Morphological marking of focus in Mabia

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1   Overview & Claims

- We discuss the distribution of in-situ and ex-situ **focus markers** in four closely related Mabia languages (Gur, Northern Ghana). Focus markers behave differently in the four languages:

  1. **Dagbani** (Olawsky 1999; Issah 2020):
     The focus markers are in separate projections and therefore in fixed positions in the clause.

  2. **Dagaare** (Bodomo 1997):
     The focus markers are in separate projections and therefore in fixed positions in the clause. They markers do not solely mark focus.

  3. **Likpakpaanl** (Schwarz 2009):
     The focus markers are adjoined to the focused constituent and therefore variable in their position.

  4. **Kusaal** (Abubakari 2018a): There is a high focus projection for ex-situ focus. The status of in-situ focus is unclear.

- The data provide evidence for focus projections at the vP-periphery (Belletti 2004; Mursell 2021).

- Data sources if not indicated otherwise are

  – Dagbani: Samuel A. Issah

  – Dagaare: Adama Bodomo, Mary Bodomo, Gordon Dakuu

  – Likpakpaanl: Samuel O. Acheampong

  – Kusaal: Joseph Adelade

2   Mabia languages

Figure 1: Map of Dagbani, Dagaare, Likpakpaanl, Kusaal

- The Mabia languages (about 70 languages, spoken in southeastern Mali, Burkina Faso, northern Benin, northwestern Nigeria, northern Togo, northern Ghana and northern Ivory Coast) belong to the Niger–Congo languages.

- This talk focuses on Dagbani (1,160,000 speakers), Dagaare (2,000,000 speakers) Likpakpaanl (600,000 speakers), and Kusaal (500,000 speakers), all spoken in Ghana.

3   Dagbani

3.1   Basic syntax

- The basic word order is S-V-O with IO > DO:

(1) a.   Dawuni kú-r-í   sòònsí máá.
          Dawuni kill-IPFV-CJ rabbits DEF
          'Dawuni kills the rabbits.'
     b.   Páɣà   máá tí   bíhí   nyùlí zùŋò.
          woman DEF give.PFV children yam today
          'The woman has given the children yam today.'

- Aspect is a verbal suffix, the perfective is morphologically unmarked.

- Dagbani marks on the verb whether the VP is completed ('disjoint', DJ), marked by *-(y)a*, or whether something follows it ('conjoint', CJ, marked by *-i* in the imperfective).

- Tense may be indicated by a free morpheme, which precedes V and indicates specific temporal references.

(2)   Doo maa **sa** ti   paɣa   maa sima   sohila.
       man DEF TNS give woman DEF groundnut yesterday
       'The man gave the woman groundnuts yesterday.'

3.2   Ex-situ focus

• Object wh-questions and their corresponding answers can be in-situ or ex-situ in Dagbani.

• When ex-situ, the focused constituents are fronted and followed by the particle *kà*.

(3)   Q: **Bò** |kà| Napari dá?
            what FOC Napari buy.PFV
            'What did Napari buy?'
       A: **Búá** |kà| Napari dá.
            goat FOC Napari buy.PFV
            'Napari bought A GOAT.'

• The particle seems to be sensitive to the subject-non-subject distinction: *ń* for subject ex-situ focus, *kà* for non-subject focus (Issah 2020).

(4)   Q: **Bò** |kà| páɣà   máá dá-r-á?
            what FOC woman DEF buy-IPFV-DJ
            'What is the woman buying?'
       A: **Nìmdí** |kà| páɣà   máá dá-r-á.
            meat   FOC woman DEF buy-IPFV-DJ
            'The woman is buying MEAT.'

(5)   Q: **ŋùní** |ń| dàà dá   búá?
            who FOC PST buy.PFV goat
            'Who bought a goat some time ago?'
       A: **Beninya** |ń| dàà dá   búá.
            B.   FOC PST buy.PFV goat
            'BENINYA bought the goat some time ago.'

• As discussed at length in Issah and Smith (2020), the distinction is actually between local subjects and everything else.

• Note especially the contrast between (6) and (7):

(6)   **Dó só** |kà| ń wúm   [CP nì ò dá   lòòrì].
       man certain FOC I hear.PFV   that he buy.PFV car
       'I heard that A CERTAIN MAN bought a car.'

(7)   Wumpini yèlí-yá   [CP nì **Mbangba** |ń| dá   lòòrì].
       Wumpini say.PFV-DJ   that Mbangba FOC buy.PFV car
       'Wumpini said that MBANGA bought a car.'

• In (6) the embedded subject is focussed, fronted to the main clause and marked by *kà*.

• In (7) the subject is locally focussed in the embedded clause and marked by *ń*.

3.3 In-situ focus

- Clause-medially, focus is marked differently than in the left periphery.

(8) Q: Napari dá | lá | **bó**?
    Napari buy.PFV FOC what
    'What did Napari buy?'
  A: Napari dá | lá | **búá**.
    Napari buy.PFV FOC goat
    'Napari bought A GOAT.'

- The same marking in the same position is used for different focused constituents, e.g. verbal focus.

(9) Q: A **vɔ́-r-í** | lá | búŋlɔ̀ɣú máa bée a **dáa-r-í** | lá | búŋlɔ̀ɣú máa?
    2SG pull-IPFV-CJ FOC wagon DEF or 2SG push-IPFV-CJ FOC wagon DEF
    'Are you pulling the wagon or are you pushing the wagon?'
  A: N **v-ɔ́r-í** | lá | búŋlɔ̀ɣú máa.
    2SG pull-IPFV-CJ FOC wagon DEF
    'I am PULLING the wagon.'

- There is also an asymmetry between markers, but this time, it appears to be related to the argument structure (see Issah 2013).

  - *mí* marks verb/predicate focus in intransitives

  - *lá* marks verb/predicate focus in transitives

- The particle *mí* is used for verbal focus in intransitive clauses.

(10) Q: Bò kà á níŋ-d-í sáhá ŋɔ? Á **kárín-d-í** | mí | bée á **dí-r-í**
    what FOC you do-IPFV-CJ time DEM you read-IPFV-CJ FOC or you eat-IPFV-CJ
    | mí |?
    FOC
    'What are you doing right now? Are you reading or are you eating?'
  A: Ń **dí-r-í** | mí |.
    I eat-IPFV-CJ FOC
    'I am EATING.'

- The particle *lá* is used for verbal focus in transitive clauses, see (9).

  - However, the choice of the particle does not actually depend on the transitivity of the verb, but, similar to the CJ/DJ distinction on the verb, rather on whether the particle is followed by an overt constituent in the same clause.

  - Weak pronouns precede the low particles, so *mí* can occur even with transitive verbs in such cases.

(11)   Q: Bò   kà   Abu   níŋ   bíá   máá?
               what FOC A.   do.PFV child DEF
               'What has Abu done to the child?'
       A: Abu **bú**   **ò**   **mí** .
               A.   beat.PFV him FOC
               'Abu has BEATEN him/her.'

- Co-occurrence of high and low focus particles: High and low focus particles cannot co-occur in the same sentence.

(12)   *Bò   **kà**   Abu níŋ   **lá**   bíá   máá?
          what FOC A.   do.PFV FOC child DEF
          'What has Abu done to the child?'

- Optionality: In situ focus marking is optional, but the principles governing the distribution are not yet fully understood.

- Also the semantic difference between the two structures is yet to be investigated.

(13)   Q: Napari dá   bò?
               Napari buy.PFV what
               'Napari bought what?'
       A: Napari dá   búá.
               Napari buy.PFV goat
               'Napari bought A GOAT.'

(14)   Q: Napari dá   **lá**   bò?
               Napari buy.PFV FOC what
               'Napari bought what?'
       A: Napari dá   **lá**   búá.
               Napari buy.PFV FOC goat
               'Napari bought A GOAT.'

- VP-focus always requires a low focus particle in the answer, independent of whether the preceding question is in-situ or ex-situ.

(15)   Q1:   Ò   níŋ   bò?
             he do.PFV what
       Q2:   Bò   kà   ò   níŋ?
             what FOC he do.PFV
             'What did he do?'
       A: Ò   páɣí   *(**lá**) ò   lòòrí.
             he wash.PFV FOC   his car
             'He WASHED HIS CAR.'

4   Dagaare

4.1   Basic syntax

- Again, SVO with IO > DO:

  (16) Zeɛmɛ dà kɔ   / dà korɔ   lá   Naapɔge doge.
        Ziema PST give.PFV   PST give.IPFV FOC Napog   pot
        'Ziema gave / is giving Napog a pot.'

- Tense is marked by a free morpheme before the verb, aspect is a vowel suffix to the verbal root.

  (17) Àng lá   **dà** yíél-**ì**   / yíél-**è**?
        who FOC PST sing-PFV / sing-IPFV
        'Who sang / is singing?'

4.2   Ex-situ focus

- Like Dagbani, Dagaare allows ex-situ and in-situ focus.

- When ex-situ, the focused element is fronted and followed always by the particle *lá*, see (18) and (19).

- If it is not a subject, the ex-situ focus comes with the complementizer *ka*, see (18).

- This construction is impossible for subjects, see (19).

  (18) Q: Fo záà   kɔ́rré | lá | nóɔ bee?
            2SG yesterday slaughter FOC fowl Q
            'Did you slaughter fowl yesterday?'
        A: Ai, boɔ | lá | **kà**   N   záà   kɔ́rré.
            no goat FOC COMP 1SG yesterday slaughter
            'No, I slaughtered goat yesterday.'

  (19) Q: Àng | lá | dà tòng tómɔ́?
            who FOC PST work work
            'Who worked?'
        A1: Dɛre | *(**lá**) | dà   tòng tómɔ́.
            Dɛre FOC   PST work work
            'Dɛre worked.'
        A2:*Dɛre | **lá** | **kà**   dà   tòng tómɔ́.
            Dɛre FOC COMP PST work work

  (20) Q: Ang | **la** | **ka**   a   Ziem ko a   yuori?
            who FOC COMP DEF Ziema give DEF pot
            'Who did Ziema give a pot to?'

A: Dakurah la ka a Ziema ko a yuori.
Dakurah FOC COMP DEF Ziema give DEF pot
'It is Dakurah that Ziema gave a pot to.'

- In Dagaare, there are multiple particles that can be used instead of *lá*, most noticeably *-ng* and *na* (depending on the dialect).

(21) Q1: Bo-ng ka Ziema ko a Napog?
what-FOC COMP Ziema give DEF Napog
'What did Ziema give to Napog?'
Q2: Bo la ka a Ziema ko a Napog?
what FOC COMP DEF Ziema give DEF Napog
'What did Ziema give to Napog?'
A: Daa yuori la[1] a Ziema ko a Napog.
pito pot FOC DEF Ziema give DEF Napog
'It is a pito pot that Ziema gave to Napog.'

4.3   In-situ focus

- In-situ focus is similar to Dagbani in that there is a fixed position for the focus particle immediately following the verb, independent of what is focused.

(22) Q1: Bong (la) ka Adama ko?
what FOC COMP Adama slaughter
'What did Adam slaughter?'
A: Adama ko la nao.
Adama slaughter FOC cow
'Adama slaughered cow.'

(23) Q: Bo la ka a Ziema ko a Napog?
what FOC COMP DEF Ziema give DEF Napog
'What did Ziema give to Napog?'
A: Ziema ko la Napog Daa yuori.
Ziema give FOC Napog pito pot
'Ziema gave Napog a pito pot.'

(24) Q: Ang la ka a Ziem ko a yuori?
who FOC COMP DEF Ziema give DEF pot
'Who did Ziema give a pot to?'
A1: Ziema ko la Dakurah a yuori.
Ziema give FOC Dakurah DEF pot
'Ziema gave a pot to Dakurah.'

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[1]The data most likely contain a mistake, but we couldn't verify with the speaker beforehand: Probably the complementizer *ka* is missing.

- In-situ focus of the subject is also possible. The difference to ex-situ subject focus seems to be that the particle *lá* follows the verb instead of the subject.

(25) Q: A   pɔgɔ   dà   ɔɔ   ⌜**lá**⌝ a   bɛngɛ.
          the woman PAST eat? FOC the beans
          'The woman ate the beans.'

      A1: Ai, o   yɔɔpuulee ⌜**lá**⌝ ɔɔ   a   bɛngɛ.
          no 3SG? sister?   FOC eat? the beans
          'No, her sister ate the beans.'

      A2: Ai, o   yɔɔpuulee ɔɔ   ⌜**lá**⌝ a   bɛngɛ.
          no 3SG sister?   eat? FOC the beans
          'No, her sister ate the beans.'

- The *lá* focus particle is also used immediately after the verb, when something embedded in a DP, e.g. a possessor, is focused.

(26) Q: Àng noɔ lá   kà   Ayuo kɔrre?
          Who fowl FOC COMP Ayuo slaughter
          'Whose fowl did Ayuo slaughter?'

      A: Ayuo kɔrre   ⌜**lá**⌝ Dɛre noɔ
          Ayuo slaughter FOC Dɛre fowl
          'Ayuo slaughtered Dɛre's fowl.'

- Interestingly, in Dagaare, it seems that the "focus" marker shows up in any clause, even if there is no explicit context for focus.

(27) Báyúó dà   tòng ⌜**lá**⌝ tómɔ́ (zààméng).
      Bayuo PST work FOC work yesterday
      'Bayuo worked (yesterday).'

(28) Ò   dà   yíélí ⌜**lá**⌝ yíélúng.
      3SG PST sing FOC song
      'She sang.'

5 Likpakpaanl

5.1 Basic syntax

- again, SVO with IO > DO:

(29) a. Adam **fé**   kɔr   ukɔla fénna.
          Adam HEST.PST slaughter fowl   yesterday
          'Adam slaughtered fowl yesterday.'

      b. Konja mèè Sam ki-gban   din.
          Konja beg Sam NC-book today
          'Konja begged a booked from Sam today.'

- Tense (29) and also aspect (30) can be indicated by a free morpheme preceding V.

(30) Ù-píí gbàààn **bī** ŋáál lòòr.
CL-woman DEF IMPF drive car
'The woman is driving a car.'

5.2   Ex-situ focus

- Object wh-questions and their corresponding answers present a superficially similar picture in Likpakpaanl.

- They can be in-situ or ex-situ.

- When ex-situ, they are followed by a particle *lè*.

(31) Q1: Adam nan kɔr **ba**?
Adam PST slaughter what
'What did Adam slaughter?'
Q2: **Ba** | **lè** | Adam nan kɔr?
what FOC Adam PST slaughter
'What did Adam slaughter?'
A1: Adam nan kɔr **ukɔla** | **là** |.
Adan PST slaughter fowl FOC
'Adam slaughtered fowl.'
A2: **Ukɔla** | **lè** | Adam nan kɔr.
fowl FOC Adam PST slaughter
'Adam slaughtered FOWL.'

- The subject wh-element is never followed by the particle seen in ex-situ object wh, suggesting subject wh-questions are always in-situ.

- Answers to subject wh-questions on the other hand must be followed by the particle, revealing an interesting asymmetry.

- Note that in contrast to Dagbani, the particle is not sensitive to the subject–non-subject distinction.

(32) Q: **ŋma** (*| **lè** |) tun?
who FOC work
'Who worked?'
A: **Adam** *(| **lè** |) fé tun (fénna).
Adam FOC HEST.PST work yesterday
'Adam worked yesterday.'

- Unsurprisingly, long-distance focalization behaves similar to Dagbani.

- The extracted wh-element is treated as non-subject focus in the matrix clause, i.e. it is followed by the particle.

(33)   Q: **ŋmà** **lè** Peter len kè   u   kɔr   ukɔla gbaan?
              who FOC Peter say COMP 3SG slaughter fowl   DEF
              'Who did Peter say that slaughtered the fowl?'

        A1:   **John** **lè**   Peter len kè   u   kɔr   ukɔla gbaaan.
              John FOC Peter say COMP 3SG slaughter fowl   DEF
              'Peter said that John slaughtered the fowl.'

5.3   In-situ focus

- Likpakpaanl uses the particles *lè* and *là* to mark in-situ focus. The particle immediately follows the focused constituent.

(34)   Q: Konja mèè **ŋma** ki-gban?
              Konja beg who NC-book
              'Who did Konja beg a book from?'
        A: Konja mèè **Sam** **lè** ki-gban   (din).
              Konja beg Sam FOC NC-book today
              'Konja begged a book from SAM (today).'

(35)   Q: Konja mèè Sam **ba**?
              Konja beg Sam what
              'What did Konja beg from Sam?'
        A: Konja mèè Sam **ki-gban** **lè**   din.
              Konja beg Sam NC-book FOC today
              'Konja begged a BOOK from Sam today.'

- The choice of the particle depends on whether the focus particle is followed by an overt constituent or not.

(36)   Q: Konja mèè Sam **ba**?
              Konja beg Sam what
              'What did Konja beg from Sam?'
        A1:   Konja mèè Sam **ki-gban** **là** .
              Konja beg Sam NC-book FOC
              'Konja begged a BOOK from Sam.'
        A2:   Konja mèè Sam **ki-gban** **lè**   din.
              Konja beg Sam NC-book FOC today
              'Konja begged a BOOK from Sam today.'

- Interestingly, the focus particle has to follow a phrase in the spine of a finite clause (i.e. a VP or an argument DP).

- This also means that it cannot follow the verb, for example (unlike what we have seen in Dagbani).

(37)   *in-situ possessor focus in Likpakpaanl*

        Q: Mary kɔr **ŋma** aa-kɔla?
              Mary kill who POSS-fowl
              'Whose fowl did Mary kill?'

A: Mary kɔr [NP **Peter** (*lè) aa-kɔla   ] *(là)
     Mary kill   Peter FOC POSS-fowl FOC
     'Mary killed PETER'S fowl.'

(38)   *in-situ V focus in Likpakpaanl*

Q: Adam nan ŋa ukɔla **ba**?
     Adam PST do fowl what
     'What did Adam do to a fowl?'

A: Adam nan [VP **kɔr**   (*lè) ukɔla] *(là).
     Adam PST   slaughter FOC fowl FOC
     'Adam SLAUGHTERED a fowl.'

(39)   *focus inside a relative clause possible*

Q: À   kan [NP u-ja   u lèn kè   Peter kɔr   ukɔla na   ] àà?
     2SG see   NC-man REL say COMP P.   slaughter fowl REL.DEF Q
     'Did you see the man that said that Peter slaughtered fowl?'

A: Aayi, n kan [NP u-ja   u lèn kè   **John** *(lè) kɔr   ukɔla na   ]
     no   I see   NC-man REL say COMP J.   FOC slaughter fowl REL.DEF

     *(là)
     FOC
     'No, I saw the man that said that JOHN slaughtered fowl.'

6   Kusaal

6.1   Basic Syntax

- SVO with either DO > IO (40-b) or IO > DO (40-c).

- Tense and Aspect is marked by a particle preceding the verb.

(40)   a.   Adam **sa**   kune soun.
            Adam PST kill   rabbit
            'Adam killed a rabbit.'
       b.   Adam **pa/sa**   nok mango (nam)ayi tehe Joseph.
            Adam HOD.PST/PST take mango two   give Joseph
            'Adam gave two mangoes to Joseph.'
       c.   Adam **pa/sa**   tehe Joseph mongo (nam)ayi.
            Adam HOD.PST/PST give Joseph mango two
            'Adam gave Joseph two mangoes.'
       d.   Adam **sa   bea**   tuum-**me**.
            Adam PST PROG.AUX work-PROG
            'Adam is working.'

- Kusaal marks focus morphosyntactically.

- Three focus markers: *ne*, *n* and *ka* (Abubakari (2018a,b))

- *ka*: ex-situ non-subject focus (NSF)
- *n*: in-situ subject focus (SF)
- *ne* in-situ NSF

6.2   Ex-situ focus

- Only NSF are ex-situ in Kusaal. There is no ex-situ subject focus.

- Object wh-questions and focused answers are marked with *ka* in ex-situ.

- *Ka* occurs immediately after the fronted focused constituent.

(41)   a.   Boo $\boxed{\text{*(ka)}}$ Adam sa   koorig-i?
            what FOC   Adam PST slaughter
            'What did Adam slaughter?'
       b.   Soun $\boxed{\text{*(ka)}}$ Adam sa   koorig.
            rabbit FOC   Adam PST slaughter
            'Sam slaughtered a RABBIT.'

- Ex-situ focus with *ka* (seems) to trigger exhaustive interpretation.

6.3   In-situ focus

N as in-situ SF marker

- The presence of the *n* marker seems to be option with in-situ SF.

- Compare (42-b) with (43). The latter is from Abubakari (2018b).

(42)   a.   Anon sa   tuum soa?
            who PST work yesterday
            'Who worked yesterday?'
       b.   Maia sa   tuum soa.
            M.   PST work yesterday
            'Maia worked yesterday.'

(43)   Dáú $\boxed{\text{n}}$ bé   dóógín   lá.
       Man FOC exist room.LOC DET
       'It is a man that is in the room (rather than a woman).'

- The marker *n* marks exhaustivity on the subject (Abubakari (2018a)).

- Open questions:

  - If *n* is optional, what conditions its optionality?

  - Secondly, why did Abubakari (2018a,b) say that the subject is in-situ (even though a marker is present)?

– In cases like (43-b), how is focus marked?

Né as in-situ NSF marker

- Our data does not show a marker for in-situ object focus (44-b), but Abubakari (2018a) data does (45)[2].

  (44) a. Adam sa koorig boo?
            Adam PST slaughter what
            'What did Adam slaughter?'
        b. Adam sa koorig soun.
            Adam PST slaughter rabbit
            'Adam slaughtered a RABBIT.'

  (45) Bííg lá dá | né | súmá
        child DEF buy FOC groundnut
        'It is groundnut the child bought (not rice and nothing else).'

- Again, why is *ne* optional with in-situ NSF? (Maybe it is due to different dialects, spoken by Abubakari and our consultant.)

- We don't have adequate data for VP focus yet.

7   Overview

7.1   Focus markers

	Ex-situ		**In-situ**	
Dagbani	ká	¬ local subject	lá	¬ clause final
	ń	local subject	mí	clause final
Dagaare	la ka	¬ local subject		
			la	default
Likpakpaanl			là	clause final
	lè	default		
Kusaal	ka	¬ local subject	n	subject
	–	local subject	ne	¬ subject

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[2]Abubakari (2018a) says that *né* occurs before focused DPs, and PPs but after VPs and IPs. We are yet to test that.

7.2   Generalizations

1. In all languages a focused constituent in the left periphery (ex-situ focus) is followed by a focus particle.

   (46)   [XP$_F$ $\boxed{\textbf{foc}}$ ...]

2. The languages differ mainly in their in-situ focus strategy:

   (a) In **Dagbani**, the focus marker appears in a fixed position in the clause, independent of what is focused: The focus marker follows the verb, which is marked for tense and aspect.

   (47)   a.   ...   T V-A $\boxed{\textbf{lá}}$ **object**$_{[FOC]}$

            b.   ...   **T V-A**$_{[FOC]}$ $\boxed{\textbf{lá}}$ object

   (b) In **Dagaare** also, the focus marker appears in a fixed position in the clause, independent of what is focused: The focus marker follows the verb, which is marked for tense and aspect.

   (48)   a.   ...   T V-A $\boxed{\textbf{lá}}$ **object**$_{[FOC]}$

            b.   ...   **T V-A**$_{[FOC]}$ $\boxed{\textbf{lá}}$ object

   (c) In **Likpakpaanl**, the focus marker is right-adjacent to the constituent in the clause that is focused or contains the focused element.

   (49)   a.   ...   T A V   IO   **DO**$_{[FOC]}$ $\boxed{\textbf{lè}}$

            b.   ...   T A V   **IO**$_{[FOC]}$ $\boxed{\textbf{lè}}$ DO

   (d) In **Kusaal**, the position of the focus marker depends on what is focused: it follows the verb for object and PP focus, but is clause-final for VP and IP focus.

   (50)   a.   ...   T A V $\boxed{\textbf{né}}$ **object**$_{[FOC]}$

            b.   ...   **T A V**$_{[FOC]}$ **object**$_{[FOC]}$ $\boxed{\textbf{né}}$

   Alternatively, if our data are correct, the in-situ focus is unmarked.

   (51)   a.   ...   T A V   **object**$_{[FOC]}$

            b.   ...   **T A V**$_{[FOC]}$ **object**$_{[FOC]}$

8   Analysis

Assumption for all four languages:
Focused constituents need to agree with a focus head.

8.1   Dagbani

- Dagbani has a low focus projection (in addition to a high focus position marked by $\boxed{\textbf{ká}}$) that contains the focus marker $\boxed{\textbf{lá}}$ and that the in-situ focused constituent agrees with. Therefore, the focus marker is in a fixed position.

- The verb undergoes head movement first to the focus head and then to the aspect head.
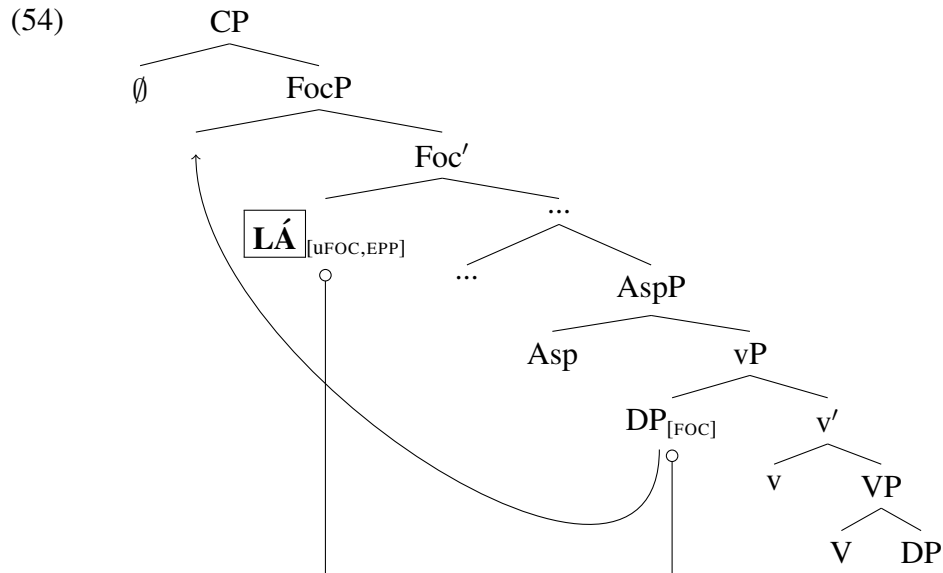
Assumptions for in-situ focus:

(52)

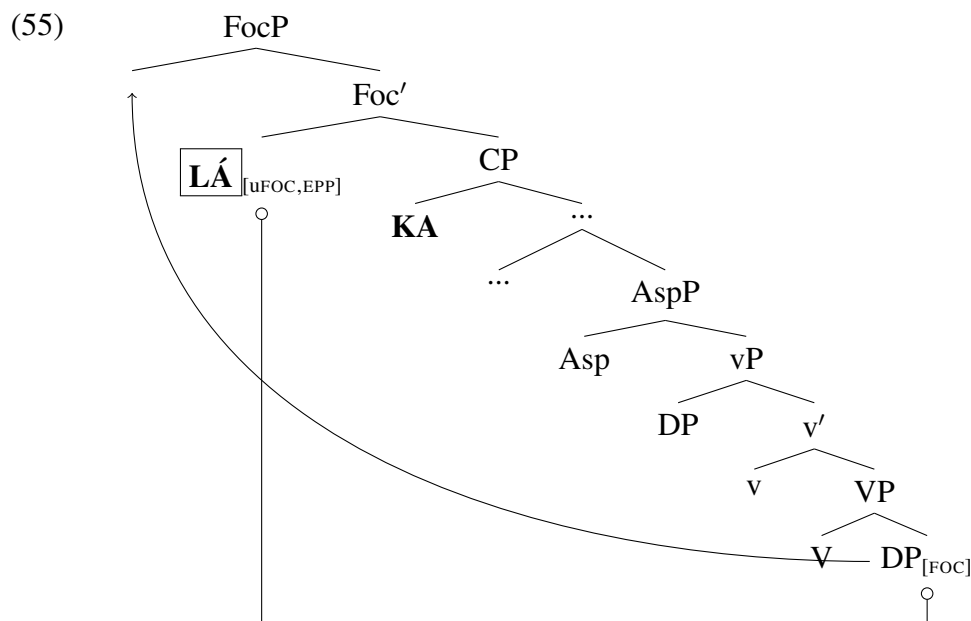**Assumptions for ex-situ focus (not local subject):**

(53)
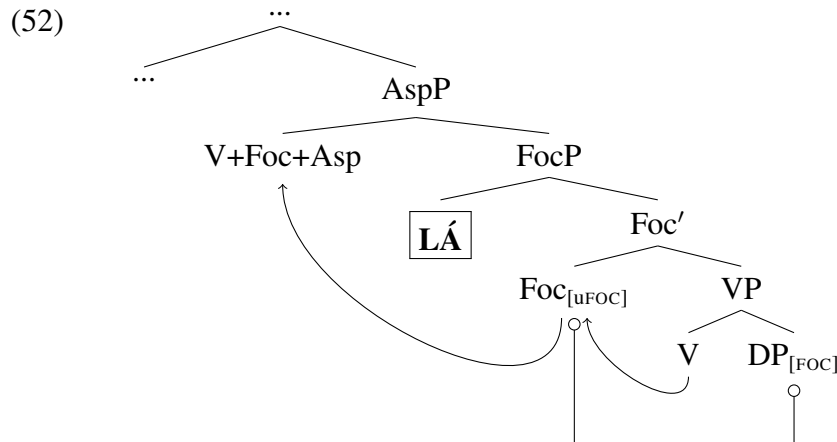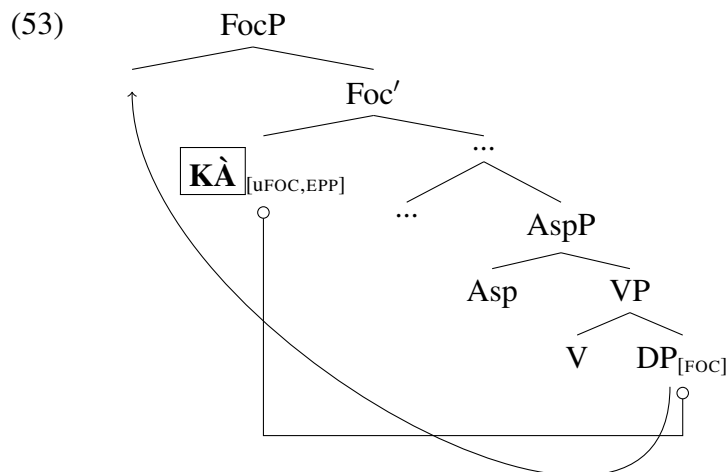
8.2 Dagaare

- In-situ focus in Dagaare seems to work like in Dagbani, except that the marker is always the same.

- Ex-situ focus is slightly more complicated. Besides the focus particle, a complementizer *ka* shows up, which indicates that the ex-situ focus is in a very high position. However, subjects, for some unclear reason, cannot reach this position.

Assumptions for ex-situ focus local subject:

(54)

CP
∅   FocP
        Foc′
   LÁ[uFOC,EPP]   ...
        ...   AspP
            Asp   vP
              DP[FOC]   v′
                    v   VP
                       V   DP

Assumptions for ex-situ focus not local subject:

(55)

FocP
    Foc′
 LÁ[uFOC,EPP]   CP
        KA   ...
           ...   AspP
              Asp   vP
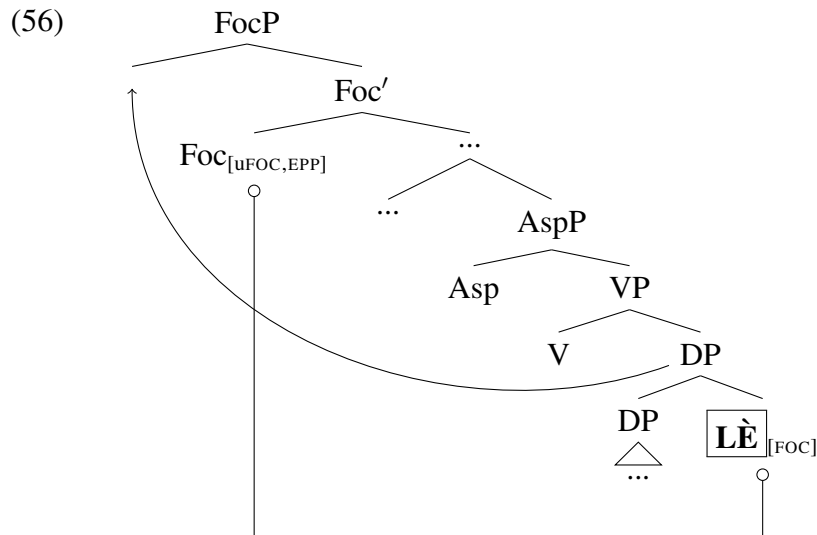   DP   v′
                    v   VP
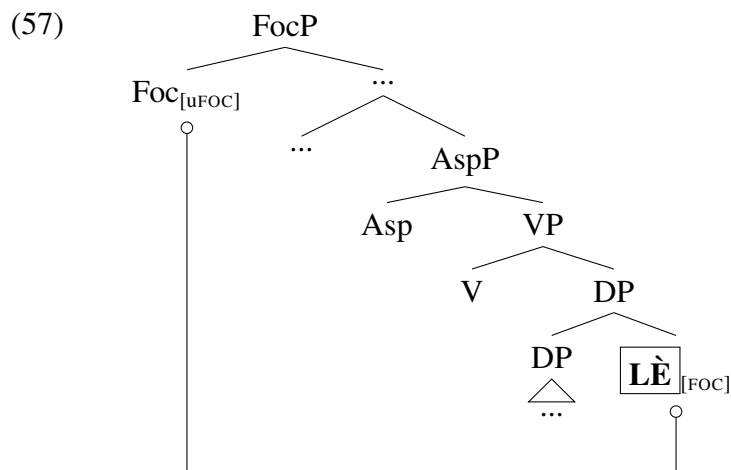   V — DP[FOC]

8.3 Likpakpaanl

- Likpakpaanl has only a high focus position that the in-situ focused constituent agrees with. There is no evidence for a low focus projection. That is why there is only one focus marker.

- The focus marker **lè** is right-adjoined to the focused element. Therefore, it has a variable position.

- Furthermore, the marker is expected not to appear to deeply embedded for reasons of locality.
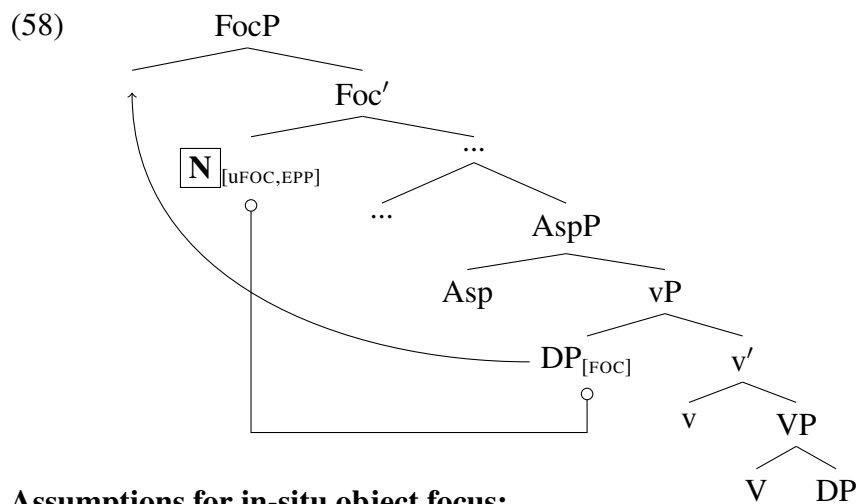
Assumptions for ex-situ focus:

(56)

```
                    FocP
          ┌──────────┴──────┐
          ↑              Foc′
                   ┌────────┴──────┐
          Foc[uFOC,EPP]          ...
                   ○        ┌──────┴─────┐
                           ...         AspP
                              ┌─────────┴──────┐
                            Asp              VP
                                      ┌───────┴─────┐
                                     V            DP
                                           ┌───────┴─────┐
                                         DP         LÈ[FOC]
                                         △             ○
                                         ...
```

Assumptions for in-situ focus:

(57)

```
                    FocP
          ┌──────────┴──────┐
       Foc[uFOC]          ...
          ○         ┌───────┴──────┐
                   ...           AspP
                       ┌──────────┴──────┐
                     Asp              VP
                               ┌───────┴─────┐
                              V            DP
                                    ┌───────┴─────┐
                                  DP         LÈ[FOC]
                                  △             ○
                                  ...
```

8.4   Kusaal

- According to Abubakari (2018a,b), there are two in-situ focus markers *n* (subject) and *ne* (rest).

- However, we couldn't replicate the use of the focus marker *ne* for in-situ object focus.

- Furthermore, the marker *n* precedes the tense marker and, thus, seems to be in a very high position.

- If our data are correct, this might point to the absence of in-situ focus altogether.

- Then, *n* would be an ex-situ focus marker for subjects and in-situ objects would not move to the ex-situ position.

- As for *ka*, it shows a striking similarity to the Dagbani ex-situ marker used also for things other than the local subject, see (53) for the structure.

- This analysis is speculative and needs to be tested further.

Assumptions for ex-situ focus local subject:

(58)

Assumptions for in-situ object focus:

(59)
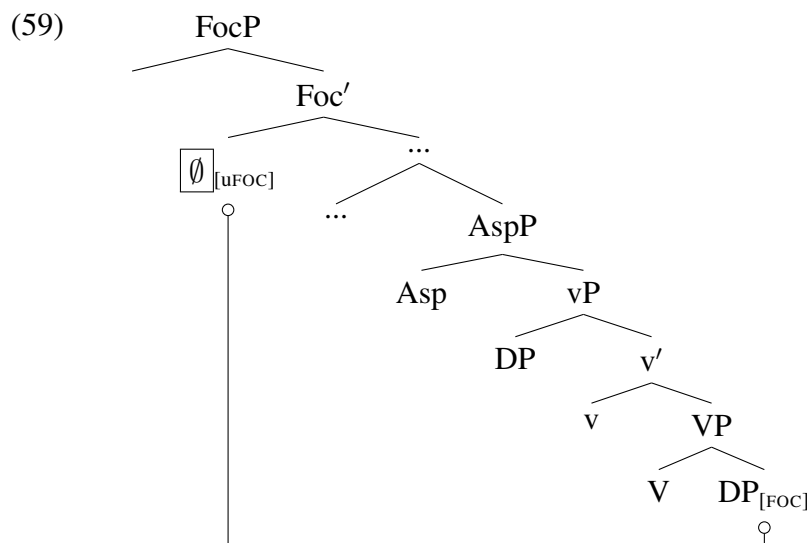
9 Summary

- Mabia languages differ in focus-marking not only morphologically, but also syntactically: It seems that the markers in the different languages are in structurally different positions.

- **Dagbani** and **Dagaare** have a high and a low focus projection; the focus particles are realized as high / low focus heads. Ex-situ focus moves due to an EPP-feature in high Foc; in-situ focus stays in-situ.

- In **Likpakpaanl** and possibly **Kusaal** as well (based on our data), it seems that there is only a high FocP.

- There are many open questions:

  - Do the markers have functions other than focus?

  - How do the markers interact with other markers?

  - How can the allomorphy of markers be described, especially it is conditioned by grammatical function?

  - Is there a connection between the markers in different languages, as they are morphologically very similar.

	Dagbani	**Dagaare**	**Likpakpaanl**	**Kusaal**
la	in-situ/ clause medial	in-situ/ ex-situ	in-situ/ clause-final	– –
ka	ex-situ/ non-subject	ex-situ/ non-subject	– –	ex-situ/ non-subject
n[3]	ex-situ/ subject	– –	– –	ex-situ/ subject

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[3]Note that there are many more nasal markers related to focus that occur in the languages: *ng/na* in Dagaare, *ne* in Kusaal, and *mi* in Dagbani. It is unclear if all of these markers are related and how they developed over time. Also it is unclear what tone tells us about the relation between markers in different languages.

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