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Linguistic Fieldnotes III: Information Structure in Gur and Kwa Languages

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Preface

This is the 16th issue of the working paper series *Interdisciplinary Studies on Information Structure* (ISIS) of the Sonderforschungsbereich (SFB) 632. The present issue continues the series on Linguistic Fieldnotes providing data elicited and documented by different members of the Sonderforschungsbereich 632. Here, the focus is placed on primary linguistic data from Gur and Kwa languages, collected and prepared by Anne Schwarz, former investigator in Project B1 and D2, and Ines Fiedler, former investigator in Project B1 and D2 and current member of Project B7 at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.

Svetlana Petrova

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QUIS Data from Buli, Kɔnni and Baatɔnum
With Notes on the Comparative Approach

Anne Schwarz

1. Introduction

The collection of primary data in several less-known and under-documented Gur and Kwa languages (Niger-Congo) represented an integral part of the work undertaken by project B1. The project was conducting an inductive investigation on focus expressions (phase 1) and on the interaction between information structure and grammar (phase 2) on the empirical basis of data from 19 languages (Aja, Akan, Anii, Awutu-Efutu, Baatɔnum, Buli, Byali, Dagbani, Ditammari, Ewe, Fon, Foodo, Gurene, Konkomba, Konni, Lelemi, Nateni, Waama, Yom), supported by data on three additional languages kindly provided by Kézié Koyenzi Lébikaza (Kabiye) and Klaus Beyer (Moore and Pana).

The aim of this chapter is to briefly outline the nature of a part of the collected data with illustrations from the Gur languages Buli, Kɔnni and Baatɔnum, followed by a chapter with data from the Gur and Kwa languages Yom, Aja, Anii and Foodo by Ines Fiedler. Together, both chapters document a small fraction of the data collections that fed the B1 corpus which was established between 2003–2009.

1 See http://www2.hu-berlin.de/gur_und_kwa_fokus.
2 I wish to thank all language consultants and colleagues for their kind cooperation and assistance and the German Research Foundation (DFG) for generously funding the research including the field trips involved. Some useful comments made by Markus Greif (project D2) helped to improve this chapter in the last stage.
2. Selection of QUIS Data for Comparative Goals

Project B1 was concerned with language-specific in-depth studies as well as with comparative goals, including language-typological and diachronic questions. Accordingly, attention was put on the establishment of a data basis that also suits comparative tasks. Most important for the cross-linguistic approach within the project was the Questionnaire on Information Structure (QUIS; Skopeteas et al. 2006), developed in project D2. In preparation of a final study of project B1 regarding the interaction of information-structural and language typology we have selected a nucleus of QUIS tasks to be conducted and prepared in each of the subject languages for comparison. The following two components from QUIS were chosen:

(a) A narrative sample from the Fairy Tale Task
(b) Selected entries from the Focus Translation Task

2.1 Fairy Tale (Topic and Focus in Coherent Discourse)

The Fairy Tale Task (Skopeteas et al. 2006: 149ff., condition A) allows first insights in the structuring of a discourse. The consultant is shown a picture series that sketches the basic stages and events of the story (figure 1) which is briefly outlined in the meta language. In the ideal completion of the task, a short narrative in the target languages is then retold with the help of the visual material as a text about unwitnessed events and in a folktale manner. The simplicity and brevity of the resulting narrative notwithstanding, it was hoped to achieve quasi-natural examples of characteristic narrative phrases and patterns for this widespread text type, such as (formalized) initial settings and presentations, and repetitive, suspense-building patterns with a climax on the third protagonist/event. The results varied to certain degree with respect to the

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3 For a few languages the data from the Focus Translation Task has also been entered in the linguistic database ANNIS (see http://www.sfb632.uni-potsdam.de/d1/annis).
speaker’s ease and engagement concerning the somewhat playful task, but material illustrating the basic language-specific modes of encoding a planned (monologue) discourse and its structuring above the simple clause/sentence level was always provided. Such data allow us to cross-linguistically study devices for topic continuity and topic change which are pivotal for any discourse and can thus be expected to be reflected in grammar.

Figure 1: Fairy Tale (Tomatoes⁴) (Skopeteas et al. 2006: 151)

⁴ See Skopeteas et al. 2006: 149ff. for additional variations and a second version (Giant Tree) of this task.
2.2 Focus Translation Extract

As second component for the comparative basis we selected specific entries from a more controlled task, the focus translation (Skopeteas et al. 2006: 209ff.). Here we concentrate on dialogues which complement the data collected by the tale and which also help to minimize unwanted interferences from the metalanguage used as the translation basis. The mini-dialogues comprise question–answer pairs (wh- as well as yes/no-questions) as well as statement–reaction pairs and can be provided by one or two speakers in the elicitation session. For the speech sample of the (imaginary) second speaker (S2) it is preferably only a keyword that is offered rather than a complete sentence given in the metalanguage.\(^5\) There is ample evidence that this approach led to better results than a pure translation template and that speakers did indeed exploit the contextualizing first speaker’s speech for the information-structural configuration of the corresponding reply/reaction.

An interesting side effect was sometimes observed when the question-answer or statement-reaction pair was repeated (for instance, for recording). Some consultants occasionally adjusted the initial, contextualizing sentence according to the focus in the second sentence. Consider the following examples:

\[(1)\]  
S1: She ate the beans.  
S1: The woman hit Peter  
S2: [I]  
S2: [also pushed]

The information packaging of the first speaker’s sentence (S1) seldom provided a dedicated focus marking, but if it did, it concerned the object (here ‘the beans’ and ‘Peter’; 2a), in particular when the subject was encoded as given (pronoun or definite noun phrase). When repeated, the focus structure in the first sentence

\(^5\) The keywords are given in square brackets and contain always the focal element, though not necessarily exclusively. Additional material that helps the informant to form the reply is provided within the same bracket for the sake of simplicity.
was sometimes adjusted (2a’), resulting in sentence pairs (2a’/2b) that display only a lexical contrast in two information-structurally and morpho-syntactically parallel sentence constructions. Such secondary structural adjustments of S1 presented welcome corroborations for the validity of particular information-packaging forms in a given language.

(2)  a. She ate (the beans)\(_{\text{FOC}}\)  a. The woman hit (Peter)\(_{\text{FOC}}\)
     a’. [She]\(_{\text{FOC}}\) ate the beans  a’. The woman [hit]\(_{\text{FOC}}\) Peter
     b. [I]\(_{\text{FOC}}\) ate them  b. She also [pushed]\(_{\text{FOC}}\) him

Out of the 189 Focus Translation Task entries a smaller number was chosen as basic language-internal set that can be implemented for comparison. Decisive for the selection\(^6\) was to get a maximum overview on the (topic) focus system on a minimally extensive data basis. The data selected to represent the language-specific basis for generalizations and illustrations thereof that can serve in cross-linguistic investigation are given in the following. They are clustered in four groups and include suggestions of criteria that may be relevant for the analysis of the entries, though other research questions and clusters according to language-specific needs are not excluded, of course.

\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{Group 1} \\
<82-6> \quad \text{There is a book on the table.} \\
<82-10> \quad \text{What happened?} \\
\quad \quad \text{A child was born.} \\
<82-20> \quad \text{What happened?} \\
\quad \quad \text{[somebody jumped into water]} \\
\end{array}
\]

\(^6\) The focus translation entries are identified by their QUIS data numbers <82-xy>. 
Are there structural parallels in all three „all new“ cases (unrequested presentation in (6), requested in (10), (20))? Is (10) passively or actively encoded and different from (20)?

**Group 2**

<82-40> Who ate the beans?
[a woman]

<82-48> What did the woman eat?
[beans]

<82-66> What did the woman eat with?
[with a spoon]

<82-72> What did the woman do?
[ate beans]

<82-128> She ate the beans.
[I]

<82-136> The woman ate the black beans.
[not the black (beans), but the red (ones)]

<82-147> The woman ate the beans yesterday.
[the day before yesterday]

<82-188> The woman ate the beans.
  a) [yes (Ex: Yes, she did eat them.)]

<82-189> b) [no (Ex: No, she didn't eat them.)]
Compare the expression of different scope of foci and types of foci: What are the formal differences of the sentence structure in case of new information (40, 48, 66, 72), contrastive information (128, 136, 147) and confirmation resp. contradiction (188, 189)?

**Group 3**

<82-74> Is he bringing the table or is he sending it?

[is sending]

<82-163> The woman hit Peter.

[called]

<82-165> The woman has hit Peter.

[will hit]

<82-164> The woman has hit Peter.

[hasn’t yet]

<82-183> The woman hit Peter.

[she also pushed]

Compare predicate-centered focus types, i.e., on verb or predicative operator: selective lexical verb (74), constrastive lexical verb (163) or TAM\(^\text{7}\) (165), restrictive concerning TAM (164), expansive lexical verb (183).

**Group 4**

<82-140> The woman cooked the beans for him.

[not for him, but for us]

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\(^7\) Tense-Aspect-Modality
| 82-170 | The woman bought the beans for the children and the elders.  
|        | [only for the elders] |
| 82-179 | The woman cooked the beans for her child.  
|        | [for the elders too] |

Compare contrastive (140), restrictive (170), and expansive (179) focus on the recipient (and additional focus particles) and parallels/distinctions between these focus expressions and those in group 2.

### 3. On the Presentation and Comparison of the Data

The main part of this paper contains the data from three Gur languages, Buli, Kɔnni and Baatɔnum (i.e., one version of the Fairy Tale Task and of the Focus Translation Task per language\(^8\) together with lists of information-structurally concerned publications prepared within the SFB. A paper with data from four further Gur and Kwa languages (Yom, Aja, Anii, Foodo) and a section concerning genetic and areal relations and our research by Ines Fiedler follows.

The presentation of the language-specific data follows orthographic conventions to some extent and for most data tone is marked in addition\(^9\). We largely follow the Leipzig Glossing Rules\(^10\) using a list of standard abbreviations slightly extended to our specific needs (see list at the end of this chapter). Digits which are not followed immediately by grammatical number indications (1SG etc.) refer to specific noun classes (alternative to the general abbreviation CL),

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\(^8\) For documentary purposes the narrative sample is accompanied by the audio source, albeit for space reasons only provided as an mp3-file.

\(^9\) Note that tone can be subject to considerable modification due to tone spreading and the position of the tone bearing syllable within the phrase and it is the largely predictable surface tone that is indicated for Buli and Kɔnni.

following the numbering conventions of the Berlin–Bayreuth Gur projects (Miehe et al. 2007).\textsuperscript{11}

The aim of these fieldnotes is to provide insights into the nature of the data dealt with in the investigation of information structure in Gur and Kwa by a selection of examples which illustrates the diversity in the expression of information structure among Gur and Kwa. A comparative analysis is not intended here. Such task would require much more background information on the languages involved than possible here and it would be incomplete without considering the complete range of language-specific alternative encodings and the exclusion of certain constructions in tasks such as the Focus Translation.

What the data provided in this chapter underlines is that even when we restrict the comparison to three genetically related languages such as Buli, Kɔnni and Baatɔnum which share several typological parallels, we face considerably diverse strategies in the expression of information structure. All three are tone languages and all three have a clause-initial subject in the pragmatically least marked (henceforth unmarked) clause. However, Baatɔnum differs from the two Oti-Volta languages by placing the object before the verb rather than behind it. Interestingly, the canonical preverbal object position in Baatɔnum seems less compatible with a focus interpretation of the object than the canonical postverbal object position in Buli and Kɔnni. In Baatɔnum, focal objects occur in a pragmatically marked fronted position (i.e., marked constituent order OSV

\textsuperscript{11} Recent research by the author suggests that the occurrence of nominal class affixes might be less mandatory and regular across nouns in some Gur languages than commonly assumed. This implies that certain suffix-reminiscent word-final segments are better not analysed as suffixes (or particular suffix allomorphes) themselves but rather as results of phonological stem adaptations. In the absence of certain noun class concords, nominal stems are compensatorily treated and some develop permanent assimilatory traits to the relatively frequently present concord morpheme. To avoid complexities regarding features that are not essential in this paper, the glossing in this chapter does not particularly reflect these distinctions and also glosses pure assimilatory traits with noun class numbers.
besides unmarked SOV). It is obviously only in such verb-distant position and not in the immediate proverbial position that the object can be targeted by phonological phrasing in Baatɔnum. The right edge of such a phrase is indicated by suffix -(C)a which also co-occurs with focal subjects and other sentence constituents. The more peripheral postverbal object position in Buli and Kɔnni, in contrast, is pragmatically less restricted and compatible with non-focal as well as focal objects, although the latter status can also be further formally underlined.

Apart from this Baatɔnum-specific requirement concerning the object, the Focus Translation Task also shows that the surface constituent order often remains unchanged despite different focus conditions. Important for the information-structural interpretation of a sentence in all three languages is not the constituent order alone. It is first of all the presence or absence of certain particles and morphological devices that accompany the canonical or the marked order. These elements are many and diverse across the languages and include, among others, the preverbal connective particle lë and postverbal particle ká in Buli and verb suffix/particle -na (allomorph -ne) and postverbal particle/verb suffix -wa (allomorph -wo) in Kɔnni. In sentences with the canonical order SVO, the mentioned morphemes are complementarily applied close to the verb (stem) and correlate with different focus readings. Consider the examples in (3) and (4), partly also taken from the Focus Translation Task (see also Fiedler et al. 2010: 250f.).
Although the complementary morphological encoding correlates with different focus readings, the affixes and particles do not represent genuine “focus markers” that have the (primary) function to mark focus and attach to the focus constituent. As outlined elsewhere (Schwarz 2009, 2010, Fiedler et al. 2010), their primary task is to distinguish between categorical (3/4a) and thetic statements (3/4b), a distinction that provides different potential focus domains in which the subject is either explicitly included (thetic) or excluded (categorical) from the focus domain. The recognition of such indirect focus marking\(^{13}\) is

\(^{12}\) Note that the surface tone of the particle ká can change to kā and kà (depending on the following environment) due to Low-Tone-Spreading.

\(^{13}\) The indirect focus marking analysis accounts for the occurrence of these affixes and particles in various environments that are not reconcilable with a focus interpretation.
relevant in cross-linguistic studies also involving languages with direct focus-marking tools in order to avoid comparison of “apples and pears”.

The narrative tasks in Buli, Kɔnni and Baatɔnum provided us with examples for the devices used to introduce major participants, to highlight particular participants and to chain important events of the story line. We face considerable differences across the languages again, for instance regarding the latter issue. Buli employs a clause-initial particle (tè) which functions as a clausal conjunction, namely of the narrative type ‘and (then)’ in the indicative, and of the consecutive type ‘so that’ in the subjunctive\(^{14}\). Different from a prototypical clausal conjunction, it cannot only follow a full clause, but also just a sentence constituent. Considering the whole range of its use (see also some examples in section 4 below), it can be concluded that it is a particular semantic/pragmatic configuration that is common to all tè-occurrences (5). The particle occurs in the presence of two information units which are information-structurally and syntactically autonomous while semantically necessarily connected, the initial unit C1 (whether a clause constituent or a clause) being semantically indispensable, similar to a precondition, for the appropriate interpretation of the second unit C2.\(^{15}\)

\[(5)\text{ Semantically dependent C2:}\]
\[
[\text{clause or constituent}]_{C1} \quad [\text{tè clause}]_{C2}
\]

Kɔnni has an apparent cognate (tà), but employs it much less than Buli and favours particle dɪ which follows only nominal subjects in narrative contexts

\(^{14}\) The modal distinction is expressed by the grammatical tone of the verb (Schwarz 2007).

\(^{15}\) The analysis of the tè-marked-clause as an information-structurally (pragmatically) fairly autonomous, but semantically rather dependent clause can account for its occurrence with head-external (in contrast to head-internal) relative clauses and for its use in sentences with multiple (i.e., discontinuous) foci, for instance those containing a non-canonical fronted contrastive topic followed by a tè-clause with its own focal peak (Schwarz, ms 2008), among others.
(pronominal subjects in corresponding environments are tonally and partly segmentally marked). In Baatönım, we find a clausal conjunction $mā$ in comparable sequences of the most decisive events. It is probably of language-external origin (from Hausa àmma ‘but’), but more research in this language is needed.

Leaving the comparative discussion for another occasion and summing up here, the comparative investigation will ideally not only identify existing distinctions in the formal expression of information structuring, but also try to establish the background (language contact, deviations in information-packaging principles, correlations with other grammatical features etc.) for such diversity across the languages. For the aim of this paper suffice it to conclude that a comparative approach to information structure on the basis of selected QUIS tasks has proven feasible and came up to a corpus full of interesting and often challenging data, as illustrated in sections 4-6 of this chapter for Buli, Kɔnni and Baatönım and in the following chapter by Ines Fiedler for Yom, Aja, Anii and Foodo.

4. Buli

Buli is a Central Gur language (ISO 639-3 bwu) spoken by approximately 150,000 people (2003, see Lewis 2009) in northern Ghana. Together with its closest relative and neighbour Kɔnni, it forms the Buli/Kɔnni subgroup within the Oti-Volta branch (Naden 1989).

Information structure in Buli was dealt with in several talks and has resulted so far in the following publications (from studies undertaken in projects B1, B7, D2):


### 4.1 Tomatoes Fairy Tale in Buli16

Audio: Tomatoes-Buli.mp3

(to play audio file move mouse into field)

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16 This story version was recorded with Vida Azenaab (32 years, Gbedem-Buli variant) in Accra, July 2004, and Denis Pius Abasimi assisted concerning its transcription and translation.
A woman sent her first-born to go to the market to buy tomatoes

And bring them to her to prepare soup.

When the boy went to the market, he lost the way.

He lost the way, he couldn’t buy the tomatoes
à yāā pilim jām yèrī.
& then return come house.5
and returned home.

(4) àtè nìpōōwá pilim a tòm
&:CNJ woman:DEF1 return & send
And then the woman sent

wâ = bì-kāāī nē pàà sāŋ = lá,
1=child-INDF12 CON reach follow=DET
her second born,

àtè wâ = chèŋ yābāŋá,
&:CNJ 1=go market:DEF6
and he went,

wá mē chèŋ siūkū bè à jām
l also go road:DEF15 lose & come
he also lost the way and came back,

àn dá tómāntösūkū tā jām-yà ?.
&:NEG buy tomatoes:DEF15 have come-ASS %
he didn’t buy and bring the tomatoes,

(5) nìpōōwá yāā tòm wâ = bì-bāŋkā
woman:DEF1 then send 1=child-last:DEF12
The woman then sent her last born,
and when he went to the market

he found his way

and bought the tomatoes and brought them home,

and the woman was able to prepare soup with the tomatoes.

There is a book on the table.

This data was recorded, transcribed and translated with Peter Wangara Amoak (42 years, Sandem-Buli variant) in March 2005 in northern Ghana. Note that some of the S[peak er]1 data are unusual for Buli main sentences, as they do not contain indications (such as provided by particles ká, kámā, connective lē, clausal conjunction lē and other means) regarding the information-structural organization of the sentence. It is likely that at least part of this uncommon lack of pragmatic information is a direct result of the translation task. The S[peak er]2 data are therefore in sum pragmatically more reliable.
S1: ká bà lè nè-yāā
PTL what CON do-ASS.Q
What happened?

S2: bà=bìg kà bík.
2=give.birth PTL child.12
A child was born. (lit. They gave birth to a child.)

S1: ká bà nè-yāā.
PTL what?: CON do-ASS.Q
What happened?

S2: wāā lè y5g lò nìám pō.
INDF1 CON jump fall water.14 in
Somebody jumped into the water.

S1: ká wàn lè nòbi tùàŋāá.
PTL who CON eat bean:DEF6.Q
Who ate the beans?

S2: nípōk àlē nòbi tùàŋá.
woman.1 &:CON eat bean:DEF6
A woman ate the beans.

S1: nípōowādé nòbi ká bàà.
woman:DEF1:DEM eat PTL what.Q
What did the woman eat?
S2: ɔ̀ = ŋɔ̀ bì kà túé.
1=eat PTL bean.6
She ate beans.

<82-66> S1: nípōōwá pà kā bààn dē-à.
woman:DEF1 take PTL what:? eat-Q
What did the woman eat with?

S2: wà = dē lè kā dùisūk.
1=eat CON PTL spoon.15
She ate with a spoon.

<82-72> S1: nípōōwá ɲè kā sēē.
woman:DEF1 do PTL how:Q
What did the woman do?

S2: ɔ̀ = ŋɔ̀ bì kà túé.
1=eat PTL bean.6
She ate beans.

<82-74> S1: wà = tà tèbùłūkū á chiēn kāmā,
1=have table:DEF15 IPFV come PTL:PTL
Is he bringing

yàā wà = tàā chēŋ kāmā.
ASS 1=have: IPFV go PTL:PTL
or sending the table?
S2: wà=tà chè kámā.
   1=have:IPFV go PTL:PTL
   He is sending it.

<82-128> S1: ò=ǹbì tùàŋá.
   1=eat bean:DEF6
   She ate the beans.

S2: ká mí lē ǹbì.
   PTL 1 SG CON eat.ASS
   I ate them.

<82-136> S1: nípööwá ǹbì kà tú-sóbtáŋá.
   woman:DEF1 eat PTL bean-black:21:DEF6
   The woman ate the black beans.

S2: òàyí, dàa tú-sóbtáŋá tè wà=ǹbì ?,
   no NEG bean-black:21:DEF6 CNJ 1=eat %
   No, not the black beans,

   kà tú-màntáŋá tè wà=ǹb.
   PTL bean-red:21:DEF6 CNJ 1=eat
   but the red ones.

<82-140> S1: nípööwá dig tùàŋá êtè kà wá.
   woman:DEF1 cook bean:DEF6 &:BEN PTL 1
   The woman cooked the beans for him.
S2: ààyí, dàà wá Ɂ?,
    no NEG 1 %
No, not for him,

wà = dig tè kà támà.
1 = cook BEN PTL 1 PL
she cooked for us.

<82-147> S1: nípṓwá ɲòbì tùàŋá ká dìèmwá.
          woman:DEF1 eat bean:DEF6 PTL yesterday:DEF1
The woman ate the beans yesterday.

S2: ààyí, Ɂ = ɲòb ká dàám-pà-tè-dîëm.
    no 1 = eat PTL past-?-give-yesterday
No, she ate them the day before yesterday.

<82-163> S1: nípṓwá fòbì ìpità.
          woman:DEF1 slap &:Peter
The woman hit Peter.

S2: ààyí, wà = Ɂ fòbí-wà Ɂ?
    no 1 = NEG hit-OBJ1 %
No, she didn’t hit him,

wà = wù-wà kámà.
1 = call-OBJ1 PTL:PTL
she called him.
<82-164> S1: nípōwá  fõbì  àpítà.
woman:DEF1 slap &:Peter
The woman hit Peter.

S2: ààyí, wà=ǹ diêm fõbì-wà ?.
no 1=NEG still/yet slap-OBJ1 %
No, she hasn’t hit him yet.

<82-165> S1: nípōwá  fõbì  àpítà  kámá.
woman:DEF1 slap &:Peter PTL:PTL
The woman hit Peter.

S2: ààyí, wà=ǹ diêm fõbì-wà ?,
no 1=NEG still/yet slap-OBJ1 %
No, she hasn’t hit him yet,

wà  lè  fõb-wā.
1 FUT slap-OBJ1
she will hit him.

<82-170> S1: nípōwá  dà  tùña
woman:DEF1 buy bean:DEF6
The woman bought the beans

tè  kà  bíñàjá  àlà  nìsòmmà.
BEN PTL child:13:DEF6 &:CON elder:DEF2
for the children and the elders.
No, she bought them only for the elders.

The woman cooked the beans for her child.

She cooked them for the elders, too.

The woman hit Peter.

She also pushed him.

The woman ate the beans.
S2a: ɗ = ṭɔ̀bì.
    l=eat.ASS
    She ate them.

S2b: ɗ = n  ṭɔ̀bì-yà ?.
    l=NEG  eat-ASS  %
    She didn’t eat them.

5. Kɔnni

Kɔnni is a Central Gur language (ISO 639-3 kma) spoken by a small group (2003 around 3,800 people, Lewis 2009) in a remote area in northern Ghana. Together with its sister Buli, it forms the Buli/Kɔnni subgroup within the Oti-Volta branch (Naden 1989).

A series of talks as well as the following three publications prepared within the SFB 632 (projects B1, B7, D2) discuss information-structural devices in Kɔnni and in related languages:


5.1 Tomatoes Fairy Tale in Kɔnni

Audio: Tomatoes-Konni.mp3
(to play audio file move mouse into field)

(1) hɔgù wʊŋi əŋəŋ ʊ=bállì bátàà bén-nè.
woman.1 1:one COM 1=child.5 2:three be.LOC-PTL
There is a woman and her three children.

(2) ʊ tʊŋ jà-kɔùrì dì ʊ=gáá,
1 send thing-old:DEF5 COMP 1=go.SBJV
She sent the elder to go

à gá dàà tɔmáŋtɔsí kẹ, ʊ=dígí jètù.
& go.SBJV buy tomatoes.12 come 1=cook.SBJV soup:21
and buy tomatoes and come for her to cook soup.

(3) bɔwá wá dì nàgì síé-gààŋ, à gá,
child:DEF1 PTL hit road-?different:N & go
The child took a different road, and went,

tà kẹ́ yé tɔmáŋtɔsíkẹ tà yíŋ!ŋí kẹ.
CNJ NEG see tomatoes:DEF12 CNJ return come
and he didn’t get the tomatoes and came back.

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Nasigri Salifu Mumuni (Barnabas) (28 years, Yikpabongo) provided this story (recorded in February 2005 in northern Ghana) and assisted in its transcription and translation.
After that,

1 = sent  person-INDF12  PTL  follow-PTL  l4:two:DEF1
she sent the person who is second

dí  ū=gá  då,  à  kẹ̀
COMP  l=go  buy  &  come
to go, buy them and come.

(5)  ū=dián  ó  gá  nàgì  síé-gààŋ,
1=also  l  go  hit  road-?different:N
He too, went and took a different road,

à  gá,  ū=ké  yéyè,
&  go  l=NEG  see:PFV
he went and did not get them,

tà  bí  yín!njí  kẹ̀,  ū=són!dí  chòòsì.
CNJ  ?  return  come  l=heart:N  PTL  spoil
and returned coming back, she [mother] got sad

(6)  kà  kúàŋ  cháàŋ,
12  back:N  ?pass
After that,
ú tọ̀jù bùà-bîké cháàŋ,
1 send child-small:12 ?pass
she sent the younger one,

dí ò=gá à dà tòmántòsìké kẹ̀j.
COMP 1=go & buy tomatoes:DEF12 come
that he should go and buy the tomatoes and bring them.

(7) bùàwá dí gà dáágì só̀-vítííŋjì,
child:DEF1 PTL go pass road-good:N
The child went and passed a good road,

síé-!díékè dí gánà-nà mí=!wó,
road-INDF12 PTL go:?IPFV-PTL there=DEF1
the road that goes to that place,

à gà dà tòmántòsìké kẹ̀j tígííj.
& go buy tomatoes:DEF12 come house:N
and went and bought the tomatoes and came home.

(8) ò=núŋ!wó sónjì, dí fààsì fíá!lí pám.
1=mother:DEF1 heart:N PTL ? get.cool very
His mother became very happy.
5.2 Focus Translation Extract

<82-6> gbáníŋ̤ díísi-nè tébülikè síkpèŋ̤.  
book:N lie-PTL table:DEF15 on  
There is a book on the table.

<82-10> S1: biá wííŋ̤ yí-nè  
what matter:N do-PTL  
What happened?  
S2: bà = mììri-wá buàn-yààlfíŋ̤.  
2=give.birth-PTL child-new:N  
A child was born. (lit. They gave birth to a child.)

<82-20> S1: biá wííŋ̤ yí-nè.  
what matter:N do-PTL  
What happened?  
S2: vúóŋ̤ wùŋí yúgí-nà à sùŋ̤ ñá!áŋ̤-mà.  
person:N l:one jump-PTL & get.down water:N-in  
Somebody jumped into the water.

<82-40> S1: mìnìà ŋóbí-nà túóhè.  
who eat-PTL bean:DEF6  
Who ate the beans?

---

19 The following data was recorded, transcribed and translated with Nasigri Salifu Mumuni (Barnabas) (28 years, from Yikpabongo) in February 2005 in northern Ghana.
S2: hògò wùnì ɲòbì-nà=hà. 
woman.1 l:one eat-PTL-OBJ6
A woman ate them.

S1: biá hògòwà dì dìì.
what woman:DEF1 PTL eat
What did the woman eat?

S2: ò = ɲòbì-wá tùò.
1=eat-PTL bean.6
She ate beans.

S1: biá hògòwà dì nàgì à dìì.
what woman:DEF1 PTL take & eat
What did the woman eat with?

S2: ò = nàgì-wá ììsìŋ à dìì.
1=take-PTL spoon:N & eat
She ate with a spoon.

S1: biá hògòwà dì yìì.
what woman:DEF1 PTL do
What did the woman do?

S2: ò = ɲòbì-wá tùò.
1=eat-PTL bean.6
She ate beans.
<82-74> S1: ̃ʊ̀ = yà-wá tèbùlikè kíé mìn,  
l=have- PTL table:DEF15 come PTL  
Is he bringing  
yàà ̃ʊ̀ = yà-ká  gárà mìn.  
or l=have-OBJ15 go:IPFV PTL  
or sending the table?  

S2: ̃ʊ̀ = yàá  gárà mìn.  
l=have go:IPFV PTL  
He is sending it.

<82-128> S1: ̃ʊ̀ = ɲòbì túó!hè mìn.  
l=eat bean:DEF6 PTL  
She ate the beans.  

S2: ààyí, dáá ̃ʊ̀ = ɲòbì-ná, mánìŋ, ̃ɲ = ɲòbì-ná=hà.  
no NEG l=eat-PTL 1SG 1SG=eat-PTL=OBJ6  
No, she didn’t eat them, I ate them.

<82-136> S1: hògòwá ɲòbì-nà tú-sòbflàhà.  
woman:DEF1 eat-PTL bean-black:6:DEF6  
The woman ate the black beans.  

S2: ̃ʊ̀ = ká ɲòbì tú-sòbflàhà,  
l=NEG eat bean-black:6:DEF6  
She didn’t eat the black beans,
1 = eat-PTL bean-red:6:DEF6
she ate the red ones.

S1: hògwà dígí-wó tùòhè, à yì-wá.
woman:DEF1 cook-PTL bean:DEF6 & BEN-OBJ1
The woman cooked the beans for him.

S2: ò = ká dígí à yì-wá,
1 = NEG cook & BEN-OBJ1
She didn’t cook them for him,

ò = dígí à yì-wá !tínnìŋ,
1 = cook & BEN-PTL 1PL
she cooked them for us.

S1: hògwà ñòbì-nà tùòhè dièné!wó.
woman:DEF1 eat-PTL bean:DEF6 yesterday:DEF1
The woman ate the beans yesterday.

S2: ò = ká ñòbì-!há dièné!wó,
1 = NEG eat-OBJ6 yesterday
She didn’t eat them yesterday.

diàríwà ó = ñòbì-hà.
day.before.yesterday:DEF1 1 = eat-OBJ6
the day before yesterday she ate them.
<82-163> S1: bàgwá nígí-wá píítà.
woman:DEF1 hit-PTL Peter
The woman hit Peter.

S2: ààyí, ò=ká nígí-wà,
no 1=NEG hit-OBJ1
No, she didn’t hit him,
ò=wà-wá mìŋ.
1=call-OBJ1 PTL
she called him.

<82-164> S1: bàgwá nígí píítà mìŋ.
woman:DEF1 hit Peter PTL
The woman has hit Peter.

S2: ààyí, ò=yè ká nígí-wà.
no 1=still/yet NEG hit-OBJ1
No, she hasn’t hit him yet.

<82-165> S1: bàgwá nígí píítà mìŋ.
woman:DEF1 hit Peter PTL
The woman has hit Peter.

S2: ààyí, ò=yè báá ò=nígí-!wá mìŋ.
no 1=still/yet want 1=hit.SBJV-OBJ1 PTL
No, she still intends to hit him.
S1:  hàgòwá  dà-wà  tòò
woman:DEF1  buy-PTL  bean.6
The woman bought beans

à ỳì  bèlbìsì  ánjáŋ  njìŋkòrá.
& BEN  child:13  COM  elder.6
for the children and the elders.

S2:  ààyí,  ò = dà  ỳì-wá  njìŋkòráhá  njìnìmà.
o 1=buy  BEN-PTL  elder:DEF6  only
No, she bought them only for the elders.

S1:  hàgòwá  dígí-wó  tòòhè,  à ỳì  ò = bóà.
woman:DEF1  cook-PTL  bean:DEF6  & BEN  1=child.1
The woman cooked the beans for her child.

S2:  dàá  ò = bóá!wá  njìnìmá
NEG  1=child:DEF1  only
Not only for her child

ò = dígì  tòòhè  à ỳì.
1=cook  bean:DEF6  & BEN
she cooked the beans.

ò = dígì  ỳì-wá  njìŋkòráhá  gbàŋ.
1=cook  BEN-PTL  elder:DEF6  also
She cooked them also for the elders.
The woman hit Peter.

She also pushed him.

The woman ate the beans.

Yes, she ate them.

No, she didn’t eat them.

6. Baatɔnum

The isolate Gur language Baatɔnum (ISO 639-3 bba) is spoken in northern Benin, in Nigeria and Togo by more than 500,000 people altogether (Lewis 2009).

Information structure in Baatɔnum so far has been discussed in unpublished manuscripts and talks (Schwarz, Anne, manuscript 2009; Schwarz, Anne, handout of a talk, Berlin 2010). The data base out of which the following
QUIS examples are taken has been established in cooperation with Sayane Gouroubéra (transcription and a first annotation and translation in French).

6.1 Tomatoes Fairy Tale in Baatonum

Audio: Tomatoes-Baatonum.mp3
(to play audio file move mouse into field)

(1) kùrɔ̠ góo-wà wàà kà wí-n bìbù ɔ̀tā.
woman:1 INDF:1-PTL COP COM DEM1-POSS child:2 CL:three
There was a woman with her three children.

(2) ú kǐ̀ ù timāàti kpēe sāà
1 want 1.SBJV tomato:CL soup:CL cook
She wanted to cook tomato soup,

mā ú wí-n bìi bē-n bù-kūrōo gɔ̄r-a.
CNJ 1 DEM1-POSS child:CL DEM.CL-POSS child-old:CL send-PTL
so she sent her eldest child.

(3) bìi wí ú swāà wɔ̌rì
child:CL DEM1 1 road:CL fall
The child got on the road,

mā u swāà tɔr-a.
CNJ 1 road:CL miss-PTL
but he missed the correct road.

20 Recorded with Sayane Gouroubéra (29 years, from Parakou) in Coutonou, January 2008.
(4) ye-n só,
DEM.CL-POSS in
Because of that,

ú wú-mā kà bīre gīríru.
1 return-ALL with basket:CL empty:CL
he returned with an empty basket.

(5) mà kùrɔ wī máā
CNJ woman:1 DEM1 ?again
The woman then

wī-n bii bē-n yīrūsèè gōr-a.
DEM1-POSS child:CL DEM.CL-POSS second:? send-PTL
sent her second child.

(6) wī-n tīī swàà wōri
DEM1-POSS ?self road:CL fall
He, too, got on the way,

mā ú swàà tōr-a.
CNJ 1 road:CL miss-PTL
but missed the correct road.

(7) ú wú-mā kà bīre gīríru wī-n tīī.
1 return-ALL COM basket:CL empty DEM1-POSS ?self
He also returned with an empty basket.
(8) yè kùrɔ wĩ kōò kō,
   CL woman:1 DEM1 FUT do
   What the woman was left to do,

   bii bẽ-n dàakóo wì ú tie mĩ,
   child:CL DEM.CL-POSS last:1 ?DEM1 l retain PTL
   the last child that was left,

   wĩ-a ú gɔ̀r-a.
   OBJ1-PTL l send-PTL
   him, she sent.

(9) dàakóo wĩ swàà wɔ̀ri,
   last:1 DEM1 road:CL fall
   The last one got on the road,

   mā ú swàà túb-a.
   CNJ l road:CL recognize-PTL
   and he found the correct road.

(10) ú wú-mā yẽ-n sɔ̀ kà timāati.
    l return-ALL DEM.CL-POSS in(side) COM tomato:CL
    Therefore, he returned with tomatoes.

(11) mā kùrɔ sii wĩ-n timāati kpée sá-wà.
    CNJ woman:1 ? DEM1-POSS tomato:CL soup:CL cook-PTL
    Then the woman prepared her tomato soup.
6.2 Focus Translation Extract in Baatɔnum

\(<82-6>\) tirerú gár-a yiī ŋaburu wɔll-ɔ (mī).
There is a book on the table.

\(<82-10>\) S1: mbá ń kū-a?
what PTL do-PTL
What happened?

S2: bā bii márà-wa.
2 child:CL give.birth-PTL(WA)
A child was born. (lit. They gave birth to a child.)

\(<82-20>\) S1: mbá ń kū-a?
what PTL do-PTL
What happened?

S2: góo ú ním wɔři-wà.
INDF:1 1 water:CL fall-PTL(WA)
Somebody fell into the water.

---

The data presented here was recorded on the basis of a written focus translation with Sayane Gouroubéra (29 years, from Parakou) in Coutonou, January 2008. In the course of recording, the appropriateness and felicity conditions for various further variants (including elliptic answers, morphosyntactically more or less marked sentence variants etc.) were discussed. These cannot be further considered within the frame of the present chapter, and the only variation indicated below concerns the optionality of certain sentence parts (placed in brackets), most often concerning pronominal concords that directly follow the nominal antecedent in subject function.
<82-40> S1: wā-rà, ú swīi yī dī?
who-PTL 1 bean:CL DEM.CL eat
Who ate the beans?

S2: kūrọ gōo-wà ú yì dī.
woman:1 INDF:1-PTL 1 OBJ.CL eat
A woman ate them.

<82-48> S1: mbā kūrọ wī ú dī?
what woman:1 DEM1 1 eat
What did the woman eat?

S2: swīi-yā ú dī.
bean:CL-PTL 1 eat
She ate beans.

<82-66> S1: mbā kūrọ wī ú kà dī?
what woman:1 DEM1 1 COM eat
With what did the woman eat?

S2: sībī-wa ú kà dī.
spoon:CL -PTL 1 COM eat
She ate with a spoon.

<82-72> S1: mbā kūrọ wī ú kū-a?
what woman:1 DEM1 1 do-PTL
What did the woman do?
S2: ú swíì dī-wà.
1 bean:CL eat-PTL
She ate beans.

<82-74> S1: ú kà tābùru gē wēē-wà
1 COM table:CL CL come-PTL
Has he brought

ṅgē ú gē móři-sía-mī-wà?
? 1 OBJ.CL send-CAUS-PROG-PTL
or is he sending the table?

S2: ú gè móři-sía-mī-wà.
1 OBJ.CL send-CAUS-PROG-PTL
He is sending it.

<82-128> S1: ú swíi yī dī.
1 bean:CL DEM.CL eat
She ate the beans.

S2: àāwó, nē-(n)a ná yī dī.
no 1SG-PTL 1SG OBJ.CL eat
No, she didn’t eat them, I ate them.

<82-136> S1: kūrọ wī ú swíi wọki yī dī.
woman:1 DEM1 1 bean:CL black:CL DEM.CL eat
The woman ate the black beans.
She didn’t eat the black beans,

swëɛ y-i-a.

red:CL DEM.CL-PTL

(she ate) the red ones.

The woman cooked the beans

wi-n sɔ̃.

DEM1-POSS in(side)

for him.

She didn’t cook them for him,

bɛɛɛ-n sɔ̃-na.

1PL-POSS in(side)-PTL

but for us.

The woman ate (the) beans yesterday.
The day before yesterday she ate them.

The woman hit Peter.

She called him.

No, she hasn’t hit him yet.

No, not yet, she will hit him.
<82-170> S1: kùrọ wí (ú) swíi yií dwá-wà
woman:1 DEM l bean:CL DEM.CL buy-PTL(WA)
The woman bought the beans

bibü kà dúró tàkóñu-n só. child:2 COM man:1 old:10-POSS in(side)
for the children and the elders.

S2: aáwó, ú yi dwá-wà
no 1 OBJ.CL buy-PTL
No, she bought them

bibü tòná-n só. child:2 only-POSS in(side)
only for the children.

<82-179> S1: kùrọ wí (ú) mðrí swë
woman:1 DEM l rice:CL put.on.fire
The woman cooked the beans

wí-n bií-n só. DEM1-POSS child:CL-POSS in(side)
for her child.

S2: u (màa kpàm máà) yi swë
1 “also” OBJ.CL put.on.fire
She cooked them
dúrọ́ tòkọ̀nú-n tìi-n sọ́.
man:1 old:10-POSS ?self-POSS in(side)
for the elders, too.

<82-183> S1: kúrọ́ wíi ú Pìě́e sọ̀.
woman:1 DEM1 1 Pierre hit
The woman hit Peter.

S2: u (màà kpàm màà) wí́ bɔ́rì-ya (máà).
1 “also” OBJ1 push-PTL ?again
She also pushed him.

<82-188> S1: kúrọ́ wíi ú swíi yí di-wa?
woman:1 DEM1 1 bean:CL DEM.CL eat-PTL(WA)
Did the woman eat the beans?

<82-189> S2a: oo, ú yí dì-wa.
yes 1 CL eat-PTL(WA)
Yes, she ate them.

S2b: àáwó ū n yí dí-ì.
no 1 NEG OBJ.CL eat-PTL
No, she didn’t eat them.

Glossing abbreviations
1, 2, … number of noun class
1SG, 1PL first person
2SG, 2PL second person
3SG, 3PL third person
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>ALL</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASS</td>
<td>assertive</td>
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<td>BEN</td>
<td>benefactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAUS</td>
<td>causative</td>
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<tr>
<td>CL</td>
<td>noun class</td>
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<td>CNJ</td>
<td>clausal conjunction</td>
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<td>COM</td>
<td>comitative</td>
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<td>complementizer</td>
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<td>intonational boundary (right edge)</td>
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<td>downstepped High tone</td>
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<td>low, mid, high tone</td>
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<td>superhigh tone</td>
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<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>gloss (to which ? is preposed) needs further verification</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**References**


Schwarz, Anne. 2009. Focus Markers that Link Topic and Comment. Handout of a paper held at the Workshop on “Focus Marking Strategies and Focus Interpretation”, DGfS Conference 2009, Osnabrück, AG9, Ms (http://www.ilg.uni-stuttgart.de/focus/).


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This is the second part of the presentation of data elicited by means of QUIS within the project on information structure in Gur and Kwa languages. Whereas the first part (Anne Schwarz) introduces the project and the rationals behind the development of the focus translation task, this part provides some comparative remarks gained from the data presented in both parts.

1 Presentation and comparison of the data

This presentation follows the principles already outlined in the first part of the contribution on information structure in Gur and Kwa (Anne Schwarz). Nevertheless, it uses some abbreviations not yet mentioned there:

- ‘ (before a vowel) indicates downstep
- 1,2 (following verb forms) indicate auxiliary sets in Anii
- AG agentive
- BG background-indicating verb suffix
- CL noun class marker
- CNJ (clausal) conjunction
- CQ constituent question
- DIR direction
- DSJ disjoint verb suffix
- EMPH emphatic
- FM focus marker
- GEN genitive
- ID identificational marker
- INDEF indefinite
- LOGO logophoric pronoun
- PN proper name
- PQ polar question
- REF discourse-referential
- REL relative
In the following, the data for the tomato story, the questions concerning that story and the selected sentences of the focus translation task are presented from four languages: Yom, Aja, Anii and Foodo. All four languages are spoken in Benin, but they belong to two different language families: Gur (Yom) and Kwa (Aja, Anii, Foodo). Within Kwa, the languages belong to different branches and cannot be regarded as closely related. From a typological point of view, Aja, an isolating language with agglutinative features, stands against the other three languages, which are agglutinative. Furthermore, these three languages have a productive noun class system with a differing number of noun classes each. All four languages discussed are tone languages, in which intonation is not a primary means for focus realization. The word order is SVO.

When comparing the different focus conditions and their realization across the four languages, the first observation to be made is that in every language, the canonical sentence can be used to express non-subject focus and predicate-centered focus types. Furthermore, every language has at least one focus marker at its disposal. In Foodo, the form of the focus marker differs according to the grammatical role the focused element has in the sentence, and in Anii, the focus marker agrees with the noun class of the focused non-subject; the subject itself cannot be marked by it. Both Yom and Aja have only one focus marker.

* I would like to express my gratitude to all people in Benin who helped me during my research work, especially my language consultants as well as the numerous people offering me assistance.

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1 The tone marking follows the following conventions throughout all languages: Every tone is marked (unless otherwise stated) as either high (´), low (´), mid (‾), falling (̂) or rising (̌).
marker; however, whereas in Aja the focus marker \( yi \) is exclusively used in ex situ focus constructions, in Yom the focus marker \( ra \) can be found in situ and ex situ.

Ex situ focus constructions in Aja and Foodo are - to the best of our knowledge - not accompanied by any changes in verb morphology. In Anii, on the other hand, two sets of auxiliaries exist. In ex situ constructions in the imperfective and potential, the second set is used instead of the first, which is found in affirmative main clauses. In the perfective, the second set only indicates focus on the subject; in all other cases, the unmarked form is used. In ex situ constructions in Yom, the verb gets a special suffix by which it is characterized as background information. In canonical sentences, the verbal system of Yom allows for another differentiation: similar to some Bantu languages, Yom has conjoint and disjoint forms, the conjoint form being used when the postverbal object is in focus, and the disjoint form, when nothing follows the verb and the verb itself is in focus.

The narrative in all four languages starts with a canonical sentence. None of the languages uses a special strategy to introduce major participants. Yom differs from the other languages in having a special verb form to indicate sequential events. The most important feature of the tomato story in all four languages is the use of pronouns: in Yom, Aja and Anii sequences of events, the ‘normal’ anaphoric pronoun is used, whereas topic shift is indicated by special pronouns, glossed here as emphatic. Foodo presents another way of using pronouns, as it has, in addition to emphatic pronouns, two kinds of anaphoric ones: the simple one refers to the main character of the story, the mother, whereas the other (glossed as REF) refers to the children of the mother.
2 The data

2.1 Yom

Yom (ISO 639-3: pil) is a Gur language of the Oti-Volta branch. Together with its closest relative, it constitutes the Yom-Nawdm group. It is spoken in Northern Benin by about 74,000 people (Lewis 2009). The data presented here was recorded in March 2005 in Djougou with two native speakers of Yom: Issifou Korogo and Amos Abel.

More detailed information on information structure in Yom can be obtained in the following articles:


Fiedler, Ines. Submitted. Conjoint and disjoint verbs in Yom?

2.1.1 Tomato Story in Yom

(1) ɔɣ-a nyɛɛ-ra a bəmən bə-sə sə-ta.
    woman INDEF.CL-FM 3SG be_with.PFV child-CL-CL-three
    ‘A woman had three children.’

(2) Lɛɛ gɔr nyɛ-nə a nɔ ka a təm sə sʊya
    CNJ day INDEF-CL 3SG want CL 3SG send CL in
    ka nyɛ-ŋa ka daana o timaat-sə ya-ku.
    CL INDEF-CL-CNJ buy.VENT. SEQ 3SG tomato-CL market-CL

In most of the Yom example sentences, the tones remain unmarked as their actual value is not clear at the moment.
‘Then one day, she wanted to send one of them to buy tomatoes from the market.’

(3)  Lɛɛ a zanɛ  pɛɛ-ɣu  ka tira  fanɛ-ɣa.  
CNJ 3SG take.PFV basket-CL  CNJ carry.SEQ first-CL  
‘So she took a basket and gave it to the first one.’

(4)  Ka  cɛɛi  nɛn  nyɛnɛn  nɛɛ,  sʊn-ii  ka  yesii.  
CNJ arrive.SEQ at  INDEF-CL  SUB  road-CL  CNJ split.SEQ  
‘When he got to some point, there was a fork in the road.’

(5)  ka  wa  mɛkɛ  la  suya  de-ʊŋ  ka  na  zanɛ  nɛɛ.  
CL  NEG  know.PFV  CL.N  in  REL-CL  CL  FUT  take  SUB  
‘He didn’t know which way to take.’

(6)  Lɛɛ  ka  bɔtɛn  bayɛ-kpara-sɛ  ka  man  nɛ.  
CNJ CL  return. PFV  hand-dry-CL  CNJ  ?find. SEQ mother  
‘So he came back to his mother empty-handed.’

(7)  Lɛɛ  nɛɛ  cɛɛr  pɛɛ-ɣu  ka  tɛm-ii  lii-ra-ŋa.  
CNJ mother receive.PFV basket-CL  CNJ send-away. SEQ two-AG-CL  
‘Then the mother gave the basket to the second one and sent him off.’

(8)  Keka  gaa-ɣa  zanɛ  sʊn-ʊŋ.  
CL.EMPH  self-CL  take.PFV  road-CL  
‘He also went on his way.’

(9)  Ka  cɛɛa  de-n  cɑ-ɛn  sʊn-ii  yɛsɛ  lee  nɛɛ,  
when  walk.PFV  REL-CL  DEM-CL  road-CL  split  like  SUB  
ka  wa  mɛkɛ  la  yaasi.  
CL  NEG  know.PFV  CL.N.POSS  manner  
‘When he arrived where the roads split, he was confused.’
‘So he turned around half-way, went back and found his mother.’

‘He hadn’t found tomatoes.’

‘This time the mother took the basket and gave it to the next child, this time even the smallest child.’

‘And this one went on his way.’

‘When he got to the fork in the road, ...’

‘and he knew this: the road on the left leads to the market.’
(16) Lee ka zanii ṇunun c-ŋ,  
CNJ CL take-away.PFV CL.EMPH DEF-CL  
ka dera ka maa de-n ba berma timaati-sə nəə.  
CNJ go. SEQ CNJ ?find REL-CL CL ?sell.IPFV tomato-CL SUB  
‘So he took that one and he went to where tomatoes were sold.’

(17) ka dara timaati-sə cə-sə pər-ɣʊ ba,  
CNJ buy.SEQ tomato-CL DEM-CL basket-CL ?  
ka kənən saa-ɣa.  
CNJ go_home.SEQ house-CL  
‘And he bought a whole basket full of tomatoes and went home with them.’

(18) Ka cən nəə ka man ka nə.  
when walk.PFV SUB CL ?find CL mother  
‘When he arrived, he met his mother.’

(19) Ba le-ɣʊ ka baayii sərə gaagaa.  
CL throat-CL CNJ become_wet much self.REDUP  
‘And they were very happy.’

2.1.2 Tomato Story – Questions and Answers

(1Q) Wé-rá nə́ cə-ə tàlló-ŋ təmər tı ...  
who-FM mother DEF-CL begin.PFV-with send.PFV to ....  
à dááná timáálti-sə  
3SG buy.IPFV tomato-CL  
‘Who is asked by his mother to go and buy tomatoes first?’

(1A) Á bə-fənəɣə-rà à tàlló-ŋ təmər.  
3SG.POSS child-first-FM 3SG begin.PFV-with send.PFV  
‘It’s her first child that she sent first.’
(2Q) Bó-ń té-lá né có-è tómèr
what-with reason-FM mother DEF-CL send.PFV
kà nyò-ŋà tó-ŋà kpééné káyáá:
CL.POSS INDEF-CL other-CL again that:
kà démá kà dááná tìmáá-tí-sò?
CL go.SBJV CL buy.PFV tomato-CL
‘Why does the mother ask another one to go and buy tomatoes?’

(2A) Bè-fànò-ŋà dé ŋè, kà wà màká lá yááśi.
child-first-CL go.PFV SUB CL NEG know.PFV CL.N.POSS manner
Dé-ń sün-fi yèśò nèè, kà wà màká lá sóyá
REL-CL road-CL divide.PFV SUB, CL NEG know.IPFV CL.N.POSS in
dè-ńjà kà ná zánò kà-ń démá kà várná
REL-CL CL FUT take.IPFV CNJ-with go.IPFV CL find.IPFV
tìmáá-tí-sò nèè, lèè kà bètèn yérém.
tomato-CL SUB CNJ CL return.PFV empty
‘When the first child went, he was confused. Where the roads split, he didn’t know which one to take to go and buy tomatoes. So he returned empty-handed.’

(3Q) Bó-rá bè-liírá-ŋà kéká nɔ́yə̀-ná?...
what-FM child-second-CL CL.EMPH bring.PFV-TP ... bring.PFV house
‘What did the second child bring home?’

(3A) Bè-liírá-ŋà gáá-yá wà nɔ́yə̀ là nyá-nà.
child-second-CL also-CL NEG bring.PFV CL.N.POSS INDEF-CL
‘The second child didn’t bring anything either.’

(4Q) Bè-dè-ŋà-rá kà nɔ́yə̀ tímáá-tí-sò sááyá?
child-REL-CL-FM CL bring.PFV tomato-CL house
‘Which of the children brought home tomatoes?’
(4A) Táárá-ŋá-rà ká nöyáñ sà.  
third-CL-FM CL bring.PFV CL  
‘It’s the third one who brought them home.’

(5Q) Fàájí có-ò nà lò nèè, nè àn dó ... éée...  
speech DEF-CL FUT finish.IPFV SUB, mother with ? ... eeh ...  
bó-wítì-ŋá có-ŋá bá lé-ì bàvá-rà-á  
child-small-CL DEF-CL 3PL.POSS throat-CL become_wet.PFV-TP-PQ  
kèè i wà bààyi?  
or CL NEG become_wet.PFV  
‘At the end of the story, were the mother and her smallest child happy or sad?’

(5A) ɛɛn, i bayəra.  
hmmm, CL become_wet.PFV.TP  
‘Humm! They were happy.’

2.1.3 Focus Translation extract in Yom

<82-6> Takọlla-ŋu (nyọ-ŋu) be taabər-ŋu paaya.  
book-CL INDEF-CL be_LOC table-CL on  
‘There is a book on the table.’

<82-10> S1: dee-ra la mənə-ra?  
how-FM DEM do.PFV-BG  
‘What happened?’

S2a: ba mɛl-ɛ bɛyə-ra.  
3PL give_birth.PFV child-FM  
‘A child has been born.’
S2b: beγa-ra ba mellɔ-ra.
  child-FM 3PL give_birth.PFV-BG
  ‘A child has been born.’

<82-20> S1: dee-ra la mənə-ra?
  how-FM DEM do.PFV-BG
  ‘What happened?’

S2: a nyɛɛ-ra a larii nyam suya.
  3SG INDEF-FM 3SG plunge.PFV water in
  ‘Somebody jumped into water.’

<82-40> S1: we-ra a jir tur-a?
  who-FM 3SG eat.PFV bean-CL
  ‘Who ate the beans?’

S2: pɔγ-a-ra a jir a.
  woman-CL-FM 3SG eat.PFV CL
  ‘A woman ate them.’

<82-48> S1: bə-ra pɔγ-a jil-la?
  what-FM woman-CL eat.PFV-BG
  ‘What did the woman eat?’

  bean-CL-FM 3SG eat.PFV-BG  3SG eat.PFV bean-CL
  ‘She ate beans.’

<82-66> S1: bə-ra pɔγ-a jir ənnə?
  what-FM woman-CL eat.PFV with-BG
  ‘With what did the woman eat?’

S2: pir-ya-ra a jir ən-na.
  spoon-CL-FM 3SG eat.PFV with-BG
  ‘The woman ate with a spoon.’
S1: bó-rá p'ý-á mènè-rá?
what-FM woman-CL do.PFV-BG
‘What did the woman do?’

S2a: à jír túr-à. S2b: à jír túr-à-là.
3SG eat.PFV bean-CL 3SG eat.PFVbean-CL-FM
‘She ate beans.’

S1: à jír túr-à.
3SG eat.PFV bean-CL
‘She ate the beans.’

S2: áawò, a-o-ra ma jír a.
no, 1SG-PRT-FM 1SG eat.PFV CL
‘No, I ate them.’

S1: pɔɣ-a jír tur-sɔwər-a.
woman-CL eat.PFV bean-black-CL
‘The woman ate the black beans.’

S2: aawò, la kpa sɔwəra,
mɔr-a-la.
no CL.N NEG be_black.PFV-BG red-CL-FM
‘No, they were not black, the red ones.’

S1: pɔɣ-a jír tur-a dìne.
woman-CL eat.PFV bean-CL yesterday
‘The woman ate the beans yesterday.’

S2a: aawò, la kpa dìne,
dìne-tol-la.
no CL.N NEG yesterday yesterday-other-FM
‘No, it was not yesterday, the day before yesterday.’
S2b: aawò, la kpa din-ra a jil-la,
no CL.N NEG yesterday-FM 3SG eat.PFV-BG
din-tol-la.
yesterday-other-FM
‘No, it was not yesterday that she ate, the day before yesterday.’

<82-188> S1: ɔɣ-a jír túr-à.
woman-CL eat.PFV bean-CL
‘The woman ate the beans.’

S2a: mm, a jir a. S2b: mm, a jir-wa.
yes, 3SG eat.PFVCL yes, 3SG eat.PFV-DSJ

S2c: mm, a jir a-ra. S2d: mm, a jir-wa-ra.
yes, 3SG eat.PFVCL-FM yes, 3SG eat.PFV-DSJ-FM
‘Yes, she did eat (them).’

<82-189> S2: aawò, a wa jir (a).
no, 3SG NEG eat.PFV (CL)
‘No, she didn’t eat (them).’

<82-74> S1: a ɔγɔna taab-ŋu, kee a jàta ɔn ku.
3SG bring.IPFV table-CL or 3SG leave.IPFV with CL
‘Is he bringing or sending the table?’

S2a: a ɔγɔna ku. S2b: a ɔγɔna-wa.
3SG bring.IPFV CL 3SG bring.IPFV-DSJ
‘He is bringing (it).’

<82-163> S1: ɔɣ-a gbəri Woru.
woman-CL hit.PFV PN
‘The woman hit Woru.’
S2a: áaw'ó, à yír ú-rà.
no 3SG call.PFV CL-FM
‘No, she called him.’

S2b: áaw'ó, yír-áŋá-rá à yír û.
no call-INF-FM 3SG call.PFV CL
‘No, she called him.’

< 82-165 > S1: pɔɣ-a gbəři Woru.
woman-CL hit.PFV PN
‘The woman hit Woru.’

S2: aawò, a na gbər ū (ra).
no 3SG FUT hit.IPFV CL (FM)
‘No, she will hit him.’

< 82-164 > S1: pɔɣ-a gbəři Woru.
woman-CL hit.PFV PN
‘The woman hit Woru.’

S2: aawò, a kan gbər ū.
no 3SG not_yet hit.IPFV CL
‘No, she did not yet hit him.’

< 82-183 > S1: pɔɣ-a gbəři Woru.
woman-CL hit.PFV PN
‘The woman hit Woru.’

S2: a tə tərri ū.
3SG also push.PFV CL
‘She also pushed him.’

< 82-140 > S1: pɔɣ-a tɔyər ū tur-a.
woman-CL cook.PFV CL bean-CL
‘The woman cooked the beans for him.’
S2a: aawò, la kpa u, ama tinii-u-ra.
  no CL.N NEG CL but 1PL.EMPH-PRT-FM
  ‘No, it was not for him, but for us.’

S2b: aawò, la kpa u-ra a tɔyɔlla,
  no CL.N NEG CL-FM 3SG cook.PFV-BG
  ama tinii-u-ra.
  but 1PL.EMPH-PRT-FM
  ‘No, it was not for him that she cooked, but for us.’

<82-170> S1: pɔɣ-a dar bɔ-sə ən kpɛ-ma tur-a.
  woman-CL buy.PFV child-CL with elder-CL bean-CL
  ‘The woman bought the beans for the children and the elders.’

S2: aawò, kpɛ-ma se-ma-ra (a dalla).
  no elder-CL only-CL-FM (3SG buy.PFV-DSJ)
  ‘No, only for the elders (she bought).’

<82-179> S1: pɔɣ-a tɔyɔr a bɔ-ya tur-a.
  woman-CL cook.PFV CL child-CL bean-CL
  ‘The woman cooked the beans for her child.’

S2: a tɔ tɔyɔr do-kpɛm-ya (la tora).
  3SG also cook.PFV person-old-CL (CL.N ?also)
  ‘She cooked for the elders, too.’

2.2 Aja

Aja (ISO 639-3: ajg) is a major Gbe language of the Kwa phylum. Its areal distribution stretches over southern parts of Benin and Togo, where it is spoken by around 500,000 speakers. The data represents the Hwe dialect of Aja (Benin)
and was gathered during several field trips from 2005 to 2008 in Lalo (Mono) with the help of our main informant, Roger Dhossou.

The information structure of Aja was at the center of several publications and conference presentations:


2.2.1 Tomato Story in Aja

(1) nyɔ̀nù dèká wà èví àmè-tön dẹ́.
woman INDEF do child person-three have
‘There is a woman who has three children.’

(2) yì gbè dèká ɔ́, è vá ...
CNJ day INDEF TP 3SG come ...
só gòdù q’àlɔmè nó xòxùtò mó
take bag put.hand.in for old.AG that
yì lé yì àfì-mè á yì xwłe yòvògbọ́
3SG SBJV go market-in FUT go buy tomato
gbè nó yòwè á xò ńtɔ́nú.
come.3SG for 3PL.LOGO FUT hit sauce
‘One day, she gave the eldest a bag to go to the market and buy tomatoes to make a sauce with.’

(3) cì èvíè ló dèdò ɔ́,
when child.3SG.POSS DEF continue TP
é só mó bú dé vá yì àfì-5-mè
3SG take way other NEG.3SG come go market-DEF-in
è yì kéké gbò
gbè 3SG until return
yì mó yé dé kpó yòvògbọ́ ọ́.
CNJ say 3SG.LOGO NEG see tomato NEG
‘(When her son was) on his way, he took the wrong path and did not get to the market. So he returned and said that he had not found tomatoes.’
(4) é vá so nó cí kplè-è dò tò
3SG come take for REL follow-3SG follow SUFF
yè gbé yì kékéké é gbɔ.
3SG also go until 3SG return
‘She (the mother) gave it (the bag) to the next one, and he, too, left and returned.’

(5) é mó yè dé kpɔ yòvɔgbô ò
3SG say 3SG.LOGO NEG see tomato NEG
‘And he said that he hadn’t seen any tomatoes.’

(6) é vá só ná hwèhwètô yè vá yì ..
3SG come take give small.AG 3SG come go ...
‘So she gave it to the youngest, he went ...’

(7) é vá tò èmò nyúí tò ló
3SG come pass way good ? DEF
yì vá yì kpɔ yòvɔgbô ló
CNJ come go see tomato DEF
yì xwlè yì só hèn gbè .. yè ..
CNJ buy CNJ take carry come.3SG ... 3SG
‘He takes the right way and finds tomatoes, buys them and takes them home. He ...’

(8) nyɔnú ló kóqó èví hwèhwètô ló wó lé jììjì mè.
woman DEF with child small.AG DEF 3PL be joy in
‘The woman and the youngest child are happy.’
2.2.2 Tomato Story – Questions and Answers

(1Q) mí èvìnò ló dqó mó yì lé yì àfì-mè
who child.mother DEF order that 3SG SBJV go market-in
á yì xwlè yòvògbó gbè ọ?
FUT.3SG go buy tomato come.3SG CQ
‘Who does the mother tell to go to the market and buy tomatoes?’

(1A) èví xòxútó éyí é dà.
child old.AG ?FM 3SG order
‘She tells the oldest one.’

(2Qa) nyitàdqó òwó nò ló dqó dèví bù mó yì lé
why 3PL.POSS mother DEF order child other that 3SG SBJV
yì àfì-mè á yì xwlè yòvògbó gbè ọ?
go market-in fut go buy tomato come. 3SG CQ
‘Why did their mother tell another child to go to the market and buy tomatoes?’

(2Qb) nyitàdqó òwó nò ló gbè dqó dèví bù dàdqá
why 3PL.POSS mother DEF also put child other towards
àfì-mè ọ?
market-in CQ
‘Why did their mother send another child to the market?’

(2A) cì xòxútó ló dé kpó (yí) xwlè gbè ē yì tádqó.
REL old.AG DEF NEG see (CNJ) buy come.3SG 3SG FM head.put
‘Because the oldest didn’t find anything to buy and bring back.’

(3Q) nyí èví àmèvè tó ló hèn gbè vá
what child person.two AG DEF carry come.3SG come
àxwè-mè ọ?
house-in CQ
‘What did the second child bring home?’

(3A) óó, é hên ŋdé gbé gò.  
no 3SG carry thing.INDEF come.3SG NEG  
‘No, he didn’t bring back anything.’

(4Q) dèvī cí yí hên yòvògbó gbé vá àxwé-mé ṣì?  
child REL FM carry tomato come.3SG come house-in CQ  
‘Which is the child that brought tomatoes home?’

(4A) dèvī hwèhwètò ló yó.  
child small.AG DEF ID  
‘That’s the smallest child.’

(5Q) lè vòvònú nó ènyí ló ṣé,  
LOC finish.mouth for problem DEF TP  
dèvī hwèhwè ló kǒqó ènò ló ṣé,  
child small DEF with mother DEF TP  
wò lé jìjò kpò kó à?  
3PL PROG joy see PROG PQ  
‘At the end of the story, are the youngest child and the mother happy?’

(5A) ēën, wò lè jìjò kpò kò.  
yes 3PL PROG joy see PROG  
‘Yes, they are happy.’

2.2.3 Focus Translation extract in Aja

<82-6> wèmá dèká lè kplòn jí.  
book INDEF be.LOC table on  
‘There is a book on the table.’
S1: nyì yí jò ì?
what FM arrive CQ
‘What happened?’

S2: wó jì vī ġèká.
3PL give_birth child INDEF
‘A child has been born.’

S1: nyì yí jò ì?
what FM arrive CQ
‘What happened?’

S2: mè ġèká dó tó-mè.
person INDEF be_DIR river-in
‘Somebody jumped into water.’

S1: mí yì dù āyú ì?
who FM eat bean CQ
‘Who ate the beans?’

S2: nyńù ġèká yí dū-ì.
woman INDEF FM eat-3SG
‘A woman ate them.’

S1: nyì yí nyńù ló dù ì?
what FM woman DEF eat CQ
‘What did the woman eat?’

S2: āyú yí é dù.
bean FM 3SG eat
‘She ate beans.’

S1: nyì yí nyńù ló só dù nū ì?
what FM woman DEF take eat thing CQ
‘With what did the woman eat?’
S2: nyónù ló só gàcí dù nú.
woman DEF take spoon eat thing
‘The woman ate with a spoon.’

<82-72>  S1: nyì yí nyónù ló wá ɔ̀?
what FM woman DEF do CQ
‘What did the woman do?’

S2: é dù ayú.
3SG eat bean
‘She ate beans.’

<82-128> S1: é dù ayú ló-wó.
3SG eat bean DEF-P
‘She ate the beans.’

S2: ényè yí dù ayú ló-wó.
1SG.EMPH FM eat bean DEF-PL
‘I ate them.’

<82-136> S1: nyónù ló dù ayú yù wó.
woman DEF eat bean black PL
‘The woman ate black beans.’

S2: ìyú yù wó é dù gò, éjúìn yá.
bean black PL 3SG eat NEG red ID
‘She did not eat the black beans, it were the red ones.’

<82-147> S1: nyónù ló dù ayú èsì.
woman DEF eat bean yesterday
‘The woman ate the beans yesterday.’

S2: nyísì yí é dù ayú.
before.yesterday FM 3SG eat bean
‘She ate the beans the day before yesterday.’
S1: nyónù ló qù ìyú wó.
woman DEF eat bean PL
‘The woman ate the beans.’

S2: èèn, é qù wó lá.
yes 3SG eat PL AFF
‘Yes, she did eat them.’

S2: óò, é qù ìyú lá-o wó.
nó 3SG eat bean DEF-PL NEG
‘No, she didn’t eat the beans.’

S1: á só ẹkplèn ló vé à
3SG.FUT take table DEF come.3SG PQ
'àbí á sóè dádá³ ì?
or 3SG take.3SG towards CQ
‘Will he bring or send the table?’

S2: á só-è dádá.
3SG take-3SG towards
‘He will send (it).’

S2: óò, é xó-ì gò, yó-è yí é yó-è.
nó 3SG hit-3SG NEG call-3SG FM 3SG call-3SG
‘No, she called him.’

S1: nyónù ló xò Kòfí.
woman DEF hit PN
‘The woman hit Kofí.’

³ dádá is a verb meaning ‘motion in direction to’.
S2a: óò, á xó-ì yó.
   no 3SG hit-3SG ID
   ‘No, she will hit him.’

S2b: óò, xó-ì á xó-ì.
   no hit-3SG 3SG.FUT hit-3SG
   ‘No, she will hit him.’

<82-164>S1: nyónù ló xò Kòfí.
   woman DEF hit PN
   ‘The woman hit Kofi.’

S2: óò, é xò Kòfí hódù gò.
   no 3SG hit PN not_yet NEG
   ‘No, she did not yet hit him.’

<82-183>S1: nyónù ló xò Kòfí.
   woman DEF hit PN
   ‘The woman hit Kofi.’

S2: é gbè cú-ì.cú-ì ádá hěnnè.
   3SG also push-3SG.REDUP towards also
   ‘She also pushed him.’

<82-140>S1: nyónù ló dà àyú nì.
   woman DEF cook bean for.3SG
   ‘The woman cooked the beans for him.’

S2: mìwó yí é dà n5.
   1PL.EMPH FM 3SG cook for
   ‘She cooked for us.’
The woman bought the beans for the children and the elders.

No, only for the elders she bought.

The woman cooked the beans for her child.

She cooked for the elders, too.

2.3 Anii

Anii (ISO 639-3: blo) is a Kwa language. Together with Adele, it forms a subgroup of the so-called Ghana-Togo-Mountain languages. Whereas all other Ghana-Togo-Mountain languages are spoken on both sides of the Ghana-Togo border (in the South), Anii is the only language spoken in Northern Benin (and partly Togo) and is therefore geographically separated from its closest relatives. The number of speakers is estimated to be around 45,000 in total. The data presented here was recorded during one field trip in Bassila in January 2008 with the help of four young students.

The results of this research were presented at two conferences and found their final form in the following publication:

2.3.1 Tomato Story in Anii

(1) gùná ḉiŋ ná bà-púrú bà-rúọ bà ṣáká à-fál.
mother INDEF CNJ 3PL.POSS-child CL-tree 3PL be_LOC CL-home
‘A woman and her three children are at home.’

(2) gùná shù ti à léé tômáti kán ì-łamá.
mother want IPFV.14 3SG do tomato GEN CL-sauce
‘The mother wants to make tomato sauce.’

(3) ṅkím ná á tím ù-púrú ù-ŋònló ṣù-yá.
it.is.there FM3SG send 3SG.POSS-child CL-big CL-market
à cí tì shè tômáti.
3SG go IPFV.1 buy tomato
‘That’s when she sent her first son to the market to buy tomatoes.’

(4) ù-púrú ñònló à kùm ù-nàté ná cí.
3SG.POSS-child big 3SG follow CL-road CNJ go
à tì kpá ò-nàncìkùrà mà ná á lí.
3SG IPFV.1 arrive CL-intersection TP CNJ 3SG lose_one’s_way
‘As he was going, he lost his way at an intersection.’

(5) K’à kòọ yọ ñ-đéé à náá kùn.
NEG.3SG no_longer know CL-REL 3SG FUT.2 follow
à kpá ṣù-yá ní má ná ná á kòọ pì fál.
3SG arrive CL-market in TP NEG CNJ 3SG return come home

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4 In imperfective aspect and potential mood, there exist two sets of auxiliaries, one used in ‘neutral’ contexts (marked as set 1), the other one in focussed, negated and dependent environments (set 2). The perfective aspect shows another distribution where the marked form (ka, vs. unmarked .GetObject) only occurs in thetic and subject focus contexts.

5 The focus marker in Anii agrees with the noun it identifies. Focus marker na belongs to nouns of class 1 (human, singular), but seems to gain wider use as general focus marker, thus neglecting the agreement patterns.
‘He didn’t know which way he had to follow to go to the market and he returned home.’

(6) ká..ná á k35 pì à-fál k’à ējí timáti à shí ná.  
   ?.. CNJ 3SG again comeCL-home NEG.3SG find tomato 3SG buy NEG  
   ‘And he came home without having found tomatoes to buy.’

(7) ná gûná à k35 tím ká nyió táájá.  
   CNJ mother 3SG again send ?GEN two ?follow  
   nú nì miáo à k35 t35 ū-nícá.  
   CNJ 3SG.EMPH also 3SG again follow CL-road  
   ‘And the mother sent the second, and he also went on his way.’

(8) à tí kpá ò-nâncikúrā ṭé n55 âtújí mà, ...  
   3SG IPFV.1 arrive CL-intersection DEM same also TP  
   ‘He also came to the same intersection, ...’

(9) kás.. k’ā ējí ù-nícá ṭé-đéé ânù cì ná nì gù-yá nì  
   ?... NEG.3SG see CL-road CL-REL CL guide with 3SG CL-market in  
   à tí shì timáti mà ná.  
   3SG IPFV.1 buy tomato TP NEG  
   ‘he did not find the way that would have taken him to the market to buy tomatoes.’

(10) ná á pì fál k’à shí timáti ná  
   CNJ 3SG come home NEG.3SG buy tomato NEG  
   ‘And he returned to the house not having bought tomatoes.’

(11) à kpá fálà mà ná gûná à bọŋọ  
   3SG arrive home TP CNJ mother 3SG finish  
   à tím bù-bọŋọ-pí.  
   3SG send 3SG.POSS-finish-child  
   ‘When he came home, the mother finally sent the last child.’
(12) ná ùnì á kôm ù-nàcá.
   ‘And he went on his way.’

(13) á kôm ù-nàcá nà cî mà ní .. n .. n’únì
   á tì sèrâ à cî à tî kpá ñù-yá nî.
   ‘Following the road, he was able to get to the market.’

(14) à ñî timàtì à shí à pí ná fál.
   ‘He found tomatoes, bought them, and took them home.’

(15) n’ì sâj ná gù-nà, ná gùná à sèrâ
   CNJ.CL.N sweet with CL-mother, CNJ CL-mother 3SG be_able
   make tomato GEN sauce
   ‘And the mother was happy, she could finally prepare the tomato sauce.’

2.3.2 Tomato Story – Questions and Answers

(1Q) àñà ná gùná á tîm gùyá nî à tî shî timàtì?
    who FM mother 3SG send market in 3SG IPFV.1 buy tomato
    ‘Who did the mother send to the market to buy tomatoes?’

(1A) gùná tîm ù-púrú ù-ŋônó gù-yá nî à cî
    mother send 3SG.POSS-child CL-big CL-market in 3SG go
    tî shî timàtì.
    IPFV.1 buy tomato
‘The mother sent her biggest child to the market to buy tomatoes.’

(2Qa) màákò léé kà gùná á tím ...
what make PFV.SF mother 3SG send ...
ù-pí à-nyiù táájá à tí shí timáti?
CL-child CL-two follow 3SG IPFV.1 buy tomato
‘Why does the mother ask another one to go and buy tomatoes?’

(2Aa) ù-púrú njónô à ci gù-yá náá k’á
3SG.POSS-child big 3SG go CL-market CNJ NEG.3SG
nì ù-nècá ù-sùnsùnù à kóó ná mà láñ.
see CL-road CL-good 3SG follow NEG TP because_of
‘Because her eldest child went to the market and did not find the right road to follow.’

(2Qb) ànjà ná gùná à kòó tím à tí shí timáti?
who.FM mother 3SG again send 3SG IPFV.1 buy tomato
‘Who did the mother send to buy tomatoes again?’

(2Ab) gùná .. gùná tím ù-púrú à-nyiù táájá àsòbáká
mother.. mother send 3SG.POSS-child CL-two follow first
k’á yó ù-nècá à ci gù-yá ní mà láñ.
NEG.3SG know CL-road 3SG go CL-market in TP because_of
‘The mother sent the second child because the first one didn’t know the road to get to the market.’

(3Q) máákò ná ù-pí nyiù táájá à pì ná à-fálà?
what FM CL-child two follow 3SG come with CL-home
‘What did the second child bring home?’
QUIS Data with Notes on Genetic and Areal Relations

(3A) ù-pí nyiú tàjá k`à pí ná à-kò đọŋ
   cl-child two follow neg.3sg come with cl-thing indef
   à-fál ná.
   cl-home neg
   ‘The second child didn’t bring home anything.’

(4Q) ù-pí à-páŋá pí kã ná timátì à-fál?ô
   cl-child cl-which come pfv.sf with tomato cl-home
   ‘Which of the children brought home tomatoes?’

(4A) ù-pí jálá pí kã ná timátì à-fál.
   cl-child small come pfv.sf with tomato cl-home
   ‘The smallest child brought home tomatoes.’

(5Q) ù-pí jálá ná à-nár i sá ná pí áā?
   cl-child small cnj 3sg.poss-mother cl.n be_sweet with 3pl pq
   ‘Were the mother and her smallest child happy?’

(5A) ēen, i sāŋ ná ù-pí jálá ná nár
   yes cl.n be_sweet with cl-child small with 3sg.poss.mother
   bà ñī timátì à shí mà láŋ.
   3pl see tomato 3sg buy tp because_of
   ‘Yes, the small child and the mother are happy because they have
   found tomatoes to buy.’

2.3.3 Focus Translation extract in Anii

<82-6> gù-bó đọŋ gùô téré tábrì láŋ.
   cl-book indef cl lay_down table on
   ‘There is a book on the table.’

6 The normal form of the indefinite pronoun is gu-đọŋ (Fiedler, submitted).
< 82-10 > S1: māākò lée ká?
what do PFV.SF
‘What happened?’

S2: bà ṅùm ù-pí.
3PL give_birth CL-child
‘A child has been born.’

< 82-20 > S1: māākò lée ká?
what do PFV.SF
‘What happened?’

S2: ù-dóŋ dá ká m-bùló.
CL-INDEF be PFV.SF CL-river
‘Somebody jumped into water.’

< 82-40 > S1: àŋà jì ká (à-)cá?
who eat PFV.SF (CL-)bean
‘Who ate the beans?’

S2: ù-sámpòrè đóŋ jì ká.
CL-woman INDEF eat PFV.SF
‘A woman ate (them).’

< 82-48 > S1: mònò ù-sámpòrè à jì?
what CL-woman 3SG eat
‘What did the woman eat?’

S2a: à-cá nì á jì. S2b: à jì cá.
CL-bean FM 3SG eat 3SG eat bean
‘She ate beans.’

< 82-66 > S1: ná māākò ní ù-sámpòrè á jì ù-jìò?
with what FM CL-woman-CL 3SG eat 3SG-food
‘With what did the woman eat?’
S2: ná tírí ná á jì jìù.  
with spoon FM 3SG eat food  
‘The woman ate with a spoon.’

<82-72> S1: määkò ní ù-sámpòrë ã lée?  
what FM CL-woman 3SG do  
‘What did the woman do?’

S2: à jì cá.  
3SG eat bean  
‘She ate beans.’

<82-128>S1: à jì cá.  
3SG eat bean  
‘She ate the beans.’

S2: aäì, áŋ jì ká.  
no 1SG.EMPH eat PFV.SF  
‘No, I ate them.’

<82-136>S1: ù-sámpòrè jì cá qônò.  
CL-woman eat bean black  
‘The woman ate the black beans.’

S2: k’à jì i-qônò ná ī-ráŋà ní á jì.  
NEG.3SG eat CL-black NEG CL-red FM 3SG eat  
‘She did not eat the black ones, but the red ones.’

<82-147>S1: ù-sámpòrè jì cá gàláì.  
CL-woman eat bean yesterday  
‘The woman ate the beans yesterday.’
S2: ááì, k’ì léé gàláì ná, gàcáláì ná.
no NEG.CL do yesterday NEG day_before_yesterday FM
‘No, it was not yesterday, it was the day before yesterday.’

<82-188> S1: ù-sámpèrà jì cá.
cl-woman eat bean
‘The woman ate the beans.’

S2: één, à jì.
yes 3SG eat
‘Yes, she did.’

<82-189> S2: ááì, k’à jì ná.
no NEG.3SG eat NEG
‘No, she didn’t.’

<82-74> S1: à ná pì ná táblè ná
3SG IPFV.2 come with table ?FM
yàá à ná shèò ná mà ná?
or 3SG IPFV.2 go_away with ? ?FM
‘Is he bringing or sending the table?’

S2: à ná shèò ná mà ná.
3SG IPFV.2 go_away with ? ?FM
‘He is sending (it).’

<82-163> S1: ù-sámpèrà (à) kò Ráhmàn.
cl-woman (3SG) hit PN
‘The woman hit Rahman.’

S2a: k’à kà ní ná, à yìdá ní ná.
NEG.3SG hit 3SG.OBJ NEG 3SG call 3SG.OBJ FM
‘She didn’t hit him, she called him.’
S2b: ù-yiɖó ná á yiɖá ní.
  CL-call.INF FM 3SG call 3SG.OBJ
  ‘She called him.’

<82-165> S1: ù-sámpérè (à) kè Ráhmân.
  CL-woman (3SG) hit PN
  ‘The woman hit Rahman.’

S2: à tāā tī kō ní.
  3SG FUT.1 IPFV.1 hit 3SG.OBJ
  ‘She will hit him.’

<82-164> S1: ù-sámpérè (à) kè Ráhmân.
  CL-woman (3SG) hit PN
  ‘The woman hit Rahman.’

S2: k’à kánà kó Ráhmân ná.
  NEG.3SG not_yet hit PN NEG
  ‘She didn’t hit him yet.’

<82-183> S1: ù-sámpérè (à) kè Ráhmân.
  CL-woman (3SG) hit PN
  ‘The woman hit Rahman.’

S2: à píkíl ní gbóó.
  3SG push 3SG.OBJ also
  ‘She also pushed him.’

<82-140> S1: ù-sámpèrò bò (à-)cá à shéè ní.
  CL-woman cook (CL-)bean 3SG give 3SG.OBJ
  ‘The woman cooked the beans for him.’
S2a: k’à bóó cá à shèé ní ná,  
NEG.3SG cook bean 3SG give 3SG.OBJ NEG  
àtóm pí.  
1PL.EMPH FM  
‘(No, ) she didn’t cook for him, it was for us.’

S2b: k’i léé úní ná à bóó (a) shèé ná,  
NEG.CL do 3SG.OBJ FM 3SG cook (3SG) give NEG  
àtóm pí à bóó (a) shèé.  
1PL.EMPH FM 3SG cook (3SG) give  
‘(No, ) it was not for him that she cooked, it was for us.’

< 82-170 > S1: ù-sámpàrè shí cá à shèé bà-pí ná bà-ñònó.  
CL-woman buy bean 3SG give CL-child with CL-elder  
‘The woman bought the beans for the children and the elders.’

S2: bà-ñònó bà-ñdindin ná à shí (à) shèé.  
CL-elder CL-only FM 3SG buy (3SG) give  
‘(No, ) she bought only them for the elders.’

< 82-179 > S1: ù-sámpàrè (à) bóó cá à shèé ù-púrû.  
CL-woman (3SG) cook bean 3SG give CL-child  
‘The woman cooked the beans for her child.’

S2: bà-ñònó gbóó ná á bóó à shèé.  
CL-elder also FM 3SG cook 3SG give  
‘She cooked (them) for the elders, too.’

2.4 Foodo

The last language of this sample, Foodo (ISO 639-3: fod), is a Northern Guang language spoken in Northern Benin by about 25,000 people. As for Anii, Foodo
is separated geographically from the other Guang languages, which are all spoken in Ghana. The data was recorded in February 2005 in Semere (Benin) with two young men, Yaya Iliassou and Zacari Idrissou, and transcribed and translated with the help of Gray Plunkett.

The results of the investigation on information structure in Foodo are summarized in the following paper:


2.4.1 Tomato Story in Foodo

(1) Ò-cúm '5-kó là mò-á-bée, kádíyà à-sá. CL-woman CL-INDEF with 3SG.POSS-CL-children people CL-three. ‘(There is) A woman and her three children.’

(2) Gé nì 5 lèélí b'áá dò 5-ñéléé nì 5 suú, ID FM 3SG pick 3PL.OBJ in CL-big CNJ 3SG send yè 5 nàà sòò bàà sà ún tòmá't'í ánà. SUB 3SG IMP.go IMP.buy DIR for 3SG.OBJ tomato PL ‘And then she chose the oldest of them and sent him to go and buy tomatoes.’

(3) Ò náá hál'í, nì 5 nyàà 5-kpáá, 3SG go TP, CNJ 3SG get_lost CL-road, gé nì 5 kíí bàà, 5 máñ bàlà tòmá't'í ánà. ID FM 3SG return DIR, 3SG NEG.PFV bring tomato PL ‘As he went, he lost his way, and so he returned not bringing tomatoes.’
‘Then the mother chose again and chose the second one; this second one, as he went, also lost his way.’

‘He didn’t know the way, and he also returned without bringing tomatoes.’

‘Thereupon, the mother said: if it’s like that, as there are three of you, I will send the youngest.’

‘And so she chose the smallest and sent him off.’
(8) ́-káánó ́-ná f’ó hál’í, ní ́-ná gbí ́-kpáá.  
CL-small CL-REF arrive TP, CNJ CL-REF know CL-road. 
‘As the small one arrived, he knew the way.’

(9) ́-ná fò tòŋkó hál’í, bà née f’è t’ómát’í ánà.  
CL-REF arrive somewhere TP 3PL IPFV sell tomato PL  
‘When he got there, they were selling tomatoes.’

(10) Gé ní ́-ná sɔ̀ bà tòmáti’ ánà, ní ́-ná  
ID FM CL-REF buy DIR tomato PL CNJ CL-REF  
kíí bàà ní ́-ná bà ní ́-ná tòlà ò-nyéé.  
return DIR CNJ CL-REF come CNJ CL-REF come.find CL-mother  
‘So he bought tomatoes and returned home and met his mother.’

(11) ́- tòlà ò-nyéé h’áll’í, ní ́ i wáá sà ò-nyéé  
3SG come.find CL-mother TP CNJ CL.N do for CL-mother  
mùò k’óm, mù là mù-bée mùò tòm  
DEF sweet 3SG with 3SG.POSS-child DEF all  
pái k’óm, ó-bée à nỳé bàà tòmáti’ ánà.  
without.exception sweet CL-child PFV find DIR tomato PL  
‘When he found the mother, and it made the mother happy, she  
and her child are very happy that the child had found the tomatoes.’

2.4.2 Tomato Story – Questions and Answers

(1Q) Àní níí ́-nyéé s’úń dí-gbálì dỳ yè  
who FM CL-mother send CL-market in SUB  
́- nàà sɔ̀ bàà sà ́-ná tòmátì?  
3SG IMP.go buy DIR for 3SG:OBJ tomato
‘Who is asked by his mother to go to the market and buy tomatoes?’

(1A) Mù-bée ‘ɔ́-ŋlɛ́ɛ nì ɔ́ cősì nì ɔ́ súŋ yè 3SG.POSS-child CL-big FM 3SG begin CNJ 3SG send SUB ɔ̀ nàà sòò bàà tómáti.
3SG IMP.go buy DIR tomato
‘First, she asked her oldest son to go and buy tomatoes.’

(2Q) Mìnɛ́ m̀ bò sò ní ɔ́ lólâ ɔ̀ née what FM_SBJ have because FM 3SG take_again 3SG IPFV s’úŋ ɔ́-nyóssèɛ yè ɔ̀ nàà lólá sòò bàà send CL-second SUB 3SG IMP.go IMP.take_again buy DIR sà ọ́jì tómáti?
for 3SG.OBJ tomato
‘Why does the mother ask another child to go and buy tomatoes?’

(2A) ɔ́-cősìsɛɛ mùò ɲ-ɲá màŋ gbú ɔ́-kpáá,
CL-first DEF CL-REF NEG.PFV know road
ɲ-ɲá à nyàà, gé nì ɲ-ɲá kíí bàà
CL-REF PFV get_lost, ID FM CL-REF return DIR
ɔ̀ mànj nyé bàà tómáti.
3SG NEG.PFV find DIR tomato
‘The first one didn’t know the way, he got lost, and he returned not having found tomatoes.’

(3Q) Mìnɛ́ ɲ̀ bálà... ó-bée ɔ́-nyósèɛ mùò ɔ́-pì?
what FM bring ... CL-child CL-second DEF CL-home?
‘What does the second child bring home?’
(3A) Ò-béé ’ò-nyóséę mòò ñ-ñá bà ɔ-pí h’állí, CL-child CL-second DEF CL-REF come CL-home TP, ñ-ñá mbò màm bìlá nyé bàà CL-REF also NEG.PFV again find DIR tòmáti gé nì ñ-ñá kíí bàà. tomato ID FM CL-REF return DIR ‘When the second child came home, he returned also not having found any tomatoes.’

(4Q) Níí... ani ’í bálà tòmáti’i ɔ-pí? CNJ... who FM_SBJ bring tomato CL-home ‘Which child brings tomatoes back home?’

(4A) Ò-maŋ ɔ bálà tòmáti’i ɔ-pí h’állí, CL-REL 3SG bring tomato CL-home TP ’òjì jí ò-béé ’ò-sáséę ’ò-kaánó. FM_SBJ be CL-child CL-third CL-small ‘The one who brought home tomatoes was the small third child.’

(5Q) ó-nyéé mòò, là mò-béé mòò, CL-mother DEF with 3SG.POSS-child DEF bà bà nì bà náá nì bà tá h’állí, 3PL come CNJ 3PL.go CNJ 3PL finish TP ì í wáá sà ó-nyéé k’óm, CL.N PFV do for CL-mother sweet àlàà ì máŋ wáá sà ůŋ kóm? or CL.N NEG.PFV do for 3SG.OBJ sweet ‘The mother and her smallest child, at the end of the story, is the mother happy or not?’
(5A) \( \text{ì wáá să ó-nyéé k'óm gé,} \)
\[ \text{CL.N do for CL-mother sweet ID} \]
\( \text{ní ì wáá să ó-béé ñ-mañ mòù kóból'í hál'í,} \)
\[ \text{CNJ CL.N do for CL-child CL-REL DEF again TP} \]
\( \text{ñ-ñá mbò kóbólì ñ-káánó mòù.} \)
\[ \text{CL-REF also again CL-small DEF} \]
‘The mother is happy, and the child is also happy, the little one, too.’

2.4.3 Focus Translation extract in Foodo

<82-6> \( \text{tàkálládá tè tébálì só.} \)
\[ \text{book be_LOC table on} \]
‘There is a book on the table.’

<82-10> S1: miné ñ wá?
\[ \text{what FM_SBJ do} \]
‘What happened?’

S2: bàá kólì ñ-bèè.
\[ \text{3PL.PFV give_birth CL-child} \]
‘A child has been born.’

<82-20> S1: miné ñ wá?
\[ \text{what FM_SBJ do} \]
‘What happened?’

S2: ñ-kó à csölí ñ-cóm dà.
\[ \text{CL-INDEFPFV plunge CL-water in} \]
‘Somebody jumped into water.’
<82-40> S1: ànì ń wì á-céè?
   who FM_SBJ eat CL-beans
   ‘Who ate the beans?’
S2: ò-cúm 'ń wì.
   CL-woman FM_SBJ eat
   ‘A woman ate (them).’

<82-48> S1: mìné nì ò-cúm wì?
   what FM CL-woman eat
   ‘What did the woman eat?’
S2a: à-céè nì à wì. S2b: ọ́ wì á-céè.
   CL-bean FM 3SG.PFV eat 3SG.PFV eat CL-bean
   ‘She ate beans.’

<82-66> S1: mìné nì ò-cúm ji7 là?
   what FM CL-woman eat with
   ‘With what did the woman eat?’
S2: là púúdóó n’í ò jì là.
   with spoon FM 3SG eat with
   ‘The woman ate with a spoon.’

<82-72> S1: mìné nì ò-cúm wáà?
   what FM CL-woman do
   ‘What did the woman do?’
S2: ọ́ wì á-céè.
   3SG.PFV eat CL-bean
   ‘She ate beans.’

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7 Anii has two verbs meaning ‘to eat’, this one here has a more general meaning, used when the kind of food is unknown.
<82-128> S1: ɔ̀ɔ́ w ɩ̂ á-cée.
3SG.PFV eat CL-bean
‘She ate the beans.’

S2: àáyi, mì ǹ wì.
no 1SG.EMPH FM_SBJ eat
‘No, I ate (them).’

<82-136> S1: ɔ̀-cúím à wì à-cée à-búnó.
CL-woman PFV eat CL-bean CL-black
‘The woman ate the black beans.’

S2: i mán jì à-búnó, àmá á-péén'ó gé.
CL.N NEG be CL-black but CL-red ID
‘They were not black, but it was the red ones.’

<82-147> S1: ɔ̀-cúím à wì à-cée ńdêlì.
CL-woman PFV eat CL-bean yesterday
‘The woman ate the beans yesterday.’

S2: ndàà-àmàlì gé.
today-back ID
‘(No,) it was the day before yesterday.’

<82-188> S1: ɔ̀-cúím à wì à-cée.
CL-woman PFV eat CL-bean
‘The woman ate the beans.’

S2: êë, ɔ́ wì.
yes 3SG.PFV eat
‘Yes, she did.’

<82-189> S2: àáyi, ɔ máŋ wì.
no 3SG.PFV NEG eat
‘No, she didn’t.’
S1: 3 née kíí là têebiìlà àlàà 3 née cúm là.
3SG IPFV return with table or 3SG IPFV bring with
‘Is he bringing or sending the table?’

S2: 3 née cúm là.
3SG IPFV bring with
‘He is bringing (it).’

S1: ɔ̀-cîm à dá Gbáání.
CL-woman PFV hit PN
‘The woman hit Gbaani.’

S2: àáyì, ɔ̀ bêé dá ɔŋ.
no 3SG.FUT hit 3SG.OBJ
‘No, she will hit him.’

S1: ɔ̀-cîm à dá Gbáání.
CL-woman PFV hit PN
‘The woman hit Gbaani.’

S2: àáyì, ɔ̀ bêé dá ḳìì dá ɔŋ.
no 3SG.FUT NEG again hit 3SG.OBJ
‘No, she did not yet hit him.’

S1: ɔ̀-cîm à dá Gbáání.
CL-woman PFV hit PN
‘The woman hit Gbaani.’
S2: ɔ̀ɔ́ w ú t á ʊ̀ŋ kóbólì.
3SG.PFV push 3SG.OBJ also
‘She also pushed him.’

<82-140>S1: ɔ̀-cű́m à d'íná à-céé sā mù.
CL-woman PFV cook CL-bean for 3SG.EMPH
‘The woman cooked the beans for him.’

S2: ì máŋ jí sā mù, àmá sā àyíí.
CL.N NEG be for 3SG.EMPH but for 1PL.EMPH
‘(No,) it was not for him, but for us.’

<82-170>S1: ɔ̀-cű́m à sóò á-céé sā à-béé là á-bîléé.
CL-woman PFV buy CL-bean for CL-child with CL-elder
‘The woman bought the beans for the children and the elders.’

S2: àáyì, sā á-bîléé wólì ní ò sóò sā.
no for CL-elder only FM 3SG buy for
‘No, only for the elders she bought.’

<82-179>S1: ɔ̀-cű́m à dínà á-céé sā mù-béé.
CL-woman PFV cook CL-bean for 3SG.POSS-child
‘The woman cooked the beans for her child.’

S2: à-bîléé kóbólì ní ò dínà sā.
CL-elder also FM 3SG cook for
‘She cooked for the elders, too.’
3. Genetic and areal relations

At the center of interest for project B1 was the investigation into the relationship between grammar and information structure in Gur and Kwa languages. This research was based on a sample of 22 languages (seven of which were presented here); although most of the languages were studied by the principal investigator and the researchers of the project themselves, we obtained material for three languages from other researchers:

Gur: Baatonum, Buli, Byali, Dagbani, Ditammari, Gurene, (Kabiye - K. Lebikaza (†), Université de Kara, Togo), Konkomba, Konni, (Moore – K. Beyer, HU Berlin), Nateni, (Pana - K. Beyer), Waama, Yom
Kwa: Aja, Akan, Anii, Awutu-Efulu, Ewe, Fon, Foodo, Lelemi

This sample only partly represents the two language families:

(i) within Gur, we mainly worked on different Oti-Volta languages, thus leaving aside nearly all of the South Central Gur languages (with Gurunsi being the biggest group) and the Senufo languages. The Oti-Volta research was accompanied by work on the isolate Baatonum and the Gurunsi languages Kabiye and Pana in order to provide us with a wider perspective on information-structure encoding in Gur.

(ii) within Kwa (which is a smaller unit than Gur), we had a strong focus on the Gbe languages (Aja, Fon, Ewe), but we also worked on languages from three other groups: Ghana-Togo-Mountain languages, Guang and Central Tano. The so-called Lagoon languages of Côte d’Ivoire were not investigated by us.

This limitation on certain language groups was due to practical considerations, as it was not possible to deal with all subgroups within one family. Therefore, we decided to concentrate on those groups within Gur and Kwa which also showed an areal relation: that is, all sample languages are
spoken in Ghana, Togo and Benin, with the Southern part of those countries hosting the Kwa languages, and the Northern parts the Gur languages. This restriction to genetically closely-related languages spoken in a close-knit area also enables us to survey areal features of the sample languages.

The following questions arose from the investigation of these languages:

1. We wanted to know whether there is a clear differentiation between Gur and Kwa languages with respect to focus marking. Our results show that such a generalization is not possible. Rather, we found a great diversity of focus marking strategies across all languages, not necessarily related to the assumed genetic relationship of the languages.

   a) For instance, there are changes in verb morphology which were mainly attested for in Gur languages, but were also found in Anii and Lelemi (Kwa).

   b) In the predominantly isolating Gbe languages, the *ex situ* construction is characterized by a syntactic change and the optional marking of the focused constituent by a focus marker. Even though such a structure can be found in all of the languages, Gbe languages (with the exception of Ewe) seem to be the only ones in which no change in the out-of-focus part of the sentence is attested. The question is: Should Gbe therefore be considered as belonging to New Kwa? If yes, could Ewe be regarded as having been influenced by the surrounding Akan, Guang and Ghana-Togo-Mountain languages?

   c) On the other hand, there are cases in which the genetic relationship is reflected in the focus marking devices, as is the case with the ‘Me-particle’ in Buli, Konni, Dagbani and Gurene (cf. Schwarz 2010).

2. We assumed an influence of certain typological features on focus marking devices, such as morphological type, intonation type, or word order type. This assumption is confirmed by our data.
(a) As all sample languages were tone languages (with differing tonal systems), tone already has a heavy functional load and should therefore be excluded from focus marking. Our research so far has shown that variation in F0 and duration can be observed, but they seem only to support syntactic structures (cf. Schwarz 2009, Fiedler & Jannedy resubmitted).

(b) The morphology-depleted Gbe languages mainly use different particles as a focusing device, but do not show a change in verb morphology, as do most of the agglutinating languages in the sample.

(c) With the exception of Baatonum, the main word order in all languages under consideration is SVO. In these languages, the postverbal position can be regarded as an unmarked focus position for objects. Similarly, one would expect that in the SOV language Baatonum the preverbal position fulfills the same function (as is the case in other SOV languages). This assumption is refuted by the language data, which also challenge the more general assumption of the predicate as host for unmarked focus in a sentence.

(3) The data of our language sample enable us to detect areal relations between the different languages.

(a) The most obvious case is a particle which can be found in different languages of Ghana. The particle *la* is sometimes treated as topic marker (Ewe, inter alia), and sometimes as (pseudo-)focus marker (Dagbani, inter alia). Whether or not the frequent occurrence of this particle is due to areal influences, and what the underlying semantics are that allow these different interpretations will be left for future research.

(b) Some of the languages in Ghana seem to have borrowed their focus marker from Akan. Anii, which is spoken in Benin and assumed to have migrated there from Ghana in the 18th century, also has a general focus marker *na* like that of Akan, but normally employs a set of different focus markers to agree with a focused non-subject. The question as to whether the focus marker
na in Anii should be considered as having been borrowed from Akan or as a language-internal development cannot be answered at this stage.

(c) Ewe is the only Gbe language showing a dedicated verb focus marker which resembles a pragmatically-used marker in Akan. This again raises the question: is this due to borrowing borrowing or is it a language-internal development?

These were only some of the challenging questions which developed from our investigation of 22 languages on the basis of data elicited by means of QUIS. The planned final publication of the project will deal with these questions in more detail and, we hope, will provide answers to most of them.

References


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