0 PhD Thesis: Contents

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

1 General Introduction

Part I: Basic Information and Definitions
2 Introduction to Pular
3 Information Structure

Part II: Information Structure in Pular
4 Topic-Comment Structure in Pular
5 Focus-Background Structure in Pular
6 Thetic Statements in Pular
7 A Quantitative Analysis of Information Structure in Natural Discourse

Part III: Internal and External Comparison
8 The IS-Encoding in Fula Dialects and Serer
  8.1 Fula dialects
  8.2 Serer
    8.2.1 The Behaviour of Topics
    8.2.2 Term and State-of-Affairs Focus
  8.3 A New View on the Verb Systems of Fula and Serer
9 Summary

1 The dissertation is realized in affiliation to Project B7 “Predicate-centered focus types: A sample-based typological study in African languages” of the SFB 632 'Information Structure' and is funded by the DFG and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. I thank my colleagues for their very helpful comments on earlier versions of (parts) of this presentation.
1 Introduction

Classification and Geographic Distribution

- Serer and Fula are both Niger-Congo > Atlantic > Northern languages
- Segerer (2010) shows that Serer and Fula are closely related languages under what he calls Northern 2 sub-branch of Atlantic

![Figure 1. Classification of Serer and Fula within the Northern branch of the Atlantic Languages (Segerer 2010)](image)

- Serer (also “Serer-Sine”): < 1.2 million speakers in Senegal and Gambia (Lewis et al. 2014), ISO 639-3: srr
- Fula: ≈ 22 million speakers in 18 countries (Gajdos 2004: 10f.)

![Map 1. Serer and Fula dialects in Africa (map by Simon Argus)](image)

---

2 Based on Harrison (2003) and University of Texas Libraries,
Sources for Serer
1) The grammar by Waly Faye (1979): “Étude morphosyntaxique du serene singandum (région de Jaxaaw - Ñaaxar)” (=Diakhao)
3) Supplementary data from Papa Saliou Sarr, a native speaker from Bambey, Senegal

Map 2. Serer in Senegal (map by Simon Argus)

Some Typological Features of Fula and Serer
• Word order: SVO
• Morphology
  o Agreement class systems range from 13 classes (Serer) to 21-24 classes (Fula)
  o Serer has agreement class prefixes on the nouns while Fula has suffixes
• Phonology
  o Distinctive vowel length (⟨a⟩ vs. ⟨aa⟩, ⟨e⟩ vs. ⟨ee⟩, etc.)
  o Implosives: both languages use the labial implosive [ɓ] and the palatal implosive [ʄ], Fula in addition the alveolar implosive[d]
Consonant mutation for singular/plural stems in nouns and verbs (also some qualifiers and quantifiers)

- Verb System
  - verb stem – (DER) – conjugation – (PRO)
  - Derivational suffixes are inserted between the verb stem and the conjugation suffix in order to express benefactive, causative, manner, etc.
  - Conjugation is marked by suffixes on the verb
  - Subject pronouns (only in some constructions) and object pronouns occur as enclitics
  - Locative periphrasis: expresses a progressive in both languages (e.g. “I am at working”) (in Fula the locative periphrasis is also used for stative and habitual))
  - Aspect:
    - Perfective vs. Imperfective (Fula: 3 perfective vs. 4 imperfective affirmative paradigms, Serer: 3 perfective vs. 3 imperfective affirmative paradigms)
  - For both languages I adopt here a (random) numbering of the paradigms instead of labelling them. For Fula I follow Sylla (1982) and Diallo (2000). Numbering is uncommon in Serer
  - Voice:
    - Fula verb paradigms distinguish between active, middle and passive voice (for each voice, the conjugation suffix differs within the paradigms)
    - In Serer, middle and passive voice are less grammaticalised: they are expressed by derivational suffixes (which cannot be combined with all paradigms), or by different construction types
    \[\Rightarrow\] these derivational suffixes are grammaticalised in Fula and form the basis for the middle and passive paradigms

- Perfective Paradigms in Fula

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>PFV1</th>
<th>PFV2</th>
<th>PFV3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unmarked</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>-u/-∅</td>
<td>-i [-u/-∅]</td>
<td>-ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>-i</td>
<td>-ii [-i]</td>
<td>-ike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>-a</td>
<td>-aa [-a]</td>
<td>-aama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preterite</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>-u-no/-∅-no</td>
<td>-ii-no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>-i-no</td>
<td>-i-noo-ke</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>-a-no</td>
<td>-aa-noo-ma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. The perfective paradigms in Fula

- Unmarked (or default) perfective vs. past (marked by the past suffix -no(o); main function: to situate an action in the past with respect to the time of the story told)
- Perfective 1 Active Unmarked and Perfective 2 Active Preterite: the conjugation suffix is either -u or zero for phonological reasons
Perfective 2 Unmarked: the first morphemes (-i/-ii/-aa) occur if no past marker or enclitic pronoun follows the conjugated verb

Perfective 2: the second morphemes (-u/-∅/-i/-a) are those which occur if the past suffix or enclitic pronoun follow them: the suffix changes from -i to -u or zero in active voice, in middle and passive voice the length of the conjugation suffix is reduced

Perfective 3 Middle and Passive: -i/-ke and -aa/-ma are historically two morphemes, which explains why the past marker occurs between them (their order was probably more flexible in the past)

- Imperfective Paradigms in Fula

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>IPFV1</th>
<th>IPFV2</th>
<th>IPFV3</th>
<th>IPFV4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unmarked</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>-u/-∅ [-e]</td>
<td>-a [-∅/-e]</td>
<td>-ay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>-o</td>
<td>-oo [-o]</td>
<td>-oto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>-e</td>
<td>-ee [-e]</td>
<td>-ete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preterite</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-ay-no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-eto-no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-ete-no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. The imperfective paradigms

- Imperfective 1 Active: the conjugation suffix is either -u or zero for phonological reasons; -e as a result of the fusion with the enclitic object pronoun of the second person singular = maa

- Imperfective 2 Active: -a is regularly zero in front of an enclitic subject pronoun

- Imperfective 2 and 4 Middle and Passive: the final vowel of the conjugation suffix is shortened in front of an enclitic pronoun

- Imperfective 4 Active: the initial -a may be dropped in fast speech; vowel assimilation in front of enclitic subject pronoun; -ay in front of the enclitic object pronoun of the second person singular = maa

- Perfective Paradigms in Serer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PFV1</th>
<th>PFV2</th>
<th>PFV3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unmarked</td>
<td>-u</td>
<td>-∅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preterite</td>
<td>-ʔ-u</td>
<td>-ʔ-u</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. The perfective paradigms in Serer

- Unmarked vs. past: their function is not clear in the language descriptions. Faye (1979) calls it “actuel” vs. “inactuel”, Renaudier calls it “présent” vs. “passé”

- But: the unmarked form is mostly translated by the French “passé composé” and the past by the French “plus-que-parfait”
The preterite suffix is the glottal stop [ʔ]  
In the preterite the PFV1 and PFV2 are identical

- Imperfective Paradigms in Serer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IPFV1</th>
<th>IPFV2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unmarked</td>
<td>-aa</td>
<td>-aa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preterite</td>
<td>-og-u</td>
<td>-og-a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. The imperfective paradigms in Serer

- The unmarked form is in the affirmative always -aa
- The preterite suffix is -og

2 The Behaviour of Topics

Definition of Topic: “A referent is interpreted as the topic of a proposition if in a given situation the proposition is construed as being about this referent, i.e. as expressing information which is relevant to and which increases the addressee's knowledge of this referent.” (Lambrecht 1994: 131)

Question: Are topics sentence-initial in both Serer and Fula?

In the canonical sentence (SVO), the unmarked subject is the topic. It agrees with the finite verb.

(1) [Topic] [Comment ]
  Njugur  a-ar-a  xaalis  xane
  1.PN  1-bring-PFV3  6.money  today
  ‘Njugur brought the money today.’
  (Sarr p.c.)

Lexical subjects and objects can be extracted from the background clause of clefts.

(2) [Topic] [Focus] [Background ]
  Sang  Ndakaru  a-ret-u
  1.PN  ?.PN  1-leave-PFV1
  ‘Jean, c'est à Dakar qu'il est parti.’ [Jean, (it is to) Dakar (he) went.]
  (Renaudier 2012: 111)
Framesetters precede the topic of the main clause.

Both lexical subjects and objects can be left-dislocated with or without topic marker; (prosodic break between xaalis and Njugur).

Table 5. Topic markers in Serer and Fula

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Construction</th>
<th>Serer</th>
<th>Fula</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Topic Comment</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Topic Focus-Background</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Framesetter Topic Comment</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Topic 1, Topic 2, Comment</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Topic 1, Topic 2 Comment</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Topic 1 Framesetter Topic 2 Comment</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Topic Background-Focus</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Framesetter Focus-Background</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Summary of Construction types in Serer and Fula
Further research:
Is the topic in # 2 an internal or an external argument in Serer? Are structures such as #6-8 possible in Serer?

Question:
Should right-dislocation be included at all? And if so, where in the dissertation? The function of right-dislocation (called “antitopics” by Lambrecht 1994) is often described as an ‘after-thought’. The speaker is aware “that the mere mention of the unmarked topic pronoun in the clause is insufficient for the hearer to understand who or what the proposition is about” (Lambrecht 1994: 203). Nevertheless, right-dislocated elements can also be co-indexed with a pronoun in the comment:

(7) [Topic] [Comment,] [Anti-Topic,]
neene an hande kadi ... nel-i=lan min pay-kun
mother.1 1S.POSS today also send-PFV2=1S 1S.EMPH child-21
toso-kun kun]
small-21 21.DEF
‘{My elder sister, too, went. That one didn’t know the way, she came back.} Today again my mother sent me, me the youngest child.’ (Apel, f.n.)

3 Term and State-of-Affairs Focus in Serer

“In most [Atlantic] languages […], the information structure of the sentence is expressed by verb morphology; that is, the language uses special verb forms for focusing various syntactic constituents. These forms belong to the paradigms of verb conjugations and constitute an organizing principle of the verb system. […] a good majority of Atlantic languages [incl. Fula and Serer] use verb inflection for focus marking.” (Robert 2010)

In this section, I present data only for term focus (subject and non-subject focus) and SoA focus. Unfortunately, the grammars do not have clear examples on TAM and TV focus.

**Definition of Focus:** “A focal information in a linguistic expression is that information which is relatively the most important or salient 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)

Question: What are similarities and differences compared to Fula?
3.1 **Ex-Situ Term Focus**

Serer uses a cleft construction for ex-situ term focus.

(8) Focus clause  Background clause  
\[ X \text{ (FOC)} \]  \[ (S) V (O) \]
- Focussed terms (incl. question words) are in sentence-initial position, optionally followed by a focus marker
- Dependent/Deranked/Background verb form in the background clause (PFV1 and IPFV1) which allows for suffixation of the subject pronouns for 1S and 2S in case of non-subject focus

(9) Object focus: SVO→OSV  
\[
\text{mbaal ndew ne Jeen o-qooxox oxe a-jik-u}
\]
5.sheep female 5.DEF 1.PN 1-farmer 1.DEF 1-buy-PFV1  
‘C’est la brebis de Jeen que le paysan a achetée.’ [The farmer bought JEEN’S SHEEP.]

(Faye 1979: 59)

For subject focus, the subject focus marker\(^3\) is optional only in the perfective. In the imperfective it is obligatory.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PFV1</th>
<th>IPFV1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject focus</td>
<td>$\emptyset$ / $o$</td>
<td>$o$ / $n$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-subject focus</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 7.** Distribution of subject focus markers in Serer

The verb never agrees with the subject which is clause-external. In the perfective, the subject focus marker is either zero or $o$.

(10) \[ \text{[Focus] [Background]} \]  
\[
\text{Jeen ŋaam-u saac' ke}
\]
1.PN eat-PFV1 4.couscous 4.DEF  
‘C’est Jeen qui a mangé le couscous.’ [JEEN ate couscous.]

(Faye 1979: 59)

---

\(^3\) The subject focus marker $o$ is also used as equational copula and an identificational marker, similar to $ko$ in Pular. The subject focus marker $n$ is not polyfunctional (Sarr, p.c.).
In the imperfective, the subject focus marker is either naa or o.

(12) [Focus ] [Background ]
    o-koor naa komande-aa
    1-man SBJ.FOC command-IPFV1
    ‘C’est l’homme qui commande.’ [It is the MAN (who) commands.]  
                                      (Renaudier 2012: 70)

(13) [Focus ] [Background ]
    den o fad-an
    2.EMPH SBJ.FOC beat-IPFV1:1.PRO
    ‘It is THEM (who) beats him.’  
                                      (Sarr p.c.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serer</th>
<th>Fula</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Focus] [Background]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus clause: N SBJ.FOC</td>
<td>Focus clause: T.FOC N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>∅; o, naa (only subjects)</td>
<td>∅, ko, dün/düm, yo, wo, düm (all terms)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background clause: dependent verb forms</td>
<td>Background clause: dependent verb forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PFV1, IPFV1</td>
<td>PFV2, IPFV4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. The ex-situ term focus construction in Serer and Fula

In Serer, o is a class prefix of three agreement classes. In Fula, ko and dün/düm are agreement class pronouns.

⇒ The ex-situ term focus structure is quite similar, the only difference being the position of the term/subject focus marker

**Further research:**
Is subject focus also used for thetic utterances and object focus also for VP focus?
3.2 State-of-Affairs Focus

In Serer, the sentence-initial state-of-affairs focus marker *kaa* is combined with the PFV2 and IPFV1.

(14) *kaa* i-ñaam-∅ maalo
   SOA.FOC  1P-eat-PFV2  6.rice
   ‘Nous avons mangé du riz.’ [We ATE rice.]      (Renaudier 2012: 77)

(15) *kaa* i-ñaam-aa maalo
   SOA.FOC  1P-eat-IPFV2  6.rice
   ‘Nous mangeons du riz.’ [We EAT rice.]      (Renaudier 2012: 77)

According to Sarr (p.c.), *kaa* only has one function, namely SoA marker.

In Fula, the verb paradigm PFV1 in the perfective and a periphrastic construction in the imperfective (only described for Pular in Guinea) are used for SoA focus.

(16) (...) o nodd-u = mo.
    1.PRO call-PFV1 = 1.PRO
    ‘(The woman said that she saw Osman.) (She did not see him) she CALLED him.’
    (Apel, f.n.)

(17) be sood-ay won-i.
    2.PRO buy-IPFV3 be-PFV2
    ‘{Will the boys buy or sell bananas?} They will buy/They buy.’
    (Apel, f.n.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Serer</th>
<th>Fula</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perfective</td>
<td><em>kaa</em> + PFV2</td>
<td>PFV1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperfective</td>
<td><em>kaa</em> + IPFV2</td>
<td>IPFV3 + woni</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9. SoA focus in Serer and Fula

Further research:
Is the SoA focus structure in Serer also used in thetic utterances or for VP focus?
3.3 Section Summary

Ex-situ term focus is expressed similarly in both languages, SoA focus not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Serer</th>
<th>Fula</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Term focus</td>
<td>Cleft with dependent verb forms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SoA focus</td>
<td>\textit{kaa} + PFV2/IPFV1</td>
<td>PFV1; IPFV3 + \textit{woni}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10. Term and SoA focus in Serer and Fula

4 A New View on the Verb Systems of Serer and Fula

Serer

Perfective 1 and 2 are dependent verb paradigms.
- PFV1: background clause in the ex-situ term focus construction (syntactic dependence)
- PFV2: relative clauses, SoA focus (syntactic dependence) and narratives (pragmatic dependence)\textsuperscript{4}

Perfective 3 is an independent paradigm used for expressing the completeness of an action (French \textit{passé composé}), e.g. I have eaten. It is also used in the locative construction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PFV1</th>
<th>PFV2</th>
<th>PFV3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dependent</td>
<td>independent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarked</td>
<td>-u</td>
<td>-∅</td>
<td>-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preterite</td>
<td>-ʔ-u</td>
<td>-ʔ-u</td>
<td>-ʔ-a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11. The perfective paradigms in Serer

In the imperfective, syntactic dependency is expressed by only form, namely Imperfective 1.
- IPFV1: background clause in the ex-situ term focus construction, SoA focus (syntactic dependence), narrative? (French \textit{présent}, \textit{imparfait})

Imperfective 2, in contrast, seems to be an independent paradigm.
- IPFV2: French \textit{présent} and \textit{imparfait}; locative construction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IPFV1</th>
<th>IPFV2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dependent?</td>
<td>independent?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarked</td>
<td>-aa</td>
<td>-aa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preterite</td>
<td>-og-u</td>
<td>-og-a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12. The imperfective paradigms in Serer

\textsuperscript{4} That one and the same verb form (here: Perfective 2) is used for both focus and narration is also attested for other West African Niger-Congo and Chadic (<Afro-Asiatic) languages (Bearth 1993, Frajzyngier 2004).
**Question:**
How deep should I go into the pronouns that are used in the different constructions/contexts?

**Fula**

In Fula, the picture is less clear. Perfective 1 and 3 are independent paradigms, Perfective 2 is dependent.

- **PFV1**: SoA focus
- **PFV2**: relative clauses, background clause in the ex-situ term focus construction (syntactic dependency), narrative (pragmatic dependency), locative construction (stative)
- **PFV3**: completeness of an action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>PFV1</th>
<th>PFV2</th>
<th>PFV3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>independent</td>
<td>dependent</td>
<td>independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unmarked</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>-u/-∅</td>
<td>-i [-u/-∅]</td>
<td>-ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>-i</td>
<td>-ii [-i]</td>
<td>-ike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>-a</td>
<td>-aa [-a]</td>
<td>-aama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preterite</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td></td>
<td>-u-no/-∅-no</td>
<td>-ii-no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td></td>
<td>-i-no</td>
<td>-i-noo-ke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td></td>
<td>-a-no</td>
<td>-aa-noo-ma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 13. The perfective paradigms in Fula**

Assumption that PFV1 developed out of PFV2: the predicate in a narrative (Perfective 2) encodes the pragmatic focal information (=comment) in a canonical narrative sentence. This unmarked VP-focus is then interpreted as marked VP-focus and eventually to SoA focus.

(18) dependent / narrative ➞ VP focus ➞ SoA focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1S see-PFV2</th>
<th>1S see-PFV2 = 3S</th>
<th>1S see-PFV1 = 3S</th>
<th>1S see-PFV1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘I saw’</td>
<td>‘I saw him’</td>
<td>‘I SAW HIM’</td>
<td>‘I SAW’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the imperfective, the Imperfective 2 and 4 are dependent paradigms.

- **IPFV2**: subjunctive (syntactic dependency), sequential (syntactic/pragmatic dependency), locative construction (habitual)
- **IPFV4**: relative clauses, background clause in the ex-situ term focus construction (syntactic dependency)
Imperfective 3 is related morphologically to the dependent Imperfective 4, but it is an independent paradigm.
- IPFV3: mainly expresses a future

Imperfective 1 is used for imperative and optative. Morphologically, it is related to the dependent Imperfective 2.

Questions:
Should I adopt a new numbering for Fula? If yes, should Imperfective 1 (imperative/optative) be part of it? Or is a not really an imperfective?
As I do not have diachronic data, how far should I treat a historical analysis of Serer and Fula in my dissertation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>IPFV1</th>
<th>IPFV2</th>
<th>IPFV3</th>
<th>IPFV4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unmarked</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>-u/-∅ [-e]</td>
<td>-a [-∅/-e]</td>
<td>-ay</td>
<td>-(a)ta [-at/-et/-ot/-ay]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>-o</td>
<td>-oo [-o]</td>
<td>-oto</td>
<td>-otoo [-oto]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>-e</td>
<td>-ee [-e]</td>
<td>-ete</td>
<td>-ete [-ete]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preterite</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-ay-no</td>
<td>-ay-noo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-oto-no</td>
<td>-oto-noo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-ete-no</td>
<td>-ete-noo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14. The imperfective paradigms

5 Summary
- Topics are sentence-initial in Serer and Fula
- Both languages use a cleft construction for ex-situ term focus with only slight differences
- SoA focus is expressed by different means: in Serer with a SoA focus marker plus the dependent verb form, in Fula by a verb paradigm on its own (perfective), and a periphrastic construction (imperfective)
- Both languages have dependent and independent paradigms: this differentiation is clearer in Serer than in Fula
6 Abbreviations

DEF definite article PFV perfective S singular
EMPH emphatic pronoun PN proper name SBJ subject
FOC focus POSS possessive pronoun SOA state-of-affairs
IPFV imperfective PRO pronoun TOP topic marker
P plural PROX proximate

7 References


