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Mande: Closely related languages, different focus architectures



Goals

- ▷ To illustrate the focus architecture of **Jula of Tougan**, an undocumented variety of Jula (West Mande);
- ▷ To compare it with that of other Manding languages (**Bambara** and **Jula of Banfora**);
- ▷ To reflect on how the **focus architecture** of otherwise **closely related languages** might differ.



The Manding Continuum

Manding continuum

- ▷ A group of closely related languages part of the West Mande group.
- ▷ This group includes **Bambara** (Mali), **Jula** (Ivory Coast/western Burkina Faso), Mandinka (Gambia), Maninka (Guinea), and Bolon (Burkina Faso).



Jula as a Lingua Franca

- ▷ Jula is a trade language. It is among one of the most important *linguae francae* of West Africa, along with Hausa and Wolof.
- ▷ Jula and Bambara are mutually intelligible.
- ▷ Jula and Bambara are considered variants of the same language by the local speakers (Donaldson 2019)

Main Features of Jula & Bambara

- ▷ Tone languages
- ▷ Rigid SOV order
- ▷ Pre-verbal TAM-marking
- ▷ No case marking
- ▷ Either no or optional *wh*- movement
- ▷ **Focus particles to express focus**

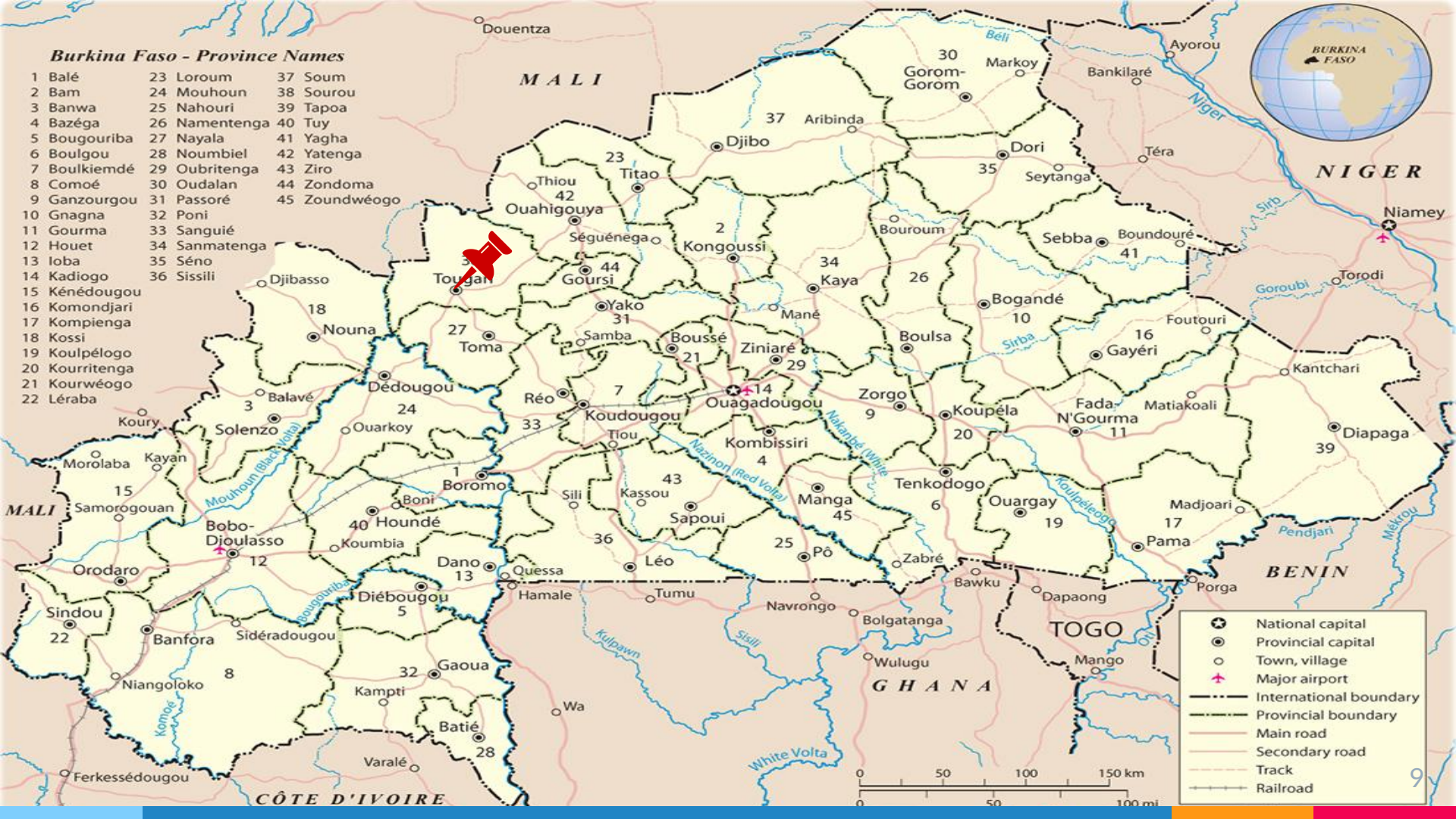


Jula of Tougan

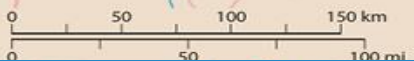


Burkina Faso - Province Names

- | | | |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1 Balé | 23 Loroum | 37 Soum |
| 2 Bam | 24 Mouhoun | 38 Sourou |
| 3 Banwa | 25 Nahouri | 39 Tapoa |
| 4 Bazéga | 26 Namentenga | 40 Tuy |
| 5 Bougouriba | 27 Nayala | 41 Yagha |
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| 9 Ganzourgou | 31 Passoré | 45 Zoundwéogo |
| 10 Gnagna | 32 Poni | |
| 11 Gourma | 33 Sanguié | |
| 12 Houet | 34 Sanmatenga | |
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| 15 KénéDougou | | |
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| 17 Kompienga | | |
| 18 Kossi | | |
| 19 Koulpélogo | | |
| 20 Kourritenga | | |
| 21 Kourwéogo | | |
| 22 Léraba | | |



	National capital
	Provincial capital
	Town, village
	Major airport
	International boundary
	Provincial boundary
	Main road
	Secondary road
	Track
	Railroad



Focus Particles in Jula of Tougan

Lo is used to express focus.

- ▷ Placed immediately to the right of the constituent over which it scopes.
- ▷ This can be the verb, an argument or an adjunct. There is also no distinction between subject and non-subject focus.

Lo

1) A: “**What** did Amadou slaughter?”

B: “He slaughtered a *sheep*”

A	ye	<i>saga</i>	lo	faga
He	TAM	sheep	FOC	slaughter

2) A: “**Who** cooked the rice?”

B: ‘It’s *Seydou* who cooked the rice’

<i>Seydou</i>	lo	ka	malo	tobi
<i>Seydou</i>	FOC	ASP	<i>rice</i>	<i>cook</i>

Information= Corrective = Mirative

Corrective

3) 'She bought a BICYCLE, not a DRESS'

A	ka	neiguesso	lo	san,	fani	te
<i>She</i>	<i>TAM</i>	<i>bicycle</i>	<i>FOC</i>	<i>buy,</i>	<i>dress</i>	<i>NEG</i>

Mirative

4) 'She bought a GIRAFFE! Can you believe it?'

A	ye	Giraffi	lo	san!	I	kamin	wa?
<i>She</i>	<i>TAM</i>	<i>giraffe</i>	<i>FOC</i>	<i>buy!</i>	<i>You</i>	<i>believe</i>	<i>INT?</i>

“Only” & Negative Quantifiers

5) A: “Did Seydou eat a lot?”

B: “No, he only ate chicken”

On	on,	a	bi	sisse	doron	lo	dumu
No,	he	TAM	chicken	only	FOC	eat	

6) A: “What did they buy?”

B: “They bought nothing”

O	ma	foyi	lo	san
They	TAM	nothing	FOC	buy

Presentational Constructions

'Lo' doesn't just appear in traditional focus environments, it is also found in **presentational constructions**:

7) A: "Who is it?"

B: Seydou **lo**

Seydou *PRT*

'It's Seydou'

→ **Double status** of 'lo' as focus AND presentational marker

Presentational Constructions

Creissel (1981), Heine & Reh (1984): Manding focus markers originate from a **protoform of the presentational marker, 'le'**.

Protoform	Present-day Focus Markers
/le/	lé, là, de, lo <i>Slezak (2009)</i>

Presentational Constructions

Slezak (2009): most Manding languages retain **two separate morphemes** to express Focus and Presentation (e.g. Bambara)

Creissels (1981): **Jula of Kong** shows the form /lòmu/, a combination of /mu/ (Presentation) and /lè/ (Focus).

Jula of Tougan: a unique morpheme to express both Presentation and Focus.

Focus Architecture of Jula of Tougan

Based on the distribution of 'lo', I will be assuming that focus is involved in the realization of presentational constructions.

In presentational constructions, a new referent is introduced in the discourse. Unlike in the case of information focus (e.g. answers to wh-questions), this new referent is not evaluated against a contrast set.

Focus type	JULA
<i>Information</i>	Lo
<i>Contrastive</i>	Lo
<i>Corrective</i>	Lo
<i>Mirative</i>	Lo
<i>Presentation</i>	Lo



Jula of Tougan vs. Bambara

Focus in Bambara

Where Jula of Tougan uses **lo**
Bambara uses **de** and **don**

(sources: Bird 1977, Prokhorov 2014)

Focus in Bambara

Information, Contrastive, Corrective and Mirative = **DE**

8) A: What did Amadou slaughter?”

B: ‘He slaughtered a *sheep*’

A	ye	saga	de	faga
He	IMP	sheep	PRT	slaughter

(Prokhorov 2014:4)

Presentational Constructions = **DON**

9) Tabali **don**

Table PRT

“It’s a table”

Manding Focus Architecture

Focus type	JULA of Tougan	BAMBARA
<i>Information</i>	Lo	De
<i>Contrastive</i>	Lo	De
<i>Corrective</i>	Lo	De
<i>Presentation</i>	Lo	Don

BAM: de/don distinction is evidence in favor of assuming that ‘presentation focus’ is its own category.

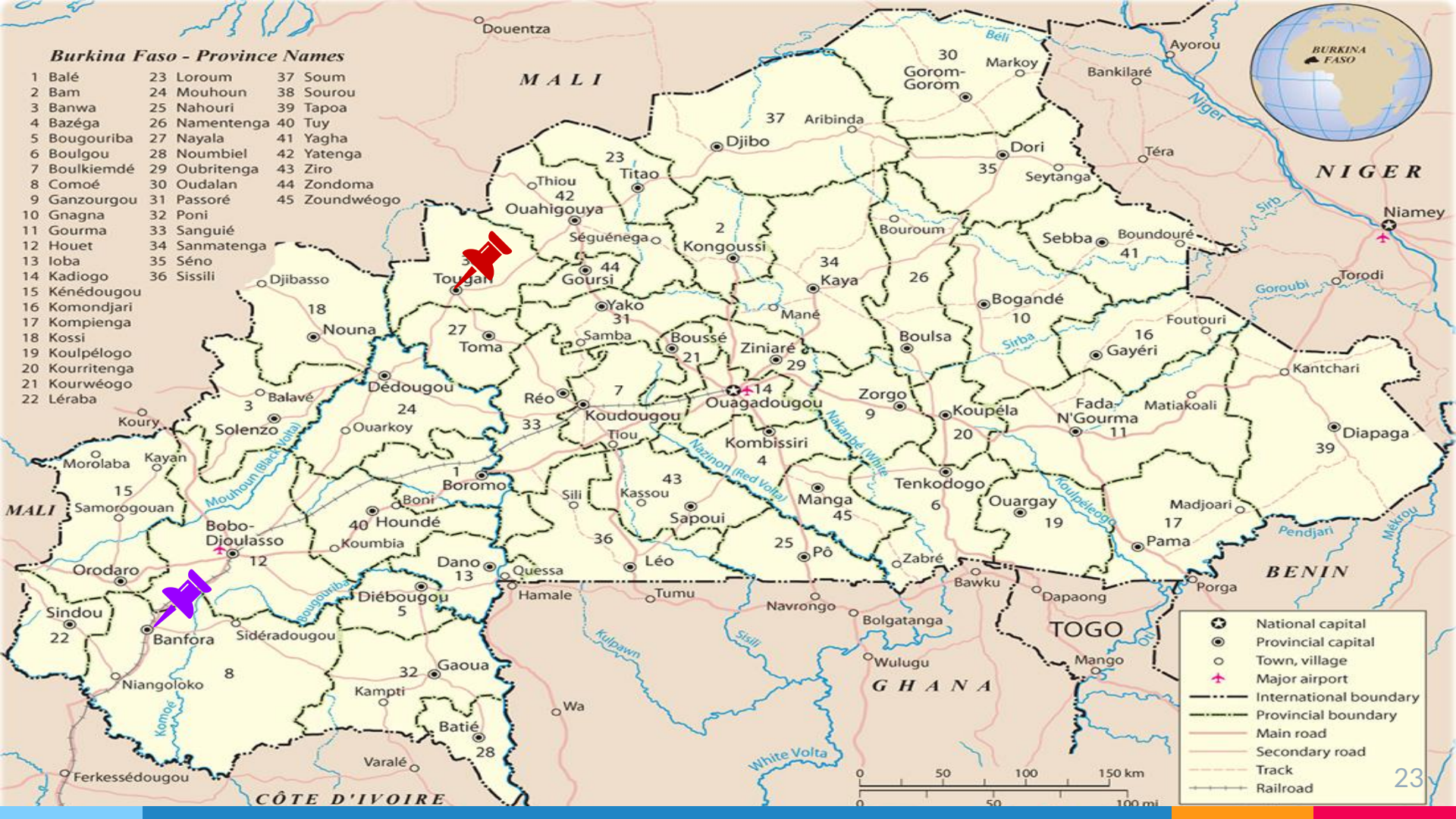


Tougan vs. Banfora



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Slezak (2009)

Focus inventory: **de, le, lo**

- ▷ **Le, de** to express **Contrastive, Corrective**
- ▷ **Lo** to express **Presentational, Information**

Sociolinguistics factors:

- ▷ **Younger speakers** use 'lo' more frequently than 'le'
- ▷ **De** mainly used by speakers with ties to Bambara

Jula of Banfora (Slezak 2007)

Lo

- ▷ Can only be used adnominally
- ▷ Cannot be negated

Le/de

- ▷ Can also be used after verbs and propositions
- ▷ Can appear in negative-polarity environments

Manding Focus Architecture

Focus type	JULA Tougan	JULA Banfora	BAMBARA
<i>Contrastive</i>	Lo	Le	De
<i>Corrective</i>	Lo	Le	De
<i>Information</i>	Lo	Lo	De
<i>Presentation</i>	Lo	Lo	Don

Manding Focus Architecture

How to make sense of the differences in focus marking strategies?

If we order focus types based on their supposed contrastivity, a pattern emerges:

	Presentation	Information	Contrastive	Corrective
Jula of Tougan	✘	✘	✘	✘
Bambara	✚	✘	✘	✘
Jula of Banfora	✚	✚	✘	✘

A Contrastivity scale

Less contrastive  More contrastive
presentation < *information* < *contrastive / corrective*

Differences in **focus-marking strategies** reflect differences in the **contrastivity** of the focus types being marked.

We do not expect that the same morpheme will be used to mark two focus types at the opposite ends of the scale.

Thanks!

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Appendices

Is 'lo' the copula?

'Lo' is not the only way to realize the copula:

- 10) Seydou yi cě ye
Seydou TAM man to
'Seydou is a man'

Use of 'lo' to express the copula is restricted to positive-polarity environments:

- 11) Saa te
Snake NEG
'It's not a snake'

Is 'lo' a cleft marker?

'Lo' structures don't have the appearance of clefts. Compare with Zulu (Nguni, Southern Bantu):

12) U- bona ini?
2ndSG- see what9
'What do you see?'

13) Y- ini o- yi- bona- yo?
COP- what9 RC OC9- see- RS
'What is it that you see?'

Wh- Movement

14) Fanta ka mun dumu? (BAM)
Fanta TAM what eat
“What did Fanta eat?”

15) **Mu** lo Fanta ka dumu? (Tougan)
What PRT Fanta TAM eat
“What did Fanta eat?”

Jula of Tougan: optional wh-movement. If the wh- element is fronted, ‘lo’ must appear to its right.

“Le” Allomorph

16)

A: “Who ate the chocolate?”

B: Lassina le ka chocola dumu

Lassina lo ka chocola dumu

Lassina FOC TAM chocolate eat

“Lassina ate the chocolate”

C: On on, cɛ̃n té. Seydou lo ka dumu

On on, cɛ̃n té. Seydou le ka dumu

No truth NEG Seydou FOC TAM eat

“No, that’s not true. SEYDOU ate the chocolate”

‘Le’ used by my language consultant in only 5% of the sentences I collected. In all the environments ‘le’ was used, my consultants report that ‘lo’ could have been used instead, with no difference in meaning.