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Categorical Gender Myths in Native America: Gender Deictics in Lakhota

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This paper questions the existence of distinctions which are solely based on the gender of the speaker or hearer in Native American languages. An analysis of conversations from field work conducted in Pine Ridge, South Dakota and the texts of Ella Deloria reveals that the gender deictics of Lakhota indicate more than the "sex" of the speaker. Certain deictics have prototypical associations such as nurturance *for clitics typically used by women or* authority *for those used by men. However, both male and female speakers sometimes use the deictics which are considered appropriate to the other sex. Given that both sexes sometimes use the same gender deictics and that the deictics accomplish more than indicating the gender of the speaker, the existence of "categorical gender" is dubious. I propose an analysis following Hanks (1993) which recognizes both the validity of native speaker metapragmatic judgments of "appropriately" gendered speech and contextual deviation. By recognizing a distinction between schematic prototypes or* frames *versus their implementation in context (*framework*) for Lakhota, the debate concerning the presence of true categorical gender distinctions in Native American languages such as Koasati, Atsina, and Yana can be resolved. A simple description of categorical gender for these languages is improbable.*

INTRODUCTION

Native American languages such as Koasati (Muskogean family), Atsina (Algonquian), and Yana (Hokan) have long been cited in the linguistic literature and introductory language textbooks as possessing categorical gender distinctions, where there is isomorphism between a form in the linguistic system and the gender of the speaker or hearer (Bodine, 1975; Bonvillain, 1993; Flannery, 1946; Haas, 1944; Sapir, 1949). The aim of this paper is to reinterpret the myth of categorical gender in various Native American languages as it is espoused in many linguistic sources. By establishing the difference between schematic prototypes (frames) of the gendered clitics of Lakhota versus their implementation in specific contexts

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(frameworks) and through an examination of the gender anomalies which occur in several languages which were previously thought to display categorical gender, I show that it is unlikely that 'sex exclusive' gender systems as previously defined operate in any language.

I focus on the system of gender clitics in the Siouan language, Lakhota, primarily because sufficient information about the gendered speech system in Lakhota can still be obtained. Of all the Native American languages which have traditionally been cited as having categorical gender, Lakhota is one of the few that has a significant number of speakers (over 15,000) and is therefore still viable (Kinkade, 1991). Although linguists have noted gender anomalies in Koasati (less than 200 speakers), Yana (no speakers) and Atsina (less than 10 speakers), they have only done so in passing. A more thorough examination of these is impossible for several reasons:

a. In obsolescing languages, the use of phonological, lexical, and grammatical indicators of distinct social categories is often lost through acculturation in a society that no longer retains social autonomy.

b. It is difficult to ascertain the extent to which dialect variation plays a role as researchers question the validity of gendered speech accounts of the past. Because claims for the existence of gendered forms vary a great deal from dialect to dialect, this may cause misinterpretation in languages for which there is little dialect information from an earlier period.[1]

c. Speakers who have acquired dying languages may have done so under restricted circumstances, e.g., male speakers may have only learned the language from females, such as grandmothers, who primarily used the female forms.

d. With so few speakers, it is difficult to ascertain if gender usage is related to conversational context and status of participants, when there are so few contexts in which native speakers of the language converse.

e. Through the examination of the historical records of the language little can be determined, for much of the elicited speech was in the form of folktales or historical narrative in which the speech of the participants in these events was often idealized according to stereotypic norms.

However, the historical records of Lakhota are unusually thorough because the native speaker and linguist Ella Deloria had the foresight to record conversations in which she took part in the 1930s and 1950s, giving minute descriptions of participant relationships and overall context.

Lakhota Typical Gender

The speech of males and females in Lakhota generally varies in several respects: in pitch, degree of nasality, choice of interjections and in the use of sentence-final clitics. These optional post-verbal clitics express the illocutionary force of the utterance and differ according to the sociological gender of the speaker, gender being the association of the sexual categories

of male and female with expected sociocultural patterns of behavior. Linguists such as Buechel (1939), Boas and Deloria (1941) and Rood and Taylor (to appear) have all noted that certain clitics in Lakhota apparently change in relation to the sex of the speaker (see Table 1 below).[2]

Table 1. Lakhota Clitics

Illocutionary/ Affective force	Male	Female
formal question	hų̨wo	hų̨we (obsolete)
command	yo	ye
familiar command	yet^{h}o	nit^{h}o
opinion/emphasis	yelo	yele, ye
emphatic statement	kʃt	kʃto
entreaty	ye	na
surprise/opinion	yewą̨	yemą̨

In addition to the illocutionary force of the utterance, these clitics quite often serve to express the affective force or the speaker's emotional state. Hence, the choice to use a specific clitic has the effect of locating the attitude/force/gender/state of mind of the speaker in relation to the utterance, creating a social or discourse deictic effect (Fillmore, 1975; Levinson, 1983; Anderson & Keenan, 1985). These prototypical connotations of affective state for the clitics are best represented by examples from folktales in which the speaker attributes stereotypically gendered speech to the character in the narrative to clearly illustrate his/her role in the plot.

For instance, *yele*, which is conventionally associated with the speech of a woman also carries a sort of maternal or nurturance quality in its prototypical usage when a woman is speaking to children or someone she cares for as in examples (1) and (2) below. In example (1), the woman is portrayed as overly-concerned for her husband's welfare. She is sweet-talking him deceivingly by using low-tones and *yele* to express her exaggerated womanly position of concern, and in (2) a grandmother is expressing her concern and relief at finding her twin grandsons safe after a *t^{h}ipi* fire.

1. wanítuk^{h}a **yele**.
   you:weary **female:assertion**.

   'How tired you must be,' (Deloria, 1937)

2. Hiṅ̨ú, ṵʃika micʰ̨kʃi tohi̧ni
Well, poor my:son always

oʃótamakit'apila tkʰa
smoke:by means of:die:pl:diminutive almost

yelé:!
female:assertion

'Well, did my poor little sons almost choke to death from the smoke,' (Deloria, 1932)

In contrast, the clitic *yelo*, conventionally associated with a male statement or opinion, implies a certain degree of masculine authority, especially when used by an elder male delivering a final opinion. Example (3) illustrates this as an eighty-year-old male concludes a long description of what it is to be a Lakhota 'Indian' or *waʃicu* 'white,' implying his unquestionable authority to decide these matters. In (4), the same man is indicating by the rising-falling tone and elongation of the vowel that something is just occuring to him and by *yelo* that he considers it to be fact. In fact, he establishes authority on this matter by using *yelo*.

3. Ho hená yą̨ke ki̧, hená é **yelo**.
sentence starter those sit the, this is **male:assertion**

Ho cʰaʃ lé táku ilúkca.
sentence starter so this whatever you:think.

'My listeners, this is the way it is; this is
the truth no matter what you think.'

4. ú̧gna tʰóka hé. hel maxpiya ó
Maybe first that. that (Red) Cloud's in

ówicʰaya eta̧... Oha̧ héhé u
generation from.... Yes male:interjection comes

welô...
male:assertion...

'Maybe that's where it first came from—Red Cloud's generation. Yes, that's where it came from.'

People can flout these implied meanings especially in a joking context or relationship. By using *yele* in example (5), the woman exploits maternal concern to show irony as she supposedly doubts Vine Deloria Sr.'s ability to deliver a decent speech in Washington, D.C. She is in a joking, in-law relationship with Deloria Sr.; he is older than she, and for these reasons an interpretation of real maternal concern and nurturance would be improbable. A similar effect is achieved in (6) as the woman insults herself, but makes it a joke by using the emphatic female form *kʃto*. This is akin to the English 'I'm disgusting.'

5. ʃiké, ehąni eʃaʃ wąʒí owáwa nąˌ yuha
poor:one earlier why:not one I:write and have

yewákʰiyelaʃni. tókʰeʃkʰe yuhélhel
I:sent:him:not how bewildered

naʒiktele!
stand:potential:**female assertion!**

'Poor thing, why didn't I write a speech to take along. How pitifully he will grope about for something to say' (Deloria, 1956).

6. cʰa lé hokʃí-ųzektepi eyápi kį
So this child-anus:killed say:pl the

hémacʰa **kiʃto!**
I:that:kind **female:emphasis!**

'I am the sort that is called rectum-killed!' (Deloria, ca. 1937)

Note that in several of these cases, stress, tone, and elongation of the vowel in the clitic play an important role in contributing to the affective effect intended by the speaker. In fact, according to Deloria (1974) in her *Dakota Texts*,

> The particle 'ye' at the close of a request signifies a petition, but even without it, the tone of the voice in which a request is spoken is the determining factor (p. 122: note 3).

The basic meaning of several of the clitics may be modified or intensified depending on the tone and stress with which they are uttered. For instance, a speaker who strongly stresses *yelo* may indicate that this particular clitic no longer is a statement, but carries the force of an

imperative. Consequently, the use of the clitics can be highly individualized depending upon the speaker's personality or emotional state.

In conclusion, there do seem to be restrictions on the possible kinds of affective states expressed by speakers as they adhere to the rule of 'men use *yelo*; women use *yele*.' Of course, not all people in every situation adhere to these restrictions, and not all males have the authority in the society to consistently utter authoritative opinions. A drunk or derelict might be laughed at if he spoke in this way. But, would the same happen to an authoritative woman? I take up this question in the next section.

Lakhota Atypically Gendered Speech

There are clear exceptions to the strict sexual divison of male-female clitic use. These anomalies can best be explained by the social position of the speaker in relation to the speech event, the relative age of the addressee, or the supposed sexual preference of the speaker--the same factors which appear to govern the regular usage of the clitics. During the remainder of this discussion, I will focus on the clitics *yelo, ye, kʃto, yele,* and the absence of clitics to illustrate the influence of linguistic and social contexts on clitic usage.

Situation 1: Relative age of addressee

If the addressee is much younger than the speaker, or is a child, or if the speaker wants to assert that the addressee and he share an emotional tie of a child and parent, a male may possibly use female clitics. In example (7), a man sees his two-year-old nephew who he was not expecting at his house that evening and he calls to the child:

7.	Wąlewą	hiyu	**wele**:.
	male:interjection:surprise	he:came	**female:assertion**.

'Look who's come!'

The use of the female clitic in this sentence does two things: A) With the elongated falling intonation on *le*, the speaker is indicating that something has occurred to him that is new; B) By imitating what a woman might say (women being perceived as experienced in the ways they speak to small children), the speaker is indicating a closeness to the boy.

Consequently, the male use of 'female' speech is an acknowledgement of an affective relationship between the speaker and the addressee. The speaker implements 'female' speech to show this relationship in the context rather than asserting, 'I am a female speaking.' A possible analysis in this instance is that the speaker is deictically projecting the sphere of 'female'

speech in the same way he would when quoting a female speaker, so that the male speaker in example (7) is actually articulating what a female speaker might be supposed to say in order to represent himself and his relationship with the addressee as close or even semi-maternal.[3] Thus, deictic projection or shift of the deictic center from that of the speaker's place, time, social status, or gender to that of an implied other, effectively creates a new point of view for the speaker without forcing him to claim the female affective qualities as part of his central gender voice.

Yet a shift in the point of view or pure deictic projection is not always a satisfactory explanation of male use of female clitics as we shall see in the situations below, where context and content of utterance influence clitic use.

Situation 2: Social position of speaker in relation to the speech event: Context of utterance

The following utterance occurred as an 80-year-old man was extolling the virtues of past generations in order to coerce the younger addressee to live up to his present expectations. (Speaker B is not the addressee.)

8. A: Honá hé tʰąʃi A--- wąyeya kʰili
sentence starter that male:cousin A--- holy really

kʃto.
female:emphatic

B: líːla upʰikpʰiya wóglake
very nicely he:spoke

A: Líːla wąʔųspe. Líːla lakʰota
Very educated. Very Lakhota

wawókiya hecʰa.
to:take:up:for:someone that:kind.

A: 'That male cousin A--- was a really good/holy man.
B: He spoke very nicely.
A: He was very educated. He was very Lakhota (in that) he was the kind to take up for someone.'

The male speaker here uses the emphatic female *kʃto* describing the great ability of a man who is now dead. This is indeed an emphatic usage, but it is unclear why this speaker used *kʃto* instead of *kʃt*, the male emphatic. There are several possible explanations. First of all, this may be the form *ųʃto*, described in Boas and Deloria (1941), which is used in talking about

the past or how things used to be, and which they believe to be related to *kʃto*. Yet according to one native speaker, the old man uses *kʃto* because the person he is speaking of is dead and can no longer defend himself. Defense of the stated character of the dead person in the face of any possible criticism is a possible explanation for making the statement essentially even more emphatic by voicing the final vowel, despite the fact that this is the 'woman's' clitic. The additional emphasis makes this man's character untouchable. The emphasis may also be reflective of the speaker's affective state, as he was angry when embarking upon his exhortation to the younger speaker, and finally, he may just have been attempting to get the younger male's full attention to emphasize the importance of what he was saying.

Of course, the use of an emphatic clitic or even a normal male opinion clitic depends to a certain extent on the addressee or the audience, those people who are not directly being addressed, but might be listening. For example, a fifty-year-old man avoided any use of male *yelo* conclusion opinion particles at all, ending most of his statements in *pi* 'plural' even when he was clearly giving opinions of things that personally affected him. His father was surreptitiously listening the entire time he spoke so he most likely did not commit himself in deference to his father or fear of being overtly challenged.

A similar illustration is of a man in his sixties speaking to a nephew in his forties, and stating his opinion about a very important matter which had for over an hour been the topic of conversation: Christian versus Native religion. After the speaker had compared the religions of those around him, talked about a specific medicine bundle and its history, and approached the question of proper religion in several ways, he concludes:

9. Ho, héc^{h}iya tąhą į: tok^{h}įʃ miʃ'eya lé
there from (pause) carelessly me:too this

imáyalų$_{Y}$e kį...
you:asked:me the

Hel į: lak^{h}ota woc^{h}ekiye ų$_{Y}$naʒįkta
There (pause) lakhota prayer dual:stand:potential

kec^{h}ąmi? eyaʃ hec^{h}ųpi s'e. į:...
I:think but:then do:plural like. (pause)

'There (all that information referring to preceding monologue) from just a careless question. In my understanding, you and I should stand with Lakhota prayer/ritual or do something like they did.'

When finally giving his concluding opinion after speaking from personal knowledge, he doesn't use a typical male (*yelo*) clitic, but ends with a glottal stop. His opinion is not authoritative but purely personal, (*kecʰąmi* 'I think'). There are two possible reasons for this: A) It reveals the personality of this quiet, reserved speaker who can go for days without saying anything; B) It reflects the present audience, a rather dominant woman who might disagree with him. His assertions are therefore never authoritative through the use of clitics, but rather the opposite as the examples in (10) show:

10 a. hecʰụpi s'e eya **awábleze.**
do:plural like (filler) **I:understand.**

'In the same way they did, I understand.'

b. kị hé é **nacʰéce**
the this is probably

'Probably this is theirs.'

c. kaʔụʃiiʔc'iya ụpi yapi
humble:reflexive:causative be:plural go:plural

ʃece
dubitative:statement

'They humbled themselves to go there maybe.'

If the speaker wishes to assert something, it is done with a verb such as *awábleze* 'I understand' or *kecʰąmi* 'I think.'

In addition to the two factors already mentioned, personality and audience, it must be noted that the speakers, a married couple, have not completely forgotten the existence of the tape-recorder as they comment that they cannot begin a verbal fight because it will be recorded. This aspect of the speech event likely affects the extent to which this male speaker wants to commit to the factual content of his assertions as he speaks about a personal and individual subject: religion.

Situation 3: Sexual preference of speaker

In the anomolous situations above, men use women's clitics or no clitics at all based upon the speech event. The question arises, in what kinds of contexts might women use male clitics, or are there no examples of this because men have more freedom to break the norms of clitic use? Both

female and male speakers regularly quote the speech of others, assuming the voice and perspective of the original speaker, but the gendered clitics in these instances serve to attribute the originality of the content to another author, rather than to establish the animator's gender.

11. oyate nilakʰotapikta hécina taku eyápikte
people you:lakhota:pl:potential if what say:pl:potential

kį henáecʰąl ecʰanųpi
the these in:like:way do:plural

yelo eyɑ keye
male:assertion he:said that:say

'If you want to be lakhota people, these things they say, you will do, he said, that is said.'

Here the clitic *yelo* derives its meaning from a stereotypic attribution of gender, expressing the illocutionary force of a statement. The holy man who originally asserted his authority (in this case, about the proper procedure for ritually killing a dog) might not have used a gendered clitic or may have used a clitic which did not imply authority. But, this description of the holy man's frustration at the improper ceremonial procedures of the modern day is embedded in a group of anecdotes of a female speaker, whose point concerning the irresponsibility of the younger generations is reinforced by the attribution of an authoritative proclamation to the medicine man. She can do this without expressing her own authoritative speech or assuming the gender qualities of a male speaker.

However, some women do use male speech in their primary voice, and this implies a certain masculinity, just as an over-use of *ye* by men would show effeminacy. When hearing a brother's assertion that "men say *yo*, and women say *ye*," a female in her forties immediately asserted, "Yeah, well I say *yo* and *yelo*, but I'm not gay. It's just all of these brothers." Another female speaker who used the male clitics regularly was considered by some to be gay, referred to as a 'tomboy' by one speaker, and as a 'dyke' or 'that woman with balls' by another. These two women shared several qualities beyond their speech. They both grew up with a number of brothers and few or no sisters, and they both were in positions of public authority: one was a judge, the other a police officer.

The contrast in usage of the 'female' and 'male' clitics at first glance fits into a pattern of authority (public and male) gender versus that of maternity (private and female). It appears that the male clitics do stress the authority of a person to speak about certain topics, and such authority may be indicative of the masculine gender. This works well with Ochs' claim

that phonological or morphological indicators of gender are constitutive in that "linguistic features may index social meanings, stances, social acts, social activities, which in turn helps to constitute gender meanings" (1991, p. 341). For instance, according to Ochs, the use of the particle *ze* (male) in Japanese coarsely intensifies an utterance, whereas *wa* (female) gently intensifies it. The speakers' associations of a certain affective quality with a specific gender leads them to use these particles or clitics differently.

Although this line of thinking may be explanatory of the authoritative female and male use of *yo* and *yelo* and the male's use of *yele*, it does not adequately account for the males use of the very emphatic *kʃto*. And, the dichotomy of authority/maternity as endemic of separate gender categories is too stereotypical for Lakhota as it also implies that the female gendered clitics carry no authority. This is simply not the case as example (12) illustrates. In this situation, a woman is uncertain about the propriety of her singing in public with a man during the year she is mourning. Her older sister-in-law gives her permission (*ye*), states an opinion (*ye*), orders her to sing (*ye*) and then gives her final opinion (*ye*) about the matter which invites no further discussion:

12. lową **ye**. Ho niwaʃte
sing **female:permission**. Voice you:good

ye... ehąni
opinion/fact for a long time

kicʰí waʔú yųkʰą kicʰí walówą.
w/her I:was and w/her I:sang.

Miye eyaʃ walówą owákihiʃni. Wana
me but I:sing I:able:negative. Now

loté kį maʃice k'ų. Cʰa lową **yé**!
throat the I:bad past:article. So sing **command**

Ho kį wą waʃte luha **ye**:.
voice the complementizer good you:have **fact/opinion**

'Sing! You have a good voice. For a long time, we've been associated, and sung together, but I'm not able to sing. Now my throat is bad, so sing! You have a good voice.'

The authority in this particular example is of a private nature (an older sister's authority over a younger one) and one may therefore be tempted to divide the authority of men and women into that of two different spheres:

public versus private authority, which is why women in positions of public authority such as the police officer and the judge would be tempted to use male speech. Yet according to Medicine (1987), women have long held the ability to speak in the same spheres as men, and according to Powers (1986) it is the very quality of their maternity (ability to remain unmoved by public opinion, just as when dealing with children) which permits them to succeed in areas such as judgeships. In (12) too, the private authority of an older sister has public repercussions, and in a society in which extended family relationships are still important, and women are in professional positions, the distinction between what is public or private becomes blurred. Consequently, this division is problematic, though there are areas such as child rearing and socialization where women apparently have more influence.

The exceptions to the rules of gendered clitics may reveal speakers' expected social roles for males and females in a stereotypic schema of the society. However, it is clearly difficult to generalize the meaning of these affective and social connotations as the use of the clitics is dependent upon the age of the speaker and addressee, their kinship relation, knowledge of the language, social stance, and the perception of a third party (audience) in addition to the content of the utterance and affective disposition of the speaker in the speech event. Frustrating as it may seem, an operative scheme of gender deixis in Lakhota would necessarily require projection of gender as a socially deictic category, and therefore the particles which index gender must be interpreted in the overall ground of the speech event, which one can see is constantly created and changing according to the factors listed above and the interactive influence that constitutive gender exerts over the speech event.

A Social Frame/Framework Analysis

The difference between linguist and native speaker accounts of the gender system in Lakhota and its implementation in a variety of contexts is not necessarily inconsistent nor insolvable. Nor does it require the complete dismissal of the notion of categorical gender, only its modification. A principled distinction must be made, however, between the speakers' metapragmatic analysis of their gendered speech system, and the implementation of that system. In other words, claims of sex exclusive or categorical gender may be accurate in terms of prototypical categories of usage; but, in actual speech events, speakers manipulate context and their role within that context by choosing which gendered clitics to display and whether to display them at all.

By adapting the notions of frame and framework from Hanks' (1993) work on spatial deixis to a social deixis perspective, we can reexamine the pragmatics of the gender system in Lakhota. In Hanks' work, a *frame*

"denote[s] a set of lexical items whose members correspond to different parts of a conceptual whole," and a *framework* is "the immediate social field of space and time perception, orientation, and participant engagement in acts of reference" (pp. 127-128). A *frame* therefore contains structural aspects of meaning, which are conventional and fairly fixed, but a framework deals with a specific instance of use in language. The *framework* is a variable local production in space and time and therefore contains the participants' orientation with respect to the social setting.

The account of the gender clitic system in Table 1 is a schematic frame or an idealized model of the gender clitic system in Lakhota; it represents the prototypical association of meaning and use of the clitics without actually considering real speakers and situations. For example, to understand the meaning of *ye* and *yo* (imperatives) versus *yele* and *yelo* (statements), one must understand that they work within a *frame* of gender and illocutionary force, in distinction from each other and from the other illocutionary force markers of Table 1. In addition, in each individual situation, these forms create a particular *framework*, that is, the meaning derived from the use of these clitics in specific contexts, stereotypic or otherwise, as they indicate affective state, nurturance, or authority of speaker respective to the utterance and speech event.

It is possible that speakers of the language also have a notion of prototypical frameworks, those exemplary cultural representations which give rise to the connotations of nurturance for women's speech or authority for men's. It is obvious that the speakers are aware of these to some extent because they manipulate them in prototypical (examples 3-7) as well as non-prototypical contexts. For instance, women speaking to a young child or a husband are often given as 'good' examples of women's speech. Thus, the male who assumed 'female' speech to speak to the young child in example (7) primarily assumed the prototypical meanings of nurturance and affection associated with female speech in an immediate framework.

Likewise, the female speaker who used the 'male' clitics knew that in a schematic interpretation, her speech would make her a 'man' or a lesbian, but this is clearly not what she intended by the use of this speech, as she immediately claimed she was not gay. Thus, the speakers show an awareness of the gender clitic system on at least two different levels: a schematic representation or frame (men say *yo*; women say *ye*) and on the level of stereotypic gender associations. Either or both of these may be mapped into a local framework of usage, and an addressee's interpretative emphasis on one or the other may lead to miscommunication.

Gender Deixis in Other Native American Languages

In other Native American languages where the determination of gendered speech has been debated as an indicator of sex versus that of

power/status of the speaker in the society (or something as yet indescribable), it is probable that this confusion is due not only to the constitutive nature of gender markers in these societies which pragmatically implicate maleness or femaleness, but also to personality and contextual influence. Haas (1944) has shown that Oklahoma Koasati speakers systematically differed in the pronunciation of word-final consonants depending on their sexual categorization as males or females; Flannery (1946) discovered a similar pronunciation distinction in Atsina, a dialect of Arapaho spoken in Fort Belknap, Montana. Sapir (1949), in the first quarter of the twentieth century, noted systematic morphological and pronunciation differences when men speak to men in Yana society.

13. 'Exclusive' speech examples

Koasati (Kimball, 1987)

female	male	
alóhlǫ	alólo:ʃ	he can drive
ákpǫ	ákpo:ʃ	do not eat
ocɪntǫ	ocɪnto:ʃ .	you can come

Atsina/Gros Ventre (Flannery, 1946)

female	male	
k / ky	c	
ikénibik	icénibic	his gum

Yana (Sapir, 1949)

female	male	
ya	yana	person
nisat^{h}	nisat^{h}i	it is said he goes
p^{h}at^{h}	p^{h}adi	place

Although 'exotic' Native American languages are reported over and over as possessing sex exclusive systems, there is considerable doubt that this has ever been the case, and it is more than likely that categorically distinct systems based on the sex of the speaker or hearer do not exist in many of these languages. Even Haas (1944) in her article 'Men's and Women's speech in Koasati' observed that Koasati men and women take on the voice of the other sex when quoting and in the appropriate context in telling folktales, and Flannery (1946) reported that when men use women's speech in Atsina that they are regarded as effeminate.

Given this meager information, one might be tempted to regard the idea of 'sex' exclusive linguistic features as dubious. And subsequently, Kimball (1987, 1990) in a reexamination of Koasati claims there are examples of women in the early part of this century using the male terminal *-ʃ* marker (what Haas described as a pronunciation difference) as a possible indication of status or respect rather than gender. One of these women was a famous Native American doctor, and the other the daughter and wife of a chief. In recent field research in Atsina, Taylor (1982) has discovered that at least some males use female pronunciation features when they are speaking to children or foreigners, e.g., linguists, using what they perceived to be an 'easier' style of pronunciation in order to communicate. Taylor speculates that because Atsina children are traditionally cared for primarily by women, they would first learn the female pronunciation through caretaker language and subsequently some male children would adopt male pronunciation, given enough exposure and overt socialization. Finally, there is doubt about the function of male to male speech in Yana as Luthin (1991) has found instances in past records of males using 'male to male' speech when speaking to women on formal occasions.

From this scant amount of information, it is difficult to conclude anything specific about the nature of the gender deictic systems in each of these languages, except that there are discrepancies between the accounts of linguistis who worked with consultants and those who have revisited these sources. There is a likelihood that the discrepancies between the original and subsequent investigations in each of these languages are due in part to the initial tendency to describe only the frame of the gender deictic systems in these languages.

CONCLUSION

The data presented above for Lakhota are not 'typical.' A Lakhota speaker would likely say that it is so contextual as to be a partial misrepresentation, for it does not represent an abstract system. In fact, a fluent speaker and teacher of Lakhota upon reading the statement 'men say *yele* and women say *yelo*' out of context naturally responded 'Only if his grandmother raised him.' In his opinion, most men if they had had the proper exposure to male speakers when growing up would not regularly use the female gendered forms. Yet a gay speaker might, and in quotation people do.

When native speakers make these sorts of judgments about their languages, or are engaged in elicitation tasks with linguists, gender of the speaker or hearer may be viewed as a categorical distinction, for they are presenting frames and prototypical frameworks of usage. However, as they

use language in a variety of interactive contexts or frameworks, they create subtle nuances, which are not always to them the most salient features of their interaction, but which nevertheless are important to meaning. I would argue that this is true for any language, so that to restrict a description of a gendered speech system to an idealization, though interesting, misses the highly important facet of 'doing gender' or viewing it as something created and reinforced through interaction itself (West & Zimmerman, 1987).

Both native speaker intuition, local productions and the relationship between the two are important to a sociolinguistic understanding of gender. Regrettably, because of the obsolescence of languages such as Koasati and Atsina, and the death of Yana, we can no longer investigate this relationship in these languages fully, but perhaps this is no excuse for promulgating the simplistic myth of 'categorical' gender for these languages or any others.

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NOTES

[1] The debate about the gender deictics in Koasati may partially be due to the differences in dialect between groups of Koasati speakers (see Haas, 1944; Kimball, 1990; Saville-Troike, 1988).

[2] The Lakhota examples are primarily transcribed using the International Phonetic Alphabet. A notable exception to this is the use of a nasal hook to indicate nasalized vowels, e.g., /ą, i̧, ų/.

[3] For a more detailed discussion of deictic projection, see Lyons (1977).

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