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Relevance and Linguistic Markers: Implications for Translating from English into a Gur Language

Solomon Ali DANSIEH
Wa Polytechnic, Ghana

ABSTRACT

This paper is an analysis of the Dagaare marker *ká* aimed at pointing out what the speaker implies when it is used in an utterance. This has been done within the framework of Sperber and Wilson's communication theory of relevance. Linguistic markers such as pronouns, aspect indicators, mood indicators, hearsay markers and attitudinal particles have been identified as encoding procedural information concerning inference processes relating to utterance interpretation (see Blakemore 1987, 1988, Blass 1990, Wilson and Sperber 1993, Fretheim 2000). Research has shown that these markers encode constraints on the inferential process of utterance interpretation rather than conveying conceptual information. As a result, there is a need for translation strategies that are based on an understanding of the way in which a given marker in a given utterance exploits the inferential comprehension process.

Keywords*: linguistic marker, hearsay markers, procedural information, conceptual information, inferential information.*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 DAGAARE AND THE DAGAABA

Dagaare is spoken mainly in the North-western parts of Ghana and in some communities in the south of Burkina Faso and the north-eastern corner of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana's immediate neighbours to the north and west, respectively. The total population of Dagaare speakers is estimated at about 1–1.5 million people, called the Dagaaba (Bodomo 1997: 44). The singular for Dagaaba – Dagao, is not only used for an individual speaker of the language, but also for the entire geographical area occupied by the Dagaaba.

Dagaare belongs to the Mabia (Western Oti-Volta) group of the Gur branch of the Niger-Congo language family. Languages that are related to it include Birifor, Waalii, Guruni, Dagbaane, Mampruli, Kusal, Buli and Moore. The term *Mabia* (*n mabie* in Dagaare) literally means 'my mother's child', that is, a brother or sister and is still commonly used between the Dagaaba and Dagomba (speakers of Dagbaane). Four main regional dialects of Dagaare are identifiable, namely Northern Dagaare, Central Dagaare, Southern Dagaare and Western

Dagaare (Bodomo 1997). Northern Dagaare is also known as Lobr or Dagara, and is spoken in the Nandom and Lawra traditional areas of North-western Ghana and also in Diebougou, Gaoua and their areas of influence in neighbouring Burkina Faso. The Central Dagaare-speaking zone covers Jirappa, Ullo, Daffiama, Nadoli and areas under their jurisdiction. Southern Dagaare, which I have used in this paper, is the dialect spoken in Kaleo, Wa (the regional capital), and their surrounding villages. Western Dagaare (Birifor), on the other hand, is spoken in areas lying on the western side of the Black Volta River in Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire.

1.2 TRANSLATION: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE IN NORTH-WESTERN GHANA

Here, I do a brief survey of the history of translation in Dagao (i.e. the homeland of the Dagaaba). I will also talk about some of the current translation projects going on in the area and conclude with an answer to the question whether there are any future prospects for the art of translating in the area in question.

Finlay (1971: 17) asserts that 'a history of translating must of necessity become a history of mankind in the widest sense and, in the narrower sense, in the interaction between peoples of different languages...'. For centuries, Dagaare, like many languages, was never properly codified or written down, and so the literary aspect of translating into the language can, at best, be described as recent. We cannot, however, rule out the fact that during the days of the Trans-Saharan trade in slaves, kola-nuts and salt in the 19th century, some form of translating or interpreting must have gone on between the Dagaaba and their Berber, Tuareg, Mandingo and Diula trading counterparts from North and West Africa, as a number of Dagaare-speaking communities were viable commercial entrepots then. Most of these North African traders were Muslims, and although they introduced Islam to their hosts, the Dagaaba (especially, the Waala), there is no known record of their having translated the Koran or portions of it into Dagaare. Probably, this was not done for fear of adulterating or embellishing the words of Allah and His holy prophet Mohammed, a view that still bars Muslims, especially in orthodox circles, from engaging in any act of translating their holy book. One may therefore not be wrong to conclude that this state of affairs contributed to the late rise of translating activities in the area in question.

With the advent of Christian Missionaries in the early 20th century, a new wave of translating activities emerged. In order to facilitate their evangelistic campaigns and catechism, they not only introduced formal education, but also started translating the Bible or portions of it, other religious literature, compilation of dictionaries, and the writing of some grammar books. Jirappa in the Central Dagaare-speaking zone was the first seat of the early Catholic Missionaries. Notable among the early missionary linguists who worked on Dagaare in Ghana were Rev. D. B. Duran (1953), Wilson (1962), Kennedy

(1966) and Hall (1973). It is an acknowledged fact that translating religious works like the Bible into various vernaculars throughout history served an important purpose. Such translations served as vehicles for codifying languages and giving rise to their generally accepted literal forms. This was the case with the translation of portions of the Bible into Central Dagaare at the dawn of the 20th century.

The beginning of the second half of the 20th century saw the coming of the Baptist Mid-Missions Missionaries and those of other protestant denominations to North-western Ghana. Missionaries of the Baptist Mid-Missions undertook the task of translating the New Testament of the Bible into Waalii (Southern Dagaare). They also compiled a concise Waalii-English dictionary, wrote a simple grammar of the dialect, and prepared several primers for their literacy programme aimed at enabling converts to read the Bible. Their choice of Waalii, the dialect spoken in Wa, the Regional capital and its surrounding areas for translation was partly due to reasons of prestige and partly due to their aim at converting the people, to Christianity. Besides the Wa area, the Baptist Missionaries also carried out various translation projects including that of translating the Bible into Birifor (Lobr) in the Lawra area. The data used as examples in this paper are from Southern Dagaare: the dialects spoken in the Wa and Sankana areas of the region.

At present, translation work on the Old Testament of the Bible into Waalii is complete and is about to be published. The Baptist Mid-Missions Literacy Centre in Wa is also involved in the translation of short stories and handbooks on health and hygiene. All these are clear pointers to the fact that Missionaries play a central role in the history of translation in North-western Ghana in particular. Their activities, worldwide, brought as fringe benefits the translation of the whole or parts of the Bible into a variety of languages and dialects, often the first examples of written forms of some of these previously solely oral means of communication (Finlay 1971).

Current world trends coupled with government policies have all conspired to give rise to a general movement in the direction of the popularity of translations. With the establishment of local FM radio stations in all regional capitals now in Ghana, the mass media is also contributing to the growth of translation as policies, advertisements and other public educational programmes have to be translated into local dialects for easy comprehension by the about sixty percent non-literate population. Also as part of the global fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic, diarrhoea, malaria, teen-age pregnancy, hunger, war and natural disasters, the activities of specialised agencies of the United Nations (especially, UNICEF, WHO, IFAD, WFP) and other Non-governmental Organisations are increasing at an unprecedented scale. To get their message home to target communities, health education handbooks, pamphlets and documentaries need to be translated into the local dialects, an indication that translating will remain an effective tool for communication in North-western Ghana for a long time to come.

1.3 WHY ANALYSE KÁ

This study was inspired by Blass' analysis of *rɛ* in her study of the Sisaali language (1990: 2; 93–122). Speakers of Dagaare and Sisaali live side by side in some communities of north-western Ghana. Although both languages belong to the Gur language family, they are not mutually intelligible. Dagaare falls under the Mabia (Western Oti-Volta) group whilst Sisala is under the Gurunsi sub-group. The particle *rɛ* in Sisaali and *ká* in Dagaare manifest some interesting similarities and differences. For instance, though the two particles tend to be related in function, they are different because whereas *rɛ* occurs at the front of the embedded sentence and utterance-finally, *ká* never occurs at the end of an utterance (Blass 1990: 98). A systematic comparison of the two languages could make an interesting study in future; but for the scope of this paper, we want to posit that the analysis of *ká* is worthwhile because of its central role in utterance interpretation in Dagaare. This can be proven by its numerous uses relating to hearsay and those that have been grammaticalised. Besides hearsay, it also has specific uses such as the expression of desire and thought. Considering the pervasiveness of this linguistic marker, we will argue that it qualifies as an interpretive marker and can lead to the achievement of relevance. This will be illustrated with some evidence for grammaticalisation leading to interpretive use[1], concluding with some empirical considerations on *ká.* An investigation of attested occurrences of this ubiquitous marker in actual translations from English into Dagaare will serve as the basis for determining which ones of its numerous uses appear in written language, and what English constructions could serve as source constructions for Dagaare translations with this marker. The study is basically a review parts of the small body of literature available in the language using texts translated from English, especially the Bible, and examining how *ká* has been used in these texts.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 RELEVANCE

The central claim of the theory of relevance is that human communication creates an expectation of optimal relevance. According to Sperber and Wilson, there is an expectation on the part of the hearer that an attempt at interpretation will yield adequate contextual effects at minimal processing cost; otherwise it

[1] Relevance theory draws a distinction between the descriptive and interpretive dimensions of language use. Its fundamental claim is that at the very basic level, every utterance is an interpretation of the thought the speaker intends to communicate. When the thought interpreted describes a state of affairs, the utterance is considered as being used descriptively. On the other hand, when the thought interpreted is an interpretation of a further thought, then the utterance used to express it is used interpretively (Sperber and Wilson, 1995).

will not be worthwhile processing or interpreting the stimulus presented to him, which means the stimulus is irrelevant to him. This fact, which is believed to form part of our human psychology, is expressed in relevance theory as the principle of relevance:

> Every act of ostensive communication communicates the presumption of its own optimal relevance. (Sperber and Wilson 1986: 158)

The authors point out that faced with the vast number and variety of stimuli that daily calls for attention, humans tend to pay attention to some phenomena at the expense of others. As to what determines which phenomena they attend to, Sperber and Wilson suggest that humans tend to pay attention to what is relevant to them. They ascribe this human tendency to the fact that relevance is the key to human cognition. As such, when the communicator is demanding attention from the audience, he suggests that the piece of information he is offering is relevant enough to be worthy of the audience's attention. This way, relevance can be seen as playing the dual role of being the key to human cognition more generally and to communication more specifically.

Sperber and Wilson's claim in the second (or "communicative") principle of relevance is that when an assumption is ostensively communicated, then there is a presumption that that particular assumption is of some relevance to the hearer. In other words, whenever someone shows that he wishes to communicate, he implicitly and automatically conveys the assumption that the hearer can expect to derive adequate contextual effects without spending unnecessary effort. This assumption, according to Sperber and Wilson, does not only have an important consequence for the theory of utterance interpretation, but is also 'consistent with the principle of relevance'.

Thus, interpreting utterances entails efforts and benefits, and the notion that shows the interrelationship between the two is the notion of relevance. Sperber and Wilson define this notion in terms of the following conditions:

> *Extent condition 1:* an assumption is relevant in a context to the extent that its contextual effects in this context are large.
>
> *Extent condition 2:* an assumption is relevant in a context to the extent that the effort required to process it in this context is small. (1986: 125)

From the above, three main facts are deducible. The first is that relevance is dependent on two inseparable factors: contextual effects and processing effort. Secondly, since these factors are both context-dependent, it means the principle of relevance itself is context-dependent, a point which is essential for understanding the nature of translation. The third fact is that the principle facilitates the comparison of utterances, since these can vary according to the degree of relevance they achieve in some context.

2.2 PROCEDURALLY ENCODED INFORMATION

Diane Blakemore's (1987) reanalysis of Grice's discourse connectives as encoding semantic constraints on implicatures impacted greatly on the theory of relevance, triggering a lot of research that led to the conclusion that some linguistic markers are best analysed as encoding procedural information. Procedural information concerns ways to enrich utterances inferentially as opposed to information which contributes to the conceptual representation of the utterance. It is an instruction to the cognitive system, telling it what to do with the conceptual representation in the inferential process. In relevance theory, utterance interpretation is understood as a relevance-guided inference procedure. This theory of communication expects the hearer to inferentially enrich the meaning encoded in an utterance until the major assumptions that the speaker intended him/her to entertain are represented in the hearer's mind. Such an inferential process is constrained by the search for optimal relevance. It will be argued that the marker *ká* in Dagaare encodes procedural information.

2.3 'HEARSAY' MARKERS

In their analysis of function words in particular languages, linguists like Palmer (1986), Levinsohn (1975), Blass (1990), found it necessary to refer to the notion of a 'hearsay' particle. Although the exact uses of 'hearsay' devices may vary depending on what language is studied, it is said that they function mainly as markers of information which is not 'first-hand'. Blass, however, observes that limiting the use of 'hearsay' devices only to reporting actual speech will imply leaving such important components of speech as paraphrasing, reporting of someone, or speech that is ascribable via inference without actually having been heard, unexplained.

Palmer (1986: 8, 9) sees the main function of hearsay particles in terms of the intention of the speaker to express her degree of commitment to the information being conveyed. The presence of a hearsay particle enables the speaker judge between what is experienced first-hand and what is not. Palmer considers a hearsay particle as a kind of 'modal' or evidential, classifiable under the same category as 'may' and 'might'. A comparison of examples 1 b) and c) as responses to 1 a) below shows that there is justification in that intuition:

(1) Southern Dagaare

a.	*Oore*	*era*	*na*	*Nooweng*	*be?*
	Cold	doing	FACT	Norway.in	Q
	'Is it cold in Norway?'				
b.	*Oore*	*era*	*na*	*be*	
	Cold	doing	FACT	there	
	'It's cold there'				

c.	*Ba*	*yɛle*	*ká*	*oore*	*era*	*na*	*beng*
	They	say	COMP	cold	doing	FACT	there
	'They say it's cold there'						

In these utterances, the speaker of 1 b) takes responsibility for the truth of the proposition expressed, while the speaker of 1 c) is not responsible for the truth of the proposition: 'It's cold in Norway', but only for the faithfulness of her report.

At these two levels, we can say that though a complementiser, (with the hearsay-marking function carried by the larger construction which includes the "they say" part), *ká* still meets the standard of being labelled a 'hearsay' marker. This is because it exhibits similar characteristics to those observed by Palmer and others for other languages.

2.4 TRANSLATION AND RELEVANCE

The list of works on the theory and practice of translation is inexhaustible, and so are the suggested guidelines therein. This situation has arisen probably because of the different angles of thought from which the subject is approached. Interestingly, however, very little work has been done on the place of relevance theory in translation. At present, the only book that represents an in-depth study in this area is Ernst-August Gutt's: *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and context* from 2000. This means that there is still a lot to be done by way of research in this area. To meet this challenge, the November 2001 issue of *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses* volume 14 (edited by Mateo and Francisco Yus) was specially devoted to pragmatics and translation with some of the articles included in the volume dealing (to a greater or lesser extent) with Relevance theory. This study is an attempt to make a contribution to how relevance theory can help handle some of the issues that stand out in the task of translating from English into an Dagaare. We shall consider some of Gutt's observations.

The central claim of Gutt's book is that given a comprehensive theory of inferential communication, there is no need for a special theory of translation. Gutt points out that it seems possible to account for differences and similarities between texts on purely relevance theoretic grounds without resorting to *traditional* translation concepts, such as 'equivalence' or 'faithfulness', at all. This does not mean that he dismisses as useless existing translation rules and guidelines. In fact, Gutt acknowledges that they can be of immense help to the translator, seeing that those rules and guidelines are expressions of generalizations about quite complex phenomena and reflections of a considerable amount of experience, collected by competent translators over longer periods of time. These generalizations, he adds, most often reflect what particular features or class of features are likely to be of special relevance to a

particular audience. Such generalizations are useful because not every audience is *completely* different in all aspects from any other audience. This is why it is 'entirely reasonable for the translator to use these observations when facing choices and decisions at the translation desk' (Gutt 2000: 226). Gutt, however, emphasizes that knowledge of these rules and guidelines *alone* is insufficient and is incapable of replacing the need for an understanding of the nature of communication. He rightly suggests that in order to do competent work, the translator must fully understand that these rules and guidelines have no validity in themselves, 'but only in so far as they are of *adequate applications of the principle of relevance* to particular texts, particular groups of people, particular sets of circumstances etc.' (Ibid: 227). He also notes that one can compose receptor language originals that have the same information content as the source text, or using the same style, try to achieve similar effects. 'However', Gutt adds, 'they would be read and interpreted very differently depending on whether they were presented as works in their own right or as representations of those famous originals' (Gutt 2000: 58). This difference is accounted for by relevance theory in terms of the distinction between descriptive and interpretive dimensions of language use.

Due to differences in socio-cultural backgrounds, a translation could turn out to be a distraction, seeing that what would matter to the receptors may not just be how closely the translation matches up in a point-to-point comparison with a corresponding source text on terms of some translation-theoretic notion like 'functional equivalence', but rather that they are given information relevant to them. In cross-language situations where cultural differences are minimal, translation is likely to go a long way towards achieving successful communication in the receptor language. But the more relevant the socio-cultural differences are to the communication act, the less successful translation will turn out to be. It is also worth mentioning that the distinction between descriptive and interpretive use applies not only to interlingual communication. Parallel cases may occur intralingually too. For an illustration of this, see Gutt (ibid: 61).

Another important observation that Gutt makes about the theory and practice of translation is that the failure to draw a dividing line between descriptive and interpretive use has engendered unfortunate results for the understanding and accomplishment of interlingual communication. Theoretically, it has brought scholars to grips with the Herculean task of trying to put in place what Kelly describes as 'a theory of translation [that] will do justice to both Bible and bilingual cereal packet' (Kelly 1979: 226). On the practical side too, it has not yielded much help either. As Gutt points out, problems can arise when the communicator does not clearly recognise that the role of the source language text is merely that of a convenient help to composing a receptor language text, and not a model to be faithfully reproduced. Unless this is fully recognised, the objective of the communication act can be distorted, and its achievement will also be in jeopardy. This is why the source language communicator has the responsibility of ensuring that the set of assumptions made manifest to the

speaker or reader of the receptor language is 'relevant enough to make it worth the addressee's while to process the ostensive stimulus' (Sperber and Wilson 1986: 158).

3. Some Empirical Evidence

3.1 Attested ká Occurrences in Translating into Dagaare

I discuss here some empirical evidence on which ones of the numerous uses of *ká* considered appear in written language. Some *ká* occurrences in actual translations into Dagaare from English will be discussed using data from the *New King James Version (NKJV)*, which serves as the source English text, and the *Waalii New Testament*[2] (published in 1984) and some final drafts of the Old Testament in Waalii as the receptor language texts for Dagaare. 'Waalii' is the dialect spoken in Wa, the regional capital of North-western Ghana and its areas of influence. To ensure variety in the choice of data, some of my examples will be drawn from folk-tales, nature and environmental studies. Although some of these have not been translated from particular foreign languages into Dagaare, they serve our other purpose of finding out more about which ones of the numerous uses of *ká* appear in written Dagaare. English constructions found as source constructions for Dagaare translations with *ká* will be examined and the question of whether *ká*-constructions are seldom employed in the translations at hand or frequently used also considered.

3.2 Attested Occurrences of ká as a 'hearsay' Marker

'Hearsay' devices are said to function mainly as markers of information that is not first-hand. In other words, they are devices employed by the speaker to mark information which she got from somebody else. This holds true for Dagaare too as illustrated in the data below:

2 The orthography used by the Baptist Mid-Missions in the translation of the Bible into Waalii and other material at the Waalii Literacy Centre (Wa, North-Western Ghana) is slightly different from the conventional one used in the country. As can be observed from most of the data used below, a tick mark is used to distinguish front from back vowels; *ch and j,* are also used instead of *ky* and *gy*.

(2)
(Source text in English)

'… when Sanbalat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab and the rest of our enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall … that Sanbalat and Geshem sent to me …' *(Nehemiah 6:1a & 2a, NKJV).*

'Nihe-maiya Gbangu 6:1a & 2a (Translation into Dagaare/Waalii)

…Sambalaati, 'To-baiya, Giisem, a 'Loribi-dau ni aning ti dondomihi ni

…Sanbalat Tobiah Geshem the Arab-man FACT CONJ our enemies FACT

chelee daang wa 'wongyeng ka n la meye a daanguoni.
rests PAST come hear.PERF COMP I again build.PERF the wall.

Beng la ka Sambalaati aning Giisem daang tung n 'jie
There FACT that Sanbalat CONJ Geshem PAST send my place

Perhaps there is no other translated account in the whole Bible that illustrates the use of *ká* to mark hearsay better than this one. In this account, Nehemiah, the Jewish cupbearer of the king of Persia is granted permission to return to his homeland to rebuild the shattered wall of Jerusalem. During reconstruction work, he faces opposition. Despite this, the task is completed in only fifty-two days. The quotations above are excerpts from a plot against him, when news of the accomplished feat went round. Nehemiah himself is the narrator, yet he uses *ká* preceded by *'wong* 'to hear' to indicate that Sanbalat and Tobiah were not eyewitnesses of what had happened, but had been told about it by some informants. Even though this information is true because the event being referred to did take place, it is still hearsay since it is not first-hand. This further finds confirmation in the wording of an open letter that Sanbalat sent him after he and his accomplices had tries and fails to trap Nehemiah for a fourth time. This is quoted below:

(3)
(Source text in English)

"In it was written: 'It is reported among the nations, and Geshem says, *that* you and the Jews plan to rebel; therefore, according to these rumours, you are rebuilding the wall, that you may be their king.' (Nehemiah 6:1, NKJV). *[Italics as in source text]*

'Nihe-maiya Gbangu 6:1 (Translation into Dagaare/Waalii)

Ngaang daang seu u 'puong: Ba yeliye a paalihi 'puong,
This-way PAST write.PERF its inside: They say.PERF the countries inside

ka Giisem ming yeli ***ka*** *i ning a*
CONJ Geshem also say.PERF COMP you CONJ the

'Juuhi	*'leyeng*	***ka***	*ye*	*die*	*taawai.*
Jews	plan.PERF	COMP	you	take	rebellion

Ana	*'bayehi*	*nga*	*'wuliyeng*	***ka***	*bila*	*'jung*	*la*	*ing*
These	they-says	FOC	show	COMP	that-is	why	FACT	you

lamiera	*a*	*daanguoni*	***ka***	*i*	*nye*	*i*	*ba*	*naa.*
building	the	wall	COMP	you	see	be	their	king.

At a single glance, two features that cannot go unnoticed in the Dagaare text are:

- In stead of the semi-colon used in the source text to separate the two sentences, a period is used in the receptor.
- The use of *ka* with four different verbs.

The breaking of the sentence into two in the receptor language text is due mainly to the need to help the reader arrive at an interpretation that will yield adequate contextual effects at minimal processing cost. To a reading target group of 69.8% people without any formal education (Ghana Statistical Service, 2005), long sentences with their attendant increase in processing effort will hinder the achievement of optimal relevance.

With regard to the use of *ka* in the translated version of the letter, we may note that among all the four instances of its use only one may be said to be directly related to hearsay – the one that is immediately preceded by *yeli* 'to say'. There are two sources of the information mentioned: the one by name - Geshem, and the other(s), just by a neuter plural pronoun *ba,* a pronoun that is often used not only in reporting hearsays but which also forms the first syllable of the Dagaare word for rumour and hearsay – *baye* 'they-say' (see section 3.5 above). Through the use of *ka*, Sanbalat, the writer dissociates himself from being responsible for the truth of the proposition expressed. By using *ka* he echoes the message of his informants and registers his faithfulness to only the truth of his report. The second complementiser *ka,* which follows the verb *le* 'to plan' (literally 'to tie'), translates the preposition 'to' in the English text. Unlike the first *ka*, but like its other two counterparts used after it in the Dagaare translation, it does not introduce indirect speech. It expresses desire on the part of Nehemiah. To some extent, we can also say that like the last *ka*, it introduces purpose(s) – the plan to rebel and the alleged hidden agenda of rebuilding the wall – to become a leader.

3.3 Attested Occurrences of Ká in Expressions of Desire

This section illustrates my claim in section 3.6.2 that the notion of desirability in Dagaare can be embedded under such verbs as 'want', 'like', 'love' with *ká*

markings from actual translations. The data below is taken from a book on nature studies entitled *Dunee Yelitarihi 'Mine*, literally some matters about the world. The excerpt is on crocodiles and talks about how mother-crocs protect their hatchlings from predators.

(4) (Baptist Mid-Missions, 1996)

Eu	*jela*	*iye*	*bera*	*fiing*	*a*	*gaa*	*nuo*	*jela.*	*U*	*mang*	*nyeye*	*u*	*jela*	*a*
Croc	eggs	be	big	small	to	pass	chicken	eggs.	It	HAB	lay	its	eggs	and

dia	*'ung*	*komboo*	*'konkogiring*	*a*	*bahaa*	*'be*	*ang*	*wegi.*
take-them	bury	river	bank	and	leave-them	there	they	hatch

Eu'bilii	*ma'mineng*	*mang*	kaaraa.	Anang	mang	kara	'duunhi
Croc-small	mothers	HAB	watch-them.	They	HAB	chase	animals

aning	eudaba	ang	mang	wa	**buora**	**ka**	a	nyogihaa	oo
CONJ	croc-men	FOC	HAB	come	wanting	COMP	they	catch-them	eat.

(Translation into English)

Crocodile eggs are slightly bigger than those of chicken. It lays its eggs and buries them on the bank of a river, leaving them there to hatch. Baby-crocodiles are often protected by their mothers. They keep animals and male crocodiles that come, wanting to prey on them at bay.

The attitude of desire above is expressed by the lexical verb *buora*, followed by the complementiser *ka,* which is obligatory in such constructions. Here, the use of *ka* helps attribute the thoughts expressed to the predators. In other words, the state of affairs described is desirable to the predators. Let us consider another example, (taken from the Bible):

(5)

(Source text in English)

And it was told Him *by some* who said, "Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you." *(Luke 8:20, NKJV). [Italics as in source text.]*

Luki 8:20 WNT (Translation into Dagaare/Waalii)

Ka	*nie*	*kanga*	*daang*	*yeli*	*'kuu:*	*I*	*ma*	*aning*	*i*	*yauhing,*
And	person	one	PAST	say	give-him:	Your	mother	and	your	younger-brothers

ahi	*'yengeng*	*a*	***buora***	***ka***	*ba*	*nyii*
stand	outside	and	wanting	COMP	they	see-you

In (5) too, *ka* is used with a propositional attitude related to desire. The speaker here indicates that it is desirable, in the point of view of Jesus' mother and siblings, not necessarily her own, that they see him. Another term that is

extensively used in translations into Dagaare to express desire is *veng/i…ka* 'let', 'allow', 'do', 'stop'. The verb *veng* (sometimes used interchangeably with *sagi* 'to agree/permit') can also encode permission, a command or a suggestion, depending on the context in which it is used. In all such cases, it is used with the complementiser *ka*. As we noted in (section 3.7.2, example 10), the complementiser *ka* adopts a low tone when it is used with *veng* to express the notion of desirability). Accordingly, nearly all the verses in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible with constructions involving 'let' in the English text, have been translated either *veng… ka* or *i...ka* in the Dagaare text as 27) and 28) below, for instance, show:

(6)
(Source text in English)

Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. *(Genesis 1:3, NKJV).*

'Mumpiilee Gbangu 1:3 (Translation into Dagaare/Waalii)

'Beng	*la*	*ka*	*Naangmini*	*daang*	*yeli:*	***Veng***	***ka***	*chaanii*	*'bibe.*
There	FACT	that	God	PAST	say:	Let	COMP	light	be-there

Ka	*chaanii*	*daang*	*'bibe.*
And	light	PAST	be-there

(7)
(Source text in English)

But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these comes from the evil one. *(Matthew 5:27 NKJV).*

Matiu 5:37, WNT (Translation into Dagaare/Waalii)

Che	*ye*	***veng***	***ka***	*ye*	*mm*	*i*	*mm,*	*ka*	*ye*	*ai*	*ming*	*i*	*ai*
But	you	let	COMP	your	yes	be	yes	CONJ	your	no	also	be	no

ye	*yeliyaga*	*'puong.*	*'Bojung*	*bung*	*jaa*	*ang*	*paahi*	*a*	*gaa*
your	many-talks	inside.	Because	thing	everythat		add	CONJ	pass

ama	*' yireye*	*a*	*bungbeu*	*ni*	*seng.*
these	come-from	DET	thing-bad	one	place

Permission, we also noted in 12) above, can be expressed idiomatically in Dagaare with the expression *'ku sori,* literally 'give road' with the complementiser *ka* to mean 'to permit/allow'. This is illustrated in the translation below:

(8)
(Source text in English)

Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." *(Acts 26:1, NKJV).*

'Bi-tunihi Gbangu 26:1, WNT (Translation into Dagaare/Waalii)

'Beng la ka Agiripa daang yeli 'ku Pooli:
There FACT that Agrippa PAST say give Paul

*N **'ku**ing **sori** **ka** i yeli die i minga.*
I give-you.PERF road COMP you speak save your self

Also observable in the Dagaare translations is the elision of the verb *veng* in the translation of some constructions involving 'let' in the English text. Particularly so are English constructions involving the expression 'come let us…' as in I Samuel 9:5 and 9, 11:14, 20:11; Isaiah 1:18; Jonah 1:7 and Romans 12:6. We could attribute the elision of *ka* in the Dagaare translations on these texts to pragmatic reasons. Not only will rendering these constructions as *ye wa veng ka* 'you.pl come let that' sound clumsy, despite its apparent closeness to the source text in terms of literalness, it is also an indication that the translator found it unnecessary to make explicit the lexical verb that encodes desire, permission or suggestion. This is because it is assumed or taken for granted that the interlocutors involved in those communication situations might have agreed with the speakers concerning what she could have used the verb *veng* to express before obeying the call to 'come', in which case embedding *ka* under the said verb would make the verb redundant. Other language internal evidence of this phenomenon includes this common expression of invitation to prayer – …*Ka te puori* 'let's pray', instead of *veng ka te puori* 'let that we pray', and this translation of one of the verses of the popular Christmas carol '*Oh come all ye faithful'* which goes *Oh come let us adore Him* as *Aa ye wa ka te puoruu,* instead of *Aa ye wa veng ka te puoruu.* These examples provide ample proof that besides being used to mark 'hearsay' phenomena, *ka* can also be used interpretively.

3.4 KÁ IN THE EXPRESSION OF THOUGHT

The interpretive use of utterances for the attribution of an utterance to somebody, we noted in 17) above, can also be used to attribute thoughts. In Dagaare, this expressed with the verb *tiehi/seng* followed by *ka.* This is illustrated in the translations below:

(9)
(Taken from an article on snakes, Baptist Mid-Missions, 1996)

Dunee	*buunhu*	*jaa*	*'puong*	*n*	***tiehi***	***ka***	*wa'mine*	*ka*	*niba*	*jora*	*yaga*.
World	things	all	inside	I	think	COMP	snakes	COMP	people	fear	more

Waahuu	*jaa*	*ing*	*nye*	*bii*	*a*	*'wong*	*u*	*dagini,*
Snake	any	you	see	or	that	hear	its	noise

i	*mang*	***tiehi***	***ka***	*u*	*iye*	*beu*	*a*	*tari*	*logu*
You	HAB	think	INT	it	be	bad	CONJ	have	poison.

(Translation into English)

'Among all the creatures of the earth, I think snakes are dreaded most. Any snake seen or heard of is often thought to be harmful and poisonous.'

(10)
(Source text in English)

Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. (I Corinthians 10:12)

Fora Korinti Gbangu 10:12, WNT (Translation into Dagaare/Waalii)

Bila	*'jung*	*nie*	*jaa*	*ang*	***tieha***	***ka***	*u*	*ahiyeng,*
Because	of-that	person	all	who	think.IMPERF	INT	he	stand.PERF.

u	*banna*	*a*	*ta*	*wa*	*'le.*	
he	be- careful	and	NEG	come	fall	

The verb *tiehi* 'to think' occurs twice in 10), each followed by the interpretive marker *ka*. Note that while the first one echoes the writer's own thought, the second is used by him to attribute the erroneous thought of every snake being bad and harmful to people. His use of the generic term *niba* 'people', in stead of *ting* 'we' in the first sentence, and the pronoun i 'you' (as a neuter gender) in stead of *ti* 'we' in the second sentence dissociate him from the majority who fear snakes. The idea of some snakes not being poisonous or harmful is expressed in these two sentences, though implicitly. In Dagaare, when the expression *tiehi/seng…ka* is used in an utterance, it can serve as a handy tool for implicitly drawing the dichotomy between seeming and being. Later in the text where this data was taken from, the writer is more explicit and brands this view of all snakes being venomous wrong. He also writes about the situation where some people draw wrong conclusions that a snake must be poisonous just because it looks red or dark. Similarly, we find in (10) that the Apostle Paul uses *tieha ka* to attribute the thought of complacency or false security to his Corinthian readers.

It is also possible to use *ka* echoically in an utterance to attribute a thought to someone unspecified, as an echo of the opinion of the great majority of people in a given culture – folks in general. Proverbs and wise sayings are very common in everyday speech situations of the Dagaaba, and they use ka in proverbs as interpretations of traditional wisdom. This is illustrated in the data below taken from a text on lizards. The excerpt talks about the mode of adaptations of the agama lizard, and ends with a popular proverb that emanates from the lizard's ability to cut off its tail, leave it in the hands of the predator and escape with the rest of its body and, of course, its life too. Consider this example:

(11)
(Dagaare text)

Ka	*inang*	*nyogi*	*banga*	*juuring*	*u*	*mang*	*tuong*	*ngmaaye*	*a*	*juuri*
If	you	catch	lizard	tail	it	HAB	be-able	cut	DEF	tail

loo	*che*	*jo.*	*A*	*'jung*	*bang*	*mang*	*loo*	*'lugu*	***ka***
throw-away	CONJ	run	This	is-why	they	HAB	throw	proverb	INT

Bandau	*juuri*	*ba*	*nyogi*	*ba*	*ta.*	*Ka*	*inang*	*nyogi*	*bandau*	*juuring*
lizard-male	tail	they	hold	Neg	reach	If	you	hold	lizard-male	tail

i	*nang*	*ba*	*nyoguu.*
you	yet	NEG	catch-it

(Translation into English)

'If you grab a lizard by the tail, it can cut it off and escape. Hence, the saying: "As illusive as grabbing a lizard by the tail." If you grab a male lizard by the tail, (you are only deceiving yourself), you haven't caught it yet.'

This proverb is used among the Dagaaba to refer to illusive characters. It is an interpretation of traditional wisdom. *Ká* is therefore used in the text to echo the traditional wisdom of the Dagaaba represented by the pronoun *ba* 'they'. *Ká* thus helps the speaker or translator to indicate that what is said is only an echo of traditional opinion, and not his/her own.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In this paper, I have tried to establish the central place of the marker *ka* as far as utterance interpretation in Dagaare is concerned. I have also argued that although *ká*, like *rɛ́* in Sissala, exhibits certain linguistic features in its usage in constructions to justify its being called a hearsay marker there are some differences in position of the two particles. Nevertheless, limiting its uses to reporting other speakers' speech and communicated thoughts would leave many

interesting pragmatic uses of this marker unaccounted for. I have also pointed out through the various phenomena cited, the translator may sometimes be faced with the problem of deciding whether a given utterance is to be understood descriptively or interpretively, what attitude the speaker is expressing, whose thought or utterance is being represented, and which logical and contextual implications of the representation are shared by the original being represented. To effectively handle such linguistic and pragmatic phenomena as these, the criterion of consistency with Sperber and Wilson's principle of relevance becomes indispensable. The first interpretation tested and found consistent with this principle is the only interpretation that meets the expectation of relevance created by the utterance, and should be chosen by the hearer. Although it is true that the principle works regardless of the speaker's ability to let his/her linguistic form reflect her informative intention in the most adequate manner, the above implies that it is still important that the speaker sometimes tries to formulate his/her utterance in such a way that the first interpretation tested and found consistent with this principle be the one she intends to convey. In this regard, Sperber and Wilson (1995: 224–230) observe that indicators of interpretive use in languages help guide the hearer towards the intended interpretation. With cognisance of these facts, I should like to propose that *ká* in Dagaare has the function of indicating to the hearer that the utterance which contains it is interpretively used and therefore has far-reaching implications for translating from a foreign language into an African language. Other possible areas for future research include uses relating to belief and surprise; and uses questions and answers.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

COMP	Complementiser
CONJ	Conjunction
DEF	Definite article
DET	Determiner
FACT	Factitive marker
FM	Frequency modulation
FOC	Focus marker
HAB	Habitual aspect marker
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IMPERF	Imperfective aspect
INT	Interpretive marker
NEG	Negative
PERF	Perfective aspect
Pl	Plural
Q	Question/Interrogative
Sg	Singular

UNICEF	United Nations Children and Education Fund
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation

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About the author: *Solomon Ali Dansieh* holds a bachelor's degree in Linguistics and French from the University of Ghana, and a Master of Philosophy in Linguistics from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. His research interests include Sociolinguistics, Translation and Lexicology. Currently he is the Vice Rector of the Wa Polytechnic in north-western Ghana, where he has been teaching Secretarial English and French.