

THE DANGME CLAUSAL CONNECTIVE **nẽ***

Nana Aba Appiah Amfo

Department of Linguistics, University of Ghana, Legon

The focus of this paper is to analyze the semantics of the general Dangme clausal connective **nẽ** ‘and’, and the pragmatic relations which pertain between clauses which are linked by this marker. The paper describes the nature of the clausal linkage achieved by means of the marker **nẽ**, examining the nature of the nexus of **nẽ**-constructions. Like its other natural language counterparts, the semantics of **nẽ** works in tandem with other crucial features of the linguistic and extra-linguistic context to bring to light specific inter-clausal relations existing between the linked clauses. These inter-clausal relations are pertinent to the derivation of the intended cognitive effects, which render specific **nẽ**-constructions optimally relevant. The identified pragmatic relations that exist between clauses linked by **nẽ** are temporal, causal, contrastive, parallel, additive and explanatory. The paper explores the motivation for particularly the explanatory inter-clausal relation, since such a relation has been predicted as unlikely for some other natural language counterparts of **nẽ**, and it examines the syntactic constraints under which such explanatory relations are possible.

L’objet de cet article est d’analyser les aspects sémantiques en gros de la proposition conjonctive **nẽ** ‘et’, et les liens fonctionnels qui existent entre les propositions mises ensemble par cette conjonction. Nous mettons en exergue ici la nature des propositions conjonctives créées à l’aide de la conjonction **nẽ**; ce faisant, nous examinons la nature des liaisons entre ces constructions. Tout comme ses équivalents langagiers naturels, la sémantique de **nẽ** fonctionne en tandem avec d’autres aspects importants linguistique et extralinguistique pour souligner les liens entre les propositions qui sont rattachées par biais de cette conjonction. Ces liens entre les propositions importent beaucoup quand à la dérivation des effets cognitifs entendus, ce qui rend des constructions spécifiques basées sur **nẽ** très pertinentes. Les liens pragmatiques identifiés qui relient les propositions unies par **nẽ** sont de nature temporelle, causative, oppositionnelle, appositionnelle, complémentaire et explicative. Cet article examine les raisons qui soulignent, en particulier, le fonctionnement des propositions unies par **nẽ** dans le cadre pragmatique explicatif, puisqu’un tel lien est considéré peu probable en ce qui concerne d’autres équivalents naturels langagiers de **nẽ**; il examine également les contraintes syntactiques qui conditionnent l’emploi de ces propositions explicatives.

0. INTRODUCTION

The semantics and pragmatics of general natural language connectives, particularly that of English ‘and’, have long been an intriguing subject of study for language philosophers and linguists (Cohen 1971, Gazdar 1979, Bar-Lev and Palacas 1980, Grice 1989, Horn 1992, Carston 1993, Txurruka 2003, Blakemore and Carston 2005, inter alia). The fascination of a connective like ‘and’ possibly lies in the fact that a single lexical item, when used to link two or more clauses¹ has the possibility of triggering quite a number of inter-clausal relations, within different contexts,

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¹ The discussion in this paper will, in many cases, stick to bi-clausal constructions for the sake of simplicity of presentation, since the analyses are equally applicable to multi-clausal constructions involving the connective **nẽ**.

rendering it semantically vague and highly context sensitive. The versatility of ‘and’ and its other natural language counterparts has been at the foundation of a number of scholarly debates as regards the semantics, and subsequently the pragmatics of such connectives.²

The present paper focuses on the Dangme (Niger-Congo, Kwa) clausal connective **nē**, the counterpart of English ‘and’. Being the Dangme general clausal connective, with the potential of prompting a number of varied inter-clausal relations, the analysis of **nē** benefits greatly from studies of its English counterpart, ‘and’. Particularly, as most of the analyses which make reference to English ‘and’ are intended to be applicable to other natural language connectives of this nature, as they follow from the authors’ views about certain general processes involved in utterance interpretation, which are of universal applicability. This paper follows Amfo’s (2007a) account of the Akan connective **nà**, as it draws parallels with the semantic and pragmatic conditions under which the mundane clausal connective in this closely related language is functionally relevant. It suggests that the acceptability of particularly the explanatory inter-clausal relations, which are permissible in both Dangme and Akan, albeit under certain constrained syntactic conditions, may be a typological feature of a group of languages in this family group. This subsequently calls for a rethinking of semantic and pragmatic models intended as general accounts of utterance meaning and interpretation, which have predicted an exclusion of explanatory relations from natural language conjunctions, and calls for further studies to unearth the specificities of clausal conjunction in the Kwa and related language groups.

Following the introduction, the paper is organized as follows. Section 1 provides some general language information about Dangme. In section 2, the general coordinating connective which links clauses is introduced, and it is distinguished from other markers in the language which are segmentally identical. Section 3 is an examination of the syntactic nature of the linkage, while section 4 is concerned with the inter-clausal relations that result when **nē** is used to link clauses. A discussion of the theoretical implications of the identified inter-clausal relations follows in section 5. Section 6 is the conclusion.

1. LANGUAGE INFORMATION

Dangme is a Kwa (Niger-Congo) language with two major dialect groups corresponding to its geographical distribution: the Inland dialect group and the Coastal dialect group (Dakubu 1987, Hall 1983). The Inland dialects are made up of Osudoku, Sɛ and Klɔ (Yilɔ and Manya), consisting of the traditional areas of Osudoku, Shai, Yilo and Manya Krobo respectively. The Coastal dialects comprise Ada, Ningo and Gbugbla corresponding to the traditional areas of Ada, Ningo, and Prampram.

Dangme is spoken by the Dangme people who are geographically located in two administrative and political regions in the South-Eastern part of Ghana, namely in the Greater Accra and the Eastern Regions. Dangme is bordered by Ga to the west, Hill Guang (Kyrepong and Larteh) and Akan to the north and west, and Ewe to the north and east.³

² See section 5 for a review of some works on the semantics and pragmatics of the English connective ‘and’. Note that I use the term conjunction in reference to the union of conjoined clauses, and the label conjunct refers to the individual clauses within that union while the word connective refers to the linking lexical item.-

³ Ga, Ewe, Akan and Guang are all Kwa languages. Kwa is one of two dominant language families found in Ghana, the other is Gur.

Dangme, in comparison to some other Ghanaian languages, can be said to have a relatively long written tradition, with a record of its first extensive attestation attributed to Zimmermann (1858), in the Adangme appendix to his Ga grammar. Dakubu (1987) reports that it was however not until the early part of the twentieth century that the language experienced more scholarly works by researchers like Jack Berry, Devine Pupilampu, E. L. Rapp and Ida Ward. Since the second part of the twentieth century E. O. Apronti and M. E. Kropp Dakubu have been among the principal researchers on the Dangme language. Lately, aspects of the phonology, syntax and semantics have been covered in the works of these researchers. In addition, students of the language have written a few theses on these aspects of the language.

In the early 1970s, Dangme was officially adopted for school use and acquired an official orthography. At present, a few texts can be found in Dangme, published by the Bureau of Ghana Languages, and the present paper benefits from a number of these publications.

Dangme is a terraced-level tone language with three contrastive tones: high, mid, low. In this paper, I follow the orthographic convention of not marking tones (except when it is relevant to the discussion). With regard to word order, it is an SVX language.

2. CLAUSAL LINKAGE

Sentences in Dangme, like in all natural languages, may be simple or complex. Complex sentences may contain a series of verbs following sequentially without an overt connective or the individual clauses may be overtly linked. This paper is concerned with the latter group of complex sentences, specifically those linked with the mid-toned clausal connective $n\bar{e}/l\bar{e}$, which has been classified as a coordinating conjunction (Dakubu 1987:32). The former group of complex constructions are known as serial verb constructions (SVCs). SVCs, as found in the world's languages, have been extensively discussed. (See, for example, Bodomo 2002, Ameka 2005, Aikhenvald and Dixon 2006). Aikhenvald (2006: 1) defines an SVC as “a sequence of verbs which act together as a single predicate, without any overt marker of coordination, subordination, or syntactic dependency of any other sort”. SVCs are clearly distinct from the constructions that are of interest in this paper.⁴ The constructions in focus here are overtly linked by the so-called coordinating connective $n\bar{e}$, each conjunct has its own subject and predicate and expresses what can be conceptualized as a single event.

Like many of its sub-Saharan language counterparts,⁵ noun phrase conjunction in Dangme is performed by a separate marker, $k\bar{e}$ as seen in (1), and verb phrases are not linked by an overt connective.⁶

⁴ SVCs are distinct from clauses linked with $n\bar{e}$, in a number of ways. Apart from the obvious absence of connectives in SVCs, the verbs in an SVC have a shared \emptyset subject which is expressed only once. On the other hand, the subject of each clause in a $n\bar{e}$ -construction is overtly expressed, even if they have the same referent. There is tense-aspect agreement in SVCs, and this need not be the case in a $n\bar{e}$ -construction. The first conjunct in (i) is an SVC and the two conjuncts are linked with $n\bar{e}$.

(i) **Ate ke Laweε bā wā nē e je a he saminya**
 Ateh CONJ Laweh came grew CONJ they look themselves well
 ‘Ateh and Laweh grew up and resembled each other very much.’ RTA/41

In (i) Ateh and Laweh serve as the subject of both **bā** ‘came’ and **wā** ‘grew’. Once **nē** is introduced a new clause begins with a new expressed subject, even if it has the same referent as the subject of the SVC, like in (i).

⁵ See Amfo (2007b) for parallels of this phenomenon in a few West African languages.

⁶ The data used in this paper are taken from three sources: fictional texts, scholarly texts and a database of invented examples, solicited from and verified by native speakers. The fictional texts are

3. SYNTAX OF *NĒ*-CONSTRUCTIONS

Clauses that are considered to be in a conjunctive coordinated relationship are linked in Dangme by the mid-toned *nē/īē*.¹¹ Even though Dakubu (1987) classifies *nē* as a coordinating conjunction because it joins two (or more) independent or main clauses, there is evidence to show that *nē* may link clauses of equal syntactic statuses (i. e. independent clauses) or a dependent clause and an independent clause. The two clauses in (6), **Yaade tsui po** ‘Yaade became afraid’ and **he bɔni kpokpomi** ‘her body started trembling’ are two independent clauses – neither relies on either clause for its existence. In (7) however, the first clause **benɛ a sɛ we ɔ mi ɔ** ‘when we entered the house,’ is a dependent clause (due to the presence of the temporal marker **benɛ** and the dependent clause marker **ɔ**) which syntactically needs the support of an independent (main) clause.

- (6) **Yaade tsui po nē e he bɔni kpokpomi**
 Yaade heart cut CONJ her body start tremble
 Yaade became afraid and her body started trembling. JNN/19
- (7) **Benɛ a sɛ we ɔ mi ɔ,**
 When 3PL enter.PST house the inside DCM,
nē kojolo ɔ je kpo.
 CONJ judge the remove out
 When we entered the house, (and) the judge went out. LCO

The occurrence of *nē* in constructions like (7), where one of the clauses is a dependent one, need not affect the ‘coordinating’ semantics of the connective. Mismatches between the semantics and syntax of a construction are not completely unprecedented.¹² Since a thorough analysis of the implications of these structures for conjunction and subordination studies go beyond the scope of this paper, I will proceed, for now, on the assumption that a relation of coordination is still relevant for sentences like (7).

Like many markers of this nature, it is possible for *nē* to begin a sentence, i.e. be found in initial position. In which case, it serves as a connective between the clause in which it is contained and some other utterance identified, either explicitly or implicitly in the preceding text/discourse. Thus, the other clause in a *nē*-construction, always precedes the clause containing *nē*, either explicitly or implicitly. In example (8), the response to the question posed is expected to provide the reason why Yaade, the speaker is expected to stay calm as suggested by the addressee, her cousin, who was embarking on a journey. Yaade was not enthused about her cousin Padite’s

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- i. **Teye nē e-ya sukuu.**
 Teye FM he-go.PST school
 TEYE went to school.

- ii. **Omo nē Kofi ye tsa pi hie.**
 Rice FM Kofi eat.PST NEG yam
 Kofi ate RICE, not yam. LCO

The relationship between the focus marker and the clausal connective, if any, in Dangme and a few other Kwa languages is explored in another paper.

¹¹ These are dialectal variants; however my data records only instances of *nē*.

¹² Culicover and Jakendoff (1997:195, 197) analyze “coordination with ‘left-subordinating’ ‘and’ ” as one such mismatch between syntactic structure and semantic representation, claiming that “a sentence with subordinate ‘and’ is still coordinate despite its semantics.”

departure. Padite however assured her in the turn preceding (8) that she should not worry, God will be with her and that he will return and take her along later on.

- (8) **Nē mēni ligbi o nge ba-e.**
 And what day you AUX come-PROG
 And what day are you coming?

JNN/22

4. SEMANTICS AND PRAGMATICS OF **Nē**

4.1 SEMANTICS

This section explores the meaning and the relevance of the use of the clausal connective **nē**. Dakubu (1987) indicates that asydetic coordination (i. e. coordination without an overt linker) is possible in Dangme. She says that “there are also sentences consisting of two coordinate clauses, but without any conjunction word between them” (Dakubu 1987: 42). Since it is possible for this kind of linkage to be achieved without a connective, why would a speaker go through the effort of using an extra word, i.e. the marker **nē**?

Sperber and Wilson (1995) suggest that a communicated utterance is relevant when it combines with contextual information to achieve adequate cognitive effects with minimum processing effort. Crucially, cognitive effects and processing effort are inversely related. Any additional processing effort should be offset with additional relevant cognitive effects. The use of a word, in this case, a clausal connective, where its omission does not render the sentence ungrammatical means the addressee will expend a bit more effort than he¹³ would have otherwise done, and this effort needs to be rewarded in the form of additional contextual effects. Dakubu (1987: 42-43) suggests that the absence of a connective indicates that the two actions described in the two clauses are very closely related. They can be considered as events or actions which are highly integrated. Indeed, they are viewed as “different aspects of one process, or one complex act”. Let us consider the following examples taken from Dakubu¹⁴:

- (9) **Jukwe ɔ du nē e ba sukuu.**
 Child DEF bath.PST CONJ he come.PST school
 The child bathed and he came to school.
- (10) **Jukwe ɔ du e ba sukuu.**
 Child DEF bath.PST he come.PST school
 The child bathed he came to school.
- (11) **Jukwe ɔ du ba sukuu.**
 Child DEF bath.PST come.PST school
 The child bathed (and) came to school.

Dakubu’s proposal is that examples (9) to (11) are synonymous, the only difference being that each successive omission suggests a more closely integrated concept of bathing and school going.¹⁵ Of course, this has to be placed within the

¹³ For ease of presentation the speaker is referred to as ‘she’ and the addressee ‘he’.

¹⁴ Examples (8), (9) and (10) correspond to Dakubu’s (op. cit: 42-43) examples (61, a, b and c) respectively. The interlinear glosses are my responsibility.

¹⁵ It is important to note that the elimination of the marker **nē** in (10), and the absence of the marker and the pronoun **e** ‘he’ is possible in (11) because the subjects of the two clauses have an identical reference.

cultural context where bathing before going to school is a norm, expected to be practised by every school going child.

What then is the role of $n\bar{e}$ in (9) where it is present, if its absence in (10) and (11) suggests that the actions involved are considered as different parts of a single complex act? I follow neo-Griceans as well as relevance theorists such as Blakemore (1987), Carston (2002), Blakemore and Carston (2005), Amfo (2007a), in maintaining that the semantics of the connective $n\bar{e}$ is equivalent to the logical operator &. There are however some relevant contextual effects to be derived from the collocation of the two clauses linked together by $n\bar{e}$. The semantics of the connective becomes an input, together with pertinent linguistic features of the $n\bar{e}$ -construction, as well as relevant extra-linguistic information, in the derivation of cognitive effects which render a given construction optimally relevant. The linking of the two clauses by $n\bar{e}$ presupposes that the utterance is optimally relevant as a conjoined unit, rather than as separate units. Even though the derivation processes often involve the recovery of separate premises from the individual clauses, which then function as separate inputs leading to the relevant cognitive effect.¹⁶ Indeed, the optimal relevance of the utterance lies in its conjunctive significance, and as a result the relation between the conjoined clauses ought not to be taken lightly. The use of $n\bar{e}$ encourages the interpretation process to move in a particular direction, giving rise to specific inter-clausal inferential relations. These specific relations are retrieved as a result of the interaction of the encoded semantics of $n\bar{e}$ and other crucial linguistic and even extra-linguistic pointers. Its presence suggests that there is a kind of inferential relation existing between the clauses which ought to be considered as part of the interpretation process. In a way, the addressee is alerted of the existence of a critical inferential inter-clausal relation which is of communicative significance. It is possible that without the presence of the connective, there may be other features of the utterance, both linguistic and extra-linguistic, which will suggest some inferential relation between the clauses.¹⁷ However, the presence of the connective guarantees such a relation.

4.2 TEMPORAL RELATION

One of the most common relations that is found between ‘and’-conjunctions and its counterparts among languages of the world is temporality. The situation in Dangme is no different, in many cases, the inter-clausal relation found in a $n\bar{e}$ -construction is a temporal one, specifically a sequential one – the event/action described by the VP in clause two is preceded by the one in clause one. This is certainly the case in (9) above, and in the following example (12), where the referent of e ‘it’, the hyena, first catches fish from the river before its consumption takes place.

- (12) **E nuu lo nge pa mi nē e yeo.**
 It catch fish at river inside and it eat
 It catches fish from the river and it eats (them). TNNA/16

Following from the relevance-theoretic comprehension strategy (Wilson and Sperber 2004: 613), the addressee, in interpreting utterances like (9) and (12), follows “the path of least effort in computing cognitive effects”. Thus combining the given

¹⁶ This is not to suggest that such utterances necessarily have a single conjunctive explicature, the resultant cognitive effect of the conjoined utterance may result from inferential processes which have the individual conjunct propositions as inputs (see Blakemore and Carston 2005 for details).

¹⁷ The addressee could make use of general world knowledge and some background information as well as the principle of iconicity, in deriving, for example, a temporal relation between two clauses which are not linked by $n\bar{e}$.

utterances in (9) and (12) with the usual narrative scripts in addition to world as well as cultural knowledge, the addressee is able to interpret the first clauses as temporally preceding the second ones. In (9), the specific cultural knowledge that children in Dangme speaking communities are expected to take a bath before going to school daily is instrumental in combining with the narrative script of reporting things which happen in chronological order. The world knowledge that a fish can only be eaten after it has been caught from its natural habitat and possibly cooked is vital in the process of recovering the intended cognitive effects in (12). In both cases (9 and 12), the sequential path appear to be “the path of least effort” to follow, in the absence of any other compelling contrary information.

This kind of temporal relation existing between two clauses linked by ‘and’ and its other natural language equivalents has¹ been highlighted in numerous studies₂ (for example Cohen (1971), Bar-Lev and Palacas (1980), Levinson (2000), Gazdar (1979) and Horn (1992)). Indeed, a lot of emphasis has been placed on this temporal relation often to the exclusion of other relations that exist between such utterances. Blakemore and Carston (2005) and Amfo (2007a) are exceptions. Blakemore and Carston attempt a more comprehensive pragmatic analysis of the English connective ‘and’. Amfo follows in this tradition and provides a full range of interpretations that the Akan linker **nà** ‘and’ may give rise to. These include temporality (sequentiality), causality, contrast, parallelism and explanation. Following Amfo (op. cit.), this paper will explore the various relations that exist between the clauses linked by **nē**. We have already seen that temporality, of the sequential nature, is one of the relations that we frequently find in **nē**-utterances. The others are causality, contrast, parallelism, addition and explanation.

4.3 CAUSAL RELATION

A causal relation exists between the two clauses which make up a **nē**-construction when the event or action described in the first clause is interpreted as the cause of the action or event described in the second clause. In example (13), the cut on Oko’s foot is the result of his stepping on what is presumably a broken bottle.

(13) **Oko naa tōō ō nō nē e nanē šīšī pō.**

Oko step.PST bottle the on and his leg under cut

Oko stepped on the bottle and cut his foot (as a result).

LCO

General world knowledge about the consequences of stepping on (broken) bottles contributes to this causal interpretation. The presence of **nē** forces the addressee to proceed on the assumption that there is an inferential relation worth exploring, combining that with general world knowledge about what broken bottles can possibly do to a bare foot when they come into contact catalyzes the arrival at the interpretation of a cause-consequence relation. It is possible for Oko to have stepped on a bottle (at some point in his life, or even on a particular day) and cut his foot (in a separate unrelated event), which might well be the case if these sentences are simply juxtaposed, and there is no other linguistic or extra-linguistic information that they are necessarily connected. Example (14) is a further illustration of causal relations.

(14) **Kwao kase we ni, lō e bue mōde nē**

Kwao study neg thing so he do.NEG well CONJ

e kpa sukuu.

he stop school

Kwao didn’t study so he didn’t do well and (as a result) stopped school.

JO

The above sentence is actually made up of three clauses; the first two are linked by the marker **lɔɔ** ‘so’, and the second and third are linked by **n \bar{e}** ‘and’. In the two linkages established here, between the first two clauses on the one hand, and the first two clauses and the third on the other hand, the inter-clausal relations are both causal. It is Kwao’s inability or unwillingness to study which led to his abysmal performance, and this performance was what led to him eventually dropping out of school. The first inter-clausal relation is encoded in the connective used, **lɔɔ**, which encodes an ‘as a result’ meaning. The second inter-clausal causal relation is however arrived at as a result of combining the more general encoded meaning of **n \bar{e}** with world knowledge and other features of the context. In the first instance, the causal relation is directly encoded, as conveyed by the semantics of **lɔɔ**, and in the second instance that same relation is inferred since **n \bar{e}** does not on its own encode a causal meaning.

4.4 CONTRASTIVE RELATION

Sometimes, the intended inferential relation between the linked clauses is contrastive. As with the other relations, a contrastive relation is arrived at as a result of combining the meaning of **n \bar{e}** with other features of the linguistic and even the extra-linguistic context, where necessary. In (15), the addressee is not only informed about the specific directions in which Ate and Lawee went, but he is encouraged to recognize the opposite directions in which they went by linking these two pieces of information together. In this particular example, the opposite meanings of the lexical items ‘left’ and ‘right’ are useful pointers.

- (15) **Ate** **wo** **muɔ** **mi** **blɔ** **n \bar{e}** **Lawee hu** **pue hiɔ**
 Ate take left inside way and Lawee also take right
 mi **blɔ.**
 inside way

Ate took the way on the left and Lawee also took the way on the right. RTA/42

4.5 PARALLEL RELATION

Blakemore and Carston (2005) identified that individual conjuncts may function as separate yet parallel premises which lead to the retrieval of a particular intended cognitive effect. Thus both clauses provide evidence for a single conclusion. Such an inter-clausal relation, which was found to occur in Akan **na**-constructions (cf. Amfo 2007a), can also be found in Dangme **n \bar{e}** -constructions. When a parallel interpretation is intended, the propositions expressed in both clauses provide information which leads to the reinforcement of a particular conclusion. The following example (16) is illustrative of this kind of relation.

- (16) **Gbe** **nuu** **le** **n \bar{e}** **sinɔ** **hu** **nuu** **le ...**
 Dog catch it and snake also catch it

The dog hunts it and the snake also hunts it ...

TNNA/19

The fact that the dog hunts the mouse (the referent of **le** ‘it’) is an indication that in the animal kingdom, the mouse is prey to both the dog and the snake. This weakness of the mouse as a vulnerable animal is revealed in the first clause by the statement ‘the dog hunts it’. It is further pronounced when the information in the second clause is processed – that the snake hunts it as well. By linking the two conjuncts with **n \bar{e}** , the writer highlights and draws the reader’s attention to the fact that these two pieces of information have an inferential link. The writer by so doing highlights the vulnerability of the mouse when it is in the wild, even if it is destructive when it

manages to find an abode at home. It is not a simple narration about what happens to the mouse (and notice the symmetry of the construction). The fact that the second clause translated as ‘the snake also hunts it’ contains the marker **hu** ‘also/too’, reiterates the fact that the proposition expressed in that clause is expected to be interpreted in the context of some information which has been provided in the immediately preceding context, in this instance, the first clause of that same sentence. It is an explicit indication that a similar piece of evidence has been provided in the context. The information provided in the second clause is expected to be interpreted as additional information provided towards the derivation of a specific conclusion – in this case, the vulnerability of the mouse.¹⁸

4.6 ADDITIVE RELATION

Sometimes, the relation between two clauses linked by **nē** may simply be an instance of addition. In (17), each clause presents an aspect of the alligator’s (the referent of **e**) appearance, in particular, its skin. The first clause focuses on the colour, and the second is concerned with the texture.

(17) E	hewomi	nge	huatahuata	nē e	nge
POSS	skin	is	differently.coloured	and it	is
	platsaa	kaa	nyaka	hewomi.	
	very.rough	like	crocodile	skin	
	Its skin is multi-coloured and it is very rough as that of a crocodile.				TNNA/26

The line between parallel and additive relations may sometimes be thin. We talk about parallel relations, when it is pretty obvious that, given the presentation of the propositions and taken into consideration the context, it is intended for a specific conclusion to be drawn, using the content of the individual clauses as separate yet reinforcing inputs. In (16), where a parallel relation was identified, it is clear from the preceding text that the writer’s intention is for the reader to be able to draw the particular conclusion that the mouse is a vulnerable animal when it lives in the wild. The relevance of the sentence lies in the successful retrieval of this particular piece of information; missing it, will be to miss the relevance of the utterance, and as indicated earlier, this is reinforced by the presence of the marker **hu**.

On the contrary, the information provided in (17) is primarily intended as information about the appearance of the alligator as part of the physical description of this animal. There is nothing about the context which suggests that a specific conclusion, using the individual clauses as separate premises is expected to be derived as part of the intended cognitive effects the reader is expected to obtain. It is true that one may draw various implications from such collocations, but so long as missing those implicatures do not affect the intended cognitive effects which render the sentence optimally relevant, an additive relation, rather than a parallel one is what is identified to pertain between the conjoined clauses.

4.7 EXPLANATORY RELATION

Sometimes, the second clause in a **nē**-construction is intended to provide an explanation for the proposition expressed in the initial clause. Illustrating from English, yet intending to have a universal applicability, Carston’s (2002) prediction is that such a relation is unlikely in constructions involving natural language equivalents

¹⁸ The role of **hu** in (16) is reminiscent of Akan **nso** (cf. Amfo 2010).

communicative role of natural language connectives in the category of ‘and’ provide the starting point for some discussion about what can be considered as legitimate inter-clausal relations triggered by the use of the connective.

Some of the accounts of natural language connectives have been semantic; attributing whatever inter-clausal relations arrived at, to the presence of the connective, i.e. to the meaning of the connective itself. For instance, Cohen (1971) suggests that ‘and’ is loaded semantically, some of its semantic features are subsequently ignored in on-line processing of actual ‘and’-utterances. Bar-Lev and Palacas (1980) propose a temporal semantics for ‘and’, using a relation of semantic command. However, such semantic approaches have been found to be inadequate, leaving a number of inter-clausal relations unaccounted for, particularly those of the non-narrative nature. (For a critique of these approaches see for example Carston 2002, Txurruka 2003, Amfo 2007a).

On the other hand, pragmatic approaches to the communicative role of ‘and’ limit the semantic content of ‘and’ – and by extension other natural language connectives comparable to ‘and’ – to the logical operator &, and they attribute specific inter-clausal relations that arise in the interpretation process to pragmatic rules. Major proponents of this view have been Grice and neo-Griceans like Horn (1992) and Levinson (2000) as well as relevance theorists like Blakemore (1987), Carston (2002), Blakemore and Carston (2005). It must be mentioned however that the pragmatic processes leading to the derivation of the specific conjunct relations differ among these two groups of pragmaticians. Whereas Grice and his followers solely attribute the inter-clausal relations to the derivation of implicatures, relevance theorists consider them, in many cases, as belonging to the explicit level of communication.

Txurruka (2003:225), on her account of the meaning of ‘and’, takes what she calls a “commonsense” approach, suggesting that ‘and’ indicates “coordination expressed as the requirement of a Coordinated Discourse Topic (CDT)”. ‘and’, for her, is a discourse marker, which indicates discourse coordination as opposed to subordination. Inter-clausal relations such as temporality, causality, parallelism and even contrast are accounted for within this framework since the underlying relation of Narration, Result, Parallel, Contrast are Coordinators (see also Asher 1993, Asher and Vieu 2005). On the contrary, Explanation and Elaboration are Subordinators and as a result such relations are excluded from ‘and’-conjunctions.²² We have however seen from section 4.7 that it is possible in Dangme to have an explanatory relation existing between the clauses of a *nē*-construction. How can such proposals intended to account for natural language connectives in the category of English ‘and’ be sustained in the light of empirical data like the one in (18)?

Clearly, the information provided in the second conjunct seeks to provide an explanation for which the directive given in the first conjunct ought to be obeyed. Indeed, this explanatory relation is not derived at an implicit level of communication. It appears to be the only reason why the two clauses will be linked with *nē*, and it provides the necessary impetus for the directive in the first conjunct to be complied with. One cannot however downplay the significance of the sentence types in such explanatory *nē*-constructions. Crucially, the first conjunct has to be an imperative. In this regard, Txurruka’s (2003) considerations that the illocutionary forces of ‘and’-construction should be identical will not work for equivalent constructions in Dangme

to the present discussion. Amfo (2007a) is one known exception which focuses on the Akan (Niger Congo, Kwa) connective *na* ‘and’.

²² Carston (2002) also takes the position that explanation is excluded from the inferential relations that can possibly pertain between conjuncts of ‘and’-conjunctions.

and Akan. There appears to be a typological feature which allows an explanatory inter-clausal relation between conjoined imperative-declarative constructions in a number of Kwa languages. This being so, a blocked explanatory relation in ‘and’-conjunctions in Germanic languages cannot be explained away cognitively, considering the universality of cognitive issues.

My conclusion is that theories which seek to account for the semantics and consequently the pragmatics of natural language connectives rely heavily, if not exclusively, on English (and other Germanic or even Indo-European languages). As a result, outside of the Indo-European family groups, these theories do not tend to have the wide applicability that it is intended to have.

One of the earliest discussions about the ‘semantic implications’ of the use of the English connective ‘and’, which surprisingly has not been followed up much in the literature,²³ is Quirk et al’s (1979:560) proposals. In line with sticking to a striped-down semantics for ‘and’, they suggest that ‘and’ “denotes merely a relation between the clauses”, with the caveat that the contents of the individual clauses should have something in common to warrant their linkage. They then go on to list eight possible conjunct relations – consequential, sequential, contrastive, commentative, concessive, condition-consequential, parallel and ‘pure’ addition.²⁴ A number of these categories have been merged in later studies (for eg. Blakemore and Carston 2005). What I find most interesting is the relation they label as “condition-consequence”. A condition-consequence relation exists between conjuncts when the consequence provided in the second conjunct is dependent on a condition mentioned in the first conjunct. In example (20), the interpretation is that the speaker will help the addressee escape if she is given some money.

(20) Give me some money and I’ll help you escape. (Quirk et al, 1979: 562)

The second conjunct provides a reason why the addressee needs to oblige, by providing money for the speaker. This appears to counter Carston’s (2002) claim that explanatory relations are excluded from ‘and’-conjunctions. Even if the execution of the action described in the second conjunct is heavily dependent on the actualization of the imperative in the first conjunct, the information provided in the latter qualifies as an answer to the question “why should I give you money?”. In other words, it provides an explanation, justification or reason why the imperative ought to be obeyed. Some authors such as Bolinger (1968, 1977), Verstraete (2005) have raised issues about the genuineness of such constructions like the first clause in (20) as (semantically) imperatives. Most examples cited though, appear to be threats and dares which implicitly encourage the addressee not to actually do as stated in the ‘imperatives’, such as Bolinger’s (1968: 340) examples: “Cut ourselves off that source of income and we’re ruined”; “Break that vase and I’ll break your neck”. Alternatively, one does what is stated and then receives a negative consequence as in “Spare the rod and spoil the child”. This state of affairs described by Bolinger’s examples is not exactly the case in (20). A context where the addressee is eager to escape is easily imaginable, and the speaker is to all intents and purposes motivating

²³ But see the discussion in Verstraete (2005) and the references cited therein.

²⁴ The terminology used by Quirk et al is quite different from the ones I use here, understandably so, for instance what I refer to as ‘inter-clausal relations’ they call ‘semantic implications’. The labels for these relations are often (though not always) my own interpretations of the relations as explained by them; they do not necessarily use these exact labels.

the addressee by the information given in the second clause to actually follow through with the suggestion provided in the imperative form.

Considering the plethora of studies concerning ‘and’-conjunctions, this particular inter-clausal relation has not been pursued and exploited enough. On the contrary, it has been suppressed (for example, Carston 2002, Txurruka 2003), and it has not been considered a viable inter-clausal relation. This relation is certainly reminiscent of explanatory inter-clausal relations in Dangme (section 4.7) and Akan (Amfo 2007a). However, in both Dangme and Akan, there is no condition required, even if the nature of certain constructions allows for a condition-consequence reading. For example in (18), the referents of **wa** ‘we’ will leave early the next day, irrespective of whether the addressee puts the child to sleep early or not. In the Akan example in (21), Mama’s coming is not dependent on the addressee’s sweeping of the room; Mama will come regardless. However, Mama’s coming is provided as sufficient reason and hence motivation for the room to be swept.

- (21) **Kɔ pra dan no mu hɔ nà Mama be-ba**
 Go.IMP sweep room DEF inside there CONJ Mama FUT-come
 Go and sweep the room because Mama will come right now.

Akan (Amfo 2007a:678)

Even though conditionality is not a necessary feature of explanatory relations in these Kwa languages identified, there may be some underlying cause-consequence relations in some of these utterances due to the nature of the content of the clauses. In the Dangme example in (22)²⁵, however, the instruction in the first clause, if followed, will provide the basis for the child not getting cold and subsequently falling ill. Even though this condition-consequence relation can be likened to the situation in English, the difference here is that the stated consequence is only going to materialize when the instruction given is not executed, whereas in English the consequence is realized when the directive is actually obeyed. In this particular case, the explanation given for why the instruction needs to be obeyed is the consequence of the non-pursuance of the request.

- (22) **Wo jukwe ɔ tade ne fie ekoya**
 Wear.IMP child DEF dress CONJ cold it.does.NEG.go
e-mi ne enu hio.
 his-inside CONJ he.catch sickness
 Dress up the child so it doesn’t get cold and fall ill.

Note that the English condition-consequence relations mentioned above can be obtained only under certain syntactic constraints (just like the Kwa languages cited). Quirk et al mention that for the condition-consequence relation to obtain, the following conditions mentioned in (23) are usually met:²⁶

- (23) a. The second clause has a modal auxiliary
 b. The verb of the first clause is an imperative or contains a modal auxiliary.
 Quirk et al (op.cit:562)

It is important to note that there is no other category of inter-clausal relations of ‘and’-conjunctions (and its natural language equivalents) that requires significant syntactic constraints such as the one involving explanatory relations.

²⁵ (22) is the Dangme translation of Amfo (2007a:678), e.g. (16)). Credit to Levi C. Ofoe for the translation.

²⁶ Quirk et al admit that there are exceptions to the general rule.

Following from the above, I conclude that an explanatory inter-clausal relation is a viable and legitimate inferential relation that pertains between $n\bar{e}$ -constructions and similar 'and'-constructions in some Kwa languages. It is obvious though that unlike the other inter-clausal relations, there is an interaction between the syntax of these constructions and $n\bar{e}$ in order to derive the intended cognitive effects. The overarching condition of an imperative plus declarative clause combination can in no way be overruled. It is yet another reminder that the interaction between the various linguistic levels of representation ought to be taken seriously in the processing of utterances in order to derive the intended cognitive effects that will make specific utterances optimally relevant.

6. SUMMARY

This paper has been concerned with the communicative role of the Dangme clausal connective $n\bar{e}$, which is the underspecified clausal connective in Dangme comparable to English 'and'. As a prelude to the analysis of the various inter-clausal relations that the use of this connective may give rise to, the nature of the syntactic linkage involved in $n\bar{e}$ -constructions was considered.

The semantic vagueness of this connective makes it highly context sensitive, and the constructions in which it occurs amenable to various interpretations. Significantly, the presence of $n\bar{e}$ encourages the addressee to look out for certain inter-clausal relations that may pertain between the linked clauses. The specific inter-clausal relation relevant for a given construction is arrived at when the addressee following a path of least effort combines the presence of $n\bar{e}$ with other significant features of the context. Specific inter-clausal relations identified include temporality, causality, contrast, parallelism, addition and explanation.

The possibility of the existence of an explanatory relation between the clauses contained in a $n\bar{e}$ -construction (contra English 'and'), once again, brings to the fore that the scope of inter-clausal relations which may pertain between clauses as a result of the presence of natural language connectives like 'and' could be broadened, taken into consideration language-specific or even typological features of specific language groups.

ABBREVIATIONS

CONJ	Coordinating connective	NEG	Negation marker
DCM	Dependent clause marker	PCM	Purpose clause marker
DEF	Definite article	POSS	Possessive pronoun
FM	Focus marker	PST	Past tense marker
FUT	Future tense marker	REL	Relative clause marker
IMP	Imperative marker		

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