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**A Semantic and Pragmatic Analysis of the Gã Discourse
Markers *ni* and *shi*: A Relevance-theoretic Perspective**

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Dedication

A memorial to my mum, *Esther Nartey*, with much love

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I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

- Philippians 4:13

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MN

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#InGodITrust

Abstract

In the last three decades, linguistic inquiry into the discourse-pragmatic functions of pragmatic particles, especially discourse markers, across diverse languages has become prevalent. In this vein, the current study explored the semantics and pragmatics of two Gã (Niger-Congo, Kwa branch) discourse markers, *ni* and *shi*. Specifically, the study sought to ascertain the linguistically/semantically encoded meanings of the discourse markers as well as their pragmatically/inferentially-derived meanings. A corpus of *ni* and *shi* was compiled for the study and Sperber and Wilson's (1995) Relevance Theory was the theoretical thrust on which the study was hinged.

The analysis and discussion revealed three key findings: First, *ni* semantically encodes elaboration, and can therefore be considered a Gã elaborative discourse marker; however, in specific communicative contexts, *ni* evokes certain pragmatic interpretations such as temporality, causality, and parallelism. Second, *shi* semantically encodes explicit contrast, and can therefore be regarded as a Gã contrastive discourse marker; conversely, depending on the context of situation, *shi* expresses very precise contrasts, including denial of expectation, substitution, and cancellation. Third, *ni* and *shi* encode procedural information and subsequently provide constraints on the inferential process.

Abbreviations

Glosses:

ADJ	adjective
ADV	adverb
ADVm	manner adverb
COMPL	complement
CONJ	conjunction
CONJC	coordinating conjunction
CONJS	subordinating conjunction
COP	copula
DEF	definite
DEM	demonstrative specifier
DET	determiner
EMPH	emphatic
FUT	future
HAB	habitual
INDEF	indefinite
N	noun
NEG	negation
Np	proper noun
Nrel	relational noun
POSS	possessive
PN	pronoun
PPOST	postposition
PROG	progressive
PRT	particle
PL	plural

QUANT	quantifier
REL	relative clause marker
SG	singular
V	verb

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1: Introduction

1.0. Background to the study

According to Coker (2013: 10-11), “Language is a social currency by which humans trade to meet their communicative ends”. As an act of communication coordinated between its participants, language in all forms of communication (spoken, written or computer-mediated), is employed as tokens of discourse. When communicating, speakers coordinate what they want to say, when, to whom, and how. To achieve this objective successfully, discourse markers (DMs), among other strategies, can be deployed. Basically, a discourse marker is an expression that suggests the nature of the relationship between an utterance and a previous one (Fraser 1996). Examples of such expressions in English include *but*, *however*, *nevertheless*, *therefore*, and *so*.

Owing to their importance to language use, DMs have engendered scholarly attention across diverse languages in the last three decades (Schourup 1991). This has culminated into a flurry of research (Levinson 1983; Schourup 1985; Fraser 1990, 1996, 1998, 1999; Blakemore 1987, 2000, 2002; Park 1998, etc.) that has investigated DMs from different perspectives, both theoretical/conceptual and descriptive/empirical. Currently, DMs represent one fruitful and expanding area of linguistic inquiry (Schourup 1991).

1.1. Main question

The main goal of this study is to identify the acceptable communicative contexts within which the Gã discourse markers *ni* and *shi* can be used. Thus, the question I seek to understand is, under what conditions/constraints can *ni* and *shi* be used in Gã? Based on this question, I aim to propose a semantics for *ni* and *shi* and distinguish this from their pragmatics.

1.2. Discourse markers

The description and definition of the term ‘discourse marker’ present some difficulty as there do not seem to be consensus among researchers on what constitutes a DM. This has resulted in the use of other analogous terms such as ‘cue phrases’ (Hovy 1994), ‘discourse connectives’ (Blakemore 1987), ‘discourse operators’ (Redeker 1991), ‘discourse particles’ (Schourup 1985), ‘pragmatic markers’ (Schiffrin 1987; Fraser 1990), ‘discourse signaling devices’ (Polanyi and Remko 1983), ‘semantic conjuncts’ (Quirk et al. 1985), ‘sentence connectives’ (Halliday and

Hasan 1976) and, more recently, ‘certain expressions of procedural meaning’ (Blakemore 2002; Watts 2003). Indeed, Brinton (1996), cited in Schourup (1985) itemizes more than twenty of such terms.

In this study, I adopt Fraser’s (1996) definition of DMs, which indicates that they are expressions that signal the relationship between an utterance’s basic message and the foregoing discourse. Importantly, DMs do not contribute to truth-conditional meaning, but only to the non-truth conditional and procedural meaning. This means that they provide cues to the addressee and lead the addressee towards a path whereby the utterance to which the DM is attached can be understood (Fraser 1990, 1996; Blakemore 1987). Fraser’s (1996: 186) explanation below explicitly captures what a discourse marker is.

“The fourth and final type of pragmatic marker is the discourse marker, an expression which signals the relationship of the basic message to the foregoing discourse. In contrast to the other pragmatic markers, discourse markers do not contribute to the representative sentence meaning, but only to the procedural meaning. They provide instructions to the addressee on how the utterance to which the discourse marker is attached is to be interpreted”.

The definitional concerns of DMs notwithstanding, Schourup (1991) notes that, generally, DMs have seven characteristics: connectivity, optionality, non-truth conditionality, weak clause association, initiality, orality and multi-categoriality. Therefore in the sentence in (1), the DM *whereas* relates two units of discourse (connectivity); can be removed without affecting the grammaticality of the (host) sentence (optionality); does not contribute to the veracity or falsity of the proposition expressed by the sentence (non-truth conditionality); is not integral to the syntactic structure of the sentence and so is loosely attached to it (weak clause association); prefaces the unit of discourse it marks (initiality); can occur in speech (orality); and has multiple functional categories – conjunction/coordinator/discourse marker (multi-categoriality).

(1) Men enjoy watching football, *whereas* women enjoy watching telenovelas.

DMs constitute an important tool by means of which interlocutors attempt to guide the process and social involvement in verbal exchange (Watts 1988), and act as important hints to the addressee on what has been said or is about to be said. These expressions comment on some aspect of on-going interaction, are usually independent of the propositional content of the syntactic structure of which they form part, and they function meta-pragmatically.

Schiffirin (1987), for instance, suggests that DMs have linguistic as well as interactional properties, and they play a role in establishing coherence. Halliday and Hasan (1976) also advance the notion of cohesion and/or connectivity as far as the functions of DMs are concerned. Given the above, the issue of whether the functions/meanings ascribed to DMs are linguistically encoded or pragmatically inferred arises. That is, it is important to establish whether the interactional functions attributed to DMs are encoded, and thus part of the constant meaning of the word, or they are arrived at on the basis of contextual assumptions or both.

This study is an attempt to shed some light on the semantics and pragmatics of two DMs in Gã, namely *ni* and *shi*. The aim of the study is two-fold. The first objective is to categorize *ni* and *shi* with respect to what kind of DM they are, according to Fraser's (1996) taxonomy. The attempt to classify the DMs will help establish, even if partially, the extent to which the taxonomies of DMs found in the DMs literature (usually arrived at using English as the language of investigation) are applicable cross-linguistically. The second objective of the study is to examine the linguistically encoded meanings as well as the pragmatically inferred meanings of the DMs. The discussion on the semantics and pragmatics of the DMs is rooted within Relevance Theory (see chapter 3, section 3.1.2.).

1.3. The Gã language

Gã¹, like most languages in Ghana, is a Niger-Congo language of the Kwa language family. Together with its closest linguistic neighbor, Dangme, Gã has been classified under the Nyo subgroup of New Kwa (Williamson 1989). Gã is the indigenous language of the people of Ga State or Greater Accra, and its surrounding areas. Ga State extends from Kasoa (but does not not

¹ Since the publication of Rev. Johannes Zimmerman's Gã dictionary in 1858 and the Gã Bible in 1866, the Gã language has undergone several orthographical revisions. In this study, I use the most current orthography, which has been in use since the 1970s.

include it), along the coast through Accra, Osu, La, Teshie, Nungua, Tema, and Kpone. In its present geographical location, the Gã speaking area is bordered on the north by the Akwapim-Togo Ranges/Mountains and on the south by the Gulf of Guinea. It is estimated that Gã has about 680, 000 native speakers (Korsah 2011; Kotey 2014).

According to historians, the Gã people, at various times in the past, shared boundaries with Akans, Obutus, Akwamus, and Ewes. They also lived with various Europeans, including the Portuguese, Dutch, Danes, Germans, and English, as a result of which the Gã lexicon has been influenced by these languages (Adjei 1999). The language has no dialects – any differences realized are accentual – and it has a longer period of written tradition and literacy compared to other Ghanaian languages. Kropp Dakubu (2002) submits that the first grammar of Gã was published in 1764. And by 1866, the entire Bible had been translated into Gã (Adjei 1999). Consequently, compared to many West African languages, Gã has a longer history of academic study and linguistic inquiry. In Ghana currently, Gã is one of the major languages used by the media for both entertainment and news broadcasting. It also one of the eleven Ghanaian languages used for instruction in schools, and is also taught as a subject at all levels of education in the country.

1.3.1. Earlier works on Gã

In her book *Gã Phonology*, Kropp Dakubu (2002) notes that earlier works on Gã date as far back as 1764. To this end, a number of studies have investigated the phonology morphology and syntax of Gã. The following are some linguistic works on the language: Wilkie (1930), Berry (1951), Okunor (1968), Kotei (1969), Trutenau (1971, 1972), Kropp Dakubu (1996, 1997, 2002, 2008), Adjei (1999) and Kotey (2002).

While progress has been made as far as linguistic research on the phonology, morphology and syntax (as is evidenced by the studies afore-stated) of the language are concerned, same cannot be said of the fields of semantics and pragmatics. As far as I know, the notable exception is Kropp Dakubu's (1992) work on topic, focus and definiteness in Gã.

1.3.2. Basic description of Gã phonology

Kotey (2014) indicates that forty-four sounds make up the Gã language. Of this, seven /i, e, ε, o, ɔ, u, a/ are oral vowels, five /ĩ, ê, õ, ù, ã/ are nasalized vowels and the remaining thirty-two sounds / b, d, dʒ, dʒw, f, g, gb, gw, h, h^w, k, kp, kw, l, m, n, ɲ, ŋ, ŋm, ŋw, p, r, s, ʃ, ʃw, t, ʈ, ʈw, v, w, j, z/ are consonants. In terms of syllable structure, Gã has a CV syllable structure. Each syllable is a tone-bearing unit, and it is normally vowels in the language to which tones can be associated (ibid).

According to Kropp Dakubu (2003), Gã is a tone language. It has two distinct tones: high and low. Tone is phonemic in the language and therefore contributes to variation in meaning as in /lá/ - sing/blood and /là/ - dream/fire. Similarly, nasalization is phonemic in Gã in that it also contributes to meaning difference(s), for example, /ba/ - come and /bã/ - hit/sever.

1.3.3. Basic description of Gã syntax

Basically, word order and pronominal forms are used to signal grammatical relation in Gã (Kropp Dakubu 2003). A simple declarative sentence has an SVO word order (ibid); that is, the subject precedes the verb, and the object follows the verb. Hence, Gã is an SVO head-initial language, but it also accepts both prepositions and adpositions. The grammatical categories associated with the verb in Gã include tense, aspect, mood, and negation (Kropp Dakubu, 2004b 2008.). And these categories may be marked morphologically on the verb. Also, the form of the pronoun used indicates whether an entity is to be considered as a subject or an object in a given Gã construction, and the pronouns are not gender-specific (Kotey 2014).

DMs in Gã usually fall within the syntactic category of coordinators and subordinators depending on whether they join clauses of equal or unequal status respectively and they occupy clause/sentence/discourse initial or clause/sentence/discourse medial position.

1.4. Motivation for the study

All over the world, linguistic research has proved useful in shedding light on various linguistic phenomena across diverse languages. Of particular importance is the impact linguistic research has on endangered languages, of which Gã is not an exception.

Generally, Gã has benefitted from linguistic research and there is still growing interest to study the language. That said, there is currently no study I know of that specifically explores Gã DMs from the point of view of semantics or pragmatics. The DMs are chosen to form the basis for the linguistic analysis and description in this study because of their contribution to meaning and the various contextual nuances they reveal. This study will therefore contribute to semantic and pragmatic study in Gã and to the creation of a comprehensive electronic corpus for Gã, which will be crucial for the preservation and documentation of the language.

It is also hoped that this study will have pedagogical value and, thus, be helpful in the formal instruction (teaching) and learning of Gã, thereby serving a useful purpose for both teachers and students/learners of Gã. As the data for this study were, largely, actual usages of DMs in authentic conversational contexts, such data will allow us to make objective and realistic statements on the functions/meanings of the *ni* and *shi*. To this end, Gã language teachers, textbook writers, syllabus/curriculum designers, researchers, and students will find this study useful.

1.5. Methodology

The data used for the study is largely naturally occurring data comprising both spoken and written texts. Also, I conducted semi-structured interviews with native consultants to complement the authentic data as well as relied on my own judgment of acceptability as a native speaker. Further, I interviewed some scholars/researchers of Gã linguistics to ascertain their understanding of the meaning of Gã DMs, *ni* and *shi* especially as well as their judgment of acceptability. The data for the study has been annotated in TypeCraft, an online linguistic annotation tool (<http://typecraft.org/tc2/ntceditor.html#2664>). A total of two months was used in collecting the data during fieldwork in Ghana.

1.6. Synopsis of the thesis

The rest of this thesis is structured as follows: Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical framework on which the study is based, and presents an overview of related literature. Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology of the work, shedding light on the type and source of data as well as the method of analysis adopted. The discussion of results is the focus of attention of Chapter 4. Chapter 5, first, presents a general summary of the study. It also outlines the major findings of

the study, makes recommendations for further studies, and provides a general conclusion to the study.

2: Methodology

2.0. Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological procedures employed in this study. It discusses the way in which data were obtained and analyzed, the data type as well as the procedures of data analysis and interpretation.

2.1 Data and data collection procedure

The investigation of the meanings of the Gã DMs in this study is based on both spoken and written data. Regarding the spoken text, I collected actual usages of discourse markers from a range of authentic communicative/conversational contexts within the Gã speech community in Ghana. Having previously sought the consent of consultants, I recorded entire conversations (which touched on varied topics, including politics, religion, social life and sports) and later transcribed relevant portions to constitute my spoken data.

I collected the written component of my data by culling samples of DMs from Gã printed materials (see appendix) and manuscripts – student essays, textbooks, novels, the Gã dictionary and Gã Holy Bible, and unpublished manuscripts. Altogether, these materials can be said to comprise a wide range of text categories, including descriptive, fictional, informational, instructional and persuasive texts. By including different text categories, I hope that the data represent a wide range of communicative situations within which the use of the Gã DMs can be considered as felicitous. Using author judgments as a native speaker of Gã, I included in the data sentences I had constructed that contained the two DMs as well as sentences that I considered appropriate, which I had heard from other Gã speakers.

In addition to the spoken and written data sets I compiled, I directly elicited (including asking consultants for judgments) information from other (native) Gã speakers through semi-structured interviews and elicitation frames, mainly creation of scenarios. Altogether, I engaged 20 consultants in four groups and each interaction/session (5 in total) lasted approximately three hours. Observational notes taken during the interviews proved useful. The inclusion of the elicitation frames and semi-structured interviews was necessary since one cannot gather adequate information about meaning from spontaneous discourse and naturally occurring data alone

(Matthewson 2004: 369). Like the spontaneous utterances, the entire interviews were recorded and relevant portions were later transcribed.

Further, I conducted semi-structured interviews with two scholars and two senior research assistants of Gã linguistics and who are native speakers of the language². I did this with the aim of ascertaining their general views and understanding of Gã DMs, in general, to confirm or disconfirm researcher's intuitive knowledge regarding certain usages, and to discuss issues of grammaticality, acceptability and ill-formedness.

The spoken and written data that are used for the analysis have been annotated and documented in TypeCraft, a multi-lingual online database and linguistic annotation tool (<http://typecraft.org/tc2/ntceditor.html#2664>) developed by Dorothee Beermann and Pavel Mihaylov (Beermann and Mihaylov 2014). A total of about 200 usages of the DMs, 100 for each of the two DMs investigated, were collected. The collection of spoken and written data lasted a period of two months (from June 14 to August 15), within which period the researcher was in Ghana for fieldwork.

2.2. Procedure for data analysis

First, I extracted examples of the relevant discourse markers (*ni* and *shi*) and for each example, I evaluated which of the categories in Fraser's taxonomy it belonged to. I also paid attention to ungrammatical or unacceptable usages of the DMs that I had elicited from native consultants or constructed myself using my native speaker competence in an attempt to test the plausibility of the descriptions I had given to the DMs. By comparing correct usage with wrong usage, for instance, I was able to ascertain whether or not some information was semantically/linguistically encoded and therefore core to the meaning of the DM.

The analysis was aided by the researcher's formal knowledge of Gã, introspections and native-speaker competence, as I compared the information given by the native consultants with my own intuitions of the language coupled with personal observation. The actual analysis of the data and discussion of findings are presented in chapter 4.

² They included Dr. Cecilia Koey and Mr. Emmanuel Adjetey-Adjei, both lecturers at the Department of Ghanaian Languages and Linguistics of the University of Cape Coast (UCC), Ghana and Mr. Benjamin Kubi and Ms. Charlotte Laryea, both senior research assistants at the Department of Ghanaian Languages and Linguistics at UCC.

3: Literature Review

3.0. Introduction

This chapter treats two main issues. First, it introduces some terms/concepts relevant to the study and presents the theoretical framework that underpins the study, emphasizing its usefulness to the analysis and interpretation of the data. Second, it provides a review of related literature that will contribute to the understanding of Gã DMs. The ultimate goal in this two-part chapter is to provide the necessary background to the analysis carried out later in the study.

3.1. Definition of key terms and theoretical framework

The purpose of this work can be better appraised through an explication of the theoretical framework on which the entire study is based. Among other things, a theoretical framework helps in anticipating meaning of observations and patterns as well as highlighting their significance. Moreover, it is essential in the development of good explanation (de Vaus 1985). The present study draws on a combination of Fraser's (1996) taxonomy of discourse markers and Sperber and Wilson's (1995) Relevance Theory.

3.1.1. *Fraser's (1996) taxonomy of pragmatic markers*

Fraser has proposed an influential classification of discourse markers (DMs) – and more generally – pragmatic markers. In his words, “pragmatic markers, taken to be separate and distinct from the propositional content of the sentence, are the linguistically encoded clues which signal the speaker's potential communicative intentions” (Fraser 1996: 168). Following this description of pragmatic markers, Fraser avers that messages and their associated pragmatic markers fall into four types: basic markers, commentary markers, parallel markers and discourse markers.

Basic markers, according to Fraser, contribute conceptual information by signaling the force of the direct message of the utterance. So in a sentence such as (2), Fraser argues that the performative expression ‘promise’ has a representational meaning which denotes a propositional attitude that the speaker has towards the forthcoming proposition.

(2) I *promise* that I will be there on time.

Concerning commentary markers, Fraser asserts that they “have both a representational meaning specifying an entire message, and a procedural meaning signaling that this message is to function as a comment on some aspect of the basic message” (p. 179). For instance, in the examples in (3) and (4), Fraser suggests that ‘amazingly’ and ‘fortunately’ provide a general assessment of the entire clause by the speaker.

(3) **Amazingly**, Derrick passed the exam.

(4) **Fortunately**, he is covered by medical insurance.

The main function of parallel markers, Fraser posits, “is to signal an entire message in addition to the basic message” (p. 185). For example, by instantiating (5), the speaker explicitly sends (in addition to the basic message) the information that the addressee of this message is ‘ladies and gentlemen’.

(5) Good evening ***ladies and gentlemen***, welcome to the home of the Black Bears.

The ensuing paragraphs are devoted to a brief presentation of Fraser’s categorization of discourse markers owing to their relevance to the present study.

Discourse markers (henceforth DMs) signal the relationship the basic message of an utterance has with the preceding discourse (Fraser 1996). Importantly, the presence of the DM makes the said relationship explicit, for instance, by indicating whether an utterance ought to be interpreted as an explanation, a denial or an additional comment, etc. to the foregoing discourse. Fraser groups DMs into four main categories, namely topic change markers, contrastive markers, elaborative markers and inferential markers. Each of these sub types of DMs is briefly discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

3.1.1. Topic change markers

Fraser explains topic change markers as those markers that signal that the forthcoming utterance, as far as the speaker is concerned, must be interpreted as a departure from the current topic. That is, one uses such DMs when one intends to move away from a given subject in the course of an interaction. Among other expressions, *back to my original point*, *before I forget*, *incidentally*, *parenthetically*, *on a different note* and *returning to my point* are some linguistic expressions that

could be used as topic change markers. The examples in (6) from Fraser and in Gã highlight topic change markers as a sub category of DMs:

- (6) a. I reckon that we'll be unable to meet today. It's dad's birthday. ***Incidentally***, when is mum's birthday?
b. ***Returning to my earlier point***, I maintain that females are more intelligent than males.
c. ***Okai me***, nyeseε otsi le po nuumo le ba bie. (***That reminds me***; daddy was around last week).
d. ***Dani mihie baakpa nɔ le***, mawo ŋaa akε wɔ fεε wɔkase nii waa. (***Lest I forget***, I'd advise that we all apply diligence to our studies).

In (6), the respective topic change markers indicate that the utterance which follows the marker constitutes, in the speaker's opinion, a departure from the current topic.

3.1.2. Contrastive markers

Contrastive markers are explained by Fraser as those DMs that signal that the utterance following the marker (or an available assumption) is supposed to be understood as either a denial or a contrast of a proposition associated with the preceding discourse (or an available assumption). Some contrastive markers that Fraser identifies include *but*, *conversely*, *however*, *on the contrary* and *on the other hand*. The examples in (7) illustrate the use of contrastive markers:

- (7) a. Steve is recalcitrant. ***On the other hand***, Ray is extremely obedient.
b. Admittedly, Jane did steal the laptop. ***That said***, the punishment meted out to her was draconian.
c. Ameβε nii, ***shi*** amεyε miishεε. (They aren't wealthy, ***but*** they are happy).

In (7), the contrastive markers signal a certain degree of contrariness between the first and second utterances.

3.1.3. Elaborative markers

Regarding elaborative markers, Fraser opines that they signal that the following utterance constitutes a kind of refinement of the prior discourse. In other words, the use of elaborative markers suggests that the forthcoming utterance provides information that expounds, explicates or adds to the information provided by the foregoing utterance. Expressions such as *above all*, *to*

cap it all off, more to the point, in addition, besides and alternatively are some examples of elaborative markers identified by Fraser. The sentences in (8) contain elaborative markers.

- (8) a. The pupil absented herself severally from school. ***In addition***, she refused to write the end of term examination.
- b. Playing golf is good exercise. ***As well***, some people claim it is therapeutic.
- c. Gbekenuu le ebuuu ma. ***Kefatahe hu*** ele nii ye skul. (The lad is recalcitrant. ***What is more***, he performs poorly at school).
- d. ***Ke tsa na*** makee skulbii le ayaboo moɔɔɔ moɔɔɔ ye kaa le mli. (***To continue***, I'd say that the pupils didn't perform well in the examination).

In the examples in (8), the elaborative markers indicate that the relationship between the two utterances be conceived of as one in which the second utterance expands the message in the first utterance.

3.1.4. Inferential markers

On inferential markers, Fraser states that such expressions signal that the force of the utterance is a conclusion that follows from the previous discourse or a premise for an inference. Such markers can therefore be seen as helping the addressee to make an appropriate deduction on the basis of what has been said in the previous utterance. Examples of inferential markers Fraser identifies include *as a result, consequently, for this/that reason, as a logical conclusion, because* and *hence*. The sentences in (9) contain inferential markers.

- (9) a. Adelaide failed the test again. ***Hence***, she was expelled from the school.
- b. Percy did pass the examination ***as a result of*** which he's been promoted to the next grade.
- c. Wokase nii waa ***ba ni afee ni*** woye kunim ye kaa mli. (We studied seriously ***so that*** we would excel in the examination).
- d. Eba bie ***koni*** eyi le. (S/he came here ***in order to*** beat him/her).

The presence of the inferential markers in the sentences above suggests that the utterances following the marker must be construed as a logical deduction that (necessarily) stems from the prior utterance.

The taxonomy of DMs that Fraser proposes provides a useful classification system within which the Gã DMs the present study investigates may be fruitfully categorized. This is because such a classification system helps to provide descriptions of the DMs. As already mentioned, Fraser's classification of DMs spells out and explicates a variety of relationships possibly signaled by discourse markers and pragmatic markers. Such an explication brought to bear by the DMs, as discussed by Fraser, can be hypothesized to be instructive in describing the Gã DMs.

However, whereas Fraser's taxonomy of DMs is useful to describe the encoded meanings of the DMs, a theoretical framework is also needed to account for the pragmatic inferences that these DMs lend themselves to. Sperber and Wilson's (1995) Relevance Theory is therefore relevant to the present study.

3.1.2. Wilson and Sperber's relevance theory

The study draws on Wilson and Sperber's (see Wilson and Sperber 2004; Carston 2002; Clark 2013) Relevance Theory (RT). The choice of this theoretical framework is motivated by the assumption that in addition to their core or encoded linguistic meaning, DMs can make certain meanings manifest; meanings that can be derived inferentially on the basis of context (of situation). A pragmatic framework such as RT, which provides principles for how such inferences take place, will thus be crucial in order to explain the function of DMs.

Basically, RT is a theory about human cognition and communication. It is a theory about ostensive-inferential communication, i.e. the phenomenon in which the speaker not only has an informative intention, but also a communicative intention. Ostensive inferential communication involves cognitive processes that are guided by the communicative principle of relevance, which states that, "Every ostensive stimulus conveys a presumption of its own **optimal relevance**" (emphasis is mine) (Wilson and Sperber 2004: 612). What is meant by optimal relevance is that (a) the ostensive stimulus is relevant enough to be worth the audience's processing effort and (b) the ostensive stimulus is the most relevant one compatible with the communicator's abilities and preferences.

The ‘relevance’ of an input to an individual is determined by a combination of the (positive) cognitive effects achieved and processing effort of the input. Hence (other things being equal), the greater the positive cognitive effects achieved by processing an input, the greater the relevance of the input to the individual at that time. Similarly, the greater the processing effort expended, the lower the relevance of the input to the individual at that time, other things being equal (Wilson and Sperber 2004: 609).

Processing effort is the mental effort expended in order to arrive at a satisfactory interpretation of incoming information, while a cognitive effect is an adjustment of an individual’s representation of the world (Wilson and Sperber 2004). Positive cognitive effects contribute positively to the fulfillment of cognitive functions or goals (Wilson and Sperber 2004: 608), and so are worth having. Following from the definition of relevance and (positive) cognitive effects and processing cost, Wilson and Sperber put forward a relevance-theoretic comprehension heuristic – a procedure that is supposed to guide the interpretation of an utterance. It states as follows:

10. a. Follow a path of least effort in computing cognitive effects: test interpretive hypotheses (disambiguations, reference resolutions, implicatures, etc.) in order of accessibility.
- b. Stop when your expectations of relevance are satisfied (or abandoned)

Wilson and Sperber (2004: 613)

This overall comprehension process involves subtasks, including the following:

11. a. Constructing an appropriate hypothesis about explicit content (EXPLICATURES) via decoding, disambiguation, reference resolution, and other pragmatic enrichment processes.
- b. Constructing an appropriate hypothesis about the intended contextual assumptions (IMPLICATED PREMISES).
- c. Constructing an appropriate hypothesis about the intended contextual implications (IMPLICATED CONCLUSIONS).

(Wilson and Sperber 2004: 615)

If for example in a conversation between A and B, A utters *I am a human being*, RT predicts that following a relatively simple heuristic, B will typically not interpret A's utterance as a statement about the biological species of A, although that is what is directly or explicitly communicated. Most likely, B will interpret A's utterance to mean that A exhibits certain attributes – kindness, has feelings, is emotional, etc. – owing to A's human nature. This latter interpretation is only indirectly communicated (an implicature); it yields a positive cognitive effect, and in context will require less processing effort compared to the biological species interpretation.

Similarly when one hears the utterance *I have a big cat* in a conversation between two childhood friends at home, one will most likely in an everyday situation interpret 'big cat' as referring to a domestic cat/pet and not a lion, for instance. This is because the explicitly communicated message in the given context satisfies the hearer's expectations of relevance. Hence, the hearer abandons the indirectly communicated meaning (a lion, for instance) which is likely to be a false assumption, and therefore not worth having.

RT claims that the expectations of relevance an utterance triggers are precise and predictable enough to aid the hearer towards the right interpretation of an utterance (Wilson and Sperber 2004: 607). This central claim on which RT rests is vital in explaining the different contextual interpretations arrived at by virtue of the type of DM used, hence the usefulness of RT to the study.

3.2. Review of previous literature on discourse markers

This section of the thesis situates the present study within the previous scholarship with the goal of justifying the present study. The chapter presents some empirical studies on DMs across different languages, with specific focus on contrastive and elaborative markers – markers the present study concerns itself with.

There does not seem to be any previous study on DMs in Gã. Hence, the studies presented here belong to diverse languages that will serve as a point of departure for Gã: English, as an Indo-European (Germanic) language and Asian languages (Chinese especially) belonging to the Sino-Tibetan or Altaic language family.

3.2.1. Some empirical studies on DMs across different languages

3.2.1.1. Contrastive discourse markers

There is considerable literature on contrastive discourse markers across languages (see for example Blakemore 1987, 1989, 2002; Fraser 1990, 1998, 2009; Wang and Tsai 2007; Feng 2008, 2011; Chang 2008), showing the possible functions of these markers of discourse. While some of the meanings expressed by these markers of discourse are common in a number of languages, others are language-specific.

Apart from Fraser's (1996) observation that contrastive discourse markers typically encode a notion of (simple) contrast, and nothing more, additional observation and more fine-grained distinctions have been made, which I will now outline as they pertain to the present study.

Blakemore (2002) observes that the contrast evoked by a contrastive marker is not always symmetric or does not always take place between two directly related utterances. In this regard, Blakemore argues that the unacceptability of *but* in certain contexts where *and* seems to communicate a symmetric contrast "is a consequence of *but*'s role in activating an inference that is linked to the cognitive effect of contradiction and elimination (p.100). The adapted example in (12) illustrates her point.

(12) The wettest weather has been in Accra where they have had 15mm of rain **and** the driest weather has been in Kumasi where there has been only 3mm of rain.

Following from Blakemore's observation, a contrast may be between the explicature of the *but*-clause and an implicature of the previous clause, for instance. Blakemore gives such an example in (13).

(13) John is a Republican, **but** he is honest.

In (13), it can be derived from the first segment – perhaps based on encyclopedic knowledge – that *John is dishonest* and it is this implicature that contrasts with the explicature of the *but*-clause.

An important aspect of Blakemore's analysis of *but* is the fact that for her, the contrast expressed by *but* does not only take place at the explicature level or between two explicatures. To this end, an implicature can be denied by the *but*-clause, as shown in the modified example in (14).

(14) Ama likes to read, *but* Kofi likes physical activities.

In (14), an implicature that *Ama likes intellectual activities* can be inferentially derived from the previous clause, and it is this implicature that is denied by the *but*-clause.

More precisely, Feng (2008) in his work on Chinese contrastive markers illustrates that the contrast evoked by a contrastive marker may be either between explicatures, implicatures, or between explicatures and implicatures. The following examples from (Feng 2008: 1709) illustrate what I have in mind.

(15) a. Zhang yue shouru guo wan guan, *keshi* haizai jiao qiong

Zhang monthly income over 10, 000RMB, but still say poor

‘Zhang’s monthly income is over RMB 10, 000, *but* he still says he’s poor.’

b. Beijing shi dongtian, *keshi* Xini shi xiatian

Beijing be winter, but Sydney be summer

‘It is winter in Beijing, *but* it is summer in Sydney.’

c. Ta shi sui le, *danshi* yiran hen piaoliang

3PS forty year PVF, but still very beautiful

‘She’s already forty years old, *but* she is still beautiful.’

In (15a), there is a contrast between two explicatures (that Zhang earns a monthly income of RMB 10, 000 and that Zhang is poor), both propositions being literally communicated, according to Feng. On the contrary, I do think that the contrast in (15a) is between a literally expressed proposition (Zhang is poor) and an indirectly communicated proposition (Zhang is rich). If (15b) is uttered to someone in Beijing who is packing a lot of heavy clothes for a trip to Sydney, the contrast realized will be between two implicatures – the cold, snowy, and windy weather in Beijing, so you need heavy clothes in Beijing as against the warm, clement, and crisp weather in Sydney, so you do not need heavy clothes in Sydney. And in (15c), there is a contrast between the explicature of the *but*-clause (she is beautiful) and the possible implicature of the previous clause (she is not beautiful).

Another observation that Blakemore (ibid) makes is that it is not sufficient to refer to contrast to account for the difference between, for instance, *but* and *however*. According to Blakemore, the difference between *but* and *however* has to do with the restrictive context within which the cognitive effect suggested by the *however*-clause can be retrieved. Thus, *however*,

does not only encode information on a contradiction and elimination of an accessible assumption, but “specifically restricts the recovery of [its cognitive] effect to contexts which include assumptions which carry a guarantee of relevance accepted by the speaker and whose cognitive effects do not include elimination of [an accessible assumption]”(p.122). The example in (16) illustrates her point.

(16) A: She’s had a very difficult time this semester.

B: **However**, I think she should hand in at least some of the work.

It is, thus, intended that in (16) the first utterance has some relevance and its cognitive effect does not include the elimination of an assumption like *She does not need to hand in any work*.

Similarly, Blakemore makes a distinction between *but* and *nevertheless*, noting that aside pointing to the contradiction and elimination of an accessible assumption, *nevertheless* is felicitous in rhetorical contexts and therefore “is understood as an answer to a question which has been explicitly or implicitly raised by the preceding discourse or which has been made relevant through the interpretation of the preceding discourse” (p.126). Blakemore’s example in (17) demonstrates this point.

(17) There’s pizza in the fridge, **nevertheless** leave some for tomorrow.

Given that the utterance in (17) is a mother’s response to her hungry child’s request for food, the previous clause is relevant as an answer to the child’s request.

Another observation made in the literature that Fraser (1996) did not mention was the fact that social roles/factors can constrain the use of contrastive markers. For example in Hyun-Koo’s (2006) work on Korean contrastive markers, he finds that variables such as age and social status can condition the use of non-use of contrastive markers, depending on the addressee. *Kuntey* (a contracted form of *kulentey*), roughly corresponding to English *but*, for instance, is often employed when an elderly person/a person with a high social status refutes a statement of a younger person/a person with a lower social status. Conversely, *(nu)ntey*, more than *kuntey*, is used by a younger person/a person with a lower social status in refuting a statement of an elderly person/a person with a higher social status. We realize therefore that beyond the syntax and

semantics/pragmatics of DMs, they may be intentionally and strategically deployed to serve some social functions, including the preservation of ‘face’ and demonstration of politeness.

A last point from the existing literature on contrastive discourse markers that I want to make is the fact that these markers of discourse have more than one meaning constraint. Hence depending on the context of usage, a contrastive discourse marker can evoke specific meanings. For instance, Blakemore (1987, 1989) observes that the presence of *but* can help an interlocutor to interpret a forthcoming utterance as a denial of expectation (as in (18)); Blakemore (2002) also points out that *but* might be described as concessive, as shown in (19).

(18) The boss is in today, *but* he cannot see you.

(19) Her husband is in hospital, *but* she is seeing other men.

In (18), Blakemore correctly observes that it is the presence of *but* that helps the interlocutor to work out the desired contrastive interpretation that the addressee’s expectation of seeing the boss has been denied in spite of the fact that the addressee has been coming round to look for the boss for sometime now. And in (19), the notion of concession can be adduced as there is a sense of unexpectedness in the proposition expressed by the *but*-clause given what has been said in the previous clause.

Based on the works presented above, it is evident that contrastive markers have various semantic underpinnings when used in discourse. Blakemore’s analysis of *but*, *however* and *nevertheless* shows that contrastive markers may be used to indicate both implicit and explicit contrast, denial of expectation, concession and the contradiction and elimination of an assumption. The works also show that contrastive discourse markers can have more than one constraint. Feng’s work on *danshi/keshi* in Chinese shows that there is a perceived contrastive relation between explicatures, between implicatures and between an explicature and an implicature, and in Hung-Joo’s (2006) work on *kulentey* in Korean, we find that the contrastive marker can be conditioned by sociolinguistic variables such as age and social status. In the next section, I turn my attention to some previous works on elaborative markers.

- c. Kwame, ε-be-yε **na** e-be-hia nso se ye-be-nya abotre a-hwehwε mu yie
 Kwame, it-FUT-be.good CONJ it-FUT-necessary too COMP we-FUT-receive patience
 PERF-search inside well
 ‘Kwame, it will be good **as well as** necessary that we are patient and investigate (it) properly’. (Parallelism)
- d. Ahyese no nna nkyε me-mm-pε **na** sesi dze me-pε
 Beginning DEF then MM I I-NEG-like CONJ now FM I-like
 ‘In the beginning, (then) I didn’t like (the idea), **but** now I do’. (Contrast)
- e. Bɔ mbɔdzen hwε ma ɔ-n-tsena fie **na** awoontsem nn-yε
 Try IMP hard look give she-OPT-sit home CONJ early.birth
 ‘Try hard to make her stay at home, **because** early child birth is not good’. (Explanation)

Another observation on the function of elaborative markers that is relevant for this study is made by Amfo (2007) in her work on the Akan elaborative marker (*n*)*so*. In this study, she demonstrates that (*n*)*so* is an additive (focus) marker in Akan whose usage (immediately) signals to the hearer that the utterance containing (*n*)*so* needs to be processed within **a parallel context** (emphasis is mine) with an immediately preceding discourse. To this end, (*n*)*so* functions like ‘too/also’ in English, introducing additional evidence in support of a previous assumption which is likely to have been deduced from an immediately preceding discourse. This can be seen in (21) as given by Amfo.

- (21) Abena noa-a aduane. ɔ-si-i nneema **nso**
 Abena cook-COMPL food she-wash-COMPL things also
 ‘Abena cooked. She did the laundry **as well**.’

3.3. Summary of literature review

In this chapter, I have presented Fraser’s (1996) categorization of pragmatic markers, including a definition of the category ‘discourse marker’ and contrastive and elaborative discourse markers. In Chapter 4, I will argue that the Gã words *ni* and *shi* are discourse markers according to Fraser’s taxonomy, more precisely that *ni* is an elaborative marker whereas *shi* is a contrastive marker. This chapter has also shown examples of works illustrating that it might be useful to classify and describe discourse markers in more detailed ways than Fraser’s categorization. For instance, more fine-grained descriptions such as implicit contrast, denial of expectation and

concession can be given to a contrastive marker like *but*. Similarly, more precise meanings like temporality, causality, parallelism, contrast, and explanation can be used to describe an Akan elaborative marker like *na*. In Chapter 4, *ni* and *shi* will be investigated with respect to these parameters in order to obtain a precise description of when these words can occur naturally in a discourse.

4: Results and Discussion

4.0. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the semantic and pragmatic analysis carried out on the data and the findings arrived at. I discuss the core or basic meaning(s), invariably, associated with each discourse marker (DM), and draw on Fraser’s (1996) classification of DMs to categorize the DMs. Second, I situate the DMs within the inferential model of Relevance Theory, highlighting specific conditions/constraints that make the communicative functions of the DMs cognitively plausible. Doing this, I present illustrative examples from the data that will seek to enrich the analysis and discussion.

4.1. Ni

The data collected and analyzed show that *ni* (roughly corresponding to English ‘and’) always – semantically speaking – introduces a discourse that elaborates a previous one. Beyond this core semantic function of elaboration, the data show that *ni* evokes other pragmatic interpretations that can only be derived inferentially with recourse to context of situation. These pragmatic interpretations include temporality, causality and parallelism.

4.1.1. The semantics of ‘ni’

Evidence from the data (both judgments of the corpus and interviews) analyzed suggests that the semantically encoded meaning of *ni* is elaboration. This is illustrated in (22).

(22) a. Eye yitswei kusuu *ni* ewoo jinsi.

“*S/he has long hair, and (s/he) wears jeans*”

Eye	yitswei	kusuu	ni	ewoo	jinsi		
e	yɛ	yitswei	kusuu	e	wo	o	jinsi
3SG	has/have	hair	plenty	3SG	wear	HAB	jeans
V	N	ADJ	CONJC	V		N	

Generated in TypeCraft.

The utterance in (22a) was instantiated when the interlocutor was asked to describe a particular female student. Through the response given, we get to know that, among other things,

the female student being described usually wears a long hair and also dons jeans trousers. Thus, the second sentence (which is introduced by *ni*) adds to the first information and expands the intended description of the speaker to the hearer. Similarly, (22b) was enunciated when a speaker attempts to put forward some attributes of Odoi.

b. Odoi buo mo dieŋtse ni etsuo shia nitsumoi babao.

“Odoi is extremely respectful, **and** (he) also performs several household chores.”

Odoi	buo	mo	dieŋtse	ni	etsuo	
odoi	bu	o	dieŋtse	ni	e	tsu o
	hole	HAB	somebody	indeed.EMPH	3SG	work HAB
Np	V	PN	ADV	CONJC	V	

shia	nitsumoi	babao
shia	nitsumo	i babao
house	chore	PL
N	N	QUANT

Generated in TypeCraft.

By introducing *ni* and somewhat ‘refining’ or modifying his first utterance, the hearer arrives at a cognitively plausible conclusion with little processing effort that in (22b), not only does Odoi exhibit reverential tendencies, but that he is also industrious with household work.

c. Dɔkdɔkɔ wa ye faa le teŋ ni ekeɛ Kpeŋkpele ake no ko eshi enane.

“Mr. Duck stopped midway in the river, **and** (he) told Mr. Rabbit that something had hit his (Mr. Duck’s) leg.”

Dɔkdɔkɔ	wa	ye	faa	le	teŋ	ni	ekeɛ
dɔkdɔkɔ	wa	ye	faa	le	teŋ	ni	e keɛ
	stop.PAST	has/have	river	DEF	middle	3SG	say
Np	V	V	N	DET	ADV	CONJC	V

kpeŋkpele	ake	no	ko	eshi	enane
kpeŋkpele	ake	no	ko	e shi e	nane
	COMPL	surface	some.INDEF	3SG	hit 3SG leg
Np	PRT	N	DET	V	N

Generated in TypeCraft.

The utterance in (22c) was made in a tale when the narrator recounts how Mr. Duck suddenly and unexpectedly stops midway in a river for no apparent reason. In an effort to explain the somewhat strange behavior of Mr. Duck, the narrator employs the *ni*-utterance. That is, the *ni*-utterance elaborates on the earlier discourse as well as gives a cognitively plausible reason why Mr. Duck had suddenly stopped midway in the river – the reason being to tell Mr. Rabbit that something had hit his (Mr. Duck’s) leg.

According to native consultants, the use of *ni* in (22) is straightforwardly one of elaboration, as the second utterance *ni* prefaces, first and foremost, adds to or expands whatever information has been given in the first utterance. In other words, the *ni*-utterance continues the utterance that precedes it by giving additional and relevant information that helps us to construe the overall import of the utterance in (22). In some instances, this additional information may be an explanation or not. The semantic information that is always present, though, is that the *ni*-utterance elaborates on the first discourse.

If the sentences in (22) were juxtaposed without the presence of *ni*, the addressee will require more cognitive effort before arriving at the intended interpretation, as the utterance may be open to some other interpretation. For example, one may construe the second utterance in (22b) as an attempt by the speaker to give a reason why Odoi is extremely respectful, but this will be a wrong interpretation. In (22c), it is the presence of *ni* that helps the reader to access the information that the second utterance is not only an elaboration on the first, but in fact the reason why Mr. Duck had suddenly stopped in the river. Thus, *ni* narrows down the possible inferences drawn from the two sentences that *ni* combines and helps the reader or interlocutor to access the correct interpretation with little processing cost.

It must also be mentioned that *ni* only roughly corresponds to English ‘and’, and not exactly it. Indeed ‘and’ has a broader usage than *ni* and so may be used in contexts where *ni* cannot be used. For example, in a sentence like, *It’s time to go to church, and you’re still asleep*, ‘and’ is used contrastively. Such a contrastive use of *ni* is, however, not applicable in Gã.

In the examples in (22) and many others similar to that in the data³, the majority of consultants submitted during interviews that *hu* (‘also/as well’) can be added to the utterances in (22) without affecting the grammaticality and semanticity of the utterances. However, they explained that doing so will be redundant since the notion of addition that *hu* brings to bear on the utterance is already integrated in and captured by *ni*. Perhaps, non-native speakers of Gã are likely to introduce *hu* in (22) in an attempt not to be misconstrued, the native consultants hypothesized.

The point to be made here is that by conceding that *hu* (which is supposed to signal a sense of addition, as it functions like English ‘also’ or ‘too’) can be added to (22), though not necessary or mandatory, the consultants tacitly reinforce the elaborative function of *ni*, and make it even more forceful. That is, by itself, *ni* is able to semantically signal an elaborative relationship between the two utterances it joins, evidence of what *ni* semantically encodes.

The idea that *ni* basically signals an elaborative relationship between two units of discourse is emphasized the more by a number of ill-formed sentences elicited from consultants in which *ni* occurs. In these sentences, there does not appear to be a logical expansion of the prior discourse, even though *ni* is used. In view of this, the consultants found such forms as ‘strange’ and altogether unacceptable in Gã. Three of these sentences are presented in (23).

(23) * a. E-sumɔ Adzo, **ni** e-nyɛ-ɛɛ e-kɛɛ lɛ.

3SG-love Adzo CONJC 3SG-able-NEG 3SG-tell PRO

“He loves Adzo, **and** (he) cannot tell her”.

* b. Gbekɛnuu lɛ e-bu-uu mɔ, **ni** e-le nii yɛ skul.

Boy DET 3SG-wear-NEG PRT CONJC 3SG-know thing be.at school

“The boy is disrespectful, **and** (he) is intelligent at school”.

* c. E-ye kunim yɛ kaa mli, **ni** e-fɔlɔ-i na-aa misɛɛɛ.

3SG-eat victory be.at exam inside CONJC 3SG-parent-PL get-NEG happiness

“She excelled in the exams, **and** her parents were not elated”.

³ i. <http://typecraft.org/tc2/ntceditor.html#2664,44055> ii. <http://typecraft.org/tc2/ntceditor.html#2664,44024> iii. <http://typecraft.org/tc2/ntceditor.html#2664,44057> iv. <http://typecraft.org/tc2/ntceditor.html#2664,44059> v. <http://typecraft.org/tc2/ntceditor.html#2664,44067> vi. <http://typecraft.org/tc2/ntceditor.html#2664,44025> vii. <http://typecraft.org/tc2/ntceditor.html#2664,44070> viii. <http://typecraft.org/tc2/ntceditor.html#2664,44034> ix. <http://typecraft.org/tc2/ntceditor.html#2664,44035> x. <http://typecraft.org/tc2/ntceditor.html#2664,44061>

According to the consultants (my native speaker competence confirms this as well), none of the utterances introduced by *ni* in (23) successfully and logically develops or adds any ‘relevant’ detail to the information in the previous discourse. That is, the *ni*-utterances neither build on nor ‘refine’ the first utterances in any meaningful way, thereby rendering the entire sentences ungrammatical. In (23), there is a perceived contrast between the two utterances. However, the native consultants explain that the sentence is still unacceptable because *ni* typically cannot be used to express contrast in Gã, and that the sentence will be acceptable with the discourse markers *shi*, which is the typical contrastive discourse marker in Gã.

An important point to be made about the semantically encoded meaning of elaboration in *ni* is the fact that *ni* cannot initiate an utterance. That is, since *ni* always elaborates on a previous utterance, there must necessarily be a previous utterance for *ni* to join, and subsequently build on. Once the *ni*-utterance is detached from an earlier unit of discourse, it loses both its well-formedness and meaningfulness as the examples in (24) show. I must add that using the English translations in (24), the Gã utterances are more unacceptable than the English ones, as it will be practically impossible for a Gã speaker to utter (24).

(24) * a. **Ni** o-na-aa akɛ abifao lɛ he tse-ee lɛ?

CONJC -2SG-see-NEG COMPL baby DET self tear-NEG PRO

“**And** can’t you see that the baby is unwell?”

* b. **Ni** e-fe-ɔ-mi akɛ oblayoo lɛ baa-fa gbɛ wɔ leebi.

CONJC 3SG-do-HAB-PRO COMPL woman DET FUT-remove road tomorrow morn

“**And** I think the woman will travel tomorrow morning”.

Generally, *ni* encodes the information that the proposition of the sentence that *ni* initiates ought to be seen as an elaboration of some other highly accessible proposition, usually, the proposition expressed in the previous sentence. Hence, when interpreting an utterance with *ni*, one will look for that other proposition that the *ni*-clause proposition ought to be an elaboration of. If there is no such highly accessible proposition (as when *ni* occurs discourse initially as seen in (24)), a prerequisite for interpreting *ni* is not in place. In other words, the processing effort of finding the antecedent clause is too big and does not lead to any new (or different) positive cognitive effects that would not have been achieved as easily without *ni*. This makes the use irrelevant, primarily, because of too much processing effort for no extra cognitive effect. Relevance Theory postulates that in utterance interpretation, one will look for interpretations that

require least processing effort for the most cognitive effect in view of which it is the most accessible propositions that will be tested for relevance first and then assumed to be true if they lead to positive cognitive effects. In (24), however, there is no ‘other proposition’ that is easily accessible, thereby making the utterances in (24) unacceptable.

In its basic sense, anytime *ni* prefaces an utterance, the interlocutor is immediately led towards an interpretative path that considers the information introduced by *ni* as a sort of refinement of a previous utterance. In all its usage in the data, *ni* is seen as expanding, adding to or supplementing a prior discourse. Thus, a sense of elaboration is linguistically encoded in *ni*, one which is integral to the core meaning of *ni* in all the communicative contexts analyzed for this study.

Using Fraser’s (1996) taxonomy of DMs, *ni* can be described as an elaborative discourse marker in Gã. As an elaborative discourse marker, *ni* is optimally relevant when its single cognitive effect (of elaboration) transcends the cognitive effects of the two utterances joined by *ni*, when considered separately. Carston (2002) discusses English ‘and’ in a similar light. Thus typically, *ni* signals an elaborative relationship between the prior and forthcoming utterances in view of which the two utterances cannot be viewed as maximally relevant on their own.

4.1.2. The pragmatics of ‘ni’

I have argued above that generally, *ni* can be considered as an elaborative marker in Gã. That said, the use of *ni* also evokes various pragmatic interpretations that are context-dependent and inferentially derived. Thus, on the basis of context of situation or some contextual assumption and ‘relevance’, the use of *ni* tells the interlocutor to look out for specific inferential relations between the conjuncts or utterances that *ni* join. Subsequently, these specific inferential relations signaled by *ni* aid the hearer in arriving at the overall intended interpretation.

In other words, *ni* is relevant insofar as it suggests to the interlocutor the need to look out for an inferential relation between the two utterances that *ni* joins. Importantly, *ni* gives procedural information, and indicates that the utterance in which *ni* occurs is optimally relevant when considered as a single unit, even though the individual utterances that *ni* joins may be relevant on their own.

The analyzed data show that the exact kind of relation that exists between the units of discourse in the *ni*-utterance may be temporal, causal or parallel. Each of these relations is subsequently discussed.

4.1.2.1. Temporality/sequentiality

A more fine-grained meaning that *ni* can be used to suggest is temporality. This is demonstrated in (25) below.

(25) a. Ni Hilla Limann baye prezident le etseεε *ni* J. J. Rawlings bakpɔ le.

“When Hilla Lamann became president, it didn’t keep long, **and** J.J. Rawlings ousted him from office/power.”

ni	Hilla	Limann	baye	prezident	le			
ni	hilla	limann	baye	prezident	le			
			<i>come_eat.PAST</i>	<i>president</i>	DEF			
CONJ	Np	Np	V	N	DET			
etseεε		ni	J.J	Rawlings	bakpɔ	le		
e	tse	εε	ni	j.j	rawlings	bakpɔ	le	
3SG	<i>keep_long</i>	NEG			<i>come-remove.PAST</i>			
V		CONJC	Np	Np		PN		

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Drawing on knowledge of Ghana’s political history with respect to her former heads of state, we are able to infer that in (25a), Dr. Hilla Limann’s presidency – which is what the proposition in the first utterance refers to – precedes his being overthrown in a military junta by Fl. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings. We notice then that the intervening clause *etseεε* (literally speaking ‘it didn’t keep long’) will gain relevance if we pragmatically interpreted the two events described in (25a) as sequentially or temporally related. The notion of duration captured by the intervening clause *etseεε* makes the temporal relation *ni* establishes in (25a) even more explicit.

b. Kwei hoo niyenii le nɔŋŋ *ni* eye.

“*Kwei immediately cooked the food, and (he) ate (it).*”

Kwei	hoo	niyenii	le	nɔŋŋ	ni	eye
kwei	hoo	niyenii	le	nɔŋŋ	ni	e ye
	<i>cook.PAST</i>	<i>food</i>	DEF	<i>immediately</i>		3SG <i>eat.PAST</i>
Np	V	N	DET	ADV	CONJC	V

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In (25b), the specific world knowledge that one can eat a meal only after it has been prepared provides the input for us to suppose that the two activities (‘cooking and eating’) are in linear order, so that the cooking event described in the first discourse is the first event and the eating event is the second. Thus, the search for positive cognitive effects (in terms of true descriptions of the world) is what guides the hearer/reader towards the interpretation that Kwei prepared the meal first, and then he ate it. Again, the temporal adverb *nɔŋŋ* (‘immediately/suddenly’) gains relevance through a pragmatic interpretation that implies that the events mentioned are in chronological order.

In (25), the presence of *ni* – which requires some extra processing effort – suggests that the utterance as a whole will be more relevant when interpreted as one unit. Consequently, the interlocutor is required – or perhaps forced – to look out for a specific relevant relation between the utterances joined by *ni*. Based on context-dependent inference and general knowledge of the world, the interlocutor is able to arrive at the desired (and) intended temporal relation. Without the presence of *ni*, native consultants explain that it will be harder and, in fact, take a lot more time for the reader/hearer to arrive at the intended interpretation that two events are in chronological order, as it will be possible to infer other interpretations. For instance, in the absence of *ni*, the second event in (25a), according to the consultants, could be interpreted as a reason why Kwei immediately cooked the food, although this sense of reason or explanation is not what is intended by the speaker. Thus, *ni*’s presence enables the hearer/reader to easily access the intended temporal/sequential interpretation.

Thus, when a given token of *ni* suggests the existence of a temporal relationship between two utterances, it means that *ni* indicates a sequential ordering of two events, activities or actions in view of which the event in the prior discourse must necessarily precede the event in the

second discourse. Unsurprisingly, the use of *ni* in such cases, as found in the data, was restricted to discourses of the narrative type in that sequence plays a major role in narrative discourses.

By providing a crucial guide for the interpretation of the *ni*-utterance as a whole, *ni* encourages the interlocutor not to only consider the *ni*-utterance as a mere expansion of the prior discourse, but more importantly as indicating a kind of linearity with respect to the period when certain events took place. Such an interpretation, as exemplified in (25), achieves optimal relevance, involves little processing effort, and results in positive cognitive effects. The point must also be made that in the examples in (25), both the first and the second events are part of a natural ‘super event’ that contains them both. That is, there is a unity of the two events; hence, the second event elaborates on the first event and helps the reader/hearer to know that both events are sequentially related.

Given that the order of events as suggested by *ni* is fixed, any attempt to reverse the positions of the conjoined utterances will result in unacceptable and ill-formed sentences like (26).

(26) * a. J.J. Rawlings bakpɔ Hilla Limann, *ni* Hilla Limann baye prezident e-tse-εε

J.J. Rawlings come.remove Hilla Limann CONJC Hilla Limann come.eat president
3SG-keep.long-NEG

J.J. Rawlings ousted Hilla Limann from office/power, *and* Hilla Limann was president
for a while.

* b. Kwei ye niyenii lɛ, *ni* e-hoo nɔŋŋ.

Kwei eat food DET CONJC 3SG-cook immediately

‘Kwei ate the food, *and* (he) cooked it’.

Based on general knowledge of the world, native consultants (my intuitions confirm this as well) submit that the sentences in (26) lack internal logical consistency, and so are false assumptions not worth having. Indeed, every native speaker of Gã will attest to the vagueness and unnaturalness of the sentences in (26).

4.1.2.2. Causality/consequentiality

Another specific inferential relation that a *ni*-utterance may reveal between two conjuncts is a causal or consequential one. This means that the action expressed in the second proposition of the *ni*-utterance is contingent on or follows from the first proposition, as illustrated in (27).

(27) Maɲtse ɛ gbo ni maɲnye ɛ gbo ni eeye awereho.

“The king died **and** the queen died of grief.”

Maɲtse	ɛ	gbo	ni	maɲnye	ɛ	gbo	ni
maɲtse	ɛ	gbo	ni	maɲnye	ɛ	gbo	ni
king	DEF	die.PAST		queen	DEF	die.PAST	
N	DET	V	CONJC	N	DET	V	CONJC

eeye		awereho
e	e	ye awereho
3SG	PROG	eat sorrowful
V		ADJ

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According to my intuitions, in (27), the death of the queen is supposed to have been occasioned by the death of the king. Thus in addition to the sequential temporal relation suggested by the utterance, the speaker – more importantly – intends for the hearer to see the causal relation between the two conjuncts *ni* joins. Therefore, a more specific causal relation that is optimally relevant strengthens the encoded sequential temporal relation. An interpretation which says that not only did both the king and the queen die but that the queen died (of sorrow) because the king died, yields many more cognitive effects than a pure temporal interpretation: the king died and then the queen died of sorrow (for whatever reason). The extra cognitive effects of the causative interpretation may include the following: if the queen died of sorrow because of the king’s demise, then she must have loved him dearly or the king must have been a good man, etc. Since the causal interpretation is also a description of the world that we may imagine as true, it is an interpretation which yields many positive cognitive effects for the extra cost that the presence of *ni* leads to. Thus, this is the optimally relevant interpretation in this case.

This specific causal relation expressed in (27), I argue, is not linguistically encoded. For instance, *ni* cannot encode causality, since it does not always lead to a causative interpretation

and so it is the search for relevance and the context of situation that leads/guides the hearer towards an interpretation of relating the first conjunct to the second conjunct causally. Consequently, the conjoined utterance has cognitive effects over and above the cognitive effects of the two conjuncts as individual units of discourse.

The presence of *ni* in signaling a cause-consequence relation between the two conjuncts is so crucial that when absent, the utterance can merely be understood as two separate events that may have taken place in the course of history within a particular society. Example (28) explains this view.

(28) Maṅtse le gbo. Maṅnye le gbo ni e-e-ye awerɛho.

King DET die. queen DET die PRT 3SG-PROG-eat sadness
“The king died. The queen died of grief”.

The example in (28) can be interpreted as an account of two events (not necessarily connected to each other) that may have taken place in a given community insofar as there is no contextual information to the contrary. For instance, it can answer the question, *which two unpleasant events have taken place in Oseikrom in the last decade?* In (28) thus, unlike in (27), the syntactic position of the two sentences is inconsequential for meaning. When *ni* is present, however (as seen in (27)), the hearer is compelled to look at the two conjuncts as jointly relevant, which, in this case, leads to an assumption that they are connected through an inferential relation. Aided by the appropriate contextual assumption and in an attempt to find ‘relevance’, the hearer is able to causally relate the two parts of the utterance with each other, and to arrive at the interpretation that the death of the queen was as a result of the demise of the king. It must be mentioned that in principle, (28) can be given the same interpretation as (27); however, the interpretation in (28) will be less explicit and harder to arrive at.

The example in (29) also illustrates how a *ni*-utterance can pragmatically evoke a causal or cause-consequence relation.

(29) Malik tu keje oketeke le mli ni enaji kumɔ.

“Malik jumped from the train, **and** (he) broke his legs.”

Malik	tu	keje	oketeke	le	mli	ni
malik	tu	keje	oketeke	le	mli	ni
		<i>jump.PAST</i>	<i>come_from</i>	<i>train</i>	DEF	<i>inside</i>
Np	N	V	N	DET	Nrel	CONJC

enaji	kumɔ
e	nane ji ku mɔ
POSS	<i>leg</i> PL <i>break</i> PL
N	V

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In (29), as in previous examples, the *ni*-utterance as a whole is optimally relevant over and above the individual units of discourse. There is therefore a semantic dependence of the second conjunct on the first conjunct in view of which the hearer is able to arrive at the logical interpretation that the action described in the second conjunct follows necessarily from the first conjunct. That is, Malik got his legs broken because he jumped from the train.

As part of the comprehension and interpretation process, the interlocutor draws on communicative context and one’s assumptions about the world, particularly (with respect to (29)) the fact that if one jumps from a moving train, one could get oneself severely injured or possibly die. Aided by this contextual assumption, the interlocutor is able to causally link the two actions together, and to come to an optimally relevant conclusion that Malik’s fracturing of his legs stemmed from his jumping from the train, while it was moving.

4.1.2.3. Parallelism

A parallel relation is yet another inferential relation that can be suggested by a *ni*-utterance. This is illustrated in (30) below.

(30) Ametsu nitsumɔi srɔtoi ni ameshwɛ shwɛmɔi srɔtoi hu koni amɛna gbɔmɔtso hewalɛ ni eye emuu.

*“They were engaged in different tasks/activities, **and** (they) played different games too in order to promote their health and general well-being.”*

Ametsu	nitsumɔi	srɔtoi	ni	ameshwɛ	shwɛmɔi
amɛ tsu	nitsumɔ i	srɔto i	ni	amɛ shwɛ	shwɛmɔ i
3PL work	tasks	PL different	PL	3PL play	game
V	N	ADJ	CONJC	V	N

srɔtoi	hu	koni	amɛna	gbɔmɔtso	hewalɛ ni	eye
srɔto i	hu	koni	amɛ na	gbɔmɔtso	hewalɛ ni	e ye
different	PL also		3PL get	human_body	health	3SG eat
ADJ	ADV	CONJS	V	N	N	REL V

emuu

emuu

complete

N

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The utterance in (30) was made in response to an inquiry by a customer who wanted to know why staff of a company embarked on annual corporate retreats. As part of the modus operandi of the company in question, an annual corporate retreat is organized for staff members where they are taken out of the formal corporate setting of their offices to a more serene environment (say a health spa) for general relaxation and brainstorming. This, the company does, in the hope that it will improve upon the productivity, output, and effectiveness of the workers. It was while company workers were on one of such retreats that a customer wanted to find out the rationale behind these retreats.

The two conjuncts in the utterance – *they were engaged in different tasks/activities* and *they played different games* therefore function as distinct but parallel premises in the comprehension process that lead to the conclusion subsequently expressed – which is to promote the health and general well-being of the workers. By giving the two distinct reasons, the speaker attempts to justify and/or rationalize the relevance of the company retreat(s). Importantly, the interlocutor processes the two reasons, though distinct from each other, at the same time (that is, in parallel) during the inferential process, and this aids the interlocutor in arriving at a derived conclusion. Collectively, the two reasons present a cogent argument for the conclusion that the

corporate retreat is justified. If *ni* is not present, it is improbable that the two propositions will be seen as contributing to the same conclusion derived in (30). Most likely, only the second proposition will be considered to yield the conclusion derived, and *hu* will not be present too, as *hu*'s is only made relevant by the presence of *ni*.

That the two distinct reasons/premises given in (30) are interpreted in parallel is reinforced by the use of *hu* ('also/too'). According to Amfo (2001), *nso* (a cognate of *hu*) in Akan directs the interlocutor to interpret the utterance within which *nso* occurs against a previously established background. Hence in (30), the interpretation of *ameshwe shwemɔi strɔtoi hu* ('they played different games also') is done within a context in which *ametsu nitsumɔi strɔtoi* ('they were engaged in different tasks/activities') is being processed. Together, the two conjuncts represent a good and a sound argument for the conclusion derived.

In the example in (30), there is no sequential temporal relation between the conjoined units of discourse, neither is there any form of causal relation between them. Instead, the *ni*-utterance is optimally relevant in that the conjuncts in the utterance present us with two parallel premises from which we can derive a conclusion. Although the parallel premises are distinct from each other, they function collectively in helping or guiding the interlocutor in the derivation of a conclusion.

4.1.3. Analyzing 'ni': a summary

In this section, I have analyzed *ni* as an elaborative discourse marker in Gã. The prediction that follows from this is that anytime *ni* is used in an utterance, the speaker intends for the hearer to identify an expansion, an addition or a refinement of a sort of a preceding discourse. Generally, the core meaning of elaboration that is expressed by *ni* is linguistically encoded (and thus semantic) in view of which *ni* encodes the information that the *ni*-utterance as a single unit achieves optimal relevance and more positive cognitive effects over and above the individual units of discourse joined by *ni*. Importantly, the semantically encoded information in *ni* is used as an input for more precise and exact pragmatic interpretations. On the basis of 'relevance' and context-dependent inference, various inferential relations are revealed between the conjuncts in the *ni*-utterance, namely temporal, causal, and parallel.

4. 2. Shi

From the data, I found that *shi* (generally corresponding to English ‘but’) always introduces an utterance that contrasts with a previous one. Thus, it prefaces an utterance to signal to the interlocutor that the *shi*-utterance gives information that partially or completely departs from the message in the preceding utterance. Hence, at the very core of the meaning of *shi* is the idea of contrast. In specific communicative contexts, however, the contrast expressed by *shi* is more precise owing to constraints on its usage. These specific types of contrasts expressed by *shi* can be pragmatically interpreted and inferentially derived on the basis of relevance and context of situation. They include denial of expectation, substitution and cancellation.

4.2.1. The semantics of ‘*shi*’

The data collected and analyzed reveal that *shi* semantically encodes the notion of explicit contrast. Hence in all its instantiation in the data, *shi* directs the interlocutor to a comprehension process that suggests that the information provided by the *shi*-utterance stands in opposition to or is a denial of some proposition associated with the preceding utterance. As the intended contrast that the *shi*-utterance expresses is always present, one can say that this meaning is integrated into the meaning of *shi*. The sentences in (31) exemplify the core contrastive semantic function of *shi*.

(31) a. Owula lɛ kɛ *shi* ɛŋa yɛ kpitioo.

“*Whereas the gentleman is tall, his wife is short.*”

Owula	lɛ	kɛ	shi	ɛŋa	yɛ	kpitioo	
owula	lɛ	kɛ	shi	e	ŋa	yɛ	kpitioo
<i>gentleman</i>	DEF	<i>tall</i>		3SG	<i>wife</i>	<i>short</i>	
N	DET	ADJ	CONJC	N	COP	ADJ	

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b. Esumᵔᵔ su yeŋ *shi* misumᵔᵔ su diŋ.

“*She prefers color white, whereas I prefer color black.*”

Esumᵔᵔ	su	yeŋ	shi	misumᵔᵔ	su	diŋ			
e	sumᵔ ᵔ	su	yeŋ	mi	sumᵔ ᵔ	su	diŋ		
3SG	love	HAB	color	white	1SG	love	HAB	color	black
V		N	ADJ	CONJC	V		N	ADJ	

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c. Ye wᵔskul bᵔᵔlutswaa kuu le mli le mitswaa hiegbᵔ *shi* minyeminuu bibioo le twsaa seegbe.

“*In our school football team, I play as a striker whilst my younger brother plays as a defender.*”

ye	wᵔskul	bᵔᵔlutswaa	kuu	le	mli	le	mitswaa			
ye	wᵔ	skul	bᵔᵔlutswaa	kuu	le	mli	le	mi	tswa	a
<i>be.at</i>	1PL	school	football	group	DEF	inside	1SG	play	HAB	
V	N	N	N	DET	Nrel	PRT	V			

hiegbᵔ	shi	minyeminuu	bibioo	le	twsaa	seegbe		
hiegbᵔ	shi	mi	nyeminuu	bibioo	le	twsa	a	seᵔ
<i>forward</i>		1SG	brother	small	DEF	HAB	back	
ADV	CONJC	N		ADJ	DET		N	

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According to native consultants (my native speaker intuitions confirms this as well), the use of *shi* in (31) is expressly contrastive. This is because the *shi*-utterances introduce some semantic information that directly and explicitly stands in opposition to the propositions in their previous utterances. There is therefore a case of explicit contrast. In a ‘question and answer’ (Q&A) session on an interactive platform, an interlocutor utters (31a) as the main physical difference between a couple. On the same platform, another interlocutor utters (31b) in response to a question on his color preference and that of his best friend. Still, yet another interactant instantiates (31c) in a bid to explain the different roles his younger brother and him play in their high school football team.

In all the instantiations in (31), native consultants explain that the two messages or propositions joined by *shi* contrast in at least two corresponding areas - *ke* (‘tall’) and *kpitioo* (‘short’) in (31a), *yeŋ* (white) and *diŋ* (‘white’) in (31b), and *hie* (‘front’) and *seᵔ* (‘back’) in (31c).

Also, the order of the two utterances joined by *shi* does not bear any consequence for meaning, this being further proof of the directly and explicitly signaled contrastive relation between the two utterances in (31) that *shi* joins. Consequently, the positions of the utterances – that is, the first and second discourses – can be interchanged without affecting the explicit contrastive meaning expressed by *shi*.

Further, the examples in (31) indicate that the contrastive relation expressed between the two utterances *shi* joins is explicitly captured along well-defined constructs: height in the case of (31a), color in (31b), and football positions in (31c). It is worth mentioning, however, that the direct contrast signaled by *shi* is not always well defined along ‘either-or’ parameters as can be found in (31). It is possible for the contrast to be expressed between less (well) defined continua as illustrated by the examples in (32).

(32) a. Osɔfo lɛ sɔleɔ daa *shi* eŋa lɛ sɔleɔ bei komɛi.

“The pastor prays consistently, *whereas* his wife prays irregularly.”

osɔfo	lɛ	sɔleɔ	daa	shi	eŋa	lɛ	sɔleɔ			
osɔfo	lɛ	sɔle	ɔ	daa	shi	e	ŋa lɛ sɔle	ɔ		
<i>pastor</i>	DEF	<i>pray</i>	HAB	<i>everyday</i>		POSS	<i>wife</i>	DEF	<i>pray</i>	HAB
N	DET	V		N	CONJC	N		DET	V	

be		komɛi
be	i	komɛi
<i>time/period</i>	PL	
N		QUANT

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b. Epue yε kpee lε shishi ke shifimɔ *shi* ewieeee ke nakai shifimɔ.

“She arrived at the meeting exuding high confidence, **but** he did not submit his views with such confidence”.

Epue	yε	kpee	lε	shishi	ke	shifimɔ	shi
e	pue	yε	kpee	lε	shishi	ke	shifimɔ
3SG	<i>appear</i>	<i>be.at</i>	<i>meeting</i>	DEF	<i>under</i>	<i>confidence</i>	
V	V	N	DET	PPOST	PRT	N	CONJC

ewieeee	ke	nakai	shifimɔ
e	wie ee	ke	nakai
3SG	<i>talk</i>	NEG	<i>confidence</i>
V	PRT	DEM	N

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In (32), the continuum along which the contrast expressed by *shi* is manifested is not well defined. That is, we are unable to accurately tell the extent or intensity of prayer being considered in (32a), neither are we able to tell the level of confidence being described in (32b). What one can say for sure, though, is that in both instances, there is an explicit contrast between the preceding and following utterances joined by *shi*.

Thus, the notion of explicit contrast is core or basic to the semantics of *shi*, and is indeed linguistically encoded in the meaning of the discourse marker. Drawing on Fraser’s (1996) classification of DMs, *shi* can be considered as a contrastive discourse marker and so achieves optimal relevance when it leads the interlocutor towards an interpretive path of contrast. Like *ni*, the cognitive effect (of contrast) that *shi* signals when the utterances *shi* joins are considered as a single unit is more important than the cognitive effects the two utterances may signal as separate utterances.

That a contrastive relation is always signaled by a *shi*-utterance is substantiated by a number of ill-formed *shi*-utterances elicited from native consultants. In these utterances, *shi* is used to express a supposed contrast that as far as the consultants were concerned is illogical within the context of usage. The examples in (33) illustrate this.

(33) *a. Mi-tsu nii gbi muu fɛɛ, shi e-tɔ mi.

1SG-work thing day full all CONJC 3SG-satisfied me

“I worked all day, *but* I am tired”.

*b. Owulaŋa Adjeley sumɔ-ɔɔ abifabii, shi e-fɔ-ɔɔ.

Mrs. Adjeley love-NEG babies CONJC 3SG-give.birth-NEG

“Mrs. Adjeley dislikes babies, *but* she didn’t give birth/have children”.

The sentences in (33), native speakers explain, are wrongly constructed. This is because the contrast supposed to be signaled by *shi* is awkward under the given circumstances, as there is no opposition whatsoever between the two utterances joined by *shi*. The instantiation in (33a) was supposed to be a response to a hypothetical scenario that some people claim they do not get worn out, even if they worked the whole day. And (33b) was supposed to be in response to the assumption that some people dislike the idea of having babies, but still go ahead to have them.

The point to be made here is that native speakers do not consider the contrast supposedly expressed in (33) as natural, hence the awkwardness and subsequent meaninglessness of the sentences. Following from this explanation, we can surmise that *shi* in Gã is always used with the aim of establishing a contrastive relation between two propositions; hence, if an overt contrastive relation cannot be perceived in an utterance where *shi* is present, the said utterance is likely to be ungrammatical and unacceptable in the language.

As previously mentioned, *shi* like *ni*, achieves optimal relevance when the cognitive effect the *shi*-utterance conveys as a single unit transcends the cognitive effects of the two conjuncts *shi* joins when considered separately. In this regard, *shi* cannot be used in a single utterance since there must necessarily be a previous discourse for the *shi*-utterance to contrast with or stand in opposition to. Hence, if the *shi*-utterance is decoupled from its preceding discourse, it cannot be optimally relevant, as demonstrated by the examples in (34).

(34) *a. Shi e-bu-uu e-fə̀lɔ-i.

But 3SG-wear-NEG 3SG-parent-PL

“**But** she disrespects her parents”.

*b. Shi nitsulɔ lɛ ye-ee anɔkwa.

But worker DEF eat-NEG faithfulness

“**But** the employee is dishonest”.

Being single units, the *shi*-utterances in (34) fail to achieve optimal relevance as there is no preceding discourse to guide the interlocutor in the comprehension process in order to arrive at a cognitively plausible interpretation. Consequently, native consultants maintain that the utterances in (34) are vaguely expressed. I must mention that the level of unacceptability in the utterances in (34) is higher in Gã than in English. Hence, it is almost an impossibility for any native speaker to utter (34).

A final point to be made about the use of *shi* is that unlike in other contexts (for example, in Korean) where contrastive markers may be conditioned by sociolinguistic factors like age and social status (Hung-Joo’s 2006), in Gã, the use of *shi* is never dependent on any such social variable. Hence, irrespective of who is being addressed, the same contrastive marker is used, and therefore the contrastive marker does not hold implications for politeness or the preservation of ‘face’. In the next section, I discuss the pragmatics of *shi*.

4.2.2. *The pragmatics of ‘shi’*

So far I have argued that, *shi* signals a contrastive relation between the utterances it joins – and nothing more. However, there are instances when the contrast suggested by *shi* is of a particular type owing to the specific communicative context within which *shi* is enunciated. These precise contrasts suggested by *shi* are, thus, context-dependent and so pragmatically or inferentially derived. In other words, based on some contextual assumption or context of situation together with ‘relevance’, *shi*’s usage leads the interlocutor towards a specific interpretative path in order to arrive at a definite contrastive relation between the propositions *shi* joins.

Here, *shi* is relevant if and only if it guides the interlocutor to look out for the precise inferential relation in the *shi*-utterance. As well, *shi* provides procedural information and achieves optimal relevance when the utterances it joins are considered as a single discourse. It

provides constraints on the inferential process and determines the overall interpretation of the discourse in which it occurs.

Evidence from the data collected reveals that the precise contrasts established by the *shi*-utterance can take the form of a denial of expectation, substitution, and cancellation. In the subsequent paragraphs, each of these inferential relations is discussed.

4.2.2.1. Denial of expectation

Denial of expectation is a type of contrast that may be suggested by the *shi*-utterance and which is pragmatically inferred on the basis of context and ‘relevance’. To say that *shi* expresses a denial of expectation means that the message conveyed by the utterance following *shi* does not naturally meet the expectation(s) of the interlocutor given the message conveyed by the utterance preceding *shi* (Blakemore 1989). The sentences in (35) illustrate denial of expectation as a precise contrastive relation expressed by *shi*.

(35) a. Haman mli wo Mordekai la naakpa *shi* ke le Haman ye ehe no.

“Haman was full of indignation against Mordecai; **nevertheless**, Haman refrained himself.”

Haman	mli	wo	Mordekai	la	naakpa	shi
haman	mli	wo	mordekai	la	naakpa	shi
		<i>inside wear.PAST</i>			<i>fire exceedingly.EMPH</i>	
Np	Nrel	V	Np	N	ADV	CONJC
kele	Haman	ye	ehe	no		
kele	haman	ye	e	he	no	
		<i>eat.PAST</i>	POSS	<i>self surface</i>		
PRT	Np	V	N	N		

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The example in (35a) was culled from a biblical narrative. Prior to the *shi*-utterance, Haman had been highly promoted by his king, the mighty King Ahasuerus, and his (Haman’s) seat had been set above all the princes that were with him. Additionally, King Ahasuerus had instructed that all servants in the king’s gate should bow to Haman. And the Queen had recently invited him to a special state banquet prepared for only him and the king. Against this backdrop, it comes as no surprise to us that he was full of indignation when Mordecai (who by the way was

a refugee seeking asylum in Haman’s country) refused to bow or reverence him. Against the implicated premise and contextual assumption that (1) Haman was a very powerful man, (2) was infuriated at Mordecai’s actions, and (3) Mordecai, an asylum seeker, had baldly refused to reverence him (Haman) even when the King had instructed same, the interlocutor expects that Haman will take immediate punitive actions against Mordecai. This expectation of the interlocutor is, however, not met – so it is denied – as Haman controls his temper and simply walks away.

b. Wətsemēi lɛ tse atua yɛ ɲshɔ ni ji ɲshɔtsuru lɛ naa shi kɛ lɛ egbɛi lɛ hewɔ lɛ ehere amɛyiwala.

“Our fathers provoked him at the Red Sea; *nevertheless*, he saved them for his name sake.”

Wətsemēi	lɛ	tse	atua	yɛ	ɲshɔ	ni	ji	ɲshɔtsuru		
wɔ	tse	mɛi	lɛ	tse	atua	yɛ	ɲshɔ	ni	ji	ɲshɔtsuru
1PL	<i>father</i>	PL	DEF	<i>cut</i>	<i>rebellion</i>	<i>be.at</i>	<i>sea</i>			<i>red_sea</i>
N		DET	V	N	V	N	REL	COP	Np	

lɛ	naa	shi	kɛlɛ	egbɛi	lɛ	hewɔ	lɛ	ehere		
lɛ	naa	shi	kɛlɛ	e	gbɛi	lɛ	hewɔ	lɛ	e	here
DEF	<i>mouth</i>			POSS	<i>name</i>	DEF	<i>reason</i>		3SG	<i>save</i>
DET	N	CONJC	PRT			DET	N	PRT	V	

amɛyiwala
 amɛ yiwala
 3PL *life*

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Before the instantiation in (35b) takes place, we are told that the Fathers (referring to he forebears of the children of Israel) had failed to appreciate the wonders of God while they were in captivity in Egypt and had also failed to remember the abundant mercies of God in their lives. Rather than being appreciative of God, they provoked Him with their unnecessary complaints and murmurs. Owing to this context of situation, the addressee is made to expect that God will ignore them (the Fathers) and, perhaps, make them remain in bondage or, at least, express dissatisfaction at their ingratitude, even the more when on some previous occasions God had vented his wrath upon others who had complained of one thing or the other when they were

required to obey Him and carry out His instructions to the letter. This is, however, not the case as the second utterance tells us that God goes ahead to save them. The contrariness between the addressee’s expectation of God’s actions and what He actually does as expressed in the second proposition is one that stems from relevance-driven inference and it is context-dependent.

c. Asaa okpɔŋɔ ato tawuu gbi shi kunimyeli lɛ Yehowa deŋ ejeɔ.

“The horse is prepared against the day of battle, **but** victory is of the Lord.”

Asaa	okpɔŋɔ	ato	tawuu	gbi	shi	kunimyeli	lɛ
a	saa	okpɔŋɔ	a	to	tawuu	gbi	shi
1PL	<i>prepare</i>	<i>horse</i>	1PL	<i>hide</i>	<i>battle</i>	<i>day</i>	<i>victory</i>
V	N		N	N	CONJC	N	DEF

Yehowa	deŋ	ejeɔ
yehowa	deŋ	e je ɔ
	<i>hand</i>	3SG <i>come</i> HAB
Np	N	V

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Drawing on one’s general world knowledge, one will expect that one’s preparation for a given assignment (here, a battle) should determine whether or not one emerges victorious. In (35c), however, this is not the case as the addressee’s expectation that stems from the utterance preceding *shi* is contradicted by the utterance following *shi*. In (35c), *Asaa okpɔŋɔ ato tawuu gbi* (‘The horse is prepared against the day of battle’) implicates a sense of readiness for battle and unwavering commitment to a course of action, even if it is only in the future. Such a context of situation is what will guide the addressee to the expectation that victory in a battle of any kind should stem from one’s preparedness and readiness to engage the challenge.

Contrary to the addressee’s expectation, however, the utterance that follows *shi* conveys the message victory comes from the Lord, that is, a force/power that no one has control over. The idea that a super power or a supernatural being is the one who determines who will be successful in a battle/challenge and who will not stand in opposition to the expectation arising from the prior discourse – that success or failure in any endeavor is determined by one’s own effort.

The point to be, thus, is that owing to the communicative context or some contextual assumption and ‘relevance’, the interlocutor is made to expect a certain situation that should ordinarily arise from the proposition preceding *shi*. However, a contrary situation from what the interlocutor expects is conveyed by the proposition that comes after *shi*. Consequently, there is a denial of expectation of the interlocutor’s expectation. It goes without saying that the opposite expectation expressed in (35) stems from a contrasting contextual implication in which case there is a contradictory or an unexpected expectation in the previous discourse that is manifest to the interlocutor and so can be inferentially derived. And one can also deduce that it is the accessed implicated premise of the prior discourses in (35) that directs the interlocutor towards a contrast in terms of expectation.

When *shi* suggests denial of expectation, there is usually no contrast between the direct/basic messages of the preceding and forthcoming units of discourse coordinated by *shi*. Hence, the interlocutor is forced to look for an indirect/implicit contrast, drawing on the communicative context. So the contrast expressed may be between the explicature of the second clause and the implicature of the first clause, for instance, as illustrated in (36). Blakemore (2002) discusses English ‘but’ in the same vein.

(36) a. Gbɔmɔ adesa damɔ jei le shi nɔ ni mihiŋmei na le ye naji ejwe.

“That is a human being standing there, **but** what I saw had four legs.”

Gbɔmɔ	adesa	damɔ	jei	le	shi	nɔ	ni
gbɔmɔ	adesa	damɔ	jei	le	shi	nɔ	ni
<i>human</i>	<i>mankind</i>	<i>stand.PROG</i>					
N	N	V	DEM	PRT	CONJC	PRT	PRT

mihiŋmei	na	le	ye	naji	ejwe	
mi	hiŋmei	na	le	nane	i	ejwe
1SG	<i>eyes</i>	<i>see.PAST</i>	<i>has/have.PAST</i>	<i>leg</i>	PL	<i>four.N>ADV</i>
N	V	PRT	V	N	ADJ	

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In (36a), an interlocutor tries to convince the other party that he recently set eyes on a mysterious figure that he is unable to aptly designate. In fact, he had been terrified by the experience and still was at the time of instantiation of the utterance. The other party, still

unconvinced, points to something or somebody as if to say that the ‘thing’ he was pointing to was what the interlocutor may have seen. It is at this point that the interlocutor utters (36a) to further drive home his point. Against this background, we are able to decipher that *Gbɔmɔ adesa ni damɔ jɛi lɛ* (‘That is a human being standing there’) gives ready access to the real-world knowledge ‘A human being has two legs’, and it is this information that contrasts with *Nɔ ni mihijmɛi na lɛ yɛ naji ejwɛ* (‘What I saw has four legs’). Thus, there is a contrast between the implicature of the first utterance and the explicature of the second utterance, a contrast that is indirectly/implicitly derived on the basis of context of situation and ‘relevance’.

b. *Maɲsajataolɔ ji mipapa shi eyeɔ anɔkwa.*

“*My father is a politician, but he is honest.*”

Maɲsajataolɔ	ji	mipapa	shi	eyeɔ		anɔkwa
maɲsajataolɔ	ji	mi	papa	shi	e	ye ɔ anɔkwa
<i>politician</i>		1SG	<i>father</i>		3SG	<i>eat HAB faithfulness</i>
N		COP	N	CONJC	V	N

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In a discussion on which group of Ghanaian workers exhibits integrity and which do not, an interlocutor utters (36b) even though it had not been previously mentioned in the discussion that politicians were dishonest. Although the integrity of politicians had not been previously mentioned in the discussion, it seems plausible that the other party will associate the concept of ‘politician’ with dishonesty, drawing on the Ghanaian context, in particular, and perhaps the general world assumption that politicians are innately corrupt. Thus, *Maɲsajataolɔ ji mipapa* (‘My dad is a politician’) gives rise to the contextual assumption (and thus implicated premise) that politicians, in general, and Ghanaian politicians, in particular, are dishonest. Hence, if one’s dad is a politician and he is honest, then there is a contrary view to the implied message in the first proposition. Here too, we observe that the contrastive relation expressed by the *shi*-utterance is inferentially derived on the basis of context and ‘relevance’. As well, the contrast takes place between the implicature of the first utterance and the explicature of the second utterance.

In the examples in (36), the contrast expressed in the *shi*-utterances is not necessarily a contrast between explicatures. Rather, it may be indirect/implicit – as is evident in the respective notions of entailment and implication – mentioned in view of which the interlocutor is only able

to access the correct inferentially derived relation with the help of the communicative context or some contextual assumption and the communicative principle of relevance.

Finally, the use of *shi* to express denial of expectation may be evident in concessive conjuncts. According to Quirk et al. (1972) cited in Blakemore (2002: 100), “Concessive conjuncts signal the unexpected, surprising nature of what is being said in view of what was said before that”. This is the situation in (37) as the utterance that follows *shi* conveys a surprising and unexpected message in the light of what the utterance preceding *shi* conveys.

(37) a. Onukpa, nyɔŋ nɛɛ fɛɛ wɔtsu nii waa *shi* wɔnaaa nɔ ko shi kɛ lɛ owiemɔ naa lɛ mafɔ yaa lɛ .

“*Master, we have toiled all the night and have taken nothing; nevertheless, at thy word I will let down the net.*”

Onukpa	nyɔŋ	nɛɛ	fɛɛ	wɔtsu	nii	waa		
onukpa	nyɔŋ	nɛɛ	fɛɛ	wɔ	tsu	nii	waa	
<i>master</i>	<i>dawn</i>		<i>all</i>	1PL	<i>work</i>	<i>thing</i>	<i>seriously</i>	EMPH
N	N	DEM	QUANT	V	N	ADV		
shi	wɔnaaa	nɔko	shi	kɛlɛ	owiemɔ	naa	lɛ	
shi	wɔ	na	aa	nɔko	shi	kɛlɛ	o	wiemɔ naa lɛ
	1PL	<i>get</i>	NEG	<i>thing</i>		2SG	<i>word</i>	<i>mouth</i> DEF
CONJC	V		N	CONJC	PRT	N		DET
mafɔ					yaa	lɛ		
ma	fɔ				yaa	lɛ		
1SG	<i>throw</i>	FUT			<i>net</i>	DEF		
V					V	DET		

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Simon, one of Jesus’ disciples, utters (37a) in response to Jesus’ instruction that he (Simon) should launch out into the deep and let down his net for a draught. From the preceding text, we know that the disciples – Simon included – had combed all parts of the sea the whole day and had not caught any fish. Therefore when Simon utters (37a), we are able to, first, accept the truth in the utterance preceding *shi* owing to our previous knowledge. To the extent that all the fishermen around – and not only Simon – had not caught any fish despite all their efforts, skills, and hard work the whole day, it seems both surprising and unexpected that Simon will

agree to let down his net in hope for a catch because a stranger had instructed him to do so. That Simon agrees to let down his net is even more alarming and unanticipated when we learn that Simon did not know of any expertise that Jesus might have (had) in fishing and neither did he know Jesus as a miracle worker since the encounter in (37a) was their first time of meeting. Still, we find it unusual that he was going to let down the net somewhere in the sea he might have previously let down his net at least once and not caught anything since he and the other fishermen had combed various areas of the sea and caught nothing. Putting all these manifest contextual assumptions together, the addressee is able to inferentially derive the notion of concessivity suggested by *shi* in (37a).

b. Blema Ghana yinɔ lɛ niɲmalɔi bɛtsɔ moŋ *shi* kɛ lɛ Ghanabii ŋmala woji babaoɔ.

“**Although** there weren't many writers/authors in ancient Ghana, Ghanaians did churn out a lot of books.”

Blema	Ghana	yinɔ	lɛ	niɲmalɔi	bɛtsɔ	moŋ	shi	kɛlɛ	
blema	ghana	yinɔ	lɛ	niɲmalɔ	i	bɛtsɔ	moŋ	shi	kɛlɛ
<i>ancient</i>		<i>era</i>	DEF	<i>writer</i>	PL	<i>few</i>	NEG		
ADJ	Np	N	DET	N		ADJ	PRT	CONJC	PRT

Ghanabii	ŋmala	woji	babaoɔ			
ghana	bii	ŋma	la	wolo	ji	babaoɔ
	PL	<i>write</i>	PL	<i>book</i>	PL	
Np		V		N		QUANT

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The addressee will admit the truth in the message conveyed by the prior discourse in (37b) as it is a historical fact that there were only few writers/authors in ancient Ghana. Consequently, the addressee is likely to be amazed (as s/he will naturally not envisage that) that notwithstanding the historical fact that there were only few writers/authors in ancient Ghana, Ghanaians (here, the few writers/authors) still managed to somehow churn out several published works. Again, we see that it is the contextual assumption manifest to the hearer that leads him/her to an optimally relevant interpretation of *shi*'s role in suggesting a contrastive concessive relation.

It is noteworthy that in (37b), native consultants explain that the use of *moŋ*, though not compulsory, reinforces the notion of concession as it emphasizes the factuality and/or veracity of the message conveyed by the prior utterance, thereby making the subsequent surprising and unexpected nature of the message conveyed by the second utterance covert to the addressee.

4.2.2.2. Substitution

The use of *shi* may also suggest a precise and/or restrictive kind of contrast in which case the second discourse provides information that is supposed to be a substitute for the first discourse (Fraser 1998). In all instances of usage where *shi* can be considered as playing a substitutive or replacive role, the prior discourse is usually negative, as demonstrated in (38).

(38) a. Akwele baaa sɔlemɔ nyɛsɛɛ Hɔgbaa *shi* moŋ eyakwe sini.

“Akwele was not in church last Sunday; **instead**, she was at the movies.”

Akwele	baaa	sɔlemɔ	nyɛsɛɛ	Hɔgbaa	shi	moŋ
akwele	ba	aa	sɔlemɔ	nyɛsɛɛ	hɔgbaa	shi
		<i>come</i>	NEG	<i>church</i>	<i>last-time</i>	<i>sunday</i>
Np	V	N	ADV	Np	CONJC	PRT

eyakwe	sini
e	yakwe
3SG	<i>go_watch</i>
V	N

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In (38a), an individual who was not too happy that Akwele was not in church the previous Sunday reports Akwele’s supposed misconduct to an elder of the church. The church elder is, thus, likely to infer from the interlocutor’s instantiation the idea that Akwele used the time for church service to visit the movies. That is, she replaced her going to church with a visit to the cinema. Following this interpretation, it is not surprising that the church elder promises the interlocutor that he was going to act on her report by personally speaking with Akwele about her action/behavior, one that he is likely to consider a misconduct.

b. Ni nyekatorɔa da no mli ni sakasakafeemɔ yɔɔ lɛ shi moŋ nyeyimɔa obɔ kɛ mumɔ lɛ.

“*And be not drunk with wine, wherein in excess, but be filled with the spirit.*”

ni	nyekatorɔa		daa	no	mli	ni			
ni	nyɛ	ka	tɔ	rɔ	a	daa	no	mli	ni
		3PL	NEG	<i>drink</i>	PL	HAB	<i>alcohol</i>		<i>inside</i>
CONJ	V			N	PRT	Nrel		REL	

sakasakafeemɔ	yɔɔ	lɛ	shi	moŋ	nyeyimɔa	obɔ	kɛ		
sakasakafeemɔ	yɔ	ɔ	lɛ	shi	moŋ	nyɛ	yimɔa	obɔ	kɛ
<i>confusion</i>	<i>be</i>	HAB			1PL	<i>full</i>	<i>complete</i>		
	V	PN	CONJC	PRT	N			PRT	

mumɔ	lɛ
mumɔ	lɛ
<i>spirit</i>	DEF
N	DET

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An extract from the Gã language Bible, (38b) forms part of a general exhortation Apostle Paul gives to the Church at Ephesus. Prior to his instantiation in (38b), he had admonished the brethren to be wise in their behavior and to seek the will of God for their lives. Then, he advises them not to be drunk with wine, but (rather) to be filled with the Spirit of God. Against the backdrop that Apostle Paul was giving a general exhortation to the Ephesian Church, it will be optimally relevant for the congregants to interpret (38b) to mean that Apostle Paul was presenting them with a better alternative to wine intoxication.

Hence instead of being drunk with excessive wine, they should rather be ‘drunk’ with God’s Holy Spirit. That Apostle Paul presents a better alternative to drunkenness – an alternative which will then be a substitute for drunkenness – is further buttressed when immediately after his instantiation in (38b), he gives a number of benefits of being filled with the Spirit of God – that it will enable the brethren to speak to themselves in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs and to make melody in their hearts to the Lord, things they will obviously be unable to do if they were intoxicated with excess wine.

c. Tsɔɔlɔ lɛ wo wɔ ŋaa akɛ wɔkawɔ bei saŋŋ *shi* moŋ wɔkase nii waa.

“*Rather than sleep a lot, the teacher advised us to be more studious.*”

Tsɔɔlɔ	lɛ	wo	wɔ	ŋaa	akɛ	wɔkawɔ	
tsɔɔlɔ	lɛ	wo	wɔ	ŋaa	akɛ	wɔ ka wɔ	
<i>teacher</i>	DEF	<i>wear.PAST</i>	1PL	<i>advice</i>	COMPL	1PL NEG	<i>sleep.PAST</i>
N	DET	V	PN	N	PRT	V	

bei	saŋŋ	shi	moŋ	wɔkase	nii	waa
bee	i	saŋŋ	shi	moŋ wɔ kase	nii	waa
<i>time</i>	PL	<i>a-lot</i>		1PL <i>learn thing</i>	<i>seriously.EMPH</i>	
N	ADV	CONJC	PRT	V	N	ADV

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The utterance in (38c) was given to a group of students by their teacher ahead of their first major external examination, the Basic Education Certificate Examination (B.E.C.E) in Ghana. Like in (38b), we see here also that the second utterance is not only intended by the teacher to replace the first, but also intended to represent a more useful option, especially for students who were preparing for a major examination like the B.E.C.E. Such a substitutive interpretation of *shi* by the students will be possible and plausible under the circumstance within which they found themselves or owing to their peculiar situation. That they ought to reduce the amount of time spent on sleep and instead invest more time into studies in preparation for an impending examination is certainly a relevant interpretation for the students, as it yields a positive cognitive effect.

According to my intuitions, the contrastive function of *shi* in (38) is restrictive. I argue that a substitutive relation can be elicited from the context of situation. Thus by replacing the information expressed in the utterance preceding *shi*, the message of the second utterance clarifies the prior discourse or presents a better or more appropriate alternative. I must add that in the instances where the second utterance clarifies the first, there is an acceptance of the message conveyed by the first utterance. Subsequently, the second utterance clarifies the message in the first, indicating what actually happened or should have happened, as in (38a). When the second utterance provides a better option, however, the idea of accepting the message in the first may or may not be present, as in (38c).

4.2.2.3. Cancellation

Cancellation is the final type of contrast suggested by *shi* that is inferentially derived on the basis of context and ‘relevance’. That is, the interlocutor is able to deduce that the utterance following *shi* is intended to cancel out the explicature or the implicature of the utterance preceding it (Fraser 1998). The contrastive cancellation function of *shi* is exemplified in (39).

(39) a. Shi oblahii ni eje nɔ lɛ amɛgbɔjɔɔ ni etɔ amɛ ni mɛi ni eshɛ oblahii tete lɛ amɛgbegbeɔ shi *shi* mɛi ni hiɛ ka Yehowa nɔ lɛ naa hewalɔ hee.

“*Even the youth shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.*”

shi	oblahii	ni	eje	nɔ	lɛ	amɛgbɔjɔɔ			
shi	oblanuu	hii	ni	e	je	nɔ	lɛ	amɛ	gbɔjɔɔ
	<i>man</i>	PL		3SG	<i>start</i>	<i>surface</i>		3PL	<i>become_weak</i>
CONJ	N		CONJ	V	N		PRT	V	

ni	etɔ	amɛ	ni	mɛi	ni	eshɛ		
ni	e	tɔ	amɛ	ni	mɛi	ni	e	shɛ
	3SG	<i>tired</i>	<i>them.3PL</i>		<i>people</i>	3SG	<i>reach</i>	
CONJC	V		PN	CONJ	N	REL	V	

oblahii	tete	lɛ	amɛgbegbeɔ	shi	shi	mɛi				
oblanuu	hii	tete	lɛ	amɛ	gbee	gbee	ɔ	shi	shi	mɛi
<i>young_man</i>	PL		3PL	<i>fall</i>	PL	HAB	<i>down</i>		<i>people</i>	
N		PRT	PN	V		ADV	CONJC	N		

ni	hiɛ	ka	Yehowa	nɔ	lɛ	naa	hewalɛ	hee
ni	hiɛ	ka	yehowa	nɔ	lɛ	naa	hewalɛ	hee
	<i>face</i>	<i>lay</i>		<i>surface</i>		<i>get</i>	<i>strength</i>	<i>new</i>
REL	N	V	Np	N	PN	V	N	ADJ

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The utterance in (39a) is one of the numerous prophecies of Prophet Isaiah as recorded in the Gã language Bible. He submits that a time will come when humans will be inadequate in their efforts irrespective of their intense efforts to the extent that even young men and women will lack the needed energy to pursue their dreams and aspirations – we see this in the prior discourse. Despite this unfortunate situation, he suggests in the second discourse that there will

still be energy and drive for those who engage God, as their strength will be renewed. Thus, we are able to glean from (39a) that the potency of Prophet Isaiah’s first utterance is rendered non-effective by his second utterance. The cancellation of the effect of his first utterance is the more made patent when he adds that in addition to the strength renewal of those that wait on God, they shall also mount up with wings as eagles, run and not be weary, and walk and not faint. Clearly, the additional context of neither being weary nor fainting reinforces the cancellation function of *shi* since in the prior discourse we had been informed that even the youth shall faint and be weary.

b. Ataa, keji osumo le jiemo kpulu nee keje mino shi kele jee bo ni misumoo le shi moŋ bo ni bo osumoo.

“Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; **nevertheless**, not my will but thine be done.”

Ataa	keji	osumō	le	jiemō	kpulu	nee	keje	
ataa	keji	o	sumō	le	jiemō	kpulu	nee	keje
		2SG	love		remove	cup		come_from
Np	CONJS	V		PN	V	N	DEM	V

mino	shi	kele	jee	bo	ni	misumoo		le		
mi	no	shi	kele	jee	bo	ni	mi	sumo	o	le
1SG	surface				NEG		1SG	love	HAB	
N		CONJC	PRT	V		PRT	PRT	V		PN

shi	moŋ	bo	ni	bo	osumoo					
shi	moŋ	bo	ni	bo	o	sumo	o			
					2SG	2SG	love	HAB		
CONJC	PRT	PRT	PRT	PN	V					

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Realizing the extent of pain, suffering, agony, and shame he was going to be subjected to by his crucifixion, Jesus Christ utters (39b). First, he expresses a desire for ‘this cup’ (referring to the pain, agony, suffering, shame, etc.) to pass over him – that is, a desire not to go through such intense suffering. However, he immediately cancels out this implicature when in the second discourse he indicates that God’s will is superior to his, and so his desires really do not matter. Thus, we are able to infer from the context of situation that whatever intent Jesus may have had of not wanting to be subjected to the pain, agony, and shame of crucifixion is nullified when in

the second discourse he submits his will, including his wants, desires, and preferences to God and is willing to accept God's ultimate will for his life. The fact that as the end of the day he was crucified, which meant that he experienced the pain, shame, and agony he would have ordinarily loved to avoid, lends credence to the idea that his initially expressed desire was indeed cancelled out by the second discourse, a cancellation that is suggested by the presence of *shi*.

In utterances where *shi* expresses a cancellation function, the interlocutor usually concedes the truth in the message conveyed by the prior discourse. However, its potency is intended by the speaker to be of non-effect given the context of instantiation. Hence albeit the information expressed in the first discourse may be effectual at a given point in time and is admitted to be true, the effect it will ordinarily have had is cancelled by the second discourse. Also, the prior discourse is usually a negative one or it represents a condition that is not favorable. Consequently, the second utterance that is prefaced by *shi* suggests a cancellation of the negative statement or the unfavorable condition, thereby rendering the import of the message conveyed by the prior discourse null and void.

4.2.3. Analyzing 'shi': a summary

Following the analysis of *shi*, we can predict that *shi* is a contrastive discourse marker in Gã. Hence in any given instance of *shi*, it is suggested that the utterance following *shi* is either a denial or a contrast of some proposition associated with the preceding discourse. Like *ni*, *shi* expresses a core meaning that is linguistically (and thus semantic) encoded, and so the *shi*-utterance is optimally relevant when considered as a single unit, even though the individual conjuncts *shi* joins may be meaningful on their own. In addition to the semantically encoded meaning of direct/explicit contrast *shi* signals, it evokes more precise types of contrast that can be pragmatically inferred on the basis of context of situation and using the principles of 'relevance'. These more precise contrasts include denial of expectation, substitution, and cancellation.

5: Summary of Findings and Conclusion

5.0. Introduction

The primary objective of the research was to interpret the corpus data in order to respond to the main goal of the research, which was to identify the conditions/constraints under which *ni* and *shi* can be used in Gã. I, thus, focused attention on the meanings of *ni* and *shi* that are linguistically/semantically encoded and those that are pragmatically inferred or inferentially derived. This final chapter presents a summary of the study, the main findings adduced from the analysis, and recommendations for further research.

5.1. Summary of main findings of the research

The following are the major findings made in the study:

1. It is evident from the research that *ni* semantically/linguistically can be described as an elaborative discourse marker. Hence, the use of *ni* is intended to expand, explain, clarify, continue, or provide a refinement of a sort to a previously made utterance. As well, *ni* pragmatically evokes various interpretive relations derived inferentially and with recourse to the context of situation and relevance. The pragmatically inferred relations can be temporal/sequential, causal/consequential, or parallel.
2. With regard to *shi*, the study reveals that it can be considered as a contrastive discourse marker. Therefore, the use of *shi* signals that a second utterance (or an available assumption) is supposed to be construed as either a denial or a contrast of a proposition associated with a first utterance (or an available assumption). Also, *shi* expresses precise contrasts that are context-dependent and deducible owing to the addressee's search for optimal relevance. These inferentially derived precise contrasts include denial of expectation, substitution, and cancellation.
3. In terms of their contribution to the inferential process, the results of the study imply that both *ni* and *shi* express non-truth conditional procedural meaning, and so they provide clues, cues, and interpretive paths that enable an interlocutor to arrive at the intended interpretation.

5.2. Recommendations for further study

The need for further research is heightened by the fact that there was nearly no Gã semantic/pragmatic study, in general, and studies on DMs, in particular, to review. It is therefore hoped that the suggestions overtly or covertly made here will engender further research and motivate other researchers to explore the Gã DMs. A number of other studies can be conducted as a sequel to this study. These may be considered for further research:

First, the present study did not employ a large data, owing to time constraints. It is therefore recommended that a future study can also investigate *ni* and *shi* – but this time with a larger corpus – in order to corroborate or repudiate the claims heretofore adduced, and even more importantly, the degree to which the findings of the present study are representative/reflective of the Gã grammar. Second, the present study was limited to only two Gã DMs, *ni* and *shi*. It would, therefore, be useful to replicate the work to cover other Gã DMs such as *hewɔɔ* ('because'), *aloo* ('or') and *koni* ('so that'). Third, it should be possible for a comparative study of *ni* and *shi* between Gã and other Niger-Congo (Kwa branch) languages to be conducted. A study of this nature will seek to identify any differences and similarities that exist between the languages and the possible reasons accounting for them.

5.3. Final remarks

My aim in this research has been to investigate the communicative function of two Gã (Niger-Congo, Kwa branch) DMs – *ni* and *shi*. The objective was to ascertain the core semantic meaning of these DMs as well as their contextual pragmatic meanings. In the light of an obvious paucity of studies on Gã DMs, this study was intended to contribute to studies in Gã linguistics. The research was motivated by the fact that despite the importance of DMs to utterance interpretation and so a vital aspect of Gã linguistics, there do not appear to be any study that has investigated DMs in Ga.

In an attempt to effectively deal with the thesis of the study, Sperber and Wilson's (1995) theory of communication – Relevance Theory - formed the theoretical framework that aided the analysis. Also, Fraser's (1996) taxonomy of the various types of DMs provided a conceptual background within which the investigated DMs were discussed. And various methodological

procedures – including data type, data source, data collection procedure, and method of analysis – contributed to the understanding of the study.

The present study of the semantics and pragmatics of *ni* and *shi* provides evidence in support of the assumption that the role of DMs to utterance interpretation is vital, one which can neither be over-emphasized nor under-estimated. The study also supports the view that the range of communicative functions expressed by the DMs is not determinate and varies across languages. While some DMs may have relatively few functions, others may reveal several functions. Notwithstanding the fact that the functions of the same DMs vary across languages, there are some similarities that may be identified as well.

In conclusion, one can only hope that this study will engender more research on Gã pragmatic particles, especially DMs, given the insight such studies are likely to bring to bear on the usage of such markers/particles. The current situation where there is virtually no study on such an important feature of language use in Gã is worrying. Hopefully, this research will ignite more interest in Gã pragmatic particles and DMs in the years to come.

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Appendix A

Corpus texts

Sources from which the examples have been drawn include the following:

Drama

Amartey, A. A. (1966). *Otswa te oswa ohiɛnaa*. Accra: Bureau of Ghanaian Languages.

Amartey, A. A. (1966). *Namɔ matsu?* Accra: Bureau of Ghanaian Languages.

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