A Contrastive Metaoperational Analysis of Predicative Operations in English and Kwa Languages

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Résumé

Cet article est une étude contrastive de la prédication de phase 2 telle qu'exprimée en anglais et dans les langues africaines. Après une présentation de la théorie d'Adamczewski sur la prédication de phase 2, nous avons exposé le cas de l'anglais. Nous avons ensuite choisi deux langues ivoiriennes pour explorer leur système de prédication de phase 2 mais également de phase 1. Ce travail nous a fourni des preuves de ce que les prédications de phase 1 et de phase 2 existent bel et bien dans les langues africaines. Des métaopérateurs codifient ces différentes opérations en surface, avec des fonctions et des effets de sens spécifiques.

Mots clés: système des phases, métaopération, prédication, rhématique, thématique, présupposition, préconstruction.

Abstract

This article is a contrastive analysis of phase 2 predication as displayed in the system of the English language and African languages. After a brief presentation of Adamczewski's theory on phase 2 predication, I have exposed the case of English. Then, I have chosen two Ivorian languages to explore their respective system of predication, phase 2 but also phase 1. This work does show that phase 1 and phase 2 predications exist in African languages. Specific metaoperators mark these operations at the surface level, with particular functions and speech effects.

Keywords: system of phases, metaoperation, predication, rhematic, thematic, presupposition, preconstruction

Introduction

Predication is one of the key operations sustaining and enabling verbal interactions. It helps (to) found syntactic entities and does impact on the meaning construction. This article launches a comparative and contrastive endeavor of the status and functioning of the predicate in some Indo-European languages and some African languages. I have started here with English and three Kwa languages: Baule, Twi and Akye. The studies lie in the epistemological scope of the Linguistics of Operations, especially Metaoperational Grammar as devised by Henri Adamczewski. This work is attempting a deep analysis of predication in some African languages. The English part will mostly be a literature review in that much has been said about it. The goal of this project is to decipher, theorize and model the predication dynamics of Kwa languages, that is capturing how the system of Kwa languages found predicative relation and what are the surface markers signaling this operation.[1]

1. On predication in linguistic science

Debates on predication are not new. Philosophers have long tried to understand what predicates really covers.

A medieval logician of the eleventh-century school of Liège, Garlandus Compotista, also known as *Garland the Computist* viewed predication as a mere utterance (*vox*). The works of the scholastic philosopher and dialectician Peter Abelard added meaning (*significatio*) to the findings of Garland the Computist. Predication has, since then included meaning.

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[1]   I am therefore not *trying to* see how African languages do what is discovered in Indo-European languages.

In logic, Predication is defined as *the attributing of characteristics to a subject to produce a meaningful statement combining verbal and nominal elements*.[2] It is seen as an inherent feature of human language. Yet, though the notion of predication is defined – and sometimes related to that of *relation* – the ones mostly treated are the *predicate* and *the subject.* A **subject** is what we make an assertion about, and a **predicate** is what we assert about the subject.

<div align="center">

Socrates is mortal

</div>

is translated "Ms": "M" for the predicate "being mortal", and "s" for the subject "Socrates".*[3]*

This example is a case of *first order logic* because the subject of the sentence is an individual object (Socrates). We talk about *second order logic* or higher order logic when the subject is another predicate (being mortal in "Being mortal is tragic"). The status or types of the predicate is marked by quantifiers: the *universal quantifier*, "(x)" and the *existential quantifier*, "(∃x)".[4]

Predication is also an interest for cognitive psychologists. According to Walter Kintsch[5],

> In forming a sentence meaning, not all features of a predicate are combined with the features of the argument, but only those that are appropriate to the argument. Hence, a different "sense" of a predicate emerges every time it is used in a different context. This predication algorithm is explored in the context of four different

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[2]   See the works of Peter Suber, Professor of Philosophy at Earlham College, www.earlham.edu

[3]   The convention is that subjects are symbolized by lower-case letters, and predicates by capitals. In this convention, predicates are put first and subjects second in our notational formulas.

[4]   "Another name for predicate logic is **quantification theory**. With the two quantifiers and negation, we can express the three quantities, *all*, *some*, and *none*.", see Peter Suber, www.earlham.edu/~peters/hometoc.htm

[5]   Walter Kintsch is Professor Emeritus of Psychology at the University of Colorado in Boulder. He retired from being director of the Institute of Cognitive Science in 2004. In cooperation with the Dutch linguist Teun van Dijk, he formulated the first psychological process theory of discourse comprehension in 1978. In 1988, this work was reformulated as a constraint-satisfaction process. His 1998 book "Comprehension" summarizes the empirical and theoretical work from recent years. Teun Adrianus Van Dijk is a prominent authority in the field of text processing, communication and discourse analysis.

semantic problems: metaphor interpretation, causal inferences, similarity judgments, and homonym disambiguation. [6]

He gives the following examples from the *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* on the 30 senses listed for the verb *run* (intransitive):

The horse runs
The ship runs before the wind
The cat ran away
The salmon run every year
My horse ran last
The bus runs between Chicago and New York
A breeze ran through the trees
A vine runs over the porch
The machine is running
The colors run
Blood runs in the veins
The ship ran aground
The apples run large this year.

> The meaning of the predicate *run* is different in each of these examples: *the horse runs* in a different way than *the machine* or *the colors* - and *run away* and *run aground* are different yet, although all of these uses of *run* have a core meaning in common. The exact meaning of a predicate depends on the argument it operates upon. Predication creates new meanings in every context by combining the meaning of the argument and appropriately selected aspects of the meaning of the predicate. It is not the whole meaning of *run* that applies to *the vines running over the porch*, or *the blood running in the veins*, but only features1 that are relevant to the argument of the predication.[7]

This little tour illustrate not only the impact of predication in language as a system and a behavior but also and especially the dynamic work occurring within predication. In the lines below, we shall investigate the predicative phenomena in linguistics.

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[6]   Kintsch, W. (2001) Predication. Cognitive Science, 25, 173-202.

[7]   W. Kintsch, id.

In the literature of linguistics science, the concept of *predication* is rarely defined. The most defined is the *predicate*. In notional grammars, a *predicate* is defined as one of the two main parts of a sentence (the other being the subject, that the predicate has a syntactic connection with). It also defined as the portion of a clause, excluding the subject, that expresses something about the subject.[8] In a basic linear chain, the subject is found on the left side of the relation and the predicate, on the right. The predicate informs on the subject, adds to its semantic or pragmatic content, or completes it. The predicate says something about the subject, from the Latin *Praedicatum* (something said, declared; from *Praedicare* – to say). To predicate, therefore, consists in saying or declaring something on the grammatical subject, the syntactic element on the left of the predicate.

This definition is not satisfactory in that it limits this activity to a mere syntagmatic contact. Let us turn now to the definition of predication.

The notion of predication was first used in linguistics in the late 1920s. It is the syntactic activity consisting in founding a predicative node or a nexus[9]. In the epistemological culture of the theory of operations[10], predication is *the combinatory process resulting in the creation a specific meaning with two basic entities as surface markers: a subject and a predicate.* Though the order is not fixed, a canonical arrangement seems to be that of subject on the left side of the structure and predicate on the right. [11] The predicative relation results in the creation of a specific entity: the meaning. This meaning is the outcome of the node (or predicative node), the nexus, the connection, the combination. Not the contact. Each entity within the connection is supplying specific portions for the common semantico-syntactic or pragmatic goal. That is why the meaning of run varies, in the examples provided by Kintsch. *Run* does not put in the relation the same set on semantic units. The units to introduce within the relation are chosen according to the

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[8] www.sil.org/linguistics/GlossaryOfLinguisticTerms/WhatIsAPredicate.htm; see also David Crystal, 2003

[9] See Otto Jespersen and Lucien Tesnière.

[10] See Antoine Culioli, Henri Adamczewski, Claude Delmas and J.F Kouadio Kpli

[11] in most languages of the world.

other members of the relation. In case no units match, there will be a connection clash. And the metalanguage will react, and perhaps accept later, when the context is clarified:

The chair is running

Predication is, therefore, not a mere foundation of a subject and a predicate. It is a *meaning construction process through a dynamic relation.*

In the theory of Henri Adamczewski, predication is treated within a microsystem.[12] This predicative relation microsystem can be presented as follows:

- ***Phase 1:*** the utterer[13] informs, the relation is new or presented as new. The utterer does not endorse this relation.

- ***Phase 2:*** the utterer endorses the relation. S/he comments or expresses his/her subjectivity. The relation is not new or presented as preexisting or presupposed.

These phases are marked by specific units at the surface linear order.

1. The microsystemic order of predication in English

In the works of Henri Adamczewski, the following examples have been given:

- (i) I leave tomorrow.

- (ii) I am leaving tomorrow.

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[12] A microsystem is a pair of units, close in system and sharing a set of features that make them interchangeable in some contexts but remain different in one feature. E.g. in phonology, /p/ and /b/; in modal auxiliaries, *may* and *can*…

[13] I use the concept of utterer here to highlight the active role of the person who speaks. Speaker may have a passive connotation, that of competent subject. Utterer means a speaker actually engaged in the act of language performance.

In the first utterance, there is a ternary relation going from left to right. The data are progressively added because each of them is free from the others. This combination is new. The utterer is therefore informing the co-utterer of his/her leaving tomorrow.

<div align="center">SUBJECT ∩ PREDICATE[14]</div>

<div align="center">S ∩ P</div>

In utterance (i), the relation is ternary as shown below:

<div align="center">I ∩ LEAVE ∩TOMORROW</div>

This utterance does not show the implication of the utterer. S/he just gives a piece of information. This accounts for the left-to-right orientation of the relation.

<div align="center">I ∩ LEAVE ∩TOMORROW
⟶</div>

The relation between subject and predicate is not presupposed. The metaoperator ∅ is the surface marker for this fact.

In (ii) on the other hand, the relation is left oriented. The utterer is installing a presupposed predicate within a subject.

<div align="center">I ∩ LEAVE TOMORROW
⟵</div>

Before installing the predicate, the speaker signals that this predicate is not new in discourse. The marker used for that is BE-ING. This metaoperator blocks the whole predicate and keeps them together.

<div align="center">I ∩ BE-ING[LEAVE ∩TOMORROW]
⟵</div>

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[14] ∩ signal the dynamic combination between the linguistic units in meaning construction.

That's why a pragmatic meaning of *I'm leaving tomorrow.* may be that of apologizing, for instance; something else has been planned or set up before. The co-utterer, competent in the language will decode relation such as *I'm staying with the kids; she's meeting the President; they are boxing tonight…*as activities preexisting the something else.

To conclude, we can see that the English language displays a microsystem ∅/BE-ING. This microsystem is grounded on the implication of the utterer and his/her comments on the relations s/he builds. Indeed, with ∅, the utterer gives a piece of information without expressing any comment. The relation is therefore free from him.

With BE-ING, however, the utterer lays his/her comment on the relation. S/he endorses the combination. In (ii), the utterer is not informing on his/her leaving. S/he is explaining the status or a problem related to I, the structural subject. That is why the relation is oriented toward I.

The purpose of this article is to investigate and capture the predicative metalanguage of some African languages. Space and time have induced the choice of two languages: Baule, Twi and Akye.

2. The microsystemic order of predication in Baule

The predicative process of Baule also displays two types of predication, or, rather, a phase 1 or fundamental and a phase 2, the result of the comment of the enunciator.

2.1.   Phase 1 predication in Baule

The following sentences are natural verbal productions:

(i) A kã ngowa.

(ii) Ajwa tɔ̃ like.

(iii)N kɔ ahimã.

(iv)be sro jue.

(v) be kɔ asɔnu.

These utterances express the phase 1 predication in Baule. The utterer is giving a piece of information. S/he is introducing a fact to the co-utterer without any comment. The facts are provided plain and simple. See utterances

(i) A kã ngowa.

     You/ play/ game

(ii) Ajua tɔ̃ like.

     Ajua /cook/ food

(iii)N kɔ ahimã.

     I /go/tomorrow

(iv)be sro jue.

     they/sing/song

(v) be kɔ asɔnu.

     they/go/church

The utterer choosing to detach the predicative relation to the context, s/he can express a series of speech effects: habits, characteristics, definition … In utterance (i), the utterer is saying that the co-utterer has the habit to play – perhaps instead of working. With utterance (ii), the predicate is given to the grammatical subject – Ajua – as a daily fact or as a job – in case of restaurant. This utterance is indeed a natural verbal production in a real context. An old friend of Ajua has just been told she works in a restaurant.

- ɔ nzi talie nu?

     She/wash/dish/in?

- Cɛcɛ. ɔ tɔ̃ like.

No. she/cook/food

- I liɛ ɔ?

  Is she the owner?

- Cɛcɛ ho. Blɔfuɛ bla kun liɛ ɔ.

  No/interjection. White/woman/one/owner.

- Yoo.

  Ok.

The predicative node set by the utterer is about the everyday activity of Ajua. The utterer is just providing for the data. S/he just collects the facts and gives back to the co-utterer. This phenomenon is marked by ø in the syntagmatic chain.

Be ø kɔ asɔnu

They ø go to church.   They are Christians.

The English system also uses the ø to mark this fact at the surface level.

In the utterance *n ø kɔ ahimã,* the utterer is using ø because the relation is set for the first time. S/he is providing a new fact: *ahimã* (tomorrow).

This phase 1 predication can be represented as follows:

$$\overrightarrow{\text{Be ø kɔ asɔnu}}$$

The process is rightward oriented because the units are successively inserted into discourse. They are in an open paradigm. Any units on the paradigmatic axis of *asɔnu* can be inserted. We may have, for instance *suklu* (school)*, jumã* (job) *fiesu* (field)...

$$\text{Be} \cap \text{kɔ} \cap \text{asɔnu}$$

There is a triadic relation.

Let us now examine the phase 2 case.

2.2. *Phase 2 predication in Baule*

Let us consider the utterances below

ɔ *su* kɔ asɔnu

be *su* sro jue

a *su* kã ngowa

ajua *su* tɔ̃ like lenyɔ̃ nga nu

A new unit is added to the previous relation. ø is replaced by *su*. The outcome is that, here, the utterer moves to a higher degree of predication. The paradigm is closed now. The choice is over since *su* ties the whole predicate in a single set. Hence the dyadic relation. The utterer uses *su* to single that the whole predicate is being invested in the grammatical subject. The paradigm is therefore closed to allow the backward movement.

$$\overleftarrow{ɔ \cap [su(\text{kɔ asɔnu})]}$$

The utterer is not informing. S/he is saying something about the grammatical subject ɔ. This is a phase 2 predication.

In the utterance

Ajua *su* tɔ̃ like lenyɔ̃ nga nu

Ajua/be-ing/cook/food/days/these/in

The utterer is saying something specific about Ajua, not about her activity. The focus is the grammatical subject.

The same situation is displayed by:

ɔ [*su*(kɔ asɔnu)]

he/be-ing/go/church (he is going to church)

Be [*su*(sro jue)]

They/be-ing/sing/song (they are singing)

A [*su*(kã ngowa)]

You/be-ing/play/game (you are playing)

With the metaoperator *su,* then, the *utterer lays comments on the predicative relation by signaling its thematic status.*

In the predicative system of Baule, therefore, a dynamic microsystem can be identified: ø vs. *su.* Ø signals the rhematic (new, novel) status of the predication node and *su* marks the thematic (preexisting, presupposed) status. *Su* is thus *a metaoperator of phase 2 predication.*

The examples provided here may connote the fact that *su* is only used in the present tense form. This is not the reality. *Su* is a powerful metaoperator in the hands of the speaker of Baule. S/he uses it according to the contextual requirements.

- Iyee…ahimã a su kɔ ekun?

Interjection…tomorrow/you/be-ing/go/again (…you're leaving tomorrow again?)

- a to li yawlo lɔ?

    You/find/past/him/his/home/there (did you find him at home?)

- ɛ. Kɛ n juli lɔ, ɔ su to hi anuã nu.

    Yes/when/I /get/past/there/he/be-ing/close/his/door[15] (yes. When I got there, he was closing his door.)

Su is neither the expression of the present, nor is it a unit for the progressive form. The examples above show that. It is the expression of the utterer's subjectivity. S/he uses it to link the predicate

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[15]   The verb for *close* in Baule is *tonu.* When an object is used, that object is put between *to* and *nu.*

to his/her context. It is the metaoperator that signals the utterer presence within the syntagmatic chain, here, within the predicate.

The system of Baule reveals an interesting fact. The following utterance may be expressed in the present, the past or the future:

Blu su kɔ

Bru/be-ing/leave

- valid in the present tense:

Niã, ɔ su kɔ

Look/she/be-ing/go

Alua n su bo ekun

Dog/det./be-ing/bark/again

- valid in the past

kɛ a wuni be, be su ye nzu?

When/you/see-past/them, they/be-ing/do/what

- valid in the future

- E *su* to eliɛ ahimã.

We/be-ing/buy/ours/tomorrow

We can notice that there is a stable form: *su*+verb (su to; su ye; su bo). The utterer uses the same structure to express the thematic status of the predicate. *Su* blocks the whole predicate and reorient it toward the grammatical subject:

$$\overleftarrow{\qquad\qquad}$$
E *su* to eliɛ ahimã.

Translation:We are buying ours tomorrow. (*You are aware of that*. Or *The decision has already been taken*)

Other utterances are provided below to illustrate the dynamic functioning of *su* as an operator in the hands of the utterer to express his/her subjectivity:

- Be *su* klo be hun. (they are falling in love)

- Nse li ɔ kɛ be *su* ba mã. A sa kɛ mbua ato? (I told you they wouldn't come. Didn't you say I was lying?)

- Kofi ni Afue? Be *su* ja mã! (Kofi and Aya? They won't get married!(trust me))

- E wɔ awlo. E *su* ti mã ehun aniɛ̃. (let's go home. We won't get to any agreement (believe me).)

- Loto numã klɔ nu. Ã mu *su* dimã jumã ahimã hekun. (there is no car in the city. You won't work tomorrow again.)

3. **The microsystemic order of predication in** *Twi*

Twi is spoken in Ghana. It is one of the three mutually intelligible dialects of the Akan language, the others being Akuapem Twi and Fante, which belong to the Kwa language family. Twi is spoken in the Ashanti Region and in parts of the Eastern, Western, Central, Volta and Brong Ahafo Regions of Ghana.

Twi is a dialect of Akan, a member of the Kwa sub-group of Niger-Congo languages. Major dialects of Twi include Akuapim Twi, Fante Twi and Ashanti Twi, which all mutually intelligible.

In this part, we shall see some aspects of the predication in Twi. We will explore the present, the past and the "future".[16]

3.1.   Predication in the present

In this predicative process, the microsystem $\emptyset$/*re* is observed.

- Maame no di emo.

    Woman/the/eat-PRESENT/ rice

- ɔ **di** mako dabiara.

    she /eat-PRESENT/pepper/everyday

- Grace **di** mako dabiara.

    Grace/eat-PRESENT/pepper/everyday

With ø the utterer informs. S/he says something new. It is the phase 1 predication in Twi.

Grace - ***di*** - mako dabiara.

The utterer just ties the units together. The process goes from left to right because the different pieces of information are provided consecutively. The unit *dabiara* can be inserted in the relation since there is no clear contextualization of the nexus, the predicative node. The relation becomes, therefore pan-chronic and pan-spatial. The predicative relation between ***Grace*** and ***di mako dabiara*** is not linked to the utterer.

The same phenomenon is expressed in the following utterance:

Maame no - ***di*** - emo.

With *re*, however, the utterer comments the predicate. S/he goes beyond the mere information, and signals his/her presence in the predicate, expressing its preconstruction or presupposition. The predicate is not new:

- Maame no **re didi** (the woman is eating)

- Maame no **re di** emo (the woman is eating rice).[17]

- Roland **re di** mako seisei ara

- Roland is eating pepper right now

- Wɔ-**re ba** ha (Asante Twi or Akwapem Twi) They are coming here

- Kofi ne Roland **bɛ re ba** (Bono dialect) Kofi and Roland they are coming

- Kofi ne Roland **re ba** (Asante Twi or Akwapem Twi)

The operator *re* is traditionally treated as the markers of the progressive in Akan.[18] In fact, this unit does not signal a progressive process or a process going on. It is a unit signaling a comment of the utterer in the relations established. In utterances with *re,* the utterer is saying *"I utterer endorse the process. I have the elements allowing me to do so or I have decided to"*: I can see now, I witness… *Re* signals the comment of the utterer on the predicate.[19] That is why the different tense forms can display *re.*

 Let us now analyze some utterances valid in other moments of time.

3.2.   *Predicating for the future*

Let us consider the following utterances:

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[17]   Didi is the full form 'didi' is only used in intransitive sentences. In fact, the second di seems to act like the object of the first di (eat). It is omitted when the verb comes with its object.

[18] See Kweku Osam of the University of Ghana, 2003

[19] Or on the predicative node. This will be another discussion in papers to come.

- ɔ bɛ ba ha ɔkyena.
  He/FUT/come/here/tomorrow

- Roland **be di** mako wɔ Grace fie.
  Roland/FUT/eat/pepper/at/Grace's house

- Roland se ɔ **bɛ ba** Lancaster nansa yi ara.[20]
  Roland/say-PRESENT/he/**FUT/come/**to Lancaster very soon.

- Kofi **bɛ ba** ha ɔkyena.
  Kofi **will come** here tomorrow.

- Grace **bɛ ba** Ivory Coast May.
  Grace **will come** to Ivory Coast in May.

- Yɛ **bɛ ba** abɛsra wo.
  We will come and visit you.

- Wo **bɛ ba** dabɛn?
  When will you come?

Though *re* is *not usually* used alone to mark future, it can be used with the future marker *be* or (*bɛ*) to mark an event located in the 'after now' time span. This may be interpreted in English as 'about to':

- Gladys **re bɛ kɔ** Ghana.
  Gladys is about to go to Ghana i.e. getting ready to go.

- Me **re be su**.
  I'm about to cry.

In these utterances, the context of interaction offers data supporting the use of *re.* However, the utterer can put the metaoperator *re* aside if s/he wants to conceal his/her presence.

When *re* is used alone, it can be interpreted as 'certainty', that is the utterer is certain that the event in question will take place. In fact this 'certainty' is the result of the existence of contextual

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[20]   The vowel in the future marker is realized as /–e/ or /–ɛ/ depending on the quality of the vowel in the stem.

markers telling the fact or expressing that the fact is expressed is settled, clearly decided on or known by the co-speaker. Let us see below:

- ɔ **re ba** ha ɔkyena.

  He is coming here tomorrow.

- Gladys **re kɔ** Ghana February.

  Gladys is going to Ghana in February.

- Roland **re ba** Lancaster ɛnnɛ.

  Roland is coming to Lancaster today.

- wɔ **re sie** papa no ɔkyena.

  They are burying the man tomorrow.

- Atta Mills **re** suae akyerɛ Ghanafo anwumere yi[21].

  Atta Mills **is** swear**ing** an oath to Ghanaians this evening.

This use may be a conversation strategy, to communicate hope, or to clear worries.

- Na su. Ɔ **re** ba ɔkyena.

  Don't cry. He's coming tomorrow.

Re has the same invariant, or fundamental value in the present tense and the "future". It is a unit of the *natural metalanguage[22]* marking the *speaker in the predicate*. In the lines below we are going to see with the past tense.

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[21]   This form difficultly works with verbs like da(sleep), di su (cry) and the like in that the utterer seems to make a plan with this predication. A verb such as *da* is pragmatically

3.3.   *Phase 2 predication in the past*

In Twi, *re* is not used on its own to mark past tense. It is generally used with the focus marker *na* to represent a progressive event in the past:[23]

-   Roland **frɛ ɛ** me no **na** me **re** di mako.[24]

(Roland call-PAST me DEF. Focus M I-PROG-eat pepper)

When Roland called me, I was eating pepper.

Na helps create a context of interaction in the past.

The following utterance is provided Kweku Osam[25]:

Yɛ́-bá-é   no   nna Akosua   ré-sú

1PLU SUBJ-come-COMPL when then Akosua   PROG-cry

When we came, Akosua was crying.

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[22]   The *natural metalanguage* is the internal dynamic grammar of a language. It is the dynamic work occurring within any language. This natural metalanguage – to be distinguished for the scientific metalanguage – is revealed by a set of *operators*, which role is to link units in structural relations or express extralinguistic facts (go, say, dog, one…) and *metaoperators*, which marks *metalinguistic operations*, phenomena occurring within the language, with no direct link with the extralinguistic world (e.g. until, be-ing, the, he, do…).

[23] See Kweku Osam, 2003

[24] The morpheme **na** (in Twi) or (**nna** in Fante) can be translated in English by 'then'. This morpheme *(na/nna)* 'then' is not restricted to the past; it can also be used in the context of future time. : see Kweku Osam, 2003.
[25] 2003, p.8

The concept of *progressive* cannot help decipher the dynamism of *re.* This utterance is a comment on the predicate by the speaker. S/he is giving is point of view, his/her testimony.

4. *Some aspects of predication in Akye*

Akye is a Kwa language spoken in Côte d'Ivoire. It has a rich structure with specific behavior as of the operations of predication. In this part, we will investigate a possible microsystem in the structuring of the predicative node, the nexus[26].

The structural differences – tense, aspect, predication, etc. – are mostly marked by tonal variations and syntagmatic changes:

Mɛ̀ kà ʃɛ̀ (I eat)

I /object/ eat or I am eating

Mɛ̀ ʃè kà (I ate)

I /eat/object or I was eating

These examples show a present/past dichotomy, the object ka closes the paradigm in the second utterance but leaves it open in the first utterance. Here, we can notice that a unique form covers phase 1 and phase 2 predications.

We can notice that there is no predicative morpheme used in Akye to mark the difference in the level of predicative structuring. One form for two facts. A simplification? I tried to understand this phenomenon. I got the following pair of utterances:

- Mɛ̀ fɛ̄ kà ā ʃɛ̀ (I sell)

- Mɛ̀ kà fɛ̄ ē ʃɛ̀ (I am selling)

Fɛ̄ʃi (to sell or 'buy and eat'); fɛ̄ ē ʃɛ̀ (sell: unaccomplished process)

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26   *See the works of Otto von Jespersen and Lucien Tesnière.*

These utterances do display a difference. A syntagmatic restructuring is used to express the comment, the presence of the utterer. The contrast does exist. This contrast is neutralized because the context of interaction helps remove the ambiguity. I can then say, here, that there is a structure simplification.[27]

In the expression of future events, a tonal variation is used to express the open activity of the utterer.

Mɛ́ bʌ̀ dzē (i will go)

1sg+fut/fut/partir

Mɛ̂ bʌ̀ dzē (i shall go)

In the utterances above, the utterer expresses his/her presence with a change in the tonal structure. S/he takes the decision to force a relation that will otherwise not be set.

Akye does show predicative contrast. However, the quasi-exclusive use of prosodic variations and syntagmatic architecture changes in meaning construction certainly accounts for the absence of morphemic marker in the linear chain. The metalinguistic microsystem therefore lies in the uttering act process, the deep structure. It is to be analyzed and captured and explained.

Conclusion

Metaoperational Grammar is a theory devised to account for language phenomena, that is to say, it can be used to work on any language. Henri Adamczewski used the theory to disentangle complex facts in several languages, mostly Indo-European. This article is a step toward a goal set

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[27]   I am grateful to Dr Joseph Yapo BOGNY, an authority in Kwa languages in Côte d'Ivoire, for his clarifications.

by Antoine Culioi: *capturing "langage" through the diversities of language systems.* I have submitted some African languages to the requirements of Metaoperational Grammar. Three Kwa languages have been analyzed. This work is the commencing step toward a deeper understanding of predicative structuring in Kwa languages. A clear microsystem exists: a phase 1 with specific markers (morphemic, prosodic or syntagmatic order) and a phase 2. The latter codes the *utterer within the predicate or the predicative relation.* Other insights, along with analysis of more kwa languages can help theorize and model the predicative reality of Kwa language dynamics.

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