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Applied Terminologies and Lexical Enrichment of Senufo Language

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Résumé
La présente étude consiste à discuter de la forme de différentes catégories de mots du senufo (langue gour parlée à Korhogo, dans le nord de la Côte d'Ivoire). En observant l'usage de cette langue, certains mots présentent des similitudes remarquables mais avec des sens différents. La précision est nécessaire dans les interactions pour éviter les malentendus. L'objectif de ce travail est de prévenir les malentendus et maladresses, en étudiant les termes et les concepts concernés ou en trouvant une définition claire et cohérente de ces mots dans la langue senufo à travers des données enregistrées. Donc, il est nécessaire de pouvoir faire une distinction nette entre ces mots afin d'éviter tout risque de mauvaise interprétation. Les données utilisées pour cette étude sont des enregistrements d'un corpus spécial soumis à des locuteurs natifs. L'analyse pragmatique lexicale des données révèle non seulement que le sens de deux mots peut différer en raison de la présence d'un phonème, mais qu'elle peut également favoriser la catégorisation du système des classes nominales.

Mots-clés : enrichissement de la langue, interaction, pragmatique lexicale, signification, terminologie

Abstract
The present study consists in discussing the shape of different categories of words of Senufo (Gur language spoken in Korhogo in the north of Côte d'Ivoire). When observing the practice of this language, some words show remarkable similarities, but they differ in meaning. Precision is necessary in interactions to avoid misunderstanding. The objective of this paper is to prevent misunderstanding and clumsiness, investigating terms and underlying concepts or finding clear definition of terminology consistency in Senufo language through recording data. It is necessary to make a clear-cut difference between these words to pull off wrong meaning. The data used for this study consists of recordings of a special corpus submitted to native speakers. Lexical pragmatics analysis of the data reveals not only that two words' meaning may differ because of the presence of a phoneme, but also it may favor that word nominal class system categorization.

Keywords: enrichment of language, interaction, meaning, lexical pragmatics, terminology.

Introduction

I would like to remind that Senufo languages belong to Gur languages, from Niger-Congo phylum. This discussion is specific to Senufo spoken in the department of Korhogo in the northern part of Côte d'Ivoire, knowing that Senufo is composed of many variants. Variants concerned are " Cebara" spoken in Korhogo and "Nafara" spoken in Napiélédougou.

Many researchers have studied terminologies, described them considering the straight relationship to development, social media and artificial intelligence have been investigated in their comprehensiveness. Researchers have attempted to connect terminologies with another fields. Different previous works on Senar (Senufo) are those of researchers like K.O.Yéo (2012), D. Traoré (2015, 2017, 2023), S. Tuo (2020), J.S.Sib et al (2021), T. Nikitina

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&S.L.Silué (2023) to quote just a few. Moreover, specific works of Senar (Senufo) terminologies are those of P.I Coulibaly (2022, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c, 2017, 2016). He also connects his orientation of terminologies with mathematics, a linguistic approach of terminology normalization within the theoretical framework of optimal terminology. Then, he proposes the practicability of Senar terminologies conceived in the perspective of the Optimal Theory of Terminology amongst Senar language speakers in the educational system in Côte d'Ivoire. He suggested a framework for unwritten languages' coining transmission and acquisition as languages enrichment.

However, the analysis of lexical pragmatics in the trend of Senar (Senufo) language (s) has yet not been exploited. Lexical pragmatics investigates the mechanisms by which linguistically specified word meanings are modified in use according to Wilson (2003) and Carston (2002). This paper aims to describe linguistic units meaning modified in use. Phonological units, phenomena like inflection or derivation can deeply influence or affect the meaning of the word. Although coinage is a human current activity. A community coinage rate is function to its challenges. Language is considered as a community own identity, an intergenerational culture transmission to the new generation. It sheds light on the speech community's thoughts, knowledge and beliefs. A significant role in language is to link, connect to, and be in relationship with another community in the world.

Linguistically specified words are analyzed as applied terminologies and lexical enrichment of Senufo language. The goal of the current work is to describe how linguistically specified word meanings are modified in use when adding linguistic units - such as a phoneme, an inflectional or a derivational morpheme. The Hypothesis of this research is that different phonological units in Senufo language may carry the meaning and make the difference. The challenge addressed in this work is that of pinning down exactly what constitutes the content of lexical items and how this content is exploited in context to grasp a better understanding of lexical semantics and pragmatics.

1. Theoretical and Methodological Framework

1.1. Theoretical Framework

Lexical pragmatics theoretical approach developed by R. Carston (2002) sheds light on the distinction between what is explicitly and implicitly communicated in a discourse. For D. Wilson and D. Sperber (2002), and D. Wilson (2003), the main idea of lexical pragmatics is

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that the linguistically encoded meaning of a word is no more than an indication of the actual interpretation or utterance meaning.

Epistemic meaning of phonological units added to the end of words in Senufo and their contextual meaning, show the matter of lexical semantics and lexical pragmatics. Works in this area notably D Sperber & D Wilson relevance theory study how word meaning are contextually adjusted – stem from inferential and cognitive traditions. Robyn Carston investigates how lexical items are enriched. She has extensively researched the gap between encoded word meaning and speaker – intended meaning. She has the first sustained investigation of two distinctions which are fundamental, the semantics-pragmatics distinction and the distinction between what is explicitly communicated and what is implicitly communicated. Specificity of lexical pragmatics theory investigates how linguistically encoded; literal' word meanings are modulated in context to produce intended, context-dependent concepts. It bridges semantic under-specification with speaker intention, primarily using processes like narrowing, broadening, and metaphor. This approach argues that lexical interpretation involves constructing "ad hoc concepts" to achieve optimal relevance. This approach is essential for explaining how language users, through a single, flexible, and automatic mechanism, adapt word meanings to fit specific communicative contexts. And it focuses on the gap between the conventional meaning of a word, and the meaning conveys in a specific context, dealing with the above phenomena.

Understanding a word in a context means that the addressee involves arriving at a confirmed hypothesis about what the speaker meant. That is, the kind of belief fixation and fixing beliefs is the function of the holistic inference processes of the central systems of the mind. Diki-Kidiri M. (2008, p. 10) broaches the matter of cultural terminology in the same way when putting « même si l'objet est nouveau dans une culture, la dénomination peut être inculturée, c'est-à-dire imprégnée de la culture endogène, si on laisse le locuteur reconceptualiser, c'est-à-dire le décomposer puis le recomposer »[1] Each community overcomes every day life difficulties facing technological development unfailing rate. So, all community members produce new words that fit with their daily challenges. For Diki-Kidiri, even if the object doesn't exist in the language, the members of the community will find out a word for the

[1]Translation Mine "even if the object is new to a culture, its name can be uncultured, that is to say, imbued with the endogenous culture, if we allow the speaker to conceptualize it again, that is to say, to break it down and then recompose it ".

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precise reality. It may be either by imbuing the new word with the endogenous culture or breaking it down and composing it again.

1.2. Methodology of Data Collection

This work is fundamental research. For such research, a qualitative method has been used for data collection. The target population of the sample is in Korhogo which is the leading town in the northern part of Côte d'Ivoire. Besides, the first collection was in Napiélédougou located 16 kilometers from Korhogo and the second was in Korhogo. The main reason that favors the use of diversified data is to compare terminologies collected from urban to rural locutors. Napiélédougou is a small town characterized by its population speaking Nafara language. Nafara seems to be the most spoken Senufo language according to T. Sita (2025, p.417). Cebara is spoken in Korhogo. Moreover, words were collected during daily conversations. The resources were collected in Korhogo from ten (10) Cebara native speakers as well as ten (10) Nafara native speakers in Napié. The meaning of words is constructed in accordance with Senufo people's beliefs and culture.

1.2.1. Nominal Class System

1.2.1.1. Background of Nominal Classes Information

Known as a nominal language, there are five nominal classes in Senufo language as follows. **Class 1** words are characterized by the **prefix plus – w**, **Class 2** main characterization is the adding of the **suffix – g** to the stem. And **Class 3** is deeply marked by **prefix plus – n**. **Class 4** the last sound of words is **–r** marks their identification**.** Finally, **Class 5** the presence of the **phoneme –m** at the end of word.

Table 1: Background Identification of Nominal Class of Senufo

Classes	Nafara	Cebara
Class 1	Ca-**w**	Ce-**w**
Class 2	Lo-**g**	Lo-**g**
Class 3	La-**n**	La-**n**
Class 4	Laa-**r**	Laa-**r**
Class 5	Sù-**m**	Si-**m**

Table 1 displays the characteristics of each nominal class. As lens, it helps us to understand and to analyze the changing of words from one nominal class to another.

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Table 2: Inflectional Morphemes of Classes

Classes	**Singular**		**Plural**	
	Nafara	Cebara	Nafara	Cebara
Class 1	**-w**	-w	**-beli**	-bele
Class 2	**-g**	-gi	**-y**	-yi
Class 3	**-n**	-ni	**-geli**	-gele
Class 4	**-r**	-ri	**-r**	-ri
Class 5	**-m**	-m	**-m**	-m

Lexical pragmatics is concerned with how context and speaker intention modify the literal, encoded meanings of words in communication, often creating “ad hoc concepts”. Relevance theorists like Deirdre Wilson and Robyn Carston argue that lexical pragmatics processes are not isolated but part of a unified spontaneous, and automatic cognitive process. Inflectional morphemes are always integrated into someone’s acts of speech. The output of lexical units remains mental representations. Lexical pragmatics analysis of the present data not only reveals that two words meaning may differ because of the presence of a phoneme, but also it may favor the word class categorization.

1.2.1.2. Specification of Open Classes of Speech in Senufo

Open classes of speech, sometimes also called content words, are grammatical categories with an unrestricted, ever-evolving membership, allowing new words to be added regularly as language changes. The primary open classes are the following: nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. They convey the bulk of the meaning in any utterance and syntactic production. They constantly accept new members through invention, borrowing and processes such as compounding. Unlike closed classes like prepositions, pronouns, conjunctions, interjections, that rarely change, open classes evolve to meet new communicative needs.

> To account for the behavior of class assigning adjectives we suggest that the role of noun class information depends on the way that information is encoded in individual lexical entries. On nouns, class specification is optional, so it can be overruled by the value contributed by an adjective. On most adjectives, noun class specification is absent, hence

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> their presence has no effect on agreement. Some adjectives have an inherent class, and their class value can be passed on to the noun phrase. (T. Nikitina, S. L. Silué, 2023, p.17)

Open classes' specificity in Senufo is characterized by phonological features. Nikitina and Silué (2023) think that class specification is optional on nouns in Kafire which belong to Senufo languages of those spoken in Korhogo's area. An inherence is perceivable with adjectives that can be passed on the noun phrase. My analysis displays data showing a difference between an adjective and a noun as follows:

*ʃinɛ̰ʔɛ̰-**m*** = huge number of persons (adjective)
*ʃinɛ̰ʔɛ̰-**r*** = dispute (noun)

The difference between locutions resides in the presence of phonemes /-m/ and /-r/ at the end of the term /ʃinɛ̰ʔɛ̰/. Besides, phonemes which help someone to distinguish a nominal locution from an adjectival. Others feature could contribute to identify nouns and verbs for example. Vowels phonological contrast also demonstrates that an identification of verbs and nouns may be a prominent feature as in the underneath items:

i̱ / u̱ = [t**í̱**] to satiate / [t**ú̱**] to thresh
u̱ / ɔ̰ = [t**ú̱**] to thresh / [t**ɔ̰́**] shut – close
o / ɔ = [k**ó**] draw back' / [k**ɔ́**] pull out – tear out - tear away
[pɔ́rɔ́] to feel better – to be wealthy

When contrasting some vowel sounds in Senufo, we can discriminate open classes based on opposing sound at the same place if and only if that phoneme is in relation with the same former sound. Only, the high front unrounded vowel /i/ in [tí̱] that is "to satiate"; and the high back rounded vowel /u/ in [tú̱] that means "to thresh" make the difference between the two verbs. It may shed light on nouns, adjectives, and verbs.

1.2.1.3. Influence of Sounds over Language Enrichment

Language enrichment features include a focus on enhancing communication through immersive high-quality input, intentional vocabulary expansion, and structural, multisensory learning. Key components include fostering literacy (decoding / encoding), boosting oral language, building comprehension strategies, and promoting confident interactive, and contextualized language use in daily routines.

1.2.1.4. Sounds Influence over Terminologies

First, a great influence of sounds is clearly noticed on terminology, and then on the language itself. Sounds influence act as an authoritative power over items meaning in such way that

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describing its effect, change, or impact on terminologies is at stake. The sounds impactful action has profoundly contributed to the increase in language vocabulary, syntax, and sentence structure, that leads to moving from simple to more complex language. It is in this view T.Nikitina, S. L. Silué, (2023, p.15) say "several adjectives can modify the same noun, but they cannot be coordinated. The noun that the adjective modifies cannot be omitted even when it is the same for the two coordinated noun phrases". This example sheds light on their viewpoint.

Table 3 Example of the adjective 'wɔ-'used in several situations

Classes	**Singular**		**Plural**	
	Nafara	**Cebara**	**Nafara**	**Cebara**
Class 1	pŋ wɔ-**w**	pŋ wɔ-**w**	pŋ wɔ-**beli**	pŋ wɔ-**bele**
Class 2	pŋ wɔ-**g**	pŋ wɔ-**gi**	pŋ wɔ-**y**	pŋ wɔ-**yi**
Class 3	pŋ wɔ-**n**	pŋ wɔ-**n**	pŋ wɔ-**geli**	pŋ wɔ-**gele**
Class 4	*pŋ wɔ-**r***	*pŋ wɔ-**ri***	*pŋ wɔ-**r***	*pŋ wɔ-**ri***

The nominal system of Senufo shows the marker of each class. In the examples of **/pŋ -w**/ that is dog and /pŋ wɔ-**w**/ which means the black dog, the two items belong to the first class of nouns characterized by the presence of the phoneme /-w/ at the end of words. Moreover, the adjective **/- wɔ/** black also fits in with that rule of the noun /**pŋ -w/** it qualifies. It is noticeable that an adjective that qualifying a noun may change the nominal system of noun class according to the orientation of the meaning as we noticed in the following examples: / pŋ wɔ-**w**/ with the phoneme **/-w/** marker of the first-class noun, here it refers to **the black dog.** Besides integrates the black dog into the nominal system class 3 due to the presence of the phoneme **/-n**/ at the end of the word, that is the **thin black dog.** Whereas the opposite is / pŋ wɔ-**g**/ that is **the big black dog**. The difference in meaning relies on phonemes **/-w/, /-n/,** and **/-g/.** Finally, /-r/ which is the marker of the class 4, appears to materialize a huge number of black dog in the word / pŋ wɔ-**r/.**

In Senufo language, when qualifying words such as / pŋ/ ended by**/-w/,** may lead the word to move from one class to another class of nominal system class as the examples above shown it. Affixes (suffixes) **/-g/** and **/-n/** added to an adjective share additional information which

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causes the nominal class changing of this adjective**.** When adding **/-r/** to the same adjective we are quantifying it. / pɔ̰ wɔ-r/ refers to the huge number of black dogs. Other examples follow:

*pɔ̰ bi-**n*** : thin puppy
*pɔ̰ bi-**geli /gele*** : thin puppies
*pɔ̰ bi-**g*** :big puppy
*pɔ̰ bi-**y/yi*** : big puppies
pɔ̰ bii-r : a huge number of puppies

Let's consider other examples, for a better understanding of sounds impact not only the meaning of the word, but also on their nominal class system.

pii-w: child / kid
pii-m: inexperienced kid
pii-r: childhood
pii pi-n = thin little girl
pii pi-g = big little girl
pii pii-r: a huge number of little girls

When phonemes /-n/, /-r/, and /-m/ are the ending sounds of other words, they are identified as adjectives in Senufo language.

Used with adjectives, we get more information about.

nɔ̰gɔ̰ pi-n = thin little boy
nɔ̰gɔ̰ pi-g = big little boy
nɔ̰gɔ̰ pii-r = a huge number of little boys

But, people don't use /nɔ̰gɔ̰ pii-m/ and /pii pii-m/ to show inexperient. They rather use **/pii-m**/ for little boys' and little girls' state to indicate inexperienced childhood. No matter if the gender identity is specific.

*pɔ̰̀ –**w*****: dog**
*pɔ̰̀ –**bele*****: dogs**
*pɔ̰̀-**r*** or *ka-pɔ̰̀-**r*** : a huge number of dogs
*kafɔ̰̀-**g**:* all forms of power
*Kafɔ̰̀-**m***: an abuse of power
*t ɔ̰̀ ɔ̰̀-**m***: sweety
*téé-**w***: wicked
*téé-**m***: wickedness

Those examples show that phonemes /-r/ and /-m/ locate at the end of some words in Senufo referred to adjectives that qualify a situation, a person's behavior, or a thing.

2. Language Enrichment

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The contextualized learning connects language to real-world experiences, making it meaningful rather than abstract. Language enrichment implies many things as far as the language functioning is concerned. The aspect, the derivational, and inflectional morpheme may change the word meaning and the orientation of the speaker's discourse. In this view, P. I. Coulibaly (2022, p. 58) says that there are two inflectional forms in Senar. That is number inflection and aspect inflection.

Levinson (2000: 37-8, 112-34) treats narrowing as a default inference governed by an Informativeness heuristic (What is expressed simply is stereotypically exemplified'), itself backed by a more general I-principle instructing the hearer to:

Amplify the informational content of the speaker's utterance, by finding the most specific interpretation, up to what you judge to be the speaker's m-intended point ... (ibid: 114).

The I-heuristic might be seen as dealing with stereotypical narrowing such as (3) above, and the I-Principle as dealing with less stereotypical cases such as (4). However, this approach leaves many aspects of the narrowing process unexplained. In the first place, there may be several possible degrees or directions of narrowing, as in (1) (where drink may be narrowed to 'drink alcohol' or 'drink a lot of alcohol') and (2) (where bird is narrowed in different ways in different contexts).

*pica-**w*** = wench, girl, lassie
pica-**g** = female youth
pica-**m** = misbehaving female young
nɲgɟcari-**w** (Nafara) / n'gɟcari-**w** (Cebara) = boy
nɲgɟcari-**g** / n'gɟcari-**g** = male youth
nɲgɟcari-**m** / n'gɟcari-**m** misbehaving male young

The phonemes which help to discriminate expressions in this case are /-w/; /-g/; /-m/. The ending in /-w/ and /-g/ are nouns. But the ending in /-g/ is a form of 'derivational inflection' by sight, because it looks like an inflectional morpheme. But it is a derivation. Such derivation belongs to word family. The stem is *pica* for female and nɲgɟcari- for male. When adding the suffix **–w** to this stem, we are referring to the young girl: **pica-w** and nɲgɟcari **-w** the young boy. On the contrary, if we add the **suffix –g** to the stem, we are creating a new word which is an adjective. Another meaningfully remark is the adding of the **suffix –m** to this stem which leads us to another adjective, but this one has a pejorative denotation. In that context, it refers to the misbehaving of the girl that is **pica-m** and for the boy, it is **nɲgɟcari-m** (Nafara) **/n'gɟcari-m** (Cebara).

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Ultimately, Senufo people use two locutions to talk about youth. They make a clear difference between a *pica-w*: female young and *nɲ̀gɲ̀cari-w*: male young, nɲ̀gɲ̀cari-*g*: male youth, *pica-g*: female youth. Then, *pica-m* when a girl and **nɲ̀gɲ̀cari-m** (Nafara) /**n'gɲ̀cari-m** (Cebara) when a boy behaves badly.

Pɔ̀r: masks or initiation
Pɔ́rɔ́ : to be wealthy or to feel better

Pɔ̀r has two different meanings. The denotation meaning refers to masks, and the connotation meaning is linked to the fact of being initiated to masks (initiation). So, the logical form and the literal meaning are not conformed. Literal meaning doesn't assume contextual one. Instead, the claim that the mechanism of pragmatic interpretation is crucial both for determining what the speaker says and what he means. Only the contextual use specifically clarifies the meaning of the word. On the contrary, the word ***pɔ́rɔ́*** means to feel better or to be wealthy.

The same morphological word may have a range of different meanings at sight. This phenomenon given name is polysemy, meaning 'many meanings'. Some speakers of Senufo, however, regard these meanings as two different words. Stated simply, the essential problem is that it is not always easy or even possible to be certain whether we are dealing with polysemy, that is, one word with several meanings, or homonymy, that is, several words with the same form.

Conclusion

The matter of terminologies in Senufo language is linguistically attested practices shown through lexical affixation. It sheds light on linguistically-modified items through ending phonemes such as /-o/, /-ɔ/, /-u̱ /, /-ɔ̱/, /-i̱/, /-u̱/, /–g/, /–m/, /–w/, and /-r/ in these words. Interestingly, their presence pre-modified expressions meaning. As the work shows the phoneme /-m/ includes the pragmatics of dimensional adjectives (Blutner and Solstad 2000). Ultimately, the appearance of the phoneme /-r/ bluntly displays the pragmatics of negated antonyms (Blutner 2004; Krifka 2007b), the approximate interpretation of number words asserting that terminologies in Senufo language co-relate with linguistic development. People coin all the time. It obviously demonstrates the nature of mental mechanisms. Newly coined words derived from nouns as Senufo is a nominal class language. Being aware of the important role above phonemes play in understanding words on the one hand and mastering them may contribute to avoiding misunderstanding in Senufo on the other hand. But the sample size or

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the scope of this study may be a limitation of the generalization of the present discoveries. Another research could be undertaken on this trend.

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