

Contrastive marking of anthroponyms and common nouns in object and subject argument slots in Nuasúe (A.62A)

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This paper tackles the contrastive marking of common nouns and anthroponyms in subject and object slots in Nuasúe, a Bantu Mbam language spoken in Cameroon. The study is twofold, i.e. descriptive and explicative. Firstly, I show that a special category is only overtly encoded on proper nouns. Indeed, a common noun in subject or (first) object functions does not entail any special marking (1) while anthroponyms carry the enclitic particle =à in two specific contexts. Whereas in non-past narrative tenses, anthroponyms allow this particle only in object argument slot as in (2), in the past narrative, both in the subject and the object functions, they maintain the particle =à, supplemented by the coexistence of the subject and its anaphoric marker (SM) as in (3). After this description, the coexistence of PN and SM will be explained as well as the grammatical function of this particle will be determined in Nuasúe, a language with no morphological case marking. Far from considering enclitic =à as a case marker, I suggest that anthroponym marking in Nuasúe is the expression of the interactions between their lexical properties and informational structure in sentences. In that case, enclitic =à appears as the morphological marker of the inherent topicality (definiteness) of anthroponyms when used in focalized syntactic slots (Bébiné, f.c.).

- (1) à-pyónyí kà-yòòsòn àŋ-ónyóní
c1-disciple F2-look.at CL1-master
'The disciple will look at the master.'
- (2) Simon kà-yòòsòn Yésus=à
Simon F2-look.at Jésus=TOP
'Simon will look at Jesus.'
- Yesus kà-yòòsòn Simun=à
Jesus F2-look.at Simun=TOP
'Jesus will look at Simon.'
- (3) Símun=à ù-à-sáŋùrà Yésús=à kí-yòŋ kí-tátú
Simon=TOP 1SM-NARR-deny Jesus=TOP CL7-fois 7-trois
'Simon denied Jesus thrice.'

References: • Bébiné, A. (f.c). *Description phonologique et morphosyntaxique du nuasúe (A62A)*. Thèse de Doctorat Ph.D. Université de Yaoundé 1. • Creissels, D. 2006. *Syntaxe typologique, une introduction typologique Vols. I, II*. Paris: Hermès-Lavoisier. • Dixon, R. M. W. 2010. *Basic linguistic theory (Vols. 1 & 2)*. Oxford: OUP. • Maho, J. 2009. *The online version of the New Updated Guthrie List, a referential classification of the Bantu languages*.