Verb Conjugation and Predicate-Centred Focus in Fula Dialects

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0   PhD Thesis: Contents

Working Title: **"A Morphosyntactic Study on Information Structure in Pular (Fula of Fuuta Jaloo, Guinea)[1]"**

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1   Introduction

Motivation

Whilst term focus has been cross-dialectically well-investigated in Fula (Diallo ms.),
predicate-centred focus has not yet been subject to a comparative study in Fula dialects.

(1)   {Who drove to the crime scene?}

[		Focus		]	[Background]
ko	*docteur*	*ndart-oowo*	*may-ɓe*	*yah-i*	*on*
T.FOC	doctor.1	look:REP-IPFV:1.REL	dead.person-2	go-PFV2	there

‘THE MEDICAL EXAMINER drove there.’, lit. ‘It is THE DOCTOR WHO USES TO LOOK
AGAIN AT DEAD PEOPLE drove there.’ (Pular; Apel, f.n.)

Theoretical Preliminaries

- Functional approach by Dik (1997: 326)

    “The focal information in a linguistic expression is that information
    which is relatively **the most important or salient** in the given
    communicative setting [...]” (emphasis added)

- Term focus (subject, object, adverbial) vs. predicate-centred focus (state-of-affairs,
  polarity, tense/aspect/mood)
- Categorical sentences (topic-comment or focus-background structure) vs. thetic sentences

Classification and Geographic Distribution

- Niger-Congo > Atlantic-Congo > Northern 2 > Fula-Serer (Williamson & Blench 2000: 18;
  Segerer 2010)
- Fula: ≈ 22 million speakers in 18 countries (Gajdos 2004: 10f.)

Map 1. Fula in Africa (map by Simon Argus, based on Harrison 2003)

- "Western" vs. "Eastern" dialects: consonant alternation (i.a. Mukarovsky 1962), verb morphology and infinitive marking (i.a. Jungraithmayr & Abu-Manga 1989), ordering within the noun phrase and interrogative markers (Lacroix 1981), locative periphrasis (i.a. Miyamoto 1993)
- "Western" vs. "Central" vs. "Eastern" dialects: Klingenheben (1941); Labouret (1952); Diallo (ms.)
- some comparative work do not try to group dialects together, i.a. Ard (1979); Gottschligg (1999)

Sources on Fula Dialects (subdialects in italices)
- Pular (Guinea): Apel (field work data, collected between 2012 and 2015 in Dalaba and Conakry, Guinea, and Berlin, Germany); Diallo (2000)
- Pulaar (Senegal): Sylla (1982); Mohamadou (2012)
- Maasina (Mali): Breedveld (1995; *Maasinankoore*)
- Gorgal (Burkina Faso): Bidaud & Prost (1982; *Liptako*); Gottschligg (1992; *Liptaako/Jelgooji*); Sow (2003; *Gaawoore*)
- Borgu (Benin): Gottschligg (draft)
- Leydi Nigeria (Nigeria): Arnott (1970; *Gombe*); McIntosh (1984; *Kaceccereere*)
- Adamawa (Nigeria, Cameroon): Noye (1974; *Diamaré*); Klingenheben (1963)

There are two problems with the sources:

1) about half of the sources are more than 30 years old, and
2) often no context is provided for the example sentences.

Some Typological Features

- Word order: SVO
- Phonology: intonation language, length of vowels and consonants is distinctive

(2)[2] a. *finugol*   'to wake up'
      b. *fiinugol*   'to flower'

- Syntax: (predominantly) head-initial
- Morphology: agreement/noun classes (21-24 classes, depending on dialect); initial consonant mutation for singular/plural stems in nouns and verbs (also some qualifiers and quantifiers)

(3)   a. *suu-du*   'house' (class 7)
      b. *cuu-ɗi*   'houses' (class 4)

General Verb Structure

Verb stems consist minimally of the root and one or more conjugation suffixes. Extended verb stems have optional suffixes:

(4)   **root** – (derivational suffix(es)) – **conjugation suffix(es)** – (subject pronoun) – (indirect object pronoun) – (direct object pronoun)

(5)   *ko*   *rowani*   ***jooɗ-an-i-no*** = *ɗaa* = *mo*
      T.FOC   last.year.1 sit-BEN-MIDD.PFV2-PRET = 2S = 1.PRO
      'You had sat for him/her LAST YEAR.', lit. 'It is last year (that) you had sat for him/her.' (Pular; Apel, f.n.)

Conjugation Paradigms

- Features of the verb system: aspect (perfective vs. imperfective), voice (active, middle, passive)
- Paradigms are numbered instead of labelled (i.a. Diallo 2000; Sylla 1982, 1993)
- Conjugation suffixes: monosyllabic -V(V), -VC, bisyllabic -V(V)CV, -VCV(V), trisyllabic -(V)CVVCV
- Preterite: additional suffix *-no(o)*

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[2] Examples (2) and (3) are from Pular.

Voice	PFV1	PFV2	PFV3	PFV.NEG	IPFV1	IPFV2	IPFV3	IPFV4	IPFV.NEG
Active	-u/-∅	-i [-u/-∅]	-ii	-aali/-aa	-u/-∅ [-e]	-a [-∅/-e]	-ay	-(a)ta [-Vt/-ay)]	-(a)taa
Middle	-i	-ii [-i]	-ike	-aaki	-o	-oo [-o]	-oto	-otoo [-oto]	-(o)taako
Passive	-a	-aa [-a]	-aama	-aaka	-e	-ee [-e]	-ete	-etee [-ete]	-(e)taake
Active		-(u)noo [-(u)no]	-iino	-aano			-ayno	-aynoo	-ataano
Middle		-inoo [-ino]	-inoke	-anooki			-otono	-otonoo	-otanooko
Passive		-anoo [-ano]	-anooma	-anooka			-eteno	-etenoo	-etanooke

Table 1. The conjugation paradigms in Pular (Guinea)

- The conjugation suffixes are portmanteau morphemes (in example 1, the conjugation suffix *-i* encodes information on aspect = perfective, polarity = affirmative, syntactic status = dependent, and voice = active)

2 "Perfective 1" in Fula

2.1 Forms

- This paradigm has been variably defined as "verb focus" (Breedveld 1995), "emphatic past" (Arnott 1970), or "emphatic completive" (McIntosh 1984)

Voice	Perfective 1
Active	-u/-∅
Middle	-i/-∅
Passive	-a

Table 2. The suffixes of
Perfective 1 across Fula dialects

- The zero morphemes (-∅) leave the verb root as the only morphological element of the verb (information on aspect, polarity, syntactic status or voice is deleted)
- This paradigm does not have any counterpart in the imperfective

2.2 Functions

1. State-of-Affairs Focus

- This function is best described in the published sources

(6)   [BG]   [Focus]
    ɓe   *ngar-∅*
    2.PRO   come-PFV1
    '(It's not here they were born,) they CAME.' (Leydi Nigeria; McIntosh 1984: 242)

(7) [BG]   [Focus] [BG]

    mi   *hɔkk-**a**=ɗum*

    1S   give-PASS.PFV1=24.PRO

    'It was GIVEN to me (, it was not lent to me.)' (Maasina, Breedveld 1995: 195)

2. Focus on the Verb Phrase

- This function is less frequently described explicitly

(8) {Qu'a fait Mamadou?} [What did Mammadu do?]

    [Background]   [Focus   ]

    Mammadu   *ruf-∅*   *kos-am*   *ɗam*

    PN   spill-PFV1   milk-23   23.DEF

    'Mamadou a renversé le lait.' [Mammadu SPILLED THE MILK.] (Pulaar; Sylla 1982: 94)

(9) {Did Hamza write the letter or did he drink the orange?}

    [BG]   [Focus   ]

    o   *yaar-**u***   *leemunnee-re* *nden*

    1.PRO   drink-PFV1   orange-5   5.DEF

    'He DRANK THE ORANGE.' (Pular; Apel, f.n.)

3. Thetic Statements

- The use of Perfective 1 in thetic statements was first stated by Arnott (1970: 267):

> "The use of the Emphatic Past [=Perfective 1] serves to **emphasize the particular action or process**, in opposition (expressed or implied) to some other action or process [=state-of-affairs/VP focus], or to **emphasize a whole sentence or clause** [=thetic statements]." (emphasis added)

(10) {What happened?}

    [Thetic   ]

    ɓe   *war-**u***   *lan-ɗo*   *on*

    2.PRO   kill-PFV1   chef-1   1.DEF

    'They killed the king.' (Pular; Apel, f.n.)

(11) {What happened?}

    [Thetic   ]

    mi *yaar-**u-no**=ɓe*   *ŋgam*   *ɓe*   *pemmb-oo*

    1S   go:MAN-PFV1-PRET=2.PRO   in.order.that   2.PRO   shave-MIDD.IPFV2

    'I had taken them to get shaved.', lit. 'I had gone (with) them in order that they get shaved.' (Leydi Nigeria; Arnott 1970: 267)

2.3 Perfective 1 and the Preterite

- Functions of the preterite suffix *-no(o)*: a) situate an action in the past with respect to the time of the story told, as an anterior (Diallo 2000: 174), b) expression of simultaneous action (Evans 2001: 146), and c) expression of two actions that do not happen at the same rhythm (Evans 2001: 146)
- The preterite suffix attaches not only to verb stems but also to auxiliaries

- For Pular (Guinea) and Maasina (Mali), it is explicitly said that Perfective 1 does not co-occur with the preterite suffix (Diallo 2000; Breedveld 1995)

	Voice	Perfective 1
Non-Preterite	Active	-u/-∅
	Middle	-i
	Passive	-a
Preterite	Active	
	Middle	
	Passive	

Table 3. The suffixes of Perfective 1 in Pular (Guinea) in non-preterite and preterite

- For Pulaar (Senegal), Gorgal (Burkina Faso), and Leydi Nigeria, it is explicitely said that Perfective 1 does co-occur with the preterite suffix (Mohamadou 2012; Bidaud & Prost 1982; Arnott 1970)

	Voice	Perfective 1
Non-Preterite	Active	-u/-∅
	Middle	-i
	Passive	-a
Preterite	Active	**-(u)no**
	Middle	**-ino**
	Passive	**-ano**

Table 4. The suffixes of Perfective 1 in Pulaar (Senegal) in non-preterite and preterite

- Question: Does the preterite suffix in Pular also attach to Perfective 1 but has not been described yet?
- Answer: yes

(14) a. **_hanki_**   _jemma_ _kasilamogoo-jo_ _dog-**u-no**_
yesterday night.1 prisoner-1   run-PFV1-PRET
'Last night a prisoner escaped.' (Pular; Apel, f.n. SLP_038)

b. *__hanki__   _jemma_ _kasilamogoo-jo_ _dog-**u**_
yesterday night.1 prisoner-1   run-PFV1-PRET
'Last night a prisoner escaped.' (Pular; Apel, f.n.)

(15) {What happened **yesterday**?}
a. _ɓe_   _piy-**u-no**_   _ɓi-ɗɗo_   _goree-jo_   _an_   _on_
2.PRO beat-PFV1-PRET child-1   age.mate-1 1S.POSS 1.DEF
'They beat my friend's child.' (Pular; Apel, f.n., FT_030_B)

b. _#ɓe_   _sopp-**u**_   _legg-al_ _ngal_
2.PRO cut.down-PFV1 tree-11 11.DEF
'They cut down the tree.' (Pular; Apel, f.n., FT_031_B)

(16) {Did he win or lose the game?}
a. _o_   _fool-**u-no**_
1.PRO win-PFV1-PRET
'He WON.' (Pular; Apel, f.n., FT_112_B)

b. _o_   _fool-**u**_
1.PRO win-PFV1
'He WON.' (Pular; Apel, f.n.)

- (Explicit or implicit) time adverbs require the preterite (14 and 15)
- If no time adverb is present (16), the interpretation of the sentence with the preterite is that the action is further from the present time of speaking (16a) than the sentence without it (16b)

	Voice	Perfective 1
Non-Preterite	Active	-u/-∅
	Middle	-i
	Passive	-a
Preterite	Active	**-uno**
	Middle	**-ino**
	Passive	**-ano**

Table 5. The suffixes of Perfective 1 in Pular (Guinea) in non-preterite and preterite

2.4 Interaction with Language-External Focus Markers

- In the Borgu dialect (Benin), the markers *-a/-wa/-ya* are (optionally?) suffixed to the conjugated verb, also when this one occurs in Perfective 1

(17) {What did she do?}

    a.   [BG]   [Focus   ]

          o   *loot-**u**=**wa***   *juu-ɗe*   *makko*

          1.PRO   wash-PFV1＝FOC   hand-3   1.POSS

          'She WASHED HER HANDS.' (Borgu; Gottschligg draft: 5)

    b.   [BG]   [Focus   ]

          o   *loot-**i**=**ya***

          1.PRO   wash-MIDD.PFV1＝FOC

          'She BATHED.', lit. 'She WASHED HERSELF.' (Borgu; Gottschligg draft: 6)

- The addition of these verbal focus markers is probably borrowed from Baatonum (Niger-Congo > Volta-Congo > North > Gur > Bariba) (Gottschligg draft: 5), a SOV language
- In the examples given in Schwarz & Fiedler (2011) based on the focus translation of QUIS, the markers *-a/-wa/ya/-na* are suffixed to verbs, nouns, pronouns, determiners, adverbs, and express subject, object, adverb, state-of-affairs, and polarity focus; they are also used in identificational clauses
- The form and prosodic realisation of the marker depends on its morphophonological environment

(18) {The woman hit Peter}

    a.   [BG   ]   [Focus]

          ú   *nùń*   *sókã̌-**wà***

          1   OBJ1   call-PTL

          'She CALLED him.' (Baatonum; Schwarz & Fiedler 2011: 43)

    b.   [Background   ]   [Focus]

          u   *(màa kpàm mã̌à)* *wǐ*   *bɔ̄ri-**ya***   *(mã̌à)*

          1   "also"   OBJ1   push-PTL   ?again

   'She also PUSHED him.' (Baatonum; Schwarz & Fiedler 2011: 45)

Map 2. Baatonum in contact with Fula (based on Harrison 2003 and Lewis et al. 2015)

2.5 Interaction with Affirmative (Term) Focus Markers

- In the dialect of Burkina Faso, the Perfective 1 is (optionally?) used together with the term focus marker *wo*, which seems to be reinterpreted as general focus marker, irrespective of the grammatical status of the element over which it takes scope

(19) [Focus] [Background]

wo   *habb-u*   *baal-i* *kunndoo-ji* *du*   *ɓe*   *ngoll-ata*

T.FOC   cotton-7   sheep-4 ?-4   7.DEF 2.PRO   work-IPFV4

'Sogar <u>Wolle von Wollschafen</u> verarbeiten sie.' [It is EVEN THE WOOL OF SHEEPS (that) they work.] (Gorgal; Gottschligg 1992: 291)

(20) [Background] [Focus]

cobb-al   *mon*   **wo**   *mett-**u***   *way*

cobbal-11 2.POSS FOC   taste.bad-PFV1   very

'Euer <u>cobbal</u> (Getränk) schmeckt wirklich abscheulich!' [Your "cobbal" (drink/ porridge) tastes VERY bad.] (Gorgal; Gottschligg 1992: 290)

2.6 Interaction with Negative (Term) Focus Markers

- In the dialects from Gaawoore (Gorgal, Burkina Faso) eastwards, Perfective 1 is negated with the negative term focus marker *wanaa/naa,* and not with the perfective negative paradigm as in the western dialects

(21) **naa** *Hamadu* *won-i* *laam-ɗo* *wur-o* ^{n}*go*
T.FOC.NEG PN be-PFV2 leader-1 village-9 9.DEM
'Le chef de ce village n'est pas Hamadou.' [HAMADU is not the leader of this village.]
(Adamawa; Noye 1974: 73)

(22) a. **naa** *o* *dogg-u,* *o* *doyy-i*
FOC.NEG 1.PRO run-PFV1 1.PRO fall-MIDD.PFV1
'Il n'a pas couru, il est tombé.' [He did not RUN, he FELL.] (Adamawa; Noye 1974: 64)

b. *o* *dog-**aali,*** *o* *doyy-i*
1.PRO run-PFV.NEG 1.PRO bruise-MIDD.PFV1
'He did not RUN, he BRUISED (e.g. his arm, e.g.).' (Pular; Apel f.n.)

2.7 *Section Summary*

- Perfective 1 has cross-dialectally three functions: state-of-affairs focus, verb phrase focus, and thetic statements
- Data for Pular showed that this paradigm can co-occur with the preterite suffix
- The forms of the conjugation suffixes of this paradigm are quite homogeneous across these dialects, despite the large area in which the language is spoken across the continent
- "Western" dialects: Pular (Guinea), Pulaar (Senegal), and Maasina (Mali), Perfective 1 is negated with the perfective negative
- "Central" dialects: Gorgal (Burkina Faso) and Borgu (Benin), affirmative and negative (term) focus markers co-occur with Perfective 1
- "Eastern" dialects: Leydi Nigeria and Adamawa (Nigeria, Cameroon), negative (term) focus markers co-occur with Perfective 1
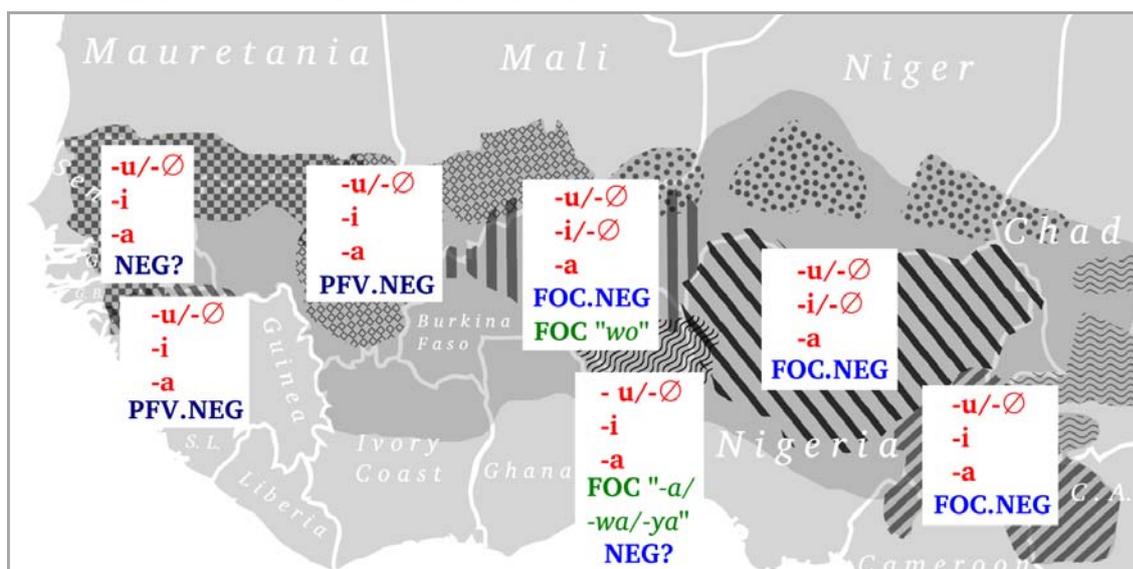
Map 3. The suffixes of Perfective 1 in seven Fula dialects, their negation and their interaction with focus markers

3 Corpus Study

3.1 Preliminaries

- In the appendix of the dissertation, there are 14 texts of different length that are used in the chapter on the corpus study (10 monologues and 4 dialogues; 7 with and 7 without visual stimulus)
- Here: pilot study with 6 texts, all without visual stimulus
  - 1 dialogue, 2 narrations, 3 descriptions/procedurals
  - 4 women, 2 men, age 20-63

- For investigating the distribution of focus types in the corpus, the texts were divided into clauses
  - Restriction to full verbal indicative clauses with a focus-background structure (exclusion of thetic utterances, questions, imperatives, non-verbal clauses, and elliptical utterances)
- From 737 clauses across 6 texts in total, 554 categorical clauses remain for the corpus study (about 75%)
- Concentration on clause-internal information structure; no analysis of the interaction of main and subordinate clauses

- Two approaches for the identification of focus within the clauses were used
  1) determination of the textual context
  2) searching for marked focus constructions

Question: How many time does Perfective 1 occur? What is its function?

3.2 Problems

1. Problems with Conjugation Suffixes
- Differentiation between paradigms in perfective
  - Perfective 1 = Perfective 2 in subordinate clauses when a clitic subject pronouns attaches to the verb stem (but: different syntactic status)
  - Perfective 1 and 2 have identical forms in main clauses in the preterite
  - Vowel length is the only distinction in different main clauses

	Voice	PFV1	PFV2				PFV.NEG
		SoA (main)	dependent (subordinate)		narration (main)	general (main + few subord.)	
Non-Preterite	Active	-u/-∅	-i	[-u/-∅]	-i	-ii	-aali/-aa
	Middle	-i	-ii	[-i]	-ii	-ike	-aaki
	Passive	-a	-aa	[-a]	-aa	-aama	-aaka
Preterite	Active	-(u)no	-(u)noo	[-(u)no]	-(u)no	-iino	-aano
	Middle	-ino	-inoo	[-ino]	-ino	-inoke	-anooki
	Passive	-ano	-anoo	[-ano]	-ano	-anooma	-anooka

Table 6. Perfective suffixes in Pular (Guinea)

(23) {We were there [at the naming ceremony]. We were a little bit messy.}

yim-ɓe   ɓen   wern-a(a)?   moyyaa

people-2 2.DEF lodge:CAUS-PASS.PFV1?2?   well

‘The people were well welcomed. {We got up.}’ (Pular; Apel, f.n., Text D_16)

- During transcription with an informant, special attention was paid to vowel length of these ambiguous cases
- A study on realisation of vowel length (e.g. middle and passive voice in Perfective 1 and 2 non-preterite, main clauses) could give an answer to the question of whether vowel length is a statistically measurable indicator for distinguishing the paradigms

2. Problems with Differentiating SoA vs. VP focus

- Does VP focus also include predicates without objects or adverbials?

(24) {The people were well welcomed.}

men   imm-ii

1P.EXCL   get.up-MIDD.PFV2

‘We got up.’ (Pular; Apel, f.n., Text D_17)

(25) *ɓe   okk-or-i=men   jus*

2.PRO give-MAN-MIDD.PFV2=1P.EXCL   juice.1

‘They gave juice to us.’ (Pular; Apel, f.n., Text D_18)

## 3.3 Distribution of Focus Types in the Corpus

- Sentences with a topic-comment structure are counted as VP focus, irrespective of presence/absence of objects and adverbials
- Subject, adverbial and object focus mean comprise unambiguous cases
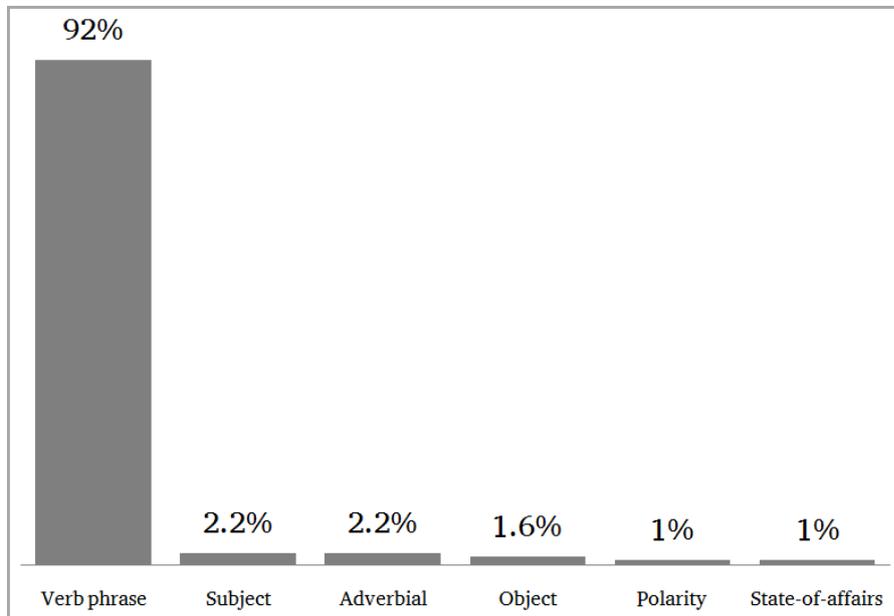
Figure 1. Focus types according to scope in the corpus (total: 554 clauses; VP focus 510, subject focus 12, adverbial focus 12, object focus 10, polarity focus 6, state-of-affairs focus 6)
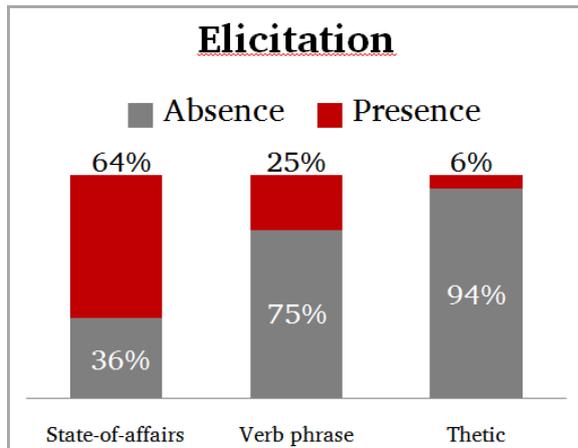
3.4 Appearance of Perfective 1

- Appearance of Perfective 1 in all three contexts
  - State-of-affairs and VP focus: ratio of all affirmative perfective instances in main clauses
  - Thetic statements: ratio of all instances of thetic statements
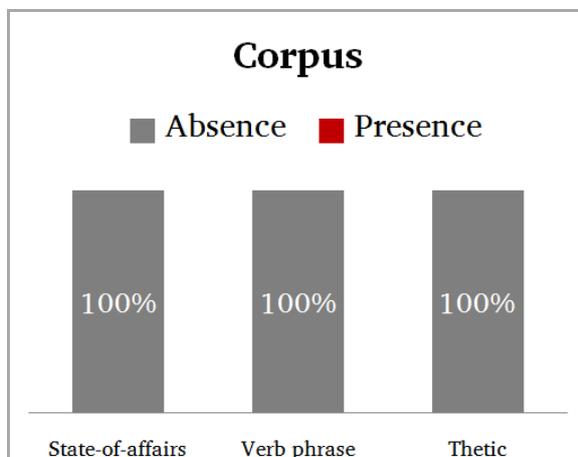
Figure 2. (Non-)Appearance of Perfective 1 in the corpus (state-of-affairs focus 2, VP focus 226, thetic

statements 11)

Figure 3. Appearance of Perfective 1 in the Focus
Translation (Skopeteas et al. 2006) and Short
Language Profile (in state-of-affairs focus 14/22,
VP focus 1/4, thetic statements 5/48)

4   Summary

- The forms of Perfective 1 are quite homogenous across Fula dialects
- Three functions: state-of-affairs focus, verb phrase focus, thetic statements
- The dialects differ with respect to the interaction with focus markers
- Three-fold division between dialects based on Perfective 1

- The paradigm is productive in elicitation (state-of-affairs focus > verb phrase
  focus > thetic statements)
- It is not productive in the corpus at all

- This pilot study highlights the importance of investigating natural discourse in addition
  to looking into grammars and elicited data for assessing the frequency of constructions

5   Abbreviations

BEN	benefactive	MIDD	middle voice	POSS	possessive pronoun
DEF	definite article	NEG	negative	PRO	3rd person pronoun
DEM	demonstrative article	OBJ	object	PTL	particle
		PASS	passive voice	REL	relative pronoun
FOC	focus	PFV	perfective	REP	repetitive
IPFV	imperfective	PRET	preterite	S	singular
MAN	manner	PN	proper name	T	term

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