AUXILIARY FOCUS*

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This paper examines the different properties of what we have
termed "auxiliary focus": the interaction between focus and
the semantic features of tense, aspect, mood, and polarity.
We argue that auxiliary focus has every property of its coun-
terpart (termed "constituent focus") and that in order to ac-
count for focus of any type, we shall have to address the fol-
lowing four parameters: (a) realization of focus (prosodic,
morphological, syntactic), (b) type of focus (assertive vs.
contrastive), (c) scope of focus (subject, object, verb, aux-
iliary, etc.), and (d) control of focus (pragmatic or gram-
matical). A particularly interesting side of auxiliary focus
is found under point (d): while in some cases, in some lan-
guages, speakers are free to choose [+focus] or [-focus] aux-
iliary markers according to the context (pragmatic control),
in other cases the choice is dictated by the language itself
(grammatical control). We will show that some semantic fea-
tures of the auxiliary are inherently focused on universal
grounds, providing a typology of focus marking on the auxil-
iary. The relevance of the above considerations of auxiliary
focus to the development of tense/aspect systems provides the
conclusion to this work.

0. Introduction[1]

In a number of related and unrelated African languages, a curious interplay

is observed between tense-aspect and focus. While the exact realization of this

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[1]The present paper represents a synthesis of work carried out separately
and together on the interaction between focus and the auxiliary features of

interplay varies from language to language, in each case some parameter of fo-
cus determines which of two corresponding sets of tense-aspect markers is used
in a given instance. The well-reported occurrence of "main" vs. "relative"
(clause) tenses is a case in point and has been documented from one extreme of
the African continent to the other, e.g. Fula in the West and Nguni Bantu in
the South(east). Quite recently we have been able to study several languages
in the Nigeria-Cameroon border area which, like some of the earlier documented
languages, allow so-called relative tenses to occur in main clauses as well.
Thus, consider the two sentences from Aghem given in (1).

(1) a. m̀ mɔ̂ zɨ̀ kɨ́-bɛ́ nɛ́   'I ate fufu today'
        I P_1 ate fufu today

    b. m̀ máà   zɨ́ bɛ́-'kɔ́ nɛ́   'I DID eat fufu today'
        I P_1/FOC ate fufu   today

In Aghem, a Grassfields Bantu language spoken in Cameroon, the today past tense
(P_1) has the two allomorphs mɔ̀ (1a) and máà (1b). As argued in the rele-
vant sections of Hyman [1979b], there is good reason to believe that máà is a
"focused" variant of mɔ̀ (see below for a definition of what is meant by "fo-
cused"). The arguments are as follows:

    (i) The semantic difference in the English glosses clearly indicates that in
(1b) a focus or emphasis is placed on the validity (truth value) of the proposi-
tion 'I ate fufu today'. Such an emphasis is lacking in the meaning of (1a).

    (ii) Processes marking elements other than the truth value as focused are

blocked in (1b), but not in (1a). Thus, the focus marker /nò/ , which marks contrastive emphasis on a preceding element or elements, cannot cooccur with máà . Similarly, the postposing of the subject after the verb to mark it with contrastive focus can only occur with mɔ̀ , never with máà . We explain these cooccurrence constraints by noting that Aghem allows at most one element to be marked as focused per clause.

(iii) The marker máà cannot occur in non-assertive environments such as relative clauses, *if*-clauses, and most temporal clauses. Since these environments are considered to be "backgrounded" (or "out of focus") with respect to assertive or "foregrounded" main clauses, we account for this restriction on the distribution of máà by noting the incompatibility of placing a focus marker in an out of focus clause. The same explanation accounts for the non-occurrence of /nò/ in these same environments.[2]

(iv) The last argument concerns the form of the object 'fufu' in the two sentences in (1). In (1a) we observe the expected Bantu noun structure prefix + stem, while in (1b) we find instead a very unusual structure of noun stem + suffix. (In both cases the affix shows class 7 concord < *ki- .) As argued in Hyman [1979a], the suffixed form is obtained, among other conditions, whenever an object noun is out of focus. Thus, compare the sentence in (2).

(2)   m̀ mɔ̂ zɨ́ nέ   bέ-'kɔ́   'I ate fufu TODAY'
     I P$_1$ ate today fufu

In this sentence nέ 'today' occurs in the focus position, which in Aghem is immediately after the verb. The result is a contrastive emphasis on 'today'. An important consequence of this transposition, however, is that the object 'fufu' must now appear in its "suffixed" form. Because the object is not part of the focus, it must take this out of focus, suffixed form. By the same reasoning,

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[2]As shown by Watters [1979:189], these restrictions against focused morphemes appearing in relative clauses do not apply to two of the three word order transformations conditioned by focus. In a later section we shall distinguish between pragmatic control of (semantic) focus and grammatical control of (morphological) focus. The former will be indicated by the feature specification [+focus], the latter by the feature specification [+F]. Thus, semantic [+focus] triggers word order variations, while [+F] triggers morphological focus marking (focused auxiliaries, out of focus noun phrases).

'fufu' occurs in the out of focus form in (1b), because the focus of (1b) is
on máà .

These four arguments clearly establish that máà is a focused or emphatic
form of mɔ́ . It thus can be safely assumed that languages can have two sets
of corresponding tense-aspect markers, one set occurring under focus, the other
set occurring when not under focus. Exactly what is meant by "under focus"
will be treated in a later section. Our purpose in presenting this brief Aghem
example has been to demonstrate by means of one clear case that the relevant
parameter conditioning one rather than the other set of tense-aspect markers is
focus.

In the remainder of this paper we propose to examine this interaction of
focus and tense-aspect in a number of African languages. In analyzing these
languages we shall propose the category of "auxiliary focus", where focus is
placed on any of the semantic parameters which serve as operators on proposi-
tions: tense, aspect, mood, polarity. While most grammars treat focus as it
pertains to the assertion of non-verbal categories, e.g. noun phrases, few
treat the focus properties of the verbal complex (auxiliary + verb). We shall
demonstrate in this study that auxiliary focus is subject to exactly the same
distinctions and potentials as the more studied types (subject focus, object
focus, etc.). In addition, we shall argue that in order to account for focus
marking in these languages it is necessary to recognize a *grammatical* feature
[+F] (standing for [+focus]), which is related to, but independent of pragmatic
determinants of focus. This [+F] specification, which has to be part of the
universal inventory of features available to languages, is assigned in similar
and non-arbitrary ways by the grammars of the languages in question. According
to the location of the assigned [+F], one or the other set of tense-aspect mark-
ers will appear on the surface. Thus, auxiliary focus is defined as the mark-
ing of the location of focus through the auxiliary.

In the following sections we shall treat the interaction of focus and the
auxiliary in selected African languages. We begin, however, in section 1 with
a general definition of focus and discuss the four parameters of focus which
shall concern us in subsequent sections. In section 2, we examine the distri-
bution of auxiliary focus within the grammatical system of the different lan-

guages. First addressing the question of which tenses or aspects are charac-
terized by "doublets" occasioned by the [+F] specification, we then examine
the different construction types, e.g. main vs. relative clauses, which are
likely to admit or not admit the doublets and [+F]. In section 3, we are then
concerned with defining the *meaning* of the competing tense-aspect sub-systems.
In this section we see that certain auxiliary properties are inherently, or
intrinsically, focused. We conclude in section 4 with some speculations on how
new [+focus] auxiliary markers may enter a language.

1. Parameters of Focus

    A number of definitions have been offered of focus in the literature. The
following were cited by Watters [1979:139] as representative of the definitions
held by different scholars:

    (i) The constituent with the most important or salient pragmatic informa-
tion [Dik 1978:19; Givón 1975:185].

    (ii) The constituent highest on the scale of communicative dynamism and
(with few exceptions) the rightmost constituent in a sentence [Sgall 1973:164].

    (iii) The constituent (from morpheme to phrase) given the intonation con-
tour [Chomsky 1971:200].

    (iv) The constituent(s) containing the information which the speaker as-
sumes the hearer does not share with him [Jackendoff 1972:230].

    It is not the purpose of this study to evaluate the merits of these or oth-
er approaches to focus, nor even to argue exhaustively for the one adopted here.
Instead, we shall accept a slightly modified version of Jackendoff's definition
in (iv), to read as follows:

    (iv') *Focus*: that information in an utterance which the speaker believes,
assumes, or knows that the hearer does not share with him/her.

    In terminology we shall adopt for this study, the focused part of an utter-
ance, as defined bv (iv'), is said to be *asserted*, or is the *assertion*, while
the out of focus part, i.e. which the speaker "believes, assumes, or knows the
hearer shares with him/her", is said to be *presupposed*, or simply, the *presuppo-
sition* of that utterance. In the languages we shall consider in this study,
different auxiliary marking is observed between utterances which otherwise dif-
fer only in their focus properties, i.e. utterances which have the same ele-
ment(s) presupposed in one case, but asserted in the other.

Having defined focus as in (iv'), it is important now to distinguish the
following four parameters of focus as they affect the grammars in question:
(i) realization of focus, (ii) type of focus, (iii) scope of focus, and (iv)
control of focus.

1.1 Realization of focus. Focus distinctions are typically realized in one of
three ways: prosodically, morphologically, and syntactically. In most stress-
accent languages, the focus conditions realization of stress within a clause.
By moving the location of the main level stress, a speaker can distinguish dif-
ferent foci within utterances, e.g. "John ate an APPLE," "JOHN ate an apple,"
"John ATE an apple," etc. The general tendency is for the focus (or the right-
most focus, etc.) to receive the strongest stress. Other foci receive less
stress, and elements which are out of focus may receive no stress at all. In
tonal accent languages tonal accents may or may not be realized according to
whether or not they occur under focus.

In the morphological realization of focus an affix or other grammatical mor-
pheme is used for focus purposes. The "do" in English sentences such as "John
DID eat an apple" is a morphological mark (accompanied by stress) marking truth
value focus. The marker /nò/ is used for contrastive focus in Aghem, as in
(3).

(3) m̀ mɔ̂ z+̀ kɨ́-bɛ́ nò nɛ́   'I ate FUFU today'
     I P$_1$ ate fufu   FOC today

This kind of morphological marking is particularly common in tone languages,
where prosody is inefficient as a means of signalling focus.

Most languages appear to have some means of marking focus syntactically. In
English and in many languages there is a cleft construction. Often there is the
possibility of rearranging word order for focus purposes. In Aghem, for example,
a focused element is moved into the immediate postverbal position. Thus, in (4),
the subject is contrastively focused.

(4) à mɔ̀ z+̀ mùɔ bɛ́-'kɔ́ nɛ́   '<u>I</u> ate fufu today' [DS = dummy subject]
     DS P$_1$ ate I   fufu   today

As noted above, the object noun fufu occurs in its suffixed form in (4) because
it is out of focus.

1.2. Type of focus. The term "focus" has been used to refer to information
judged by the speaker not to be shared by the listener. There are different
factors which may cause the speaker to consider a specific element or elements
as not shared. These factors give rise to different types (or functions) of
focus. The literature abounds with notions such as "contrastive focus", "em-
phatic focus", "exhaustive listing focus", etc. A complete analysis of focus
types is not available at this time, although the second author has attempted
a recent typology in his study of Aghem [Watters 1979]. For the purpose of
our present study, we shall distinguish between "assertive focus" vs. "con-
trastive focus" as broad categories perhaps subject to further subtyping. *As-
sertive focus* can be defined as asserted information projected against a neu-
tral background. By using the term "neutral background", we mean that the
"slot" occupied by the focused element(s) is judged by the speaker not to have
been assigned any *conflicting* value by the listener. By "value" is meant any
referent, verb action or state, truth value, etc., as we shall examine in 1.3
below. This neutral background is assumed by the speaker in at least two dif-
ferent contexts. The first and more straightforward one occurs when the listen-
er has asked the speaker a question. The WH-word in a question such as "what
did John eat?" signals that this speaker (let us say, the S_1) requests a value
for the object slot. In responding, the second speaker (or S_2) provides the ut-
terance "John ate AN APPLE," where "an apple" is assertively focused because
the WH-question of the S_1 explicitly indicated no conflicting value in the ob-
ject position. A yes-no question works the same way, except that the unfilled
slot is the truth value of the whole proposition. In response to S_1's question
"Did John eat an apple?", S_2 can respond "YES," "yes he DID," or "yes, John/he
DID eat an apple." In the last example, the auxiliary verb "do" is used assert-
ively to focus the truth value of the proposition "John ate an apple."

If the question context provides an explicit acknowledgement by S_1 of a neu-
tral background for focus in S_2's response, the second context contains only an
implicit acknowledgement, at best. In this case, S_2 judges that there is no
relevant previous context leading him to assume a preexisting conflicting value
in the focus slot. This could mean no relevant context in the immediate dis-
course or in the knowledge store assumed to be in S_1's possession. The extreme

of this occurs when the focus slot is the whole utterance. Such a context oc-
curs frequently in announcements such as "American Airlines announces the arri-
val of flight 101 at gate 34." Since no conflicting information has been
available to the many listeners, the whole utterance is assertively focused.[3]
In more normal discourse, only part of an utterance will be assertively focused.

In *contrastive focus*, a non-neutral background is assumed by S_2. That is,
S_2 judges that S_1 has filled the focus slot with a conflicting value (which can
also be a null element). Again, there are two contexts. In the first, an ex-
plicit conflict is created by the fact that S_2's utterance contradicts part or
all of a previous assertion made by S_1. Thus, if S_1 says, "John ate an apple,"
S_2 may reply, "no, John/he ate a PEAR." Now, in this case, "pear" is contrast-
ively focused because it explicitly disagrees with the filler of the same ob-
ject slot in the prior utterance. In the second context, S_2 uses contrastive
focus *not* because he is contradicting a previous utterance made by S_1, but be-
cause S_2 is contradicting knowledge shared by S_1 and S_2. Thus, if John never
eats pears, and the speaker and listener both know this, S_2 can utter, "Guess
what? JOHN ate a PEAR!" In this case, the utterance "John ate a pear" is con-
trastively focused in its entirety with the assumed knowledge "John doesn't eat
pears."

The importance of this dichotomy between assertive and contrastive focus
will be seen in languages where one is marked differently from the other. In
many languages the formula CF = AF + X demonstrates that contrastive focus is
realized by an addition to, or an operation on, the assertive focus structure.
In English, stress placement is identical for both CF and AF. However, the
strength of the stress is generally greater, i.e. with higher pitch, duration
and/or intensity, in CF than it is in corresponding cases of AF. In the case of
auxiliary focus, we can either greatly stress the "do" auxiliary in "John DID
eat an apple," or add the form "too" or "so", i.e. "John DID TOO/DID SO eat an
apple." This last example makes the counter-assertive nature of CF more explic-

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[3]Note that if part of this utterance were not presupposed, e.g. if there
had been a gate change, the announcer would have had to report this information
first.

it. In Aghem, the P_1 marker màá is used both for CF and AF. However, to make it clear that contrastive focus is intended, Aghem speakers can place normally postverbal elements before the verb, as seen in (5).

(5) m̀ máá   bé-'kɨ́ zɨ́   'I DID TOO eat fufu'
     I P_1/FOC fufu   ate

Thus, the X in the above formula represents the process of "adposing" [Watters 1979] in Aghem.

1.3. <u>Scope of focus</u>. We have already seen in numerous examples above that the positions and functions included within the focus vary from utterance to utterance. Focus can be *exclusively* on one element, e.g. the subject or the object, or it can be inclusively on more than one element, e.g. the verb + object. While most discussions on focus treat cases where a noun phrase is exclusively or inclusively in focus, it is of course possible for an exclusive focus to be on the lexical meaning of the verb or on the truth value of an entire proposition. The possibility also exists for multiple foci within the same utterance. Our earlier example, "American Airlines announces the arrival of flight 101 at gate 34," has several intonation peaks, indicating more than one focus. The reason for this is, as we have said, that the whole utterance is in focus.[4] Each language has rules for assigning surface focus marking (either through prosodies or other means) according to the scope of focus. As a case in point, consider the following Somali utterances, which differ only in the location of focus:

(6) a. cáli-baa móos   cunáy   'ALI ate a banana'
         Ali   FOC banana ate

    b. cali móos - buu cunay   'Ali ate a BANANA'
        Ali banana FOC ate

    c. cali móos wáa-cunay   'Ali ATE a banana'
        Ali banana FOC ate

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[4]There are some unresolved issues bearing on this analysis. It may be relevant to ask whether there is an implicit contrastive focus on each constituent, e.g. "American Airlines, NOT TWA," etc. One might consider a comparable utterance made in a hotel or on a boat, "Dinner is now being served in the main dining room." Here the multiple accents cannot be attributed to implied contrasts.

As seen in the above forms, the obligatory category of focus (FOC) must be assigned to one element in each utterance [Antinucci 1980]. In (6a), the focus marker baa indicates that the subject is in focus; in (6b), the focus marker buu (< baa + uu 'he' [= subject agreement]) indicates that the object is in focus; and in (6c), the focus marker wáa indicates that the verb is in focus. It is only in relative clauses that the arguments and the verb can cooccur without a focus marker (or a focused auxiliary, as discussed in later sections). Thus, cali móos cunáy can only mean "Ali who ate a banana'. In (6) we have translated these instances of morphological focus realization with exclusive focus on the S, O, and V respectively. Each sentence is potentially ambiguous as to scope of focus, however: (6a) is used also in situations where a whole utterance is in focus; (6b) can indicate also that the verb is part of the focus, e.g. as an answer to the question 'what did Ali do?'; (6c) ambiguously focuses either on the lexical meaning of the verb (EATING rather than PEELING a banana), or on the truth value of the utterance, i.e. 'Ali DID eat a banana'. This second interpretation of (6c) is an instance of auxiliary focus. In assigning a morphological marker of focus in Somali, the following ordered rules appear to capture variations in simple SOV utterances:

(i) If the S is included in the focus (assertion), assign a FOC marker
    to it.

(ii) If not, but if the O is included in the focus, assign a FOC marker to
    it.

(iii) If not, assign a FOC marker to the V.

It is important to note, then, that surface realization of focus on a given element (whether prosodically or morphologically) does not imply exclusive focus on that element. We shall see cases in section 3 where the feature specification [+focus] is assigned to a form if either the auxiliary or the verb is included within the focus.

1.4. Control of focus. The last parameter of focus to be discussed here involves the *control* of focus marking. In all of the above examples, the focus marking was determined by the actual discourse situation. Thus, in the sentence "John DID TOO eat an apple," the focus marking "did too" is required by the desire of S_2 to contradict S_1's utterance "John didn't eat an apple." We re-

fer to this state of affairs as *pragmatic control* of focus: the speaker deter-
mines the element(s) on which the grammar will express focus.

   A different set of affairs is found in the African languages we shall con-
sider in this study. In most of these languages there is partial pragmatic
control of focus; that is, there is a segment of the grammar where the speaker
can determine how focus will be realized by the grammar. There is also, how-
ever, a large segment of the grammar where focus marking is not controlled by
the speaker, but rather by the grammar itself. The pattern is that there is a
[+focus] form and a [-focus] form, and in some grammatical contexts the speaker
has no choice but to use one or the other of these, regardless of what may actu-
ally be in focus according to pragmatic conditions. Consider, for example,
some of the points which were made with respect to the [+focus] form máà and
the [-focus] form bɛ́-'kɔ́ 'fufu' in (1) above. Although English allows con-
trasts such as "the boy who ate the apple" vs. "the boy who did eat the apple",
Aghem does not allow máà to occur in relative clauses. The [-focus] form mɔ̀
is thus required in relative clauses by the grammar. Similarly, the [-focus]
noun form is required after an imperative, as seen in the examples in (7).

(7) a.   zɨ̂ bɛ́-'kɔ́   'eat fufu!'
         eat fufu

    b.   zɨ̂ bɛ́-'kɔ́ nô   'eat FUFU!'
         eat fufu   FOC

In (7a), the object noun appears in its suffixed out of focus form after the im-
perative verb. This [-focus] marking on the noun is required whether or not
'fufu' is included in the focus. Thus, (7a) can answer any of the following
questions: "what should I do?" [VP-focus]; "what should I eat?" [O-focus];
"what should I do with fufu?" [V-focus]. It is only the last question which
places the object semantically out of focus. The facts are even clearer in (7b).
In this case the (contrastive) focus marker /nô/ is placed after 'fufu'. De-
spite the fact that it is now contrastively focused, 'fufu' must still appear in
its [-focus] form, because the grammar dictates this form after an imperative.
In the above situations, we speak of *grammatical control* of focus: the grammar
determines how the speaker will express focus.[5]

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[5]To some extent the difference between pragmatic vs. grammatical control of

A potential situation of grammatical control of auxiliary focus can be ar-
gued for a segment of English, although much depends on the interpretation one
lends to the facts. We have said that the auxiliary verb "do" marks truth val-
ue focus in declarative affirmative clauses (in the present, past and impera-
tive). In this environment the speaker has control over whether the [+focus]
variant "do" or the [-focus] variant $\emptyset$ is used. However, it is well known that
"do" appears in other contexts where the speaker has less control. In both
yes-no questions and in negation, "do" is required: "did John eat an apple?",
"John didn't eat an apple." It is quite clear that these occurrences are re-
quired independent of where the scope of focus may fall. For example, if S_1
says, "John didn't eat an apple," S_2 can reply, "No, John/he didn't eat a PEAR."
In S_2's reply, the negation forms part of the presupposition, and yet "do" is
required. The situation is similar to that in Aghem (and the other languages
to be examined later). So, for English we shall say that a feature [+focus] is
assigned to the auxiliary in at least the following two cases: (i) there is
pragmatic control of focus on the auxiliary, e.g. contrastive focus on truth
value; or (ii) there is grammatical control of focus on the auxiliary, e.g. in-
terrogatives and negation. Whenever a [+focus] specification is assigned to a
$\emptyset$ finite auxiliary, "do" is required by the grammar. Considerable support for
this kind of approach will be seen below.

2. Grammar of Auxiliary Focus

    In this section we shall discuss the grammatical properties of auxiliary fo-
cus, postponing until section 3 a discussion of the semantic differences exist-
ing between the [+focus] and [-focus] auxiliary forms reported in this section.
Our treatment of the grammar of auxiliary focus will require two subsections.

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focus is one between etic vs. emic. The location of semantic focus in any given
instance is pragmatically controlled by the speaker. On the other hand, a gram-
mar can encode universal tendencies concerning the cooccurrence of focus and se-
mantic features of the auxiliary, e.g. negation tends to be part of the semantic
focus of an utterance, although it is possible to construct utterances where
this is not the case (see section 3.1). What is important is to recognize that
although grammatical control must be grammar-specific, the relationship between
pragmatic and grammatical determinants of focus marking is a non-arbitrary one:
what *tends* to be semantically in focus comes to be grammatically focused.

First, we shall survey the semantic features of the auxiliary which are affected by focus (tense, aspect, mood, polarity). Second, we shall examine the grammatical constructions in which competing focus variants are found or not found. In both subsections examples will be cited from African languages we have personally studied and/or have interpreted from sources in the literature.

2.1. <u>Focus and auxiliary features</u>. In this section we shall attempt to isolate those features of the auxiliary which tend to develop (or not develop) focus variants. By auxiliary features we refer to the universal categories of tense, aspect, mood, and polarity. In attempting to establish generalizations concerning the cooccurrence of the feature [Focus] with the various auxiliary features, it is clear that the exact statement will depend upon the kind of auxiliary system existing in each individual language. This is especially true in the tense/aspect categories. Some of the languages we shall consider are primarily aspectual (aspect-prominent), e.g. Hausa, while others are tense-prominent, e.g. Efik. In several cases the two are interwoven in such a way as to make the ultimate statement differ slightly from language to language, even as the surface facts appear to be virtually identical.

2.1.1. <u>Efik</u>. We shall begin with the most general case known to us, namely, Efik, a Cross River language of Nigeria, where the focus distinction covers the entire tense/aspect system. (Where we make no statement to the contrary, it should be assumed that the discussion pertains only to indicative affirmative forms.) The data given below in (8) are based on studies by Welmers [1968] and Cook [1976, 1979].

(8)	[-focus]	[+focus]	
PAST	-kV-	-ma	
PRESENT	Ø	-mV-	[-PROG]
		kɛ́-	[+PROG]
FUTURE	dì	-yɛ́-ˋ	

Efik is a tense-prominent language, whose past, present, and future tenses show focus variants. An example taken from Cook [1976] is given in (9).

(9) a. e-tìm ɔ-kɔ-bɔ̀b   à-kam-ba u-fɔ̀k   'Etim built A BIG HOUSE'
     Etim he-PST-built big   house

    b. e-tìm a-mà   ɔ-bɔ́b   à-kam-ba u-fɔ̀k   'Etim BUILT A BIG HOUSE'
       Etim he-PST he-built big   house

In the [-focus] form in (9a), the direct object 'a big house' is the exclusive
focus of the sentence. Thus, (9a) answers the question 'what did Etim build?',
where it is presupposed that Etim built something. In the [+focus] form in
(9b), the entire verb phrase is the focus. Thus, (9b) answers the question
'what did Etim do?', with the only presupposition being that Etim did some-
thing. As can be seen, the [-focus] variant is used when the verb is not in-
cluded in the focus, while the [+focus] form is used when the verb *is* included
within the scope of focus.

    It is important to note that we assign the feature values for [Focus] dif-
ferently from what would be implied by descriptions in the literature. The
[-focus] forms are used when there is either AF or CF on a non-verbal element,
e.g. the object in (9). Cook [1979] also indicates that these forms are used
when a contrastively focused element is preposed, although there is also a to-
nal perturbation on the verb form. Since the [-focus] forms are associated
with a marked focus elsewhere in the sentence, some studies refer to it as the
focused or contrastive construction. In our study, however, we are concerned
only with the question of whether the [+focus] goes on the auxiliary form or
not.

    It is interesting to note that the only place in the tense system where
there is an opposition between progressive and non-progressive aspect is in the
[+focus] present tense. (The sentences in (9) could also have been glossed
'Etim was building a house'.) In the [-focus] present tense, there is no dis-
tinction between present progressive and present perfect. In the [+focus] pres-
ent tense, however, /-mV-/ unambiguously signals present perfect, while /ké-/
signals present progressive. For the origin of /ké-/ , consider the sentence
in (10).

(10)   à-kam-ba u-fɔ̀k kɛ e-tìm ɔ-kɔ-bɔ́b   'Etim built A BIG HOUSE'
      big   house FOC Etim he-PST-built

The sentence in (10) is the preposed variant of (9a) and can equally be tran-
slated 'it's a house that Etim built', i.e. with a cleft construction. What is
important is that the focus marker in such preposed sentences is /ké/ . Now,

since the [+focus, +PROG] tense consists of /kɛ́-/ preposed to a ∅ marked
verb, it is clear that this particular [+focus] form was derived by simply add-
ing the focus marker to the [-focus] form. The literal meaning of the [+focus,
+PROG] tense is thus 'it is he builds a house' (= 'he is building a house').
We shall see below that the Haya focus marker /ní/ similarly derives a pro-
gressive from a zero present tense.

2.1.2. <u>Gwari and Ejagam</u>. In two languages we have found that the focus dis-
tinction is found throughout the system except in the perfect. In Gwari, a Kwa
language of Northern Nigeria, Hyman and Magaji [1970] reported the oppositions
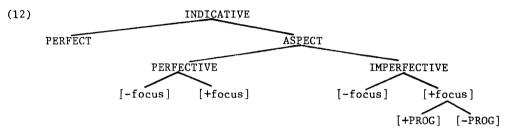reproduced in (11).

(11)

		[-focus]	[+focus]
	0	wo si àshnamá (ĺō)	wo kú àshnamá si (ĺo)
	PERF		wó kú àshnamá si
	P_1	wo ɓéT si àshnamá	w'a kú àshnamá si
	P_2	wò ɓei sii àshnamá	wò kūì àshnamá si
	P_3	wò ɓei si àshnamá	wò ɓei kú àshnamá si
	F_1	wo ɓá si àshnamá	wo ɓá kú àshnamá si
	F_2	wo ɓéi sTì àshnamá	wo ɓei kúi àshnamá si(i)
	F_3	wo ɓéi sT àshnamá	wo ɓéi kú àshnamá si

         'he TM buy yams'   'he TM take yams buy'

As can be seen in the glosses at the bottom, these utterances involve the propo-
sition 'he buy yams', where TM stands for "tense marker".[6] In the forms on the
right, the verb kú , which means 'take' (as does its singular counterpart ĺá),
is used as a completive aspect auxiliary. Because these forms are not used
when an argument or verb is contrastively focused, Hyman and Magaji [1970:123]

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[6] In these Gwari forms, the subscripted numerals refer to today (1), yester-
day/tomorrow (2), and before yesterday/after tomorrow (3). Thus, F_2 means 'to-
morrow future tense'. The [+focus] variants have different meaning according to
their tense. The past tenses are completive if [+focus], incompletive if [-fo-
cus] ('they bought yams' vs. 'they are buying yams'). The future tenses are
future anterior if [+focus] ('they will have bought yams'). The present (0)
tense means 'they are getting yams bought', when [+focus].

argued that lá and kú should be interpreted as focused aspect markers (cf.
George's [1970] treatment of /á/ in closely related Nupe). The perfect
tense is redundantly [+focus] and therefore has no [-focus] counterpart. The
motivation for this redundancy apparently has to do with the semantics of the
perfect, which necessarily focuses on the completedness of the action (see sec-
tion 3). The same observation holds for Ejagam, an Ekoid Bantu language spo-
ken along the Nigeria-Cameroon border, whose tense/aspect system is analyzed
by Watters [1980] essentially as follows:

(12)   INDICATIVE

       PERFECT   ASPECT

              PERFECTIVE   IMPERFECTIVE

         [-focus]   [+focus]   [-focus]   [+focus]

                                              [+PROG]   [-PROG]

The perfect tense is considered to fall outside of the aspect system, since "it
does not involve a viewpoint on the internal temporal constituency of the situ-
ation" (Watters [1980:15], following Comrie [1976]). Under aspect, both the
perfective and the imperfective show focus variants. In addition, the [+focus]
imperfective category allows for a further distinction of progressive vs. non-
progressive (= habitual) aspect. It is significant that Efik and Ejagam make
the greatest number of aspectual distinctions in essentially the same focused
category.

2.1.3. <u>Hausa</u>. As is well known from numerous grammars of Hausa, a Chadic lan-
guage spoken primarily in Northern Nigeria and Niger, the completive and pro-
gressive aspects are each characterized by two suppletive allomorphs found in
complementary distribution:

(13)   [-focus]   [+focus]
         [+CPL]   ...sú-kà tàfí   sú-n tàfí   'they went'
         [+PROG]   ...sú-kèe tàfíyàa   sú-nàa tàfiyàa   'they are going'
    cf. FUTURE   záa sù tàfí   swáà tàfí   'they will go'

Hausa is primarily an aspect language. The [-focus] forms indicated for the

completive and progressive aspects are generally found when preceded either by
the head of the relative clause in which they occur or by a focused nonverbal
element. The [+focus] forms are not found in these environments. Although
two future forms are distinguished, it is not clear whether they should be in-
terpreted as parallel to the preceding aspectual forms.[7] As we shall see in
the following Bantu examples, it is common for the future to be the only tense
not having focus variants.

2.1.4. KiRundi and ChiBemba. In most Bantu languages, important differences
are noted in the marking of tense aspect in main vs. relative clauses. In some
languages, such as KiRundi and ChiBemba, the forms which occur in relative
clauses (where there is no focus distinction) also occur in main clauses. The
following summary of the tense system of KiRundi, the Bantu language spoken in
Burundi, is adapted from Meeussen [1959].

(14)

	[-focus]			[+focus]		
P_0	-∅-	-a / -ye	[+TR]	-ra-	-a / -ye	[-TR]
P_1	-a-	-a / -ye	[+TR]	-aa-	-a / -ye	[-TR]
P_2	-á-	-a / -ye	[+TR]	-ára-	-a / -ye	[-TR]
F	-zoo-	-a	[+TR]	-zoo-	-a	[+TR]

Meeussen recognizes four time distinctions, which he labels "immédiat", "récent",
"prétérit", and "futur". We have relabeled these P_0, P_1, P_2 and F. In addition,
there is an aspectual distinction between imperfective (-a) and perfective (-ye)
which characterizes all but the future tense.[8] The future is also exempt from

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[7]Russell Schuh has informed us that what we have labelled the [+focus] fu-
ture does not normally occur in relative clauses and WH questions. In this
sense it is parallel to the [+focus] variants of the completive and progress-
ive aspects. However, the [-focus] future construction differs from its two
counterparts in its ability to be used in an independent clause. Another di-
vergence from the pattern is that the two futures have distinct negative forms.
In the completive and progressive negatives, the focus distinction is neutral-
ized.

[8]The table in (14) is made possible by adopting Meeussen's *structural* rath-

the focus system. The three other tenses reveal morphological and tonal dif-
ferences between [-focus] and [+focus] variants. Morphologically, the [+focus]
variants appear to be derived from the [-focus] variants by means of adding
-ra- (where -ara- becomes -aa- in the [+focus] P_1). In the above formu-
lae, the acute accent stands for high tone, while the absence of this mark in-
dicates low tone. The feature [TR] refers to a process of tonal reduction
whereby a high tone verb radical loses its high tone in [-focus] tenses. The
loss of this high tone (or accent, as has been argued by Hyman and Byarushango
[1984] for the closely related language, Haya) is of course a reduction pro-
cess. It should therefore not be surprising to see high tone reduction charac-
terizing forms which are not in focus. As seen in the bottom right form in
(14), the future tense undergoes tonal reduction in environments where the cor-
responding [+focus] P forms do not. Thus, it is probably more appropriate to
leave the [+focus] F slot blank.

The tense/aspect system of the related Zambian language, ChiBemba, has been
the subject of a number of studies [Sharman and Meeussen 1955; Sharman 1955;
Givón 1972]. Interpreting these sources, we establish the system in (15) on
the following page. The system consists of a present (0) and four degrees of
past tense (P_1-P_4). Although there are two degrees of future tense (F_1 and F_2),
the F_1 is clearly identical to the P_1, which form will be treated as past for
the purpose of focus marking. In addition, there are a present and a past "lin-
ger tense" (OL and PL), whose effects linger on beyond the time of the action
[Givón 1972:178]. In addition, the non-linger tenses (other than the P_1/F_1)
are further differentiated for progressive vs. non-progressive aspect. As in
KiRundi, we note both morphological and tonal differences between [+focus] and

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er than *semantic* grouping of the various tense/aspects. The meanings of the
tense/aspect combinations are as expected, except for the following: (a) the
imperfective P_0 has present tense meaning if [-focus] and immediate future
meaning ('to be about to...') if [+focus]; and (b) the P_1 imperfective is tran-
slated as a conditional, either in the present if [-focus], or in the past if
[+focus] [Meeussen 1959:120-121]. In addition, it should be noted that Meeus-
sen terms our [-focus] column "conjoint" and our [+focus] column "disjoint".
It is clear from his definitions (pp. 215-216) that this opposition is one of
focus.

(15)   [-PROG]

	[-focus]		[+focus]			[+PROG]		
0	-∅-	-ə	-la-	-ə	[±TS]	-lée-	-ə	[±TS]
P_1/F_1	-á-	-ə	-áa-	-ə	[±TS]			
P_2	-ácí-	-ə	(complex)			-ácíláa-	-ə	[±TS]
P_3	-á-	-ile	-álii-	-ə	[±TS]	-álée-	-ə	[±TS]
P_4	-a-	-ile	-alí-	-ile	[+TS]	-alée-	-ə	[±TS]
F_2	-ka-	-ə	-ka-	-ə	[+TS]	-kaláa-	-ə	[±TS]
OL	-∅-	-ile	náa-'	-á	[-TS]			
PL	-a-	-á	-alí-	-ə	[+TS]			

[-focus] forms.[9] Morphologically, non-future, non-progressive forms all show focus variants. The F_2 and progressive forms are capable only of tonal variation to indicate focus. The feature [TS] stands for tone spreading. Forms which are marked [+TS] are characterized by the spreading of the last underlying high tone of the verbal complex all the way to the end of the word [Sharman and Meeussen 1955:395]. All [-focus] forms are redundantly [-TS]. All progressive forms are marked [±TS], indicating that they will be [+TS] when under focus, and [-TS] when out of focus. The [±TS] indicated for the [+focus] variants of the 0 and P_3 tenses signals an inconsistency in the tonal realization of these forms. We cannot explain why the [+focus] OL tense is [-TS].

2.1.5. Aghem. We have seen in KiRundi and ChiBemba that both future tenses and progressive forms can be exempt from the auxiliary focus system. The same is found in Aghem, although the exact statement varies slightly due to the

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[9]Sharman [1955] refers to our [-focus] column as "strong link" and to our [+focus] column as "weak link". He states that the strong link forms "...throw emphasis (if any) on what follows the verb, or more precisely, are strongly linked to what follows (and formally therefore *cannot* stand at the end of the sentence...) [The weak link forms] ...throw emphasis on the verb itself, or, more precisely, have only a weak link with what follows (and formally therefore may stand in mid-sentence *or* at sentence-end)" (p.30). These characterizations clearly point to a difference in the scope of focus. Givón [1972] characterized the two columns as [±action focus]; he later [Givón 1975] changed the terminology to "COMP focus" vs. "VP focus".

structure of the tense/aspect system. Anderson [1979:75] provides the follow-
ing feature analysis of the Aghem tense/aspect system.

(16)

	P_2		P_1		0		F_1	F_2
[PST]	+		+		-		-	-
[FUT]	-		-		-		+	+
[TOD]	-		+		+		+	-
[CPL]	+	-	+	-	+	-	-	-
[FOC]	+/-	-	+/-	-	+/-	-	-	-
[HAB]	-	+/-	-	-	-	+/-	-	+/-

Five time distinctions are recognized in a symmetric fashion: a present (0), a
today past (P_1), today future (F_1), a before today past (P_2), and an after today
future (F_2). The features used are [Past], [Future], [Today], [Completive],
[Focus], and [Habitual]. As seen in the row for the feature [Focus], focus var-
iants are found only in [-future, +completive] forms. The complete set of these
variants is given in (17).

(17) COMPLETIVE TENSE-ASPECT MARKERS

	[-focus]	[+focus]
P_0	∅	ń`
P_1	mɔ̀	máà
P_2	`mɔ́	má'á

In (17), P_0 refers to the present completive (and "present" is designated by the
feature complex [-PST, -FUT]). We observe the mɔ̀/máà opposition in the P_1 seen
in earlier examples. It seems that the focus variants are derived from the
[-focus] forms by the addition of something.[10] By excluding [+FUT] forms from

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[10]Unfortunately, this is not universally the case. Watters [1980] has demon-
strated that in Ejagam the suffix -i represents [-focus] on the perfective aux-
iliary, while ∅ represents [+focus] (in this case, focus on the truth value).
This is the only instance we know of where the [-focus] variant is morphological-
ly more complex than the [+focus] variant.

morphological variation, Aghem lines up with KiRundi and ChiBemba. By exclud-
ing [-CPL] forms, it lines up again with ChiBemba. We might add that it lines
up also with English, which introduces the [+focus] auxiliary verb "do" in the
[-PROG] present and in the past completive.[11]

There are a few hints that Aghem shows a partial focus opposition in tense/
aspect marking when under negation. In all of the above examples, the [+fo-
cus]/[-focus] differences are not found when cooccurring with negation.
Either the [-focus] form is found with negation or, as in the case of Hausa,
there is a third tense/aspect pattern. This is not to say that negation can-
not show focus allomorphs. In many Bantu languages, negation is marked by the
prefix /ti-/ ∿ /te-/ when in focus (as in a main clause), but by the "infix"
/-tə-/ when out of focus (as in a relative clause). A particularly striking
example comes from Kihung'an, where the verb 'to fail' substitutes for the neg-
ative marker when negation is not in focus [Takizala 1973].

2.1.6. <u>Remnants</u>. In the preceding examples it was possible to isolate seman-
tic features such as [Future], [Progressive], etc. and define a feature complex
which in turn conditions [+focus] and [-focus] variants. In other languages,
perhaps only one tense/aspect combination will show variation, or perhaps a set
of tense/aspect forms which do not constitute a natural class. The Bamileke di-
alects (Grassfields Bantu, Cameroon), for example, show tonal variations indica-
tive of an earlier more pervasive system (see, for example, Hyman and Tadadjeu
[1976:103]).

2.2. <u>Auxiliary focus and construction types</u>. In the preceding section we took
a close look at how the focus feature penetrates different tense/aspect systems.
We will say more about the semantics of this penetration in section 3. In the
present section we are concerned with the delimitation of the set of grammati-

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[11]The oft noted generalization is clearly that English uses "do" in finite
forms which do not have an auxiliary of their own. This explains the unusual
focus marking of the imperative: English is the only language we have found to
have focus variants in this environment. The additional requirement that the
verb be a finite form accounts for the non-occurrence of "do" in infinitive
phrases—e.g. "to not go", rather than *"to don't go"; "I want you *to* go", rath-
er than *"I want you to *do* go", etc.

cal environments where the focus distinction is likely to be found. Our study indicates few, if any environments, where [+focus] forms are absolutely required. On the other hand, there are many environments where only the [-focus] forms can appear. It thus seems appropriate to distinguish environments where [+focus] variants are likely *not* to occur. We consider first main clauses and then non-main clauses.

2.2.1. <u>Main clauses</u>. The main clause is the most likely grammatical context for an auxiliary focus system to develop. Among the languages hosting [+focus] and [-focus] tense/aspect markers, none forbids the appearance of the [+focus] variants in main clauses. By contrast, almost all forbid [+focus] forms in relative clauses.[12] The universal compatibility of [+focus] forms in main clauses is due to the fact that main clauses project foregrounded information, e.g. information likely to advance a story line. As such, they create what we can refer to as an assertive environment. By main clause we do not mean to restrict ourselves to non-subordinate constructions. In particular, complement clauses often, if not typically, share all focus properties with independent clauses (cf. note 12). Let us then use the terms "main" vs. "subordinate" to refer to assertive vs. non-assertive clauses. In this case, we can say right off that some languages have a perfect one-to-one mapping between [+focus] forms in main clauses vs. [-focus] forms in subordinate clauses. One such language studied by the second author is Ngie (Grassfields Bantu, Cameroon), where one set of tense markers is found in main clauses and another set in relative clauses. This is clearly a case of grammatical control of focus marking and explains the widespread use of such terms as "main" vs. "relative" tenses in the literature. Most languages are not as consistent as Ngie, however. Instead, we find particular types of main clauses which preclude the possibility of accepting a [+focus] tense/aspect form. All such main clauses to our knowledge

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[12]This statement must be tempered considerably. In most, if not all languages requiring [-focus] variants in relative clauses, the requirement pertains only to the relativized verb form, and not to any verb forms that might be contained in a complement clause within a relative clause. Thus, in a hypothetical relative clause "the man who knows that I fell", only the verb "know" will be required to take the [-focus] form. Clements [1980] has noted the same constraints on the [+focus] marker nĩ in Kikuyu.

involve cases where the verbal complex (auxiliary + verb) falls outside the scope of focus.

Consider first emphatic constructions involving contrastive focus. If contrastive focus is placed on one of the arguments of a verb, none of the above languages will allow the [+focus] tense/aspect forms. In some cases it could be argued that the contrastive construction involves a clefting process [Harris-Delisle 1978] or even a relative clause (as is definitely the case in Ngie or Haya). In other cases, the argument would be somewhat difficult to maintain. Instead, a focus construction involves the foregrounding of the elements within the scope of focus and the backgrounding of the elements falling outside the scope of focus [Schachter 1973]. Thus, although still a main clause, the [-focus] form is required in the following Hausa example, because the presuppositional context 'they ate x' is backgrounded:

(18) a. dóoyàa sú-kà   cí   'they ate YAMS' (not something else)
        yams   they/CPL ate

     b. *dóoyàa sú-n cí

Notice by the same token that it is rather difficult to get the [+focus] auxiliary "do" to cooccur with contrastive argument focus even in a main clause: (*)"John DID eat an APPLE" (acceptability depending on intonation).

A related main clause context disfavoring [+focus] auxiliary marking is WH-questions. Thus, (19a) employs the [-focus] form in Hausa, while (19b), which has the [+focus] form of the completive aspect, is ungrammatical.[13]

(19) a. mèe sú-kà   cí   'what did they eat?'
        what they/CPL ate

     b. *mèe sú-n cí

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[13]Phil Jaggar has pointed out to us that if a Hausa WH question does not involve fronting, the [+focus] verb forms are used, e.g. sú-n cí mè 'they ate what?'. As seen in the English gloss, one interpretation of this nonfronted WH construction is that it is an echo question (or contingent query). Such constructions often have pragmatic rather than grammatical control of focus. Thus, while the normal English question form "did you fall?" used "do" because the *grammar* places [+focus] on the auxiliary, the contingent query "you FELL?" does not require "do" unless the truth value is explicitly in question ("you DID fall?").

The answer to the question in (19a) is (18a).

Thus, to summarize, [+focus] tense/aspect forms may be excluded from main clauses when the auxiliary falls outside the scope of the focus.

2.2.2. <u>Subordinate clauses</u>.   There are far more environments where [+focus] tense/aspect forms are systematically excluded from backgrounded, subordinate clauses.   In languages where one or more types of subordinate clauses require [-focus] forms, focus marking is grammatically, not pragmatically, controlled. The types of subordinate clauses affected are as follows:

(i) *Relative clauses*.   None of the above languages allows the [+focus] variants to occur in relative clauses (but cf. note 12).[14]   The explanation for this has to do with the backgrounding nature of relative clauses [Schachter 1973].   Relative clauses present information which is backgrounded (or defocused) with respect to other, foregrounded (focused) information.   This constraint against an auxiliary marked [+focus] within a relative clause is of course a grammatical rather than a semantic one.   Thus, "do" can in fact occur in a relative clause in English, as seen in (20a).

(20) a.   the man who DID eat an apple   [not the one who DIDN'T]

b.   ?the man who DID TOO eat an apple! [contrary to your assertion that he
                                              DIDN'T eat an apple]

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[14]Noni, a Cameroonian Bantoid language, *does* however allow [+focus] variants in relative clauses, as seen in the following examples [Hyman 1981].

(a)   ké mē ŋkēè wàn̄   wv̀ū cí gwèὲ kὲ   'I don't know the child who fell'
      NEG I   know child REL P_2 fell NEG

(b)   ké mē ŋkēè wàn̄   wv̀u cí nɔ́ gwè kὲ   'I don't know any child who fell'
      NEG I   know child REL P_2 FOC fell NEG

The sentence in (a) has a [-focus] verb form in its relative clause.   The interpretation is thus straightforward: the relative clause is used as a way of identifying for the listener which child fell.   That is, that a child fell is shared (presupposed) knowledge between the speaker and the listener.   In (b), however, the head of the relative clause is non-referential.   At the same time, the person uttering (b) does not treat the falling of a child as shared knowledge.   In fact, he refuses the first speaker's assumption that this knowledge is shared.   This is seen most clearly if the context preceding (a) and (b) is the question 'which child fell?'.   The answer in (a) accepts the presupposition that a child fell; the answer in (b) does not.

It probably could be maintained that relative clauses with the [+focus] auxiliary "do" are, in some semantic or pragmatic sense, more "marked" than relative clauses with [-focus] auxiliary forms. Consider, for example, the even more marked status of (20b), where the intensified contrastive focus construction "do too" is used. While it might be possible to construct a highly unusual or complex context in which (20b) would "pass", it seems to be inappropriate to counter-assert within a relative clause.[15]

(ii) *Temporal clauses.* In most of the above languages, auxiliary forms in temporal clauses must be [-focus]. In only some of the cases can it be argued that the temporal clauses are built on relative constructions ('the time that' = 'when...' etc.). By temporal is meant clauses which would be translated in English with initial "when...", "as...", "before...", etc. It is not hard to extend our relative clause explanation to temporal clauses. In a sentence such as "while the children played, we ate apples", it is clear that the temporal clause is backgrounded to the main clause. Thus the grammar of languages such as Aghem and Fula [Arnott 1970:317] will not allow the feature [+focus] to be assigned to the auxiliary in such clauses. (Compare the marked nature of "do" and "do too" auxiliaries in temporal clauses in English.) One possible exception, in some languages only, is "after-" clauses. In Aghem, the focused auxiliary form is used to assert either the truth value or the completedness of the action (see section 3). Since "after-" clauses are oriented toward the completion of the action, the [+focus] variants are used in this language.

(iii) *Antecedent "if-" clauses.* The data in this category are less conclusive, and in a few cases, we were not able to obtain complete information on which form is used. In antecedent clauses of conditional "if-then" constructions there seem to be several patterns. First, in Aghem, the [+focus] tense/aspect forms cannot be used at all. In other languages there can be a special marker of conditional mood which is used in antecedent clauses. In Ejagam, the

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[15]If someone says "this is the man who didn't eat an apple" (presupposed: every other man DID eat one), one might respond, "this is the man who DID TOO eat an apple!". In this case we have a reversal of the normal state of affairs: the main clause contains only presupposed information, while the focused information is seen in the auxiliary within the relative clause.

conditional mood appears to pattern with [+focus] forms, while in Haya (treat-
ed in section 3), it patterns with [-focus] forms. Still in Haya, antecedent
clauses in simple conditions (as opposed to hypotheticals or counterfactuals—
see Salone [1977]) employ the future tenses, which pattern with [-focus] forms
in general.

  (iv) *Consecutive, sequential and narrative clauses*. These three clause
types are all related in African languages and rarely, if ever, show an opposi-
tion in focus marking on the auxiliary. The terms "consecutive" and "sequen-
tial" are used to refer to conjoined clauses. A distinction is sometimes made
between consecutive clauses, which have the same subject as the main clause,
vs. sequential clauses, which have a different subject from the main clause.
Since these constructions are used to convey sequences of events following one
another, they are used especially in narratives. In fact, many languages have
special "narrative tenses" which resemble consecutive forms used in common con-
versation. The interaction between focus and consecutive/narrative clauses has
been carefully studied by Anderson [1979] in Aghem. The P_2 different-subject
consecutive marker ′mè ∿ ′N̂ is used as a narrative tense, as seen in (21a)

(21) a. ò ń   ′zɨ́ kɨ́-bɛ́   'he then ate fufu'
        he P$_2$/CNS   ate fufu
     b. ò ń   ′zɨ́ bɛ́-′kɔ́   'he HAS eaten fufu'
        he P$_0$/FOC   ate fufu

Thus, (21a) can be used either as a clause by itself in a narrative, or as a
consecutive clause following a P_2 verb in the main clause. Since the object
'fufu' does not go into its out of focus (suffixed) form, we conclude that the
P_2 consecutive tense is [-focus]. In fact, comparing it with (21b), we observe
that the [+focus] variant of the P_0 completive aspect differs only in that the
object is in its out of focus form (cf. the chart in (17) above). Etymological-
ly, it appears that this consecutive construction is in fact the [-focus] coun-
terpart to the P_0 [+focus] form. Whatever has caused the semantic shifts, e.g.
P_0 vs. P_2, P_2 consecutive forms remained [-focus] when the focus opposition was
developed in the language. (For further complications in other consecutive
forms, see Anderson [1979:112-117].)

  Since a number of languages use the [-focus] variants in narratives, e.g.

Hausa, Fula, we attribute this to the non-interactional, non-assertive nature
of such discourses. Thus, it may be that narrative clauses are also treated
as backgrounded—perhaps to the intermittent instances of direct discourse, in
which both [+focus] and [-focus] forms occur. What is important in this study
of clause-types is that clauses are hierarchized for focus in the same way that
elements within a clause are hierarchized.

3.   Semantics of Auxiliary Focus

     We have had occasion in our discussion of the grammatical properties of
auxiliary focus to refer to meaning differences obtaining between [+focus] and
[-focus] variants. In this section we shall address the semantics of auxiliary
focus in somewhat more detail. We begin by establishing the notion of "intrin-
sic" focus and then attempt a semantic typology of auxiliary focus.

3.1.   Intrinsic auxiliary focus.   In section 2.2, we saw that the focus opposi-
tion tended to be disfavored in certain grammatical environments. Prior to
that, in 2.1, it was observed that different languages develop focus variants
in different parts of their tense/aspect system. In this section we shall ar-
gue that certain semantic features of the auxiliary have an intrinsic focus of
their own. This intrinsic focus is designed to explain two facts. First, cer-
tain features do not readily cooccur with the focus opposition. Second, these
same features frequently assume properties of the [+focus] variants found else-
where in the auxiliary feature system. Consider, for example, the main clause
affirmative forms in Haya given in (22) on the next page. In Haya, a Bantu lan-
guage spoken in Tanzania, tense, aspect, mood, and polarity are indicated by a
system of prefixes and suffixes, exactly as we saw in the closely related lan-
guages, KiRundi in (14) and ChiBemba in (15). The acute accents indicate high
tone, absence of an accent indicating low tone. What is of interest to us in
Haya is whether the high tones (and occasional falling tones indicated by the
circumflex) are realized in the forms in the right hand column. The forms in
the left hand column all have the object prefix -mu- 'him/her', while those
to the right have instead an object noun 'Kato' following the verbal complex.
The forms represented in (22a) all lose their high or falling tones whenever
they are followed by anything (object, adverb, etc.) in the same clause. Since
we know that the focus of a sentence comes finally in Haya [Bennet 1977], the

(22)   'they tie him up' etc.   'they tie up Kato' etc.

   a. 0   ba-mu-kóm-a   ba-kom-a káto

      P_1 bá-á-mu-kôm-a   ba-a-kom-a káto

      P_2 ba-mu-kom-íl-e   ba-kom-il-e káto

      PH   ba-a-mu-kóm-ag-a   ba-a-kom-ag-a káto

      F_1 ba-laa-mu-kôm-a   ba-laa-kom-a káto

      F_2 ba-li-mu-kôm-a   ba-li-kom-a káto

   b. PROG   ni-ba-mu-kóm-a   ni-ba-kom-á káto

      PERF   bá-á-mu-kóm-il-e   bá-á-kóm-il-e káto

      EXP   ba-lá-mu-kóm-il-e   ba-lá-kom-il-e káto

      PRST   ba-kyáá-mu-kóm-il-e   ba-kyáá-kóm-il-e káto

      SJCT   ba-mu-kôm-e   ba-kom-é káto

      IMPER   mu-kôm-e   kom-á káto

      CONSEC   bá-ka-mu-kôm-a   bá-ka-kóm-a káto
      P_3/Pf/CNS

high/falling tones are lost to the right in (22a), because the verbal complex
is not in the focus position within its clause.

    The forms in (22b) work differently, however. While they too have various
high and falling tones in the left hand column, these are not reduced to low
tone when followed by the noun object 'Kato'. We would like to propose that the
high and falling tones in (22b) are exempted from the reduction process affect-
ing the forms in (22a) because the semantic features represented in (22b) are in-
herently focused. That is, the grammar assigns a [+focus] feature specification
to any verbal complex which either (a) is final in its clause or (b) has an in-
herently focused feature. Then, the tone reduction (TR) rule lowers the tones
in verbal complexes which are not marked [+focus].[16]

    What, then, are these inherently focused features in Haya? Although not
represented in the forms in (22), any verbal complex containing a negative mor-
pheme (either †i- in main clauses or -ta- in subordinate clauses) is exempt
from TR. As argued by Givón [1978], negation is the *marked* polarity and tends

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[16]For further discussion, see Hyman and Byarushengo [1984].

to fall within the scope of focus. Givón suggests that a negative utterance presupposes its affirmative counterpart, in which case the negation is the exclusive focus. It is not hard to imagine contexts where negation is presupposed, i.e. falls outside the scope of focus. A WH-question will provide such a context, since the *semantic* focus has to be on the WH element. Since the context for the question "who didn't fall?" is much more complex than that providing for the affirmative question "who fell?", we can view out of focus negation as a marked combination of semantic features, i.e. [+negative, -focus]. What Haya, and many other languages, do is have their grammars assign a redundant [+focus] specification to all negative forms.[17] This grammatical [+focus] should not be confused with the semantic feature [+focus], which will be pragmatically controlled. In order to avoid confusion, we shall henceforth refer to the grammatically controlled focus feature as [+F]. Thus, Haya assigns [+F] to clause-final and to negative verbal complexes.

Concerning the remaining auxiliary features in (22), compare the present habitual (0) forms in (22a) with the progressive (PROG) forms in (22b). As can be seen, the exact same morphemes are involved with the same underlying tones. The PROG is derived from the 0 tense by prefixing ni- . As seen in (23),

(23) ní kắto   'it's Kato'

this morpheme is in fact the Haya focus marker (cf. our discussion of Efik /kɛ́/ in section 2.1). Thus, the focus marker derives the PROG and at the same time provides the [+F] which exempts the resulting form from the TR rule. Since both Efik and Haya derive a progressive from a focus marker, and since Ejagam in (12) provided a [+PROG] form only under focus, it is clear that the progressive aspect has an inherent semantic focus. The same can be said about some of the other features in (22). Note that the features in (22a) are all *tensed*. The today past (P_1) stands in opposition to the yesterday past (P_2), and the general

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[17]Thus, in Aghem, objects automatically take the out of focus form after a negative verb, whether the negative form is semantically [+focus] or [-focus]. The intrinsic focus of negation may also explain why negation takes on aberrant tonal characteristics in so many African languages, e.g. Gwari, where the tone on the negative morpheme is one level higher than it should be [Hyman and Magaji 1970:118].

future (F_1) is opposed to the far future (F_2). Also, present and past habitu-
al forms (0 vs. PH) are noted. In (22b), however, only the perfect (PERF) and
P_3 (before yesterday past) are in any sense tenses. We have seen in Gwari and
Ejagam that the perfect often does not develop focus variants. This is be-
cause it is an inherently focused tense. As for the P_3, its marker -ka- is
found only in main clause affirmatives and derives from an earlier perfect mark-
er.[18] In relative clauses, -ka- is not used, and the tones of the relative
P_3 thus reduce, as expected.

The remaining features in (22b) are all aspectual or relate to mood. The
experiential (EXP) means 'to have (n)ever X-ed' and the perstitive (PRST) means
'to still be X-ing'. SJCT and IMPER stand, respectively, for the subjunctive
and imperative moods. It is interesting to note that negatives, imperatives,
and [-CPL] subjunctives cause an object in Aghem to go into its [-focus] form.
Thus, our conclusion that some auxiliary features are inherently focused has
greater generality, and the association between these features and focus is
grammatically controlled, but semantically non-arbitrary.

In summary, those features which are intrinsically focused, and therefore
likely to receive a grammatical [+F] specification, are those which represent
marked values in each of the categories polarity, mood, aspect, and tense, as
follows:

(i) *Marked polarity*: Of the two possible values (affirmative and negative),
the negative is clearly the marked one. Thus, there are numerous languages
treating negative forms as focused, but no language treating only affirmative
forms as focused.

(ii) *Marked mood*: Of the possible moods recognized in any given language,
the imperative seems the most likely to be treated as focused. This is fol-
lowed by the subjunctive (optative, hortative, etc.), and perhaps in some
cases, by a possible focused conditional mood. All of these represent devia-
tions from the unmarked mood, the indicative. There is no language which sin-
gles out only indicatives to receive a [+F] specification.

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[18]Thus, compare the negative perfect form tì-bá-ka-kóm-ìl-e 'they have not
tied up (yet)', where -ka- forms part of the perfect marker. Mould [1979] has
reconstructed *ka as a perfect marker based on comparative evidence.

(iii) *Marked aspect*: The progressive aspect is clearly marked, as seen in
Haya, Efik and Ejagham. In languages having a distinction between completive
vs. incompletive, the incompletive is the marked value.[19] There are no lan-
guages to our knowledge which treat only non-progressives as focused.

(iv) *Marked tense*: Finally, the category least likely to occasion intrin-
sic focus marking on its own is tense. The major exception to this is found
in the perfect, which (if not considered to be an aspect) can thus be viewed
as marked tense. While other tenses situate actions temporally with respect to
a starting point (often the time of speaking), the perfect insists on the rela-
tionship between the action and that point. It is not surprising, then, that
it is singled out among all tenses for focus marking.

The above four categories have just been presented in order of their expect-
ed attraction of a [+F] specification. Aghem, for example, must assign [+F] to
most negatives, imperatives, second person hortatives, and incompletive horta-
tives. It does not automatically extend [+F] to incompletives or the perfect
(P_0). We would hope that this hierarchy can be further refined and generalized
to meet other needs. It should be noted that in assigning [+F], a language may
require the combination of two or more marked features, e.g. the incompletive
hortative mentioned in note 19. The experiential (EXP) form in Haya in (22b)
is probably to be analyzed as [+PERF] plus another feature, and like the perfect
itself, any tense marked [+PERF] will automatically be assigned the feature [+F].
The perstitive (PRST), however, works a little differently. In its meaning of
'to be still doing something', it clearly aligns itself with the progressive and
could in this case be marked [+PROG]. However, when used to refer to states,
e.g. 'he is still asleep', a different morphology is obtained which is incompat-
ible with the feature specification [+PROG]. Instead, it is probable that the
perstitive tense(s), like the perfect tense(s), insists on the relationship be-
tween the state of affairs holding at one point in time with the state of af-
fairs obtaining at the reference point, e.g. the time of the discourse. Thus,

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[19]Thus, in Aghem, the incompletive hortative is intrinsically [+F], while
the completive hortative is [-F] [Anderson 1979:105]. The combination of the
two semantic features "incompletive" and "hortative" suffices to make object-
defocusing obligatory.

the PRST may be another candidate for marked tense.

A final point to be made in this subsection comes as a corollary to the preceding discussion of marked auxiliary features. By recognizing marked features of polarity, mood, aspect, and tense, we are now in a position to account for the distribution of the focus opposition noted in our survey of languages in section 2.1. The generalization which has almost uniform application to the examples in 2.1 is that the focus opposition couples with unmarked feature values rather than (or before) coupling with marked values. Thus, the focus opposition is absent in negative forms; it is also totally absent from non-indicative forms. Focus also tends not to be distinguished in progressive forms, e.g. ChiBemba in (15), although the progressive aspect does show focus variants in Hausa, as seen in (13). In this last case we have been informed by Russell Schuh (personal communication) that the focus variants found in the completive aspect predate the development of focus variants in the progressive aspect. We therefore can at least maintain the implicational universal that a language will not develop focus variants in a marked category, e.g. PROG, without having already developed such variants in corresponding or competing unmarked features. Finally, Efik is a prime example of focus variants existing throughout the complete tense system—tense being lowest on the focus feature hierarchy.[20]

3.2. Extrinsic auxiliary focus. We have seen in the preceding subsection that certain (marked) semantic features acquire focus characteristics more readily than others. At the same time, the (unmarked) complement set of these features is more prone to developing focus variants. If we have referred to marked semantic features as having intrinsic focus, i.e. they are assigned a [+F] by

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[20]In most languages there is an inseparability of tense and aspect marking which apparently precludes the possibility of focus variants developing for tense independently of aspect. Thus, we have found no language with focus variants in the past [±completive], but not, say, in the present [±completive]. Since Efik is a tense language, aspect plays no role in determining where focus variants will occur within the system. Note that the future tense remains a problem for us. On the one hand, it rarely develops focus variants. This would suggest that it has intrinsic focus of its own. However, in no language does it pair with the negative, imperative, etc. and take on properties of [+focus] variants, e.g. futures do not condition object-defocusing in Aghem; futures also are not immune from tone reduction in Haya. It would seem that the future is of lowest priority within the total focus picture.

grammatical rule, we can refer to cases of pragmatically controlled focus variants as extrinsic auxiliary focus. These markers will be assigned the feature [+focus] by a *semantic* rule, since the auxiliary is in this case the locus of semantic focus (as defined in (iv') in section 1). Our purpose in this section is to provide an account of the semantic differences between [+focus] and [-focus] auxiliary forms. In particular, we would like to know which of the possible features of the auxiliary is asserted by using the [+focus] variant.

We have referred to English "do" as marking truth value focus. That is, in a sentence such as "John did eat an apple", the focus is on the fact that the proposition "John ate an apple" is true. Focus is therefore on the *polarity* feature of the auxiliary. In English, it is somewhat difficult to isolate focus on any of the remaining auxiliary features. Consider tense, for example. If someone asks "did John eat the apple, or is he eating it now?", where the question is focused on the difference between past and present tense, one can reply "he ate it," but not as readily "he did eat it." We take this to mean that "do" is not normally used to focus on tense/aspect. A number of complications arise in this area which we shall not be able to resolve. For example, in contrasting tenses, the normal past tense to use is the perfect, which does not use "do". Let us assume, then, that the [+focus] auxiliary verb "do" signals truth value focus and nothing more in English.

In Aghem and Ejagam, the [+focus] forms clearly mark focus on either the truth value or tense/aspect. Watters [1980] has demonstrated that the perfective [-focus] suffix -í is used in all cases where the auxiliary is out of focus. That is, focus is either on an argument of the verb or on the lexical meaning of the verb itself. If focus is on either the truth value or the tense/aspect, the suffixless form of the verb is used. In these and other languages of the Western Cameroon area, there is a clear category of auxiliary focus, which obtains whenever semantic focus is on polarity, mood, aspect, or tense.

The final situation obtains when the [+focus] variant is used either for semantic focus on the auxiliary or on the verb itself. This seems to be the normal pattern in Eastern Bantu languages. Thus, consider the following ChiBemba sentences taken from Sharman [1956:40].

(24) a. bušé mu-la-peepa   'do you (pl.) smoke?'   (0, [+focus])

   b. ee tu-peepa sekelééti   'yes, we smoke cigarettes' (0, [-focus])

   c. bámó bá-la-lyá ínsoka   'some people actually eat snakes'
                                                    (0, [+focus])

In (24a) the [+focus] variant of the 0 tense is used because the focus is locat-
ed somewhere in the verbal complex. It can be the auxiliary (truth value or
tense) or the lexical meaning of the verb. Apparently no distinction is made.
In the response in (24b), the [-focus] variant is used, because the exclusive
focus of (24b) is on the object 'cigarettes'. In (24c) the focus is again lo-
cated on the verbal complex with two possible meanings: 'some people ACTUALLY
eat snakes' (as opposed to not eating them) [= auxiliary focus] vs. 'some peo-
ple actually EAT snakes' (as opposed to raising them) [= verb focus]. English
seems to allow some overlap in assigning stress to these two meanings, and the
meaning of "actually" may be ambiguous in just these two ways. What is impor-
tant, however, is that if the focus were on 'snakes', it would be necessary to
use the [-focus] variant of the 0 tense. Thus, ChiBemba uses [+focus] variants
whenever some aspect of the verbal complex (auxiliary or verb) is included in
the focus. As a final example, consider the slight nuance observed in the two
ChiBemba sentences in (25), taken from Sharman [1956:40].

(25) a. nga mw-aa-tóbá úmutóndó, bálééisaafúlwá
                   =TS

      'if you BREAK the pot, they will be angry'

   b. nga mw-aa-tóba úmutóndó, twáákuláatápíla múnsupa

      'if you break the POT, we shall have to use a calabash for drawing
       water'

In (25a) the [+focus] variant of the P_1 is used to place the focus on the BREAK-
ING (of the pot), which will cause them to be angry. In (25b), however, the
[-focus] variant is used to indicate that focus is on the pot (as seen from its
contrast with a calabash in the following clause). ChiBemba is one of the lan-
guages, apparently, which allows a focus contrast on the auxiliary in antece-
dent clauses.

   To summarize, we have seen languages using focus variants for (a) truth val-
ue focus (English), (b) truth value or tense/aspect focus (Aghem, Ejagam), or

(c) truth value, tense/aspect or verb focus (ChiBemba). In languages such as English, only one of the auxiliary parameters is singled out for the focus distinction. In languages such as ChiBemba, the focused variant is extended to cases where it is the action of the verb which is in focus. It is only the languages in (b) which have an exact overlap between *semantic* auxiliary focus and marking of focus on the auxiliary. It should be pointed out that some languages allow for a three-way distinction. In Fula, for example, Arnott [1970] distinguishes a general past, a relative past, and an emphatic past tense.[21] He states the following environments for the occurrence of the relative tenses (p.316): (a) in relative clauses; (b) in relative adverbial clauses, i.e. temporal clauses; (c) in WH-questions; (d) in emphatic sentences and clauses "where there is 'exclusive emphasis' on a word, phrase, or clause preceding the verbal"; and (e) in narratives. These are, of course, all familiar environments where the [-focus] variants have been said to occur in other languages (section 2.2). The general and emphatic past tenses are not found in these environments. According to the examples given by Arnott, it would appear that the emphatic past tense is used when there is an exclusive focus on the auxiliary, e.g. polarity, as in (26a), or on the verb, as in (26b).

(26) a. ii, gooŋga, mi-yejjutu   'yes, true, I FORGOT' [DID forget]
    b. 'o-nawnu-ndi, naa 'o-faddu-ndi   'he WOUNDED it [a snake], he didn't
                                          KILL it'

Finally, the general past is used in remaining environments, e.g. in antecedent clauses, clauses where there is no contrastive focus on the verb or auxiliary, etc. While the Fula situation requires further detailed study, we wish only to emphasize here the possibility that a language may have a three-way focus distinction in its tense/aspect marking.

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[21]Arnott also distinguishes a three-way opposition in future tenses: general future vs. relative future vs. vague future. As we are now accustomed to expecting, the three categories in the future do not correspond exactly to the three categories recognized in the past. Instead, it is probable that the general vs. relative future opposition corresponds to the general vs. relative vs. emphatic past opposition, with the difference between general and emphatic being neutralized in the future.

4. Summary and Conclusion

In the preceding sections we have established the following properties of
auxiliary focus:

(i) [+focus] auxiliary forms can mark truth value only (English), truth
value and tense/aspect only (Aghem), or truth value, tense/aspect, and verb fo-
cus (ChiBemba).

(ii) [+focus] auxiliary forms can be pragmatically or grammatically con-
trolled.

(iii) [+focus] variants appear first on auxiliaries where intrinsic focus
is low, e.g. past completive.

(iv) Auxiliaries with high intrinsic focus can take on characteristics of
[+focus] variants of modalities of low intrinsic focus.

(v) More tense/aspect distinctions may be found under [+focus] than under
[-focus], e.g. Efik, Ejagam.

The above generalizations explain a number of facts about the marking of fo-
cus within the auxiliary of natural languages. For example, the generalization
in (i) predicts that no language will use a [+focus] auxiliary form to refer to
truth value and verb focus, but not to tense/aspect focus; similarly, the [+fo-
cus] form could not indicate auxiliary focus and argument focus, e.g. on subject
or object, but not verb focus. These generalizations also may provide a clue as
to the motivation for the development of new tense/aspect forms in languages.
In many languages one has the option of using either a present tense or a com-
pound future tense to express future time. Bell [1953:61-62] indicates, for ex-
ample, that Somali uses the present progressive to express immediate or non-em-
phatic future time, while it uses a periphrastic construction involving the verb
'to want' if the future time reference is remote or "emphatic". In this context,
"emphatic" could only refer to auxiliary focus. Thus, the present tense is used
for 'I will go', while the 'want' future is used for 'I WILL go' (focus on the
polarity or truth value). We suspect that new auxiliary verbs marking tense and
aspect first enter a language in this "emphatic" function.[22] This would also ap-

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[22]Keith Beavon has informed us, for example, that in the Cameroonian Bantu
language Kɔnsime, the verb 'to finish' is used for past completives, but only in

ply to the auxiliary function of English "do", whose history appears anything
but clear [Haussman 1974]. The use of "do" in questions and negation would
have thus had to do with placing focus on truth value, either to negate the
truth value of an utterance or to place it under question. In each case the
[+focus] auxiliary is generalized to environments where semantic focus is not
on the auxiliary.

As a case in point, let us reconsider the Gwari data seen earlier in (11).
The forms built on the 'take' construction have been argued to be [+focus], be-
cause they do not normally cooccur with contrastively focused constituents.
Thus, compare the P_3 forms in (27).

(27) a. wò ɓei kú àshnamá si   'he bought yams'
     b. wò ɓei si àshnamá nû   'he bought YAMS'

The [+focus] form in (27a) is that seen earlier in (11). The [-focus] variant
in (27b) is required because the object 'yams' is contrastively focused (marked
by the focus morpheme /nù/). However, as pointed out by Hyman and Magaji
[1970:123], the focused nature of the auxiliary verbs /lá/ and /kú/ seems to
be breaking down, since some speakers will accept the auxiliaries to cooccur
with /nù/ , as in (28).

(28) wò ɓei kú àshnamá nû si   'he bought YAMS'

The 'take' auxiliaries are thus becoming the unmarked tense/aspect forms whose
original focus function will presumably become more and more blurred.

As a final note, consider the word order differences between (27a) and (27b).
The [+focus] form requires that the object occur between the auxiliary and the
main verb. Clauses are otherwise SVO in Gwari. We saw in (b) above that Aghem
can prepose the object to occur between the auxiliary and main verb, as in Gwari
'take' constructions. The result in Aghem is a defocusing of the object (and a
focusing of the auxiliary). We would like to argue that the word order S AUX O
V, which is quite frequent in West African languages, represents the structure

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main clauses. A different situation is noted by Takizala [1973] in Kihung'an, a
Bantu language spoken in Zaire, where the ordinary negative construction appears
to have been supplanted by the auxiliary verb 'to fail' in relatives and other
presuppositional contexts.

one expects if the object, normally within the scope of focus, is defocused.
Thus, Kru languages have affirmative SVO standing in opposition to negative
S NEG O V. The intrinsic focus of negation requires S AUX O V word order, just
as it causes the object to take the suffixed, out of focus form in Aghem. Go-
ing hand in hand with the defocusing of arguments is the concomitant potential
of focus on the auxiliary. In our latest thoughts on the analysis of the [+fo-
cus] variants in Aghem and Ejagam, for example, we have come to the conclusion
that sentences such as (1b) are ambiguous. They can, as indicated, mean that
there is an explicit contrastive focus on the truth value of the proposition.
The [+focus] auxiliary máà can alternatively, however, merely signal that all
of the constituents of the sentence (verb + arguments) are out of focus. In
this case focus on the truth value is of the assertive, rather than contrastive
type. The sentence in (1b) can therefore be an appropriate translation by a
language consultant of the investigator's queried gloss 'I ate fufu today'. By
supplying the arguments and the lexical verb, the investigator unwittingly pro-
vides a context where all of the constituents are presupposed by the listener
(= himself). Thus, the consultant assumes that it is the truth value of the
proposition that is in assertive focus: 'I ate fufu today, it is' or 'it is the
case that I ate fufu today'. Until now we have said that the [+focus] variants
in Aghem correspond to "do" in English. Note, however, that no English speaker
would ever volunteer the sentence "I did eat fufu today" as a normal translation
of a linguist's non-emphatic gloss. This important difference between Aghem and
English is captured if we view the meaning of the [+focus] auxiliaries in Aghem
to be "constituents out of focus" and that of the [+focus] "do" to be "auxiliary
in focus". Needless to say, more detailed studies would be helpful in revealing
the exact usages of focus variants within the auxiliary of these and other Afri-
can and non-African languages.

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