





an undescribed Atlantic language of Guinea

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#### Introduction

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### **Outline for Section 1**

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- 2. Focus in Baga Pukur
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- 3. Pervasiveness of focus constructions
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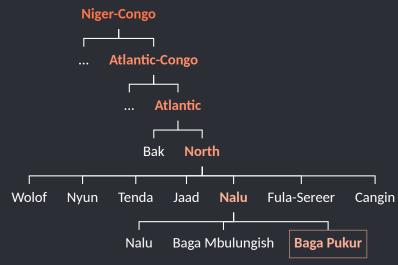
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# Baga Pukur within Atlantic (Segerer and Pozdniakov forthcoming)



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Backeround

A few hundred speakers in 2 villages (= 2 dialects) of coastal Guinea

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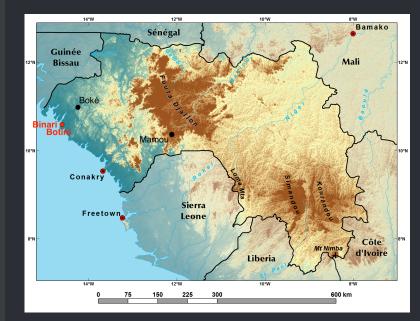
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- A few hundred speakers in 2 villages (= 2 dialects) of coastal Guinea
  - Previously undescribed, critically endangered (status 7 'shifting' on Lewis and Simons (2010)'s scale), bilingualism with Soso (Mande)

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Reference:

- A few hundred speakers in 2 villages (= 2 dialects) of coastal Guinea
  - Previously undescribed, critically endangered (status 7 'shifting' on Lewis and Simons (2010)'s scale), bilingualism with Soso (Mande)
- Author's field data collected during 2 field trips (3,5 months)

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Phonological basics

## Phonological basics

Tonal

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## Phonological basics

- Tonal
- No voicing contrast (all consonants transcribed as voiceless)

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#### Subject focus

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## Subject focus

(1) a. 
$$\acute{a}$$
- $f\bar{a}$ - $k\acute{a}$ - $k\ddot{a}$   $f\hat{a}$ t. 3SG.SBJ-PF-3SG.OBJ-PST carve '(S)he carved it.' [Mb]

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Subject focus

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(1) a. \acute{a}-f\bar{a}-k\acute{a}-k\bar{a} f\hat{a}t. 3SG.SBJ-PF-3SG.OBJ-PST carve '(S)he carved it.' [Mb]
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b. *mán á-fát yánpàŋ*.

3 S G. F O C INF-carve Nimba

'It's (s)he who carved the Nimba.' [Mb]

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- Individual bus

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## Subject focus

## Summary of subject focalization strategies:

- Infinitive inflection shared by subject relative clauses
- Emphatic pronoun series (if subject expressed by pronoun)
- Null aspect verb form replaces perfect (shared by relative clauses)

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## Object focus

- (2) a.  $n\text{-}f\acute{a}\text{-}c\acute{e}p$   $n\text{-}t\grave{i}=l\grave{a}$ .

  1SG-PF-break SG-wood=IN

  'I have broken a stick.' [Mb]
  - b. n-tí n-cép = las G-wood s G-wood s G-sbj-break=s (It's a stick that I have broken.' [Mb]

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## Object focus

(3) a.  $\bar{a}$ -fá-táp n-túl póndk. 3SG.SBJ-PF-stand VN-cook cassava '(S)he's cooking cassava.' [Mb]

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## Object focus

- (3) a.  $\bar{a}$ -fá-táp n-túl pýnðk. 3SG.SBJ-PF-stand VN-cook cassava '(S)he's cooking cassava.' [Mb]
  - b. pɔ̄nɔík pá-tàp n-tùl
    cassava 3sG.Foc-stand vn-cook
    'It's cassava that (s)he's cooking.' [Mb]

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## Object focus

### Summary of object focalization strategies:

- Object moved to clause-initial position
- Null aspect verb form replaces perfect (shared by relative and temporal subordinate clauses)
- Special bound 3sg subject pronoun (shared by relative and temporal subordinate clauses)

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Verb focus

### Verb focus

## Cognate object construction strategy:

- n-fá-wìn. (4)a. 1SG-PF-get tired 'I'm tired.' [Mb]
  - à-wìn. b. Ø-wín 1SG-get\_tired INF-get\_tired 'I'm tired.' [as answer to question like 'Why are you not working?'] [Mb]

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Verb focus

### Verb focus

## Cognate object construction strategy:

- (4)n-fá-wìn. a. 1SG-PF-get tired 'I'm tired.' [Mb]
  - b. Ø-wín à-wìn. 1SG-get\_tired INF-get\_tired 'I'm tired.' [as answer to question like 'Why are you not working?'] [Mb]
- → Strategy found cross-linguistically that reflects the **double** statement implied by any focalization (Robert 1993: 20)

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### Verb focus

## Subject focalization strategy

- (5) a. ālāpál táp mō-lò. body stand 18G.0BJ-eat 'My body is hurting me.' [Mb]
  - b. alapśl á-táp mɔ̄-lò.
    body INF-stand 1sG.OBJ-eat

    'My body is hurting me.' [as answer to question like
    'What's going on?'] [lit. 'It's my body that is hurting
    me'] [Mb]

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### Verb focus

#### Transitive verb:

fàl n-táp n-pòk-àt.
 child 1sG-stand VN-wash-TR
 'I am washing [my] child' [as answer to question like 'What are you doing?'] [lit. 'it's [my] child that I am washing'] [Mb]

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#### Verb focus

### Transfer of emphasis (from subject/object to verb)

- was analyzed in detail for Wolof (subject → verb) by Robert (1993; 2000)
- is cross-linguistically common (Robert 1993)

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## Outline for Section 3

- Pervasiveness of focus constructions

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# Pervasiveness of focus constructions Answers to questions

- (7) a. ànsí í-tùl? what 2SG.SBJ-cook 'What have you cooked?'
  - b. pɔ̃nɔ́k n-tùl.
    cassava 1sg.sBJ-cook
    'I've cooked cassava. [lit. 'It's cassava that I've cooked.' [Mb]

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## Pervasiveness of focus constructions

Answers to questions / explanations

- (8) a. ànsí ó-sóŋ nè n-kó-fòŋ?
  what 3sg-put what 1sg-Neg+2sg-see
  'Why didn't I see you?'
  - b. ntōānt n-táp.
     work 1sg.sbj-stand
     'I was working. [lit. 'It's working that I was].' [Mb]

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## Pervasiveness of focus constructions

Apodosis of conditional sentences

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(9)
       npé pó-wānkāl
                              npēl étālă,
                                          mán
                              salt
       when 1PL.SBJ-scrape
                                           3SG.FOC
                              mán
      pá-nā-yésākǎ,
       1PL.SBJ-UNACC-carry
                              3SG.FOC
      pá-nān-tūl,
                             mán
       1PL.SBJ-UNACC-cook
                             3SG.FOC
      pá-nāŋ-kŏp
                            Γ...7
       1PL.SBJ-UNACC-sell
       'When we scrape salt at Etala, it's what we carry, what
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we cook, what we sell.' [Bn]

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#### Pervasiveness of focus constructions

## Usage of focalization Baga Pukur / Atlantic:

- Very widely used:
  - contrastive identification in the very large sense of selection from a paradigm (→ answers to questions, explanations)
- Marks apodosis of conditional sentences because NEW. vs. typologically widespread topicalization marking of conditional protasis, c.f. Haiman (1978)

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## Pervasiveness of focus constructions

Topicalization of focalized terms

(10) a. ēsíàw mán Ø-mū-ŋ nōmòn.
today 3sg.Foc 1sg.sbJ-EP-go there
'It's today that I went there.' [lit. 'today, it's when I
went there'] [Mb]

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## Pervasiveness of focus constructions

Topicalization of focalized terms

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b.

- (10) a. ēsíàw mán Ø-mū-ŋ nɔ̄mɔ̀n.
  today 3SG.FOC 1SG.SBJ-EP-go there
  'It's today that I went there.' [lit. 'today, it's when I
  went there'] [Mb]
  - the\_day\_after\_tomorrow 3sg.foc-stand n-cà.

    VN-come

    'It's the day after tomorrow that (s)he is coming.'

    [Bn]

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## Pervasiveness of focus constructions

Topicalization of focalized terms

(11) npé yú fâŋ pớŋ-ă,
when rainy\_season too find-ANTICAUS
ākép-ăm mớn wó-nā-lùk.
fish-DIST 3SG.FOC 2PL.SBJ-UNACC-catch
'When the rainy season comes, you fish [lit. 'that fish, it's what you catch.']' [Bn]

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## Pervasiveness of focus constructions

Topicalization of focalized terms

(12) bùtámà, mán a-pác yákūbà.

PN 3SG.FOC INF-be\_big PN

'Burama is older than Yakuba.' [lit. 'Burama, it's he who is older than Yakuba'] [Bn]

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## Pervasiveness of focus constructions

Topicalization of focalized terms

(13) á-lě tén á-sālě á-fá-sōŋà ítīpàl
PL-year ten DIST-two 3SG.SBJ-put\_in=IN five

mán Ø-fá-sōtà.
3SG.FOC 1SG-PF-obtain

'I'm 25 years old.' [lit. '25 years, it's what I have gained.']

[Bn]

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## Pervasiveness of focus constructions

Topicalization of focalized terms

(14) ì-fá-mán-kà bātīzē àtàkó. Père
3PL.SBJ-PF-1SG.OBJ-PST baptize Katako Father
Bienvenu màn à-bátìzè-m.
PN 3SG.FOC INF-baptize-1SG.OBJ.

'I was baptized in Katako. Père Bienvenu baptized me [lit.
'Père Bienvenu, it's he who baptized me']. [Mb]

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## Pervasiveness of focus constructions

Topicalization of focalized terms

(15)  $p\acute{a}=k\grave{a}\eta$  ábdúlláy kàmárà nán father 1 s g. poss pn pn thus yín-tùk-à.

3PL.SBJ-call-3SG.ОВЈ

'My father's name is Abdullay Camara.' [lit. 'My father, Abdullay, that's what they call him.'] [Mb]

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### Pervasiveness of focus constructions

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- (16) a. yìn-túk-ǔm á-tūk-ùm= č
  3PL.SBJ-call-1SG.OBJ INF-call-1SG.OBJ=QUOT
  pòpó ádāmà.
  PN PN
  - 'My name is Popo, daughter of Adama' [Bn]
  - b. bīntá yín-tūk-ùm.

    PN 3PL.SBJ-call-1SG.OBJ

PN 3PL.SBJ-call-1SG.OBJ

'My name is Binta.' [lit. 'It's Binta they call me.'] [Bn]

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## Pervasiveness of focus constructions

Topicalization of focalized terms

Also common in other Atlantic languages such as Wolof And Jóola Fóoñi (Creissels 2021: 23)

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### **Outline for Section 4**

- 4. Summary

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## Summary

- like in Atlantic in general, focalization constructions in Baga
   Pukur = rich, grammaticalized, and pervasive
- topicalization of focus terms:
  - almost as pervasive as plain focalization
  - to be tested with verb focalization
  - motivation unclear
  - plain topicalization isn't pervasive

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1pl 1st person plural 1sg 1st person singular 2pl 2nd person plural 2sg 2nd person singular 3pl 3rd person plural 3sg 3rd person singular anticaus anticausative dist distal ep epenthetic segment foc emphatic pronoun in illocative inf infinitive neg negative obj object pf perfect pl plural pn proper noun poss possessive pst past quot quotative sbj subject sg singular tr transitive unacc unaccomplished vn verbal noun

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