



Questioning the exclusive categorization of ‘*beaucoup*’ as an adverb in the analysis of Saa, caari, and cieri in the Nafara language

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Abstract

This article is a critical approach to the metalanguage and theoretical tools used to reflect on the way saa, caari and cieri function in nafara, a variety of Senufo, a language of the gur language-family of Côte d’Ivoire (West Africa). In an article, those linguistic units seem to be isolated and somewhat mistakenly categorized either as adverbs of quantity or of degree exclusively by two analysts of the Nafara language. Thus, the current article tries to question to some extent the relevance of the logic which guided the reasoning adopted in the article under criticism. It also tries to demonstrate that the irrelevance of the reasoning originates in the falseness of the premise adopted at the inception of their analysis. This article finally shows an alternative way which could help analyze saa, caari and cieri in Nafara differently.

Keywords: parallax error, adverb of degree, adverb of quantity, nominal determination, lexeme

Introduction

A common belief in linguistics and grammar is that words are very often categorized based on syntactic, semantic and morphological criteria. A simplistic approach to figure out the category or class of words may also be a quick reference to dictionary entries. Those approaches to word categorization or classification often tend to disregard the criticality of the analyst’s judgement freed of pre-conceived ideas and actual uses or occurrences of the words to be categorized in specific contexts or co-texts. Failure to conduct a context-based analysis of a language fact may be misleading. That may be what happened to some analysts of the Nafara language.

Thus, this article is to be regarded as a meta-analysis of the functioning of *saa*, *caari* and *cieri*, three linguistic units mistakenly categorized as adverbs of quantity and of intensity by Diarassouba Sidiki and Yéo Kanabein Oumar, two analysts of Nafara, a language of the Gur language-family spoken in Côte d’Ivoire. Conducted within the framework of an article, Diarassouba and Yéo’s analysis of those three units was published in issue # 13 of the online journal of the *Laboratoire des Théories et Modèles Linguistiques (LTML)* hosted by Université Félix Houphouët-Boigny de Cocody (Côte d’Ivoire). Thus, a thorough review of Diarassouba and Yéo’s approach triggered the current article whose aim is to draw the attention of the analyst of Nafara, in general, to the need for a reconsideration of the syntactico-semantic categorization of *saa*, *caari* and *cieri*.

The current article mainly targets the metalanguage and the theoretical tools used to analyze the linguistic units whose categorization is questioned herein. For, technically, the metalanguage and the theoretical tools referred to right above seem to be counter-productive in the sense that they are used to present *saa*, *caari* and *cieri* as being exclusively adverbs with regard to their syntactic distributions in some sentences in which they occur. Hence the central research question which consists in figuring out whether those

linguistic units are properly categorized, that is categorized with accuracy, with regard to their occurrences.

With a view to puzzling out the problem raised by the central question, this research is primarily grounded within the framework of Antoine Culioli’s Theory of Enunciative Operations whose object is “ l’activité de langage appréhendée à travers la diversité des langues naturelles (et à travers la diversité des textes, oraux ou écrits) (Culioli, 2000 p.14)”. Additionally, and to a lesser extent, the research resorts to Noam Chomsky’s Generative Syntax, Gustave Guillaume’s Psychomechanics and finally to a Dependency Grammar Theory, that is, Igor Melchuk’s Meaning-Text Theory, to run a pre-analysis of the corpus before its ultimate analysis through the major theoretical framework of this study.

To that effect, this article is divided into three major parts. In the first, the theoretical framework, the research methodology and the corpus are presented. In the second one, I account for the data of the corpus, point out the parallax error which caused the analysts of Nafara to isolate the linguistic unit ‘*beaucoup*’ from ‘*de*’ and mistakenly categorize it as an adverb irrespective of the phrase the two units seem to form with regard to the somewhat obvious syntactic dependency between them. In the third part, within a discussion, I conduct a contrastive analysis of *saa*, *caari* and *cieri* and some determination operators of the English language with the aim of bringing out the similarities between their functioning based on their syntactic distributions and their semantics.

1. Theoretical Framework, Research Methodology and Corpus

In this part of the paper, I first and foremost briefly present a few basic concepts and theoretical tools needed to work out the issue of nominal determination as it is approached to within the framework of Antoine Culioli’s Theory of Enunciative Operations, the major theoretical framework of the study. That presentation of the theoretical framework

encompasses the tools of the other additional theories mentioned above. Finally, that part ends up with the presentation of the research methodology and of the corpus.

1.1 Theoretical Framework

In the French School of Discourse Analysis, Antoine Culioli's Theory is categorized as a theory of Enunciation that is a theory of the utterer. Enunciation is therefore regarded as an approach to human language analysis which features the utterer and his discourse as its center of interest. Thus, within the framework of the Theory of Enunciative Operations, Culioli identifies four noun categories namely the *discrete*, the *dense*, the *compact*, and finally *noun recategorization* which makes it possible to shift from one noun category to another one by means of some metalinguistic operators.

Nouns relevant to the category of the *discrete* (such as *pig, pen, car, house, book, girl*, etc.) are discontinuous and they form discrete units meaning that they are likely to be individuable. Their occurrences are likely to be stripped off or counted. That's why the distributional classes constructed with discrete units can be extractable. As for the units forming part of the category of the *dense* (such as *bread, milk, grass, dust, luggage, advice*, etc), they are not likely to lend themselves to individuation. However, they may be extracted by means of a classifier or a partitive operator. As for the nominals relevant to the category of the *compact* (such as *bitterness, inflation, love, courage*, etc.), they do not allow any extraction.

Antoine Culioli also postulated the existence of four major types of nominal determination operations. Those operations are *Reference to the Notion*, *Extraction*, *Pinpointing* and *Scanning*. As such, *Reference to the Notion* is a qualitative operation by means of which reference is purely and qualitatively made to the notional significance of a nominal element. That operation is noted *Qlt* and lexically marked by the presence of a void article \emptyset (Cote *et al.*, 1993 p.74). As for the *Extraction operation*, it is fundamentally perceived as a quantitative operation noted *Qnt*, *a* being the linguistic trace of it. (Cote *et al.*, 1993 p.78). Regarding the *Pinpointing operation*, it is also a qualitative operation noted *Qlt* whose linguistic mark is *the*. Additionally, it is to be noted that the *Pinpointing operation* can target noun categories like */discrete/*, the */compact/* or the */dense/*. The *Pinpointing operation* is a second hand operation in the sense that it presupposes a first hand operation that is an extraction which takes place prior to it (Idem, 1993 p.85). As for the fourth operation which is *Scanning*, it consists in reviewing all the classes of occurrences associated with a given nominal notion.

Taking into consideration the syntactic distributions of the linguistic units of Nafara under study seems to be paramount to ensure a meta-analytical side of the current research paper. To that effect, I intend to resort to two transformational rules of Chomsky's Generative Syntax to feature the syntactic functioning of the French and English translations of *saa*, *caari* and *cieri*. The transformational rules referred to here are *deletion* and *movement*.

In addition, I will resort to the lexicological and semantic components of Meaning-Text Theory to shed light on the non-compositionality of the nominals whose occurrences on the linear order are determined by *saa*, *caari* and *cieri*. As a result of that, the analysts of Nafara will arguably be invited to consider the French translations of *saa*, *caari* and *cieri* as

non-compositional phrasal lexemes.

Finally, I will resort to Gustave Guillaume's psychomechanics, especially to the psychomechanism of the ontogenesis of the word to better grasp the order of conceivability of *saa*, *caari* and *cieri* and the nominal notions the occurrences of which they determine on the surface structure.

1.2 Research Methodology and Data Analysis

In order to be able to generalize the findings of this research, the major methods used will be deduction and induction.

1.2.1 Deduction, Induction and generalization

The first research methodology, that is, the deductive method consisted in resorting to the linguistic theories mentioned earlier on, that is, the Theory of Enunciative Operations and the other theories. By resorting to those theories, I intended to scrutinize the concealed syntactic and discursive side of the units of Nafara as formerly analyzed by Diarrassouba and Yéo. That first step of the methodology was followed by an empirical validation of the findings which stem from the theoretical approach to *saa*, *caari* and *cieri*. The empirical validation consisted in collecting lexical data from native speakers of Nafara, namely in the Greater Korhogo Region, through discussions and interviews. The final goal of that empirical validation was to gather enough facts enabling future generalization of the findings so as to give shape to the induction phase.

The second methodology consisted in working with a sample of nine native speakers of Nafara. The sample was made up with three categories of speakers. The first category comprised uneducated speakers, while the second was made up with fairly educated speakers with a secondary education level. The last category was made up with scholars, that is, highly educated speakers including the two analysts of Nafara whose work is being criticized.

1.2.1 The corpus

The corpus comprises three categories of data. The first category is made up with French and English translations of Nafara utterances and sentences. The second category is a set of Nafara sentences, and the third one was formed taking some utterances and phrases in English.

The sentences and utterances of the first and second categories of data were entirely borrowed from Diarrassouba and Yéo, the two analysts whose work is under criticism. As for the utterances and phrases of the third category, they were borrowed from other sources where they were submitted to other types of analyses. The latter utterances and phrases were used in this article because their relevance for the current study seems justified.

2. Results: presentation and analysis of the data of the corpus

2.1 Parallax error in the categorization of the lexeme containing the linguistic unit «beaucoup»

2.1.1 Isolation and erroneous categorization of «beaucoup» as an adverb

First and foremost, let's recall the questionable sentences whose interpretation by the two analysts of Nafara was considered as a parallax error or a guesswork of the functioning of the French translation of *saa*, *caari* and *cieri* in an utterance or in discourse. Those questionable

sentences are (1), (2) and (4) below. Apparently, on referring to the footnotes of their original article, the sentences were borrowed from another author and submitted to their own interpretation.

1. Il a mangé beaucoup de pain.
2. Il a lu beaucoup de livres.
3. Il aime beaucoup cet auteur.
4. Il éprouve beaucoup de respect pour son père.

At the outset, it seems relevant, in my analysis, to leave out sentence (3) for the mere reason that in that sentence the linguistic unit ‘*beaucoup*’ is unquestionably an adverb. Consequently, in my analysis, the emphasis will rather be laid upon the three other sentences singled out above.

In the three problematic utterances, isolating the linguistic unit ‘*beaucoup*’ with a view to categorizing it as an adverb looks like a biased analysis. That biased analysis might originate in an out-of-context labelling of parts of speech which is a common practice in most traditional and pedagogical grammars. That categorization of the unit ‘*beaucoup*’ in the utterances proposed by the two analysts of Nafara also recalls raw dictionary entries which do not necessarily take into account the elements of the extra-linguistic world or of the co-text of linguistic units for meaning construction in discourse. Such an analysis may easily qualify as a parallax error likely to disrupt the validity of the postulate upon which lays the whole fabric of the reasoning of the two authors.

If we thus take for granted that ‘*beaucoup*’ is an adverb in

sentences (1), (2) and (4), according to the word of the authors whose article is under criticism, the phrases ‘*de pain*’, ‘*de livres*’ and ‘*de respect*’ would then be the respective objects of the verbs of those sentences. Apparently, those phrases being prepositional phrases, their syntactic function would consequently be indirect object. If that happens to be the case, then this would be inappropriate to the point where the verbs ‘*manger*’, ‘*lire*’ and ‘*éprouver*’ which are respectively linked to those prepositional phrases do not, under normal circumstances, select indirect objects. As a matter of fact, those verbs are rather two-place verbs and therefore govern two arguments or participants.

For, it is a well-established knowledge in linguistics, namely in dependency grammars, which can easily help figure out the valency of verbs, and even in normative and pedagogical grammars, that ‘*manger*’, ‘*lire*’ and ‘*éprouver*’ in French rather select direct objects. Then, how come those verbs are associated with so called ‘*implicit*’ objects categorized as indirect objects according to Diarrassouba and Yéo’s words? What might that inaccurate analysis proposed by the two analysts of Nafara imply both syntactically and semantically?

To answer those two questions, let’s resort to a theoretical tool of Chomsky’s Generative Syntax. By theoretical tool here we mean transformational rules, namely *deletion* and *movement*. The application of those transformational rules to the sentences singled out above yields the transformed sentences in the boxes below.

Table 1: Illustration of the transformation of deletion and movement of the linguistic unit «*beaucoup*»

Deletion	Movement
(1') *Il a mangé <i>e</i> ₁ de pain.	(1'') *Beaucoup ₁ , il a mangé <i>t</i> ₁ de pain.
(2') *Il a lu <i>e</i> ₂ de livres.	(2'') *Beaucoup ₂ , il a lu <i>t</i> ₂ de livres.
(4') *Il éprouve <i>e</i> ₄ de respect [...].	(4'') *Beaucoup ₄ , il éprouve <i>t</i> ₄ de respect [...].

We understand that sentence (4) yielded sentences (4') and (4''). However, to ensure an effective overall analysis, the prepositional phrase ‘*pour son père*’ must be disregarded here since its relevance does not seem to be justified. Furthermore, it could be added that syntactically, ‘*beaucoup*’ is an adjunct, that is, an optional or non obligatory constituent which could be deleted or moved without causing any semantic mis-interpretation of the sentences, if and only if its categorization by Diarrassouba and Yéo as an adverb were taken for granted or valid.

If ‘*beaucoup*’ could be isolated and considered as an adverb on its own in the sentences provided by Diarrassouba and Yéo, it could have passed the deletion and movement tests without yielding ungrammatical sentences as a result of the application of those transformational rules. But, unexpectedly, the overt ungrammaticality of sentences (1'), (2'), (4'), (1''), (2'') and (4'') seems to corroborate the idea that the primary postulate or the premise of the reasoning adopted by Diarrassouba and Yéo was flawed. And that flaw was so deeply enshrined that it reshuffled the validity of their reasoning and turned the latter into a good-faith mistake.

2.1.2 On the invalidity of the reasoning based on Nafara

The original parallax error of the primary postulate seems to influence the subsequent demonstration based on Nafara. As a matter of fact, even the examples given in Nafara seem to corroborate the parallax error identified in Diarrassouba and

Yéo’s article. For, one does not really need to be a native speaker of Nafara to notice, in the utterances given by the two analysts of Nafara to exemplify their views, that:

- The direct object may not be realized morphophonologically in that language without causing any structural or semantic disruption. In other words, the direct object may be deleted or omitted;
- *Saa* rather looks like a determiner applicable to a phonologically or lexically realized or unrealized nominal notion. Therefore, *saa* could not be categorized as an adverb, at least in the utterances examined here. It rather looks like a nominal determination operator which qualifies or quantifies the occurrence of an unrealized nominal notion.

Let’s recall sentence (6) given by Diarrassouba and Yéo to support their views in their analysis.

(6) *kolo ma~ suro~ saa li~
[nom propre] Préd. nourriture manger-Acc beaucoup
Kolo a mangé beaucoup de nourriture.

Kolo ate a lot of food.

In sentence (6), instead of regarding *saa* as an adverb, it should have rather been taken for a determiner. For, on seeing the structure of sentence (6) in Nafara, it could be deduced that in that language, the operator which determines the occurrence of a nominal notion (*suro* in the case in point) on the linear order holds a post-nominal position in a noun phrase. Such a structural order of the

constituents of the noun phrase in Nafara is in tune with a theoretical principle of Gustave Guillaume's Psychomechanics referred to as the Psychomechanism of the Ontogenesis of the Word.

Based on that principle, let's consider two words, that is, two units of potentiality readily furnished in tongue and due to result in a noun phrase, that is a unit of actuality in discourse. The order of conceivability of those two units of potentiality which will be deployed in languaging in the operative time commands that the noun surfaces first in the speaker's mind right before the determiner which quantifies its occurrence on the surface structure. That pre-discursive and immutable order anticipated in tongue, that is language-as-a-potential, is preserved in language-as-actual especially in Nafara. From that standpoint, it can be contended that there is a systematic iconicity between the order of conceivability in language-as-a-potential and the linear order in language-as-actual of the linguistic units forming a noun phrase in Nafara; at least, based on the utterances under study here. However, postulating such a linearity of the constituents of a noun phrase in Nafara does not mean that other possible constituents-ordering may not be considered. The analysis here is just limited to the examples provided by the two analysts whose views are under criticism. Conversely, one should also bear in mind that not in all languages are the order of conceivability and the linear order of words always iconic.

Consequently, in sentence (6), the principle presented above could account for the occurrence of *suru* in the context right before *saa* which is mistakenly considered as an adverb. By the way, one could rightfully point out that contrarily to the noun phrases of French or English whose linear structure seems to keep astray from the order referred to above, we can state that an African language like Nafara abides by the ordering principle of constituents suggested by Gustave Guillaume's theory. That may be the reason why the noun is sometimes believed to rather determine the occurrence of the determiner on the surface structure.

It could be further said that without Diarrassouba and Yéo's knowing it, the analysis of sentences (6) and (7) corroborates the primary postulate consisting in isolating '*beaucoup*' with a view to categorizing it as an adverb. Conversely, the linguistic unit of Nafara which is equated with an adverb rather seems like a nominal determination operator. Thus, perceiving '*beaucoup*' as an operator of nominal determination seems more plausible in the sense that from sentence (6) to sentence (7), the two authors resort to the lexeme *ne?e* whose internal structure can help understand that the linguistic units analyzed in this article are operators of nominal determination.

2.2 Advocating for a reconsideration of the categorization of '*beaucoup*' in the analysis of Nafara

In this part of the paper, the analysis will be conducted within the double framework of Mel'cuk's Meaning-Text Theory and Antoine Culioli's Theory of Enunciative Operations. Resorting to those two theories aims to demonstrate that the word-forms '*beaucoup*' and '*de*' form a non-compositional lexeme, that is a phrasal lexeme on the one hand. On the other hand, we intend to demonstrate that the analysts of Nafara would have rather considered '*beaucoup de*' which is basically an operator of nominal determination. Considering the phrasal lexeme '*beaucoup de*' from that standpoint implies that the

problem raised by the linguistic units *saa*, *caari*, and *cieri* partly seems to be one of nominal determination rather than an exclusive matter of syntactic distribution of an adverb.

2.2.1 Perceiving '*beaucoup de*' as a semantically non-compositional phrasal lexeme

The theoretical tools used here to conduct the analysis of the linguistic units under study were borrowed from Igor Mel'cuk's Meaning-Text Theory. Meaning-Text Theory is fundamentally a structuralist and formalist theory which covers three major sub-fields of linguistics that is lexicology, morphonology and semantics. But within the framework of the analysis being conducted, only the lexicological and semantic components of his theory will be considered.

Let's recall that the analysts of Nafara should have rather considered '*beaucoup de*' as a set phrase, in other words, a phrasal lexeme. For, it is a well-established knowledge in Meaning-Text Theory that the word-lexeme is a realization of the lexeme. In other words, a lexeme may be either a word-lexeme or a phrasal lexeme. Thus, the syntactic dependency relationship existing between the two word-forms forming a single phrasal lexeme is such that each of the two word-forms '*beaucoup*' and '*de*' considered alone could not refer to the signified of the phrasal lexeme '*beaucoup de*'. Hence the non-compositionality of that phrasal lexeme.

Such a perception of '*beaucoup*' and '*de*' seems more reasonable in so far as they are respectively and systematically categorized as adverb and preposition in most dictionary entries (Cf. Le Nouveau Petit Robert, 2009 pp. 236 and 615). However, when approached to from a contextual point of view, '*beaucoup de*' rather portrays the features of a determiner. That's how a linguist, who refrains from confronting the trouble of conducting a contextual analysis of the language and rather relies on dictionary entries, may be misled as pointed out by Polguère regarding the categorization of lexemes. « *Le diagnostic même de la nature locutionnelle ou non d'un syntagme est parfois difficile à établir. Cela peut amener à des divergences dans les descriptions des dictionnaires.* » (Polguère, 2008 p. 55). Hence the need to prefer actual contextual uses of linguistic units to dictionary entries and ready-for-use definitions provided by normative and pedagogical grammars which may very often be misleading.

2.2.2 On the equivalence between *saa*, *caari*, *cieri* and '*Beaucoup de*': operators of nominal determination

To back up the idea that the linguistic units *saa*, *caari* and *cieri* are indeed operators of nominal determination, we will once again resort to Antoine Culioli's Theory of Enunciative Operations.

Based on Culioli's approach to the issue of nominal determination whose basic concepts were briefly presented earlier in this article, one can contend that Diarrassouba and Yéo's account that *saa* could translate as '*beaucoup*' could seem incomplete. For, *saa* could also translate as '*beaucoup de*'. If we elaborate more on Diarrassouba and Yéo's argument which tends to imply that '*manger beaucoup*' necessarily means '*manger beaucoup de x*' (*x* being what is eaten), it could be said that *x* which suddenly occurs in their analysis is actually a nominal notion unrealized morphophonologically. Under those circumstances, *saa* should rather be considered as the

determiner of the unrealized nominal. Consequently, to better grasp the functioning of *saa* and the other linguistic forms the categorization of which is under study, it seems necessary to typologize them and categorize the nominal notions they determine.

2.3 On the analysis of *saa*, *caari* and *cieri* as constituents of a noun phrase

If we take for granted that *saa*, *caari* and *cieri* are operators of nominal determination, there should therefore be a relation of syntactic dependency between a nominal notion and them with a view to forming a noun phrase. Under those circumstances, what is the category of the nominal notions they are likely to determine on the surface structure? Additionally, what type of operators of nominal determination they themselves may be?

2.3.1 Attempting to categorize the nominal notions determined by *saa*, *caari* and *cieri*

With a view to categorizing the nominal notions determined by *saa*, *caari* and *cieri*, let's first of all recall the sentences analyzed by Diarrassouba and Yéo in their analysis.

1. *Kolo mà li saa*
[nom propre] Pred. manger-Acc beaucoup
Kolo a mangé beaucoup.
Kolo ate a lot.
2. **Kolo mà surò saa li*
[nom propre] Préd. nourriture manger-Acc beaucoup
Kolo a mangé beaucoup de nourriture
Kolo ate a lot of food.
3. *Kolo mà sune?εε li*
Kolo ma su-nε?ε-re li
[nom propre] Préd. beaucoup de nourriture manger-Acc
Kolo a mangé beaucoup de nourriture
Kolo ate a lot of food
4. *Kolo mà juó saa*
[nom propre] Préd. parler-Acc beaucoup
Kolo a beaucoup parlé
Kolo talked a lot.
5. *Kolo li mà caari*
Kolo li mà caari
[nom propre] manger-Acc. Préd. Adv.
Kolo a trop mangé.
Kolo ate too much.
6. *Kolo lí na fági*
[nom propre] manger-Acc. Préd. dépasser
Kolo mange «dépasser les bornes»
Kolo ate "exceeding limits".
7. *Kolo juó mà cāari*
[nom propre] parler-Acc Préd. beaucoup
Kolo a beaucoup parlé.
Kolo spoke a lot.
8. *Liin Kolo déni má caari*
Liin Kolo déni má caari
Manger [nom propre] aimer-Acc. Préd. Adv.
Kolo aime le manger trop

Kolo aime trop manger.
Kolo likes eating a lot.

9. *Kolo juó mà caari*
Kolo juó mà caari
[nom propre] bon (beau) Préd. Adv.
Kolo est très beau.
**Kolo is handsome a lot.*

10. *Kolo carí mà caari*
Kolo cari mà caari
[nom propre] petit Préd. Adv.
Kolo est trop petit.
**Kolo is short a lot.*

11. *Kōlo mà cieri li*
Kolo ma cieri li
[nom propre] Préd. un peu manger-Acc
Kolo a mangé un peu.
Kolo ate a little.

12. *Kōlo mà li cieri*
Kolo mà li cieri
[nom propre] Préd. manger-Acc peu
Kolo a peu mangé.
**Kolo a little ate.*

13. *Yaw ba ne tari cieri cieri*
Yaw ba ne tari cieri cieri
Malade-Déf. COP. Prog. marcher -Inac peu à peu
Le malade est en train de marcher peu à peu.
**The sick person is walking little by little.*

Further to a close examination of sentences (1), (2), (3) and (4), it could be noticed that the linguistic unit *saa* has two variants or realizations which are *saa* and *ne?ε* as shown in the figure below:



Fig 2: Combinatory variants of *saa*

When *saa* is realized as *saa*, it occurs in a post-verbal position. It is therefore a free morpheme which features the traits of an adverb. That's what sentences (1), (2) and (4) show. Whereas when it is realized as *ne?ε*, it then holds a post-nominal position. Under those circumstances, it determines the occurrence of a nominal notion on the linear order. It is therefore a bound morpheme, especially an infix just like in sentence (3). It is, to that effect, an operator of nominal determination. But what nominal category does *saa* determine when it is realized as *ne?ε*?

Based on the data of sentence (3) in which *saa* is realized as *ne?ε* to determine a nominal notion which translates as 'food', we can contend that it quantifies or qualifies a notion which is relevant to the *dense* or possibly to the *compact*.

Further to the analysis of the second group of sentences especially (5), (6), (7), (8), (9) and 10, we can notice that the linguistic unit *caari* could also have two possible realizations which are not necessarily lexically or phonetically distinct from each other as shown in the figure below:



Fig 3: Combinatory variants of caari

In sentences (5), (6), (7), (9) and (10), *caari* seems to be an adverb. It therefore occurs in a post-verbal position with regard to the verb it modifies or refers to. Under those circumstances, it could be an operator of modalization. But in sentence (8), it is realized as an operator of nominal determination. However, it seems auspicious to underline that it determines a nominalized verb by means of the operator of nominalization *in*. It is thus a truism to state that the nominalization operation yields a linguistic form which features the traits of a nominal notion ready to be grammaticalized. But a critical feature of that nominalized verbal notion is that it is distanced from the operator which determines it on the surface structure.

So, just like *saa*, we can notice that *caari* also quantifies or qualifies a nominal notion relevant to the *dense* and possibly to the *compact* to some extent.

In tune with the two linguistic units already examined within the framework of this article, we can notice that the third unit *ciəri* also has two variants which look alike lexically and even phonetically. So, it can realize either as an adverb or an operator of nominal determination as shown in the figure below:

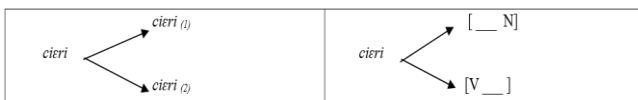


Fig 4: Combinatory variants of ciəri

When *ciəri* is realized as an operator of nominal determination, it occurs in a pre-nominal position in relation to the nominal it determines. But, here, it is worth noting that *ciəri* determines a nominal which is not realized morphophonologically or lexically as shown in sentence (11). That unrealized nominal notion can be represented by \emptyset , hence the notation $[_ \emptyset]$.

If one refers to the French translation of *ciəri* (*'un peu de x'*, $x = \emptyset$) suggested by Diarrassouba and Yéo, one could hypothesize that that operator of nominal determination targets a reality which may be seen as a quantifiable and qualifiable continuous reality. Whereas such a reality could ideally refer to a nominal category relevant to the *dense*, and possibly to the *compact* to some extent.

Based on the above analysis which has examined a limited number of sentences, we could firmly state that *saa*, *caari* and *ciəri* are indeed operators of nominal determination which essentially quantify or qualify the occurrence of nominal notions relevant to the *dense* and to the *compact*. If so, what types of operators may they be themselves?

2.3.2 On the typology and syntactico-discursive functioning of the operators *saa*, *caari* et *ciəri*

In the sentences analyzed earlier, when the linguistic units *saa*, *caari* and *ciəri* are categorized as operators of nominal determination, they determine nominal notions which translate in French as *'nourriture'*, that is *'food'* in English.

In sentence (3), *ne?e* features the traits of an operator of reference to the notion in so far as the nominal notion the occurrence of which it quantifies and qualifies on the linear order is taken in the general sense of the word. In addition, the nominal notion translated as *'nourriture'* is deemed equivalent to a quantifiable and continuous reality. In other words, it describes a reality which allows an extraction from the set of the class of occurrences. Consequently, the operator which quantifies its occurrence could not but be an extractor.

The occurrence of *caari* and *ciəri* respectively in (8) and (11) could be accounted for by a unified or single argument. In the two cases where we have a nominal which results from a nominalization operation on the one hand, and a morphophonologically unrealized nominal on the other hand, the operator of nominal determination would translate in French as *«trop de x»* for (8) or as *«peu de x»* for (11). We therefore have a quantification or an attempt of quantification which calls for a classifier. Whereas such a quantification refers to an extraction operation. Therefore, *caari* and *ciəri* could be categorized as extractors.

We could also resort to noun phrases allowing other types of occurrences which could possibly help better grasp the typology of the operators of nominal determination currently under study. To that effect, let's consider the noun phrases highlighted in the sentences below^[1]:

14. kajoo, wóri fāng-ì beè ne?e yawée-ya sáama wó?o na
Hyena, his strength-def was more animals-other many theirs than.

Hyena, his strength was greater than that of many other animals.

15. cèeri na à wí jo
little while after DP he said
After a little while, he said

The operator of nominal determination *ne?e* which occurs in sentence (14) was previously identified as a combinatory variant of *saa*. The nominal *yawée*, translated as *'animal'*, and the occurrence of which it determines on the surface structure, can be categorized as a reality that lends itself to individuation, discretability and isolation. It is therefore a nominal category relevant to the discrete. Consequently, *ne?e* can undoubtedly be categorized as an extraction operator. In other words, it is an extractor in the sense that it helps extract a certain quantity of animals from the class of animals.

In sentence (15), *« a little »* which is an operator of nominal determination in the noun phrase *a little while* (*little = cèeri*) may also be categorized as an extractor which helps quantify a compact recategorized as a discrete due to the fact that fundamentally, *'while'* portrays or translates a continuous reality which does not lend itself to any individuation.

Finally, we come to the conclusion that *saa*, *caari* et *ciəri*

¹ The sentences analyzed here were borrowed from Diarrassouba Sidiki, one of the highly educated native speakers of Nafara mentioned when accounting for how the corpus of the research was constructed. Those sentences were drawn on his doctoral dissertation written in English. There may therefore be some slight differences between the spelling or phonetic transcriptions of the words he uses and those used by Yéo. Diarrassouba's thesis is mentioned in the bibliography at the end of the article.

could be categorized either as operators of reference to the notion or operators of extraction which quantify (*quantification operators*) or qualify (*qualification operators*) the occurrence of nominal notions relevant to the dense or to the compact.

3. Discussion

3.1 Constrastive and Syntactico-semantic Approach to saa, caari and cieri at the yardstick of the English Language

Based on the well-established linguistic principle that languages shed light on one another, we are now calling in a few units of the English language to better underscore the difficulties an analyst may be confronted with when categorizing linguistic units in a given language. Those units of English referred to here are believed to syntactically or semantically behave just like the way *saa*, *caari* and *cieri* do in Nafara.

3.1.1 Formal Structure of saa, caari and cieri and their equivalents in French and English

Further to a close observation of the form and internal structure of the linguistic units *saa*, *caari* and *cieri*, it could obviously be noticed that they are formed with a single continuous morpheme. However, their semantic equivalents in English and French, categorized as operators of nominal determination, rather occur as discontinuous morphemes as shown in the table below:

<i>saa, caari, et cieri</i> → continuous morphemes	
<i>beaucoup de, peu de</i> → discontinuous morphemes	
Group 1	Group 2
<i>A lot of</i> <i>A little</i> <i>A great deal of</i> <i>Lots of</i> <i>Plenty of</i>	<i>A large quantity of</i> <i>A fair amount of</i> <i>A large quantity of</i>
} discontinuous morphemes	} discontinuous morphemes

Fig 5: Comparison between *saa*, *caari*, and *cieri* and equivalents in French and English

Just like *saa*, *caari* and *cieri*, the operators of nominal determination of groups 1 and 2 in the table above are likely to determine nominal notions relevant to the *dense* and to the *compact*. To illustrate that, let's resort to the nominal notions *butter* and *reluctance*, respectively relevant to the *dense* and to the *compact*, to show that the semantic equivalents of the linguistic units of Nafara examined in this article are also likely to quantify and qualify nominals relevant to the dense and to the compact.

As a matter of fact, the operators of group 1 in the table above are compatible with the two nominal notions taken to illustrate their similarity with their Nafara equivalents. Hence the noun phrases below:

1. a. A little *butter* b. A little *reluctance*
2. a. A great deal of *butter* b. A great deal of *reluctance*

However, operator 1 of group 2 is only compatible with *butter* whereas operator 2 is only compatible with *reluctance*.

3.1.2 Syntactico-semantic implications

Based on the examples taken from the English language, the analysis of the latter operators of nominal determination shows that the word-forms they are constituted with were not isolated and considered individually to convey the idea of quantification or qualification of the nominal notions the

occurrence of which they determine on the surface structure. They were rather considered as non-compositional phrasal lexemes. Those phrasal lexemes are rightfully non-compositional in so far as the word-forms they are constituted with are relevant to different parts of speech or word classes.

That's why in dictionary entries, *little* and *great* are respectively categorized as adverb and adjective. Whereas when they form parts of phrasal lexemes as shown earlier, they turn into determiners. Such a categorization of non-compositional phrasal lexemes taken as determiners is valid for all the other phrases of the table above.

Conclusion

To conclude this article whose primary goal was to revisit the categorization of *saa*, *caari* and *cieri*, three linguistic units of the Nafara language exclusively categorized as adverbs, we could contend that the latter units could rightfully be categorized as operators of nominal determination with regard to their occurrences or syntactic distributions in certain contexts or co-texts. Consequently, they may be considered as operators of extraction and reference to the notion. Therefore, they quantify or qualify, on the surface order, the occurrence of nominal notions relevant to the dense and to the compact. However, contrarily to their semantic equivalents in English and French which are discontinuous morphemes, they are rather continuous morphemes.

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