

Topicalization of focalized terms in Baga Pukur

.....
an undescribed Atlantic language of Guinea

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Outline for Section 1

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2.1 Subject focus

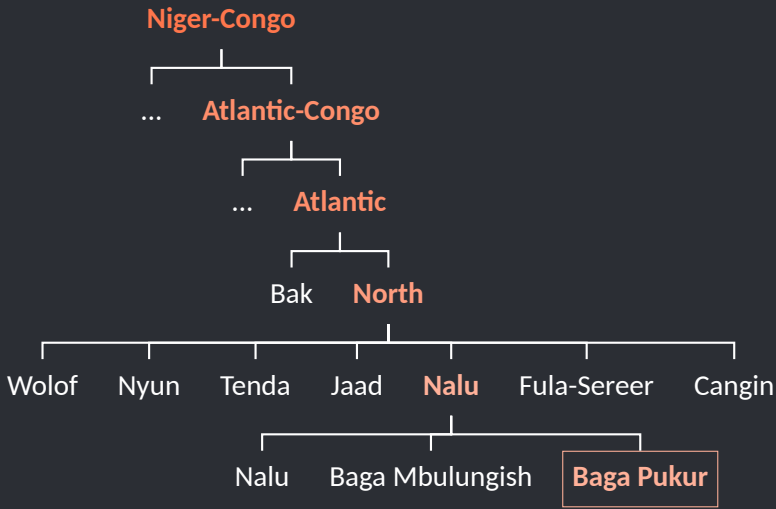
2.2 Object focus

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Baga Pukur within Atlantic (Segerer and Pozdniakov *forthcoming*)



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

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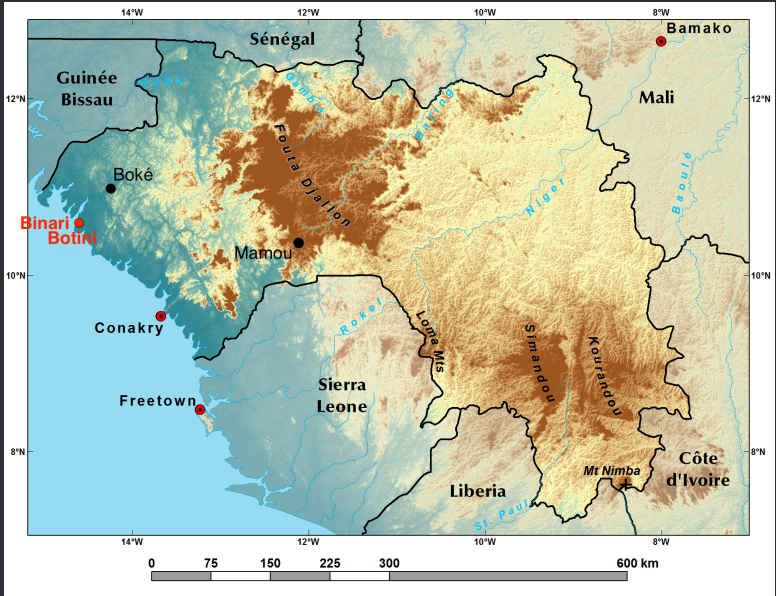
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- A few hundred speakers in 2 villages (= 2 dialects) of coastal Guinea
- Previously undescribed, critically endangered (status 7 ‘shifting’ on Lewis and Simons (2010)’s scale), bilingualism with Soso (Mande)

- 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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- Tonal

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

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- (1) a. *á-f̄ā-ká-kā* *f̄āt.*
3SG.SBJ-PF-3SG.OBJ-PST carve
'(S)he carved it.' [Mb]

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- (1) a. *á-f̄ā-ká-kā* *f̄āt.*
3SG.SBJ-PF-3SG.OBJ-PST carve
'(S)he carved it.' [Mb]
- b. *mán* *á-f̄āt* *yánpàŋ.*
3SG.FOC INF-carve Nimba
'It's (s)he who carved the Nimba.' [Mb]

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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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- (2) a. *n-fá-cép* *n-tì = là.*
1 SG-PF-break SG-wood=IN
'I have broken a stick.' [Mb]
- b. *n-tí* *n-cép = là*
SG-wood 1 SG.SBJ-break=IN
'It's a stick that I have broken.' [Mb]

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- (3) a. *ā-fá-táp* *n-túl* *póŋòk.*
3 SG.SBJ-PF-stand VN-cook cassava
'(S)he's cooking cassava.' [Mb]

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- (3) a. *ā-fá-táp* *n-túl* *pójòk*.
3SG.SBJ-PF-stand VN-cook cassava
'(S)he's cooking cassava.' [Mb]
- b. *pōjók* *pá-tàp* *n-tùl*
cassava 3SG.FOC-stand VN-cook
'It's cassava that (s)he's cooking.' [Mb]

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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)

Verb focus

Cognate object construction strategy:

- (4) a. *n-fá-wìŋ.*
1 SG-PF-get_tired
'I'm tired.' [Mb]
- b. *∅-wìŋ* *à-wìŋ.*
1 SG-get_tired INF-get_tired
'I'm tired.' [as answer to question like 'Why are you
not working?'] [Mb]

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Cognate object construction strategy:

- (4) a. *n-fá-wìŋ.*
1 SG-PF-get_tired
'I'm tired.' [Mb]
- b. *∅-wìŋ* *à-wìŋ.*
1 SG-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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Subject focalization strategy

- (5) a. *ālāpól táp mō-lò.*
body stand 1SG.OBJ-eat
'My body is hurting me.' [Mb]
- b. *ālāpól á-táp mō-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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Transitive verb:

(6) *fàl* *n-táp* *n-pòk-òt.*
child 1 SG-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 wash-
ing'] [Mb]

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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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Pervasiveness of focus constructions

Answers to questions

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

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]

Pervasiveness of focus constructions

Apodosis of conditional sentences

- (9) *npé* *pó-wānkāl* *npēl* *étālǎ*, *mán*
when 1 PL.SBJ-scrape salt 3 SG.FOC
pá-nā-yésākǎ, *mán*
1 PL.SBJ-UNACC-carry 3 SG.FOC
pá-nāη-tūl, *mán*
1 PL.SBJ-UNACC-cook 3 SG.FOC
pá-nāη-kǒp [...] *[...]*
1 PL.SBJ-UNACC-sell
'When we scrape salt at Etala, it's what we carry, what
we cook, what we sell.' [Bn]

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)

Pervasiveness of focus constructions

Topicalization of focalized terms

- (10) a. *ēsíàw mán Ø-mū-ŋ nōmòŋ.*
today 3SG.FOC 1SG.SBJ-EP-go there
'It's today that I went there.' [lit. 'today, it's when I
went there'] [Mb]

Pervasiveness of focus constructions

Topicalization of focalized terms

- (10) a. *ēsiàw mán Ø-mū-ŋ nōmòŋ.*
today 3SG.FOC 1SG.SBJ-EP-go there
'It's today that I went there.' [lit. 'today, it's when I
went there'] [Mb]
- b. *kóséŋ pá-tāp*
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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- (11) *npé* *yú* *fâŋ* *páŋ-ǎ*,
 when rainy_season too find-ANTICAUS
 ākéŋ-ǎm *mán* *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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(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]

Pervasiveness of focus constructions

Topicalization of focalized terms

- (13) *á-lě* *tén* *á-sālě* *á-fá-sōḡà* *ítípàl*
 PL-year ten DIST-two 3SG.SBJ-put_in=IN five
mán *∅-fá-sṵtà.*
 3SG.FOC 1SG-PF-obtain
'I'm 25 years old.' [lit. '25 years, it's what I have gained.']
[Bn]

Pervasiveness of focus constructions

Topicalization of focalized terms

(15) *pá = kàŋ* *ábdúlláy* *kàmárà* *nín*
father_{1 SG.POSS} PN PN thus
yín-tùk-à.

3 PL.SBJ-call-3 SG.OBJ

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

Pervasiveness of focus constructions

Topicalization of focalized terms

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

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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- 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

Bibliography

T_EX, *L_AT_EX*, and Beamer

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Thank you!