
Coordination Ellipsis and Verbal Morphology in Dagbani

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Dagbani (Gur, SVO) verbs exhibit inflectional morphology traditionally referred to as the conjoint/disjoint distinction, prominently known from Bantu languages (Hyman & van der Wal 2017). Descriptively, the CJ form appears if the verb is followed by an argument or an adverbial. The DJ form appears if the verb is in final position. In the perfective aspect, DJ marking is blocked in *wh*-questions, constituent focus, negation, relative clauses and coordination ellipsis (Issah 2015). In these contexts, the perfective verb obligatorily appears in the CJ form.

The blocking effect shows a clear connection to focus: Questions and answers represent typical focus contexts; constituent negation closely interacts with focus. Restrictive relative clauses presuppose the existence of entities of which the description given in the relative clause is not true. Coordination ellipsis (VP-ellipsis, postverbal drop) shows the same morphological restriction strongly corroborating the close connection between focus and ellipsis (Winkler 2005) from a very different angle.

Accounting for the verbal morphology in Dagbani, I make the following proposal: (i) Aspect: The verb moves to AspP above *v*P. The aspectual head is realized as *r* (or one of its allophones *d*, *t*, *n*) if imperfective, and zero in the perfective. (ii) CJ/DJ: I take Monich's (2015) distributed morphology approach of the CJ/DJ distinction in Sotho as a starting point and analyze CJ/DJ in Dagbani as resulting from various post-syntactic rules which apply at different syntactic heads introducing the respective vowels. The DJ blocking effect in focus contexts is derived from a restriction built in the respective post-syntactic rule.

References: • Hyman, L. & J. van der Wal (eds.) (2017). *The Conjoint/Disjoint Alternation in Bantu*. De Gruyter. • Issah, S. (2015). Conjoint and disjoint verb alternations in Dagbani. *Ghana Journal of Linguistics* 4.2: 29-63. • Monich, I. (2015). Morphosyntax and Tonology of Sotho Languages. Ph.D. UConn. • Winkler, S. (2005). *Ellipsis and Focus in Generative Grammar*. Mouton De Gruyter.