

# Focus Constructions in Hausa\*

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## Abstract

This paper investigates focus constructions in Hausa, a Chadic language spoken mainly in the north of Nigeria. It examines the syntax of two strategies of focus marking in this language, the *ex situ* and the *in situ* strategy. The former strategy was previously claimed by almost all scholars of Hausa to be the unique means of focus marking available in the language. Recently, however, the latter strategy has been suggested to be an alternative to focus fronting. Due to the observation that *ex situ* focus is rather infrequent in the language, it is claimed here that *in situ* focus is probably much more widespread than otherwise assumed in the literature.

## 1. Introduction

Tone languages represent an interesting subject of investigation for a comparative study of information structure. Since tones in such languages either form part of the lexical meaning of words, or are grammatically distinctive, they cannot be used to indicate foci and topics to the same extent as in intonational languages. Tone languages therefore opt for different means of highlighting informationally prominent parts of a clause.

This paper investigates focus constructions in Hausa, which is a Chadic language.<sup>1</sup> These languages are all tone languages and therefore have different strategies to mark a focus constituent: the focus appears either *in situ*, or it is moved (the “*ex situ*” strategy). The target of focus movement can be the left or right periphery of the clause, as well as the postverbal position (cf. Tuller 1992). I will limit myself mostly to focusing in Hausa, which is by far the best documented of the Chadic languages (cf. the excellent grammars of Wolff 1993, Newman 2000 and Jaggar 2001). Even Hausa focus constructions have received attention in the linguistic literature (cf. Green 1997, Green and Jaggar 2003, Jaggar 2004). Given the wealth of Hausa data in the literature, I am basing the present article mostly on empirical material from various studies on Hausa.

The article is structured as follows. Section 2 presents some basic assumptions on focus, Hausa grammar, and the correlation of focus and

tone. Section 3 looks at *ex situ* focus constructions. I first present the inventory of categories which can be focused *ex situ*. Then I corroborate the claim that *ex situ* focus is derived by focus movement. Finally, I investigate the nature of the focus marker *nee*. Section 4 gives an analysis of a Hausa newspaper text with respect to its information structure. It is shown that the *ex situ* pattern is rather infrequent in Hausa. Section 5 presents the insights of Jaggar (2001), (2004) and Green and Jaggar (2003), who first acknowledged the existence of *in situ* foci. Section 6 starts with the hypothesis that *ex situ* foci might be related to a specific focus interpretation such as contrastive (cf. Rochemont 1986) or identificational (Kiss 1998) focus. *In situ* foci, on the other hand, are rather interpreted as new information focus. The data, however, do not fully corroborate this hypothesis.

## 2. Basic assumptions

### 2.1. A definition of focus

I adopt the following definition of focus: Focus on a constituent ( $[ ]_F$ ) invokes a set A of alternatives to  $\alpha$ , indicating that members of A are under consideration (Rooth 1985). Depending on the interaction of  $\alpha$  with other alternatives, a focus can receive different pragmatic readings: A focus is *corrective* or *contrastive* if  $\alpha$  replaces an element of A previously introduced into the common ground (CG), i.e. the linguistic context preceding  $\alpha$ , see (1a). A focus is *selective* if  $\alpha$  introduces an element of A into the CG and some elements of A are made explicit, see (1b). A focus expresses *new-information* if  $\alpha$  introduces an element of A into the CG and A is left implicit, see (1c).

- (1) a. (Peter painted his bicycle red.) No, he painted it [blue]<sub>F</sub>.  
       = blue, A = {blue, red, green, pink,...}  
 b. (Did Peter paint his bicycle red or blue?) He painted it [blue]<sub>F</sub>.  
       = blue, A = {blue, red, green, pink,...}  
 c. (Which color did Peter paint his bicycle?) He painted it [blue]<sub>F</sub>.  
       = blue, A = {blue, red, green, pink,...}

The alternative sets in (1a-c) are identical. This shows that the foci do not differ semantically, but only pragmatically. I follow the generally held assumption that focus represents the new information in a clause. Since every clause is supposed to add some new information, there are presumably no focusless sentences.

Focus is a universal category. The linguistic focus marking devices, however, vary considerably across the world's languages. Focus may be

marked by pitch accent, by word order, by focus marking particles, or by some combination of one or more of these devices.

## 2.2. Hausa grammar

### 2.2.1. Syntax

Hausa is an SVO language. I assume that the verbs always appear in their infinitival form. Temporal and aspectual information as well as person agreement are encoded in a separate morpheme, which I will refer to as “the auxiliary”. The auxiliary is usually left adjacent to the verb. However, it can be separated from the verb by certain emphatic particles and adverbs (Tuller 1986, Green 1997). This shows that the auxiliary and the verb do not form one single head. The auxiliary is almost always a portemanteau morpheme, i.e. it is not always possible to discern its different parts (aspect, agreement etc.).<sup>2</sup> The data in (2a/b) are from Green (1997: 16, 21).<sup>3</sup> The emphatic particles and adverbs are printed in bold face.

- (2) a. *Audu yaa **kuma** ba mini littafi.*  
 A. 3sg.perf PRT give me book  
 ‘Audu also gave me the book.’  
 b. *Audu yaa **fa** ba mini **ku**li da yawaa.*  
 A. 3sg.perf PRT give to-me money much  
 ‘Audu did indeed give me lots of money.’  
 c. *Naa **kusa** kaamàà shi.*  
 1sg.perf almost catch it  
 ‘I almost caught it.’

I assume that the adverbs and particles in (2) are adjoined to VP. The auxiliary is located outside of this verbal complex. As a consequence, the auxiliary and the verb cannot form one single head.

Further evidence for a syntactic separation of the verb and hence the VP from the auxiliary is provided by the following observation. As will be argued at length below, focus constituents move to the left periphery of the clause and are optionally followed by a focus marker (FM). Focus movement can also involve the VP – with the exclusion of the auxiliary. The following example is taken from Wolff (1993: 507), who also concludes that the auxiliary forms an independent constituent.

- (3) *Dafà naamàà (nee) Muusaa ya yi jiyà.*  
 cook meat FM M. 3sg.rel.perf make yesterday  
 ‘It is cooking MEAT, that Musa did yesterday.’

I am assuming a very simple clause structure for Hausa declarative main clauses. I take the clause to be an IP. If a focus constituent is fronted, the root node is a focus phrase (FocP). The focus constituent targets SpecFocP. The head of FocP hosts the optional focus marker *nee* (Green 1997), compare (4), an example with a fronted object focus.

- (4) [FP *Naamàà*<sub>i</sub> [F° *nee*] [IP *Muusaa ya* [VP *dafà t<sub>i</sub> jiyà*]]].  
 meat FM M. 3sg.rel.perf cook yesterday  
 ‘Musa cooked MEAT yesterday.’

In the perfective and the continuous aspect, the auxiliary has two forms, the “absolute” and the “relative” form. The absolute form appears in basic sentences such as (5a). The relative form appears in connection with *wh*-questions (5b), focusing (5c), and relativization (5d). There is one additional use of the relative form which I do not discuss here: the relative auxiliary appears in narrations as well, cf. section 4. (Note that I take the absolute form to be the default form, which therefore does not appear in the glosses. In other words, “1pl.perf” reads as “1<sup>st</sup> person plural, absolute perfective”, cf. footnote 2).

- (5) a. *Mu-n ga yaaròn a kààsuwaa.*  
 1pl-perf see boy at market  
 ‘We saw the boy at the market.’  
 b. *Wàà mu-kà ganii à kààsuwaa?*  
 who 1pl-rel.perf see at market  
 ‘Who did you see at the market?’  
 c. *Yaarònkà (nee) mu-kà ganii à kààsuwaa.*  
 boy.your FM 1pl-rel.perf see at market  
 ‘We saw your BOY at the market.’  
 d. *yaarònkà dà mu-kà ganii a kààsuwaa*  
 boy.your REL 1pl-rel.perf see at market  
 ‘your boy who we saw at the market’

### 2.2.2. Tonal system

Tone in Hausa is not only a distinctive suprasegmental feature of lexical meanings, it also differentiates grammatical meanings.<sup>4</sup> For instance, in the third person singular, the relative perfective (6a) and the subjunctive (6b) only differ in the associated tones. These auxiliaries are quite differently distributed, see Wolff (1993), Newman (2000), and Jaggar (2001).

- (6) a. *Naa soo abîn dà ya sàyaa.*  
 1sg.perf like thing which 3sg.rel.perf buy  
 ‘I liked what he bought.’

- b. *Yaa cê yà yi barcii.*  
 3ps.perf say 3sg.subj make sleep  
 'He said that he slept.'

Apart from marking tense, aspect, and agreement, tone serves to differentiate a number of other grammatical distinctions. Newman (2000: 600) mentions the following functions of tone: it can form minimal lexical pairs (*bàaba – baabà*, 'father – mother'), it marks plural (*mààtaa – maataa*, 'wife – wives, women'), it creates different verb grades (*dafàà – dàfaa*, 'to cook – cook!'), it forms verbal nouns (*shaa – shâ*, 'to drink – drinking'), and it derives adverbs from nouns (*•asaa – •asà*, 'earth, ground – on the ground').

The expression of topic and focus in tone languages fundamentally differs from the ways in which they are expressed in intonational languages. Intonational languages make topics and foci prosodically salient by associating them with pitch accents (cf. Gussenhoven 1983, Selkirk 1984, Cruttenden 1986, Jacobs 1993, Ladd 1996 etc.). In many languages, the assignment of a pitch accent is the standard way to express topic and focus. Typically, pitch accents are realised as contour tones, perceived as distinctive F0-movements on the metrically most prominent syllable of the topic and focus exponents. In tone languages, on the other hand, the lexical tones cannot be overridden by contour tones to indicate prominent stress assignment. Thus, the strategy of marking topic and focus constituents by contour tones is not available to the same extent as it is in intonational languages (cf. Cruttenden 1986, Dik 1997).

### 3. *Ex situ* focus

#### 3.1. Inventory of constituents that can be fronted

Focused constituents may be fronted in Hausa. As the following examples illustrate, focus fronting can apply to any maximal projection. After the fronted XP, a focus marker FM (*nee/cee/nee* for masculine/feminine/plural, with polar tone) is (optionally) inserted. As the examples show, nominal arguments (7), prepositional arguments and adjuncts (8), adverbials (9), and even clauses (10) can be focused by fronting them (cf. Wolff 1993: 504, Green 1997: 110, Newman 2000: 178, and Jaggar 2001: 500f.). The examples in (8) and (9) are from Newman (2000: 188-192). Example (10a) is from Jaggar (2001: 500), (10b) is from Green (1997: 110).

- (7) a. [DP *Kiifii*]<sub>FOC</sub> *nèè Kànde ta-kèè dafààwaa.*  
 fish FM K. 3sg-rel.cont cooking

- ‘Kande is cooking the FISH.’<sup>5</sup>
- b. [DP *Kànde*]<sub>FOC</sub> *cèè ta-kèè* *dafà* *kiifii*.  
 K. FM 3sg-rel.cont cooking fish  
 ‘KANDE is cooking the fish.’
- (8) a. [PP *Baayan bishiyàà*]<sub>FOC</sub> *ya-kèè*.  
 behind tree 2sg-rel.cont  
 ‘He is behind the TREE.’
- b. [PP *Dà wu•aa*]<sub>FOC</sub> *nèè ya* *sòòkee shì*.<sup>6</sup>  
 with knife FM 3sg.rel.perf stab him  
 ‘He stabbed him with a KNIFE.’
- (9) [AdvP *Maza-maza*]<sub>FOC</sub> *nèè su-kà* *gamà aiki-n*.  
 quick-quick FM 3pl-rel.perf finish work-DET  
 ‘Very QUICKLY, they finished the work.’
- (10) [CP *Don in biyaa kà kuŋin*]<sub>FOC</sub>  
 in.order.to 1sg.subj pay you money  
*nee na zoo*.  
 FM 1sg.rel.perf come  
 ‘It’s in order to pay you the money that I’ve come.’

If a VP is focused, the verb is nominalised, i.e. a verbal noun. The formation of verbal nouns is a difficult issue in Hausa grammar and there are different theories about it. I am following here the analysis of Jungraithmayr and Möhlig (1986), who continue the tradition initiated by Abraham (1941). In this tradition, verbal nouns (VNs) fall into two syntactic classes, feminine and masculine VNs. Feminine VNs always end in *-waa* (*kaamàà* ‘to catch’ – *kaamààwaa* ‘the catching’, *kashèè* ‘to kill’ – *kashèèwaa* ‘the killing’). Masculine VNs do not end in *-waa*, they have irregular forms (e.g. *shaa* ‘to drink’ – *shâ* ‘the drinking’, *shaarèè* ‘to sweep’ – *shààraa* ‘the sweeping’). If the feminine VN is followed by an object, the final syllable *-waa* (as well as the final vowel length) disappears (*Inàà kaamààwaa*. ‘I am catching.’ – *Inàà kaamà kààzàa*. ‘I am catching a chicken.’). The masculine VN is linked to a following object by the genitive linker *-n* (*Yanàà shân taabàà*. ‘He is smoking’, literally: ‘He is drinking tobacco.’). If VNs appear in verbal constructions, the continuous aspect is obligatory. It also has an absolute and a relative form, depending on the syntactic construction.

The examples in (11) (from Newman 2000: 193) illustrate VP-focus. The focused verbs *biyàn* and *tàimakon* are undoubtedly verbal nouns since they are linked to the following objects by the genitive linker. In both cases, the proverb *yi* appears, which can be optionally deleted. Compare the neutral sentences (with absolute auxiliary and *in situ* VP) in the parenthesis below the paraphrases (also from Newman).

- (11) a. [*Biyà-n hàṛṛaaji-n*]<sub>FOC</sub> (*nee*) *Tankò ya yi.*  
 paying-GEN tax-DEF FM T. 3sg.rel.perf make  
 'It was pay the taxes that Tanko did.'  
 (vs. *Tankò yaa biyaa hàṛṛaajin.*)
- b. [*Tàimako-n juunaa*]<sub>FOC</sub> *zaa mù<sup>7</sup> yi.*  
 helping-GEN together fut 1pl make  
 'It is help one another that we are going to do.'  
 (vs. *Zaa mù tàimàki juunaa.*)

Newman (2000: 193) and Jaggar (2001) propose that infinitive verbs can also be focused. Instead, I would like to keep the hypothesis that verbs can only be focused in their nominalised form: The focused verbs in (12) are shortened forms of female verbal nouns (cf. Jungraithmayr and Möhlig 1986). Thus, *Ìaurè* is derived from the female verbal noun *Ìaurèèwaa* because it is followed by an object. *Ginà* is the shortened form of *ginààwaa*. These shortened VNs look identical to the infinitive verbs.<sup>8</sup>

- (12) a. [*D'aurè fàraawòò*]<sub>FOC</sub> (*nee*) *su-kà yi.*  
 tie.up thief FM 3pl-rel.perf make  
 'To tie up the thief is what they did.'  
 (vs. *Sun Ìaurè fàraawòò.*)
- b. *Ginà masallaacii (nèè) su-kèè sô sù yi.*  
 build mosque (FM) 3pl-rel.cont want 3pl.subj make  
 'It is building a mosque that they want to do.'  
 (vs. *Sunà sô su ginà masallaacii.*)

The data in (12) are, in principle, compatible with the theory of Newman (2000) and Jaggar (2001) that not only verbal nouns can be focused but also infinitive verbs. However, supporting evidence for the analysis of verbal focus proposed in this article (verbs can be focused only nominalised) comes from monosyllabic verbs that only have one (masculine) verbal noun. As the examples in (13) illustrate, the monosyllabic verbs have to appear as verbal nouns if fronted, the infinitive form cannot be used.

- (13) a. *Shân / \*sha taabàà ya-kèè yi.*  
 drinking / drink tobacco 3sg-rel.cont do  
 'It is smoking that he is doing.'
- b. *Cîn / \*ci àbinci ta-kèè yi.*  
 eating / eat food 3sg.fem-rel.cont do  
 'It is eating food that she is doing.'

The target position of focus fronting is the specifier of a functional projection dominating IP (cf. (4)). Due to the Structure Preservation Principle (Emonds 1976), this position may only host maximal

projections. Syntactic heads are therefore not expected to be focused by fronting. In accordance with this expectation, the literature on Hausa does not report any instances of syntactic heads being focused by movement. Focused heads are scarcely treated at all, with one exception: Hyman and Watters (1984) examine focused auxiliaries in different African languages. With respect to Hausa, the authors assume that the focus form of the auxiliary is not the relative form, which becomes obligatory in connection with movement to the sentence initial position, but the absolute form. The discussion of focused auxiliaries is taken up by Wolff (1993: 507ff. and 2001). Wolff assumes that aspectual focus is signalled in the perfective and progressive aspect only. In the spirit of Hyman and Watters, he claims that the absolute forms of these aspects express focus, cf. (14) (Wolff 1993: 508, the glosses and paraphrases are my English translations of Wolff's German ones).

- (14) a. *Muusaa yaa dafà naamàà jiyà.* perfective  
 M. 3sg.perf cook meat yesterday  
 'It is/was done: Musa cooked the meat yesterday.'
- b. *Muusaa ya-nàà dafà naamàà yànzù.* progressive  
 M. 3sg-cont cook meat now  
 'It is going on: Musa is cooking the meat now.'

The assumption that the absolute auxiliary expresses focus is not without problems, however (see also Hutchison 2000). Since it occurs in any clause except *wh*-questions, relative and focus fronting clauses, the alleged focus auxiliary is predicted to represent the default form. This prediction seems to be too strong. Notice further that focus constituents do not necessarily have to move to the sentence initial position: focus may also be realised *in situ* (cf. Jaggar 2001, 2004, Green and Jaggar 2003, and also section 6). In this case, the auxiliary appears in the absolute form. Consequently, a double focus reading is expected (aspect focus plus *in situ* constituent focus), which is not attested. A final confirmation of Wolff's and Hyman and Watters' hypothesis has to await further careful examination.

### 3.2. Arguments for focus movement

In this section I present arguments which corroborate the claim that *ex situ* focus is derived by movement (cf. Tuller 1986, Green 1997, Newman 2000, Jaggar 2001). As illustrated in (4), Green (1997) assumes that the focus constituent moves to the specifier of a focus phrase. The head of FocP is filled by the focus marker *nee*.

The following arguments support this analysis. First, the relative form of the auxiliary is obligatory in *ex situ* focus constructions. As shown in



the examples (5) above, the relative auxiliary becomes obligatory in connection with all instances of *ex situ* constructions (i.e. A'-movement).

Second, Tuller (1986) notes that constituents contained in *wh*-islands cannot be focused. In the ungrammatical (15), from Tuller (1986: 55), the trace of the *ex situ* focus constituent is contained within a *wh*-island.

- (15) \**Alij (nee) mu-ka san [waa<sub>i</sub> zai t<sub>j</sub> auraa t<sub>i</sub>].*  
 A. FM 1pl-rel.perf know who 3sg.fut marry  
 'Ali, we know who will marry.'

Third, a comparison between focus and topic constructions reveals differences between the two with respect to movement. As (16) to (18) illustrate, they differ in the following two respects. The focus and topic markers (TM) are not the same. In addition, topic and focus constructions have different auxiliaries. Example (16) (Newman 2000: 187) gives a minimal pair: In the focus sentence (16a), the auxiliary has the relative form (with short high vowel); in the topic sentence (16b), the absolute form appears (with long high vowel). Since only the relative auxiliary indicates movement, topics are base-generated sentence-initially (Junaido 1987).

- (16) a. *Hàdizà (cee) ta ci lambàà.*  
 H. FM 3sg.fem.rel.perf eat prize  
 'HADIZA won the prize.'  
 b. *Hàdizà (kàm) taa ci lambàà.*  
 H. TM 3sg.fem.perf eat prize  
 'As for Hadiza, she won the prize.'

Example (17) shows that topics can be related to elements contained in a *wh*-island (Tuller 1986: 55). This would be impossible if topics were fronted by movement.

- (17) *Ali (kam), mun san [waa<sub>i</sub> pro zai auraa t<sub>i</sub>]*  
 A. TM 1pl.perf know who 3sg.fut marry  
 'As for Ali, we know who (he) will marry.'

Finally, since foci occupy the (unique) specifier of FocP, multiple foci are expected to be ruled out. That this expectation is borne out is illustrated by example (18) from Newman (2000: 188).

- (18) \**Audù nee, hùùlaa cèè ya sàyaa.*  
 A. FM cap FM 3sg.rel.perf buy  
 'AUDU bought a CAP.'

Topics, on the other hand, should be able to iterate. Being base-generated, they are adjoined to the root node. There is no general

principle which forbids multiple adjunction. (19a) shows that multiple topics are indeed possible. A further prediction is that a topic and a focus may co-occur. In the grammatical (19b), the focus appears in the specifier of FocP, and the topic is adjoined to it. (Both examples are again from Newman 2000: 118).

- (19) a. *Audù fà, hùùlāa kām yaa sàyaa.*  
 A. TM cap TM 3sg.perf buy  
 ‘As for Audu, regarding the cap, he bought it.’  
 b. *Audù fà, hùùlāa cèè ya sàyaa.*  
 A. TM cap FM 3sg.rel.perf buy  
 ‘As for Audu, it was a cap which he bought.’

Finally, topic constructions differ from focus constructions in their intonational structure. As noted in McConvell (1973), Jaggar (1978) and Tuller (1986: 57), downdrift, i.e. the continuous declination of the absolute pitch value towards the end of the clause (Kenstowicz 1994: 341), is interrupted in topic, but not in focus sentences. Since the domain of downdrift is the clause, its non-interruption in focus constructions shows that these are indeed monosentential (against McConvell 1973, cf. subsection 3.3).

To summarise, topics and foci, which both appear at the left periphery of the clause, do not behave alike with respect to movement. While foci must respect well-known constraints on movement, topics may violate them. This can be explained under the assumption that sentence initial foci are derived, but topics are base-generated there.

### 3.3. The focus marker *nee*

This subsection discusses the nature of the morpheme *nee* (in the following, I use *nee* as an abbreviation for the complete paradigm of the focus markers *nee/cee/nee*, for masculine, feminine, plural). *Nee* appears in focus and predicative constructions. The analyses of *nee* in these constructions vary in that they either treat it as one and the same element, or as two different elements. McConvell (1973), a proponent of the unified analysis, treats *nee* in both cases as a copula verb (cf. also Jaggar 1978). He analyses focus constructions as clefts, which involve a bisentential structure. Thus, the focus constituent together with the copula forms a clause and so does the following relative clause. Tuller (1986) advocates a non-unified treatment of *nee*. She is the first who takes *nee* in focus constructions to be a focus marker. This view implies a monosentential analysis of focus constructions. In predicatives, Tuller analyses *nee* as a defective auxiliary. Green (1997) offers another version of the unified approach. She adopts Tuller’s treatment of *nee* as

a focus marker and extends her analysis to copula constructions in general. Thus, Green analyses *nee* generally as a focus marker.

This subsection presents the most convincing arguments showing that *nee* is indeed sensitive to the focus. Most of these arguments originate in Tuller's and Green's work.<sup>9</sup> The following arguments show that *nee* in focus constructions can be neither a (copula) verb nor an auxiliary. A cleft analysis of focus constructions is therefore not tenable.

An unbeatable argument against a verbal analysis of *nee* in focus constructions is that it never appears together with an auxiliary. This sets it apart from verbs, which are always preceded by an inflection word (Green 1997: 98). Furthermore, Tuller (1986) points out that *nee* – unlike Hausa verbs – shows gender and number agreement. Unlike verbs, *nee* does not form a verbal noun.

One could still maintain the view that *nee* is a copula verb, assuming that it resembles the Hausa auxiliary. The first argument which favours a separate treatment of the focus marker and the auxiliary concerns the optionality of the former. While the focus marker (20a) is not obligatory, the inflectional element ((20b), from Newman 2000: 188) may not be missing.

- (20) a. [*Baayan bishiyàà*]<sub>FOC</sub> (*nee*) *ya-kèè*.  
 behind tree FM 3sg-rel.cont  
 'He is behind the TREE.'  
 b. *Audù \*(yaa) ga doogon mùtùm*.  
 A. 3sg.perf see big man  
 'Audu saw a big man.'

The second difference between the two elements concerns their syntactic position (cf. Tuller 1986). While the auxiliary always appears after the subject in Hausa (21a), *nee* follows the fronted focus constituent ((21b), Newman 2000: 193). In (21b), the focus marker and the auxiliary co-occur, which illustrates once again that they do not share the same position.

- (21) a. *Audù yaa* [<sub>VP</sub> *ga doogon mùtùm*].  
 A. 3sg.perf see big man  
 'Audu saw a big man.'  
 b. [<sub>VP</sub> *Shaarè Ìaakìn*] *nee ta-kèè*.  
 sweep room FM 3sg-fem.rel.cont  
 'It is sweeping the room that she is doing.'

The preceding examples show that *nee* does not behave as a verbal category and therefore should not be treated as a copula (cf. Green 1997 and Tuller 1986). Analysing *nee* as a focus marker instead implies that Hausa focus constructions cannot be clefts, since clefts obligatorily

involve a copula verb in the clefted part. I follow the proposal of Tuller and Green who analyse focus constructions as monosentential structures.

To summarise, section 3 looked at *ex situ* focus constructions in Hausa. It was shown that all kinds of phrasal constituents can be focused by fronting them. With respect to heads, the Structure Preservation Principle excludes head-movement to specifier positions such as the specifier of FocP. Since focus fronting of XPs is restricted by constraints on movement, *ex situ* focus was argued to involve movement to the left periphery (A'-movement). Such restrictions were shown not to hold for topics, which was related to the idea that topics are base-generated sentence initially (Junaido 1987). Finally, the arguments of Tuller (1986) and Green (1997) in favour of a monosentential structure of focus constructions were presented. The adopted analysis treats *nee* as a focus marker rather than as the copula, which appears in cleft sentences. This does not exclude the possibility, however, that the focus marker diachronically evolved from the copula in cleft sentences – a matter which is left open for future research.

#### 4. *Ex situ* focus in texts

In this section, I analyse the information structure of a paragraph of an article taken from the journal “A Yau” (from February 27<sup>th</sup> 1998). My intention is to show that the occurrence of *ex situ* focus is actually very restricted. Since *ex situ* foci always trigger a relative auxiliary, I primarily look at those sentences containing such an auxiliary (printed in bold face), trying to determine which of them contain a focus. Each number at the left margin indicates a (main or embedded) clause. Below the sentences containing a relative auxiliary, I determine the type of the respective construction. The following abbreviations are used: RELC stands for “relative clause”, NAR for “narrative”.<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, it is uncommon in Hausa written texts to annotate tones and vowel length. This information is therefore missing in the following text.

“Mace Îaya na iya auren mutane biyar” (One women can marry five men)

- |   |  |               |              |                 |                |                |                 |
|---|--|---------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1 | <i>Batseri wani</i>  | <i>•auye</i>  | <i>ne</i>    |                 |                |                |                 |
|   | B.   | some          | village      | is              |                |                |                 |
|   | ‘Batseri is some village’                                  |               |              |                 |                |                |                 |
| 2 | <i>da</i>  | <i>(ya)ke</i> | <i>kan</i>   | <i>tsauni</i>   | <i>a</i>       | <i>gudumar</i> | <i>Kinneur</i>  |
|   | REL  | 3sg.rel.cont  | on.top.of    | mountain        | in             | district       | K.              |
|   | ‘which is on top of a mountain in the district of Kinneur’ |               |              |                 |                |                |                 |
|   | → RELC   |               |              |                 |                |                |                 |
| 3 | <i>da</i>  | <i>(ya)ke</i> | <i>jihar</i> | <i>Himachal</i> | <i>Bradesh</i> | <i>a</i>       | <i>arewacin</i> |
|   | REL  | 3sg.rel.cont  | district     | H. B.           |                |                | in north.of     |

- asar* *Indiya*  
land India  
'which is in the district of Himachal Pradesh in the north of India.'
- **RELC**
- 4 *Kasancewar* •*auyen* *kan* *tsibiri* *sai* **ya**  
presence-GEN village-DEF on mountain PRT 3sg.rel.perf  
*kasance*<sup>11</sup>  
made.to.be  
'The location of the village on an island made it happen that'
- **NAR**
- 5 *ba'a* *iya* *yin* *noma* *ko* *kuma* *sam(u)n*  
neg.cont.one can do fieldwork or else find  
*wani amfani*  
some profit  
'no one can do field work or find some other job'  
*daga* *kashi biyu bisa uku* *na* •*asar* *wurin*.  
from 2/3 of earth-GEN place-DEF  
'in two thirds of the place.'
- 6 *Ganin* *haka*  
seeing this  
'Seeing this'
- 7 *sai* *al'ummar* •*auyen* *suka* *yanke* *shawara*  
PRT people-GEN village-DEF 3pl.rel.perf make decision  
'the people of the village decided (that)'
- **NAR**
- 8 *maza* *su* *ha'u*  
men 3pl.subj get.together  
'men should get together'
- 9 *su* *auri* *mace* *Îaya domin* *rage* *hayayyafa*.  
3pl.subj marry woman one for reduce births  
'and should marry one woman in order to reduce the birth rates.'
- 10 *Kamar yadda* *Lalchand*, *Îan shekaru* 32 *da* *haihuwa*  
such as L. boy years 32 from birth  
'Such as Lalchand, a man of 32 years'
- 11 *wanda* **ya** *ha'u* *da* •*aninsa* *Hilala*,  
REL 3sg.rel.perf get.together with brother.his H.  
*Îan shekaru* 25  
boy years 25  
'who got together with his brother Hilala, a man of 25 years'
- **RELC**
- 12 *suka* *auri* *wata* *mata* *mai* *suna*  
3pl.rel.perf marry some woman holder name  
Yumphati Negi  
Y.N.  
'they married a woman called Yumphati Negi'

- NAR
- 13 *wadda ta haifar masu 'ya'ya* 12  
REL 3.fem.rel.perf give.birth them children 12  
'who gave birth to 12 children'
- RELC
- 14 *kuma cikin ya'yan biyar suka mutu*  
PRT among children-DEF 5 3pl.rel.perf die  
'from which 5 children died'
- 15 *suka bar bakwai*  
3pl.rel.perf leave 7  
'7 remained'
- NAR
- 16 *yaa ce*  
3sg.perf say  
'he said'
- 17 *irin wannan auren (ya)na sanya mata*  
thing-DEF this wedding-DEF 3sg.cont cause woman  
*jin da'i*  
feel joy  
'this wedding is letting a woman feel joy'
- mai irewa da tabbacin kariya*  
lasting and confirmation-GEN security  
'lasting and the confirmation of security'
- 18 *domin idan miji Iaya ya yi tafiya*  
because if man one 3sg.subj make travel  
'because if one man makes a journey'
- 19 *sauran suna nan.*  
rest-DEF 3pl.cont here  
'one stays here.'

Since no focus markers are used in the text, it is not trivial to detect possible foci. In four obvious cases, the relative auxiliary appears with relative clauses (sentences 2, 3, 11 and 13). The remaining occurrences of relative auxiliaries could indicate either an *ex situ* focus or a narrative form. Sentences 4, 12, and 14 all represent new information, i.e. the whole sentences are focused. Given this, it would not make much sense to treat the subjects preceding the respective relative auxiliaries as *ex situ* foci. I therefore analyse the relative auxiliaries in 4, 12, and 14 as narrative forms, which do not involve focus fronting (cf. footnote 11). In 15, no overt constituent precedes the relative auxiliary. This cannot be an *ex situ* focus then, but also has to be a narrative form.

To summarise, there are no *ex situ* foci in the newspaper text above. Therefore, the advancement of new information in Hausa must be able to employ strategies which differ from focus fronting. We turn to such strategies in the next section.

### 5. *In situ* focus

The predominant view among Hausaists is that focusing always involves movement to the sentence initial position (cf. section 4 and references therein). Since we assume that there are no focusless clauses (cf. section 2.1), Hausa sentences should generally exhibit focus movement. As the text analysis in the last section revealed, however, none of the clauses (matrix and embedded) show the *ex situ* focus pattern. This is a problem for the traditional view since it cannot explain how information is packaged in the majority of the cases.<sup>12</sup>

#### 5.1. Jaggar (2001) / Green and Jaggar (2003)

Jaggar (2001) and Green and Jaggar (2003) propose a possible solution to this problem. The authors observe a secondary focus strategy in Hausa. Investigating the possibility of *in situ* focus, they claim that some focus constituents do not necessarily move. These are, following Jaggar (2001: 496), mainly (but not exclusively) “predicates containing locative and prepositional phrases”. The authors assume that *in situ* focus is in general less common than focus fronting.<sup>13</sup>

Let us have a look at Jaggar and Green’s data. As (22) illustrates, the constituents corresponding to the *wh*-expressions in the questions appear in their base-generated positions. No movement takes place, as evidenced by the auxiliaries, which appear in their regular, absolute form. Thus, *in situ* focus is syntactically and morphologically unmarked.<sup>14</sup> The following data are from Jaggar (2001: 497f).

- (22) a. *Dàgà wàné gàrii ka zoo?*  
 from which city 2sg.rel.perf come  
*Naa tahoo dàgà [Bìnin •wànni]FOC.*  
 1sg.perf come from Birnin Konni  
 ‘From which city do you come? I come from BIRNIN KONNI.’
- b. *Wàné kaayaa ki-kà màntaa?*  
 which things 2sg-fem.rel.perf forget  
*Naa mancee [jàkaataa dà rìgaataa]FOC.*  
 1sg.perf forget bag.of.1sg and coat.of.1sg  
 ‘Which things did you forget? I forgot my BAG and my COAT.’
- c. *Kòðfii zaa kà shaa koo kùwa shaayì?*  
 coffee fut 2sg drink or else tea  
*Zàn shaa shaayìFOC.*  
 fut.1sg drink tea  
 ‘Will you drink coffee or tea? I will drink TEA.’

The data in (22) show that core arguments allow *in situ* focus. In (22a), the NP is a complement of a preposition, in (22b,c) it is the direct object (coordinated in (22b)). Green and Jagggar (2003: footnote 15) acknowledge that *in situ* focus of core arguments is sporadically allowed by Eastern Hausa speakers. As will be shown in sections 5.2 and 6, however, *in situ* object focus represents a real alternative to focus fronting in standard Hausa.

Apart from NPs, predicates (23) and verbs (24) (from Jagggar 2001: 497) do not have to be moved in order to be focused.

(23) *Ìnaa kòðfii? Yanàà [can cikin kwabàà]FOC.*  
 where coffee 3sg.cont there in cupboard  
 ‘Where’s the coffee? It’s there in the CUPBOARD.’

(24) *Mèè ya fààru gà ‘yan-taawaayèn?*  
 what 3sg.rel.perf happen to rebels  
 [*An Ìaurèè*]FOC su.  
 4pl.perf imprison them  
 ‘What happened to the rebels? They IMPRISONED them.’

The fact that a variety of syntactic constituents may be focused *in situ* indicates that the *in situ* pattern is obviously more frequent than Jagggar and Green assume. Further evidence for the more general availability of *in situ* focus is also provided in Hausa text books (as e.g. Jungraithmayr and Möhlig 1986, Cowan and Schuh 1976). Looking at question-answer drills reveals that the answers provided in these books always exhibit *in situ* focus. This is not the only way to answer these questions, but the exclusiveness of the pattern is remarkable.

## 5.2. More on *in situ* focus

When I started to write this article, Jagggar (2001) and Green and Jagggar (2003) were the only available publications on *in situ* focus in Hausa. Considerations such as those presented in section 4 lead me to the conclusion that *in situ* focus must occur much more frequently in Hausa than Green and Jagggar assume in their work. During the review process of this book, science fortunately went on. I continued to investigate the possibility of *in situ* focus, together with my colleague Malte Zimmermann. The result of our work is a further paper on focus in Hausa, to which I refer the interested reader (Hartmann and Zimmermann 2005). At the same time, and without our knowledge, Philip Jagggar analysed Hausa *in situ* focus more closely (Jagggar 2004) and came to similar results as we did: *In situ* focus is a common and frequent focus strategy in Hausa. In this section, I present some of our



empirical findings. A thorough analysis of the data is found in our respective articles.

*In situ* focus in Hausa is possible with all constituents except subjects (see section 5.3). It occurs across most syntactic categories and functions. As the data from Jaggar (2001) and Green and Jaggar (2003) showed, *in situ* focus is possible with direct objects (22b,c) and NP-complements of prepositions (22a). In addition, focused *in situ* arguments may also involve indirect objects (25) and locative arguments (26).

- (25) *Wàà ka sayoo wà zoobèè?*  
 whom 2sg.rel.perf buy PRT ring  
*Naa sayoo zoobèè [wà Hàliimà]*<sub>FOC</sub>.  
 1sg.perf buy ring PRT Halima  
 ‘For whom did you buy the ring? I bought it for HALIMA.’
- (26) *Ìnaa su-kà tàfi? Su-n tàfi daajì*<sub>FOC</sub>.  
 where 3pl.rel.perf go 3pl-perf go bush  
 ‘Where did they go? They went to the BUSH.’

All kinds of adjuncts can be focused *in situ*. Jaggar (2004) presents examples for nominal adjuncts, locative and temporal focused *in situ* adjuncts. (27) and (28) are examples for temporal and instrumental adjuncts.

- (27) *Yàushè su-kà daawoo? Su-n daawoo*  
 when 3pl-rel.perf come.back 3pl-perf come.back  
*jiyà*<sub>FOC</sub>.  
 yesterday  
 ‘When did they come back? They came back YESTERDAY.’
- (28) *Dà mèè ya sòðkee shì?*  
 with what 3sg.rel.perf stab him  
*Yaa sòðkee shì [dà wu•aa]*<sub>FOC</sub>.  
 3sg.perf stab him with knife  
 ‘With what did you stab him? I stabbed him with a KNIFE.’

Finally, focused predicates can also occur *in situ*. This was shown in section 5.1 for locative predicates (23) and verbs (24). In addition, VPs (29), as well as NP-predicates (30), taken from Jaggar (2004, ex. (24)) can be focused *in situ*.

- (29) *Mèèneenèè Tanko ya yi?*  
 what Tanko 2sg.rel.perf do  
*Tanko yaa [biyaa hà•aajì]*<sub>FOC</sub>.  
 Tanko 2sg.perf pay taxes

‘What did Tanko do? Tanko paid the TAXES.’

- (30) *Shii wàanee nèe? Shii Audù nee.*  
 he who FM he Audu FM  
 ‘Who is he? He is AUDU.’

To sum up, *in situ* focus is a very common pattern in Hausa. Of course, the answers in (22) to (30) are also well-formed if the focus constituents are fronted. Our informants, who were confronted with a set of answers to each question, accepted *in situ* focus and *ex situ* focus constructions all the same, the only exception being focused subject, where only the *ex situ* pattern is possible (see the following section). The possibility of *in situ* focus offers a natural solution to the problem of the incomplete correlation of new information focus on the one hand and the infrequency of the *ex situ* pattern on the other.

### 5.3. Subject focus

Green and Jaggar (2003) note that *in situ* subject foci are excluded. Thus, the answer to the question in (31) requires the auxiliary in its relative form, indicating focus movement. The absolute form, which obligatorily appears with *in situ* foci in the examples above, is ungrammatical here.

- (31) *Suwàà su-kà tàfi Amīkà?*  
 who 3pl-rel.perf go America  
*Su Audù dà Muusaa (nèè) \*su-n/su-kà tàfi.*  
 3pl A. and M. FM 3pl-perf/3pl-rel.perf go  
 ‘Who went to America? AUDU and MUSA went.’

The fact that subjects have to move if they are focused is not unique to Hausa but has also been observed in a variety of other Chadic languages, such as Tangale (cf. Hartmann and Zimmermann 2004b) or Miya (cf. Schuh 1998),<sup>15</sup> as well as in a number of languages outside the Chadic language family (see Sabel and Zeller, to appear).

As Hartmann and Zimmermann (2004) argue for Tangale, the reason for the exclusion of *in situ* subject foci is that the (default) preverbal subject position triggers a topic interpretation (see Givon 1976). Therefore, if a subject is to be interpreted as focus, something special has to be done. In Tangale, as well as in Hausa, the subject has to be dislocated.

## 6. Focus interpretation

Sections 4 to 6 showed that focus constituents can appear either *in situ* or *ex situ*. One could assume that *ex situ* foci appear only when associated with a specific interpretation. In other words, the following correlation could potentially hold in Hausa: *Ex situ* foci are always interpreted as a correction or a contrast, while *in situ* foci receive a new-information focus interpretation. This distinction would corroborate theories which distinguish different types of foci by their syntactic position (e.g. Kiss 1998).

However, Hausa does not seem to support such a correlation between focus position and focus interpretation. *In situ* foci as well as *ex situ* foci can be interpreted either as corrective/contrastive or as new-information focus. This is illustrated in the following data. *Ex situ* foci can receive a corrective interpretation as shown in (32): The answer negates the statement of the yes/no-question and replaces the question's subject by the focus constituent. Since the auxiliary necessarily appears in the relative form, the subject focus constituent is positioned *ex situ*.

- (32) *Tsoohuwa*- $\overset{\text{F}}{\text{ɓ}}$ -*sà* *cee* *ta* *mutù?*  
 mother-of-3m FM 3sg.fem.rel.perf die  
*A'âà*, *mààta*- $\overset{\text{F}}{\text{ɓ}}$ -*sà*<sub>FOC</sub> *cee* *ta* *mutù.*  
 no wife-of-3m FM 3sg.fem.rel.perf die  
 'Was it his mother who died? No, it was his WIFE who died.'

The alternative question in (33a) (Jaggar 2001: 498) offers the choice of two drinks. In the answer, one of the drinks is selected. Note that the focus constituent can appear *in situ*. In (33b), *littaafin* ('the book') contrasts with the negated *takarɗâr* ('the letter'). Again, the contrastive focus is *in situ*.<sup>16</sup>

- (33) a. *Kòðfii* *zaa* *kà* *shaa* *koo* *kùwa* *shaayì?*  
 coffee fut 2sg drink or else tea  
 'Will you drink coffee or tea?'  
*Zân* *shaa* *shaayì*<sub>FOC</sub>.  
 fut.1sg drink tea  
 'I will drink TEA.'
- b. *Naa* *aikàà* *da* *littaafi*-*n*<sub>FOC</sub> *nee* (*bàà* *takarɗâr*-*r* *ba*).  
 1sg.perf sent book-DEF FM NEG letter-def NEG  
 'I sent the BOOK, (not the letter).'

Foci which express new-information in a clause and which are not necessarily interpreted as contrastive or corrective may also appear *in situ* or *ex situ*. An example for new-information *in situ* focus was given in (22a). Needless to say, new-information focus can also be fronted.

These data show that a one-to-one correlation between focus interpretation and syntactic structure cannot be established cross-

linguistically. Still, a differentiation of focus types could possibly be expressed non-syntactically in Hausa, for instance by prosodic means.

## 7. Conclusion

This article gave an overview of Hausa focus constructions. Its merit was not the presentation of many new data but, rather, their systematic review and evaluation. As is unavoidable in such a paper, a number of interesting open matters and questions remain. Future research on Hausa information structure should be primarily concerned with the following issues. Firstly and most importantly, the prosodic properties of Hausa topic and focus constructions have received almost no attention (this is also true for the rest of the Chadic languages). Prosodic research of information structure is central in at least two respects. On the one hand, *in situ* foci, which are not made salient by syntactic promotion, could be identified by distinctive intonational features (see the pilot study in Hartmann and Zimmermann 2005). On the other hand, intonation could help to discern different focus interpretations, which again cannot be identified by their syntactic position. Secondly, the frequency of *in situ* focus has to be examined more closely. I expect that the development of new methods to elicit foci and topics will reveal that *in situ* foci are much more frequent than claimed in previous work. Coherent texts and oral speech should be analysed with respect to the increment of new information. It is very likely that a refined methodology to elicit focus and topic data in Hausa will further relativise the alleged predominance of the *ex situ* construction.

## Notes

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- 1. The Chadic languages are spoken in the vicinity of Lake Chad, a lake with adjoining borders to Nigeria, Chad, Niger, and Cameroon. They belong to the Afroasiatic languages. Hausa is by far the biggest of the Chadic languages. It is spoken by more than thirty-five million speakers. It is the first language of the ethnic Hausas in northern Nigeria as well as in the south of Niger. Hausa

is also used as a lingua franca in many northern regions of Nigeria where it is establishing itself as a mother tongue in many cases (cf. Newman 2000).

2. The encoded information is made transparent in the glosses. I use the following abbreviations: 1,2,3 = person number markers, sg = singular, pl = plural, perf = perfective, perf.rel = relative perfective, cont = continuous, rel.cont = relative continuous, subj = subjunctive, fut = future, fem = feminine, NEG = negation, PRT = particle, FM = focus marker, TM = topic marker, DET = definite marker, GEN = genitive, VN = verbal noun, Q = question marker
3. Hausa is a tone language. It differentiates three tones. It has a high tone, which is not marked in the examples, a low tone (à), and a falling tone. Falling tones (â) appear only on heavy, bimoraic syllables. A circumflex on an open vowel, which is always long, indicates tone and length (*sôo* 'liking' is represented as *sô*). The language has no rising tone.  
Unfortunately, tones are generally not marked in the Hausa orthographic system. An exception are Hausa text books and grammars, as well as some of the linguistic literature. Green (1997) does not indicate tones. In addition, she does not mark full vowel length. If I cite her examples, this information is therefore missing.
4. Note that the tones may be modified by morphological or phonological processes (cf. Leben 1971, 1978, Leben, Inkelas, and Cobler 1989).
5. In the English translations of the examples, I mark the focus exponent by capitals. In the literature, the translations are often given as cleft sentences. Since it is not obvious that Hausa focus constructions are cleft sentences, I find this practice misleading and therefore I do not follow it here. Where I cite examples, I sometimes change cleft sentences in the translation to my notation. (I leave the translation as a cleft where my notation would yield ambiguities due to focus projection.)
6. It is also possible to move only the complement of the preposition and strand the head of PP, cf. Newman (2000: 192). In this construction, a resumptive pronoun (*ita*) becomes obligatory in the complement's base position.
  - (i) [Wu•aa]<sub>FOC</sub> cèè ya sòðkee shì dà ita.  
'It was a KNIFE he stabbed him with (it).'
7. In the future aspect, the order of the morphemes in the auxiliary which mark person agreement and aspect is reversed compared to all other auxiliaries. In other words, the aspect marker precedes the person agreement marker, while it usually follows it.
8. Note that verbs such as *Íaurèè* and *ginàà* also have masculine VNs, *Íaurìì* and *ginìì*, respectively. The masculine verbal nouns can also be used in VP focus constructions. They are linked to the following object by the genitive linker.
  - (i) *D'aurìn fàraawòò (nee) sukà yi.*
  - (ii) *Ginìn masallaacii (nèè) sukèè sô sù yi.*
9. I am very sympathetic with Green's extension of the 'nee-as-focus-marker-analysis' to copula constructions. I refer the reader to her work for arguments in support of this extension.

10. Recall from subsection 2.2.1 that the relative auxiliary is also used in the narrative form. This represents an exception to the other uses of the relative auxiliaries (focus, *wh*-questions and relativization) in that these always appear if some constituent is fronted (in the case of subjects, movement is vacuous). In the narrative, no movement is taking place. One might ask the question why the relative auxiliary appears in environments which, at first glance, appear to be so diverse. According to Jaggar (1998, 2001: 162), this is motivated by the related semantic function of focus clauses and narrative clauses: Both highlight material which is informationally prominent. In sentences involving an *ex situ* focus, the fronted constituent is always interpreted as the informationally most important constituent of the clause. In narrative clauses, the expressed event is also informationally prominent in that it is understood as salient or discrete (see Jaggar 1998, 2001 for closer examination of this correlation).
11. Due to the missing markings of vowel length and suprasegmental features such as tone, auxiliaries in written Hausa texts may be ambiguous. This is true for the auxiliary *ya*. With a long vowel high tone, *yaa* expresses the 3rd singular past form. With a short vowel high tone, *ya* appears in relative environments and in narrative uses. Finally, with short vowel low tone, *yà* is the subjunctive which expresses wishes, desires, purposes, obligation etc. This last use is not compatible with the interpretation of line 4 in the text. The first and second uses, however, are both possible, and depend on the emphasis the speaker wants to put on the subject.
12. This state of affairs is obviously not unique to Hausa, it is also reported from a variety of other African languages (Ines Fiedler, p.c.).
13. The existence of *in situ* focus predicts the possibility of multiple focus constructions. As pointed out in subsection 4.2, two *ex situ* foci cannot co-occur (cf. (i), from Green and Jaggar 2003). This is related to the ban on multiple specifiers in Hausa. However, two foci are expected to co-occur, if one focus is fronted, and the other one remains *in situ*. Green and Jaggar (2003) report that (ii), where the first focus constituent is *ex situ* and the second *in situ*, is accepted by at least some speakers.
- (i) *Kun ga mààtaataa à makaƙàntaa, koo?*  
 2pl.perf see wife.my at school Q  
 \*Aa'àà, *yaarònkà nee mukà ganiì à kààsuwaa nèè.*  
 no son.your FM 1pl.rel.perf see at market FM  
 'Did you see my wife at school?' 'No we saw your SON at the MARKET.'
- (ii) *Aa'àà, yaarònkà nee mukà ganiì à kààsuwaa.*
14. Focus could also be prosodically marked. Following Gundel (1988), prosodic prominence is indeed the most consistent means of highlighting a focus. In their study on phrases and phrase tones in Hausa, Leben, Inkelas and Cobler (1989) investigate local intonational effects. They note that single high tones on individual words may be raised to highlight these words. In (i), high tone raising is signalled by the upwards pointing arrow which precedes the highlighted word *Nuhù*.
- (i) *Maalàm ↑Nuhù nee ya hanà Lawàn hiirà*  
 teacher N. FM 3sg.rel.perf prevent L. chatting

dà Hàwwa.  
with H.

'The teacher NUHU prevented Lawan from chatting with Hawwa.'

The example in (i) is an *ex situ* focus construction. Leben, Inkelas and Cobler (1989) do not extend their study to *in situ* foci. Hartmann and Zimmermann (2005) present a pilot study which investigates prosodic distinctive features of *in situ* focus. The result of this study is that *in situ* focus is also prosodically unmarked.

15. In Miya, a Western Chadic language, focus constituents are not fronted if they are interpreted as new-information (cf. Schuh 1998). Subject foci can only be identified by a special auxiliary (*aa* or *de* in the perfective, *jiy* in the imperfective), cf. (i). Object foci, on the other hand, do not require special auxiliaries. The informational status of the focused object can only be detected by the absence of the "totality marker" *suw...ay*, compare the out-of-focus construction in (ii) with the focus construction in (iii).

- (i) wàa d' Diy-ùws-a? - Ndùwya d' Diy-ùws'  
who AUX follow-him-Q N. AUX follow-him  
'Who followed him? - NDUWYA followed him.'
- (ii) à m'ar suw zhàak-áy (iii) à m'ar zhàak'  
he got TOT donkey-TOT he got donkey  
'He got a donkey.' 'He got a DONkey.'

16. In Miya, the state of affairs with respect to *in situ* focus is identical to the situation in Hausa: "Miya can express contrastive focus with a pseudo-cleft construction, but the regular focus construction used to answer questions can also express contrastive focus." (Schuh 1998: 332). *Ex situ* focus is always understood contrastively: This is illustrated below. Following Schuh, the subject in (i) as well as the object in (ii) are contrastive foci.

- (i) m'n jíy baa d' ra-tl'n aa wàshasham  
I FM one.who perf exceed-them with years  
'I am the one who has spent longer than (any of) them.'
- (ii) T' jíy ba faarà zahiya-yá gwalf' ta miyà  
he FM one.who do.first make-into.him leadership of Miya  
'He's the one to whom they gave the leadership.'

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