

For or Against Saussure's *Cours de Linguistique Generale*? A Discursive Approach to Alethic Modalities in Ahmadou Kourouma's *Allah is not Obligated*.

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Abstract: A century after Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale*, one is likely to witness enormous progresses in the linguistic field. Far from viewing this constant unrest as debasing, one should rather view it as a reassuring sign of vitality of linguistics. In other words, is *Cours de linguistique générale* dead or still alive with regard to linguistics today?

This paper is intending to exhort the scientific community that Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale* is trans-theoretical. A theory can welcome it or openly reject it, but can never be without it. As a matter of fact, understanding alethic modalities required the mastery of the basic concepts developed in Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale*. Hence, the necessity of having more than ever Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale* in memory and never forget it because it is the rock upon which modern linguistics is built.

Key words: alethic, modality, post-Saussurian, Saussure, trans-theoretical.

Résumé: Un siècle après le *Cours de Linguistique Générale* de Ferdinand de Saussure, l'on peut se rendre compte des énormes progrès opérés en linguistique. Loin de voir ce constant changement comme un signe d'avilissement, l'on gagnerait à y voir un signe rassurant de la vitalité de la linguistique. Dans cette communication, nous espérons exhorter la communauté scientifique que le *Cours de linguistique générale* est le socle invisible de toute théorie linguistique. Par conséquent, le *Cours de linguistique générale* de Saussure ne doit pas être oublié, il doit plutôt réconcilier les théories linguistiques.

En effet, une bonne compréhension de la modalité aléthique exige au préalable la maîtrise des concepts fondamentaux développés par Saussure. D'où la nécessité d'avoir en mémoire le *Cours de linguistique générale* car c'est la pierre de l'angle sur laquelle est bâtie la linguistique moderne.

Mots clés: aléthique, trans-théorique, modalité, Saussure, post-saussure.

Introduction

"Alethic modality is a linguistic modality that indicates modalities of truth, in particular the modalities of logical necessity, possibility or impossibility" according to Eugene Loos and al. (2003). It is often associated with epistemic modality in research, and it has been questioned whether this modality should be considered distinct from epistemic modality which denotes the speaker's evaluation or judgment of the truth. But, its distinctive feature is that alethic modality might then concern what are considered to be apodictic statements. Otherwise, alethic modality is the modality that connotes the speaker's estimation of the logical necessity or possibility of the proposition expressed by his or her utterance.

In which way, does the direct repetition of elements linked to alethic modality influence the understanding of Birahima and of his culture? Can one reasonably link the study of alethic modality to Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale*? What makes still relevant Saussure's *Cours de Linguistique Générale* in linguistics? In a work of three parts, the purpose is to display alethic modality expressed in Ahmadou Kourouma's *Allah is not Obligated*. The first part discusses Authorization as Indice of Alethic Modality and part two is about Verbs and alethic modality. As for part three, it addresses Adverbs and adjectives in expressing alethic modality.

I. Authorization as Indice of Alethic Modality.

The definition of authorization provided by Olga Lavrusheva (2013:48) deserves attention.

Authorization is legitimation by reference to author. Someone (or somewhat, if authority is impersonal) in whom (or in which) institutionalized authority is vested, is recognized by authority. Whether the source of authority is personal or impersonal, this legitimation strategy is stated by mentioning the authority as a subject, as well as by reference to a particular authority.

In Ahmadou Kourouma's *Allah is not obliged*, reference to authority gives it an orientation towards commonness. Interestingly, that authority referred to is mentioned number of times. According to Robert de Beaugrande (1981: 54), this "direct repetition of elements is called recurrence, since the original occurrence merely happens again. Recurrence appears on various levels. [...] When there are more resources and time available for text producer, recurrence is customarily kept within limits. If unduly frequent, it lowers informativity". This statement shows the direct link between recurrence and informativity that is the more recurrent, the least informative. This is not strange because it complies exactly with the notion of alethics. Thus, in this section, a glance at lexical recurrence will show the way alethic modality is expressed in reference to an author.

I.1 Divine Source

One source identified in Ahmadou Kourouma's *Allah is not obliged* is the reference to God as the doer of everything. As Van Leeuwen and Wodak, (1999:104) put it,

Authorization is legitimation by reference to authority. Someone (or somewhat, if authority is impersonal) in whom (or in which) institutionalized authority is vested, is recognized by authority. Whether the source of authority is personal or impersonal, this legitimation strategy is stated by mentioning the authority as a subject, as well as by reference to the particular authority.

Obviously, this divine source has something to do with modality since the reference to God impacts strongly on speakers. The choice of the modality markers can reveal this situation.

For Querler (1996 :9), «Les marqueurs modaux permettent d'interpréter l'attitude du locuteur par rapport au contenu de son assertion»¹. That is stating a source of constrains from opposing what is said. The example that follows shows it somehow:

(1)The full title: **Allah** is not obliged to be fair about all the things he does here on earth. (AINO²: 1).

Welcoming this warning as an axiom will bring reconciliation between mankind and Allah. The reason is that, one will forget and forgive all what is already gone for which we bear grudge against Allah. Alethicity relies on the fact that this opening sequence should be taken for granted. It highlights the sovereignty³ of Allah. Example (1) can be glossed as: Allah does what he wants; he does not do what he does not want. Another apodictic truth is that Allah does everything for his children's goodness. One can notice it in the following example:

¹ Modals help interpret the speaker's attitude in relation to the content of the assertion. (Translation mine)

² Allah is Not Obligated

³ According to Concise Oxford English Dictionary (2009: 1380), Sovereignty means supreme power or authority. It can describe the power of one state or thing over another or the freedom a state or thing has to control itself.

(2) **Allah** does not mete out suffering without cause. **He** makes you suffer here on earth to purify you so that one day he can grant you paradise and eternal happiness. (AINO: 9).

What can be learnt from that observation is that a suffering is but covering happiness, therefore one must bear it. That idea is backed up in what follows.

(3) If **Allah** has ordained that you be miserable here on earth, it is because he has reserved some greater happiness for you in paradise. (AINO: 10).

The utterance that follows states the way Allah oriented actions.

(4) ...but seeing as **God** says thou shalt not kill too much, or at least thou shalt kill less, we stopped killing. (AINO: 56).

Birahima, the child-soldier and the narrator, and his likes stopped killing only because God say not to. One can therefore realize how beliefs influence behaviors. The following assertion helps understand this belief-behavior interconnexion. Echoing this intricate link Shalkowski, (1994:4) put what follows: "I assume that there are truths involving modal qualifications and that truths, in general, are connected with reality". Another source of alethicity is persons. This is what is going to be studied.

I. 2. Human Source

What is intended by human source is the power embedded in a person as opposed to God, as the Supreme Being, the power of which imposes truthness and belief and can be referred to in an argumentation process. In the example that follows:

(5) **Everyone** says education's not worth an old grandmother's fart any more. (AINO: 1).

One sees the indetermination of the subject. It complies with an implicit modality. It is as if X⁴ says education is not worth, Y says said education is not worth and Z says education is not worth. The fact that this idea is spread here and there gives it a certain truthness. It even pairs God's word. As ascertained by the Latin proverb: VOX POPULI, VOX DEI⁵. For Querler (1996 :32), it evidences «L'influence de la détermination du sujet sur l'interprétation d'une propriété à modalité implicite. [...] On peut ainsi considérer qu'il s'agit d'une propriété de l'objet.»⁶ That is, one can replace the different variables by God and restore authority.

For Culioli (1990:181) understanding 'everyone' requires "a central concept, namely, that of individuation". It implies the notion of 'notion' which he defined as: "a complex of physic-cultural representations and should not be equated with lexical labels" (Culioli, 1990:181). As such 'everyone' is a trace of an extraction that is "it consists in singling out an occurrence, that is, isolating it and drawing its spatio-temporal boundaries (in other words, locating it with reference to a situational system)" (Culioli, 1990:182). Thus it appears obvious that 'everyone' refers to a course with low individuation. On the contrary, 'each' has high individuation. Human source is also present in the following proverb.

(6) A proverb "For as long as there's a head on your shoulders, you don't put your headdress on your knee". That's village **customs** for you. (AINO: 3)

(7) According to Black Nigger African Native **customs**, "If your mother...you're cursed". (AINO: 4).

(8) "**Grandmother and Balla** always said she was pretty as a gazelle, pretty as a gouro mask⁷. (AINO: 11)

Alethic modality is at stake in the personality of the sayers because of their virtue and their credibility. In example (8), one learns the attitude of the child Birahima towards anybody comes from them. He is rapt with wonder by their wisdom. In other words, «La modalité,

⁴ X, Y and Z are variables.

⁵ "The voice of the people [is] the voice of God".

⁶ The influence of the determination of the speaker about the interpretation of a property of an implicit modality. [...] One can thus consider that it is a property of the object. (Translation mine).

⁷ One can think of Zamblé because according to TOH (2013:41) the Gouro mask Zamblé is very elegant.

c'est l'expression de l'attitude du locuteur par rapport au contenu propositionnel de son énoncé»⁸ (Querler, 1996:14).

What is obvious is the power granted to that utterance because it originates from knowers. For the child Birahama, Balla, the marabout deserved being believed. His qualities are praised in this sequence:

(9) "**Balla** was a great guy and totally extraordinary. He knew all these countries and other stuff. Allah had given him hundreds of incredible destinies, and talents and opportunities." (AINO: 8)

Rightly the observation of Stubbs (1998: 202) can teach:

I will use the term modality to mean the ways in which language is used to encode meanings such as degrees of certainty and commitment, or alternatively vagueness and lack of commitment, personal beliefs versus generally accepted or taken for granted knowledge. Such language functions to express group membership, as speakers adopt positions, express disagreements with others, make personal and social allegiances and contracts.

In the same way, Sekou the marabout was trusted in virtue of his power. Then the two travelers couldn't but adjust their doing to his words: "For travelers who had seen a dead hare in their path, Friday was the only day he would counsel.

(10) Because Friday is the holy day for Muslims, of the dead, and even of grigri-men. (AINO: 42).

As one would deduce, interpreting the sign of the dead hare complies with what the society has experimentally established as rule. This is alethic modality in the sense that it is rule governed, nonrandom and shows predictability. The dead hare would amount in this context to a Saussurian sign known as symbol⁹. As Anttila (1984: 13) put it:

A symbol is based on a learnt conventional relation, ascribed contiguity, or colligation, between form and meaning. This relation is completely arbitrary, and this is exactly the basic characteristic of the linguistic sign as especially stressed by de Saussure.

One can even draw a parallel with Greimas and Courtes. The semiotic modality, as defined by Greimas and Courtes (1979), of ontological necessity ('having-to-be' and its structural oppositions on the semiotic square which are impossibility ('having-not-to-be'), possibility ('not-having-not-to be') and contingency (not-having-to-be). For Greimas and Courtes (1979: 314), the semiotic square is a basic semiotic structure which describes the interhuman modalities of communication in linguistic terms. A sign is structured within a system in which it may be opposed to its absence, to its opposite or to the absence of its opposite. The alethic modalities (from the Greek 'aletheia': truth, as opposed to error or lying) produce the indispensable social conditions ('having to be') for veridiction or truth-saying. Thus, the dead hare is an indicator of an ontological necessity.

Alethic modality has been seen under the nominal determination. It can also and chiefly be seen in the use of verbal determination. As indicated by Querler (1996 :62)

Le même type de modalité peut être véhiculé par des marqueurs très différents les uns des autres, et de séries de paraphrases discursives

⁸ Modality is the expression of the speaker's attitude in relation to the propositional content of the statement. (Translation mine)

⁹ A symbol is a sign in relation to object (referent) signatum. A symbol is a sign seen as rule or law. Anttila (1984:ix)

peuvent être produites à partir de marqueurs différents de la même modalité¹⁰

These markers in the following section are identified as verbs.

II. Verbs and alethic modality

According to Benveniste (1971:107), “The meaning of a linguistic unit is defined as its capacity to integrate a unit of a higher level”. One will therefore reasonably agree then with Querler (1996:11) who put:

«La portée du marqueur modal dans la phrase est, [...] un paramètre essentiel à prendre en compte dans l’interprétation d’un énoncé modalisé»¹¹. This intricate relationship between form and meaning lead Benveniste (1971:107) put: “Form and meaning thus appear as conjoined properties, given of necessity and simultaneously, and inseparable in the functioning of a language”.

II. 1. Verbs introducing irrefutable facts.

By irrefutable facts, we mean things which become routines. These facts are most often introduced by number of verbs.

(11) Polite kids **are supposed** to listen (AINO: 3).

In this utterance, alethic modality is conveyed by the verb ‘suppose to’. It witnesses what is rightly expected from children. That is, to listen and learn. In the words of Meyer, (2011 :135):

Affirmer une idée, c’est d’abord être capable d’apprécier et de communiquer son degré de crédibilité, et donc d’acceptabilité par autrui. Il est ainsi important de pouvoir la positionner entre deux pôles que sont la certitude et le doute¹².

Another example sheds light on it:

(12) The day he dies, no Muslim **is allowed** to go to his funeral, and they’re **not allowed** to bury his body in the Muslim cemetery. Nobody’s **allowed** to eat the meat of any animal whose throat he slits. (AINO: 8).

The idea is that commonsensical Balla, the marabout, will not draw profit from privileges granted to Muslims because he is not part of them. Alethicity lies in the paraphrase of the modal ‘can’ that is ‘is allowed to’.

(13) The omens **signified** hyenas howling in the mountains, owls crying on the roofs of the huts. (AINO: 13).

‘Signified’ means ‘amounts to’. In saussurean structuralism, a sign is to be interpreted. Then the value of the omens can be established as an exchange between dissimilar things. In the words of Das (2006:10) “Value is always composed of two kinds of comparisons among elements in a system. The first is that dissimilar things can be compared and exchanged”. More accurately, the omen is an index and according to Antilla (1984:13) “An index expresses mainly material relation (factual, existential contiguity) between meaning and form. It is based on psychological association and/or physical juxtaposition of different events and things”

¹⁰ The same modality type can be expressed in a number of ways with different markers and series of discursive paraphrases. (Translation mine).

¹¹ The scope of the modal in the sentence is, [...] an essential parameter to take into account in the interpretation of a modalized utterance. (Translation mine.)

¹² To affirm an idea, is first to be able to appreciate and communicate one’s degree of credibility, and therefore of acceptability by others. It is thus important to be able to position it between two poles that are certainty and doubt. (Translation mine.)

II.2 Verbs expressing alethic modality

(14) Allah **can** do whatever he feels like (AINO: 13).

This utterance (14) has been reworded this ways:

(15) Allah up in heaven **can** do whatever he likes; he doesn't have to be fair about what he does here on earth. (AINO: 21)

It simply means that God is not obliged to accept all our prayers. The same way, spirits are all powerful as the following utterance witnesses it.

(15) The spirits of the ancestors **can** do what they like. (AINO: 13)

In the words of Benveniste, the modal 'can' complies with reality.

Benveniste (1974 :187) réduit l'expression de la modalité aux verbes modaux (il n'envisage la modalité que dans son chapitre sur les auxiliaires): aller, vouloir, falloir, désirer, espérer, et surtout devoir et pouvoir. Il présente la modalité comme «une assertion complémentaire portant sur l'énoncé d'une relation»¹³ (Querler, 1996:50)

(16) Only the grisgris of African healer **can** heal your wound. (AINO: 17).

In the above example, grisgris also are powerful, so powerful that they challenge medicine and science. This recourse to grisgris led Kofi to conclude that: "Muslim characters often find no protection in Islam when they are confronted with material realities" (Kofi Darkoh-Ankrah, 2013: 1). The idea is that, Allah, in his almightiness will not admit any other protector. The two protectors are incompatible because one of the two is compulsorily a fake one. Either, you totally rely on Allah, in which case you strongly oppose other kind or protection or you completely let down Allah and you do with grisgris and their likes.

As it can be seen, what characterizes the modal 'can' is its feature, not oriented towards predication. In short, the modal 'can' deals with the domain of possibility. It is not directed to the realization of the predicate.

The modal 'can' merely signals that there is already a pre-constructed relation between the subject and the predicate. One can easily understand the scarcity of the modal 'may' in the child-soldier's mouth in Kourouma's *Allah is not obliged*. In fact, with the modal 'may', the relation between the subject and the predicate is not inherent hence a greater intervention of the speaker. In what follows, the predication has been negated and this is astonishing for Johnson. This is stated in the following:

(17) I **can't** believe it, it **can't** be true (148).

In fact, Johnson cannot bear that people can live on alms of faithful people. He was sure to have dollars in the convent.

For Pottier, modality can even be evaluated in relation to the tense «Pour Bernard Pottier, l'opposition se situe entre procès ponctuels (éclater) et procès duratifs (savoir)»¹⁴ (Querler, 1996 :20). In example (17), the action is not punctual. Then it sounds accurate to mention that alethic modality takes time to get rooted in people. The consequence is that, once established almost nothing can remove it from people's mind.

The modal 'Must', in the following example can be understood as a condition of happiness for Colonel Papa le Bon.

(18) You **must** do this, it is a necessary sacrifice. (AINO: 68).

In the words of the grigrisman Yacouba, only the sacrifice of two big bulls will pave the way to welfare for Papa le Bon.

¹³ Benveniste (1974:187) reduces modality only to modal verbs. (He even discussed modality only in the chapter devoted to auxiliaries): go, will, shall, desire, hope, and chiefly must and can. He presents modality as "a complementary assertion about the relation". (Translation mine).

¹⁴ For Bernard Pottier, the opposition lies between punctual process (to explode) and lasting process (to know).

In this context, the modal 'Must' is a pragmatic one. It carries the meaning of obligation. The enunciator imposes a constraint (a predicate) on the co-enunciator. One can easily show that 'must' is derived from 'may' through a double negation: you-may not— not do this. Then (18) can be glossed as: you may not— not do this. As put by Toh (2012:6), "Must = may not not".

Another token of alethic modality is perceptible in the verb tense.

By its choice of verb tense, discourse clearly distinguishes itself from historical narration. Discourse freely employs all the personal forms of the verb, I/you as well as he. Explicit or not, the relationship of person is everywhere present.

(Benveniste, 1971: 209).

Arguably, the present tense can be said to be a refrain in Kourouma's *Allah is not obliged* starting by the title itself.

(19) Allah **is** not obliged to be fair about all the things he **does** here on earth. (AINO:1)

(20) Because Allah **doesn't** have to be fair in all the things he **does** (AINO: 156).

In (19) and (20), the present tenses display facts that are atemporal. They are apodictic and somehow axioms. In the same line, the use of the modal 'will' is instructive.

(21) You might as well amputate baby citizens because they **ll be** voters (AINO: 165)

For Toh (2012:7) "'will' belongs to the basic English modals. Like 'can' 'will' is plus inherent (+i) and unlike 'can' 'will' is plus O Pred (+ O Pred)." Argumentatively, Querler mentioned «Le futur ici marque une relation d'autorité entre le locuteur et l'interlocuteur, de façon analogue à un impératif. Temporalité et modalité dans cet énoncé sont très liées»¹⁵ (Querler, 1996: 16). Corporal Foday Sankof is displaying his power when ordering arms of any Sierra Leone citizen to be cut off. Babies are not exempted because they will grow old. Querler (1996:30) called this a future of characterization.

Le futur de caractérisation est donc un paramètre favorisant l'interprétation de l'énoncé comme l'assertion d'une propriété, et comme véhiculant une modalité du possible¹⁶.

Quoting again Querler (1996:15), one can see there is not a unique way of expressing alethic modality:

L'expression de la modalité se fait au moyen de différents marqueurs: des verbes modaux (pouvoir, devoir, falloir, ...), des adverbes (peut-être, sans doute, heureusement...), des tiroirs verbaux (subjonctifs, impératif...), des subordonnées (conditionnelles, concessives...) ¹⁷.

The truth of this variety of expression of alethic modality leads to discuss adjectives and adverbs in connection with that modality.

III. Adverbs and adjectives in expressing alethic modality.

Adjectives and adverbs are also carriers of modality as evidenced in examples that follow.

III.1. Adverbs in the expression of alethic modality.

The adverb 'only' in the example (21) conveys an idea of a commonsensical belief.

¹⁵ The future here marks a relation of authority between the speaker and the interlocutor, analogous to an imperative. Temporality and modality in this utterance are closely bound. (Translation mine.)

¹⁶ The future of characterization is therefore a parameter encouraging the interpretation of the utterance as the assertion of a property and as conveying modality of possibility. (Translation mine.)

¹⁷ Modality is expressed in different ways : with modal verbs (can, must, shall, ...), with adverbs (maybe, probably, fortunately,...) with mode indicators (subjunctive, imperative), with subordinate clauses (conditional, concessive).

(21) I suppose I should apologize for talking right at you like this, on account of how I'm **only** a kid. (AINO: 3)

We use **only** as an adverb to mean that there is just one or very few ways. Normally, kids don't speak. Only old people should speak because of their knowledge. The unstated idea being that talking is for old men with big beards. For Hagège, (1985: 269) only the knowers speak and children are but know-nothings. Even their big heads are full of nothing. «Ce n'est pas par hasard que le souverain est qualifié de *tlatoni*: à l'origine de son pouvoir, il y a l'art de parler, les palabres au sein du conseil, l'habileté et la dignité de ces discours pompeux et images»¹⁸. Probably the warning of Habermas will enlighten: "Finally, the cultural tradition must interpret the lifeworld in such a way that action oriented to success be freed from the imperatives" (Habermas, 2004: 72). One of the imperative here is the age limit.

Alethic modality is also present in wronging women in Kourouma's *Allah is not Obligated*.

(22)The woman is **always** wrong (AINO: 26). That's what they call women's rights. The time adverb 'always' shows the debasing status of women. This status is mockingly called women's right. There is no way for them to pretend rightness. This adverb of time 'always' shows how far "Much language use is routine" (Stubbs, 1998: 41). It is in line with the given context and it works as mathematic axiom. He worded it as follows: "Once someone speaks to you, you are in a relatively determined context and you are not free just to say what you please. We are born individuals. But to satisfy our needs we have to become social persons ... it is [in] the study of conversation... that we shall find the key to a better understanding of what language really is and how it works". (Stubbs, 1998: 41). For Firth (1935:66) "Conversations are much more of a roughly prescribed ritual than most people think".

Another adverb is worth mentioning. It is the time adverb 'never' which means 'not ever', 'at no time'.

(23) Allah **never** leaves empty a mouth (AINO: 35).

What can be learnt from (23) is that Allah is the provider and he indeed always provide. Then, Birahima and his likes are right to say that the optimism grows so fatter that anything that happens will be minimized.

(24)This is **simply** another ordeal (AINO: 10). In short, minimization of the misfortune is the key to happiness.

The frequency adverb mostly in (24) states a principle in the way things are ordinarily done.

(25) **Mostly**, things don't happen like that. **Mostly**, the bike or the car or whatever whatever stops dead when the kid makes the signal and doesn't go past him even one inch. (AINO: 46).

One will therefore hesitatingly agree with Diodore. "Diodore Cronos réduit donc la modalité à la temporalité. Il réduit le nécessaire à **toujours**, le possible à **parfois**, et l'impossible comme le non-nécessaire à un **jamais**. (Querler, 1996: 39).

What is normal for the muslim child Birahima was to learn the Qu'an. Unexpectedly Balla, the marabout is doing and teaching him something else.

(26) I was always skipping classes to be a street kid or to go hunting in the forest with Balla, who was teaching me hunting and animism and magic **instead of** teaching me holy word of Allah from the Qu'an. (AINO: 28)

As it appears, alethic modality is present in adverbs. What about adjectives?

¹⁸ It is not by chance that the sovereign is known as *tlatoni*. At the origin of his/her power, there is the art of speaking, endless discussions within the council, cleverness and dignity of these pompous speeches and images. (Translation mine.)

III. 2. **Adjectives expressing alethic modality**

The observation of Stubbs (1996: 202) about modality and definition is worth to be recalled.

I will use the term modality to mean the ways in which language is used to encode meaning such as degrees of certainty and commitment, or alternatively vagueness and lack of commitment, personal beliefs versus generally accepted or taken for granted knowledge. Such language functions to express group membership, as speakers adopt positions, express disagreements with others, make personal and social allegiances and contracts.

A kind of commitment and social contracts is visible in the hope shared by believers.

(27) We were **optimistic** because Allah in his infinite goodness never leaves empty a mouth he has created.” (AINO: 54).

The adjective ‘optimistic’ meaning according to the Concise Oxford English Dictionary ‘hopeful and confident about the future (of an estimate) unrealistically high’ conveyed the idea that even though, apparently nothing is clear for them in terms of things to eat, Birahima and his likes expect God intervention, they rely on providence. That strong knowledge is taught to them by faith and experience.

(28) It is **obvious**: someone with no arms couldn’t vote. (AINO: 165).

The adjective ‘obvious’ complying with evidentiality is relevant here. As it can be seen, alethic modality can be conveyed in a number of ways.

As a matter of fact, the adjective ‘obvious’ meaning according to the Concise Oxford English Dictionary, easily perceived or understood; clearly complies with alethic modality. A surest way of voting is with arms. Then, how to picture voting without arms? Almost impossible even if people managed to vote un-armed according to the child-soldier narration. As put Stubbs (1998:43) “Language in use transmits culture”. One way of understanding the child-soldier is that in his culture, if you have no arms, then no voting for you.

(29) Balla was a great guy and totally **extraordinary**.

The adjective ‘extraordinary’ qualifying the grisgris man Balla prepared minds in accepting anything will come from him. As if the adjective ‘extraordinary’ by itself were not sufficiently expressive, it collocates with the adverb ‘totally’ deriving from the adjective total meaning ‘comprising the whole number or amount’. That is the power of the marabout Balla makes him an exception as a human being.

Conclusion

Understanding alethic modalities will not only help one forget the past but also and chiefly forgive for the past misfortune one has probably blamed the Lord for. Obviously, if one has forgiven Lord, he has to forgive human beings. If a brother hurts me, it is because Allah has allowed it.

Moreover, as theories grow and are soon abandoned, Saussure’s linguistics can still be perceived in this study of alethic modalities embedded in enunciation. Thus, one should see structuralism not only as a mere ingredient giving taste to the supper but as the theory without which we fall in nothingness.

Rightly, Benveniste, one of the pioneers of enunciation, declared himself an heir of Saussure. However, emphasis should also be on limitations in the kind of study presented here. It has not been possible to study all the theories in wholeness to certify the inevitability of structuralism and therefore the necessity for linguists to get reconciled at least around Saussure’s *Cours de linguistique générale*.

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