

Information Structure in Fula Dialects

Viktoria Apel

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

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Working Title: “A Morphosyntactic Study on Information Structure in Pular (Fula of Fuuta Jaloo, Guinea)”

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1 Overview on Fula and its dialects

- Classification: Niger-Congo > Atlantic-Congo > Atlantic

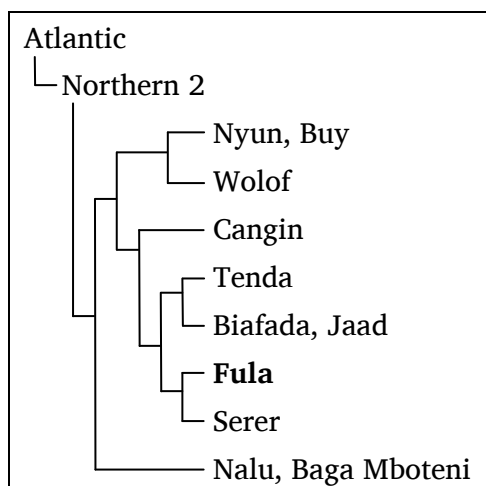


Figure 1: Classification of Fula
within the Atlantic languages (Seeger 2010)

➤ around 22 million speakers in total (Lewis et al. 2013)

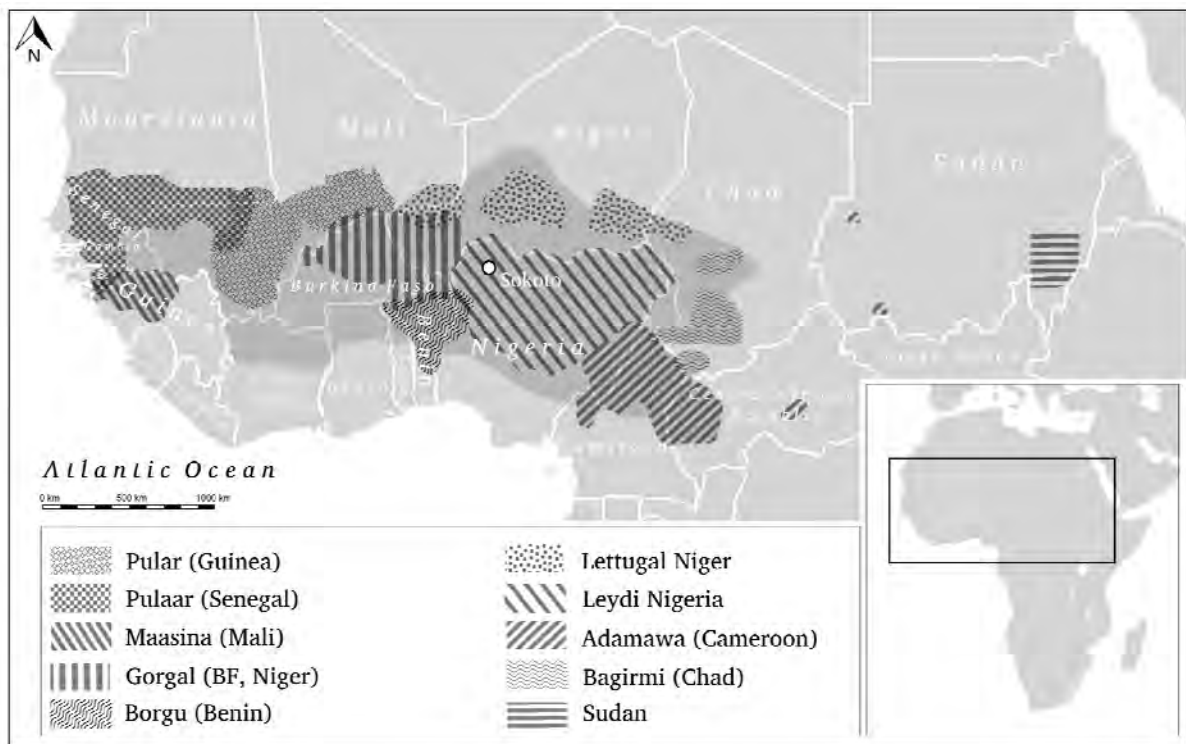


Figure 2: Fula in Africa (map by Simon Argus)

- **Origin:** Senegal/Mauretania
- **7th century:** migration eastwards to Mali and southwards to Gambia and Guinea
- **15th century:** migration towards Niger (and further eastwards)
- **During the 16th and 17th century:** groups from Mali migrated again to Guinea (Diallo 2001)
- **Hypothesis:** The Guinean dialect was over many centuries nearly isolated from the other dialects and thus preserved older forms (Mukarovsky 1962, Gajdos 2004); e.g. no consonant mutation in singular/plural verb forms, ‘mi yahay’ “I will go”, ‘en yahay’ “we will go

EASTERN VS. WESTERN DIALECTS:

Following Harrison (2003), I distinguish ten main dialects; in line with Lewis et al. (2013).

Western dialects	Eastern dialects
Pular (Fuuta Jaloo: Guinea, Guinea Bissau)	Leydi Nigeria
Pulaar (Fuuta Tooro: Senegal, Mauretania, Mali, Gambia, Guinea Bissau)	Adamawa (Cameroon, Nigeria, Central African Republic)
Maasina (Mali)	Bagirmi (Chad)
Gorgal (Burkina Faso, Niger)	Sudan
Borgu (Togo, Benin, Nigeria)	
Lettugal Niger	
Leydi Nigeria	

Table 1: Western vs. Eastern dialects

DISTINCTION OF DIALECTS IS BASED ON:¹

- Lexicon
- Phonological features (e.g. consonant alternation)
- Nominal morphology (agreement class system (semantics and morphological features), differences in the shape of locative subject pronouns)
- Verbal morphology (e.g. verbal extensions, flexions)
- Based on locative constructions and pronouns, the boundary between Western and Eastern dialects located around the **Sokoto** area of Nigeria (Miyamoto 1993: 228)
- “[...] it is, not surprisingly, extremely difficult to draw clear lines of dialect boundaries, because of (a) the difference between political and cultural boundaries; and (b) the complicated movements of the Fulbe people, including the mixture of major and old migrations and smaller-scale, recent movements and seasonal transhumance.”

(Miyamoto 1993: 215f.)

- Information-structural (IS) aspects have not been compared across the dialects yet; only Diallo (2012) investigated on term focus constructions
- **Goals:**
 - What are the similarities and differences across the dialects?
 - Can Western and Eastern dialects be distinguished on IS grounds?
 - Is the Guinean variety in this respect really more different from the other dialects?
- **Sources:** Own field work data for Guinean Fula, grammars and articles on other dialects

¹ Authors working on dialectal differences are for instance Arnott (1974), Ard (1979), Miyamoto (1993), and Gottschligg (1995).

DIALECTS CONSIDERED HERE:

Western dialects	Eastern dialects
Pular (Guinea) own data Evans (2001)	Leydi Nigeria: McIntosh (1984; <i>Kaceccereere</i>) Arnott (1970; <i>Gombe</i>)
Pulaar (Senegal) Sylla (1982, 1993) Fagerberg (1983)	Adamawa (Cameroon) Caron & Mohamadou (2000) Noye (1974; <i>Diamaré</i>)
Maasina (Mali) Gajdos (2004) Breedveld (1995; <i>Maasinankooore</i>)	Bagirmi (Chad)
Gorgal (Burkina Faso) Bidaud & Prost (1982; <i>Liptako</i>) Gottschligg (1992; <i>Liptaako/Jelgooji</i>)	Sudan
Borgu (Togo, Benin, Nigeria)	
Lettugal Niger: Sow (2003; <i>Gaawoore</i>)	
Leydi Nigeria: Jungrathmayr & Abu-Manga (1989; <i>Sokoto</i>)	

Table 2: Dialects considered here, including sources

2 Topic

2.1 Definitions

2.1.1 Functions

SENTENCE TOPIC:

A sentence topic is **what is predicated about an entity in a sentence**: The speaker announces a topic and then says something about it (topic-comment structure) (cf. van Dijk 1977)

- (1) [Aristoteles Onassis]_{Topic} [married Jackie Kennedy]_{Comment}.
 (Krifka 2007: 41)

- The sentence topic often, but not always, correlates with the grammatical subject of the sentence.

FRAME SETTERS:

Frame setters have to be distinguished from “normal” sentence topic: “It appears that frame setters indicate the general type of information that can be given about an individual” (Krifka 2007: 46).

- (2) (How is John?)
[As for his health]_{Frame}, [he]_{Topic} [is fine]_{Comment}.
(cf. Krifka 2007: 45)

2.1.2 Forms

LEFT-DISLOCATION/RIGHT-DISLOCATION:

The dislocated topic is taken up by a pronoun

- (3) [This movie]_i, I saw it_i when I was a kid.
I saw it_i when I was a kid, [this movie]_i.
(cf. Lambrecht 2001a: 1052)

TOPICALIZATION:

The dislocated topic is NOT taken up by a pronoun

- (4) [This movie]_i, I saw __ when I was a kid.
(Lambrecht 2001a: 1052)

- In the following, I shall only consider **marked** topics, and no canonical SVO sentences
- I am interested in the morphosyntax of these constructions
- I will go by form and not by function

2.2 *Left-dislocation*

2.2.1 General structure for left-dislocation in Fula

TWO TYPES IN FULA:

- 1) [The song]_i, I like it_i.
- 2) [The song TOP]_i, I like it_i.

- Subjects and objects (also emphatic pronouns) can be left-dislocated
- The dislocated NP taken up by a pronoun (subject, object, possessive) in the main clause
- (A comma indicates a small prosodic pause)

2.2.2 Left-dislocation without topic marker

- Very productive strategy, found in all dialects (only the dialect of Niger lacks an example)

(5) Pular (Guinea)

Fete-re nden, suka on fegg-i e **mayre.**
rock-5 DEF.5 young.person.1 DEF.1 stumble-MIDD.PFV3 and POSS.5

(Why is the boy angry at the rock?) [The rock]_i, the boy stumbled on it_i.

(Pourquoi est-ce que le garçon est fâché contre le rocher?) Le rocher, le garçon a buté contre lui.

(Pular TT-025-B)

(6) Pulaar (Senegal): The pronoun which refers to the left-dislocated object (–human) does not necessarily agree with its class

Rawaa-ndu ndu, Aali jagg-ii **ndu/ɗum.**
dog-7 DEF.7 PN catch-A.PFV1 7/24

[The dog]_i, Ali caught him_i/it_i.

Le chien, Ali l'a attrapé.

(Sylla 1993: 134, ex. 85.a)

(7) Liptako (Burkina Faso): Also larger NPs can be dislocated (here: relative clause)

Suka gartu-ɗo gaa, on fiy-ete.
young.person.1 come-1 here 3S beat-PASS.IPFV3

[The child who came here]_i, he_i will be beaten.

L'enfant qui est venu ici, il sera battu.

(Bidaud & Prost 1982: 61)

(8) Kaceccereere (Nigeria)

Kanje, mi-'annd-aa-ɗe.
3.EMPH 1S-know-A.PFV.NEG-3

[(As for) them (e.g. books)]_i, I don't know them_i.

(McIntosh 1984: 216, ex. 314)

(9) Diamaré (Cameroon)

Pucc-u pur-u ngu'u, ngu pamar-u.
horse-10 grey-10 DEM.10 10 small-10

[This small horse]_i, it_i is small.

(Labatut 1976: 91)

2.2.2 Left-dislocation with topic marker

- Does not exist in all dialects: the Guinean and Senegalese dialect do not have topic markers for English 'as for'
- But all dialects who use left-dislocation with a topic marker use also the strategy without the marker

- Here: The topic marker “as for”, semantic topic markers, e.g. “on the other hand”, and “also” are not considered here

(10) Gaawoore (Niger): Topic marker *yaa*

Miin yaa mi wi'aay ma na-yi.
 1S.EMPH TOP 1S say-A.PFV.NEG 2S cow-4
 [As for me]_i, I_i didn't talk to you about cows.
 Quant à moi, je ne t'ai pas parlé des vaches.
 (Sow 2000: 104, ex. 50)

(11) Diamaré (Cameroon): Topic marker *kam* (≈ Hausa)

Minin kam, min and-aa.
 1P.EXCL.EMPH TOP 1P.EXCL know-A.PFV.NEG
 [(As for) us]_i, we_i don't know.
 Quant à nous, nous ne savons pas.
 (Noye 1974: 45)

(12) Adamawa (Cameroon): Topic marker *boo, kam, duu, na, fuu, dey* are said to be interchangeable:

Miin boo/kam/duu/na/fuu/dey, debb-o ɗaɓɓ-it-oy-an-mi,
 1S.EMPH TOP woman-1 search-INV-DIST-BEN-1S

 debb-o jaaw-do.
 woman-1 fast-1
 (“Woman, where do you go?” She answers: “I’m looking for a man, a fast man.” He says to her:) [As for me]_i, a woman I_i am searching, a fast woman.
 (« Femme, où vas-tu? » Elle répondit : « Je suis à la recherché d’un home, d’un home rapide. » Il lui dit : « Et moi, je suis à la recherche d’une femme rapide. »
 (Caron & Mohamadou 2000: 72, ex. 17)

- Even if it is not stated clearly for the Adamawa Fula and the Fula from Niger, I think that there are semantic differences in different topic markers as found in other dialects (also, on the other hand, even, etc.)

2.3 Right-dislocation

- Function of right-dislocation: Afterthought
- Only two examples are found, which make use of a topic marker with a semantic value:

(13) Kaceccereere (Nigeria)

Dume 'o-wad-ata, kanko boo?
what 3S-make-A.IPFV4 3S.EMPH TOP
What is he_i doing, [him on the other hand]_i?
(McIntosh 1984: 225, ex. 332)

(14) Liptaako/Jelgooji (Burkina Faso)

Dume bornotoo-mi, miin le nyann-de bann-gal?
what wear-MIDD.IPFV4-1S 1S.EMPH TOP day-5 wedding-11
What will I_i wear, [me]_i the day of the wedding?
Was werde ich anziehen, (lit. ich denn), am Tage der Hochzeit?
(Gottschligg 1992: 288)

2.4 Topicalization

➤ Always with restrictions or a special constructions

(15) Pular (Guinea): both subject and object can be topicalized, the comment = term focus construction

[Yummiraaw-o on] ko maafe tiga Ø def-i.
mother-1 DEF.1 T.FOC sauce.1 peanut.1 cook-A.PFV2
(What did your grandmother do?) [The lady]_{TOP} it is peanut sauce (that she) cooked.
(Qu'est-ce que ta grand-mère a fait?) La vieille femme a préparé une sauce d'arachide.
(Pular TT-001-B)

(16) Pulaar (Senegal): Only found for objects

Ñaay-re kay boombi cuud-ii Ø.
pearl-5 TOP young.girls.2 hide-A.PFV1
[The pearl]_{TOP} the young girls hid (it).
La perle, les jeunes filles l'ont cachée.
(Sylla 1993: 132, ex. 82a)

(17) Kaceccereere (Nigeria): Only possible for subjects

Bee, no Ø mbi-'etee?
3P.EMPH how call-PASS.IPFV4
[These (people)]_{TOP}, what are (they) called?
(McIntosh 1984: 218, ex. 319.b)

(18) Adamawa (Cameroon): Only an indefinite NP can be topicalized

Gudd-ol, ɓe mbiid-ataa Ø.

shortened.sentence-14 3P say-A.IPFV.NEG

[A shortened sentence]_{Top}, they don't say (it) (to each other).

Ils ne se disent pas un mot. (lit. Un bout de phrase, ils ne se disent pas.)

(Cameron & Mohamadou 2000: 70, ex. 9)

2.5 Section Summary

- Many data is insufficient/missing (right-dislocation, topicalization)
- Contexts for utterances are mostly missing
- Translation of topic markers is not consistent
- Left-dislocation without topic marker is an **overall** phenomenon
- East/West cannot be divided on Topic grounds; GUI + Senegal have the most similarities; Maasinaa and Gorgal behave more like Eastern varieties

	GN	SN	Maasina (ML)	Gorgal (BF)	Lettugal Niger	Leydi Nigeria		Adamawa (CN)	
	Pular	Pulaar	Maasinan-koore	Liptaako (/Jelgooji)	Gaawoore	Sokoto	Kacece-reere	Adamawa	Diamaré
left-dislocation w/o TOP	x	x (no full agreement for objects)	x	x		x	x	x	x
left-dislocation with TOP			x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Right-dislocation with TOP				x			x		
Topicalization	x (comment = FOC structure)	x (only objects)			x (with TOP)		x (only subjects)	x (only indefinite)	

Table 1: Dislocation and Topicalization in Fula dialects

	GN	SN	Maasina (ML)	Gorgal (BF)	Lettugal Niger	Leydi Nigeria	Adamawa (CM)	
	Pular	Pulaar	Maasinan-koore	Liptaako (/Jelgooji)	Gaawoore	Kacece-reere	Adamawa	Diamaré
neutral TOP			kam nee	ka	kay yaa	kam	kam (?)	kam
TOP with antic value	<u>le</u> , non, duu	ne, kay, (ne) kadi,	duu , nii, kaa, tan	du , <u>le</u>	<u>le</u>	BOO, maa, kemma	BOO, duu , na, fuu, dey	BOO

Table 2: Topic markers in Fula dialects

3 Term focus

DEFINITION OF FOCUS:

“(…) 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)

TERM FOCUS: Focus on subject, object, adverb, prepositional phrase

➤ **Morphosyntactic** marking, prosody is not considered here

3.1 *The canonical ex-situ term focus construction ≈ Cleft(-like)*

- Bi-clausal structure:

(19) $\underbrace{\text{(T,FOC) X}}_{\text{focus}} \quad \underbrace{\text{(S) V}_{\text{DEP}} \text{(O) (Z)}}_{\text{out-of-focus}}$
clause clause

- (X): Subject, Object, Adverb, Prepositional phrase
- Restriction of verb forms: only PFV2 and IPFV4 (in numbering I follow Diallo 2000)

CLEFT: It is champagne (that) I like.

PSEUDO-CLEFT: What I like is champagne.

To be more precise, we should call the structure **cleft-like** as it lacks some criteria for a “real” cleft, e.g. a relative pronoun or a identificational marker.

➤ To keep it short, I will talk of a cleft

➤ **General problem:** Contexts for the sentences are not given in most descriptions

(20) Pular (Guinea): Focus on the object

Ko welo o sood-ata.

T.FOC bicycle.1 3S buy-A.IPFV4

[What will Maria buy?] She will buy a BICYCLE., lit. It is a BICYCLE she will buy.

(Apel forth.)

(21) Pulaar (Senegal): Focus on the adverb of time; optional focus marker

(Ko) hanki Aali sood-i teew.

T.FOC yesterday PN buy-A.PFV2 meat.10

Aali bought meat YESTERDAY.

C'est hier que Ali a acheté de la viande.

(Sylla 1982: 169)

(22) Maasina (Mali): Focus on the subject; term focus marker may be \emptyset , *ko*, or *âun*

Âun/Dun Binta sood-i defte-re.

T.FOC PN buy-A.PFV2 book-5

BINTA bought a book.

(Diallo 2012)

(23) Liptako (Gorgal, Burkina Faso): Focus on the subject: all focus markers are also identificational markers; focal objects are less frequently marked by a focus marker, because they are already in a marked syntactic position

Baaba am nii nyib-i suu-du ndu'u.

Baaba am non nyib-i suu-du ndu'u.

Yo baaba am nyib-i suu-du ndu'u.

T.FOC father.1 1S.POSS T.FOC build-A.PFV2 house-7 DEM.7

MY FATHER built this house.

C'est mon père qui a construit cette case.

(Bidaud & Prost 1982: 97)

➤ Because of the post-nominal position of *nii* and *non* I do not assume that these are pure term focus markers; in the Guinean dialect both have also a deictic and presentational function

(24) Liptaako/Jelgooji (Gorgal, Burkina Faso): Focus on the object

Wo/Yo haab-u baal-i kunndoo-ji du ɓe ngoll-ata.

T.FOC cotton-7 sheep-4 ?-4 DEF.7 3P work-A.IPFV4

They work (even) THE WOOL OF SHEEPS.

Sogar Wolle von Wollschafen verarbeiten sie.

(Gottschligg 1992: 291)

(25) Gaawoore (Niger): Focus on the object

Mukuru Saatu sood-i.

skirt.1 PN buy-A.PFV2

Saatu bought a SKIRT.

C'est un jupon que Sâtou a acheté.

(Sow 2003: 98)

(26) Sokoto (Nigeria): Focus on the subject

(Dum) Bello loot-ii

T.FOC PN wash-M.PFV2

BELLO washed himself.

Es ist Bello. der sich gewaschen hat.

(Jungraithmayr & Abu-Manga 1989: 100)

(27) Gombe (Nigeria): Focus on the object; optional focus marker *dum*

(Dum) sheed-e Bello wadd-i hannde.

T.FOC money-3 PN bring-A.PFV2 today

It is MONEY that Bello brought today.

(Arnott 1970: 29, 318)

(28) Diamaré (Cameroon): Focus on the subject

Min **oon** sood-i gaw-ri.

1S T.FOC buy-A.PFV2 millet-6

It is ME (who) bought the millet.

C'est moi qui ai acheté le mil.

(Noye 1974: 45)

- All dialects share the same structure (cleft), but differ in the focus marker
- Only in Guinea the use of the focus marker is obligatory
- As Diallo (2012) states, there is a
 - *ko* dominant area in the West (Guinea and Senegal)
 - *dum* is used in the Eastern dialects (Nigeria, Adamawa, little in Mali)
 - In central dialects (Burkina Faso, Mali) there is more variation: *ko*, *wo*, *yo*, *âun*, *dun*

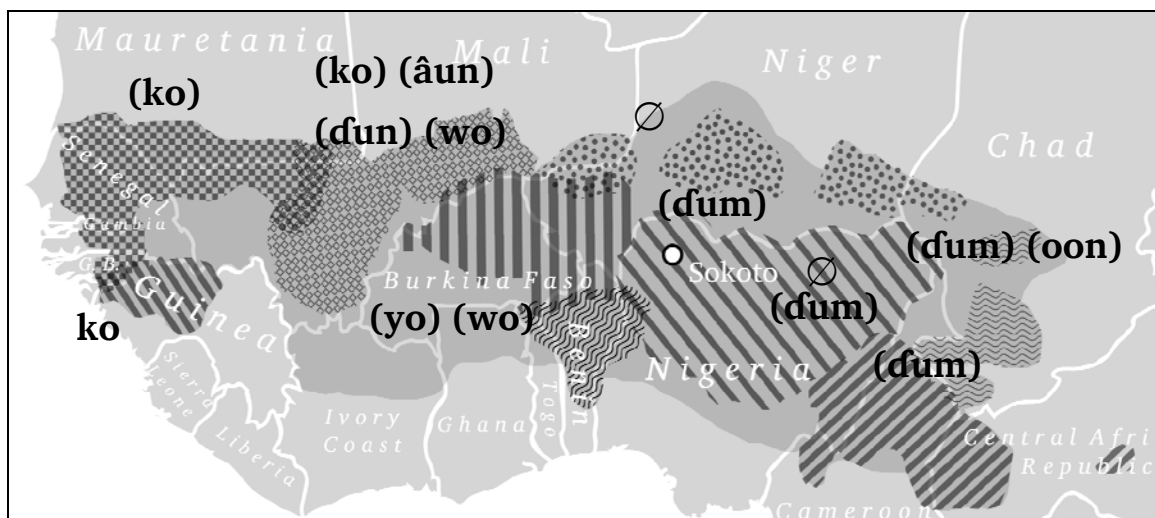


Figure 3: Term focus marker in Fula (map by Simon Argus)

3.2 Variant of the cleft

One variant for object focus is to extract the subject of the out-of-focus clause for it to occur in the sentence-initial topic position:

- (29) $\underbrace{S}_{\text{topic}}$ $\underbrace{T.FOC X}_{\text{focus}}$ $\underbrace{V_{\text{DEP}} (O) (Z)}_{\text{out-of-focus}}$
 clause clause

In the Guinean, Senegalese and Malian (?) dialect the focus marker is obligatory, in the Burkina Faso dialect is optional (here the verb form indicates focus).

- (30) Pular (Guinea): Assertive focus on the object

Gork-o on ko banaanaa-ru won-i jaam-ude.
 man-1 DEF.1 T.FOC banana-6 be-A.PFV2 eat-A.PROG
 [What is the man eating?] The man is eating A BANANA., lit. The man it is a
 BANANA (he) is eating.
 (Pular_QUIIS_21)

- (31) Pulaar (Senegal): Focus on the object

Aali ko teewu sood-i hanki.
 PN T.FOC meat.10 buy-A.PFV2 yesterday
 Aali bought MEAT yesterday.
 C'est hier que Ali a acheté de la viande.
 (Sylla 1982: 169)

- (32) Maasina (Mali): Focus on the subject

Bee fuu wo miin deman-ta.
 3P.EMPH all T.FOC 1S.EMPH cultivate-IPFV4
 It is for ME that all will cultivate.
 (Diallo 2012)

- (33) Liptaako/Jelgooji (Gorgal, Burkina Faso): Focus on the object

Lekkol Ali cuu-dfi jeegom jog-i.
 school.1 PN room-4 six hold-A.PFV2
 Ali's school has SIX ROOMS.
 Alis Schule hat sechs Zimmer.
 (Gottschligg 1992: 292)

3.3 Pseudo-cleft

In Fula, the pseudo-cleft is bracketed by ko...(kon), the relative pronoun of class 18 which refers to the invisible head of the relative clause, and the definite article of class 18. In colloquial speech the definite article (also called “end marker” by Evans 2001: 113) can be dropped. In relative clauses, the same verb forms as in term focus constructions occur (PFV2 and IPFV4).

(34) $\underbrace{Ko\ S\ V_{DEP}\ (O)\ (Z)\ kon}_{\text{out-of-focus clause}}\ \underbrace{T.FOC\ X}_{\text{focus clause}}$

(35) Pulaar (Senegal): Focus on the object

Ko labb-o o sood-i ko ko mbabb-a ba.
 18 lumberjack-1 DEF.1 buy-A.PFV2 DEF.18 T.FOC donkey-15 DEF.15
 What the lumberjack bought, it is a DONKEY.
 Ce que le bûcheron a acheté, c'est l'âne.
 (Sylla 1993: 123, ex. 48)

In Senegal there is another variation in leaving out the “brackets” for the out-of-focus clause:

(36) Pulaar (Senegal): Focus on the object

O sood-i ko pucc-u.
 3S buy-A.PFV2 T.FOC horse
 (What did Demba buy?) He bought A HORSE.
 (Qu'a acheté Demba?) C'est un cheval qu'il a acheté.
 (Sylla 1993: 107, ex. 9.a)

(37) Kaceccereere (Nigeria): Focus on the object; *dum* is here a dummy subject pronoun for class 12 and not the term focus marker

Ko sood-u-mi, dum agoogoy-el.
 18 buy-A.PFV2-1S 24 watch-12
 What I bought, it is a WATCH.
 (McIntosh 1984: 241, ex 361.d)

3.4 Variant of the pseudo-cleft

In two dialects, it is possible to extract the subject of the pseudo-cleft and drop the definite article of the relative clause:

(38) $\underbrace{S}_{\text{topic}}\ \underbrace{ko\ V_{DEP}\ (O)\ (Z)\ \emptyset}_{\text{out-of-focus clause}}\ \underbrace{T.FOC\ X}_{\text{focus clause}}$

(39) Pular (Guinea): Focus on the object

Maria ko jog-ii ko sarii-re.
 PN 18 hold-MIDD.PFV2 T.FOC rabbit-5
 [What does Maria have, a rabbit or a cat?] Maria has a RABBIT.
 (Pular_QUIIS_193)

3.5 Section Summary

➤ Especially for the variant of the cleft and the pseudo-cleft structures data is missing

- (40) a. It is a rabbit Maria has. cleft
b. Maria it is a rabbit (she) has. cleft with extracted subject
c. What Maria has is a rabbit. pseudo-cleft
d. Maria what (she) has it is a rabbit. pseudo-cleft with extracted subject

a) is found in all dialects, with variation of the focus clause

b) is found in Guinea, Senegal and Burkina Faso

c) only in Guinea and Kaceccereere (Nigera)

d) only in Guinea and Senegal

For Fagerberg (1983), the position of the focus clause depends upon the direction of the connection. “A focused NP in S[entence]-initial position is mirrored by a connection branching to the left. And a focused element in final position signals connections to the right” (ibid: 156).

➤ Guinea and Senegal allow for the most variation of the canonical term focus construction

	GN	SN	Maasina (ML)	Gorgal (BF)	Lettugal Niger	Leydi Nigeria			Adamawa (CM)	
	Pular	Pulaar	Maasinankoore	Liptaako (/Jelgooji)	Gaawoore	Sokoto	Kaceccereere	Gombe	Adamawa	Diamaré
Cleft	ko	(ko)	(ko) (âun) (dun (yo))	(yo) (wo)	∅	(dum)	∅	(dum)	(dum)	(dum) (oon)
SUBJ_{TOP}-Cleft	ko	ko	wo	(wo)						
Pseudo-cleft		x					x			
SUBJ_{TOP}-Pseudo-cleft	x									

Table 3: Construction types for term focus marking in Fula dialects

4 State-of-affairs focus

The verb systems of all dialects are quite similar, variation occurs mostly with the progressive. All dialects dispose of a verb form which is used for state-of-affairs focus:

	GN	SN	Maasina (ML)	Gorgal (BF)	Lettugal Niger	Leydi Nigeria		Adamawa (CM)
	Pular	Pulaar	Maasinankoore	Liptako	Gaawoore	Kaceccereere	Gombe	Diamaré
PFV3	-u/-∅	-∅	-u/-∅	-u/-∅	-u	-u/-∅	-u/-∅	-u/-∅
	-i	-i	-i	-i/-∅	-i	-i	-i/-∅	-i
	-a	-a	-a	-a	-a	-a	-a	-a

Table 3: Perfective 3 in Fula dialects

(41) Pular (Guinea): -u/-∅, -i, -a

Be sopp-**u**.

3P cut-A.PFV3

(What, she said, did they do to a tree?) They cut (it) down.

(Quoi, a-t-elle dit, ont-ils fait à un arbre?) Ils (l')ont COUPE.

(Pular_FT_184_B)

(42) Pulaar (Senegal): -∅, -i, -a (*Perfectif 1*)

Mammadu ruf-∅ kos-am dam.

PN spill-A.PFV3 milk-23 DEF.23

(What did Mammadu do?) Mammadu spilled the milk.

(Qu'a fait Mammadu) Mammadu a RENVERSE le lait.

(Sylla 1982: 94)

(43) Maasinankoore (Mali) : -u/-∅, -i, -a (*Verb focus*)

ʔɔ fiy-aay suka ʔɔ, ʔɔ wall-**u** mɔ.

3S play-A.PFV.NEG child.1 DEF.1 3S help-A.PFV3 3S

He didn't beat the child, he HELPED it.

(Breedveld 1995: 193)

(44) Gaawoore (Niger): -u, -i, -a (*L'accompli I*)

O wujj-**u** wanaa o hokk-**a**.

3S steal-A.PFV3 NEG 3S give-PASS.PFV3

He STOLE, it is not that he was given.

Il a volé; ce n'est pas qu'on lui a donné.

(Sow 2003: 68, ex. 4)

(45) Gombe (Nigeria): -u/-∅, -i/-∅, -a (*Emphatic past*)

‘O-nawn-**u**-ndi, naa ‘o-fadɔ-**u**-ndi.

3S-wound-A.PFV3-6 NEG 3S kill-A.PFV3-6

He WOUNDED it (a snake), he didn’t kill it.

(Arnott 1970: 268)

5 Summary and Outlook

➤ Goals:

- What are the similarities and differences across the dialects?
- Can Western and Eastern dialects be distinguished on IS grounds?
- Is the Guinean variety in this respect really more different from the other dialects?

SIMILARITIES ACROSS THE DIALECTS:

- Left-dislocation without a topic marker
- The use of a cleft-construction for term focus
- The use of the verb form PERFECTIVE 3 for state-of-affairs-focus

DIFFERENCES ACROSS THE DIALECTS:

- Use and morphology of the topic marker; from Mali on the topic marker is *kam* (*ka, kay*) is (maybe borrowing from Hausa?)
- Morphology of the term focus marker: *ko* in the Western area, *wo, yo, âun, dum* in the central area, *dum* in the Eastern area

CAN WESTERN AND EASTERN DIALECTS BE DISTINGUISHED ON IS GROUNDS?

- The data for IS do not support the distinction Western/Eastern by Miyamoto (1993) on locative pronouns
- As for topic, the dialects from Mali and Burkina Faso behave structurally more like Eastern dialects; the Senegalese and Guinean dialects are more similar
- In the Eastern area, the term focus marker *dum* is widespread
- In the Western area, there are data for the cleft construction with the extracted subject in the topic position
- But: Data are missing for right-dislocation, topicalization and the variants of the cleft/pseudo-cleft construction

IS THE GUINEAN DIALECT DIFFERENT OR MORE CONSERVATIVE THAN THE OTHER DIALECTS?

- The data showed that the Guinean and the Senegalese share that they make not use of a topic marker; innovation?

- The Guinean dialect is the only one in which the term focus marker is not optional. This could hint to the term focus marker once having been one main criteria for the cleft construction, as it represents the identificational marker of the focus clause.
- The fact that the term focus markers are optional in all other dialects is underlined by a comparison of the different agreement systems (“noun classes”). These show in other dialects also a reduction in comparison to the Guinean dialect which has a larger system with 24 classes in total.
- All taken into account, the data on IS presented here do not show clearly that the Guinean dialect is more “conservative”, but it shows more similarities to the Senegalese dialect than to the Malian one.

OUTLOOK AND RESEARCH GOALS

- Data for: Framesetting, semantic topic marker, right-dislocation
- What are good methods for research on topic markers?
- What is the interaction between the verb form used mainly for state-of-affairs focus and theticity? At least in the Gombe dialect (Nigeria), this verb form is also used for thetic statements
- What are also other functions of this verb form across the dialects?

6 Abbreviations

A	active voice	INSTR	instrumental	PN	proper name
BEN	benefactive	INV	inversive	POSS	possessive pronoun
DEF	definite	IPFV	imperfective	PROG	progressive
DEM	demonstrative	MIDD	middle voice	S	singular
DIST	distantial	NEG	negation	T	term
EMPH	emphatic	P	plural	TOP	topic marker
EXCL	exclusive	PASS	passive voice		
FOC	focus	PFV	perfective		

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