

# Subjectivity in Kwa languages: the case of Anyi spoken in Côte d'Ivoire

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## Introduction

The *Anyi* language is one of the Volta-Bandama major languages in Côte d'Ivoire. It is made of different varieties, among which is *Anyi-djuablin* spoken in the area of Agnibilékrou (in the eastern part of the country) located a few miles away from the border between Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. The phenomenon of subjectivity in this variety is striking, yet it seems to have not been subject to many studies.

Subjectivity, as will be seen in the process of this paper is expressed through specific phenomena such as quantification, namely, noun quantification with a remarkable emphasis on the adjunction of specific morphemes to the quantifier. If this hypothesis is accurate, we may postulate different degrees of endorsement of the speaker following the quantifier used.

Our analysis will then try to shed light on the phenomenon of endorsement (expression of subjectivity) in the *Anyi-djuablin* language, through the notion of quantification. The aim is to identify some traces highlighting the presence of the speaker so as to see how his/her view varies following different degrees of endorsement in his utterances. This work will be considered in the framework of *Uttering Act Theories* which are linguistic trends stressing on the actualisation of language by speakers.

We first intend to survey the concept of subjectivity through what is known as endorsement; then, we shall try to characterize quantifiers in *Anyi-djuablin* so as to see how the quantifiers in question are liable to express subjectivity.

### I. Subjectivity in *uttering act theories*

General linguistics is addressed through two different approaches. The first involves the concept of "*langue*" and is investigated by theories such as structuralism and generative grammar while the second refers to "*parole*" which is the subject of uttering act theories. These theories are in turn twofold: a pragmatic approach on the one hand and a grammatical approach on the other hand. The grammatical approach is the one we are interested in. Some of its forerunners are Wilhelm Gustav, Humboldt, Gustave Guillaume, Roman Jakobson, Emil Benveniste and Antoine Culioli. Benveniste<sup>1</sup> for instance states that communication is the factor which best illustrates the utterer with reference to intersubjectivity.

In fact, the common issue underlying these theories is the search for linguistic device (modals, shifters etc.) through which the utterer endorses his/her utterance. This means that through the use of these device the utterer's view can be implicitly or explicitly noticed in his utterance. Three trends are known in these theories that are led by Gustave Guillaume<sup>2</sup>, Antoine Culioli<sup>3</sup> and Henri Adamczewski<sup>4</sup>. We shall consider Culioli's vision in this paper.

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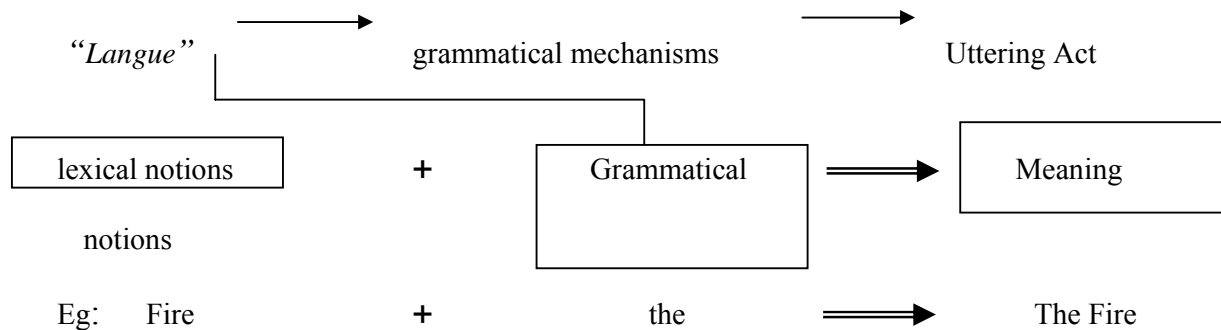
<sup>1</sup> Benveniste Emile. *Problemes de linguistique générale*. Paris, Gallimard, 1966 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition).

<sup>2</sup> Guillaume Gustave is the leading figure of Psychomechanics.

<sup>3</sup> Culioli has initiated the Theory of Lexis.

<sup>4</sup> He is the gather of Metaoperational grammar.

Uttering Act theories recognize meaning as a significant key to emphasize when the speaker is involved in the process of language production. In these theories, the construction of utterances relies on various operations that are activated by the utterer. Culioli believes in the concepts of surface and deep structure, but views them with reference to structuring operations. In fact, the production of utterances involves three complementary levels. The first level takes into account a set of three notional entities called notions. Culioli defines the notion as a bundle of physical and cultural properties. The notions are both grammatical and lexical. They are neither constructed nor conceptualised. The relationship between grammatical and lexical notions helps delimitate the meaning of an utterance. It should be understood that lexical notions bear a semantic content that can be qualified as primitive, while grammatical notions have a void semantic content. These notions acquire a specific meaning with the involvement of the utterer in the context. This can be understood as follows:



Meaning is therefore the result of a construction that takes both into account grammatical and lexical notions. The notions we are referring to are represented by Culioli through what he calls lexis, which is as follows:  $\langle \xi_0, \xi_1, JI \rangle$ . The lexis is a propositional schema not yet validated or grammaticalized in which  $\xi_0$  is known as the first argument,  $\xi_1$  the second argument, and JI: the variable serving as operator of predication. JI refers to the binding operator that builds up the predicative node. The lexis is not an utterance; it is neither asserted nor unasserted. It is a form that just has a propositional content and liable to generate derived families of utterances.

The second level is called the assignment level. It consists in assigning lexical units to void places according to the primitive relations inherent to physical and cultural properties.

Eg:  $\langle \text{John, speak, English} \rangle$  is still virtual.

This second level, together with the first one are qualified as pre-assertive. The third level is the assertive level where the utterer endorses his own utterances. This is the place where all possible operations are activated in line with the produced utterance, that is, in concrete situations of communication. That was a brief overview of Uttering Act theories under Culioli's model. At this level, the issue of subjectivity can be addressed.

The subject we are interested in here is the one that applies to Uttering Act theories. In syntax, this is to say in structural and transformational grammar, the subject plays a syntactic function in the sentence, whereas in discourse theories like uttering act, the subject is identified as the utterer. In fact, the utterer is not viewed with bare eyes in the utterance but is assumed to be present through some forms such as modals, the use of pronouns like "I", inflective forms, etc. As far as Culioli is concerned, subjectivity is manifested through specialized grammatical categories that state the relationship between the utterer and his utterance. These grammatical categories are referred to as persons, modals, tense, deitics, etc.

As can be noted, subjectivity, understood as the endorsement of the utterance by the utterer through some grammatical and lexical forms, is of great significance. The utterance is therefore the result of structuring operations that are activated by the utterer. It differs from the formal structure of the sentence and takes into account all the intentions and situations of utterance. The utterer is free to decide whether he/she should be implicitly or explicitly present in his/her utterance. In any uttering act, several parameters are to be considered, among which are:

- the situation of the utterance : Sit<sup>0</sup>
- the moment of the utterance : T
- the moment of the process of utterance defined with reference to both the utterer and the co-utterer: T
- the utterer, considered as the origin of the utterance: S
- the subject of the utterance itself: S

The analysis of the notion of **utterer** is of great help to the characterization of noun quantifiers (N-quantifiers).

## II. Characterization of the quantifiers (N-quantifiers)

As specified in the introduction, our analysis focuses on noun quantifiers, may they be countable or uncountable. In the English language, noun quantifiers are classified as follows:

<p>N<sup>5</sup>— uncountable          Some/any money          (a) little money          Most of the money          A lot of / much money          All the money          No money            Enough money</p>	<p>N – countable          Some / any books          (a) few books          Most books          A lot of / many books          All books          No books          Each / every book          Enough books</p>
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It can be noted that most of the above mentioned quantifiers are both countable and uncountable. Using one of them in an utterance subsumes that the utterer is well informed of the situation or context. They are therefore used to bring much determination to the noun they go with and so help comment on the noun in question.

We suggest we would analyse these quantifiers in the *Anyi djuablin* language and see how they behave. It is important to note that we have grouped the quantifiers following a certain progression going from the smallest quantity to the highest. Let's consider the following characterizations:

### II.1. No (uncountable / countable) / None (countable / uncountable)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| eg <sub>1</sub> : He has no money (uncountable)            | eg <sub>1</sub> : w <sup>h</sup> ɔʒE sika fi              |
| eg <sub>2</sub> : They have no houses (countable)          | eg <sub>2</sub> : bE lE swa fi                            |
| eg <sub>3</sub> : None of them came (countable)            | eg <sub>3</sub> : bE bie fi(h <sup>h</sup> ) aama         |
| eg <sub>4</sub> : It's none of your business (uncountable) | eg <sub>4</sub> : nã w <sup>h</sup> jrE fi h <sup>h</sup> |

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<sup>5</sup> N-stands for noun.

The equivalent of **NO** in *Anyi* is : fi  
**None** refers to: fi hɔ

II.2. (A) Little(Uncountable) / (A) Few(countable)

eg<sub>1</sub>: They have (a) little money

eg<sub>2</sub>: There are (a) few yams for sale

There are four (4) equivalents that are:

kã<sup>6</sup> means (little / few) while ti→ stands for (a little / a few)

then we have two other forms that are ti→pɔ and ti→ pɔlia pɔ

eg'<sub>1</sub>: bE IE sika ti→

eg''<sub>1</sub>: bE IE sika ti→ pɔ

eg'<sub>2</sub>: bE su→ yɔ Elue ti→ pɔlia pɔ atɔi

II.3. Some / Any (both are used either as countable or uncountable)

eg<sub>1</sub>: Give me some oranges (countable)

eg<sub>2</sub>: Give me some water to drink (uncountable)

eg<sub>3</sub>: Did you buy any shoes ? (countable)

eg<sub>4</sub>: Do you need any drink? (uncountable)

The equivalent of *Some* is still: kã, but it is used here both as countable and uncountable and stands for a quantifier.

As for *Any* it equates: klɔa and klɔa klɔa

eg'<sub>1</sub>: mã mi→ domwã kã

eg'<sub>2</sub>: mã mi→ nzue kã mã nɔ→

eg'<sub>3</sub>: asu E tɔli mabwa klɔa

eg'<sub>4</sub>: asu E klo nzã klɔa klɔa

II.4. Most (of) / Enough (Both are used as countable and uncountable)

eg<sub>1</sub>: Most animals are dangerous (countable)

eg<sub>2</sub>: Most of the drink is mine (uncountable)

eg<sub>3</sub>: I want enough chairs for the meeting (countable)

eg<sub>4</sub>: I want enough water for my bath (uncountable)

**Most** could refer to: pi→mbi→, dɔɔ or su→mã

**Enough** refers to: dɔɔ

eg'<sub>1</sub>: nã pi→mbi→ bE wɔ yɔ sro (dɔɔ and su→mã are used too)

eg'<sub>2</sub>: nzã dɔɔ ti mi→ diE

eg'<sub>3</sub>: bE mã mi→ bia su→mã mã yE yɔ yE anyia

eg'<sub>4</sub>: bE mã mi→ nzue dɔɔ mã nva mia

II.5. A lot of(countable) / Many(countable) / Much(uncountable)

eg<sub>1</sub>: There are a lot of boys here (countable)

eg<sub>2</sub>: There is a lot time to go (uncountable)

eg<sub>3</sub>: Many persons are living in this house (countable)

eg<sub>4</sub>: He drinks much palm wine(uncountable)

The above three quantifiers refer to: pi→mbi→ pa

eg'<sub>1</sub>: matrã pi→mbi→ pa wɔ Ewa

eg'<sub>2</sub>: tEmɔ→ pi→mbi→ pa wa ha

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<sup>6</sup> kã used as countable is an adjective while it becomes a quantifier when it is used as uncountable.

- eg'3: swrã pi→mbi→ pa bE w<sub>h</sub> awle he nu  
 eg'4: w<sub>h</sub> n<sub>h</sub>→ nzã pi→mbi→ pa.  
 II.6. **All** (countable / uncountable)  
 eg<sub>1</sub>: All the drink belongs to him (uncountable)  
 eg<sub>2</sub>: All the trees get dry in the drying season (countable)  
 “All” refers to three variables: kl<sub>h</sub>a, kl<sub>h</sub>a ti→ and kl<sub>h</sub>a kl<sub>h</sub>a  
 eg'1: nzã kl<sub>h</sub>a tii diE  
 eg'2: maka m<sub>h</sub> kl<sub>h</sub>a kl<sub>h</sub>a bE u→ wawa nu→

This brief overview leads to few remarks:

1° No distinctions are noticed between countable and uncountable nouns in *Anyi djuablin*, just the notion of quantity is significant. This is shown through the same form expressing quantity for both countable and uncountable nouns.

2° As long as the degree of quantity increases, there are remarkable similarities that are noticed. Two cases can be quoted : the first one is the shift from **(most/enough)** to **(a lot of/many/much)**. *Pîmbî* appears as a common element to both realities: it can refer to the two couples **most / enough** and **a lot of/many/much**.

The second case is the shift from **some/any** to **all**, where kl<sub>h</sub>a kl<sub>h</sub>a is the common denominator.

3° Some forms stand for further intensity with additional elements while others are just duplicated.

One striking case of additional elements is noticed with ti→, ti→ p<sub>h</sub> and ti→ p<sub>h</sub>lia p<sub>h</sub>. Besides, duplication is noted with kl<sub>h</sub>a and kl<sub>h</sub>a kl<sub>h</sub>a.

These remarks will be crucial to the last part of the study as they could probably show the linguistic status of the expression of subjectivity through the quantifiers.

### III. Expressing subjectivity with quantifiers

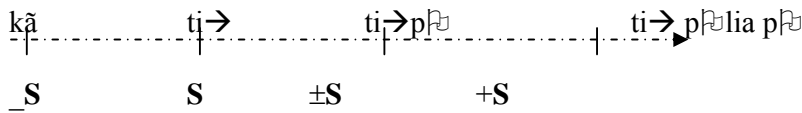
Under this subheading, we shall use symbols like S<sup>-7</sup>, S<sup>±8</sup>, and S<sup>+9</sup> to indicate the degree of subjectivity according to the form used. The units to be analysed will be considered following the order established in the second part of the work.

#### III.1. No / None



The primary form *fi* indicates a certain degree of subjectivity which is not intensified while the additional morpheme *h<sub>h</sub>* is what strengthens the utterer's view in his utterance. In fact, *h<sub>h</sub>* means that the noun it quantifies is of less significance.

#### III.2. (A) Little / (A) Few



<sup>7</sup> S<sup>-</sup>, means “lower degree” of endorsement of the utterer.

<sup>8</sup> S<sup>±</sup> stands for “average degree” of endorsement of the utterer.

<sup>9</sup> S<sup>+</sup> refers to “higher degree” of endorsement of the utterer.



The study of the quantifiers in *Anyi djuablin* offers much insight into the concept of subjectivity which shows the operations that are completed by the utterer. In fact, to express subjectivity, the utterer indulges in a number of operations according to the situation at stake. These operations (that are peculiar to the principles of uttering act theories) can be summarized as follows:

- addition (h<sub>ti</sub>, ti → and pa)
- duplication
- scanning operation
- emphasis
- specification

These are some of the operations the utterer performs with view of expressing his endorsement. This means that even though the same form is used indifferently to express quantification, it should be noted that the utterer's vision is indispensable, hence the grammar of operations as described in this study.

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