

PhD Thesis: Focus in Fulfulde

0 PhD Thesis: Contents

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1 Basic information on Fulfulde

- **Classification:** Niger-Congo > Atlantic-Congo > Atlantic > Northern > Senegambian > Fulani-Wolof > Fula > West Central (Lewis 2009)
- **ISO 693-3:** fuf
- Fulfulde (short: Ful) is spoken in **18 countries** from Western to Central Africa by around **18 million people** (Gajdos 2004: 9-11).
- There are around **3 million speakers** of the Fuuta Jaloo (short: FJ) dialect of Guinea (Lewis 2009). (⇒ variety of the dissertation)



Map 1: The Fulfulde dialect of Fuuta Jaloo (Guinea)¹

1.1 Basic phonology

- No tones
- The length of vowels and consonants is distinctive:

- (1) a. Ko hanki o loot-i. b. Ko hanki o loot-ii.
TF yesterday 3S wash-A.PFV2 TF yesterday 3S wash-M.PFV2
'It is yesterday that he washed (sth).'

¹ Harrison, Annette (2003): *Fulfulde language family report*, SIL Electronic Survey Reports 2003-009, <http://www.sil.org/silesr/2003/silesr2003-009.htm>.

- Consonant mutation (in Ful of FJ only for nouns, in other dialects as well for verbs):

(2)	a.	fell-o		b.	pell-e	
		hill-9			hill-3	
		‘hill’			‘hills’	[Baldé/Caudill/Diallo 2000: 25]

1.2 Basic morphosyntax

- SVO
- Head-initial
- **24 agreement classes:** agreement between the noun and definite articles, demonstratives, adjectives, numerals and pronouns:

(3)	a.	gerto-gal	njan-al	ngal	b.	gerto- de	njan-e	den
		chicken-11	big-11	DEF.11		chicken-3	big-3	DEF.3
		‘the big chicken (sg.)’				‘the big chicken (pl.)’		

- **Verbal morphology:**

(4) **stem**–(derivational suffix_n)–**TAM**–(subject pronoun)–(IO pronoun)–(DO pronoun)

(5) Mi **yah-an-ay-mo** ton.
 1S go-BEN-A.IPFV3-3S.O there
 ‘I will go there for him.’

[cf. Baldé/Caudill/Diallo 2000: 89]

- **Verb paradigms:**

➤ Three **perfective** paradigms vs. five **imperfective** paradigms, which go along with either the short or long subject pronouns (Diallo 2000: 151-173):

- PFV1: Accomplished action, description of states
- PFV2: Term focus, relative clauses, interrogatives, stative, durative
- PFV3: Focus on the lexical verb
- PFV.NEG: Negation
- IPFV1: Progressive
- IPFV2: Subjunctive, durative, habitual, sequential imperative
- IPFV3: Future, general truth, proverbs
- IPFV4: Term focus, relative clauses, interrogatives
- IPFV5: Imperative, optative
- IPFV.NEG: Negation

➤ In each paradigm the verbs are classified in three voices: **active, middle, passive**

➤ Extra preterite ending for most of the paradigms

➤ No conjugation for number or person

➤ Thus, the TAM-markers merge tense, aspect, voice and focus (as in many Atlantic languages, cf. Robert 2010).

- The paradigms which will be the most relevant in the upcoming section are the PERFECTIVE2 and the IMPERFECTIVE4 which look as follows:

Voice	PERFECTIVE2	IMPERFECTIVE4
ACTIVE	-i -(u)-mi (1s) -(u)-ɗaa (2s) -(u)-ɗen (1P.INCL) -(u)-ɗon (2P)	-ata -ay-mi (1s) -at-aa (2s) -et-en (1P.INCL) -ot-on (2P)
MIDDLE	-ii -i-mi (1s) -i-ɗaa (2s) -i-ɗen (1P.INCL) -i-ɗon (2P)	-otoo -otoo-mi (1s) -oto-ɗaa (2s) -oto-ɗen (1P.INCL) -oto-ɗon (2P)
PASSIVE	-aa -a-mi (1s) -a-ɗaa (2s) -a-ɗen (1P.INCL) -a-ɗon (2P)	-etee -etee-mi (1s) -ete-ɗaa (2s) -ete-ɗen (1P.INCL) -ete-ɗon (2P)

Table 1: The PERFECTIVE2 and IMPERFECTIVE4

Here, the suffixation of the subject pronoun in the 1st person singular (rare, but possible), 2nd person singular and the 1st person plural inclusive and 2nd person plural is required.

- (6) a. Ko ka maakiti o yah-i.
 TF PREP market.1 3S go-A.PFV2
 ‘It is to the market he went.’

- b. Ko ka maakiti yah-u-ɗaa.
 TF PREP market.1 go-A.PFV2-2S
 ‘It is to the market you went.’

[cf. Baldé/Caudill/Diallo 2000: 36]

2 Focus in Fulfulde

DEFINITION OF FOCUS:

“A focal information in a linguistic expression is that information which is relatively the most important or salient information in the given communicative setting, and considered by S [the speaker] to be most essential for A [the addressee] to integrate into his pragmatic information.” (Dik 1997: 326)

⇒ **functional approach**

PRAGMATIC FUNCTION: Closing an information gap (esp. completive/assertive focus); Rejecting, replacing, expanding, restricting, selecting information (contrastive focus).

2.1 Term focus

- **SCOPE:** TERM FOCUS comprises focus on the **subject**, the **object**, **adverb** etc. (no sentence or predicate-centered focus)

(7) Scope: **OBJECT**; Pragmatic function: **REPLACING**

A: John bought apples.

B: No, he bought **BANANAS**.

[Dik 1997: 333]

2.1.1 State-of-the-art

⇒ The most frequent construction for term focus: **[Ko X] S V X**

- The verb needs to be in PFV2 or IPFV4, where the suffixation of the subject pronoun is possible.
- When a pronoun is in focus, it must be the emphatic pronoun.

(8) SUBJECT FOCUS:

A: **Ko hombo** yah-i ka maakiti hande
TF who go-A.PFV2 PREP market.1 today

(, ko Cerno kaa ko an)?
TF Cerno or TF 2S.E

,WHO went to the market today (CERNO or YOU)?'

B: **Ko Cerno/min** (yah-i ka maakiti hande).
TF Cerno/1S.E go-A.PFV2 PREP market.1 today

,CERNO/I (went to the market today).' [cf. Baldé/Caudill/Diallo 2000: 36]

(9) OBJECT FOCUS:

A: **Ko hombo** Moustapha jomb-ata?
TF who Moustpaha marry-A.IPFV4

,To WHOM will Moustapha marry?'

B: **Ko Fatou/kanko** (o jomb-ata).
TF Fatou/3S.E 3S marry-A.IPFV4

,(He will marry to) FATOU/HER.'

[cf. Balde/Leroy 2002: 76]

(10) ADVERB FOCUS:

A: **Ko honde tuma** yah-u-daa ka maakiti?
 TF when go-A.PFV2-2S PREP market.1
 ‚WHEN did you go to the market?’

B: **Ko hande** (mi yah-i ka maakiti).
 TF today 1S go-A.PFV2 PREP market.1
 ‚(I went) TODAY (to the market).’ [cf. Baldé/Caudill/Diallo 2000: 36]

(11) FOCUS ON THE PP:

A: **Ko honto** hirt-oto-daa (, ko doo kaa ka Cerno)?
 TF where eat.dinner-M.IPFV4-2S TF here or PREP Cerno
 ‚WHERE will you eat dinner (, here or at Cerno’s)?’

B: **Ko ka Cerno** (mi hirt-oto).
 TF PREP Cerno 1S eat.dinner-M.IPFV4
 ‚(I will eat dinner) at CERNO’S.’ [cf. Baldé/Caudill/Diallo 2000: 47]

The pattern:

- (12) [Ko subject/emphatic pronoun] V X SUBJECT FOCUS
 [Ko object/emphatic pronoun] S V_(s) X OBJECT FOCUS
 [Ko X] S V_(s) X OTHER TERM FOCUS

⇒ whereas the verb needs to be either PFV2 or IPFV4

2.1.2 Hypothesis

2.1.2.1 Arguments for a cleft-like construction

Sylla (1993: 109f.) claims for the Senegalese dialect that term focus constructions are **cleft sentences** (*‘clivés’*), which are closely related to pseudo-clefts, interrogatives, relative and temporal sentences:

- (13) ko hannde Aali sood-i puccu ngu
 EMP aujourd’hui Aali acheter-ASP cheval DET
 ‘c’est aujourd’hui qu’Ali a acheté le cheval’
 EMP today Aali buy-ASP horse DET
 ‘it is today that Ali has bought the horse’ [Sylla 1993: 110]

DEFINITION OF A CLEFT: A CLEFT CONSTRUCTION (CC) is a complex sentence structure consisting of a **matrix clause headed by a copula** and a **relative or relative-like clause** whose relativized argument is coindexed with the predicative argument of the copula. Taken together, the matrix and the relative express a logically simple proposition, which can also be expressed in the form of a single clause without a change in truth conditions. (Lambrecht 2001: 467)

In favor of his hypothesis:

- *Ko* is a copula:

- | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---------------------|-----------|---------|----|-------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| (14) a. | Klaus | ko | Almanjo | b. | janngo | ko | alarba |
| | Klaus | COP | German | | tomorrow | COP | wednesday |
| | 'Klaus is a German' | | | | 'tomorrow is wednesday' | | |
- [Diallo forth.: 44]

- Same verb paradigms (PFV2 and IPFV4) in relative clauses and term focus constructions, which allow the suffixation of the subject pronoun:

- (15) SUBJECT RELATIVE:
- | | | | | | |
|-------|---------------------|--------|---------------------|-------|------------|
| Gorko | [sopp- u -dɔ | leɸ-dɛ | dɛn] _{Rel} | on | yah-i. |
| man.1 | cut-A.PFV2-REL.1 | tree-3 | DEF.3 | DEF.1 | go-A.PFV2. |
- ,The man who cut the trees has gone.' [cf. Balde/Leroy 2002: 50]

- (16) OBJECT RELATIVE:
- | | | | | | |
|------------|--------|----|------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| Gerto-gal | [ngal | ɓɛ | hirs-i | hanki] _{Rel} | ngal ... |
| chicken-11 | REL.11 | 3P | slaughter-A.PFV2 | yesterday | DEF.11 |
- ,The chicken that they slaughtered yesterday,' [cf. Baldé/Caudill/Diallo 2000: 91]

- The term focus construction is bi-clausal and the verb is marked as dependent.

Against his hypothesis:

- No relative pronoun in “clefts”, although “normal” relatives have such a pronoun:

- (15) SUBJECT RELATIVE:
- | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------------|--------|---------------------|-------|------------|
| Gorko | [sopp- u - dɔ | leɸ-dɛ | dɛn] _{Rel} | on | yah-i. |
| man.1 | cut-A.PFV2-REL.1 | tree-3 | DEF.3 | DEF.1 | go-A.PFV2. |
- ,The man who cut the trees has gone.' [cf. Balde/Leroy 2002: 50]

(16) OBJECT RELATIVE:

Gerto-gal [ngal be hirs-i hanki]_{Rel} ngal ...
 chicken-11 REL.11 3P slaughter-A.PFV2 yesterday DEF.11
 ,The chicken that they slaughtered yesterday,’

[cf. Baldé/Caudill/Diallo 2000: 91]

	<i>ko</i>	relative pronoun	suffixation of the subject pronoun	PFV2	IPFV4
term focus/ interrogatives	x		x	x	x
relative clauses		x	x (in object rel.)	x	x

Table 2: Identical features between term focus constructions and relative clauses

⇒ Because of the absence of the relative pronoun in the term focus constructions, I would claim for those to be **cleft-like** rather than clefts.

2.1.2.2 On the copula *ko*

- *Ko* appears also in pseudo-clefts, but must be analyzed here as a relative pronoun, as it agrees with the definite article:

(17) PSEUDO-CLEFT:

[Ko o sood-i kon] moy’-aa.
 REL.18 3S buy-A.PFV2 DEF.18 be.good-A.PFV.NEG
 ,What he bought isn’t good.’

[Baldé/Caudill/Diallo 2000: 92]

- As in the relative clauses and the term focus constructions, the same verb paradigms are the only grammatically correct ones:

	<i>ko</i>	suffixation of the subject pronoun	PFV2	IPFV4
term focus/ interrogatives	x	x	x	x
relative clauses		x (in object rel.)	x	x
pseudo-clefts	x	x	x	x

Table 3: Identical features between term focus constructions, Relative clauses and pseudo-clefts

- The question arises if class 18 is used in pseudo-clefts only because of its phonological resemblance to the copula

2.2 *Predicate-centered focus*

- **SCOPE:** PREDICATE-CENTERED FOCUS comprises focus on the **lexical verb** (state of affairs) or operators as **TAM** and **polarity** (esp. truth value)

(18) FOCUS ON THE LEXICAL VERB:

A: Did you paint or repaint the house?

B: I didn't **PAINT** the house, I **RE**ainted it. [Dik 1997: 330]

(19) TAM-FOCUS:

A: John painted the house yesterday!

B: John **HASn't** painted the house, he **IS** painting it right now. [Dik 1997: 330]

(20) TRUTH-VALUE-FOCUS:

A: Peter solved the problem.

B: He did **NOT** solve the problem. [Dik 1997: 331]

2.2.1 State-of-the-art

2.2.1.1 Focus on the lexical verb

- **PERFECTIVE3:** “[II] permet d’exprimer une focalisation du prédicat. Il s’agit d’une insistance sur l’action exprimée dans le verbe. Il est marqué par une forte accentuation sur la première syllable du verbe.”

(Diallo 2000: 156)

(21) A: Bubakar hocc-**u** kaa o wujj-**u**?
 Bubakar pick.up-A.PFV3 or 3S steal-A.PFV3
 ‚Did Bubakar PICK it UP or did he STEAL it?’

B: O hocc-**u** o wujj-**aa**.
 3S pick.up-A.PFV3 3S steal-A.PFV.NEG
 ‚He PICKED it UP, he didn't steal it.’

[Diallo 2000: 157]

- Imperfective: No hints in the literature
- Possibly IMPERFECTIVE3:

(22) A: Bubakar hocc-**ay** kaa o wujj-**ay**?
 Bubakar pick.up-A.IPFV3 or 3S steal-A.IPFV3
 ‚Will Bubakar PICK it UP or will he STEAL it?’

B: O hocc-ay o wujj-ataa.
 3S pick.up-A.IPFV3 3S steal-A.IPFV.NEG
 ,He will PICK it UP, he won't steal it.'

2.2.1.2 TAM-Focus

- No hints in the literature
- The imperfective seems to be reinforced by the distantial suffix *-oy-*, the perfective by the preterite suffix *-no*:

(23) A: O hocc-oy-ay kaa o hocc-ii-no?
 3S pick.up-DIST-A.IPFV3 or 3S pick.up-A.PFV1-PRET
 ,WILL he pick it up or HAS he picked it up?'

B₁: O hocc-oy-ay.
 3S pick.up-DIST-A.IPFV3
 ,He WILL pick it up.'

B_s: O hocc-ii-no.
 3S pick.up-A.PFV1-PRET
 ,He HAS picked it up.'

2.2.1.3 Truth value focus

- No hints in the literature
- In the perfective, the PFV1-PRET seems to contrast with the PFV.NEG

(24) A: Mi and-aa si o haal-ii-no fun.
 1S know-A.PFV.NEG if 3S say-A.PFV1-PRET 24:0
 ,I don't know if he has said that.'

B₁: Pellet, o haal-ii-no fun!
 true 3S say-A.PFV1-PRET 24:0
 ,Yes, he HAS said that!'

B₂: Oo'woye, o haal-aali fun!
 no 3S say-PFV.NEG 24:0
 ,No, he has NOT said that!'

- In the imperfective, the DIST-IPFV3 seems to contrast with the IMPF.NEG:

(25) A: Mi holl-aaki o yah-oy-ay Mali.
 1S announce-A.PFV.NEG 3S go-DIST-A.IPFV3 Mali
 ,I don't believe that he will go to Mali.'

B₁: Pellet, o yah-oy-ay Mali!
 true 3S go-DIST-A.IPFV3 Mali
 ,Yes, he WILL go to Mali!’

B₂: Oo’woye, o yah-oy-taa Mali.
 no 3S go-DIST-A.IPFV.NEG Mali
 ,No, he will NOT go to Mali!’

2.2.2 Hypothesis

Focus on	PERFECTIVE	IMPERFECTIVE
lexical verb	Did/Will he PICK it UP or did/will he STEAL it ? PFV3	IPFV3
TAM	HAS he picked it up or WILL he pick it up ? PFV1-PRET	DIST-IPFV3
truth value	He HAS said that. PFV1-PRET	He WILL go. DIST-IPFV3
	He has NOT said that. PFV.NEG	He will NOT go. DIST-IPFV.NEG

Table 4: Summary of the verb forms for predicate-centered focus

⇒ Operator focus is encoded identically.

3 Remaining questions

- What role does intonation play for focus (esp. for in situ focus)?
- SCOPE OF FOCUS: sentence focus, VP focus, other terms/phrases?
- What kind of focus types (assertive, contrastive) can be expressed by the same structure?
- PREDICATE-CENTERED FOCUS: Does focus involving stative verbs differ? Are the hypotheses correct? Are there alternative forms?

3.1 Example of a questionnaire:



Sentence focus: A: What happens?
B: [The boy is swimming]_{Foc}.

Subject focus: A: Who is running?
B: The [WOMAN]_{Foc} is running.

Truth value focus: A: Does the man enjoy walking?
B: Yes, he [DOES]_{Foc} enjoy walking.

4 Abbreviations

A	active voice	IPFV	imperfective
ASP	aspect marker (Sylla 1993)	M	middle voice
BEN	benefactive	NEG	negation
COP	copula	O	object pronoun
DEF	definite	P	plural
DEM	demonstrative	PFV	perfective
DET	determiner (Sylla 1993)	PREP	preposition
DIST	distantial	PRET	preterite
E	emphatic pronoun	REL	relative pronoun
EMP	emphatic (Sylla 1993)	S	singular
INCL	inclusive	TF	term focus

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