
Subjects vs. everything else in Dagbani

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In this talk we investigate how subjects behave under focus marking in Dagbani, a Gur language spoken in Northern Ghana. We show that what initially appears to be a two-way division between subjects and other elements, a pattern commonly seen in focus constructions in West African languages (Fiedler et al 2009), is in fact a three way distinction between matrix subjects, embedded subjects, and other elements.

Amongst other differences, whilst focussed matrix subjects are divided from all other foci in appearing with the focus head $\{n/\eta/m\}$ instead of *ka*, focussed embedded subjects are different in that they demand the use of resumptive pronouns, in contrast to all other foci. These differences are explained by appealing to there being two different derivations for focus in Dagbani: (a) movement of a focus to the left periphery; and (b) prolepsis, where a focus is base generated in the left periphery and linked to a resumptive element in the associated argument position (Salzmann 2011). These different derivations are forced by an interplay of preferences of Dagbani clause structure, including the need to license focus in a left-peripheral position, as well as a strong surface need to fill Spec,TP.

Literatur: • Fiedler, I., K. Hartmann, B. Reineke, A. Schwarz, and M. Zimmermann (2009): Subject focus in West African languages. In M. Zimmermann and C. Féry, editors, *Information structure: theoretical, typological and experimental perspectives*, 234–257. Oxford University Press, Oxford. • Salzmann, M. (2011): Silent resumptives in zurich german possessor relativization. In P. Gallman and M. Wratil, (eds.), *Null Pronouns*, 141–221. Mouton deGruyter.