

I think it is clear that the structure of prayers encapsulates the structure of greeting and news-giving, as far as this is possible when one of the two parties involved is silent.⁴ The interchange is still basically between two persons: the host, acting on behalf of the entire human assembly, and the super-natural guests. (No single being is singled out as their spokesman or representative, although a particular prayer may lay more emphasis on the invocation of, e. g., the supreme deity, or a particular ancestor.) The invocation section of the prayer corresponds to the greeting (*gamɔ* plus *flamɔ*) between humans, greeting each super-human person in turn as humans do in greeting, while the explication section including supplication corresponds to the news-exchange speeches. The re-invocation towards the end of the prayer echoes the repeated returning of greetings among humans. The performance of two prayers also echoes the paired sets of speech acts between humans. As with greetings, the invocation of the second prayer repeats the first except in minor details. Since the supernatural beings do not give their own side of the "news," the explication section of the second prayer also tends to be very similar to that of the first. The speaker may reserve some details of the situation for the second prayer, or describe it from a slightly different aspect, and vary the blessing or curse requested.

We can say then that the proceedings move from greetings between humans to greetings between humans and super-humans, and we can integrate the entire verbal performance with the presentations of drink into a single structure, as in Figure 2.

Just as the major concern of human greeting and news-giving is the integration of each individual into the group in an explicit manner, so the prayer-giver explicitly integrates the super-human aspect of society into the group. This has already been anticipated, at the very outset of the greeting procedure, when host and visitor identify each other with their respective ancestors by using a formal appellation (Daku-

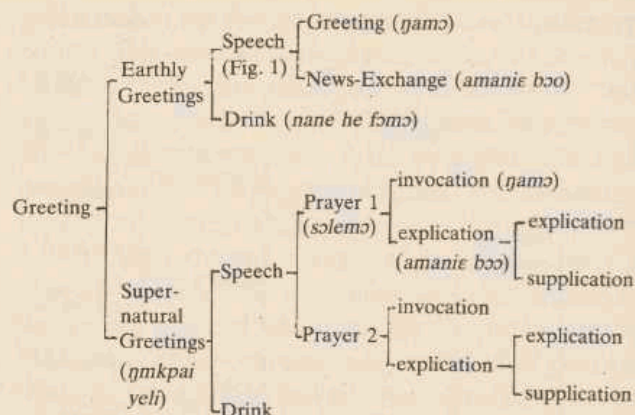


Figure 2

bu 1981: 115). In prayer, these beings are assured that none of them are being left out, in invocation phrases like *Atsee moko ashiii moko* "They don't call someone and leave someone (else) out." That is, no one, that is, no deity or spirit and especially no ancestor, is being slighted, and nothing is being done behind anyone's back. The idea is amplified in the following (from the Nai Wulomo) where the speaker pleads ignorance and his weakness compared to the power of the beings invoked, lest any one of them suspect underhand dealing:

Gbeke ko ji mi
Ke mi naa fufɔ sa
Milée gmaa kulibii ayibo
Ni male nye yi abɔ
Nye blublu mitse
Mitsee moko ni mashi moko

I am only a child
 With the smell of milk on my mouth
 I don't know the number of millet grains
 To know the number of your people
 I call every one of you
 I don't call one to leave one out.

Like the humans, the superhuman visitors are assured of the host's good intentions and the absence of danger:

Wohiee daa nee ye esha ko he
 We don't hold this drink for any bad reason

Like *amanie bɔɔ*, the explication section serves the same purpose, but since these are super-humans being addressed it also gives the

⁴ Structural, linguistic, and thematic parallels between greeting plus news-giving and prayer are further discussed in Dakubu 1981: Chap. 4/5.