order to get Alex to stop crying.

Another example, (2), comes from an interaction between a Ku Waru man Taka and his 15-month old son Laplin. The two of them are sitting together outside, in an open space near the main meeting ground at Kailge, which is also the parking place for the community’s only motor vehicle, PMV or ‘Public Motor Vehicle’, that takes paying passengers to the provincial capital, Mt Hagen.

2. (a) Taka: mawa wi to [boy’s name] call out do:IMP:SG  
   Call out to Mawa.

(b) Laplin [shouts]: mawa-ai! [boy’s name] -VOC  
   Hey Mawa! ...

(c) Taka: kar-na pabiyl wa! kar!  
   car-LOC go:OPT:2DU come-IMP:SG car  
   Come, let’s you and me go in the car! The car!

(d) Laplin: wa come:IMP:SG  
   Come!

Again, there was actually no serious prospect of Laplin and Mawa taking a trip together in the car, to its usual destination or anywhere else. The main point seems to have been to stimulate social engagement. But at a more general level, it seems that, in line with the quote from Merlan and Rumsey (1991) above, part of the point (or at least the effect) of such exchanges is also to instil in children a preparedness for the possibility of deceit. This is suggested not only by my assistants’ commentary on the transcripts of parent-child interaction, but also by frequent explicit metapragmatic characterization of what is being said or done within the interaction as true/honest (sika) or ‘tricking/deceit’ (gol/gep). In this regard it is relevant to note that there is really no closely equivalent term to the English word ‘lie’ in Ku Waru, i.e., no term that conveys the sense of moral opprobrium that ‘lie’ does. Hence the appropriateness of the more usual English term that is used to translate it: ‘trick’ (and, for that matter also Tok Pisin giaman). An example of an early use of gol is in 3 (line c) from an interaction between Enita, age 2 years, 9 months and her mother Mis.

3. (a) Mis: no nu-n mola naa nu-n  
   water consume²-PRF:2SG or not consume-PRF:2SG  
   Do you want to drink water or not?

(b) e e miki-ya e e  
   [exclamation] vomit [exclamation]  
   I feel like vomiting.

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² We gloss this verb (nu-) as ‘consume’ because it can mean either ‘eat’, ‘drink’ or ‘burn’ depending on the context.
An example of the (actually spurious) use of *sika* ‘true’ can be seen in 4 (line e), from an interaction involving John Onga, his son Jesi, age 2 years 4 months, and Jesi’s sister Justina, age 12.

4. (a) John: kang-abola-ma-o rais
   boy-girl-PL-VOC rice
   Hey children, rice...

   (b) Jesi: ku kui-na, kui-n tomb ke
   kur lui-n lui-n to-bu ke
   spirit axe-INS axe-INS hit-FUT:1SG
   I’ll hit you with a steel axe, with an axe.

   (c) John: a rais kal-ai-o nya
   o.k. rice cook-IMP:PL say:IMP:SG
   O.K., tell them to cook the rice.

   (d) Jesi: kui-n tomb ke
   lui-n to-bu ke
   axe-INS hit-FUT:1SG
   I’ll hit you with an axe.

   (e) John: *sika* nyi-ki-m justina nu lui-n to-ba ke
   true say-PPR-3SG Justina you axe-ERG hit-3SG-FUT
   He’s telling the truth Justina, he’ll chop you with an axe.

   (f) Jesi: nu ku, nu ku-n t o-bu ke
   nu lu nu lu-n⁴ to-buke
   you ax you axe-INS hit-1SG-FUT
   I’ll hit you with an axe, with an axe.

   (g) John: rais kal-k kai te
   rice cook-NF:2 good do:IMP:SG
   Cook the rice properly.

   (h) a manya mol-a, rais kal-k kai te
   o.k. down be/stay:IMP:SG rice cook-NF:2 good do:IMP:SG
   O.K, sit down and cook the rice properly.

³ The word *kur* ‘spirit, ghost’ in Ku Waru is used here to mean ‘European’, based on the idea that that Ku Waru people along with other New Guinea Highlanders had when they first encountered Europeans (in the 1930s), that they were the ghosts of their ancestors returning from the land of the dead. The expression *kur lu* ‘spirit [i.e. European] axe’ designates ‘steel axe’, as opposed to *bo lu* ‘indigenous axe’, i.e., with a blade made of stone.

⁴ In the first instance of *ku* (Baby talk for *lu* ‘axe’) in this line Jesi has omitted the (ergative/) instrumental case -n from it. He then repeats the first words, adding the instrumental case (rather precociously for a child of his age).
True to the characterization of them as ‘tricking’ such routines can of course always shade into what one might regard as ‘play’ rather than ‘lying’, as illustrated by all of the above (notwithstanding the assertion to the contrary above in line e, *sika nyikim* ‘He’s telling the truth’). In other cases it is clear that, whatever the intent of the parent may have been, the child has taken their gambit seriously. An example is (5), an exchange between Jenny Yamai and her daughter Lorlyn, age 2 years, 4 months.

(5) (a) Jenny: Wai sispop me-ba o-ku-m kana-ku-r
Wai Cheesepop carry-NF:3SG come-PPR-3SG see:PPR-1SG
I can see Wai bringing cheesepops.

(b) na nab
I consume:OPT:1SG
I want to eat them.

(c) Lorlyn: naa mep om
naa me-pa o-ku-m
not carry-NF-3SG
He’s not bringing them.

(d) Jenny: kor wi klemens-nga lku stoa-na lyi-ba pu-ku-m ilyi already up Clemens-GEN house store-LOC get-FUT:3SG go-PPR-3SG this
But as we know, he went a long time ago to Clemens’ store to get them.

(e) Lorlyn: i i i naa pumal
naa pu-m-ayl
[cries] not go-PRF:3SG-DEF
No he didn’t go.

(f) Jenny: kor lyi-ba pu-m-ayl
already get-FUT:3SG go-PRF:3SG-DEF
He already went to get them.

(g) Lorlyn: naa pu-m i i i
not go-PRF:3SG [crying]
No he didn’t go.
[Translator’s gloss: *gol tokun naa pum nyiba kola tirim* ‘Saying/thinking “You are tricking, he didn’t go”, she cried’].

Over the previous twenty minutes there had been repeated references by Jenny to Wai’s having gone to buy Cheesepops, lamb flaps, candy, pikelets and rice cakes for the children and others. Lorlyn had evidently believed it because when it was proposed a few minutes earlier (i.e., before the exchange in ex. 5) that she and others leave the house and go fishing in a nearby creek Lorlyn said no, she wanted to stay until Wai brought the dumplings and rice.

Such examples show that the potential disparity between appearance and reality – and more particularly the possibility of deceit – are realities that are Ku Waru children are finely attuned to from an early age. But it would be incorrect to infer from this a belief that successful communication or intersubjective engagement never takes place, or that it is never understood to have taken place.
On the contrary, there are many contexts in which its occurrence is recognized and even cultivated by Ku Waru people.

One such context is the same kind exemplified above – everyday interaction between adults and children. Alongside the more-or-less serious practice of deceit, one of the other most frequent routines is the elicitation from children of expressions of empathy (kodu). An example is (6), an exchange between Jenny and Lorlyn on the same day as (5), when Lorlyn was two years and four months old.

(6) (a) Jenny: na kolsi si-k nan-e me little bit give-NF:2 consume:SR2:2SG=Q
Can you give me a little before you eat the rest?

(b) Lorlyn: nu mok nu mol you no
No, not you.

(c) Jenny: na no-bu I consume-FUT:1SG
I want to eat too.

(d) Lorlyn: nu naa no-ni
you not eat-FUT:2SG
You are not going to eat any.

(e) Jenny: aku na nabi tim-na that me what do:PRF:3SG-LOC
But what about me?

(f) na **kodu** naa te-ki-m-i me compassion not do-PPR-3SG=Q
Don’t you feel sorry for me?

(g) Lorlyn: ily epol naga this [name] consume:OPT:3SG
Let Epol [Lorlyn’s sister] eat that one.

(h) Jenny: epol naga-e [name] consume:OPT:3SG=Q
Let Epol eat it, eh?

(i) pi na so me
So what about me?

(j) Lorlyn: nu tim-ko
nu ti-bu-ko you give-FUT:1SG=also
O.K., I’ll give you some too.
The operative word here *kodu*, ‘empathy’, ‘compassion’ (line f), is a major theme in Ku Waru discourse about interpersonal relationships, as is also the case in many other locales in Melanesia the Pacific more generally (Hollan and Throop 2011, E. Schieffelin 1976, B. Schieffelin 1990). In Ku Waru the expression that I have translated as ‘feel sorry for’\(^5\), *kodu* functions grammatically as a ‘verbal adjunct’ (Foley 1986:113-23), which is paired with a verb *te-* ‘do’ which in this collocation is invariably marked for third person singular subject, the two words together comprising an impersonal construction.

An example of a solicitation of empathy for someone besides the speaker (namely myself) can be seen in (7), which comes from an exchange involving a John Onga, his son Jesi (age 3 years, 4 months) and a woman who was visiting named Kupin. The house that John refers to is one that I had been staying in during my field trips to the region, which was burned down along with most of the others in the immediate area at Kailge during a bout of tribal warfare in 2006.

(7) (a) Kupin:  yi kuduyl-ayl lku pe-ly-m-ayl tepi nu-ru-m-i man red-DEF house lie/stay-HAB-3SG-DEF fire consume-RP-3SG-Q The house where the red [i.e., white] man stays was burned down, eh?

(b) John:  kuduyl alan-nga lku tepi nu-ru-m mola mol red Alan-GEN house fire consume-RP-3SG or no Was red Alan’s house burned down or not?

(c) Jesi:  nu-m consume-PRF:3SG It was burned.

(d) John:  pe so So?

(e) Kupin:  kodu ya compassion really Sorry!

(f) John:  nu *kodu* te-ki-m mola mol you compassion do-PPR-3SG or no Are you sorry or not?

(g) Jesi:  tem te-ki-m do-PPR-3SG I am.

Through routines like these children not only learn to express sympathy for others, they also learn to elicit it for themselves, as Jenny has done in (6). An example, which also involves an element of

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\(^5\) A more literal translation would be ‘empathize with’, since in *kodu* is by definition always experienced in relation to another, whereas one can feel ‘sorry’ for oneself.
playful ‘trickery’ (gol) by the child is (8), an exchange involving Enita Don at 25 months, her mother Mis and her Father Don.

(8) (a) Enita:  i i i  
[crying sound]

(b) Mis:  nai   kulu-m  
who die-PRF:3SG  
Who died?

(c) Enita:  papa e ya  
Daddy oh EXCM  
Daddy!

(d) Mis:  papa kulu-m kola te-amul-i  
Daddy die-PRF:3SG cry do-HRT-Q  
Daddy has died so we have to cry, eh?

(e)  i i i  
[crying sound]

(f) Don:  papa-o kuduyl alan nya,  alan-o nya  
daddyº-VOC red Alan say:IMP:SG  Alan-VOC say:IMP:SG  
Daddy, tell red Alan?  call out for Alan and tell him.

(g) Enita:  papa kulu-m  
Daddy die-PRF:3SG  
Daddy has died.

(h) Mis:  kulum-i,   mis kulu-m mola mol, mis kulu-m-i  
die-PRF:3SG-Q Mis die-PRF:3SG or not Mis die-PRF:3SG-Q  
He died eh? Did Mis die or not? Did Mis die or not?

(i) Enita:  mis kulu-m-i  
Mis die:PRF-3SG-Q  
Did Mis die?

(j) Mis:  e pe  
yes so  
Yes, so?

(k) Don:  papa, papa kulu-m-i  
daddy daddy die:PRF-3SG-Q  
Your daddy died, eh?

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º Don is using papa ‘daddy’ here to address his daughter Enita. This usage is explained below.

7 I was back in Australia at the time when this interaction was being recorded, by my assistant Andrew Noma. What Don is playfully proposing is that Enita call out to me and tell me of this death for me to hear when I play the tape.
Through routines such as 7 and 8 children are presented with a model what it is to take the perspective of another and how to act accordingly. The same is true of a particular form of kin term usage that also happens to be illustrated in 8 – in line f where Don addresses his daughter Enita as *papa* ‘Daddy’. This is an example of a regular practice of self-reciprocal extension whereby an adult Ku Waru speaker when addressing a child uses the same vocative kin term for the child that the child uses for that particular adult – the effect here being that Don is taking the perspective of his daughter and addressee Enita on the interaction between the two of them.

Likewise in examples 1 and 2 Wapi and Taka take the perspectives of their sons Jesi and Laplin respectively, in effect putting words in their mouths to address to others, which they do – Jesi addressing his brother Alex and Laplin the boy Mawa. Consistent with the importance accorded to displays of empathy as in 7 and 8, as we shall see in §4 below, in the adult political arena high regard is placed upon the ability to discern the thoughts of others and act accordingly.

Having considered the pragmatics and metapragmatics of intention discernment, deception and empathy in discourse involving Ku Waru children, I will now broaden the focus by considering non-discursive aspects of such interactions.

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8 The word *sori* is a borrowing from Tok Pisin. Although it derives ultimately from English ‘sorry’, its sense in Ku Waru and Tok Pisin is closer to *kodu* in that it is always other directed, as noted for *kodu* above.

9 The literal meaning of the expression *ama=o* is ‘Oh Mother’, but in Ku Waru as in many of the neighbouring languages it is used as a general expression of alarm, rather like ‘Oh my God!’ in English.

10 Note that I am not claiming here that Ku Waru people assume that all such expressions of empathy accurately represent the thoughts or feelings of the person who offers them. Indeed in examples 6-8 there is almost certainly no such assumption, given the playful tenor of the interaction in which they occur. The point is rather that the notion of *kodu* entails recognition the possibility of empathetic understanding of the thoughts and feelings of others.

11 Note that this a distinct phenomenon from the widely-observed pattern – already noticed by Kroeber (1909) – for vocative kin terms to develop into fully lexicalized self-reciprocal ones. For in ordinary usage the term *papa* in Ku Waru is not used by either a Father or Mother for either the son or daughter, who are instead addressed and referred to as *mal* and *kimul* respectively.
3. Discursive and non-discursive dimensions of intention-discernment

One of the most interesting and solidly supported findings of the psychologists referred to in §1 is that the capacity to share and exchange intentions and perspectives is one that begins to develop very early in children and is highly developed long before they learn to speak. As shown by comparative-primatological studies (Tomasello et al 2005), what is most distinctively human about those interactions is that many of them are not just dyadic but triadic, involving joint attention to a third person or object outside of the immediate circuit of interaction between infant and other.

An example from my Ku Waru language-socialization study can be seen in Figure 1, which shows a moment of interaction between 15-month old Josefin and her five-year old brother Jeri. It is a still from a video that I shot in 1997, of the two children and their mother Bebi sitting around the central hearth in their house at Kailge, where most of our Ku Waru fieldwork has been based. In order to stoke the fire Jeri is blowing on it through a section of PVC pipe, which he is holding in both hands. As can be seen, Josefin’s left arm is extended out towards the tube. Or, to describe what she is doing in more ordinary terms, Josefin is reaching for the tube. To describe it that way of course adds an element of intentionality: it attributes to Josefin an intention to grasp the tube, and treats her extending of her arm towards it as an instrumental act that is preparatory to the intended act of grasping.

Figure 1. Interaction between a Ku Waru Mother Bebi, her baby daughter Josefin and son Jeri

In the online video that accompanies this publication the reader can see and hear what happens in the 31 seconds that follow the moment shown in the still. One can hear that as Josefin reaches out towards the tube she makes whining sounds, sometimes repeating a short, semantically
indeterminate\textsuperscript{12} syllable [dɛ] with rising intonation. After a few seconds of this, at 5:21:17, Jeri releases the tube from his left hand and with his right hand begins to move it towards Josefin’s extended left hand. At 5:22:23 her hand makes contact with it. By 5:23:24 she has begun to pull it towards herself. By 5:24:06 Jeri has relinquished his right-hand grip on the tube and it has begun to fall out of Josefin’s left hand. At that point her mother Josefin reaches across with her right hand, lifts the tube up and guides the end of it towards Josefin’s mouth. While doing so she is saying \textit{ekepu nu tepi popu to, popu to, popu to, i-d popu to} ‘Now you blow the fire. Blow! Blow! Blow into here!’\textsuperscript{13} While this is happening, beginning at about 5:28 Jeri shifts his gaze from the fire towards Josefin. At about 5:30 she turns her gaze away from the end of the tube towards Jeri. At 5:31 their gazes meet and Jeri smiles. From about 5:39 to 5:41, with Josefin looking at him Jeri puts his hand to his mouth and says \textit{ilyi, i, i, te} ‘This, this, this, do this’.

As in my earlier description of the initial frame as shown in figure 1, my account above of what happens in the next sixteen seconds is full of attributions of intentionality to all three participants. More to the point it seems clear that all of the participants themselves attribute intentions to each other and display their own in ways that they intend to be discernable by others. Thus baby Josefin in the initial frame not only reaches for the tube that Jeri is holding, she vocalizes with high-rising intonation in a way that seems intended to get his attention and focus it on her attempt to take the tube from him. Though he does not redirect his gaze away from the fire and towards her at that point, from the way he releases the grip of left hand on the tube and moves towards her it is clear that he has understood her intention and complied with it. After Josefin has the tube in her hand, first Bebi and then Jeri clearly express an intention that she blow through it. Both of them do this with speech, using imperative verbs, and also by non-verbal indications of what they want her to do, Bebi by moving the end of the tube toward Josefin’s mouth while blowing with her own, and Jeri by pointing to his own mouth with both hands.

I have offered this rather detailed account of a short stretch of interaction among Ku Waru people not in order to argue that there is anything special about the role that is played by intention-attribution in it, but on the contrary, to show that it is just as fundamental and pervasive among them as it is any other human community for which we have comparable evidence on the question. The main point I want to draw from this example is that it provides evidence of a largely non-discursive sort that Ku Waru people routinely engage in intention reading and use it to help coordinate their actions. Furthermore, in this interaction they do it in a way that makes extensive use of the kind of triadic engagement that Tomasello et al (2005) have shown to be so fundamentally and uniquely human, in which subjects share and exchange intentions and perspectives with respect to a joint focus of attention. In the above example such triadic engagement could be seen at a very basic, non-verbal level in the reaching out by little Josefin for the fire-blowing tube that Jeri was holding, and in his attempt to focus her attention on the fire and get her blow on it.

Returning now to the interactions with children discussed in §2, where speech plays a bigger part, we can see that triadic engagement also figures in examples 1 and 2, in a form that is much more complex, not only because they involve speech but also because each in fact involves two triadic

\textsuperscript{12} By semantically indeterminate I mean that it is not lexically interpretable either by me or my Ku Waru language assistants, who have characterised it as either meaningless (\textit{we ung} ‘nothing word’) or a word that that only Josefin understood (\textit{yama-nga ung}, ‘her own word’).

\textsuperscript{13} Josefin at this time was at the one-word stage of language acquisition. While her intelligible utterances were few and far between at this stage, she is frequently addressed by others, and sometimes shows herself capable of understanding utterances of more than one word. For example, at 6:09 Bebi says softly into Bebi’s ear \textit{jeri pait to} ‘Hit Jeri’, after which Josefin immediately takes a swing at him.
configurations, one embedded within the other. In example 1 the initial triad consists of Wapi as speaker, her son Jesi as addressee and Jesi’s crying brother Alex as the referent, to whom Wapi directs Jesi’s attention. The second, embedded triadic interaction is one that is orchestrated by Wapi but involves Jesi as speaker, Alex as addressee and as the object of attention a proposed trip to Kailge to get some Cheesepops (a kind of packaged junk food that has found its way into even remote Highland PNG trade stores). Besides the embedding, a further complexity is that from line (c) onward, all Wapi’s utterances belong to both triadic frames at once, in that she is both addressing Jesi and at the same time speaking as Jesi – putting words in his mouth that he is in turn meant to say to Alex, which he then does. (Consistent with this double framing, in the third line Wapi uses a baby-talk pronunciation of the name Kailge, kali which Jesi then repeats in an even more simplified pronunciation take). Likewise, from line b to h, all of Jesi’s utterances belong to both triadic frames, being positioned both as responses to Wapi and as utterances addressed to Alex. In line j Jesi partially breaks out of the first frame, no longer repeating after Wapi exactly, but elaborating on her utterance and at the same time showing that he understands the force of it by in effect treating Alex’s crying as an instance of bikhet, i.e. stubborn, inconsiderate behavior.

Through similar complex framing in example 2, 15-month old Laplin is recruited into an embedded triadic interaction in which he calls out to an older boy Mawa and is enjoined to propose a trip in the village PMV (Public Motor Vehicle), the sole destination of which (as Mawa would presumably understand) is the provincial capital Mount Hagen.

As shown by Bambi Schieffelin’s (1990) detailed study of child language socialization among the nearby Kaluli people, this kind of ventriloquizing is ubiquitous in speech to infants, not only by adults, but also by older children, often at the prompting of adults. It is a powerful form of subjectification, especially when the action being enjoined is speech to another, in that it presents to the child not only a model of interaction in which his/her subjectivity is virtually aligned with that of care-giver, but also a model of what to expect in engagements with others. For example, in the ventriloquized words in line c of example 2, Taka is presenting to Laplin a model of what, in order to get Mawa’s attention, he can assume will be an alluring prospect for him, namely a trip in the community’s only motor vehicle to the provincial capital. In other words, through a directive that Laplin is enjoined to issue to another, Laplin is himself being placed within an established landscape of differentially valued places and kinds of movement within it, and ways of feeling about it.

What is especially relevant here about such interactions is that they inherently involve explicit communication of intentions. As discussed in Rumsey (2003), one of the most basic and ubiquitous means by which that is done in speech involving young children is through the use of ‘intentional’ forms of the verb, especially the imperative. These are present in each of the ten lines in 1 and in three of the four lines in 2 (all them of except 2b). This is typical of Ku Waru child- and child-directed speech. Furthermore, in Ku Waru and all the other languages with which I have compared it in this respect (Japanese, Spanish and Catalan) such intentional verb forms, especially the imperative, are among the first to be acquired by children, and are acquired well before personal pronouns or verbal person marking (Rumsey 2003). This is interesting in view of the fact that imperative verbs like personal pronouns are ‘shifters’, the use of which entails the same kind of role reversal as does the use of pronouns, in that, for example, in order to understand the force wi to ‘Call out’ in 2a (as he clearly does), Laplin has to understand that he is the person who must do the calling out, and that Taka is expressing an intention for him to do so; whereas in order to use this expression felicitously Laplin would have to understand that his addressee is the one to do the calling out, and that he himself is the one that is expressing the intention for it to be done. The fact that children learn to engage in this form of linguistic role reversal so early with respect to intentionality in particular is
consistent with the findings of Tomasello et al (2005) that the capacity to understand and share intentions is one of the most basic of human traits.

In §5 I will take up the question of how the pre-linguistic forms of such engagement that were exemplified above are related to the ones involving speech in §2, and the relation of both of them to language ideologies. First, in order to help address that question, in §4 I will broaden the evidentiary base by turning to certain kind of interaction among adults.

4. The etiquette and politics of mental-state attribution in Ku Waru public speech

The data for this section will come from two public events in the Ku Waru region that Merlan and I observed during our fieldwork on language and local politics there in the early 1980s. One was a ceremonial exchange event at which a compensation payment was presented by one tribal group to another for injuries they suffered when fighting as their allies. The other event was a paternity dispute involving a claim by a man against his wife who had left him to stay with her parents shortly before becoming pregnant. Both events involved many speakers over the course of several hours. We recorded and transcribed the speeches at both with the help of Ku Waru people including some of the participants in the events. The transcripts of both – totaling 1850 and 1744 lines respectively – are included in their entirety in two of our publications (Merlan and Rumsey 1986, 1991), allowing the reader to look at the examples used here in their larger contexts, and to check my claims about what does and does not occur in them14. Before turning to questions of mental-state attribution in the transcripts I will first provide some relevant details concerning the grammar of projected15 speech and thought in Ku Waru.

The main Ku Waru reported speech construction has already been illustrated above in (1a). It makes use of the verb *nyi*—‘say’, which in this case occurs in its singular imperative form *nya*, framing the locution *ana kola naa ti-o* ‘Brother don’t cry’. Ku Waru syntax being strictly verb final, the framing verb in this construction always follows the material it frames, which is treated as a grammatical object16. In keeping with the Ku Waru penchant for compositional verbal constructions, the meaning ‘think’ is expressed by this same verb *nyi*—‘say’, preceded by another verb *pilyi*—‘hear, sense’. As in all such serial verb constructions in Ku Waru, the combining verb in non-final position takes a NON FINAL (NF) suffix showing person and number but not tense. An example is (9).

\[
(9) \quad \text{kujilyi} \quad \text{nunu} \quad \text{to-k-un} \quad \text{tepi} \quad \text{kaluni} \quad \text{nyi-b} \quad \text{pilyi-ri-d} = \text{o}
\]

\[
[\text{man’s name}] \quad \text{you yourself} \quad \text{hit/do-NF2-SG} \quad \text{fire cook:FUT:2SG say-NF:1 hear-RP-1SG-VOC}
\]

Kujilyi, I thought you yourself would burn up [i.e., spend] the money. (E748)

14 To that end, all of the excerpts from those two transcripts that are reproduced here are referenced by line number, preceded by ‘D’ to designate the dispute transcript (Merlan and Rumsey 1986:86-179) and ‘E’ to designate the exchange-event transcript (Merlan and Rumsey 1991:245-321) (so for example ‘D174’ means ‘Dispute transcript, line 174’, etc.).

15 Following Halliday (1985), I used the term ‘projected’ speech and thought in place of the more common designation ‘reported’ speech and thought because, as is widely acknowledged in the literature on this topic (e.g., Tannen 1986, Wierzbicka 1974) the use of constructions of this sort does not necessarily presuppose the existence of an actual utterance or thought that is being ‘reported’. This is shown for example by 1(a), where Wapi’s framed locution *ana kola naa ti-o* ‘Brother don’t cry’ is not one that has already been spoken, but rather is one that is being presented (‘projected’) for Jesi to repeat, which he then does.

16 For evidence of this, and further details concerning the grammar and uses of this construction in Ku Waru, see Rumsey (2010).
The last two words – inflected forms of the verbs nyi- ‘say’ and pilyi- ‘hear’ – comprise the serial verb construction meaning ‘think’, with first person singular subject and in the remote past tense. The framed material representing the thought that the speaker retrospectively attributes to himself is in the preceding four words nunu tokun tepi kaluni. ‘You yourself [Kujilyi] will burn up the money’.

Another example is (10).

(10) na we-na to-ku-m nyi-k-in pilyi-n
I nothing-LOC hit-PPR-3SG say-NF2-SG hear-PRF:2SG
You (SG) thought I was off the mark. (E948)

As between examples (9) and (10), (9) is more typical of Ku Waru projected thought constructions in having a first person subject rather than a second person one. This can be seen from Table 1, which shows the incidence of subjects of the various person-number categories that occur with nyi- pily- (‘think’) construction in the 1986 and 1991 transcripts.

Table 1. Incidence of subject types for nyi- pily- (‘think’) constructions in two samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event type</th>
<th>1SG</th>
<th>1PL</th>
<th>2SG</th>
<th>2PL</th>
<th>3SG</th>
<th>3PL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paternity dispute</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-clan exchange event</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>49</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures by themselves do not provide sufficient evidence the incidence of thought-attribution to self and other because not all instances of the nyi- pily- construction actually involve an attribution of a definite thought to a specific person. Counter-examples include:

- questions, e.g. ‘What do you people think about it?’ (D217)
- instructions (sometimes formulated as rhetorical questions) as to what people should not think, e.g.: ‘Don’t think they would do something different’ (E958); ‘You think you are going to go soon?’ [i.e. You are not going to go soon.] (E383).
- hypotheticals, e.g.: ‘If you thought so…’ (E6790); ‘If you think “He’s talking strangely”’ (E1001); ‘You may think “some of the men’s house groups are not giving enough”’ (E913)
- predictions about the future, e.g. ‘You will think “Why did I say it?”’ (D756); ‘You will think he is saying one thing.’ (D1360)
- qualifying clauses, e.g., ‘When she has thought about it, will she change her attitude or not?’ (D1662)
- typifications, e.g. [during the act of sex in general] ‘The woman thinks “I’m doing it to him” and the man thinks “I’m doing it to her”’ (E481-2).

Note that the (self-)attributed thought is cast in semi-indirect discourse, with the tense of ‘burn’ computed relative to the time in the remote past at which the speaker had purportedly had the thought, but its person marking and that of its subject pronoun computed in relative to the speech event in which is being presented, with Kujilyi as the addressee. This is typical, in that, while reported/projected speech in Ku Waru is almost always framed as direct discourse, reported thought is often framed as indirect or semi-indirect discourse (cf. Rumsey 2010:1668-72).
If one puts aside all such uses if the *nyi-* *pilyi-* construction and includes only the ones such as (9) and (10) in which a definite thought is attributed to a specific person, there is a striking difference in the way in which the latter are distributed with respect to the person and number of the subject. This is shown in table 2, which includes only the latter.

Table 2. Incidence of subject types for definite thought attributions using *nyi-* *pilyi-* (‘think’) constructions in two samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event type</th>
<th>Person/number of subject</th>
<th>1SG</th>
<th>1PL</th>
<th>2SG</th>
<th>2PL</th>
<th>3SG</th>
<th>3PL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paternity dispute</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-clan exchange event</td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By comparing tables 1 and 2 one can see that:

1) among the instances of *nyi-* *pilyi-* with first person subjects, by far the majority (52/60 or 87%) are definite thought attributions, whereas among those with second person subjects only a small minority (8/46 or 17%) are;

2) the corresponding ratio for instances of *nyi-* *pilyi-* with third person subjects (6/17 or 35%) is immediate between the ones for first person and second person subjects.

The relative paucity of direct attributions of thoughts to addressees at these particular events is especially notable in view of the fact the participants’ states of mind are highly pertinent to what is going on, and implicated in much of the discussion. But while speakers make ample use of *nyi-* *pilyi-* for attributing thoughts to *themselves*, for probing the thought of their interlocutors they generally use less direct means. An example is (11), from a speech by the main leader (‘big man’) of the one of the groups involved at the Kailge compensation event, Kujilyi.

(11) (a) memi kona pe te-ly-meli mel naa te-ki-n
       blood new then do-HAB-3PL like not do-PPR-2SG
       You are not giving as they do when they pay for 'new blood'.

   (b) ya el te-ly-meli plan nyi-ly-meli mel te-ki-n
       here fight do-HAB-3PL plan say-HAB-3PL like do-PPR-2SG
       Here you are giving as they do when making plans to fight. (E54-5)

The distinction Kujilyi is making in these two parallel lines is a fraught one, which is always at issue at events of this kind. For the payment of compensation to allies for battle injuries (‘new blood’) helps to assure good relations between the allied groups, but for that very reason can be perceived by others as threatening, insofar as it shifts the balance of power toward the allied groups, and can be construed as part of a plan to attack others. What is noteworthy here is that Kujilyi does not directly attribute such a motive to the donor group whom he is addressing. Instead, making use of the habitual aspect, the frames his remark in terms of generalizations about how groups *typically* act when they have a particular intention.
In some cases what is attributed is not a definite thought, but a more general state of mind or emotion. The attribution of the relevant psychological states is done not with the nyi-pily-construction, but with emotion descriptors such as boni pily- ‘feel aggrieved (literally: ‘feel a heaviness’)’ for popolu kol- ‘feel angry’, ‘feel resentful’ (lit. ‘die of anger/resentment’). An example of such an attribution using boni pily- occurs in line g of (12), which comes from a speech delivered the special prosodically marked Ku Waru oratorical register known as ‘fight talk’ (el ung).

(12) (a) sirku no-ku-ma
    speargrass eat-PPR-3SG
    Speargrass bites [the feet].

(b) lu-n no-ku-ma
    axe-ERG eat-PPR-3SG
    The axe bites [in warfare].

(c) sirku-n no-ku-ma
    speargrass-ERG eat-PPR-3SG
    Speargrass bites.

(d) kamaya-n no-ku-ma
    cane grass-ERG eat-PPR-3SG
    Cane grass bites.

(e) ilyi-nga te-ki-r ilyi kana-ku-n-i a
    that-GEN do-PPR-1SG this see-PPR-2SG-Q
    That's why I'm doing this [paying compensation to you], you (SG) see?

(f) nu nunu-n pilyi-ki-n a
    you yourself-ERG feel-PPR-2SG
    You yourself are feeling it.

(g) numan-ayl boni pilyi-ki-n o
    mind-DEF heavy feel-PPR-2SG
    Your (SG) mind is heavy (aggrieved).

(h) na nyi-r-im adiyila
    me say/tell-RP-3SG
    He [the Kusika-Midipu] told me so.

With respect to the issues about the locus and discernment of psychological states, several things about this typical passage of el ung oratory are noteworthy. The first is that the person/number categories of Ku Waru are being used with special values which are characteristic of this genre. These are what Merlan and Rumsey (1991) call ‘segmentary person’ values, in which singular forms are used in reference to groups of people – clans, tribes, etc. – with whom the speaker is identified.

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18 This gloss provides only a very rough approximation of the meaning of this cultural very important concept, which is also found among the neighbouring Melpa people, where it is called by the cognate term popokl. For a detailed exegesis of the latter which also pertains to the former, see Strathern (1968).

19 For details of this register and its uses at Ku Waru ceremonial exchange events see Merlan and Rumsey (1991:88-155)
In line e of (12) for example, the first person singular marking on the verb refers not only to the speaker but his whole tribe, the Kubuka, who on the occasion at which he is speaking are presenting a joint payment to the Laulku tribe. Likewise, the second person singular subject of the verb kana-‘see’ is not any particular person but the entire Laulku tribe, or all the members of it who were present among his audience. The entire Laulku tribe is also the referent of the second person singular pronoun nu in line f and of the second person singular subject marker of the verb pilyi- ‘feel’ in lines f and g. Lines a - d refer to hardships that the Laulku allies have suffered in battle, both literally, when treading over the sharp grass on the battlefield and exposing themselves to the enemies’ battle axes, and metaphorically through the figurative association between sharp grass and arrows.

When the speaker Unya says in line e ‘That’s why I’m doing this [paying compensation]’, it is an instance of what John Searle (1995) calls ‘we-intentionality’, the idea being that not just he, but the Kubuka tribe as a whole recognize the hardships that the Laulku have endured, as described in lines a-d, and collectively take responsibility for compensating them. Likewise, when Unya in lines f and g attributes feelings of pain and aggrievement through psychological predicates with second person singular subjects the entailed subject is not any particular individual, but the whole Laulku tribe, which he thereby treats as having suffered jointly.

There were many such attributions at the 1991 compensation event, which took place in line with a standard set of background assumptions about such events. One is that in order to function properly the segmentary groups that take part in these activities, called talapi, must be of ‘one mind’ (numan tilupu), and that this is enabled by the agency of leaders – ‘bigmen’ – such as Unya, the speaker of (13) who at the time was the leading big-man (yi nuim) of his tribe. This way of understanding the matter is given direct expression in the grammar of segmentary person, whereby first, second and third person singular forms are used in such a way as to identify the orating big men with the groups they represent, at once personifying their groups and amplifying their own personae.

Another background understanding is that warfare and wealth exchange are driven by emotions – chief among them anger, empathy, and aggrievement – and that when segmentary groups (talapi) participate as such in these activities the relevant emotions are experienced jointly by their members. Big men give voice to those emotions on behalf of the groups they personify. Likewise they can also discern and respond to the emotions of other groups and the big men who personify them.

More specifically with respect to the emotions involved, it is assumed that groups who come to the aid of others in battle and suffer injuries or deaths as a result are likely to feel angry and aggrieved over it, and must be paid compensation to assuage those feelings, lest the alliance break down and the groups become enemies rather than allies (Merlan and Rumsey 1991, Rumsey 2003, 2009). Similar considerations apply to disputes such as the one discussed in Merlan and Rumsey (1986), where individual plaintiffs and their close kin seek compensation, not so much as a penalty for crimes committed, as to assuage their feelings of anger at the offending party.

Given the set of background assumptions I have described, the other-directed intentional- and emotional state attributions that are made at Ku Waru ceremonial exchange events are generally quite stereotypic ones, as illustrated by both (11) and (12). The main area in which there is room for subtlety and creativity concerns not the emotions and intentions themselves, but the nature and identity of the parties to whom they are attributed. A prominent example of this from the 1983 exchange event occurred in one of the speeches by the leading big-man of the Kopia tribe, Noma. In 20

20 In 1982 when the battle under discussion took place, the weapons used were still bows and arrows, spears and battle axes. For details see (Merlan and Rumsey 1991:48-50, 344-6).
order to understand in what respect it was creative, one needs to know a little more about the conduct of warfare and exchange.

In the discussion so far I have treated the involvement of ‘groups’ in Ku Waru warfare as if it were a clear cut matter. But actually there is often considerable indeterminacy as to the basis on which particular people participate, especially around the edges. For example, in the Marsupial Road War of 1982 there was a clear understanding that the Kopia and Kubuka tribes had participated as such, and had recruited the Laulku tribe to fight as their allies. But just as Kopia and Kubuka are considered ‘paired tribes’, so Laulku has a paired tribe, Mudika. A small number of Mudika men did in fact participate along with Kopia-Kubuka and Laulku. But in virtue of that, did the Mudika tribe as such participate? At the 1983 exchange event it seemed at first as if the operative answer to that question was going to be no, as no compensation payment to Mudika was mooted. But then Noma delivered a dramatic speech in *el ung* style, in which he first announced the payment to Laulka, and then said to them

\[
\text{(13) (a) } \text{nu } \text{ti-d} \text{ kana-pa a} \\
\text{you (SG) give.to-PRF:1SG see-NF:3SG} \\
\text{Seeing that I have given it to you} \\
\text{(b) mudika } \text{kit } \text{pilyi-ba} \\
\text{(tribe name) bad feel-FUT:3SG} \\
\text{The Mudike will feel badly about it} \\
\text{(c) mudika } \text{kasip a} \\
\text{(man’s name)} \\
\text{Mudike Kasipa [man's name]} \\
\text{(d) o-k-un } \text{ilyi-nga ena lyi-ri-n kana-ru-d kanilyi a} \\
\text{come-NF:2-SG this-GEN sun get-RP-2SG see-RP-1SG (for) that} \\
\text{I saw you come here and stay in the sun, and for that} \\
\text{(e) adad ilyi koma le-nsi-ki-r a} \\
\text{hundred this carry put-BEN-PPR-1SG} \\
\text{I'm carrying this hundred for you} \\
\text{(f) ilyi-nga ok lyi o} \\
\text{this-GEN come-NF.2 get:JUS} \\
\text{Come and get it.}
\]

After this speech, when accepting the special payment Kasipa praised Noma for his sensitivity, saying ‘You look with the eyes of a flea and recognize’\(^{22}\). Two things about this are noteworthy in the present context. The first is that this image draws upon the idea I have mentioned above, that the most reliable way to ascertain a person’s state of mind is by observing their actions and bodily symptoms. Among the latter, what is taken to be especially telling is the condition of one’s skin (cf.

\(^{21}\) For the full speech see Merlan and Rumsey (1991:287-8). For a detailed analysis of it see Merlan and Rumsey (1991:147-50).\(^{22}\) For a full transcript of this speech see Merlan and Rumsey (1991:312). For further discussion of the speech in context, see Merlan and Rumsey (1991:147-52).
Strathern 1975 on the neighbouring Melpa)\textsuperscript{23}. To observe a person’s skin from the close-up perspective of a flea on it would be to know their mind very well indeed\textsuperscript{24}.

The second thing to notice about this example is that, for reasons discussed above, it can be seen to involve a judgment on the orator Noma’s part that does not follow in a predetermined way from the apparent facts of the matter. Implicitly addressing the question ‘did the Mudika tribe as such participate in the fight?’, in effect it answers in the affirmative, treating the big man Kasipa as the Mudika tribe’s representative for the purposes of receiving compensation. As discussed in Merlan and Rumsey (1991:147-152) this gambit of Noma’s was part of a carefully crafted attempt to recast the relatively minor compensation payment that was taking place that day into an initiatory payment that would create an obligation on the part of both Mudike and Laulku to enter into a long term exchange relationship with his tribe, Kopia. For this purpose it was important for Noma’s payment to Kasipa not to be seen as one that came in response to any explicit claim made by Kasipa or other Mudika tribesmen, but rather as the result of his ability to discern the hidden thoughts of others.

Let us now turn to a consideration of the status of mental-state attribution at the other public event that is being considered here, the paternity dispute that is transcribed and analyzed in other terms in Merlan and Rumsey (1986). As noted above, in this dispute as in the compensation event, questions regarding the participants’ states of mind are highly pertinent to what is going on, and implicated in much of the discussion. In the dispute the main question of that kind is whether the woman who is at the center of it, Sumuyl, is telling the truth when she denies having slept with anyone besides her husband over the course of several months, during which she has been living mainly apart from him and has nonetheless become pregnant. And if she was not, who was the genitor whose identity she was concealing?

A big difference between the two events is in the relative social status of the interacting parties. In the exchange event, in keeping with the protocols for such events, there is a presumption of parity or ‘equivalence’ among the transacting, male-centered segmentary entities (Merlan and Rumsey 1991:205-9; cf. Read 1959). By contrast, in the dispute\textsuperscript{25} there is a conspicuous disparity between the accused and her accuser, in three respects. First, there is the usual asymmetry that obtains between people who are being interrogated and those are interrogating them, whereby the latter are given wide scope for questioning the former but not vice versa. Second, in ways that I cannot go into here\textsuperscript{26}, as a woman, the defendant Sumuyl is subject to more demeaning and coercive forms of

\textsuperscript{23} Compare also Strathern and Stewart (1998:44-5).

\textsuperscript{24} When I read out the Ku Waru original of this line of Kasipa’s to my Ku Waru friend John Onga in 2007 and asked him to explain it in English he said: ‘It’s like reading someone’s mind; sometimes we can do that. Not often, but sometimes’.

\textsuperscript{25} This dispute opened as a more-or-less customary moot, which was conducted outdoors, in a clearing next to the thatched hut that then served as the venue for the local ‘Village Court’. Later on the proceedings were shifted into that building, were they were treated as a Village Court hearing. Established under the Village Court Act of 1973, the Village Courts were intended to ‘ensure peace and harmony …by mediating in and endeavoring to obtain just and amicable settlements of disputes’ (Village Court Act, Paragraph 16). However, the court does have ‘compulsive’ jurisdiction and is entitled to impose fines, award compensation or damages, and enforce its decisions within the limits of its jurisdiction. The courts are presided over by elected Village Court Magistrates. At least within the Ku Waru region, the disputes that end up as Village Court cases tend to be aired first as informal moots, often conducted by the magistrates in an unofficial capacity, as happened in this case considered here. For further details of this case and of the Village Court system as it operates within the region, see Merlan and Rumsey (1986).

\textsuperscript{26} For details and examples see Merlan and Rumsey (1986). For a detailed study of the similarly coercive style of questioning of women by men in moots and village court cases among the nearby Huli people about 100 miles to the west see Goldman (1986), (1988). For a perceptive and vivid account of similar practices toward women in moots among the Melpa immediately to the east see M. Strathern (1972).
questioning than male defendants generally are. Third, unlike in the exchange event, where orators were speaking on behalf of groups whose backing is presupposed, in this particular case the defendant Sumuyl is backed by no one − not even her own father, who says that she has always deceived him (D1428, D1434). There a strong presumption by all the parties that she is lying when she denies having slept with anyone besides her husband27. But interestingly, notwithstanding all of the above, in the paternity dispute there is only one instance of a particular thought being attributed to Sumuyl. It is shown in 14.

(14) ung akiyl nu ol somongu naa nu-ru-d nyik pilyi-n-i
talk that you saliva not consume-RP-1SG say hear-PRF:1SG-Q
Do you think of that talk "I didn't swallow saliva"?

Like 9 and 10 above this sentence makes use of a serial verb construction which combines the roots nyi- ‘say’ and pilyi- ‘hear’ to mean ‘think’. As can be seen, even this example does not involve a definite attribution of a thought, but rather a question − in this case a rhetorical question framed in terms of an idiom of ‘swallowing saliva’, the force of which is to strongly suggest that Sumuyl thinks she can evade the charges that have been made against her. But the really striking thing about this material is the rarity with which any such attributions occur with second person subjects, even when Sumuyl is the addressee. In that respect the material from the paternity dispute is similar to that from the intergroup exchange event, notwithstanding its other considerable differences. This can be seen from tables 1 and 2, where the disproportionately low number of second person subjects in such attributions is similar as between the two events.

The main way in which the paternity dispute differs from the exchange event in this respect is not in incidence of actual attributions, but in the fact that in the paternity dispute the idea of mental opacity gets explicitly thematized in metapragmatic discourse. This is done though the use, by three different speakers, of a trope in which people’s thoughts are likened to the soft inner pulp of a tree that remains concealed beneath the bark and outer layers of wood. It is repeatedly pointed out that no human, but only God can see into that inner core of the tree, and that the same way only God can see into the hearts and minds of people who hide them from each other as the defendant Sumuyl is taken to be doing (D953, 955, 1370-8, D161-2).

5. Conclusions

In §2-4 I have examined the pragmatics of thought-attribution and associated metapragmatic discourse in three areas of Ku Waru social life: interaction between young children and their parents and older siblings, a ceremonial exchange event between tribes, and a publicly aired, multi-party dispute. In conclusion, I will draw these differing kinds of examples together and relate them to the issues introduced in §1.

First let us return to the summary statement quoted there from Merlan and Rumsey (1991:225), that Ku Waru people ‘bring to social interaction the pervasive assumption that actions (including talk) of others do not truly reflect their intentions, but may be intended to deceive’, and that ‘preparedness for the possibility of deceit may be instilled early by [the] common … use of it in attempts to secure

27 One of the main reasons for this is that in the local understanding of procreation, for a child to form within the womb it takes many acts of copulation over several months in order to stop the flow of menstrual blood and build up the foetus. The husband says that he and the defendant Moni have had sex approximately three times during the period when she has been living apart from him, and she says approximately six times. But in the local view even six acts of copulation would not suffice to bring her to the stage of pregnancy that she is in. For further details Merlan and Rumsey (1986).
children’s cooperation’ (226). The evidence presented in examples 1-5 and the discussion of the paternity dispute in §4 certainly bears out the latter point, and the more general one that Ku Waru people are very attentive to the possibility that others’ actions ‘may be intended to deceive’. But much of the other evidence presented in §2-4 (along with that from Rumsey 2008 cited in §1) shows that Merlan and I oversimplified in suggesting that Ku Waru people invariably assume that ‘actions (including talk) of others do not truly reflect their intentions’.

This is most obvious in the videoed interaction discussed in §3, which, as we have seen, is full of examples of non-verbal displays of intention followed by appropriate responses from the addressed parties, and of coordinated action among them which presupposes ongoing understanding and sharing of intentionality. The same is true of all the interactions involving speech in §2-4, insofar as they involve at a basic level, an assumption by the interacting parties of a mutual intention to communicate, and to be taken by their interlocutors to be operating in terms of such an assumption. Note that this does not presuppose an intention to communicate truthfully. For deception too is a form of communication – of something which the speaker knows to be false. Indeed an essential attribute of the lie is that it be intentional, i.e., not that it be untrue, but that the speaker believes it to be untrue and is offering it with the intention of deceiving the addressee. That being the case we can see that Ku Waru people’s constant concern with the possibility of deceit in their dealings with others does not by any means entail a correspondingly diminished interest in discerning the intentions of their interlocutors. On the contrary it increases the premium placed on such discernment, since deceit necessarily entails an intention to deceive.

Furthermore, as shown by some of the data in §2, even acts of deception can sometimes provide evidence for shared intentionality in one respect, namely, with respect to the intention to deceive. This can be seen for example in 1 and 2. Recall that both of these examples were first introduced as instances of deception or ‘trickery’, the mooted trips to Kailge and Mount Hagen having not being proposed seriously, but rather, to get Alex to stop crying and to get Mawa’s attention. But from the discussion in §3 of those examples as complex, doubly triadic engagements we can see that deception is not all that is involved. The deception is confined to the embedded interactional frames involving Jesi+Alex in example 1 Laplin+Mawa in example 2. Within the outer, encompassing frames involving Wapi+Jesi and Taka+Laplin respectively there is no deception, but rather a sharing of intention between the interlocutors with respect to a proposed scenario involving the duped third parties Alex and Mawa respectively.

A related point that is illustrated by both of these examples (1 and 2) is one that is axiomatic to the work by Humphrey (1976) and others on ‘Machiavellian intelligence’, namely that deception – no less than empathy or valid intersubjective communication – presupposes an accurate understanding of other people’s minds and bodily dispositions. That is why humans are so good at it. For we are nature’s intention-discerners par excellence. This is enabled not only by species-specific, innate capacities, but also by people’s common grounding in shared life worlds, including for example in the Ku Waru case, forms of hearth-centered sociality shown in the video clip of baby Josefin, and a finely differentiated landscape of known places such as Kailge and Mount Hagen, and of foods such

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28 Grice (1957) has of course argued that this is a basic feature of human communication as ‘non-natural meaning’, an argument which has been extensively developed by speech act theorists such as Levinson (2000) and Sperber and Wilson (1986), and critiqued by linguistic anthropologists as discussed in §1. For present purposes I leave aside the question of the universal validity of such an account, and present this generalization as one that is based on my understanding of the Ku Waru examples discussed in this paper on the basis of my extensive discussions of them with Ku Waru people.

29 Again, I would not offer this definition of the lie as universal, or as one that corresponds to a concept that is found in all societies. Indeed, it appears not to be found among the Mopan Maya, among whom the speaker of an untruth is regarded as morally culpable even if he/she believes it to be true (Danziger 2010). This is not the case among Ku Waru people, for whom the concept of gol includes as a definitional feature the intention to deceive.
as sweet potatoes and Cheesepops, and a set of common expectations about people’s attitudes toward them.

Given all the above, what are we to make of Ku Waru people’s frequent, apparently contrary claims to the effect that people’s minds are opaque to one another? Are they merely a kind of ideological smokescreen that bears no relation to anything else that Ku Waru people do in practice? The evidence discussed in this article suggests otherwise. First, the opacity doctrine is consistent with some of the things they do, including the sometimes quite harsh-seeming ‘tricks’ *(gol)* they play on children, as part of a pedagogy of deceit; and the avoidance of direct thought attribution to others that we saw in §4. Second, although the doctrine is phrased in categorical terms, the contexts in which it is actually invoked tend to be quite restricted, to ones in which people would be expected to have reasons for practicing deception. For example, it did not come up at all in the 1850 lines of speeches from the exchange event discussed in §4, where no such reasons were in play, whereas during the paternity dispute, in keeping with the general mistrust of the defendant and the presumed motive she would have for denying her suspected adultery, the opacity doctrine was invoked several times (as discussed at the end §4).

This paper opened with a discussion of anthropological critiques of speech act theory that had faulted it for overplaying the importance of intentions in human interaction – one of them by Alessandro Duranti. I then discussed Duranti’s recent reconsideration of his views, involving a revaluation of intentionality as theorized differently by Edmund Husserl. I then turned to a consideration of intentions and intention-discernment in interaction in the Ku Waru region, and their relation to Ku Waru metapragmatic discourse concerning the opacity of other minds. Like Duranti I found the role of intentionality to be of fundamental importance in the interactions I have examined, and in a complex relation to the discourse of mental opacity. But also in common with Duranti I would not want to be read as advocating a simple return to speech act theory as the most adequate account of what goes on in human interaction. What I find inadequate about it is the way in which it locates intentions in the minds or brains of individuals and sees communication as a matter of creating bridges between or among those minds.

To see what is wrong with this let us reconsider the largely non-linguistic interaction involving baby Josefin in §3, compare it with the interactions in §2 and ask, what difference does language make? For one, it allows for a far greater complexity in the interactional processes through which intentions are shared. For example it allows not only for processes of triadic engagement of the kind discussed in §3, but also for complex interactions between them, of the kind known to post-Goffmanian interactional analysis as ‘lamination’ (Goffman 1974). This can already be seen within the space of a single line in 1a, where the imperative verb *nya* belongs to what Goffman would have called the ‘outermost’ frame, in which Wapi is speaking to Jesi, telling him what to say to his brother Alex. That imperative verb of saying frames the locution *ana kola ne ti-o* ‘Brother, don’t cry’, which Jesi then repeats in 1b as he is told to do. As a result, within 1b a complex intention is expressed which is not Wapi’s or Jesi’s alone, but a composite one, which can still be identified with Wapi as its originator, but with which Jesi has identified himself through what he says in 1b, an utterance which is positioned both as a response to Wapi and as a directive to Alex (which is later re-voiced in Jesi’s own words in 1j). With respect to example 2, similar considerations apply to lines 2c–2d, in which, as discussed in §3, Taka presents Laplin a model of what, in order to get Mawa’s attention, he can assume will be an alluring prospect for him, in effect drawing Laplin into that model through his response in line 2d.

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30 I exclude here the relatively anomalous context of discussion with anthropologists.
In short, as shown in a basic form by these simple examples involving young children, a big difference that language makes is in the way it allows for the diffusion of intentionality across the space of interaction and beyond. As Bakhtin (1981:294) put it ‘Language is …something that comes to us populated with the intentions of others’. This too is something that is refracted in Ku Waru metapragmatic discourse, to the effect that people can have ‘many minds’ (numan ausiyl) due to the influence of multiple others (Rumsey 1986:287-8, Merlan and Rumsey 1991: 227), and that a speaker is not necessarily the final arbiter of the meaning or force of his/her own words, for which the addressee can often be held responsible to an equal or even greater degree (Rumsey 1986:288-9, Merlan and Rumsey 1991: 108-9; cf. Robbins 2001). In other words, Ku Waru ‘language ideology’ in some respects provides a more adequate account of interactional discourse pragmatics tout court than does speech act theory. Though I do not have the space to develop it here, a fuller understanding of the former – and of its dialectical relationship to the aspects of Ku Waru discourse pragmatics that I have examined in this article – would require a full examination of other Ku Waru metapragmatic discourses besides the one of mental opacity, and of the contexts in which they are deployed.

References


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31 For more complex examples involving adult speakers see Rumsey 2010b:114-22.


Rumsey, A. 2010a. ‘Optional’ ergativity and the framing of reported speech. Lingua 120, 1652–1676.


Abbreviations and symbols not included in the Leipzig Glossing Rules (for others see http://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resources/glossing-rules.php)

CTV continuative  
HAB habitual  
HRT hortative  
IDF indefinite  
JUS jussive  
NF non-final verb  
NSG non-singular  
OPT optative  
Q question  
PPR present progressive  
RP remote past