

Tanulmány

Bebwa Isingoma

The Pragmatics of *kandi*: A Relevance-theoretic Account

Abstract

The paper presents an exploratory analysis of the pragmatic functions of *kandi* within Relevance Theory (cf. Sperber & Wilson 1986, Wilson & Sperber 2004), a clausal coordination connective in Rutooro (a Bantu language spoken in Uganda). *Kandi* can roughly correspond to English *and* (cf. Ndoleriire et al. 2009). The discussion specifically explores the inferential relations between the conjuncts of an utterance linked by *kandi*. The paper shows that despite the semantic closeness of *kandi* to English *and*, *kandi* does not express temporality or causality/consequentiality, as opposed to *and* (cf. Carston 2002). In Rutooro, temporality and causality/consequentiality are expressed by the so-called Virtual Present tense. *Kandi* is mainly used to encode explanation and to constrain inferential processes involving mental representations in which a speaker's attitude description is foregrounded.

Keywords: *kandi*, coordination connective, temporality, causality/consequentiality, higher level explicature

1 General observations

Kandi – the putative Rutooro equivalent of English *and* (cf. Ndoleriire et al. 2009: 65)¹ – contributes to the search for relevance in an act of communication. Rutooro is a Bantu language spoken in Uganda. Relevance Theory can be looked at as an inferential approach to communication. It may be assessed in terms of cognitive effects and processing effort, i.e. “the greater the positive cognitive effects achieved [...], the greater the relevance”, and “the greater the processing effort expended, the lower the relevance” (Wilson & Sperber 2004: 609).

Within Relevance Theory, linguistic expressions are categorized into two, i.e. those that fall under conceptual semantics and those that fall under procedural semantics (cf. Blakemore 1987, Carston 2002). The first category involves expressions that encode a concept, i.e. they contribute a concept to the propositional content of the utterance, as ingredients in a mental representation of a specific state of affairs. They include *inter alia* verbs, nouns, and adjectives. Such expressions are truth-conditional, i.e. they can describe or partially characterize a certain state of affairs. On the other hand, procedural semantics involves expressions that do not encode concepts, but rather constrain the way the hearer's inferential computations and mental representations should proceed in the utterance's comprehension

¹ In addition to *and*, Rubongoya (2013: 163) states that *kandi* also means *moreover*, *also*, *again*. In this paper, I eschew these additional meanings and concentrate on *and*.

process (Fretheim 2004a, Assimakopoulos 2015). In other words, they guide the hearer towards the intended contextual effects, by profiling the most efficient cognitive trajectory leading to an output of the pragmatic processing which is congruent with the speaker's informative intention. Such expressions indicate to the hearer the type of inference process she is expected to go through.² Blakemore (1987) shows that connectives such as *so* and *after all* contribute to relevance by guiding the hearer in the inferential phase of the comprehension process towards the intended contextual effects. This reduces the overall effort required and satisfies the hearer's expectation of relevance (also see Carston 2002, Fretheim 2004a). A word like *kandi* falls under this category. According to Blakemore's (1987) semantic constraint on relevance, expressions that encode procedures are non-truth-conditional.

Wilson & Sperber (1993) empirically distinguish two types of procedural expressions, i.e. those that impose constraints on implicatures,³ e.g. discourse connectives, and those that impose constraints on explicatures,⁴ e.g. pronouns. They also state that there might be still a further type of procedural expressions, which constrain not the proposition expressed by an utterance, but its higher level explicature (i.e. cognitive representations in which propositional forms are embedded under a speaker's attitude description (cf. Fretheim 2004b)). Hence, in keeping with Wilson & Sperber (1993), *kandi*, as a connective, should impose constraints on implicatures. However, it also proffers an instantiation of Wilson & Sperber's (1993) conjecture on procedural expressions that constrain higher level explicatures, as I will show in the subsequent sections. In addition to constraining higher level explicatures, *kandi* is used to encode explanation, as is the case with its Akan counterpart *nà* (Amfo 2007). Despite its semantic closeness to English *and*, *kandi* is not usually used to express temporality or causality/consequentiality, as opposed to its English counterpart *and*. These inferential relations are encoded by the so-called the Virtual Present tense (cf. section 2.1 below).

Given these multifaceted functional properties, *kandi* can be said to exhibit what is commonly known as ambiguity (i.e. semantic polysemy). However, in keeping with the spirit of Relevance Theory, we will not treat these properties as semantic polysemy, because *kandi* does not encode distinct meanings. Rather, we will look at it from the pragmatic perspective of univocity (cf. Fretheim 2006, Amfo 2007). Univocity means that the different context-dependent uses of *kandi* are looked at as tokens of one lexical item, which has no semantic polysemy structure. In other words, these context-dependent uses do not pose any ambiguity since they rest on context at the explicit level of content.

The study relies on native speakers' intuition, who were contacted in order to shed more light on the different readings that *kandi* encodes in an utterance. The rest of the paper is structured as follows: Section 2 delineates what *kandi* encodes and what it does not encode, as well as providing alternative means used by Rutooro to express inferential relations involving temporality and causality/consequentiality. Clauses in which mental representations and inferential computations of the sort are profiled do not require the use of *kandi*, whose presence there instead constrains inferential processes characterizing the speaker's propositional attitudes, known in relevance-theoretic terms as higher level explicatures. The section

² For convenience purposes, I use 'she' to refer to the hearer/addressee and 'he' to refer to the speaker/communicator.

³ An implicature is "a contextual assumption or contextual implication intended (communicated) by the speaker" (Carston 2002: 377).

⁴ An explicature is an explicitly communicated assumption developed via inference from the conceptual representations encoded by an utterance (Carston 2002).

provides other pragmatic functions of *kandi*, namely explanation and other higher level explicatures. The paper finishes with a conclusion in Section 3, underscoring variability among languages as regards inferential relations associated with their functors.

2 Pragmatic functions of kandi

2.1 Temporality and causality/consequentiality vs. higher level explicature

Unlike English *and* (cf. Carston 2002), *kandi* is not usually used to encode temporality or causality/consequentiality. If it is used in clauses with temporal or causal readings, it plays the role of constraining a higher level explicature in the two propositions. Temporality and causality/consequentiality are expressed by juxtaposing two conjuncts, separated by a comma in writing, and a brief pause in speech. More importantly, a special tense (namely, Virtual Present (cf. Maddox 1902, Rubongoya 1999) is used. Consider (1) and (2):

- (1) Omusaija akahika ha saaha ikumi, y-a-tu-ramuky-a.^{5/6/7}
 Man arrived at hour ten 3s-V.PRES-us-greet-FV
 ‘A man arrived at four o’clock and greeted us.’
- (2) Akasanga enju ekingirwe, y-a-garuk-a-yo.
 He found house locked 3s-V.PRES-go back-FV-LOC
 ‘He found the house locked and went back.’

In (1), the inferential relation between the two conjuncts is temporal, while in (2) there is both a temporal succession and a causal-consequence reading. In both (1) and (2), the utterances show that there is coordination at work, which instructs the addressee to process the two propositions in each utterance as conjuncts. In these utterances, the addressee will arrive at optimal inferential relevance when she makes use of the inferential relations between the two conjuncts, i.e. the temporal ordering and causal-consequence readings. Note that the reason for the two readings in (2) is that there is usually an entailment relation between causality and temporality, i.e. “the event which caused the other event must have occurred first” (Amfo 2007: 672).

The second clause cannot stand on its own without the syntactic or pragmatic support of the first clause in both (1) and (2). The syntactic and pragmatic dependence of the second conjunct on the first is triggered by the tense used in it. The -a- marker, glossed here as Virtual Present (cf. Maddox 1902, Rubongoya 1999), indicates that some event occurred before the one expressed in the conjunct in which this tense is used. Crucially, syntactic dependence is mandatory here, since, as Maddox (1902: 25) states, the use of the Virtual Present requires “to commence a narrative in the tense appropriate to the time (say far-past) and to continue with

⁵ Sentence slightly adapted from Ndoleriire & Oriikiriza (1996: 105).

⁶ Special abbreviations and notation: **1, 2, 3** = 1st, 2nd, 3rd person; **#** = not the intended meaning; **APPL** = applicative; **FV** = final vowel; **IMP** = imperative; **LOC** = locative; **s** = singular; **NEG** = negative; **p** = plural; **PERF** = perfective; **V.PRES** = Virtual Present

⁷ Note that, in Rutooro, time is counted from sunrise to sunset, i.e. 7.00 am is the 1st hour of the day and 6.00 pm is the 12th hour of the day. A similar system is used for the time between 7.00 pm and 6.00 am. Hence, 4.00 pm is the 10th hour of the day.

the virtual present...” Hence, it is important to point out here that this overlap between coordination and subordination blurs the categorical distinction between these two grammatical concepts. As Blühdonn (2008: 61) states, “the syntactic distinction between coordination and subordination is neutralized at levels higher than the sentence. On the levels of text and discourse it does not play any relevant role.” Ndoleriire & Oriikiriza (1996: 106) state that, “when one says, ‘yaturamukya’ the literal translation would be ‘and he greeted us’.” This observation indicates that the Virtual Present tense encodes some procedural information that something that had an impact on, or led to what is described in the conjunct in which this tense appears, must be retrievable in the preceding conjunct – a task sometimes performed by the connective *and* in English.⁸ Note that if the conjunct in which this tense occurs is not overtly preceded by another conjunct, then this non-overt conjunct must be recovered contextually.

When *kandi* is used to connect propositions in the temporal and causal readings, it constrains a higher level explicature, i.e. an embedding of the proposition under a propositional attitude description. Thus, if we insert *kandi* in (1) and (2), as in (3) and (4) below, this will direct the addressee to the fact that the relevance of the utterance resides more in the higher level explicature than in the actual temporal proposition (3) or causal proposition (4). In contrast, in the English analogue utterances (5), *and* encodes temporality in (5a) (i.e. the arrival of the man preceded his greeting us) and causality/consequentiality in (5b) (i.e. the fact that he found the home locked made him go back). Note that as is the case in the Rutooro utterance in (2), (5b) encodes a temporal succession as well, since “causality entails temporality” (Amfo 2007: 670).

- (3) Omusaija akahika ha saaha ikumi **kandi** y-a-tu-ramuky-a.
 Man arrived at hour ten *and* 3s-V.PRES-us-greet-FV
 ‘A man arrived at four o’clock and greeted us.’
- (4) Akasanga enju ekingirwe **kandi** y-a-garuk-a-yo.
 He found house locked *and* 3s-V.PRES-go back-FV-LOC
 ‘He found the house locked and went back.’
- (5) (a) The man arrived at four o’clock and greeted us.
 (b) He found the house locked and went back.

In (3), the speaker expresses surprise, which is a higher level explicature. That is, the speaker did not expect the man to greet them having arrived at four o’clock. Perhaps, such a time was not convenient for the man to greet them, but he did it, nevertheless. The propositional content of temporality is encoded by means of the Virtual Present tense, while the presence of *kandi* directs the addressee to the propositional attitude of surprise. In (4), the propositional content is causality, but this is embedded under the propositional attitude of the speaker, namely either of surprise or disappointment. In other words, the speaker expected the referent to possibly

⁸ Maddox (1902: 25) states that in addition to the use of the Virtual Present tense in narratives, the tense is also used to encode the fact that “something has just happened, is in danger of happening, or (rarely) has been happening up to the present” (see also Rubongoya 1999: 226).

wait even if he/she had found the house locked. Thus, although the latter's departure was prompted by the fact that the house was locked, it surprised or disappointed the speaker.

We should note that *kandi* can be also used syntactically in an utterance that encodes temporality or causality/consequentiality if it conjoins more than two propositions. In such cases, its role is to show a list of events, although prosody can be used to still encode a higher level explicature. For example, let us expand (1) and (2) (as in (6) and (7)), by adding the proposition *yatusiima* (and he thanked us) and *tiyayongera kugaruka* (and he never came back), respectively. Here, it will be felicitous to use *kandi* to syntactically conjoin the third proposition to the rest.

- (6) Omusaija akahika ha saaha ikumi, y-a-tu-ramuky-a **kandi**
 Man arrived at hour ten, 3s-V.PRES-us-greet-FV and
 y-a-tu-siim-a.
 3s-V.PRES-us-thank-FV
 'The man arrived at four o'clock, greeted us and thanked us.'
- (7) Akasanga enju ekingirwe, y-a-garuk-a-yo, **kandi**
 He found house locked 3s-V.PRES-go back-FV-LOC and
 ti-y-a-yonger-a kugaruka
 NEG-3s-V.PRES-add-FV come back
 'He found the house locked, he went back and never came back.'

In utterances (6) and (7), *kandi* is required even though coordination is expressed by the tense (Virtual Present). The function of *kandi* here is to conjoin a list of propositions. The inferential relation of temporality in (6) is still expressed by the Virtual Present tense. There is a temporal relation involving all the three propositions, as the speaker shows that the arrival of the man preceded his greeting of the people there and the greeting preceded the act of thanking. Also, the inferential relation of causality/consequentiality in (7) is still expressed by the Virtual Present tense, while *kandi* indicates that the third proposition is the last in the series of propositions that constitute the utterance. Remarkably, causality/consequentiality is only reflected relationally between the first conjunct and the second conjunct, and the first conjunct and the third conjunct. No causal-consequence relation seems to obtain between the second conjunct and the third conjunct. In other words, the going back of the referent did not cause his/her not coming back. This was caused by his/her finding the house locked, as his/her going back was. Specifically, there is only one cause to the two consequences in the utterance.

As is the case with (2), the utterance in (7) above not only shows a causal relation, but also a temporal one due to the entailment relation that exists between causality and temporality. In the temporal reading, we see that the event in the first conjunct happened before that of the second conjunct, and the latter happened before the event in the third conjunct. This implies a transitive temporal relation between the event in the first conjunct and the event in the third conjunct. Thus, the use of the Virtual Present tense is justified. Note that if *kandi* was left out in (6) and (7), the Virtual Present tense would still be used, but the hearer would expect the speaker to add another proposition until he uses *kandi*, which would signal the last proposition. However, sometimes, a speaker may not include *kandi* at all, and this would lead to what has been referred to as pure asyndetic coordination, which "gives an impression of in-

completeness, a notion of the sentence being in-the-air” (Büring & Hartmann 2015: 44). As Büring & Hartmann (2015: 44) continue to explain, under such circumstances, there is a need for “a major prosodic break” between the conjuncts and there is also a need to end such conjuncts with “an intonational high plateau.” Recall that this kind of asyndeton only involves more than two conjuncts, since leaving out *kandi* when there are only two conjuncts is the norm, as coordination is coded by means of the Virtual Present tense in order to encode temporality or/and causality/consequentiality (cf. (1) and (2)), while including it in this case leads to higher level explicatures (cf. (3) and (4)).

2.2 Explanation

Inspired by Blakemore (1987) and Wilson & Sperber (1993), Fretheim (2004a: 111) points out that discourse connectives are “encoders of information about a kind of inference process that is meant to facilitate the hearer’s derivation of a cognitive output that agrees with the speaker’s informative intention and satisfies the hearer’s expectation of stimulus relevance.” *Kandi* is usually used in some utterances in order to facilitate the hearer’s derivation of cognitive output that conforms to the speaker’s intention to provide an explanation in the second conjunct for what is described in the first conjunct. The fact that *kandi* can be used to encode an explanation makes it functionally similar to the Akan discourse connective *nà* (cf. Amfo 2007). Crucially, Amfo (2007) challenges Carston’s (2002) dictum that a connective of this sort cannot precede a conjunct that provides an explanation for a state of affairs expressed in the preceding conjunct. While Carston (2002) relied on data from English, Amfo (2007) argues that her (Carston’s) account of constraints on the pragmatic processing of coordination was not meant to be language specific. Crucially, it is not only Akan *nà* that is used in an utterance to encode an explanation, but also the Rutooro connective *kandi*, as shown in the utterances in (8):

- (8) A: Abaana ti-ba-som-er-e!
 Children NEG-3p-study-PERF-FV
 ‘The children have not gone to school!’
 B: **Kandi** ba-ta-ba-bing-e.
 And 3p-PAST.NEG-3p-chase-FV
 Lit. ‘And didn’t they chase them.’
 ‘It is because they were sent away.’

The utterances in (8) present a case of detached conjuncts. As pointed out earlier, there is need for saturation here. The zero conjunct which could have been replaced by a non-zero one to the left of *kandi* should be saturated, by matching it with an antecedent in the preceding utterance, i.e. A’s utterance. In fact, semantically, the *kandi* conjunct (8B) is only permissible as a reaction to some utterance. In other words, it is dependent on the preceding utterance since it cannot stand on its own, at least semantically.⁹ The utterances in (8) provide us with a situation where B’s utterance gives the reason why the children have not gone to school. The

⁹ Note that the dependence here is semantic rather than syntactic. This is because in (8) we have the Perfective aspect and the Far-Past tense, as opposed to cases such as those in (1) and (2), where the dependence is syntactic, given that the Virtual Present is used.

syntactic and pragmatic requirements in this utterance dictate the use of the negative form of the verb. Notably, there is some kind of enrichment here, mandated by intonation and the negative form of the verb.

Kandi can also be used to express an explanation in a non-detached conjunct, as shown in (9).

- (9) Nkagwa ebizaamu **kandi** obu na-a-som-ir-r-e Bundibugyo.
 I failed exams and when 1s-V.PRES-study-APPL-PERF-FV Bundibugyo
 ‘I failed exams since I studied in Bundibugyo.’

The *kandi* conjunct directs the addressee to search for relevance, bearing in mind that this is an explanation for the failure in the exams (national ones) by the speaker. If *kandi* were removed, the utterance would only amount to a statement that tells the addressee that the speaker failed exams when he studied in Bundibugyo, i.e. the speaker seems to have studied in various areas, and he failed exams in Bundibugyo. Such a statement does not tell us, as (9) does, that it is because of studying in Bundibugyo that the speaker failed his exams. Note that in (9) contextual content is crucial, i.e. the addressee is supposed to have known that studying in Bundibugyo normally makes people fail their exams. In other words, the addressee has to employ contextual assumptions at her disposal in order to strengthen the propositional content to a fact followed by an explanation for it. The use of *kandi* in (9) clearly demonstrates that the speaker imputes his failure in exams to studying in Bundibugyo, while without it there is no explicit ascription of the failure to the fact that the studying was done in Bundibugyo. To clearly drive this point home, let us consider (10):

- (10) #Nkagwa ebizaamu **kandi** obu na-a-som-ir-r-e Kampala.
 I failed exams and when 1s-V.PRES-study-APPL-PERF-FV Kampala
 ‘I failed exams since I studied in Kampala.’

Utterance (10) is not pragmatically acceptable when one is equipped with contextual information pertaining to Uganda. Under normal circumstances, one cannot impute his failure in national exams to the fact of studying in Kampala, because Kampala is renowned for having the best schools in Uganda. Note that in Uganda, passing national exams greatly depends on the type of school one goes to. To this effect, schools are categorized in terms of good schools (locally known as ‘First-World schools’) and poor schools (locally known as ‘Third-World schools’). Most Kampala schools are ‘First-World schools’ and all schools in Bundibugyo, for example, are ‘Third-World schools’. Moreover, the worst school in Kampala is better than the best school in Bundibugyo. Hence, it is inconceivable for one to utter (10) unless he is just being ironical.

2.3 Other instances of higher level explicatures

So far, we have seen *kandi* occurring utterance-medially (or at least as a response to an overt proposition, as in (8B)). As stated earlier, *kandi* can occupy other slots too in an utterance. One of them is the initial position of an utterance, as the examples in (11) and (12) show:

- (11) Kandi w-a-gend-a.
 And 2s-V.PRES-go-FV
 ‘And you have gone.’
- (12) Kandi gend-a.
 And go.IMP-FV
 ‘And go.’

The occurrence of connectives utterance-initially is not peculiar to Rutooro. Amfo (2007: 671) points out that *nà* – the Akan equivalent of English *and* – can occur utterance-initially, and the same holds for English (cf. Blakemore & Carston 2005, Reitz 2013). Obviously what matters here is not whether such a phenomenon holds in other languages or not. Our interest instead is to examine how *kandi* directs the addressee to process relevance in such a context given that it (*kandi*) does not conjoin two overt propositions. Pragmatically speaking, *kandi* here conjoins two propositions although the first proposition is not overtly expressed. *Kandi* tells the hearer that the missing linguistic elements in front of it should trigger a contextual search for the premise that justifies utterances (11) and (12). Hence, what the addressee does here is saturate the utterance using contextual assumptions. Sometimes, the addressee can use the proposition expressed in the preceding utterance, or she can employ inferences retrievable from that proposition.

The token of *kandi* in the examples above constrains higher level explicatures. In (11), the speaker employs *kandi* to indicate to the addressee that he does not wish her to go. The speaker’s attitude could be either he is disappointed, or he feels sad that the addressee is taking leave of him. In (12) the speaker portrays impatience when he uses *kandi*. He expects the addressee to have gone some time back, or he sees the addressee dilly-dallying around instead of going, as agreed. We need to underscore the role of the moods used in these utterances in contributing to the kind of higher level explicature here. *Kandi* has to ‘work in tandem’ with the indicative mood to express disappointment or sadness (utterance (11)), and the imperative mood (as well as contextual information) to express impatience (utterance (12)). This means that the inferential relations that obtain in these conjuncts are a result of the combination of the semantics of the discourse connective, the syntactic structure of the conjuncts, and contextual assumptions (cf. Amfo 2007: 682). In order for us to clearly see the role of *kandi* here in conveying attitudinal propositions, let us consider the same utterances without it as in (13) and (14) below:

- (13) W-a-gend-a.
 2s-V.PRES-go-FV
 ‘You have gone.’
- (14) Gend-a.
 Go.IMP-FV
 ‘Go.’

In (13), the utterance is a mere statement meaning literally *So, you are going (away)*. In (14), we only have an order, which does not really tell us whether the speaker is impatient or not. Evidently, we are aware of Blakemore’s (1992) treatment of imperatives, originally proposed

in Sperber & Wilson (1986). She shows that imperatives express higher level explicatures. This means that even without *kandi*, the utterance in (12), as modified in (14), still expresses a higher level explicature because the content proposition, which is the same in (12) and (14), is embedded under a predicate of propositional attitude. However, this higher level explicature only reflects the attitude of the speaker's desire to see his interlocutor leave. It does not have the impatience-laden reading where *kandi* is used. Hence, we clearly see that more than one higher level explicature is communicated when *kandi* is used in an imperative sentence like (12). That is, the speaker not only has the desire of seeing his interlocutor leave (1st higher level explicature), but also he is impatient (2nd higher level explicature).

Note that in both (11) and (12), *kandi* can be placed utterance-finally, as shown in (15) and (16):

(15) W-a-gend-a kandi.
 2s-V.PRES-go-FV and
 Lit. 'You have gone and.'

(16) Gend-a kandi.
 Go.IMP-FV and
 Lit. 'Go and.'

While (11) and (15) will have more or less the same pragmatic interpretation (i.e. disappointment or sadness), (12) and (16) exhibit some level of mismatch, depending on the intonation. The first reading of (16) presents the same attitudinal proposition as in (12) (i.e. impatience), but the second reading gives us the impression that the speaker unwillingly allows the addressee to leave. It directs the addressee to the propositional attitude of the speaker that he is not happy about the addressee's act of wanting to leave. As pointed out above, intonation plays an important role in differentiating the two readings. The reading associated with impatience requires the speaker to stress *kandi*, while this is not the case in the second reading (i.e. where the speaker expresses unwillingness or unhappiness).

3 Conclusion

In this discussion, I have provided an exploratory analysis of the pragmatic use of *kandi*, a coordinating connective in Rutooro. I have demonstrated that whereas *kandi* can be equated to English *and*, its pragmatic functions are in the main different from those of *and*. Unlike English *and* which is used to encode, e.g. temporality, causality/consequentiality (cf. Carston 2002), *kandi* does not exhibit such pragmatic functions. These functions are encoded by a special tense in Rutooro known as Virtual Present. Also, in contradistinction to English *and*, *kandi* can be used in an utterance to express an explanation, which makes it similar to the Akan connective *nà* (cf. Amfo 2007). The connective *kandi* is also used procedurally to direct the addressee to a higher level explicature, expressing the attitudinal proposition of the speaker. To this effect, *kandi* can be used to encode impatience, disappointment, unhappiness, unwillingness, sadness, etc. Thus, this paper augments the discourse on how languages differ considerably as to how they ascribe pragmatic functions to their functors. Despite the rendition of *kandi* as *and* (cf. Ndoleriire et al. 2009), the way Rutooro deploys it on the prag-

matic plane points to a sharp contrast with English. Relatedly, even though some pragmatic functions of *kandi* are akin to those of Akan *ná*, the two differ significantly as regards inferential relations involving higher level explicatures, as *kandi* displays a wide array of such speakers' propositional attitudes.

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Bebwa Isingoma:
The Pragmatics of kandi: A Relevance-theoretic Account
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Bebwa Isingoma
Department of Languages and Literature (English Language & Linguistics Section)
Gulu University
P. O. Box 166 Gulu, Uganda
b.isingoma@gu.ac.ug
isibebwa@yahoo.co.uk