

Pragmatic marker *to* in Hausa (West Chadic, A.1; Nigeria)¹

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Abstract

In Hausa language function words contribute to sentence structure mainly on the syntactic level. They can specify the attitude or mood of the speaker. The broad class of function words includes a sub-class of items known as Pragmatic Markers (PMs). So far interpretations of PM *to* in Hausa were based on its semantic rather than structural contributions to the utterance content. There is a lack of a closer look on *to* from the pragmatic perspective. The aim of this article is to demonstrate how the interpretation of *to* within the framework of PM can contribute to describing this item's functions in discourse in a more precise way, i.a. for the purpose of preparation of resources for studying the Hausa language by foreigners such as bilingual dictionaries. I propose the interpretation of *to* as a PM with the binary category of procedural and representational meaning. It will be demonstrated with the examples extracted from radio conversations that PMs framework allows to comprehensively describe *to* marker in terms of its contextually determined functions and meanings.

Keywords: Pragmatic Marker; Hausa; radio; conversation; modal particle

¹ Hausa is the third most widely spoken non-European language in Africa after Arabic and Swahili. It has approximately 50.7 M native speakers, mainly inhabitants of northern Nigeria and bordering southern regions of Republic of the Niger. Almost 26.2 M people speak Hausa across (Western) Africa (also in diaspora) as their second language (Eberhard, Simons & Fennig 2022). Hausa society as well as language since ca. 14th century have been under the influence of Islam (Adamu 1976: 5) which resulted in the significant presence of Arabic elements in Hausa lexicon (Baldi 2008; Greenberg 1947). The status of Hausa in West Africa was built upon the historical process of acculturation and integration of other ethnic groups into the Hausa society, among which the most numerous and influential are Fulanis (Piłaszewicz 1995: 13). Linguistic and literary studies on Hausa have long tradition at universities in Africa (i.a. Nigeria, Niger), Europe (i.a. Poland, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom, France, Austria), America (USA, Canada) and Asia (i.a. Japan) (Wolff 2019).

1. Introduction

In Hausa language function words contribute to sentence structure mainly on the syntactic level. They can specify the attitude or mood of the speaker. This class of words is represented by the number of predominantly one- and two-syllable items labelled as *exclamations* or *interjections* (depending on their function) which have merely vague or general meaning, e.g. *ai, af, fa, mana, ungo*² as well as the commonly used word *to*³. “The[ese] words are difficult to define precisely because a great part of the meaning is pragmatically determined” (Newman 2000: 176). These items function in language as i.a. subordinators, coordinators, prepositions as well as various types of expressions and particles (some of them were demonstrated in Zajac 2019: 19).

The broad class of function words includes a sub-class of items known as Pragmatic Markers (PMs) which are “linguistically encoded clues which signal the speaker’s potential communicative intentions” (Fraser 1996: 168). They are found in grammatical and lexical stock of a language. Verbs, nouns, adverbs and even idioms are “pressed into service” as PMs (Fraser 1996: 170–171). “[F]or the most part, the meaning of the expression when used as a PM, is the same as when it is used as a propositional formative and it is only its function which differs” (Fraser 1996: 170–171).

The question of what is the primary feature of the PM is not definitely solved:

For many scholars, the central function of pragmatic markers is to express the relation or relevance of an utterance to the preceding utterance or to the context.

(Brinton 1996: 30)

The lack of agreement on terminology among the researchers resulted in studying lexical items that are covered by the term PM under various names and labels, i.a. pragmatic particles (Östman 1995), discourse particles (Abraham 1991), pragmatic formatives (Fraser 1987), pragmatic expression (Erman 1987), pragmatic connectives (van Dijk 1979), pragmatic operators (Ariel 1994), conjuncts (Quirk et al. 1985), sentence connectives (Halliday & Hasan 1976), phatic connectives (Bazzanella 1990), cue phrases (Knott & Dale 1994), signalling devices (Polanyi & Scha 1983), indicating devices (Dascal & Katriel 1977), discourse connectives (Blakemore 2002), discourse operators (Gaines 2011), Discourse Markers (DMs) (Schiffrin 1987) and PMs (Brinton 1996; Fraser 1996).⁴ In the view of a more recent study PMs are members of the same “family” if not essentially the same thing as DMs, and Modal Particles (MPs), since the categories of pragmatics, discourse and modality overlap in language:

² The rules of transcription based on standard orthography (cf. Amfani et al. 2011): *c* = /tʃ/, *f* = /f/, *j* = /dʒ/, *sh* = /ʃ/, *ts* = /sʰ/, *y* = /j/. Short and long vowels are not marked. There is no tonal notation and no distinction between two phonemes represented by letter *r* (/ɾ/ and /r/). Modified Latin letters are used to denote glottalized consonants: *ḅ, ḍ, ḳ, ʔ*.

³ The varying tonal pattern of *tô/tò* will be discussed later in the article. In that case long vowels are marked with a horizontal bar above the letter; a low tone with gravis; a falling tone on long vowel with circumflex.

⁴ Works cited are mentioned by Azi (2018: 49), Fraser (2009: 394) and Kibiki (2019: 30).

The difficulties in delimiting these entities [MPs, PMs and DMs] and investigating their mutual relationships stem from a variety of reasons. The most important of these reasons, in our view, is precisely the terminological *cul-de-sac* that appears to characterize this field: the debate on the boundaries between these categories, in fact, has often been an obstacle rather than a stimulus to a more thorough understanding of their specificities and commonalities, and has generally obscured what these items have in common.

(Fedriani & Sansó 2017: 1)

Two closely related linguistic terms, namely DM and PM happen to be used interchangeably (at least to some extent). Azi (2018: 51–52) gave a detailed discussion on the terminology and concluded that spoken discourse is a domain of PMs as opposed to written discourse which is associated with DMs. According to Fraser (1996: 170, 186; 2009: 295–298) the term DM is narrower than what is understood under the term PM. In other words, DMs are considered to be a subtype of PMs and are “mainly related to «textuality and coherence» of a text, whereas PMs have various functions that cannot be limited to the same basic functions of DMs”. PMs “appear to perform a larger number of interactional functions that are mainly related to spoken discourse” (Azi 2018: 51).

These expressions [i.e. DMs] occur as part of a discourse segment but are not part of the propositional content of the message conveyed, and they do not contribute to the meaning of the proposition, *per se*. However, they do signal aspects of the message the speaker wishes to convey.

(Fraser 2009: 295)

There is quite a number of papers on PMs (including DMs) in languages spoken in Africa, i.a. Standard Arabic (Hussein & Bukhari 2008) along with Arabic dialects of the North Africa such as Maghrebi and Egyptian (Bidaoui 2015) and Nigeria: Šuwa/Shuwa (also known as Nigerian Arabic) (Owens & Hassan 2010), Swahili (Dunn 1990; Habwe 1999; Kibiki 2019), Swahili and Amharic (Nicolle 2000). To the best of my knowledge there are no works in which PM framework is applied to the analysis of Hausa except for a discussion of PM *to* use in code-switching Nigerian Arabic-Hausa conversations recorded in Maiduguri (Owens & Hassan 2010)⁵. So far interpretations of *to* in Hausa were based on its semantic rather than structural contributions to the utterance content. There is a lack of a closer look on *to* from the pragmatic perspective.

1.1. “To” meanings and functions

To is a word used frequently in Hausa to modify the mood of an utterance. In one of the oldest comprehensive Hausa dictionary written by Schön (1885) *to* is listed as an *adverb* meaning ‘now’. In another early work on Hausa, Delafosse (1901: 124) gave *to* meaning as ‘bien, à la bonne heure’. Mischlich (1906) classified *to* as an *interjection* and gave its German

⁵ The lack of the detailed studies of Hausa PMs was also acknowledged by Owens & Hassan (2010: 211). Here are examples of some other frequently used Hausa PMs used especially in spoken discourse: *gaskiya* (*kwarai*) ‘(indeed) this is the truth’, *gaskiya ne/ce* ‘this is the truth’, (*kwarai*) *da gaske* ‘(indeed) this is true’, *haka ne* ‘it is like that’, *shi ke nan* ‘that is it’, *e/i* ‘yeah’.

(and additionally English) translation as follows: ⁶تُ ‘jawohl, gut, es ist recht (das englische *all right*)’. Also Smirnova (1982: 68) put *to* in the same grammatical category while translating it as ‘there you are’. In Bargery (1934) the definition is also very short, and therefore not comprehensive: *to* ‘quite so; yes; all right; well’. A roughly identical translation of *to* which was labelled this time an *exclamation* can be found in Newman (2007): *tô* ‘1. OK, that’s all right. 2. well then’; whereas Abraham (1962) provides some contextual meanings and additionally, cross-reference to other entries: *tò* ‘1. very well!’ 2. ~ daidai = 1. 3. *a* ~ ‘well then...’ (= *a’a*) 4. *tò?* a. ‘really?’ b. ‘fancy!’ 5. Vd. *ai; dagogo*.

All the above definitions (translations) of the word *to* do not in fact indicate its numerous pragmatic functions in a text⁷ interpreted as a *communication event* (Duszak 1998: 13–14, 28–32). However, Robinson and Burton (1905), who worked during colonial times, gave the definition as follows: ‘well! so! yes! good!, when a native does not quite understand what is said he will frequently reply *to*’. This definition indirectly presents an observation that this word serves some pragmatic communicative purposes. Another observation on functions of *to* is provided in Hausa grammar by Migeod (1914: 208): “Used on receiving an order and signifying acceptance. Also as an informal expression of thanks”.

All “lexical meanings” of *to* discussed above are in fact selected contextual translations or contextual equivalents of this word in European languages.⁸ As it was indicated before, the word in question is a function word and not a content word. Therefore, its use can be described more efficiently through enumerating its pragmatic functions and not by the proxy of lexical equivalents in other languages.

Noteworthy, some pragmatic properties of *to* marker were indicated by Hodge & Umaru (1963: 18). According to them *to* indicates assent in one of the 3 moods: indifferent, respectful or sarcastic. The detailed research on the use of *to* (Gonciarz 1986: 23, 56, 59)⁹ demonstrated that it occurs exclusively at the beginning of a sentence. *To* is formally and semantically related to the content of the whole sentence that follows it rather than to its particular fragments. However, the item’s connection to the content of the following sentence is loose

⁶ The 19th and early 20th century Hausa dictionaries provide the entries both in *boko* (Latin-based) and *ajami* (Arabic-based) script. Quite interestingly, *to* that is realised usually with the long vowel /ō/ is written with short /o/ indicated by *damma* ˆ rather than with long /ō/ represented by letter *wāw* ɔ. The short variant was attested in contemporary Nigerian Arabic-Hausa code-switching conversations recorded in Maiduguri (Owens & Hassan 2010: 214).

⁷ I use term *text* in a broad meaning that covers both graphic (mostly written) and phonic (mostly spoken) speech acts (Duszak 1998: 13). The term *speech act* is to be understood in reference to J. L. Austin’s Theory of Speech Acts (1962) developed i.a. by J. Searl (1969) and other contemporary philosophers of language and linguists.

⁸ On the problems of equivalence in translation relevant for this matter see: Hejwowski (2004: 81–82).

⁹ Gonciarz (1986: 40, 57–58) classified *to* as a MP. The category of MPs in Hausa consists of items that cannot be classified as nominal or verbal items. This set of words is therefore diverse in terms of form and function (Pawlak 1998: 53): they “...serve to express a personal attitude, state of mind, emphasis or contrast, corrective, conversational flow, or other pragmatic or discourse functions. They are often essentially untranslatable...” (Newman 2000: 326). These items are considered “an additive” or what Hausas call *gishirin Hausa* ‘salt of Hausa’ (cf. Newman 2000; Schmalig 2001: 3).

because the general syntactic function of *to* is to indicate the continuation of speech or the sentence relation to the preceding sentence (Gonciarz 1986: 24, 37, 41). This is in accordance with an observation made by Owens & Hassan (2010: 235) that predominately *to* introduces a sentence (152 cases in their corpus) rather than appearing as a single token without continuation of the talking (16 cases). According to the aforementioned study *to* has at least 7 pragmatic functions (Owens & Hassan 2010: 212–216, 233). “In general terms, *to* can be characterized as a marker of transition from one event or state of affairs to another. (...) It can variously be translated as ‘right, okay, I got you, so, oh’” (Owens & Hassan 2010: 214). Significantly, *to* is a marker characterised by a “greater salience” i.e. it allows more involvement by the other speaker and very often suggests that s/he will take over the next turn (Owens & Hassan 2010: 232–234). In spoken and written Hausa *to* is a word which can be omitted without an utterance necessarily losing its meaning and function (except when appearing as a single token without continuation of the talking). All correct sentences with *to* element that are possible to be generated in Hausa, would still be grammatically accepted if *to* was deleted.

Finally, worth noticing are tonal variations of *to* registered by some lexicographers (even though these are minor tone and meaning variations, they should be mentioned). This is to compare: *tō/tò* (Bargery 1934) vs *tò* (Abraham 1962) vs *tô/tò* (Newman 2007). Some researchers suggested that tonal variants of *to* can be interpreted as two separate lexical units (Gonciarz 1986: 41–42, 57, 59, 60; Kraft 1973: 51):

- tô* ‘1. good, great’, ‘2. agreed, well then, it seems that we came to the agreement’¹⁰ (a pause occurs after the word)
- tò* ‘in this case..., well then, so’¹¹ (usually employed when there is no pause between it and the following word)

Four interesting variations in the use of *tô/tò* depending on tonal pattern and vowel length are indicated in Hodge & Umaru (1963: 18–19) who named it an *affirmative particle*:

- tô* ‘respectful reply to an elder who has made a request or given an order (frequently used by children)’
- tô* ‘assent (between equals)’
- tô* (question tone, high with short fall) ‘1. reply when a person disagrees but doesn’t want to say anything’, ‘2. expression of doubt’, ‘3. in connection with other words: *tô, shi ke nan* “well, that’s how things are”
- tòôô* (drawled low high tone) ‘expression of surprise at learning something’
- tòtòtòtò* (indefinite number of lows followed by high falling) ‘expression of surprise’

2. Aim and scope

The aim of this article is to demonstrate how the interpretation of *to* within the framework of PMs can contribute to describing this item’s functions in discourse in a more precise way, i.a. for the purpose of preparation of resources for studying the Hausa language by foreigners such as bilingual dictionaries.

¹⁰ Original text in Polish: ‘1. dobrze, wspaniale’, ‘2. zgoda, a więc dobrze, no to jesteŝmy umówieni’.

¹¹ Original text in Polish: ‘w takim razie, no to, więc’.

I will demonstrate functional properties of *to* that determine its pragmatic use with illustration from spoken media discourse, following the framework presented by O’Keeffe (2012). The examples were extracted from 3 conversations held on air in BBC Radio station.

Presenters and guests on BBC Radio are encouraged to speak Standard Hausa which is following recognised norms of the language and was indicated as the language to be used on radio and television (Newman 2000: 1). This rule is predominantly obeyed however, some phonetic and lexical features of other dialects can be spotted incidentally in the speech of particular speakers.

3. Methodology

To affects not only structure of a clause or a sequence of clauses as it was already established in cited works, but is an element serving to organise a much wider structure, i.e. discourse. Although *to* can be occasionally found in written texts, it is a typical conversational marker (Owens & Hassan 2010: 208) that modulates “the organization of conduct within interaction” (Clayman & Gill 2012: 120).

The use of *to* as a PM will be illustrated with examples¹² excerpted from conversations with methods of Conversation Analysis (as described in Clayman & Gill (2012) and ten Have (1999)) such as: sampling, transcribing, a detailed inspection of recordings and transcriptions, observation, searching for systematic manners and communication practices. According to Schiffrin (1987: 13, 24) (conversational) discourse consists of 5 “planes”: *exchange structure*, *action structure*, an *ideational structure*, a *participation framework* and an *information state* which are all interconnected and integrated in order to make communication successful. In Schiffrin’s model the *discourse coherence* is being achieved by the means of what she calls “DMs” that integrate “various components of the discourse” (Lenk 1998: 42). The question that is being investigated in the current article is how does PM *to* “integrate” conversation or in other words what are its pragmatic functions on the plane of a conversation *exchange structure* and thus, what meaning types can it carry.

Referring to Fraser’s classification of PMs (1996; 2009), it will be demonstrated that *to* depending on the context of its use can carry either representational or procedural meaning which correspond to PMs sub-types. These two types of pragmatic meaning are in a binary opposition (Fraser 1996: 170; Kibiki 2019: 30). A representational meaning denotes concepts, and thus is to some extent fixed. Here are the examples of use of PMs with representational meaning (marked in bold) provided by Fraser (1996: 174):

I am (herby) asking you to be there on time. [PM of request]¹³

Can you **please** help me? [PM of request]

I want to thank you for the advice. [PM of gratitude]

¹² The transcription symbols used are taken from the set provided by Jefferson (2004) and Clayman & Gill (2012) and their full list is provided in the last section.

¹³ My comments in square brackets.

In turn, a procedural meaning (corresponding to the function) is relation of a sentence to the preceding discourse. Therefore, it emerges in a context. Fraser (1996: 186) underlined PMs' procedural meanings role in instructing an addressee how the utterance to which the marker is attached is to be interpreted (modality), e.g.

- A: Mary has gone home.
 B: a) She was sick. [no PM, no clues on interpretation]
 b) **After all**, she was sick. [PM of explanation]
 c) **Thus**, she was sick. [PM of conclusion]
 d) **Moreover**, she was sick. [PM signalling that there is more of relevant information]
 e) **However**, she was sick. [PM of contrast]

4. To in Hausa as a Pragmatic Marker

4.1. Procedural meaning

The PM *to* sometimes does not carry any representational meaning but only a procedural one which can be further specified with reference to PM sub-categories and their functions rather than any “lexical” meaning.

4.1.1. Emphatic¹⁴

To can serve as an emphatic commentary PM. Fraser (1996: 179) considers commentary PMs to have both representational and procedural meaning. However, an emphatic *to* in Hausa could be omitted without changing the meaning of the statement it is used in, and therefore emphatic PM *to* is an item with only procedural meaning. Consider the examples of emphatic PM *to* used in common expressions below:

- (1) A. *I to, haka ne.*
 yes PM like_that COP
 ‘Yes, **all right**, it is like that.’ [emphasis marker]
 B. *I, haka ne.*
 yes like_that COP
 ‘Yes, it is like that.’ [no PM, no clues on interpretation]
- (2) A. **To**, *wannan gaskiya ne.*
 PM this truth COP
 ‘**Okay**, this is true.’ [emphasis marker]
 B. *Wannan gaskiya ne.*
 this truth COP
 ‘This is true.’ [no PM, no clues on interpretation]

¹⁴ I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer for pointing out the importance of this function of *to* and providing examples which I used.

- (3) A. *To, a ra'ayi-na...*
 PM PREP opinion-mine
 'As for my opinion.' [emphasis marker]
- B. *A ra'ayi-na...*
 PREP opinion-mine
 'In my opinion.' [no PM, no clues on interpretation]

Statements marked A are “strong”, and somehow getting more attention than statements marked B. Statements A use emphasis, and their counterparts in B lack such emphatic mood (while having the same meaning).

4.1.2. Elaborative

To can carry a procedural meaning and function as an elaborative DM¹⁵ signalling topic continuation (dwelling on a particular topic), a refinement or the follow-up of the preceding discourse, signalling that “the utterance following constitutes a refinement of some sort on the preceding discourse” (Fraser 1996: 187–188; Fraser 2009: 296, 301). Here is the example extracted from the Conversation 1¹⁶ being an excerpt of BBC Radio programme, in which *to* was used turn-initially, cf.

- (4) *Tò wannan babba-n banki ne wanda ake kira*
 PM this big-GEN bank COP which IMPERS.CONT.REL call
babba-n banki-n ba-da lamuni-n gine-gine ga al'umma-r Najeriya.
 big-GEN bank-GEN give credit-GEN constructing for society-GEN Nigeria
 'To come to the point, this is a big bank which is known as a central bank giving credit for [houses] construction to the people of Nigeria.'

Example (4) contains words of the speaker (Ahmed Dan Giwa) who is not in direct contact with the radio presenter that gave the introduction. In order to fit in the radio programme structure his turn was extracted from a recording and paste into a new linguistic context. It gives the impression of an elaboration in reference to the presenter's turn while in fact the conversation was recorded earlier by a reporter (Yusuf Ibrahim Yakasai). Surely, the interviewed man did not know the final structure of the program (the exact linguistic context and order in which fragments of his utterance will be put on air) while he was being recorded. Hence, he started his turn (example (4)) with an opening marker *tò* which indicates the follow-up to the previous (cut-out) turn of the itinerant reporter. By the use of *tò* he also stated that it is his own opinion on the topic that he is presenting (cf. Gonciarz 1986: 42, 57) and indicated continuation of the discussion on the topic (cf. Owens & Hassan 2010: 233).

In the following example (5) *to* is used in turn-medial position. It was extracted from Conversation 2 which is a continuation of the conversation between the speaker (Ahmed Dan

¹⁵ DMs are a sub-category of PMs.

¹⁶ The excerpts from which examples were extracted are attached in the section following the Conclusion.

Giwa) and the reporter (Yusuf Ibrahim Yakasai) without any further participation of the studio-based presenter. In the example (5) the first *tò* pronounced by the speaker is signalling “transition from one (...) state of affairs to another” and topic continuity (Owens & Hassan 2010: 232–234). Strictly procedural meaning of *tò* in this context, again confirms its function of an elaborative DM (Fraser 1996: 187–188; Fraser 2009: 296, 301), cf.

- (5) *Kowa mutum zai ga cewa akwai lokaci-n da zai zamanto*
 all man 3SG.FUT see-GEN that there_is time-DEF that 3SG.FUT become
inda za-ka biya mata albashi-nka, tò sai aka ce tò ya gaishe ka
 where 2SG.M.FUT pay her salary-yours PM PRTC IMPERS.CPL.REL say PM 3SG.M.CPL greet you
 ‘Every man will see there is a time, when [that time] comes you will pay your salary, **well** they just say that indeed “it has greeted you”’.

4.1.3. Inferential

The PM *tô* can also serve as an inferential DM which signals that “the force of the utterance is a conclusion which follows from the preceding discourse” (Fraser 1996: 188; Fraser 2009: 298). This function of *tô* was noted also by Gonciarz (1986: 41–42, 57) as well as by Owens & Hassan (2010: 232–234). In example (6) extracted from the Conversation 2 it was used in this function turn-medially by the speaker (the preceding discourse is omitted here due to the space limits), cf.

- (6) *Tô sai aka ((indistinct)) da wani National Housing Fund Scheme...*
 PM PTRCL 3SG.CPL.REL with certain National Housing Fund Scheme...
 ‘**And then** ((indistinct)) with a National Housing Fund Scheme...’

Another example of inferential pragmatic function is extracted from Conversation 3 whose topic is local elections. *Tô* starts the opening of the comment on the situation that came up (Gonciarz 1986: 41–42, 57), cf.

- (7) *Tô daga mataki-n tana dauko, hukumomi ne gida-nsu, ta kammala.*
 PM from steps-DEF 3SG.F.CONT carry local_governments COP house-their 3SG.F.CPL complete
 ‘**So**, [one of] those steps is transporting [ballots], local governments are their home, [then] it is finished.’

4.1.4. Discourse Managing Marker

PM *tô* can function also as a Discourse Management Marker, i.e. it serves to organize the ongoing discourse (Fraser 2009: 297). In the example (8) *tô* introduces a short summary. Moreover, PM *tô* in this context serves also as a type of rhetorical expression (Owens & Hassan 2010: 232–234). *Tô* in example (8) extracted from Conversation 3, is used in the beginning of the reporter’s (Ibrahim Isa) turn (reply), cf.

- (8) *Tô hali-n da ake ciki dai har yanzu ana mataka-n kanana hukumomi ne...*
 PM state-GEN which IMPERS.CONT.REL in PRTCL until now IMPERS.CONT steps-GEN small.PL governments COP
 ‘**Yeah**. The current situation is: steps are being taken [on the level of] local governments...’

4.2. Representational meaning

To can carry not merely procedural but also representational meanings which denote concepts. They are generally fixed. Those meanings, in contrast to procedural ones, were relatively well described by the lexicographers without referring to the PM framework.

4.2.1. Agreement

Tô while carrying a representational meaning can serve as a Lexical Basic Marker in the form of a Pragmatic (Message) Idiom expressing agreement (according to the classification by Fraser 1996: 176). It is used turn-initially as a turn claimer (a participant who uttered *tô* claimed their turn). This feature of *tô* has been observed also by Owens & Hassan (2010: 214, 233). Radio Presenter 2 in Conversation 3 is using *tô* to express agreement (Fraser 1996: 176), indifferent assent (Hodge & Umaru 1963: 18) and a positive attitude towards the interlocutor (Gonciarz 1986: 41–42, 57), cf.

- (9) *Tô an gai-da Ibrahim Isa kuma yanzu haka kai-tsaye*
 PM IMPERS.CPL greet Ibrahim Isa PRTCL now this_way directly
muna tare-da shi daga can birni-n na Lokoja
 1PL.CONT together_with him from there city-DEF GEN Lokoja

‘OK we have already greeted Ibrahim Isa and now we have direct connection with him [from there] in the city of Lokoja’.

Interesting example can be found in Conversation 2 in which *tô* was used in the initial position by the speaker (Ahmed Dan Giwa) as a turn claimer. The moment when *tô* was being pronounced interfered with laughing and for this reason it was transcribed as *t(h)ô*. It is a reaction of the speaker to the reporter’s (Yusuf Ibrahim Yakasai) question suggesting that government workers are the ones who own big houses. It seems that the speaker shares this opinion however, do not want to admit it too directly as if it was something to condemn. Probably he does not want to express his true personal opinion about government workers on record. The PM signals here a sarcastic assent (Hodge & Umaru 1963: 18). The PM *tô* makes a reference to the preceding utterance while signalling the speaker’s own opinion on the matter and expressing his positive attitude towards the reporter. These pragmatic functions of *to* were spotted also by Gonciarz (1986: 42–43, 57), cf.

- (10) Yusuf Ibrahim Yakasai: *Masu-gida manya ma'aikata-n gwamnati*
 house_owners big.PL employees-GEN government
su yi manya iri-n ko watakila?
 3PL.SBJV do big.PL type-DEF PRTCL maybe

Ahmed Dan Giwa: ((laughing)) *tô hehee* ((both laughing))
 PM <laugh>

Yusuf Ibrahim Yakasai: ‘Important house owners. The government employees – they wish to do big kind, probably?’

Ahmed Dan Giwa: ‘((laughing)) A, [well] yes, hehe. ((both laughing))’

4.2.2. Evidential

Another way that *tò* carrying representational meaning can be used is as a rhetorical expression (Owens & Hassan 2010: 232–234). The second *tò* in example (11) below demonstrates the use of *tò* as an *evidential* Commentary Pragmatic Marker in a form of a rhetorical expression that signals confidence about the truth of the basic message (Fraser 1996: 179–180), cf.

- (11) *Kowa mutum zai ga cewa akwai lokaci-n da zai zamanto*
 all man 3SG.FUT see-GEN that there_is time-DEF that 3SG.FUT become
inda za-ka biya mata albashin-ka, tò sai aka ce tò ya gaishe ka
 where 2SG.M.FUT pay her salary-yours PM PRTC IMPERS.CPL.REL say PM 3SG.M.CPL greet you
 ‘Every man will see there is a time, when [that time] comes you will pay your salary, well they just say that **indeed** “it has greeted you”’.

5. Conclusion

I proposed the interpretation of *to* as a PM with the binary category of procedural and representational meaning. As it was demonstrated on the examples extracted from radio conversations, PMs framework allows to comprehensively describe *to* marker in terms of its contextually determined functions and meanings. Therefore, it can be situated in different sub-categories of PMs depending on the context of use.

It was demonstrated with reference to the examples that *to* can carry:

1) procedural meaning and:

- functions as an *emphasis* Commentary Pragmatic Marker emphasizing the force of the basic message of the statement it is used with (this function does not occur in instances where *to* is a statement or a conversational turn on its own);
- functions as an *elaborative* DM signalling topic continuation (dwelling on a particular topic), a refinement or the follow-up of the preceding discourse;
- functions as an *inferential* DM which signals that the utterance is a conclusion which follows from the preceding discourse;
- functions as a Discourse Managing Marker, i.e. it serves to organize the ongoing discourse, e.g. introduces a short summary;

2) representational meaning and:

- functions as a Lexical Basic Marker in the form of a Pragmatic (Message) Idiom expressing *agreement*;
- functions as an *evidential* Commentary Pragmatic Marker in a form of a rhetorical expression that signals confidence about the truth of the basic message.

The former approaches to *to* meaning allowed to categorise it simply as a polysemous item. Hausa PM *to* happened to be labelled in a rather vague way as, i.a. “an agreement

marker”, “a continuer” or “a silence filler”. Applying PMs framework to the analysis of *to* adds to understanding of how this item functions in Hausa as to contrast with limited and sparse dictionary definitions as well as working definitions in language manuals. The pragmatically viewed functions that were demonstrated can be the basis for extending those definitions towards more user-friendly definitions, indicating meanings of *to* on operational level. This would contribute to better understanding of this item by learners of Hausa.

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Appendix

Transcription of excerpts

Conversation 1

This is a conversation during the ‘morning programme’ on BBC Hausa Radio. It is the beginning of a new audition section. Quite typically for a radio programme (O’Keeffe 2012: 443–444), in the first turn the presenter carries out the identification and recognition of the conversation participants and topic. The presenter is introducing a conversation between a BBC reporter and the head of the bank which gives Nigerians loans for the purpose of buying and building houses. The conversation was recorded earlier.

BBC Radio Presenter: ((introduces the participants and the topic of the conversation)) ...a wata hira da BBC, akitekt Ahamed Dan Giwa, wanda shi ne shugaban bankin >ya bayyana wa Yusuf Ibrahim< Yakasai, yadda ayyukan bankin suka kasance da kuma inda aka nufa kan batun samad da muhalli a Najeriya.

Ahmed Dan Giwa: Tõ.=wannan babban banki ne wanda ake kira babban bankin ba da lamunin gine-gine ga al’ummar Najeriya. Aikinsa shi ne ya ba da bashin gina gida ga dan Najeriya ko kuma...

(*Shirin Safe* 10.11.2019)

BBC Radio Presenter: ((introduces the participants and the topic of the conversation)) ...in a conversation with BBC, [mister] architect Ahmed Dan Giwa, who is a head of the bank explained to Yusuf Ibrahim Yakasai how the bank has been implementing its policies as well as [explained] how is [the plan of] “gaining position” in Nigeria going to be implemented.

Ahmed Dan Giwa: **To come to the point**, this is a big bank which is known as a central bank giving credit for [houses] construction to the people of Nigeria. Its job is to give a loan for building a house to a Nigerian citizen as well as...

(translation¹⁷ by the Author)

Conversation 2

Conversation 2 is a continuation of the conversation between the speaker (Ahmed Dan Giwa) and the reporter (Yusuf Ibrahim Yakasai) without any further participation of the studio-based presenter. The speaker informs that up to 80 % of Nigerian citizens including “government workers” (Hau. *ma’aikantan gwamnati*) cannot afford a house despite being paid monthly. Topic of the conversation is circulating around the goal (Hau. *aniya*) of the bank that is to “support the society” (Hau. *taimaka wa al’umma*) by giving them long term loans with a fair commission for buying, constructing and fixing houses *na zamani* ‘keeping modern standards’. Conversation 2 contains 4 examples of the PM to use. These examples are evidence that use of *to* marker in radio conversation is a method of building an interaction between the participants of a speech event. This perhaps might be a common practice (Clayman & Gill 2012: 130).

Yusuf Ibrahim Yakasai: M:asu gida manya (.) >ma’aikatan gwamnati s:u yi manya irin ko watakila?<

Ahmed Dan Giwa: ((laughing)) a(h)- aa- **t(h)ô**: hehee- ((both laughing))

Ahmed Dan Giwa: Ko(wa) mutum za- a-(i) ga ce(wa) akwai ll- hh a: a- ha: lo:kacin da zai zamanto inda za ka biya mata albashinka, **tô** sai aka ce **tô** ya gaishe ka. Ka kai ka samu wannan amani↓. **Tô**=sai aka ((indistinct)) da wani (.) National Housing Fund Scheme (.) .hh

Yusuf Ibrahim Yakasai: >Wa[to:]?<

Ahmed Dan Giwa: [>Wannan<] ASUSU ne.

Yusuf Ibrahim Yakasai: ↑Mm-hmm↓.

(Shirin Safe 10.11.2019)

Yusuf Ibrahim Yakasai: Important house owners. The government employees – they wish to do big kind, probably?

Ahmed Dan Giwa: ((laughing)) A, [well] yes, hehe. ((both laughing))

Ahmed Dan Giwa: Every man will see there is a time, when [that time] comes you will pay your salary, **well** they just say that **indeed** “it has greeted you”. You have reached to get this trust. **And then** ((indistinct)) with a National Housing Fund Scheme...

Yusuf Ibrahim Yakasai: ...which is...

Ahmed Dan Giwa: It is a fund.

Yusuf Ibrahim Yakasai: Mm-hmm.

(translation by the Author)

¹⁷ The translation text is written in standard English orthography. The features of spoken language that were indicated in Hausa transcriptions are omitted in translation. Round brackets contain () author’s best guess of what was said; square brackets [] contain author’s comments and clarifications.

Conversation 3

This is an example of conversation in the BBC Hausa Radio ‘evening programme’. The participants of the interaction are two studio-based radio presenters and a field reporter (Ibrahim Isa) who is speaking on the phone (relatively low quality of the connection). The topic is local elections.

- BBC Radio Presenter 1: ((speaker is introducing the topic, indistinct noises in the background))
...Ibrahim Isa, sashen Hausa na BBC .h daga Lokoja, a Najeriya.
- BBC Radio Presenter 2: .hhh **Tô**.=an gai da: Ibrahim Isa kuma yanzu haka kai tsaye muna tare da shi daga: can: birnin na: >Lokoja↓<=>IBRAHIM< KANA JINA↑?
- Ibrahim Isa (Reporter): ((on the phone)) E:, ina jinka Aliyu.
- BBC Radio Presenter 2: **Tô**=kamar: uwu- wane hali ake ciki game da: kida:ya kuri'un da aka riga (karkada)?
- Ibrahim Isa (Reporter): ((on the phone)) .hh **Tô**.=halin da ake ciki dai:: har yanzu ana:: matakan:: kanana hukumomi ne. Wato bayan an kammala tattara sakamako daga: rumfuna, daga nan kuma akan koma cibiyoyi haka: na gunduma, daga can kuma ake wucewa karamar hukuma. **Tô**.=>daga matakin tana dauko hukumomi ne< hiransu ta kammala. Tss- za su wuto hedikwoter hukumar zaɓe, domin: gabatad da:: abin da kowa (shekara) hukuma ta samu na sakamako...
- (Shirin Yamma 16.11.2019)

- BBC Radio Presenter 1: ((speaker is introducing the topic, indistinct noises in the background))
...Ibrahim Isa, BBC Hausa division, from Lokoja in Nigeria.
- BBC Radio Presenter 2: **OK** we have already greeted Ibrahim Isa and now we have direct connection with him [from there] in the city of Lokoja. Ibrahim, do you hear me?
- Ibrahim Isa (Reporter): ((on the phone)) Yes, I hear you, Aliyu.
- BBC Radio Presenter 2: **OK**. How is the situation when it comes to counting the votes that have been already (casted)?
- Ibrahim Isa (Reporter): ((on the phone)) **Yeah**. The current situation is: steps are being taken [on the level of] local governments. It means that after collecting of the results from our stalls is completed, then usually they are received by the administrative district centres like that. From then on [the results] go outside local government area. **So**, [one of] those steps is transporting [ballots], local governments are their home, [then] it is finished. They [i.e. the local governments representatives] will go to the electoral commission headquarter in order to present the report on the results which the commission receives every (year)...
- (translation by the Author)

Transcription conventions

- [] Square brackets show beginning and ending of the overlapping talk
 - (.) Period in parentheses is a very brief silence (less than 0.1 sec.)
 - ((on the phone)) Transcriber's comments are enclosed in double parentheses
 - () Empty parentheses denote indecipherable utterance
 - (shekara) Text within parentheses is transcriber's "best guess" as to a speaker's utterance
 - .
 - ?
- Period indicates downward intonation, not necessarily the end of a sentence.
Question mark indicates upward intonation, not necessarily a question.

:	Colon(s) indicate that a sound is stretched. The more colons, the longer the sound.
.hh	h's with preceding period indicate audible inbreath; the more h's, the longer the inbreath
hh	h's with no preceding period indicate audible outbreath; the more h's, the longer the outbreath
(h)	Parenthesized "h" indicates plosiveness, often associated with laughter, crying, breathlessness, etc.
>word<	Enclosed talk is spoken more quickly than surrounding talk.
WORD	Upper case indicates greater loudness than surrounding talk.
a-	Dash indicates a cut-off of the preceding sound.
=	Equal sign indicates utterances before and after have no intervening silence.
↓↑	Arrows indicate shifts into especially high or low speech.

(Adapted from Jefferson 2004 and Clayman & Gill 2012)

Abbreviations

CA	Conversation Analysis
CAD	Critical Discourse Analysis
DM	Discourse Marker
Hau.	(in) Hausa
PM	Pragmatic Marker

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