



Vortrag im Rahmen des Linguistischen Kolloquiums

19. November 2013

Victoria Apel

HU-Berlin

Dissertation : « Topic and focus in Fula dialects »

Owing to migration since the 7th century, Fula (Atlantic<Niger-Congo) is the language with the largest geographical expansion in Africa. Today it is spoken by around 22 million people in 18 countries, from Senegal to Sudan (Gajdos 2004). The Fula dialects are identified as “Eastern” and “Western” Fula, with 5 main subdialects under each (Harrison 2003), based on divergence in the lexicon, phonological features (e.g. consonant alternation), and morphology (e.g. number and function of agreement classes, verb paradigms, shape of pronouns, etc.).

My dissertation will analyze the information structure (IS) of the Fula dialect of *Fuuta Jaloo* in Guinea. As part of the comparative chapter of main IS categories, such as topic and focus, this talk presents first results on similarities and differences between the Eastern and Western dialects from an IS perspective. To the present day, no such comparison has been undertaken. For instance, in the ex-situ term focus construction, dialects differ in the presence/ absence and the shape of a term focus marker, however all dialects have in common a focalized term which stands in the first clause of such a construction. Also the verb form is cognate (PFV2 in the examples below) in all dialects:

(1) Pulaar (Western Fula, Senegal): Focus on the adverb of time

Ko hanki Aali sood-i teew.
T.FOC yesterday PN buy-A.PFV2 meat.10
'Aali bought meat YESTERDAY.' (Sylla 1982: 169)

(2) Liptaako (Western Fula, Burkina Faso): Focus on the subject

Baaba am **non** nyib-i suu-du ndu'u.
father.1 1S.POSS T.FOC build-A.PFV2 house-7 DEM.7
'MY FATHER built this house.' (Bidaud & Prost 1982: 97)

(3) Sokoto (Eastern Fula, Nigeria): Focus on the object

Ndiy-am o yar-i.
water-23 3S drink-A.PFV2
'S/he drank WATER.' (Jungraithmayr & Abu-Manga 1989: 130)

In this talk I shall point out (1) the differences and similarities between the dialects with respect to topic and focus, and (2) argue that dialectal divergence manifests itself also in IS, and not exclusively in lexicon, phonology and morphology.

**Ort: Institut für Asien- und Afrikawissenschaften,
Invalidenstr. 118, Raum 410**

Zeit: 16:15 Uhr

Alle Interessierten sind herzlich eingeladen!