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The apocopated verb forms of Yulu (Central Sudanic) and related situations in some African languages.

An introduction to the programme
"Foregrounding and backgrounding: the morphological marking of discourse hierarchy"
CNRS – Fédération de Recherche *Typologie et Universaux Linguistiques*

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Yulu (SBB, CAR/Sudan)

1. Yulu disyllabic verb forms (by far the most frequent pattern) alternate a 'strong' vowel (**i, ii, ɛ, ɛɛ,** etc.) in first syllable with a 'weak' vowel (**ə**) in second syllable:

(1) **ùkə̄**   'dry up'
     ɔ̀ɔlə̀   'be far'
     ɲāɓə̄   'watch (out) for, spy on'
     jóoɗə̀   'ask (question, person)'

2. As a general rule, the final vowel of verb forms (including plural suffix **-kē**) is clearly articulated within the sentence (2a/b) as well as in the final position (3-4a/b):

(2a) **àayə̄   tɔ́nɔ̀ng**
      3.come   yesterday
      'He came yesterday.'

(2b) **àayə̄-kē̱   tɔ́nɔ̀ng**
      3.come-PL   yesterday
      'They came yesterday.'

(3a) **àayə̄**
      3.come
      'He came.'

(3b) **àayə̄-kē̱**
      3.come-PL
      'They came.'

(4a) **ǎ-làayə̄**
      3.FUT-come
      'He will come.'

(4b) **ǎ-kē   làayə̄**
      3.FUT-PL   come
      'They will come.'

3. However, *in final (pre-pausal) position* as well as *in pre-final position before the polar interrogative* **nèe/ee**, some verb forms – i.e. paradigms or inflectional classes ('tiroirs') – are realized *without final vowel* (the wovel elision or apocope is indicated by '_' below). Compare (5-9a) (full forms) and (5-9b) (apocopated forms):

(5a) **mē̱sɔ́   àayə̄**
      chief.DEF   3.come
      'The chief came.'

(5b) **níinə̄   k-āay_**
      who?   FOC-come
      'who came?'

(6a) **ɲɔ̀ɔ-îì   àayə̄-kē**
      child-PL   3.come-PL
      'The children came.'

(6b) **ɲɔ̀ɔ-îì   k-āayə̄-k_**
      child-PL   FOC-come-PL
      'THE CHILDREN came.'

<table>
<tr><td>(7a)</td><td>**mḗsɔ́**
chief.DEF</td><td>**ǎ-lɛ̀ʔɔ̄**
3.FUT-go</td><td>(7b)</td><td>**mḗsɔ́**
chief.DEF</td><td>**ǎ-cē**
3.FUT-NEG</td><td>**lɛ̀ʔ_**
go</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2">'The chief will go.'</td><td></td><td colspan="3">'The chief will not go.'</td></tr>
<tr><td>(8a)</td><td>**àayɔ̄**
3.come</td><td>**nèe**
Q</td><td>(8b)</td><td>**nàanē**
him</td><td>**k-āay_**
FOC-come</td><td>**ēe**
Q</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2">'Did he come?'</td><td></td><td colspan="3">'Did HE come?'</td></tr>
<tr><td>(9a)</td><td>**ǎ-làayɔ̄**
3.FUT-come</td><td>**nèe**
Q</td><td>(9b)</td><td>**ǎ-cē**
3.FUT-NEG</td><td>**làay_**
come</td><td>**ēe**
Q</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2">'Will he come?'</td><td></td><td colspan="3">'Won't he come?'</td></tr>
</table>

4. The apocope, which is then to be observed in very restricted contexts only (final position and pre-final position before the polar interrogative)[1], systematically affects – i.e. without any possible choice:

- the *S-Focalizing* forms (expressing contrastive focalization of the subject), which are complementarily marked either by the verb prefix **k-** (see (5-6b), (8b) above), or by the modifier **ndé ~ ndɔ́** following the verb (10-11) or the auxiliary (12)[2]:

(10) a. **ǎadɔ̄ nɔ̄-t-òosɔ̀   ndé jùmɔ́**
          3.say LOG-DEP-eat FOC polenta.DEF
          'He said that HIMSELF ate the polenta.'

      b. **ǎadɔ̄ nɔ̄-t-òosɔ̀   nd_**
          3.say LOG-DEP-eat FOC
          'He said that HIMSELF ate (it).'

(11) a. **kàalɔ̀   mḗsɔ́   k-āay_**
          uniqueness chief.DEF FOC-come
          'Only THE CHIEF came.'

      b. **kàalɔ̀   mḗsɔ́   k-āayɔ̄   nd_**
          uniqueness chief.DEF FOC-come FOC
          'idem'

(12) **ǎadɔ̄ nɔ̄-t-ǎ-ndɔ́-kē   ndōog_**
       3.say LOG-DEP-FUT-FOC-PL buy
       'He said that THEMSELVES will buy (it).'

- the *Purposive* forms (marked by prefixing **tɔ̀-/tɔ̄-** to the purposive infinitive):

(13) **tīcɔ̄   nà   mèemɔ́   tɔ̀-lɔ́ɔy_**
       2.pour him water.DEF 3.PURP-drink
       'Pour him water so that he drinks!'

(14) **kìinē sūukǎ`   kɔ́ tāàtè   tɔ̄-lɛ́ɛ   láad_ ée**
       you 2.trap.PROG with mouth.my 2.PURP-go say Q
       'Are you trapping my words so that you will go and tell (them)?'

Nevertheless the *Negative Purposive* forms are *not* affected by apocope[3]:

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[1] This fact explains that instances of apocopated verb forms are in fact very limited in texts.

[2] Postverbal **ndé** is used with verb forms that are already prefixed (see table at the end). Both **k(ə)-** and **ndé** may appear simultaneously, as shown in (11b).

[3] The Negative Purposive is morphologically based on the Prohibitive (see **5.** below), a fact that could (?) explain its non-parallel behaviour vis-à-vis the (positive) Purposive.

(15) **ècēbè̀ ngútɔ́ ɲɔ̀ɔ-íỉ̀ tɔ̀lákɔ́ lūumɔ́**
3.shut door.DEF child-PL 3.PURPNEG.PL enter
'He shut the door to prevent the children to come in.'

(16) *ǎí láʔ àʃâanɔ̀ óoyɔ́ nēe dɔ́ kɔ̀cɔ̄ tɔ̀lágɔ̀-* ... *-njàamɔ́.ndēkɔ́*
yes no because pus TOP at there 3.PURPNEG- -remain.again

(Resma, 177)

[about healing]
'Yes, no, because the pus, there, should not... remain any more.'

- the *Consecutive* forms (expressed by auxiliaries **bàlɔ́/bālɔ́** or **gàmɔ́/gāmɔ́**, followed by the simple infinitive):

(17) **m-ēegɔ̄ mɔ̄-ndáaŋɔ̀ nàakè bàlɔ́-kē lɛ̀ʔ_**
1S-want 1S-greet them 3.CONS-PL go
'I want to greet them before they go (~ and they will go).'

(18) **jàanɔ́ náhɔ́ kìinē ēegɔ̄ t-ɔ̄-lɔ̀ɔyɔ̄ mɔ̀ɔndɔ́ ngɔ̀m gāmɔ́**
occasion.DEF some.DEF? you 2.want DEP-2.FUT-smoke tobacco.DEF first 2.CONS

ɲèɛt_ (on the spot)
work
'Sometimes you need to smoke before you work.'

- the *negative* forms; the apocope may affect the verb **ènjɔ́** 'not be, not exist', and its compound associates (19-21), or the infinitive forms following the future auxiliary marked by the negation **cē** (22-23) (see also (7b-9b) above):

(19) **ùuɗɔ́ ènj_**
speech.DEF 3.not_be
'There is no problem/it's OK.'

(20) **sòwɔ́ ènj_ ée**
sorghum.DEF 3.not_be Q
'Isn't there any sorghum?'

(21) **làá ènjɔ́.dúùn_**
thing.DEF 3.not_be.add
'There is nothing more/nothing else.'

(22) **à-cē làay_** (cp. 4a)
3.FUT-NEG come
'He will not come.'

(23) **[...] kɔ̄-lá-ké làayɔ̄ cé ā-cē-kē lòmb_ ā-cē-kē lòmbɔ̄**
2-TEMPFUT-PL come DEM 2.FUT-NEG-PL throw 2.FUT-NEG-PL throw

gbɔ̀lɔ̄ŋ bïïtɔ̀ c_ (Resma, 274)
bang thus NEG
[speaking of the firewood the best men will bring to the bride's parents]
'... when you come, you will not throw (it), you will not throw (it), bang, like this.'

But the apocope affects the negation itself when the latter directly follows the verb form, a more frequent situation (24-26):

(24) **àayɔ̄ c_**
3.come NEG
'He didn't come.'

3

(25) **àayɔ̀-kē   c_**
    3.come-PL   NEG
    'They didn't come.'

(26) **ɔ̀osɔ̀.dúunɔ̀   c_**
    3.eat.add   NEG
    'He does not eat any more.'

5. On the other hand the apocope *never* affects
   – the *Conditional* forms (prefix **gɔ̀-/gɔ̄-/g-**)
   – the *Virtual* forms (auxiliary **àgɔ̀-/āgɔ̀-** + simple infinitive)
   – the *Prohibitive* forms[4] (auxiliary **tàgɔ̀-/tāgɔ̀-** + definite infinitive)

6. Domain of apocope: beyond the verb?
    As has been seen so far, the apocope may in fact affect something else than the verb (conjugated form, auxiliary or infinitive) strictly speaking, namely
   – the after-verb plural **-kē** (e.g. (6b) above)
   – the after-verb S-focalizing modifier **ndé** (see (10b-11) above)
   – the after-verb negation **cē**, etc. (see (24-26) above)
    However these elements immediately follow the verb and could be considered as belonging to the verb in a broad sense.
    Now I wonder whether the apocope may not also affect more remote elements, namely

• the *resumptive (?) negation* (**cē ~ cɔ̄**?) that appears after a following constituent (object or adverbial) (see also (23) above):

(27) a. **m-ɛ̄ʔɔ̄.táakɔ́   c_   dɔ́   jàal**
      1S-go.ever   NEG   to   Djallé(.LOC)
      'I never went to Djallé'

    b. **m-ɛ̄ʔɔ̄.táakɔ́   c_   dɔ́   jàalɔ̀   c_**
      1S-go.ever   NEG   to   Djallé.LOC   NEG
      'idem'

(28) **è-cē káacɔ̀ lùlɔ̀   c_**
    3.be   person   dying   NEG
    'He is not a person to die'

although the apocope proves not to be so regular with negation:

(29) **máà   j-ǎʄɔ̀   c_   kɔ́   nàakê   c(ɔ̄)**
    we   1P-be_related NEG   with   them   NEG
    'We are not related (through marriage)'

(30) **ǎ-lánɔ́   cē   kì   cɔ̄**
    3.FUT-make_drunk   NEG   you   NEG
    'It won't make you drunk.'

• the **t** *closing marker of the relative clause*, apparently an apocopated form of the near demonstratives **́-tì ~ ́-tè**[5]:

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[4] Imperative forms (2 sg./pl.) are drawn from the Aorist paradigm (the less marked one) and (as such?) not affected by apocope either.
[5] Note that the verb of a relative clause is never final and therefore cannot show up apocope by itself.

(31) **góoɲə̀ mòokə́ k-āɲə̀ tè ằ lɛ̄**
grain metal REL-3.remain DEM 3.be where?
'Where is the remaining money?'

(32) **īikə̀dɛ̀ jūwə́ k-ằ tə̀ vúkə̄ t_**
2.take pot.DEF REL-3.be on fire.LOC DEM
'Take the pot which is on the fire!'

(33) **sáawə́ mə̄-kə̀-mbə̀và t_ āasằ ngbūngb**
stew.DEF 1S-REL-cook.PROG DEM 3.steam.PROG swirling
'The stew that I am cooking is making steam'

(34) **[...] bằdéen t-ə̄-lɛ̀edə̄ kɔ̀ɔ lɛ̀ɛ́ k-ə̀-nằá t_** (Cam, 118)
then DEP-2.FUT-see still thing.DEF REL-3.FUT-do DEM
'... then you will see what he will do.'

(35) **jóoɗə̀-kē mēsə́ ằadə̄ gɛ̀ɛ kìinē mōtfằ k-ēekə̀dè.náamə̀ tə̀ yáà**
3.ask-PL chief.DEF 3.say that you cannon.DEF REL-2.take_by_force.from at body
bằand-îì t_ t-ằ wénə̀ yáà (Sen, 222)
Banda-PL DEM DEP-3.be where? EXCLM
'They ask the chief saying that, you, the cannon you took by force from the Banda, where is it?'

Nevertheless, apocope apparently never affects the anaphoric (or discourse) demonstrative **cé** 'the aforementioned' that has the same function:

(36) **ɛ̀ɛ̄ èekə̀.lɔ́ɔkə́ zə̀ngòngéɛ̀ ... cə̀lūukə̀ k-ɛ̀lānə̀ cé**
3.go 3.take.immediately sloughing.DEF.SUSP Chameleon REL-3.push_in.leave DEM
(Cam, 140)
'She goes and immediately takes the sloughing... that the Chameleon had pushed and left (into the ground).'

(37) **k-ằ-kē lòocə̄.láayə́ mə̄tōfə́ cé k-ằ-kē lētə̀ cé ...**
REL-3.FUT-PL carry.come cannon DEM REL-3.FUT-PL shoot DEM
òcə̄zèe [...] (Sen, 77)
3.fall.miss.SUSP
'When (the Banda) bring the cannon, when they shoot... (the cannonball) falls and misses (its target)...'

7. Function of apocope was first looked for in something like 'irrealis' or 'virtual' values, an assumption compatible with the purposive, negative, maybe also consecutive (?) forms, but not with the S-focalizing ones. Moreover apocope doesn't operate with conditional, virtual, and prohibitive forms (see **5.** above). Hence another explanation was necessary.

8. Discourse hierarchy
Focus or focalization represent a starting point toward several notions in affinity:
– *in focus/out of focus* (Hyman & Watters 1984)
– *assertion/préconstruit* (Robert 1993) [assertion/preconstructed(?)]
– *hiérarchie syntaxique* vs *hiérarchie énonciative* et *noyau informatif de l'énoncé* : « [...] l'explication proposée est que dans ces langues, la flexion verbale reflète des distinctions relatives à l'organisation discursive de l'unité phrastique dont le verbe est le noyau prédicatif. » (Creissels & Robert 1998: 162)
[... the suggested explanation is that in these languages, the verbal inflection reflects distinctions relative to the discourse organization of the sentence unit [?] of which the verb is the predicative nucleus.]

Indeed many languages display two types of verbal inflections, one type consisting of usually shorter verb forms that are *backgrounded* (put *out of assertion*) in the utterance hierarchy, may or may not be optional, and are frequently observed (be they free or compulsory) in the following contexts (after H&W 1984):

1. constituent focalization (term focus)
2. constituent questions (WH-questions)
3. negation
4. imperative
5. relative clauses
6. consecutive clauses

Furthermore, compatibilities of certain tenses/aspects with forms of either type are sometimes limited (see in particular Hyman & Watters 1984, but apparently no clear generalization for the time being).

9. As has been seen, Yulu's apocope matches points 1, 3, (5?), and 6 (including purposive?) in the above list.

Properties:

– apocope = phonological reduction or non-completeness as a sign of *backgrounding*: iconicity?
– despite some possible (meaningless?) variations in the case of negation and relatives (see section **6.** above), apocope proves to be automatic or obligatory: it is always *grammatically controlled* (vs. *pragmatically controlled* [H&W 1984]).

Ibibio (Benue-Congo/Lower Cross, Nigeria – Source: Oliveira 2007)

"The H&W [Hyman & Watters 1984] notion of 'auxiliary focus' proposes that, in addition to the traditionally recognised tense/aspect/mood and person determinations, the verbal inflections of some African languages express distinctions related to the discourse functions as focus[*]. Therefore, many of the different types of conjugations described in the African literature as the conjugations 'types **A/B/C**'[**], 'types **I/II**'[***], '**relative tenses**'[****], etc. can be better explained under the scope of **[–focus] / [+focus]** (auxiliary focus).

[Notes :] * Also topic. / ** Cf. Cook (2002). [Efik] / ***Cf. Essien, O. (1990). [Ibibio] / ****Cf. Caron (2000). [Hausa]"

(Oliveira 2007, translating and quoting Oliveira 2005)

Ibibio 'Past' morphemes:

I		II
Non-prox	Prox	
mà-	**mé-**	**ké-**

1. **ké-** grammatically controlled (WH-questions, Negation, Mood):

(38) **ùsó   á-*!ké*-bá   m̀mǒ m̀kpóñ?**
your_father 3S-PAST_II-be_somewhere where? yesterday/tomorrow
'Where was your father yesterday?'

(39) **Èmèm é-*!ké*-wòod-é   ébót**
E.   3S.NEG-PAST_II-kill-NEG goat
'Emem didn't kill a goat.'

(40) **èté ódò á-kpé-***!ké***-kà   úfôkńwèd-ńfàìñóf**
man DEM 3S-CONTRAFAC.-PAST_II-go university
á-kpàá-*!ké***-dìònó   íbât**
3S.SA-DESID-PAST_II-be_expert mathematics
'If that man had be gone to the university,
he would be expert in mathematics.'

2. **ké** pragmatically controlled (Contrastive focus), cp.:

(41) a. **Èmèm á-***mà***-á-dλñ   Ùyó**
E. 3S-PAST_I(NPR)-EXPL-live U.
'Emem has lived in Uyo.'

b. **ìyó!ó Ikọt Ekpene ké Èmèm á-***!ké***-dλñ**
no! I.E. FOC E. 3S-PAST_II-live
'— No, it is in Ikọt Ekpene that Emem lived (not in Uyo)'

Ibibio 'Future' morphemes:

I		II
Non-prox	Prox	
yà-	**yá-**	**dî-**

1. **dî-** grammatically controlled (WH-questions, Negation, Mood) [examples are parallel to (29-31)]

2. **dî-** pragmatically controlled (Exhaustive listing focus), cp.:

(42) a. **Kókóǹmá á-***yà***-wót   énáñ**
K. 3S-FUT_I(NPR) chicken
'Kokomma will kill a chicken.'

b. **Kókóǹmá á-***dî***-wót ké énáñ**
K. 3S-FUT_II FOC chicken
'Kokomma will kill a chicken (and only a chicken).'

Surkum (western Nilotic, Sudan – Source: Andersen 2007)

In an assertive context (43a-44a) as well as in the absence of an object (45a), the Surkum verbal predicate includes a FOCUS marker that on the other hand cannot appear in a negative (43b) or interrogative (44b) context, nor in the presence of an object (45b). In the latter situations indeed the FOCUS (i.e. *foregrounding* or *assertion*?) concerns an element that is distinct from the predicate or the clause as a whole:

(43) a. **tòʊl ŋâaŋ-g-ɪ́**
child cry-PST-FOC
'The child cried.'

b. **tòʊl ŋʌ́ ŋáaŋ-ʊ̀**
child not cry-PST
'The child did not cry.'

(44) a. **tòʊl ʔáɖ-ɪ́-rì**
child go-CF-FOC
'The child will go.'

b. **ŋáa ʔáḍ-í ?**
   who   go- CF
   'Who will go?'

(45) a. **tòʊl ʔʌ̀m-bì-rí**
      child   eat-AP-FOC
      'The child is eating.'

   b. **tòʊl ʔàm ɗúbán**
      child   eat   polenta
      'The child is eating polenta.'

Tswana (Bantu, Botswana et al. – Source: Creissels & Robert 1998)

In several verbal inflections, Tswana contrasts 'conjoint' and 'disjoint' forms that express the information structure of the utterance. The conjoint form never appears in the final position. Within the utterance a contrast is possible, and reflects the *rhematic* (conjoint form) respectively *thematic* (disjoint form) nature of the constituent that follows the verbal predicate. In the latter case, this constituent represents an extraposed theme that does not take part in the "sentence unit [?] of which the verb is the predicative nucleus" [« l'unité phrastique dont le verbe en question est le noyau prédicatif », p. 164]. Examples (transcription and glossing modified):

(46) a. **kè tsàmàìlè**
      I   go.PFT.DJT
      'I have gone.'

   b. **kè tsàmàìlè lé   ǹná**
      I   go.PFT.DJT also me
      'I have gone me also.'

   c. **kè tsàmáílè ká   tèrénà**
      I   go.PFT.CJT with train
      'I have gone by train.'

(47) a. **rè thúsá kítsò**
      we   help.CJT K.
      'We help Kitso.'

   b. **rè à   mò thúsá kítsò**
      we   DJT him help   K.
      'We help him, Kitso.'

Wolof (Atlantic, Senegal – Source: Creissels & Robert 1998)

In Wolof, "the verb form indeed varies according to the *syntactic* nature of the element that is in a *rhematic* function. Verbal inflections then make it possible to contrast cases where no constituent of the sentence unit [?] is distinguished as focus with cases where one of the syntactic components (subject, verb, or complement) has, beside its syntactic function, a specific informative function in the utterance (it is the focus)."

[« [l]a forme verbale varie en effet en fonction de la nature *syntaxique* de l'élément qui est en fonction *rhématique*. Les conjugaisons permettent alors d'opposer les cas où aucun constituant de l'unité phrastique n'est distingué comme focus, aux cas où l'un des composants syntaxiques (sujet, verbe ou complément) a, outre sa fonction syntaxique, une fonction informative particulière dans l'énoncé (il est le focus). », p. 168].

These specific inflections are traditionally labelled as 'subject / verb / complement emphatic' [« emphatiques du sujet / du verbe / du complément »]. Examples:

(48) **Peer lekk na**   (perfect)
     P.   eat   PFT.3S
     'Pierre has eaten.'

(49) **Peer dafa   lekk**   (verb emphatic)
     P.   EMPHVB.3S   eat
     'Pierre has EATEN.'

(50) **Peer moo   lo lekk**   (subject emphatic)
     P.   EMPHSUJ.3S it eat
     'PIERRE has eaten it.'

(51) **mburu laa   lekk**   (complement emphatic)
     bread   EMPHCOMPL.1S eat
     'I have eaten BREAD.'

Aghem (Grassfields, Cameroon – Source: Hyman et Watters 1984)

Compare the following examples from Aghem:

(52) a. **m̀ mɔ̂   zɨ̀ kɨ́-bé nɛ́**
        I   PAST1 ate fufu   today
        'I ate fufu today'

     b. **m̀ máà   zɨ̀ bé-ꜜkɔ́ nɛ́**
        I   PAST1/FOC ate fufu   today
        'I DID eat fufu today'

H&W argue that **mɔ̂** and **máà** represent two allomorphs of the same today past (PAST1) marker for the following reasons:
– the **máà** variant in (52b) expresses a focus (or emphasis) placed on the truth value of the sentence that is absent in (52a);
– in the presence of **máà**, no other element of the sentence may be put into focus;
– **máà** cannot appear in non-assertive contexts (relative, conditional, and most temporal clauses), i.e. in *backgrounded* or *out of focus* environments;
– moreover **bé-ꜜkɔ́** 'fufu' (52b) represents an 'out of focus' form of the noun **kɨ́-bé** (52a), as can be shown by comparing the further examples (53-54):

(53) **m̀ mɔ̂   zɨ̀ nɛ́   bé-ꜜkɔ́**
     I   PAST1 ate today fufu
     'I ate fufu TODAY'

(54) **m̀ mɔ̂   zɨ̀ kɨ́-bé nò   nɛ́**
     I   PAST1 ate fufu   FOC today
     'I ate FUFU today'

[*Personal remark concerning the last point:* However, if so, what is the difference between (52a) and (54)?]

Biafada (Atlantic, Guinea-Bissau – Source: Wilson 1993)

"**Salience**. In the three declarative tenses, the non-future, the habitual/future, and the progressive, the affirmative form can be marked for SALIENCE [...]; the forms concerned are referred to as **L-**forms. For the most part, forms with **L-** may be regarded as ASSERTIVE, being the principal, or salient, verb in a statement. They can also, however,

occur in relative clauses and questions, apparently when highlighting or foregrounding is required." (p. 70)

T.U.L. programme "Foregrounding and backgrounding: the morphological marking of discourse hierarchy" (2010-2013)

> "In a number of related and unrelated African languages, a curious interplay is observed between tense-aspect and focus. While the exact realization of this interplay varies from language to language, in each case some parameter of focus determines which of two corresponding sets of tense-aspect markers is used in a given instance. The well-reported occurrence of "main" vs. "relative" (clause) tenses is a case in point and has been documented from one extreme of the African continent to the other, e.g. Fula in the West and Nguni Bantu in the South(east)." (Hyman & Watters 1984: 233-234)

Many works are devoted to the syntactic (specific markers, word order), or prosodic (intonation, tone) expression of information structure. Morphological marking through the use of specific verb forms in particular contexts is apparently less studied (see however recent publications in *ZASPIL* and SFB 632 B7 Project on *Predicate centered focus*). A discursive approach would probably lead to reconsider the traditional presentation of the verb system in several African languages.

Marking discourse hierarchy through verb morphology thus represents the research field of the T.U.L. programme.

Starting from the significant paper by H&W 1984, and through the direct or indirect study of several languages, we are aiming to establish a typology of the facts and to get a better understanding of the general and peculiar properties of the verb morphology/discourse interplay. It is not clear yet whether the field will be limited to African languages or not.

Participants, and languages considered so far:

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	Elsa Oréal	Ancient Egyptian (Afro-Asiatic)
	Stéphane Robert	Wolof (Atlantic, Senegal)
	Marie-Claude Simeone-Senelle	Afar (eastern Cushitic, Ethiopia/++)
CNRS (DDL)	Denis Creissels	Tswana (Bantu, Botswana/++)
		Mandinka (Mande, Senegal/Gambia)
CNRS (SEDYL)	Marie-France Patte	
Univ. of Naples	Giorgio Banti	Somali (eastern Cushitic, Somalia/++)
		Saho (eastern Cushitic, Eritrea/++)
Univ. of Turin	Mauro Tosco	Gawwada (eastern Cushitic, Ethiopia)

— : —

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Abbreviations

1P	1st person pl. index	FOC	focus/S-focalizing form
1S	1st person sg. index	FUT	future
2	2[d] person index	H&W	Hyman & Watters
3	3[d] person index	LOC	locative
3S	3[d] pers. sing.	LOG	logophoric
AP	antipassive	NEG	negation/negative
CF	centrifugal	PAST1	today past
CJT	conjoint	PFT	perfect
CONS	consecutive	PL	plural
DEF	definite	PROG	progressive
DEM	demonstrative	PST	past
DEP	dependent	PURP	purposive
DJT	disjoint	PURPNEG	negative purposive
EMPHCOMPL	complement emphatic	Q	polar interrogative
EMPHSUJ	subject emphatic	SUSP	suspensive
EMPHVB	verb emphatic	TEMPFUT	future temporal
EXCLM	exclamative	TOP	topic

Morphology of the Yulu verb system

	I	II				III
	non-prefixed	Dependent (**t-**)	Relative (**k-**)	Conditional (**g-**)	non-prefixed	S-Focalizing (**k(ɔ)–**)
conjugated verb	Aorist	Dependent–Aorist	Relative–Aorist	Conditional–Aorist	–	S-Focalizing–Aorist
	Future	Dependent–Future	Relative–Future	Conditional–Future	–	S-Focalizing–Future
	Virtual	Dependent–Virtual	Relative–Virtual	(?)	–	(?)
(pref. +) aux. + inf.	–	–	Future Temporal	–	Consecutive 1/2	(?)
	–	Purposive	Temporal	–	–	–
pref. + purposive inf.	–	Prohibitive	–	–	–	–
aux. + definite inf.	–	Negative Purposive	–	–	–	–

> apocopated form

Types I / II / III condition three sets of personal indices marked by segmental prefixation and/or tonal alternations.

Type II forms represent the subordinate forms ('dependent' in the broadest sense).

S-focalizing forms (type III) and S-focalizing postverbal modifier **ndé** are used for focalizing the subject (the only constituent that may be focalized).

S-focalizing postverbal modifier **ndé** (also triggering apocope) is not represented in the table. It may be combined with many inflections of types II or III, but likely restrictions have not been checked systematically.

Imperative forms (2 sg./pl.) are drawn from the Aorist paradigm.