

A. BODOMO · H. ABUBAKARI · S. A. ISSAH

Handbook of the
Mabia Languages of West Africa

GALDA VERLAG

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to all linguists who have committed themselves to the advancement of the Mabilia Languages.

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CHAPTER TWO

FOCUS MARKING IN SERIAL VERB CONSTRUCTIONS IN KUSAAL

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Abstract:

This chapter explores a less addressed phenomenon in the literature where constituents are focused in-situ in serial verb constructions (SVCs). Unlike Predicate Cleft Constructions in SVCs, little is known in the literature regarding in-situ focus strategies in SVCs specifically in Mabia languages and possibly cross-linguistically. This chapter reveals a trend where Kusaal can be argued to have a double focus construction strategy in SVCs such that constituents thus both NP arguments and predicates can be internally (in-situ) or externally (ex-situ) focused. The discussion in this chapter shows that the shared subject, the shared-object as well as the complex IP of an SVC can be exhaustively focused in-situ using the particles *ń* (for subject focus) and *ńé* (for non-subject focus) in Kusaal. The chapter also discusses constraints that govern in-situ focus in SVCs in the language and a generalization that explains the concept. The Lexical Functional Grammar Framework is used in formalizing focus markings in SVCs in Kusaal.

Keywords: Kusaal, Serial Ver Constructions, Lexical-Functional Grammar, Focus marking, In-situ focus, Ex-situ focus

1.0 Introduction

Recent contributions from African languages, in studies of information structure, have revealed various overt morphological elements that have actualized some ideas, notions, and concepts that once remained abstract. The use of overt morphological particles in marking discourse notions such as focus, and topic are attested in several West African languages with Mbia languages being no exceptions (Abubakari 2019a; Hiraiwa and Bodomo 2008; Issah 2013; Fiedler et al 2010; Fiedler and Schwarz 2005; Bodomo 1997; among others). Abubakari (2019a) identifies the particles *kà*, *ń*, and *ńé* as exhaustive/contrastive focus particles in Kusaal, a language spoken in Ghana, Burkina Faso and Togo. Unlike *kà* which is used for ex-situ focus constructions, *ń* and *ńé* are used for in-situ focus constituents. The contexts below are used to generate natural situations that necessitate the use of these particles for contrastive as well as exhaustive focus associated interpretations.⁵

Context 1. There are two items on display at the market: millet and groundnut and you want to find out which one the woman bought.

- (1) a. Pú'á lá sà dā' ńé sù má lá.
 woman DEF PAST buy FOC groundnut DEF
 'The woman bought the GROUNDNUT.'
 'It is the groundnut that the woman bought.'
- b. Sù má lá kà pú'a lá sà dā'.
 groundnut DEF FOC woman DEF PAST buy
 'The woman bought the GROUNDNUT.'
 'It is the groundnut that the woman bought.'

Context 2a. There are two people, a woman and a man, which one of them bought the groundnut?

⁵ The notion of 'contrastive focus' is here used to mean (A but not B) whilst 'exhaustive focus' mean (A but not B and nothing else).

Context 2b. You expect the man to buy the groundnut (correction, unexpectedly).

- c. Pú'á lá n sà dā' sūmá lá⁶.
 woman DEF FOC PAST buy groundnut DEF
 'THE WOMAN bought the groundnut.'
 'It is the woman that bought the groundnut.'

⁶ A likely question to be asked is why subject focus is considered as a kind of in-situ and whether it does not involve any form of movement in Kusaal. The situation is not immediately clear for the following reasons:

- (1) Assuming subject focus has the structure: [FP n [TP Subj [VP OBJ]]]. The hypothesis is that the subject moves from Spec TP to Spec FocP triggered by both Agree and EPP features on FocP.
 (2) The problem arises when the subject is substituted by other elements such as the *wh*-phrase ànóón 'who'. It is ungrammatical to focus the *wh*-phrase with the subject focus particle *n* (ii) though the constituent that corresponds to the *wh*-phrase in the answer to the question can be focused with *n* as in (iii) or it can be left bare as in (iv).

- (i) Anóón di diib la?
 who eat food DEF
 'Who ate the food?'
 (ii) *Anóón n di diib la?
 who FOC eat food DEF
 (iii) Ans: Pua la n di diib la.
 woman DEF FOC eat food DEF
 'It is the woman who ate the food.'
 (iv) Pua la di diib la
 woman DEF eat food DEF
 'The woman who ate the food.'

However, it is grammatical to focus the *wh*-phrase, ànóón 'who', using the non-subject focus particle *né* if it happens to be the object of the sentence.

- (v) Aduk bu' né ànóón?
 Aduk beat FOC who
 'Who (specifically) did Aduk beat?'

Two things make the situation quite unclear:

- (a) The fact that the *wh*-phrase, ànóón 'who', cannot co-occur with the focus particle *n* at subject position though it is grammatical to have the non-subject focus particle *né* co-occurring with the same *wh*-phrase at object position.
 (b) The possibility of focusing the subject constituent that corresponds to the *wh*-phrase in the question in the answer.

I therefore assume the vacuous movement hypothesis and argue that subject focus in Kúsààl is an instance of in-situ focus until further evidence is found to counter this assumption (Abubakari 2019a).

These examples are naturally used by speakers under the proposed contexts and the particles are obligatory therein. All the sentences are associated with contrastive and exhaustive focus interpretations. It will be infelicitous to respond to these questions under the supposed contexts without the use of the particles.

Ex-situ focus in SVCs has also engendered a lot of debates (Abubakari 2011; 2019b; Hiraiwa and Bodomo 2008; Hiraiwa 2005; Lefebvre 1992) as against in-situ focus in SVCs which has received little attention if any at all in the literature although it is equally relevant in any discussion that seeks to offer a holistic account of focus constructions, serial verb constructions and the interaction between the two. This importance cannot be underestimated in an attempt to uncover the relevance of focus in day to day discourse interpretations in human interactions. The main aim of this chapter, therefore, is to explore a less addressed phenomenon where constituents are focused in-situ in serial verb constructions in Kusaal. Unlike predicate cleft constructions in SVCs, little is known in the literature regarding in-situ focus strategies in SVCs specifically in Mbia languages and possibly cross-linguistically. In this chapter, I show that the shared subject, the shared object as well as both VPs and IP can be exhaustively focused in SVCs in Kusaal using the particles *ní* and *né*.

Previous research (Abubakari 2011, 2019b) has demonstrated the possibility of clefting various constituents in SVCs in Kusaal to the left periphery for contrastive and exhaustive interpretation. It is possible to cleft the object, V1, V2 as well as V1 and V2 in SVCs in Kusaal (Abubakari 2011, 2019b)⁷.

- (2) a. Búpón lá dà kū'āā dáám kūōs.
 lady DEF PAST brew alcohol sell
 'The lady brewed alcohol and sold it.'

⁷ This chapter adopts the LFG framework and as such the use of the terms 'constituent clefting' and 'movement' etc are for heuristic purposes as shown in the analysis in section 5. Abubakari (2011, 2019b) uses the minimalist approach. These terminologies are used for the sake of consistency with the source reference.

b. Dáám kà búpúnj là dà kū'āā kūōs.
 alcohol FOC lady DEF PAST brew sell
 'It is alcohol that the lady brewed and sold.'

c. Kúósúk kà búpúnj là dà kū'āā dáám kūōs.
 sell.Nml FOC lady DEF PAST brew alcohol sell
 'It was selling that the lady brewed alcohol and sold.'

d. Kúà'àp kà búpúnj lá dà kūāā dáám kūōs.
 brewNml FOC lady DEF PAST brew alcohol sell
 'It was brewing and selling alcohol that the lady did.'

e. Kúà'àp ne kúósúk kà búpúnj lá dá kū'āā
 brewNml CONJ sell.Nml FOC lady DEF PAST brew
 dáám kūōs.
 alcohol sell
 'It was brewing and selling alcohol that the lady did.'

The clefted constituents in the sentences in (2b-e) receive contrastive focus interpretations by virtue of their displacements. This is further reinforced by the contrastive focus particle *kà*.

This observation is not unique to Kusaal as an earlier research has established same in a close sister language Dagaare where the particle *lá* functions as a factive marker and a default focus marker (Bodomo 1997; 2000). The examples below are taken from Hiraiwa and Bodomo (2008) for illustration.

(3) a. Ò dà sé lá néné òò.
 3SG PAST roast FOC meat eat
 'He roasted meat and ate it.'

b. Néné lá ká ò dà sé òò.
 meat FOC COMP 3SG PAST roast eat
 'It is meat that he roasted and ate.'

c. Sééólá ká ò dà sé néné òò.
 roast.Nml COMP 3SG PAST roast meat eat
 ‘It is roasting that he did and ate meat.’

d. òòó lá ká ò dà sé néné òò
 eat.Nml FOC COMP 3SG PAST roast meat eat
 ‘It is eating that he roasted and did to meat.’

e. Sé-óóó lá ká ó dà sé
 roast-eat.Nml FOC COMP 3SG PAST roast
 néné òò.
 meat eat
 ‘It is roasting and eating that he did to meat.’

However, unlike Kusaal, as will be demonstrated later in this study, it is impossible to focus constituents contrastively or exhaustively using the focus marker *lá* in-situ in Dagaare. The particle functions as a default focus marker in-situ and it is constrained to occur post verbally and never after an NP complement (Bodomo 1997).

(4) a. *Ò dà sé néné lá òò.
 3SG PAST roast meat FOC eat

b. *Ò dà sé néné òò lá.
 3SG PAST roast meat eat FOC

From the examples in (2, 3) and with reference to Abubakari (2011, 2019b) and Hiraiwa and Bodomo (2008), Kusaal and Dagaare have demonstrated close semblance in predicate cleft constructions in SVCs. What remains unmentioned is the possibility of equally exhaustively focusing the various constituents in SVCs in-situ in Kusaal which is not the same in Dagaare. The presence of the in-situ focus particles *ń* and *né* makes it possible to focus constituents in SVCs internally. The questions that inform the discussion in this chapter include: (1) How are constituents focused in-situ in SVCs in Kusaal? (2) Are there constraints

governing how a constituent is focused in-situ in SVCs in the language? (3) What line(s) of asymmetry(ies) can be drawn between focused constituents in SVCs and focused constituents in non-SVC? (4) What generalization (s) can be made from the various observations? And (5) How can we make sense of the concept using the Lexical-Functional Grammar Framework?

This chapter is divided into six sections. After this section, the second section briefly explores how constituents are focused ex-situ and in-situ in Kusaal. It further discusses the use of the particles *kà*, *n'* and *né* in focusing various grammatical constituents in non-SVC. In section three, I give a brief background of SVCs in Kusaal whilst section four elaborates on focus marking on the various elements in SVCs in Kusaal. It further discusses some observed restrictions in in-situ focus in SVC in the language as well as a descriptive generalization of the concept as it occurs in Kusaal. In section five, I explore previous analyses of SVCs and Information Structure within the LFG Framework and demonstrate how focus marking in SVCs in Kusaal can be captured within this framework. Section six gives a short summary and conclusion of all discussions.

2.0 Ex-situ and In-situ focus marking strategies in Kusaal

This section focuses on discussing the various morpho-syntactic means of expressing the notion of focus in Kusaal. It basically centres on the way various grammatical elements: subject, non-subject, VP and IP are syntactically and morphologically marked for contrast and exhaustivity in the language. Focus is here understood as the information structural constituent of a given proposition that is most important or salient relative to a given discourse situation. Relative importance or salience is achievable in several ways: (i) by introducing new information into the discourse (information focus), or (ii) by setting contrast to a set of comparable alternatives (contrastive focus) (cf Fiedler et al 2010, Dik 1998, Jackendorf 1972, Rochemont 1986; Rooth 1985) and (iii) by expressing exhaustivity under which the focused constituent is identificationally exhaustive (É. Kiss 1998, É. Kiss 2010).

Languages employ several grammatical techniques in packaging discourse related information. Focus marking in Kusaal, as is also the case in several Mbia languages, is mostly carried out by the use of particles. Kusaal employs both in-situ and ex-situ focus strategies in focus marking. DPs, VPs IPs can be both internally and externally focused. Unlike information focus which maintains the canonical SVO order and with focus marked by means of prosody (marked in bold), contrastive focus employs the use of focus markers in addition to prominence.

- (5) Q. Dáu lá sá dā' bó?
 man DEF PAST buy what
 'What did the man buy?'

Ans. a. Ò sà dā' **búúg**.
 3SG PAST buy goat
 'The man bought a **goat**.'

Correction: b. Àyéí, núá kà dáu lá sá dā'.
 no fowl FOC man DEF PAST buy
 'It is a fowl the man bought' (rather than a goat or sheep)

Ans. c. Dáu lá sá dā' né núá.
 man DEF PAST buy FOC fowl
 'It is a fowl the man bought.' (rather than something else, nothing more)

Additionally, it is important to add that it is ungrammatical to have multiple foci within a single sentence. The particle *kà* cannot be used with in-situ focus neither can the particle *né* be used for ex-situ focus.

- (6) a. *núá né dáu lá sá dā'.
 fowl FOC man DEF PAST buy
 'It is FOWL the man bought.' (rather than sheep or goat)

- b. *Dáú lá sá dā' kà núá.
 man DEF PAST buy FOC fowl
 'It is FOWL the man bought.' (rather than something else,
 nothing more)

- c. *Núá kà dáú lá n̄ dā' né.
 fowl FOC man DEF FOC buy FOC

With this background, the following subsections illustrate the use of the particles *ka*, *n̄* and *né* in focusing various grammatical constituents.

2.1 Subject Focus

Subject focus in Kusaal is expressed both morphologically and prosodically. Contrast and exhaustivity can be marked using the particle *n̄* as illustrated (7a-c). Assuming a context where the identity of the person who ate the food is questioned, the answer in (7b) would be used to refute the claim made in (7a) and to correct the wrongly created impression.

- (7) a. Ànó'ón dī dííb láá?
 who eat food DEF
 'Who ate the food?'
 b. B́ís lá dī dííb lá.
 children DEF eat food DEF
 'The children ate the food.'
 c. Àyéí, pú'áb lá n̄ dī dííb lá.
 no women DEF FOC eat food DEF
 'It is the women [not the children] who ate the food'

2.2 Object Focus

Both direct and indirect objects can be focused in-situ and ex-situ in Kusaal where the particle *né* is used in-situ before the focused constituent whilst *kà* is used ex-situ after the focused constituent.

(8) S: The woman bought beans.

Correction: a. Ò sà dā' né mùì.
 3SG PAST buy FOC rice
 ‘She bought RICE/It is RICE she bought.’

b. Ò sà dā' mùì.
 3SG PAST buy rice
 ‘She bought rice’

c. Mùì kà ò sà dā'.
 rice FOC 3SG PAST buy
 ‘She bought RICE/It is RICE she bought.’

The omission of *né* from (8b) does not change the truth value of the sentence; however, it erases the exhaustive interpretation.

Similarly, both direct and indirect objects can be focused both in-situ and ex-situ in double object constructions as illustrated in (9) and (10) respectively.

(9) Q: Ànɔɔ'ón kà pú'á lá sà tīsí bó?
 who FOC woman DEF PAST give what
 ‘Who did the woman give what?’

Ans. a. Pú'á lá sà tīsí né bííg lá
 woman DEF PAST give FOC child DEF

lígídí lá.

money DEF

‘The woman gave THE CHILD money.’

‘It is the child that the woman bought groundnut for.’

b. Bííg lá kà pú'á lá sà tīsī
child DEF FOC woman DEF PAST give

lígídí lá.

money DEF

‘It is the child the woman bought the peanut for.’

- (10) Q: Bó kà pú'á lá sà tīsī bííg láa?
what FOC woman DEF PAST give child DEF
‘What did the woman give to the child?’

Ans. Pú'á lá sà tīsī bííg lá né
woman DEF PAST give child DEF FOC
lígídí lá.
money DEF

‘The woman gave the child THE MONEY.’

‘It is the money that the woman gave to the child.’

2.3 Predicate focus

In focusing the VP or the IP, the particle *né* occurs at the end of the clause.

- (11) Q: Bó kà Àdúk sà māāl'é?
what FOC Aduk PAST do
‘What did Aduk do?’

Ans.: Àdúk [VP sà zō̄ né]
Aduk PAST run-away FOC
‘Aduk RAN-AWAY.’

- (12) Q. Bó māālé?
 what happen/do
 ‘What happened?’

Ans: [IP Àdúk dā' núá né.]
 Aduk buy fowl FOC
 ‘ADUK BOUGHT A FOWL.’(an unexpected occurrence)

Comparatively, predicates can be fronted for contrastive and exhaustive interpretations in Kusaal. Focus predicates are moved to the left periphery of the entire construction and they receive contrastive focus interpretations. Clefted predicates are obligatorily nominalised and they receive double pronunciations (Abubakari 2011, 2019b).

- (13) Q: ‘What did he do?’

Ans : a. Ò sà sēn' né ní'ím lá.
 3SG PAST roast FOC meat DEF
 ‘He ROASTED THE MEAT/It is roasting the meat he did.’

b. Sénb kà ò sà sēn' ní'ím lá.
 roast.NML FOC 3SG PAST roast meat DEF
 ‘He ROASTED THE MEAT/It is roasting the meat he did.’

To account for the word order variation on how *né* focuses something that follows it as on object focus and something that precedes as in VP and IP focus, it is assumed that *né* behaves as an adnominal selected by the NP/DP it modifies. It behaves as an adverbial when it modifies VPs and IPs, in which case it merges with the entire IP or VP (Abubakari 2019a; Renans 2016:§3). This is illustrated below.

- (14) a. né [NP/DP]..... Adnominal né
 b. [VP] né Adverbial né
 c. [IP] né Adverbial né

In sum, Kusaal employs different strategies in packaging different focus notions for different interpretations. Information focus is morphologically null whilst contrastive focus is marked using particles.

3.0 Brief description of SVCs in Kusaal

Serial verb constructions in Kusaal are characterized by features such as: multiple predications, argument sharing, TAMP (Tense, Aspect, Mood and Polarity) sharing and the absence of connectors. They are used in coding activities that are conceptualized as expressing single events. Series of verbs are also used in coding series of activities that are conceptualized as taking place within the same scope of time (Abubakari 2011, 2019b). Below are examples of SVCs in Kusaal:

- (15) Ò sà dūg dííb tōr.
 3SG PAST cook food share
 ‘She cooked for sharing.’

- (16) Ò dɔ̃ yī kūl.
 3SG get-up go-out go-home
 ‘S/he got up and went home.’

- (17) Ò sà dūg dííb tōr.
 3SG PAST cook food share
 ‘She cooked for sharing’

- (18) Ò dūg dííb tīsī bííg lá.
 3SG cook food give child DEF
 ‘She cooked food and gave to the child.’

The above characteristics of SVCs in the language can be summarized in the following constraints (Abubakari 2011; 2019b; Hiraiwa and Bodomo 2008; Haspelmath 2015).

- (19) a. The subject sameness constraint: the series of verbs in SVCs must share the same structural or functional subject.
 b. TAMP: all the verbs share identical tense, aspect, mood and polarity particle.
 c. The connector constraint: there is no connector joining the series of verbs in SVCs in this language.

Having outlined basic features of SVCs in Kusaal in addition to the previous discussion of both ex-situ and in-situ focus marking strategies in the language, the next section looks at focus marking on various constituents in SVCs: Objects, subject, VPs and IPs.

4.0 Focus marking in SVCs

The common practice in languages is to have focused constituents in SVCs fronted to the left of the clause and mostly followed by a focus particle where applicable. Languages with parallel constructions where both fronting, and in-situ focus are possible have not been widely attested leading to the claim that either the phenomenon is rare in languages or an equally interesting concept has received little attention in the literature. Below, I demonstrate in-situ focus realizations in SVCs in Kusaal.

4.1 Object focus in SVCs

It is possible to exhaustively focus a shared object in-situ in SVCs in Kusaal. By so doing, the focus particle *né* precedes the focused constituent just as is the case in non-SVCs.

- (20) Q.: What did the man buy and eat?

Ans. a. Dáú sà dā' mùì dī.
 man PAST buy rice eat
 ‘A man bought rice and ate it.’

Correction: b. Àyéí dáú sà dā' né béńír dī.
 no, man PAST buy FOC beans eat
 'No, it is beans that a man bought and ate (rather than rice).'

(21) a. S: The woman bought rice for the child.

b. Ayei, pú'á lá sà dā' né súmá tīsī
 no, woman DEF PAST buy FOC groundnut give
 bííg lá.
 child DEF
 'No, it is GROUNDNUT the woman bought for the child.'

In all these examples the exhaustive focus interpretation directly falls on the succeeding constituent.

4.2 Subject focus in SVCs

The particle *ń* as shown earlier is used in marking in-situ subject focus in the language. The shared subject in SVCs in Kusaal can equally be focused using this particle. Similar to non-SVCs, the particle strictly follows the subject as in (21).

(21) S: The woman bought beans and ate.

Àyéí, dáú lá ń sà dā' béńír dī.
 no, man DEF FOC PAST buy beans eat
 'It is THE MAN who that bought beans and ate.'

4.3 Predicate focus in SVCs

Predicate focus in-situ in SVCs in Kusaal has three possibilities: (i) individual verbs can be focused independently but not simultaneously (ii) the series of

verbs in SVCs can be focused collectively with a single particle referred to as ‘VP foci’ (iii) the entire IP can also be focused with a single particle referred to as ‘complex IP foci’. Answers to the questions in the examples below demonstrate various instances where predicate constituents are focused in SVCs.

(22) Q: How did the man get the food?

Ans: Dáú lá [VP sà dā' dííb lá né].
 man DEF PAST buy food DEF FOC
 ‘The man BOUGHT THE FOOD.’ (rather than ‘stole’ the food)

The particle occurs at the end of the clause. It will be infelicitous to answer the question in (22) with the sentence in (23) where the particle follows the verb because the interpretation will then exhaustively focus the object *dííb* ‘food’.

(23) Dáú lá sà dā' nē dííb lá.
 man DEF PAST buy FOC food DEF
 ‘The man bought THE FOOD.’ (not the fruits)

Similarly, should the particle be sandwiched by the object and second verb (V2), the focus interpretation then shifts to V2 as in (24) which will then answer a different question as in (24) below.

(24) Q: What did the man buy the food for?

Ans: Dáú lá sà dā' [VP dííb lá né dī].
 man DEF PAST buy food DEF FOC eat
 ‘The man bought the food and ATE it’ (rather than ‘stored’ it)

The answer to the question in (25a), thus (25b), is a further illustration of how an entire VP in the SVC is focused. The focused particle is at the right periphery of the entire clause.

(25) Q: a. What did the man do?

Ans: b. Dáú lá [VP sà dā' dííb dī né].
 man DEF PAST buy food eat FOC
 'The man BOUGHT FOOD AND AND ATE IT (rather than
 any other activities).'

To further show that the individual verbs in SVCs can be exhaustively focused in-situ; SVCs without internal arguments are used as illustrations. In (26b) the entire VP is focused, in (27b) the exhaustive interpretation falls on V1, whilst it falls on V3 in (28b) and in (29b) focus falls on V4.

(26) Q: a. What did he do?

Ans: b. Ò sà dī dɔ̃ zɔ̃ kūl né.
 3SG PAST eat get-up run go.home FOC
 'He ATE GOT UP AND RAN AND WENT HOME.'

(27) Q: a. What did he do before running home?

Ans: b. Ò sà dī né zɔ̃ kūl.
 3SG PAST eat get-up FOC run go.home
 'He ATE, got-up and ran and went home.'

(28) Q: a. What did he do to get home?

Ans: b. Ò sà dī dɔ̃ zɔ̃ né k ũ l .
 3SG PAST eat get-up run FOC go.home
 'He ate got-up RAN and went home.'

(29) Q: a. Where did he get up and run to?

Ans: b. Ò sà dɔ̃ zɔ̃ kūl né.
 3SG PAST get-up run go.home FOC
 'He got-up, ran and WENT HOME.'

Finally, the entire IP of an SVC in Kusaal can also be focused in which instance the particle, *né*, occurs IP internal periphery and has its scope spreading leftwards across the entire construction as in the answer to the question in (30b). This type of sentence is usually used in unexpected circumstances to express surprise (Abubakari 2019a, Zimmermann 2008). The example in (30) can be used in the hypothetical context in (3) whilst (31) is used in context (4).

Context 3: A detained patient at the hospital unexpectedly got up and ran home.

(30) Q: a. What happened?

Ans: b. Ò sà dɔ̃ zɔ̃ kūl né.
 3SG PAST get-up run go.home FOC
 ‘HE GOT UP AND RAN AND WENT HOME.’

Context 4: Everyone is supposed to abstain from food; the man surprisingly bought food and ate it.

(31) [Dáú lá dā' dííb dī né.]
 man DEF buy food eat FOC
 ‘THE MAN BOUGHT FOOD AND ATE IT.’

In general, in-situ focus in SVCs using the particles *n̄* and *né* patterns in similar ways with in-situ focus in non-SVCs particularly in the distribution of the focus particles. Parallel to the observation in Abubakari (2011, 2019b) that the V1, V2, V3 in SVCs in Kusaal can be clefted to the left followed by the particle *kà* for contrastive, exhaustive interpretation, so can these constituents remain in-situ and also be exhaustively focused using the particle *né* in Kusaal.

4.4 Common Restrictions in the use of *né*

As a post-verbal non-subject focus particle, it is ungrammatical to have *né* occurring before a preverbal temporal particle as in (32) or before a verb either in SVCs or in non-SVC constructions.

- (32) a. Dáú lá sà dā' dííb lá.
 man DEF PAST buy food DEF
 'The man bought the food yesterday.
- b. *Dáú lá sà né dā' dííb lá.
 man DEF PAST FOC buy food DEF
- c. *Dáú lá né sà dā' dííb lá.
 man DEF FOC PAST buy food DEF
- d. *Ò sà né dɔ̃ zɔ̃ kūl
 3SG PAST FOC get.up run go.home

Equally ungrammatical is the co-occurrence of more than one focus particle in a single construction, be it an SVC or not, in Kusaal.

- (33) a. *Ò sà dɔ̃ né zɔ̃ né kūl né.
 3SG PAST get.up FOC run FOC go.home FOC
- b. *Dáú lá sà dā' dííb né di né.
 man DEF PAST buy food FOC eat FOC
- c. *Dáú lá sà dā' né dííb nɛ dī né.
 man DEF PAST buy FOC food FOC eat FOC

It is also infelicitous to have different focus particles on different constituents in the same construction.

- (34) a. *Dáú lá n̄ sà dā' dííb n̄é dī.
 man DEF FOC PAST buy food FOC eat
- b. *Dáú lá n̄ sà dā' dííb dí n̄é.
 man DEF FOC PAST buy food eat FOC

In brief, in-situ focus marked with the particles *n̄* and *n̄é* are governed by constraints that determine well-formed constructions in Kusaal. In general, it is ungrammatical to focus more than a single constituent at the same time. Different particles cannot be used in the same sentence. Whilst *n̄* is restricted to subject focus, *n̄é* is used for objects, PP, VPs and IPs foci.

4.5 General Hypotheses

It is possible, therefore, to suggest that, in addition to the clefting of various constituents to the left periphery for contrastive and exhaustive focus interpretations in Kusaal, speakers have the additional option of packaging similar information IP internally. The particles *n̄* and *n̄é* are used to focus the shared subject and non-subject arguments respectively in SVCs in Kusaal. *N̄é* can further be used for VP and IP foci in SVCs. It is also observed that the constraints that govern in-situ focus in SVCs are not entirely distinct from the ones that govern non-SVCs in Kusaal. The empirical data provided, so far, support the following generalizations on in-situ focus in SVCs in Kusaal.

- i. Kusaal has parallel focus constructions in SVCs such that constituents thus both NP arguments and predicates can be internally (in-situ) or externally (ex-situ) focused.
- ii. Whilst the particle *kà* focuses all elements, with the exception of subject arguments, that are moved to the left periphery, *n̄* focuses only subject

NPs and *né* on the other hand focuses all but non-subject NPs, VPs and IPs clause internal.

iii. Multiple foci with either the same particle or different particles on either the same constituent or different constituents in a single construction are ungrammatical.

iv. With regards to predicate focus in SVCs, it is possible to focus individual verbs independently but not simultaneously.

5.0 Theoretical Framework: Brief Background to LFG⁸

In recent years, LFG has emerged as one of the most important theoretical frameworks in grammar and is highly regarded in formal linguistics in general and computational linguistics in particular. It is observed that among the extensive research conducted on LFG; most of it has been focused on the exploration of Optimal Syntax (OT-LFG) framework from the point of view of Optimality Theory (OT) and LFG respectively, or even both (Bresnan 1998).

As far as the syntax is concerned, the analysis of the syntactic structure within LFG is represented at three main levels: the argument structure (a-structure), the functional structure (f-structure) and the constituent or phrase structure (c-structure), which has two kinds of equations-annotated functional equations and constraint equations. These structures are subject to different kinds of requirements. Within LFG, the three levels of representation are in a relation of correspondence with each other (Falk 2001). A-structure is mapped to f-structure through the Endocentric Mapping Principles (Bresnan 2001).

Bodomo (1997) indicates that the grammatical architecture of LFG is based on parallel structures of five levels: P-(prosodic) structure, σ -(semantic)

⁸ The summary of the theory of LFG provided here does not include detailed exposition of the framework and as such readers are encouraged to gain access to primary sources of the theory from: Bresnan et al (2016) and Falk (2001) among others.

structure, a-(argument) structure, f-(functional) structure and c- (constituent) structure. He further argues that the syntactic components of these levels, that is: the c-structure, the f-structure and the a-structure are by far the most developed. Linguists including: King (1997); Choi (1996); Butt 2014; Mycock (2013, 2006); Dalrymple and Nikolaeva (2011); Abubakari (2018), among others, advocate the need to have an additional i-(information) structure to cater for issues related to Discourse Structure. This proposal will be explored extensively in the analysis of focus in Kusaal.

The three grammatical components mentioned above represent different grammatical structures: role, function and category respectively. Roles, modelled by a-structure, correspond to the grammatically expressible participants, which may have roles such as agents and theme. Function, which belongs to the f-structure, represents grammatical relations such as subject, object and predicate. Finally, the c- structure models grammatical categories such as NP, VP, etc.

According to Bresnan (2001) each level of representation has its own unique prominence relations featuring the logical subject, the functional subject and the structural subject. The levels are associated by principles of functional correspondence. Bodomo (1997:27) represents the syntactic components of LFG as follows:

(35) a. a-structure: $R\langle q_1 \dots \dots q_n \rangle$

[fl]-----[fn]

b. f-structure:

PRED	[---]
SUBJ	[---]
OBJ	[---]

c. c-structure :

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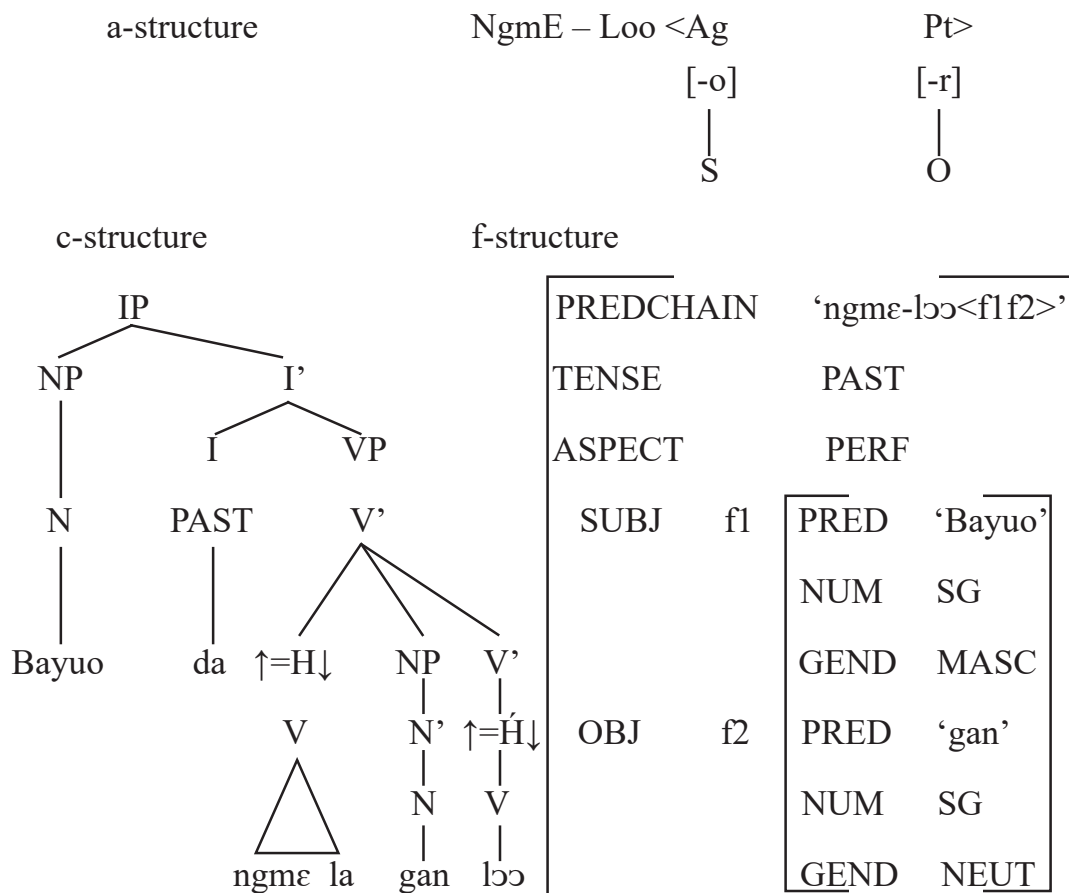
      VP
     /  \
    V'   PP
   /  \
  V    NP

```

5.1 Previous Analysis of SVCs within the LFG framework

Bodomo (1997) with data from both Akan and Dagaare argues for the representation of SVCs as a kind of complex predicate into the parallel but related levels of grammatical representations. He proposes the representation of grammatical roles at Argument Structure, Grammatical Categories at Categorical Structure and Functional Information at Functional Structure. He argues that the representation of complex predicates and complex argument structure may link up to a complex or simple categorical structure and to a flat functional structure. This, according to him provides a simple way of indicating the syntax semantic mismatch of SVCs. Consider the example below taken from (Bodomo 1997:11-13).

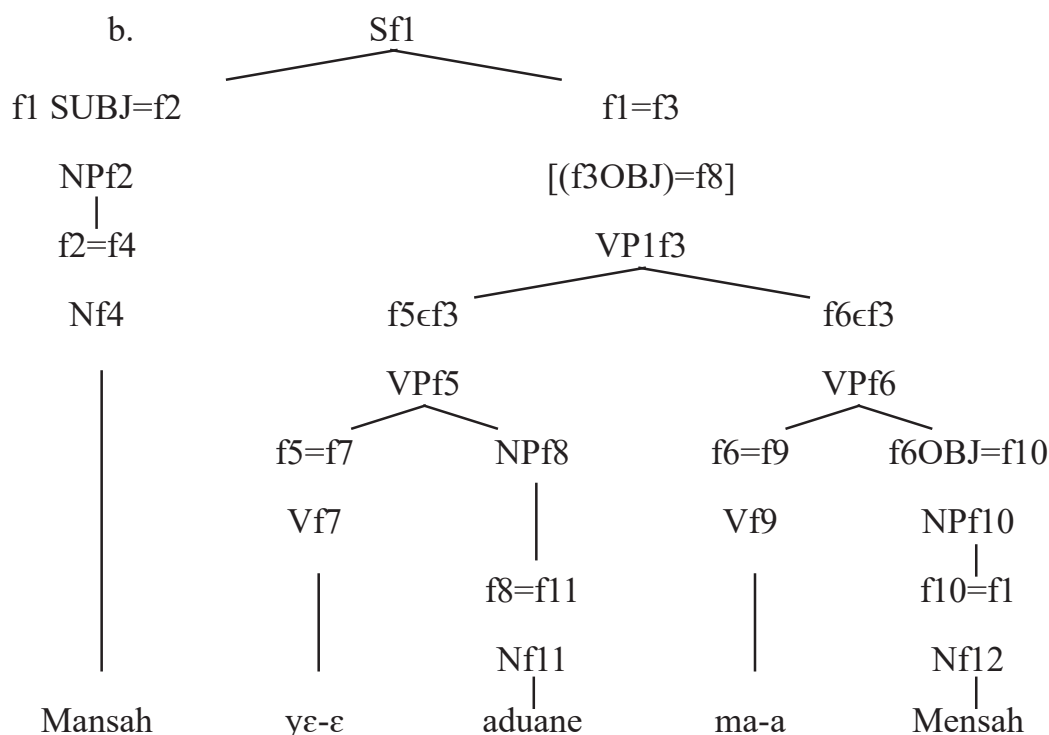
- (36) Bayuo da ngmɛ-ø la a gan lo-ø
 Bayuo Pst knock-perf FOC. DEF book caus+fall-perf
 ‘Bayuo knocked the book down’

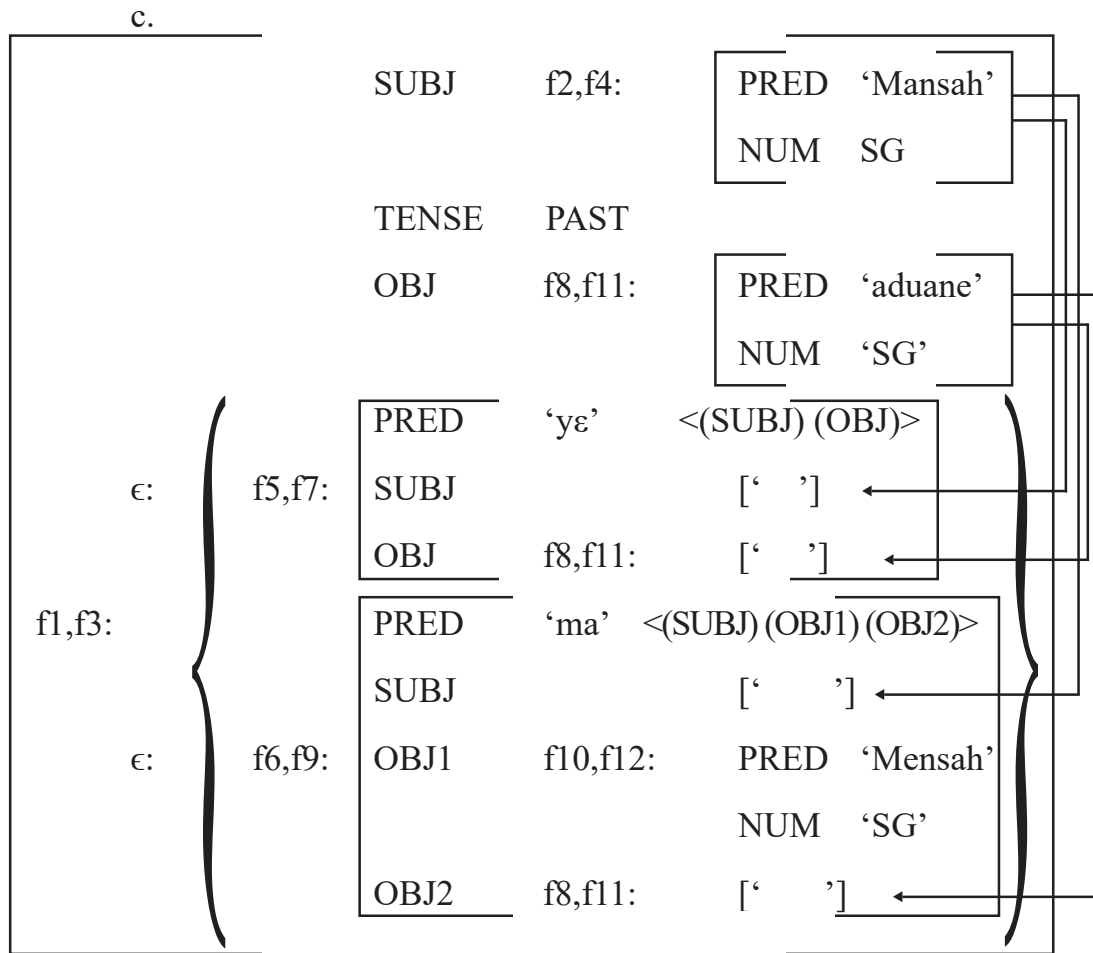


Bodomo et al (2003) also analyse SVCs in Cantonese as complex predicates in LFG after indicating the possibility of analysing SVCs in the said language as complementation constructions, as coordinating constructions or as complex predicate constructions. The analysis as complex predicates supersedes the others because the series of verbs in SVCs behave as a single unit. Evidence of this according to them is via negation tests. This test ranges from negation for single predicate benefactive constructions and patterns of negation for complex benefactive constructions.

In a later development, Appah (2009) argues that the analysis of SVCs as complex predicates amounts to overgeneralization of the argument sharing relation. His claim is motivated by the fact that there are instances when all verbs do not share all arguments in SVCs. Appah (2009) proposes an analysis where shared arguments are put into the functional structure of the parent VP so that its properties can be inherited by any verb that shares that argument. Any unshared argument occurs with the verb with which it is associated solely in the functional structure of that verb. The sentence in (37a) and its c-structure and f-structure in (37b, c) respectively are taken from (Appah 2009: 112) as illustrations.

- (37) a. Mansah yε-ε aduane ma-a Mensah
 Mansah do-PAST food give-PAST Mensah
 ‘Mansah prepared food for Mensah.’





Comparing Bodomo (1997) and Appah (2009), it can be argued that both proposals complement each other instead of one superseding the other.

Looking critically at the proposal for complex predicates, it is resourceful in the analysis of causative SVCs in languages like Akan, Dagaare and Kusaal, benefactive SVCs in languages like Cantonese, as well as SVCs where the series of verbs are transitive verbs. In both causative and benefactive SVCs, the series of verbs function as a single unit and as such separating them results in different semantic interpretations. Modelling them as complex predicates solves the issue of syntax-semantic mismatch in SVCs as argued by Bodomo (1997).

- (38) Ama bɔ-ɔ abɔfra no whe-e fɔm
 Ama hit-PAST child DEF cause.hit/fall-PAST ground
 'Ama hit the child down.'

This is a type of ‘action-causation SVC’ where *Ama* is the causative agent and the child is the patient. There is a causative verb *whe* ‘cause to fall/hit’, which is expressed subsequent to the action verb. The act of hitting ‘caused’ the act of falling/ hitting on the ground. ‘*Bɔɔ+whe*’ is therefore seen as a complex predicate which results in a single semantic interpretation ‘hit down’. The single but complex unit ‘*bɔɔ+whe*’ selects the object ‘*abofra*’. These verbs often have different semantic interpretations in other environments when used individually. Separating the two verbs gives us different semantic interpretations:

- (39)
- | | | | | |
|----|------|---------------------|--------|-----|
| a. | Amaa | bɔɔ-ɔ | abofra | no |
| | Ama | hit-PAST | child | DEF |
| b. | Ama | whe-e | abofra | no |
| | Ama | lash-PAST | child | DEF |
| | #Ama | cause.hit/fall-past | child | DEF |

Putting (39a) and (39b) together does not automatically result in the interpretation in SVC. Speakers have options of choosing how to combine the verbs to generate the desired interpretation. More so, unlike Akan, languages like Dagaare and Kusaal need not have a locative item accompanying the causative verb (see 36).

Appah’s proposal fills a gap which is not mentioned in Bodomo (1997) concerning SVCs that do not share, most especially internal, arguments. The overgeneralization arises when we have intransitive and ditransitive verbs where the direct object and the indirect object, respectively, are not shared.

- (40)
- | | | | | | | | | |
|------|--------|--------|-------|-----|------|------|-------|-----|
| Ò | dɔ̄ | yī | kīŋ | dā' | dííb | tīs | bííg | lá. |
| s/he | get up | go-out | leave | buy | food | give | child | DEF |
- ‘S/he got up and went out and bought food for the child.’

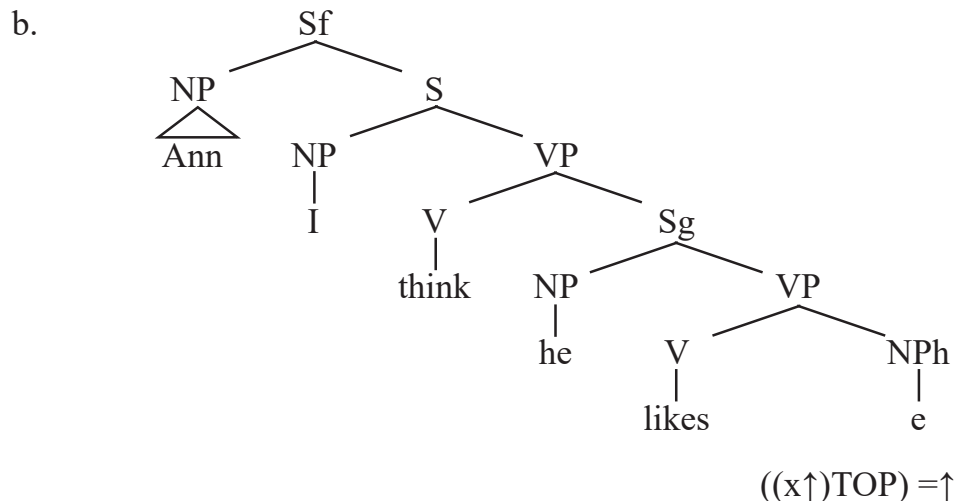
In this example, the verbs ‘*dɔ yi kiŋ*’ are intransitive and do not take an internal object. ‘*da’a*’ selects only ‘*diib*’ as a transitive verb and ‘*tis*’ selects both ‘*biig*’ and ‘*diib*’ as a two-place predicative verb. In this instance, Appah’s proposal serves a good purpose of curbing the problem of overgeneralization in instances where SVCs do not share internal arguments.

5.2 Previous Analysis of Focus and Topic in LFG

The analysis of topic and focus in LFG has also undergone several transformations ranging from phrase structural approach (Kaplan and Bresnan 1982; Zaenen 1980, 1983) to functional approach (Kaplan and Maxwell 1988; Kaplan and Bresnan 1982, Bresnan and Mchombo 1987) and subsequently information discourse approach (Abubakari 2018; King 1997; Mycock and Lowe 2013; Choi 1996). This work combines these approaches in its attempt to analyse focus constructions in SVCs in Kusaal.

Bresnan et. al. (2016) argue that syntactic elements can perform both grammatical and discourse functions simultaneously. This motivates the representation of both grammatical and (grammaticalized) discourse functions in the f-structure. The example below is taken from Bresnan et. al. (2016: 67-69) where the object of the sentence also functions as the topic constituent.

(5.1) S: Ann, I think he likes her.



King points out that the problem arises when the f-structure heads receive discourse function. This is because everything under the head automatically receives the discourse function interpretation as well as in (43) where the subject is indirectly focused alongside the PRED head *karim* ‘read’ (see Abubakari 2018).

Consider the yes/no question below:

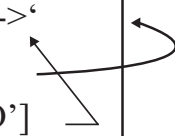
- (42) Ò kārīm gbān lá bɛ?

PRED	‘karim<SUBJ, OBJ>’
Q-FOC	[]
SUBJ	[PRED ‘O’]
OBJ	[PRED ‘gban’]
- 3SG read book DEF Q
‘Has s/ he read the book?’

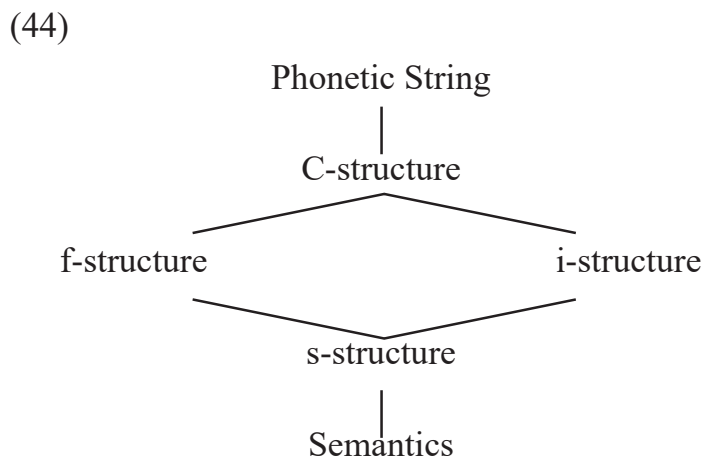
- (43) a. S: Did she buy the book or she read the book?

Contrastive Focus ‘Karim’

- b. Ò kārīm né

PRED	‘karim<--->’
Q-FOC	{[]}
SUBJ	[PRED ‘O’]
- 3SG read FOC
‘It is reading that she did.’
- 

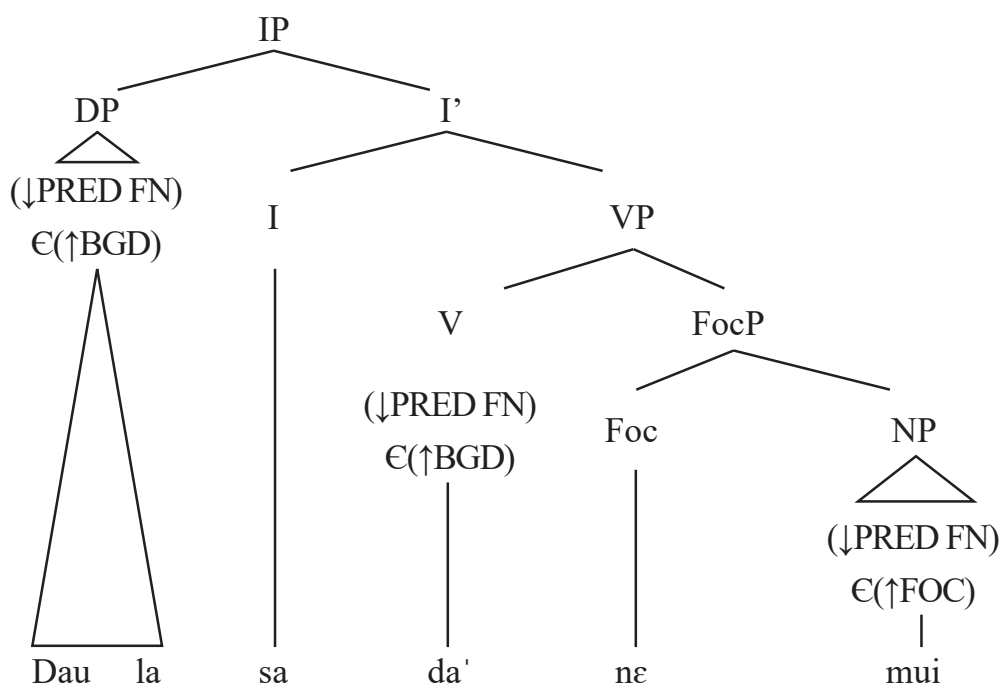
In solving the above situation, King (1997) proposes the introduction of i-information structure such that information is projected from the c-structure into a distinct i(nformation)-structure which will be accessible by the s(ematic)-structure.



Using the figure above, King (1997) explains that the mapping between i-structure and c-structure serves dual roles. It permits the semantic access to discourse function information as needed. It also allows all lexical items with PRED values to be assigned discourse function role (PRED FN: Focus, Topic, Background (BGD)) (Kaplan and Zaenen 1988, 1989; Huang 1992:112). This means any item with a semantic predicate receives a corresponding i-structure role which ensures the independence and the completeness of the i-structure. Additionally, Abubakari (2018); Butt (2014) among others argue for the introduction of finer grained details in the i-structure to achieve maximum discourse correspondence between the c-structure and the i-structure. This also ensures that subtypes of discourse notions: contrastive focus, information focus, etc are fully captured in the i-structure projection. Example (45) is an illustration of an in-situ object focus (see Abubakari 2018 for similar analysis).

- (45) a. Dáú lá sà dā' né mùì.
 man DEF PAST buy FOC rice
 ‘The man bought RICE/It is RICE she bought.’

b. Annotated c-structure



c. F-structure

PRED	‘da’ <SUBJ, OBJ>
TENSE	PAST
SUB	[PRED ‘dau’]
OBJ	[PRED ‘mui’]

d. i-structure

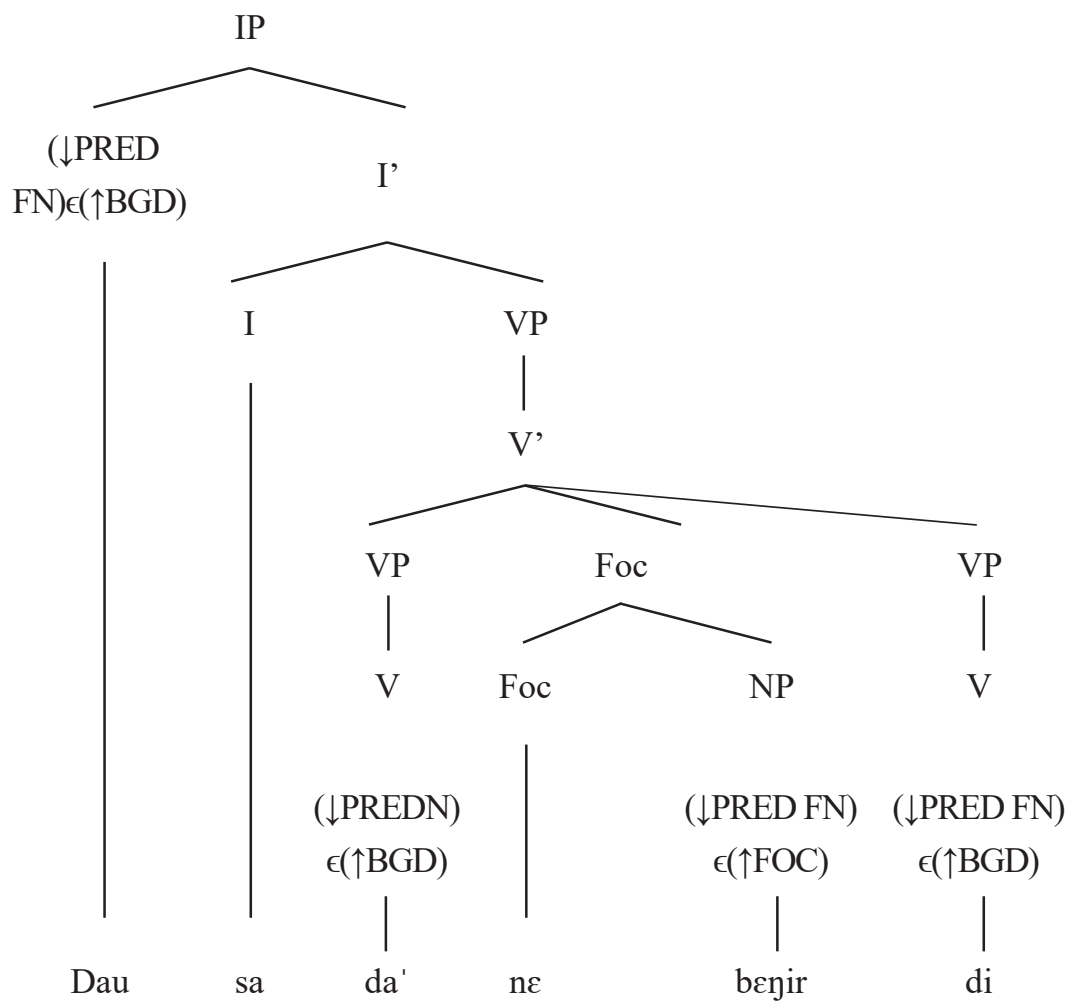
FOCUS	{	REF	diib	}
		DTYPE	contrastive	
		DFORM	ne	
BACKGROUND	{	[REF	di]	}
		[REF	biis]	

5.3 Analysis of Focus in SVCs in Kusaal

Following previous research on information structure in LFG including: Abubakari (2018); King (1997); Butt (2014) among others, I use an independent i-structure to capture discourse related information in the analysis of focus expressions in serial verb constructions in Kusaal. I introduce two predicate values termed Discourse Type (DTYPE), to capture the subtypes of discourse notions: contrastive focus, information focus etc, and Discourse Form (DFORM) to represent any discourse particle e.g. *kà*, *ń*, and *né* for Kusaal, or discourse features such as [+Prominent, +New] for contrastive focus in a language like German (Abubakari 2018; Choi 1996). All focus constituents are annotated with ($\downarrow$ PRED FN) ϵ ($\uparrow$ iFOC) (Kaplan and Zaenen 1988,1989) in the c-structure. The c-structure for SVCs is also modelled along the proposal of Bodomo (1997). Due to space, the illustration is limited to examples involving SVC with shared internal argument and SVC with VP focus.

- (46) a. Dáú la sà dā' né bēŋír dī.
 man DEF PAST buy FOC beans eat
 'No, it is beans that the man bought and ate (rather than rice).'

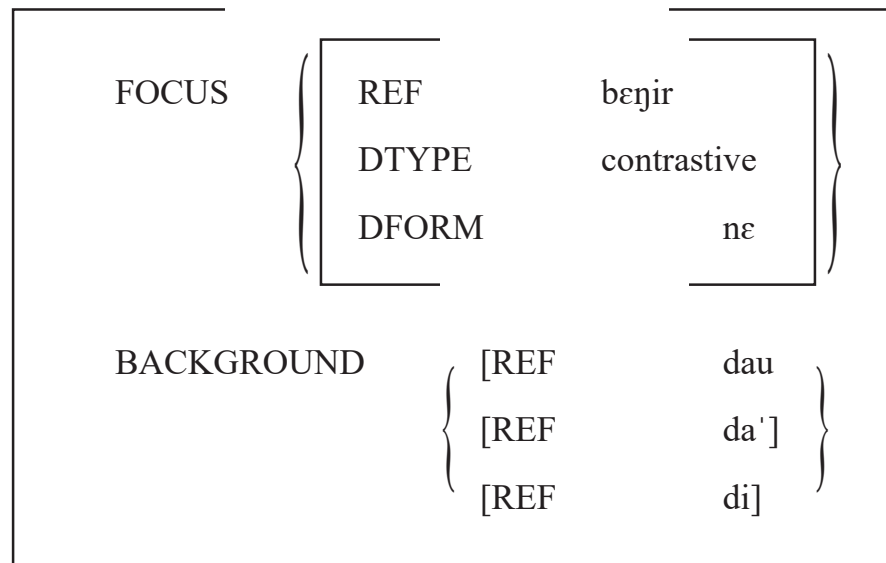
b. c-structure



c. F-structure

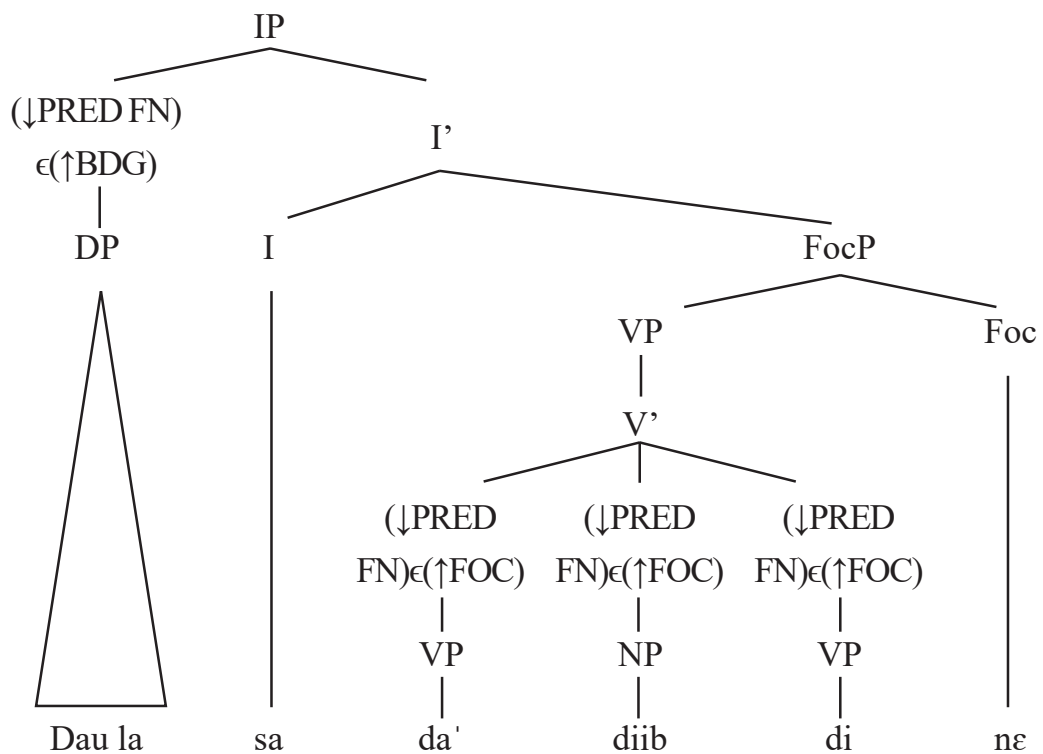
PREDCHAIN	'da', di <f1 f2>'
TENSE	PAST
SUBJ f1	[PRED 'dau']
OBJ f2	[PRED 'bēŋír']

d. I-structure



- (47) a. Dáú lá [VP sà dā' dííb dī nē].
 man DEF PAST buy food eat FOC
 'The man BOUGHT FOOD AND AND ATE IT (rather than any other activities).'

b. c-structure



c. F-structure

PREDCHAIN	‘da’, di <f1 f2>’
TENSE	PAST
SUBJ f1	[PRED ‘dau’]
OBJ f2	[PRED ‘diib’]

d. I-structure

FOCUS	{	REF	da’	}
		REF	diib	
		DTYPE	contrastive	
		DFORM	nɛ	}
BACKGROUND	{	[REF	dau]	}
		[REF	di]	}

6.0 Conclusion

This study set out to address a less discussed phenomenon where constituents are focused IP internally in SVCs in Kusaal. Using various empirical examples, the possibility of contrastively and exhaustively focusing constituents in SVCs in Kusaal has been demonstrated using the particles *n̄* and *nɛ*. Whilst the particle *n̄* is used for in-situ subject focus, *nɛ* is used for in-situ non-subject focus in both SVCs and non-SVCs in the language. As a post verbal particle, various constraints that characterize the use of *nɛ* in in-situ focus have also been discussed.

In general, the findings in this study show that Kusaal combines both clefting and in-situ focus strategies for focus marking in SVCs. Though I have mentioned the impossibility of focusing SVC constituents in-situ in the Mabia language, Dagaare, this study raises the possibility of having Mabia

Languages that could potentially use either clefting as the sole focus strategy in SVCs, or languages that could use only in-situ focus strategy for SVCs or others that could combine both strategies for similar effects as is the case in Kusaal. It will, therefore, be interesting to extend this discussion to cover other Mabia languages to ascertain the level of divergence or similarity in focus strategies in SVCs.

The chapter has further discussed issues relating to previous formal analyses of SVCs in LFG and observed that the proposals of Bodomo (1997); Bodomo et al (2003) and Appah (2009) are complementary since they both are not exhaustive in solving issues relating to all types of SVCs. Each approach should be adopted for the type of SVC it addresses in the absence of a unilateral approach for all types of SVCs.

Building on a combined approach of the work of Abubakari (2018), Butt (2014); King (1997); Choi (1996) and Bodomo (1997), focus constructions in SVCs in Kusaal are analysed within the LFG framework. The c-structure is annotated for various discourse functions, and an independent i-structure is also used to project discourse related information. Predicate attributes referred to as DTYPE and DFORM are introduced in the i-structure to distinguish subtypes of focus and to capture discourse particles and features on individual language basis.

List of Abbreviations

BGD	Background	Nml	Nominalised
COMP	Complement	NUM	Number
CONJ	Conjunction	OBJ	Object
DEF	Definite Article	PL	Plural
DTYPE	Discourse Subtype	PRED	Predicate
FOC	Focus	SG	Singular
GEND	Gender	SUBJ	Subject

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