

A cognitive approach to the functions of the particle me in Jola-Bandial

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*In Jola-Bandial, a language of the West Atlantic sub-family spoken in southern Senegal, the particle **me** occurs very frequently and has different functions. Traditionally they are analysed in terms of grammar and discourse. In this paper we use a cognitive approach to establish a unified framework that makes it clear when and why **me** is expected to occur in a text.*

*The main result is that the **me** morpheme in Bandial is a marker of **individuation**.*

The individuation in Bandial is in fact a generalisation of the concept of individuation as set out by the transitivity hypothesis of Hopper & Thompson (1980). According to them, the individuation of an entity has to do with the distinctiveness of that entity from its own background.

*After describing the grammatical and semantical functions of **me** and related morphemes of the same abstract noun class, we discuss what the presence or absence of **me** does to a clause, particularly a relative clause.*

*It turns out that the occurring of **me** is correlated to several features associated with higher transitivity in the sense of Hopper and Thompson, particularly to individuation and telicity and, to a lesser extent, to the distinction of definite vs. indefinite. Most often **me** provides grounding and linkage; the linking function of **me** can apply to the present speech situation backwards (anaphoric) in the sense of knowledge management, or forward (cataphoric) in the sense of attention management.*

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