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INFORMATION STRUCTURE IN NARRATIVE TEXTS IN BYALI
(A GUR LANGUAGE OF BENIN)

by

John J. Berthelette
Bachelor of Arts, Calvin College, 1985

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

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for the degree of

Master of Arts

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2004

This thesis, submitted by John J. Berthelette in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

(Chairperson)

This thesis meets the standards for appearance, conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SPECIAL SYMBOLS

<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Term</u>
AF	Argument focus
bu/a	Noun class bu/a
Caus	Causative
Comp	Complementizer
Conj	Conjunction
Conj.SS.Seq	Conjunction, same subject, sequential action
Conj.SS.Sim	Conjunction, same subject, simultaneous action
Cont	Continuous
DFE	Dominant focal element
fə/i	Noun class fə/i
Foc	Focus (prominence marker)
Fut.Imm	Future tense-aspect (immediate)
Fut.Indef	Future tense-aspect (unspecified)
Fut.Near	Future tense-aspect (near)
Hab	Habitual
Hab.Pst	Habitual (past)
hu/tu	Noun class hu/tu
i/a	Noun class i/a
Imp	Imperative
Indef	Indefinite
kə/si	Noun class kə/si
Lit	literally
m	Noun class m
Neg.Foc	Negative focus (negative prominence marker)
p.c.	personal communication
PF	Predicate focus
Pft	Perfect
pl	plural
Pst.Imm	Past tense-aspect (immediate)
Pst.Indef	Past tense-aspect (unspecified)
Pst.Rec	Past tense-aspect (recent)
SF	Sentence focus
sg	singular

u/bə	Noun class u/bə
u/i	Noun class u/i
1	First person
2	Second person
3	Third person
*	Ungrammatical

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an application of Knud Lambrecht's 1994 work, *Information structure and sentence form*, to Byali, a Gur language of northwestern Benin (West Africa). In particular, it concerns an analysis of how the different focus structures are marked in Byali, according to Lambrecht's framework.

Given that this is an application of a theoretical framework in order to describe a language, the thesis has three purposes: (1) to provide an overview of Lambrecht's framework; (2) to provide an analysis of Byali data using this framework; and (3) to evaluate the suitability of Lambrecht's framework for analyzing Byali focus structure.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will serve as an introduction to this thesis in two areas. First, it will provide the goals and methodology for this study into the information structure of Byali. Second, it will briefly describe the Byali language and people.

1.1 Purpose and methodology for the study of Byali information structure

In linguistic theory, the effect that the communication setting has on the characteristics of utterances has received increasing attention in the last three decades. With regards to this broadened perspective, understanding a particular language involves more than simply mastering as separate objects of study its sound system, syntax, and semantics. One must also understand how a language allows its speakers to tailor utterances to fit communication contexts, with the goal of transmitting a meaning specific to the context.

In his 1994 work, *Information structure and sentence form*, Knud Lambrecht contributes new insights into this area of linguistics. The major goal of this thesis is to apply Lambrecht's theory of information structure to texts from Byali, a Gur language of Benin. As a particular subpoint, I seek to enhance my understanding of the particle *e* occurring in these texts. Thus, this study should lead to a clearer understanding of how the Byali language functions. Since this thesis applies Lambrecht's framework to a language, it will also require an explanation of his framework, provided in Chapter 2, as

well as an evaluation of its suitability for describing Byali. The latter goal is relevant given that Lambrecht refers mostly to data from European languages.

The data used for this study consist of twenty narratives from six different storytellers. The storytellers are all native speakers of the *kapai* speech variety, spoken in the western half of the Byali region, to the north and west of the town of Materi (see the map on page 4). Only men above thirty years of age were selected to recount stories: the restriction on men is based on the observation that they are generally more at ease in a recording situation; the requirement on age concerns the desire to have Byali speakers who have a rather mature ability in the language and who are quite experienced in storytelling.

All of the stories and subsequent data were recorded directly onto a computer, with a headset microphone used to ensure that the storyteller spoke into the microphone in a consistent way. This factor is important when acoustic study is involved. A native Byali speaker transcribed the stories, and a second native Byali speaker, a university student in linguistics, checked the original transcription.

Kruijff-Karbayová (2001:59) considers that Lambrecht's work falls short in the area of prosodic cues. She states: "It is a serious shortcoming of the author's approach that he deliberately disregards more fine grained aspects of intonation, i.e. different types of accents and boundary tones (cf. p. 109 bot.), when discussing intonation as a signal of information structure." Yet when dealing with a language that one does not control fluently, it is more straightforward to glean information structure cues from syntax and morphology than to do so from prosody.

Therefore, to avoid subjectivity in the area of prosody, I have relied almost exclusively on native-speaker opinion for the final editing choices in the transcription of the texts. Furthermore, I used the computer program PRAAT for acoustic measurements. Joan Baart, an expert in acoustic analysis, also offered important recommendations. Nevertheless, three comments are necessary. First, a study of this size cannot adequately describe the data. Secondly, this study has only briefly looked at the area of the psychological reality of the prosodic cues identified. Third, I relied on my own hearing to determine prominence at the clause level.

The analysis of Byali syntax is a work in progress. Certain issues regarding the grammatical analysis remain unresolved, despite the use of local speakers and research conducted in related languages.

1.2 The Byali people and language

Byali is spoken predominantly in the Atacora (or Atakora) province of northwest Benin, a country in French-speaking West Africa. Based on data provided by a non-governmental organization, a reasonable estimate is that Byali speakers number over 80,000 (C.A.P.E. / I.N.S.A. 2003:8). The great majority of these speakers live in the communes of Materi, Cobly and Tanguieta. However, Byali-speaking villages are also found in Togo to the west, in Burkina Faso to the north, and in the central Borgou region of Benin. (See map on p. 4.) The great majority of Byali speakers are subsistence farmers.

Gabriel Manessy classifies Byali as part of the Eastern group of the Gur family's Oti-Volta languages (Manessy 1979:70). Other languages in this group are Tayari (also

Nateni [Grimes 2004]), Tāmari 1, Tāmari 2¹, and Wama (also Waama [Grimes 2004]). Tony Naden, in a more recent work, concurs with that analysis (Naden 1989:144). The full classification is: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, North, Gur, Central, Northern, Oti-Volta, Eastern (Grimes 2004). Byali is an SVO language, and like many of its neighboring languages, is tonal. (See Chapter 3 for a fuller discussion.)

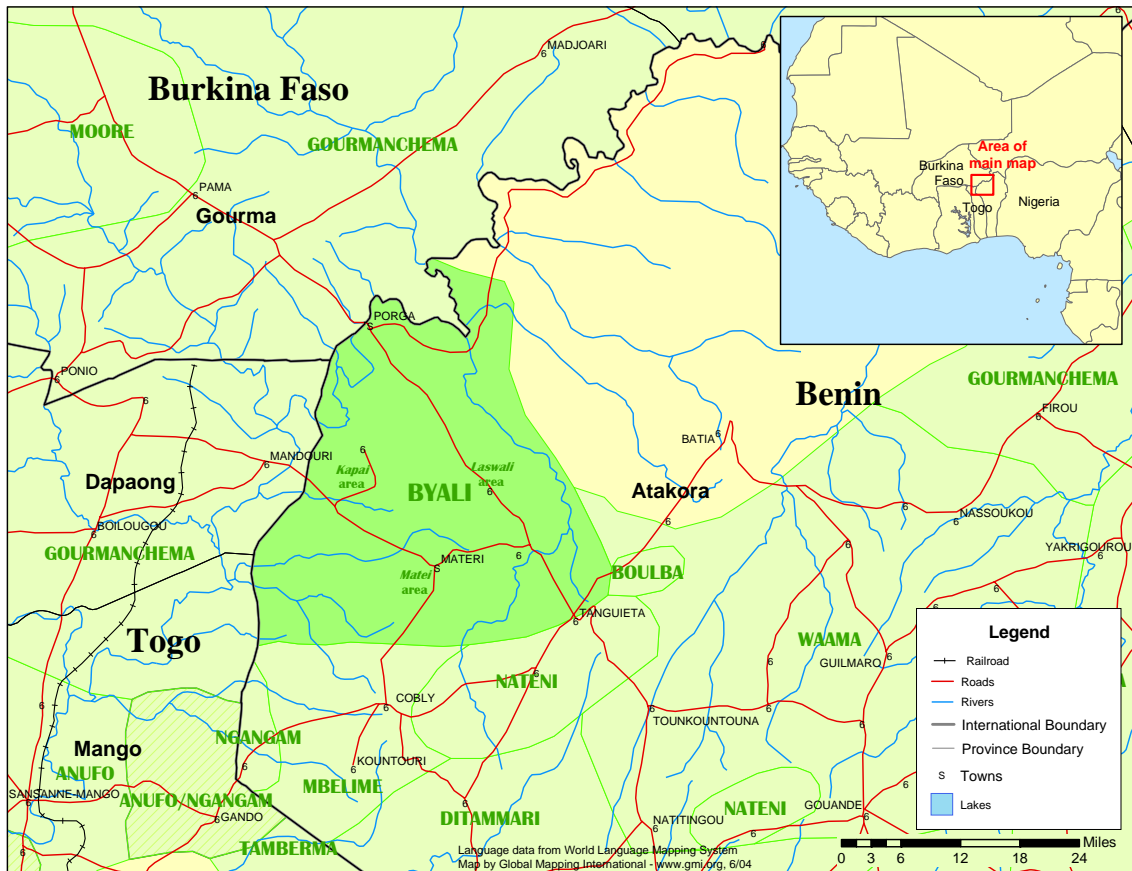


Figure 1. Map of the Byali/Northern Benin region

¹ In Grimes 2004, Tāmari, without further specification, is listed as a variant reference to the Ditammari language. Grimes 2004 also relates Tamberma to Ditammari. Thus, Manessy’s two references to Tāmari probably correspond to these variant language names (Grimes 2004).

Traditionally, a member of the Byali ethnic group refers to herself/himself as a *byalau*, with the plural *byaləbə*. In our day, however, a local speaker often refers to himself as *berba*, a term given to local speakers by colonizers (Sambieni 1999:6).

While the origins of Byali are not known with certainty, the Berba state that their group migrated from the Madjoari region of the Gourmanchema-speaking area, in the southeastern region of present-day Burkina Faso. Their migrations into their present homeland presumably began as early as the 14th century (Balle 1988:43). Other migrations occurred between the 17th and 19th centuries (ibid. 44).

Three major speech varieties are recognized by Byali speakers (Henson and Tompkins 1999:5, 6): *matei*, spoken in the central region, surrounding the town of Materi; *laswali*, spoken in the eastern region; and *kapai*, spoken in the western region. Other more-localized varieties also exist. Byali speakers have identified *kapai* as the most widely-understood speech variety. *Kapai* has been chosen as the standard for written Byali; this decision was made by thirty-five community leaders during a meeting held in 2001. Since all of the storytellers for this study are native speakers of the *kapai* speech variety, this study should enable us to better understand the speech variety chosen for standardization.

Concerning language use and attitudes, a very high percentage of Berba are either monolingual or have attended elementary school for six years or less. (In almost all schools, the language of instruction is French, the official language of Benin.) Low school attendance is especially the norm in the case of girls. At the same time, however, families believe that it is to their benefit financially that certain members of their family master French, in order that they might find paying jobs. In addition, there is some

bilingualism in the Dendi language,² since it is widely used in commerce in the Atacora region of Benin. Furthermore, a certain percentage of Berba are bilingual with neighboring languages. Despite their use of other languages, the Berba demonstrate a very strong attachment to their own language.

The following is a list of linguistic research on Byali:

- in 1973, André Prost published a grammatical description of Byali and in 1975, a comparative word list for languages spoken in the Atacora region;
- in 1983, Raphaël Windali N'Oueni, a Byali speaker, made the first known attempt at analyzing the phonology of Byali in his master's thesis;
- in 1989, Coffi Dari Yargo wrote his master's thesis on the morphosyntactic structure of Byali;
- in 1990, Linda K. Seyer wrote a thesis on verbal morphology in Byali narratives;
- in 1991, David Seyer compared the transitivity of verbs in Korean, English and Byali;
- in 1999, Coffi Sambieni, a Byali speaker, wrote a thesis on Byali's nominal system; and in 2004 is hoping to finish his dissertation on a proto form for the Oti-Volta group.

Furthermore, David Seyer, Linda Seyer, Kouandi Gnago and I have written other unpublished papers on Byali syntax, and research into various linguistic topics continues.

Since September 1999, my wife Carol and I have lived in the town of Materi for periods totaling three years.

² Dendi is classified as Nilo-Saharan, Songhai, Southern, and is part of the Zarma-Songai dialect continuum (Grimes 2004).

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND TO INFORMATION STRUCTURE

In a simplified form, Lambrecht's conception of information structure has two main aspects: (1) what is in the minds of the speaker and hearer concerning referents during the communication process, and (2) based on this, the speaker's subsequent adaptation of an utterance, especially in the syntactic (or prosodic) form s/he chooses, to help the hearer interpret that utterance (Lambrecht 1994:3). In short, Lambrecht emphasizes how the discourse and communication settings impact syntax (ibid. 2) and attempts to unite various elements of information structure.

Lambrecht's work has received critical acclaim. Maria Polinsky, in her review in *Language*, gives the book high praise: Lambrecht "has single-handedly created a cohesive, well-argued theory that designates information structure as a separate level of linguistic representation" (1999:580). And as a separate level, information structure has a mediating role between the mental representations of the speaker and hearer and the syntactic and prosodic structures of a language (ibid. 568).

Mira Ariel, in a review in the *Journal of Linguistics*, also considers that Lambrecht correctly represents language as involving an interaction of morphosyntax, information structure (as a part of grammar), and "conversational pragmatics" (1996:206).

My study into Byali information structure is mainly limited to the marking of focus in Byali. With that in mind, the following overview will especially treat concepts

related to focus in Lambrecht's framework. Although I draw from Lambrecht 1996, Lambrecht and Michaelis 1998 and Lambrecht 2000, by far the predominant source for the following discussion is Lambrecht 1994.

2.1 Lambrecht's definition of information structure

The author provides the following formal definition of the term **information structure**:

That component of sentence grammar in which propositions as conceptual representations of states of affairs are paired with lexicogrammatical structures in accordance with the mental states of interlocutors who use and interpret these structures as units of information in given discourse contexts (Lambrecht 1994:5).

This definition requires a great deal of unpacking. First, Lambrecht admits that he does not use the term **proposition** in the conventional sense. In the discourse context, a speaker assumes the hearer is aware of "states of affairs, situations, events, etc." (ibid. 53); these bits of data in the hearer's mind are not propositions, strictly speaking, but **conceptual representations of states of affairs**. In discourse, the speaker encodes or makes reference to these conceptual representations of states of affairs (events, states of affairs, etc.) through propositions (ibid.).

In using the expression "in accordance with the mental states of interlocutors," Lambrecht emphasizes that the speaker and hearer(s) have certain conceptions about the entities and states of affairs pertaining to their discourse. While communicating, the speaker assesses how the hearer conceives of these entities or states of affairs (ibid. 3). For example, the speaker judges the extent to which the hearer knows of, is conscious of, or is "tuned into" a particular referent (ibid. 53), and will refer to her/him/it in an appropriate manner. A conversation between female acquaintances at the break room will

not normally begin with, “She really knows her **stuff**” (the accent of the sentence is indicated by bold font). “She” is too general an expression for this first sentence, and the hearer will probably not be able to identify the woman to whom the speaker is referring.

Continuing with Lambrecht’s definition, he argues that both the discourse context and the speaker’s judgments of the mental states of the hearer will affect the speaker’s choice of the “lexicogrammatical structure” to use. In other words, s/he chooses a particular syntactic form or prosodic pattern for the utterance from among a language’s repertoire of constructions; this form or pattern matches her/his purpose and is appropriate to the mental states of her/himself and her/his hearer (ibid. 6). For example, Lambrecht asserts that the discourse setting will prompt a speaker to choose “It’s his **daughter** who wants a horse,” as opposed to “His daughter wants a **horse**.” The propositions in these structural variants are equivalent on the semantic level but have differences in prosody, morphology or syntax.³ A speaker chooses one over another depending on the pragmatic context (ibid.). In analyzing information structure, then, one studies the morphosyntactic or prosodic differences between structural variants, and one also identifies why the speaker chooses one structural variant as opposed to another in a given context (ibid.).

Given the existence of structural variants, Lambrecht argues that one grammatical structure will serve as a default, or **unmarked**, form, displaying what he refers to as the **pragmatically unmarked constituent order** (ibid. 15). He states that in the unmarked

³ Lambrecht refers to these different possible forms as **allosentences** (ibid.). Since the term “allosentence” is unfamiliar outside of Lambrecht’s framework, we will use “structural variant” instead.

information structure of English, a pronoun serves as subject and the accent falls on the predicate, as in “He closed the **door**” (ibid. 226).

This unmarked constituent order contrasts with **marked** orders, such as “It was the **janitor** who closed the door.” The grammar of a language uses such marked syntactic forms to achieve specific communicative purposes (ibid. 17); for example, to draw attention to a particular constituent in an utterance. A language also has a pragmatically unmarked sentence accent position (ibid. 15) which contrasts with marked ones. Compare the unmarked “He closed the **door**” with the marked “The **janitor** closed the door.” Thus, in English, the position of the accent is a key factor in distinguishing between unmarked and marked constructions. Finally, what is unmarked and marked is language-specific (ibid. 27).

Lambrecht limits his study of the mental states of the speaker and hearer. He does not analyze the context of communication with the sole end of better interpreting utterances, as certain pragmatists have done (ibid. 4). He studies the mental states or judgments of the interlocutors only to the extent that these affect the grammatical structure of an utterance. This structure is reflected in its morphosyntax and prosodic pattern (ibid. 3). For this reason, Lambrecht refers to information structure as a part of sentence grammar (ibid.).

Turning to the matter of **discourse contexts**, Lambrecht distinguishes between the **text-external** and **text-internal** world. The **text-external** world includes the speaker and hearer(s); it also involves the elements of the speech setting, such as the place, time and situation when an utterance is made (ibid. 36). For example, in talking to her friend, a speaker makes reference to the text-external setting by pointing to her child, saying, “My

son over there, he loves to get dirty.” When Lambrecht refers to conceptual representations in the speaker’s and hearer’s minds, he excludes elements of the text-external world from his definition, since the speaker can point to these elements or can mention them in reference to the speech setting itself. As such, s/he may take these elements for granted, assuming that the hearer has an awareness of them (ibid. 38).

The **text-internal** world, meanwhile, involves both the actual utterances as well as the meaning underlying the utterances (ibid. 37). Lambrecht makes several distinctions in his conception of meaning. The most important is between the “real-world” referents and the representations of these referents existing in the minds of the speaker and hearer (ibid.). According to the speaker’s assessment of the hearer’s mental representations, s/he uses the linguistic expression “son” to encode a particular referent at one point in conversation, but switches from “son” to “he” at another.

Characteristics of the text-internal world are at the heart of the various facets of information structure (ibid. 39). One facet concerns whether a referent has been previously introduced into the text-internal world – that is, whether a referent is **activated**, and how recently the presentation occurred (ibid. 38) (see Section 2.2). Furthermore, such information structure terms as **topic**, **aboutness** (see Section 2.4.1), and **focus** (see Section 2.4.2) refer to the text-internal world (ibid. 39). On the basis of such concepts, a speaker chooses between using “knife” and “it” in both clauses of the utterance “I used his knife; it cuts meat well.”

We turn now to the last concept of Lambrecht’s definition of information structure, that of **information** itself. Information is that “something new” which the speaker utters, that which s/he believes is enlarging the hearer’s store of knowledge (ibid.

44). In the second clause of the previous example, the “something new” is “cuts meat well.” The speaker knows that the “something new” must relate in a relevant way to what is already in the hearer’s store of knowledge; if not, the hearer may not integrate it successfully (ibid. 46). The speaker first relates the mention of “knife” to a certain “him” (about whom s/he assumes the hearer already knew), and then relates the comment “cuts meat well” to “knife” by the use of the pronoun “it.”

Old or new information conveyed by the speaker is not to be equated with a specific constituent of an utterance; for example, one cannot equate the predicate with new information (ibid. 47). In fact, in the utterance, “His **daughter** drove his car home,” the new information is not found in the predicate “drove home.” Nor does the notion of information simply refer to individual lexical items, such as “daughter.” Instead, Lambrecht regards new information as “establishing relations between denotata and propositions” (ibid. 209). Likewise, information is conveyed through propositions (ibid. 46). In “His **daughter** drove his car home,” the speaker is establishing a relation between “car” and who, in particular, went home with it. Furthermore, the expression “his daughter” encodes the proposition “he has a daughter.”

In this regard, Lambrecht refrains from accepting a black-and-white division between what has been termed “old” and “new” information (ibid.). Thus, while information is conveyed through propositions, a proposition will include both that which the speaker deems to be already known to the hearer – the **presupposition** of a proposition, as well as that which he deems to be not known to the hearer, the **assertion** of the proposition (ibid. 52). (These are shortened forms of the terms **pragmatic**

presupposition and **pragmatic assertion** [ibid.].⁴) In “His **daughter** drove his car home,” the presupposition includes the ideas that “he” is known to the hearer, that “he has a daughter,” that “he owns a car,” and that an unidentified person “drove the car home.” The assertion is “daughter.” The speaker will choose a syntactic structure for an utterance that will provide cues as to which elements of the utterance make up the presupposition and which make up the assertion (ibid. 55).

Note that the presupposition – the already known – is not redundant. The speaker knows inherently that relating the presupposition to the assertion – the unknown – allows the hearer to more easily integrate the assertion into her/his store of knowledge (ibid. 51). Since the speaker adapts the proposition to the situation, Lambrecht calls it a **pragmatically structured proposition** (ibid. 52).

2.2 Referents in a discourse

Lambrecht defines referents as “the entities and states of affairs designated by linguistic expressions in particular utterances” (ibid. 37), the real-world things we touch and do, including their attributes. As stated above, however, he is most concerned with the conceptual or mental representations of these things in the minds of the speaker and hearer. To simplify his discussion, however, he abbreviates “mental representations of referents” to “referents” (ibid. 74).

In the syntactic structure of an utterance, discourse referents will appear as “argument (including adjunct) categories, such as noun phrases, pronouns, various kinds

⁴ In a later article, Lambrecht and Michaelis offer the following definition of pragmatic assertion: “The proposition expressed by a sentence which the hearer is expected to know or believe or take for granted as a result of hearing the sentence uttered” (Lambrecht and Michaelis 1998:493).

of tensed or non-tensed subordinate clauses, and certain adverbial phrases” (ibid. 75). In “She dropped her **glasses**,” “she” and “glasses” are referents. Lambrecht notes that referents usually cannot be expressed as predicates, arguing that predicates do not refer to arguments individually, but rather express “attributes of, or relations between, arguments” (ibid.). Predicates can become referents, however, when they are nominalized (ibid.), as in the case of “Dropping her glasses was not her intention.”

A key consideration in information structure is the degree to which a given entity is **identifiable** and **active** in the mind of the hearer. For an entity to be identifiable to a hearer, s/he must have a representation of it in her/his store of knowledge (ibid. 77), and be able to distinguish it from others in a certain class (ibid.). In “She dropped her **glasses**,” where the owner of the glasses is the one who dropped them, the speaker assumes that the hearer can identify the entity to which “she” and “her” refer.

A language may have a syntactic means to signal whether or not an entity is identifiable, such as a distinction between definite and indefinite. Other means include case marking (ibid. 85), possessives, and deictic demonstratives (ibid. 88). However, an entity is not simply identifiable or unidentifiable; identifiability is a matter of degree (ibid. 84).

In **anchoring**, one sees the difference in the identifiability of two referents. A speaker employs anchoring to introduce a brand-new (and therefore unidentifiable) referent into the discourse with reference to one already identifiable to the hearer (ibid. 86). In the second clause of “She dropped her **glasses** and her mother **stepped** on them,” the speaker introduces the referent “mother” by anchoring it to “her.”

Finally, languages have an anaphoric reference system (for example, a pronominal system) by which they signal that a referent is identifiable (ibid. 89). By using pronouns, the speaker signals that both “the owner of the glasses” and “glasses” are identifiable in the sentence “She dropped her **glasses** and her mother **stepped** on them.”

At this point, we can combine the terms involved in the identifiability of referents with the notion of presupposition. Lambrecht (2000:613) distinguishes between four kinds of presuppositions. First, a **knowledge presupposition** concerns what the speaker presupposes that the hearer knows at the time of the utterance. Second, an **identifiability presupposition** concerns a referent. It is identifiable if the hearer has a representation of it when s/he hears the utterance; this representation may be in her/his long-term memory. Third, a **consciousness presupposition** involves a referent or proposition whose mental representation has been activated by the utterance in the hearer’s short-term memory. Fourth, a **topicality presupposition** concerns a referent or proposition which “the speaker assumes that the hearer considers ... a center of current interest in the discourse and hence a potential locus of predication” (ibid.). Identifiability and consciousness presuppositions are related logically: the presence of a consciousness presupposition presumes that an identifiability presupposition also holds (ibid.).

Take the example, “She took his **computer**.” The proposition “he owns a computer” may be a knowledge presupposition, something the hearer knows at the time of the utterance. “She” and “his” involve both identifiability and consciousness presuppositions: the hearer recognizes to whom the pronoun refers, using both her/his long-term and short-term memory. Concerning topicality, the use of the pronoun “she” shows that the entity to which it refers is “of current interest.”

As stated above, one must also decide to what extent a referent is active. A referent's **activation state** relates to a hearer's consciousness of a referent (Lambrecht 1994:93). Consciousness is especially dependent on short-term memory during a discourse, and thus differs from knowledge (ibid.). A proposition or an element of a presupposition of an utterance must be present in a hearer's consciousness when s/he receives the utterance; if not, s/he may not correctly process it (ibid.).

Adopting Chafe's (1987:22ff) characterization, Lambrecht posits three activation states: "active, semi-active (or accessible), and inactive" (ibid. 93-94). An **active** referent is one which is present in the interlocutors' consciousness at the time of an utterance, "currently lit up" (ibid. 94). First and second person pronouns are by nature considered active, due to their central role in the text-external world (ibid. 110). Shifting to the opposite end of the activation spectrum, an **inactive** (or **unused**) referent is one existing in the hearer's long-term memory – in her/his store of knowledge. The referent, however, is not in her/his consciousness at the time of communication. Between these end states is the **accessible/semi-active** state (ibid. 94). An accessible referent has the potential to become active in a discourse (ibid. 104) and is one for which the interlocutors have "a background awareness" (ibid. 94). Nevertheless, the interlocutors are not focusing on the referent at the time of communication. Inherent in the term accessible is the idea that a referent's activation state may change during the communication process (ibid. 99).

Take the example of someone describing Sarah's morning: "Sarah went to see a neighbor boy at **school**. His teacher **waved** to her, and finally, she returned **home** around noon." In the first clause, we see that the referent "Sarah" is active, and in mentioning the referents "boy" and "school," the speaker activates them as well. "Teacher" is an

“inferentially accessible” referent (ibid. 110): the speaker can make reference to her/him as part of the frame, or related set of concepts, involved in “school” (ibid. 90); in this context, Sarah’s husband would be accessible as well. The referent “boy” may be deactivated to a semi-active state if not referred to for an extended period (ibid. 99).

As with identifiability, the grammar of a language has the means by which it can signal a referent’s activation state (ibid. 94). Depending on the language, this signaling may occur through prosody, morphology, syntactic structure, or some combination of these. That a referent is active is most clearly conveyed by its being encoded anaphorically, as a pronoun or using null anaphora (ibid. 96). A referential expression that is unaccented is also a signal that it is active (ibid. 95). A referent which had been inactive is often accented and encoded with a full noun phrase, or “full lexical coding” (ibid. 96). However, full lexical coding is not a fool-proof indicator of a referent’s being inactive: it is a means to specify a referent in order to avoid ambiguity, among other things (ibid. 95-96).

Consider this sentence involving the referent “Sarah”: “She drove to school, and saw her two sons.” The referent “Sarah” is shown to be active in the discourse in being encoded by both a pronoun and null anaphora. It is likely that the referent “sons” had been inactive, being encoded by the full noun phrase “her two sons.” Similarly, if the speaker had wanted to activate one of her two sons in the expression “x was in a class play,” s/he could not have referred to him as “he.” Rather, s/he would have used full lexical coding, such as “the younger son,” or “Mike.”

2.3 Conceptual representations as reflected in syntax

The previous discussion has provided the theoretical underpinnings of one important facet of the information structure framework: how the speaker and hearer conceive of referents and propositions (their mental representations). Lambrecht next considers how such concepts as identifiability and activation states are reflected in the syntactic structures of a language.

As a central principle of his work, he argues that “the syntactic structure of sentences and the assumed discourse representations of referents correlate with each other and that this correlation is determined by an independent factor ... [namely] the topic and focus structure of the proposition in which the referent is an argument” (ibid. 114). For example, the topic and focus structure of a language will determine how activation states are reflected in a language’s syntax. Furthermore, accessibility is closely associated with the categories of subject and topic. Similarly, inactiveness correlates with the categories of object and focus (ibid.).

For languages such as English, where prosodic accenting signals information structure, he posits two kinds of accented/non-accented prosodic contrast. One contrast in accent deals with identifiability and activation states. A second prosodic contrast exists between topic and focus, terms dealing with the relations that exist between referents and propositions in a discourse (ibid.). Lambrecht offers the following example of a sentence with both an activation accent⁵ and a focus accent: “Oh my God! My new downstairs

⁵ Lambrecht will later refer to this accent as a “topic-ratifying accent.” It “indicates that the subject entity is selected as a topic among several potential candidates for topic status in the proposition” (Lambrecht 2000:620).

neighbor is a **pianist!**” (ibid. 275). “Neighbor” carries an activation accent, since “my new downstairs neighbor” is a topic expression. The focus accent falls on “pianist.”

In English, prosody shows that these two contrasts exist in a sentence’s information structure. Other languages, however, demonstrate the existence of these contrasts through their morphosyntax, in such ways as the forms of their pronouns, their word order, or the presence of a particle (ibid. 234).

2.4 Types of information structure

In the last section, I introduced the undefined concepts of topic and focus. This section will provide an overview for these crucial terms.

2.4.1 Lambrecht’s conception of topic

Topic is what a proposition is about (ibid. 118). “A referent is interpreted as the topic of a proposition if in a given discourse the proposition is construed as being about this referent, i.e. as expressing information which is relevant to and which increases the addressee’s knowledge of this referent” (ibid. 127). Topic is a relation that operates at the level of a proposition (ibid. 130), yet at the same time is a pragmatic relation in that it is understood by means of the context of the discourse (ibid. 127). Going further, a topic has to be a part of the pragmatic presupposition: it is either “under discussion” (ibid. 150) or is part of the context.

One may express or encode a topic referent in various ways. Take the example “Jim rode his bike into town, and left it there. He then walked home.” The speaker has made reference to the participant under discussion by means of the noun phrase “Jim,” the possessive pronoun “his,” and the personal pronoun “he.” The various ways of referring to a topic are **topic expressions** (ibid. 131). Yet one is not required to encode a

topic in a clause by means of an explicit topic expression (ibid. 135-36). English allows for the null anaphora of the topic, as seen in the phrase “and (Ø) left it there.”

Lambrecht considers a **ratified topic** as “a referent whose topic role in a predication is considered predictable to the point of being taken for granted by the hearer at utterance time” (Lambrecht and Michaelis 1998:495). In the example above, “Jim” is such a topic for the non-initial clauses: “Jim” is predictable as topic to the point of being encoded by null anaphora. Lambrecht distinguishes a ratified topic from a referent that is **topical**, that is, “one which, due to its salience in the discourse, represents a predictable or expectable argument of a predication for the hearer” (ibid.). Again referring to the example involving Jim, “bike” is topical, shown by the predication that Jim left “it” in town.

Furthermore, any constituent of a sentence that expresses a proposition may have a topic; this topic need not apply to the whole sentence (Lambrecht 1994:130). And topic referents may be embedded both within constituents that function as the topic, as well as in constituents which function as the focus (ibid.). Lambrecht provides the example “I finally met the woman who moved in downstairs” (ibid.): the topic expression “who,” referring to the head of the relative clause, occurs in the focus domain.

Lambrecht considers the subject as the “unmarked topic expression” (ibid. 136), that is, the grammatical relation that will most often contain the topic. However, in identifying the topic of a clause, one cannot equate it with the subject (ibid. 131). For instance, if an accent falls on a full noun phrase as subject, the subject is often not the topic of the clause (ibid. 142), such as in “The **child** fell.” Neither can one claim that the first constituent in a sentence is necessarily the topic; one needs to consider the discourse

context (ibid. 120). Furthermore, a sentence may have both a primary and secondary topic (ibid. 147). Lambrecht provides the following sentences to exemplify this: “Why am I in an up mood? Mostly it’s a sense of relief of having finished a first draft of my thesis and feeling OK at least about the time I spent writing this. The product I feel less good about” (ibid.). Dealing specifically with the last sentence of this discourse, he considers the primary topic “I” and the secondary “product.” The latter qualifies as topic because it is not occupying its canonical position and because one learns about the speaker’s feelings toward it (ibid.).

The term “topic” is different from the notions of identifiability and activation, discussed in the previous section (ibid. 160). Yet Lambrecht argues that a referent’s activation state correlates with its status as topic (ibid. 162). This relation centers on the speaker’s judgment that a hearer can interpret a referent, the speaker thus assuming that the referent has a certain activation state in the hearer’s mind (ibid.). Sentences whose topics are not sufficiently accessible will be either difficult to interpret or ill-formed (ibid. 165). Based on this claim, Lambrecht offers his “Topic Acceptability Scale.” Ordering from the most acceptable as topics to the least acceptable, this scale is: active referents, accessible referents, unused referents, brand-new anchored referents, and brand-new unanchored referents (ibid.). Lambrecht cites the following example from Perlmutter as a brand-new unanchored referent whose use causes ill-formedness: “*A boy is tall” (ibid. 167).

What kinds of topic expressions do languages thus prefer? “The cognitively preferred topic expression has unaccented pronominal form” (ibid. 172). This is so because an active referent is normally preferred as topic and languages show that a

referent is active by the lack of accent and by encoding it as a pronoun. Lambrecht includes pronouns, morphemes of inflection, null anaphora, and “possessive and demonstrative determiners” (ibid.) within the category “unaccented pronominal form.” He states, for instance, that in French narratives unaccented pronominals are the most common topic expressions (ibid.). In Byali, the topic of a clause is most often encoded by means of null anaphora when the topic has not changed.

2.4.2 Lambrecht’s conception of focus

Lambrecht relates **focus** to the assertion relayed in a sentence. All sentences have a focus, since all sentences relay new information (ibid. 206). Yet he refrains from simply equating focus with the “new information” in a sentence (ibid. 207). “Unpredictable” and “non-recoverable” more adequately describe focus than “new” (ibid. 211).

Furthermore, the focus of a sentence does not include elements that are pragmatically presupposed (ibid. 214). The following is Lambrecht’s formal definition of focus: “the semantic component of a pragmatically structured proposition whereby the assertion differs from the presupposition” (ibid. 213). Consider the sentence “His **father** is here” in response to the question “Who is here from his family?” In the answer, “father” is in focus and is accented, since it identifies the missing argument of the question, while “his” is not focal, given that it is part of the pragmatic presupposition.

Lambrecht terms **focus relation** the “pragmatic relation between a denotatum and a proposition” (ibid. 210). In marking an element as focal, a speaker shows that that part of a proposition has a focus relation with the entire proposition.

A further concept is the **focus domain** of the sentence. It is “the syntactic domain in a sentence which expresses the focus component of the pragmatically structured

proposition” (ibid. 214). In the example “She uses an old **computer**,” the predicate of the sentence is a comment on the topic “she.” Thus, the focus domain is the entire predicate.

Focus is not a category of syntax, however. Instead, it is a category of semantics and pragmatics. Focus “is defined at the semantic level of the (pragmatically structured) proposition, not at the grammatical level of the (syntactically structured) sentence” (ibid. 213). As a result, one cannot equate focus with a particular syntactic domain or constituent (ibid.). In the example “She uses an old **computer**,” the focus domain is the predicate. In the example “His **father** is here,” the focus domain is the noun phrase “his father.” Lambrecht writes: “information-structure contrasts may in principle be expressed within any syntactic domain which expresses a predicate-argument relation, for example, within the noun phrase” (ibid. 35).

Yet the focus domain must be above the level of lexical items; it must involve a phrase or sentence (ibid. 215). Information structure is concerned “with the pragmatic construal of the relations between entities and states of affairs in given discourse situations. Entities and states of affairs are syntactically expressed in phrasal categories, not in lexical items” (ibid.). Furthermore, “focus domains must be constituents whose denotata are capable of producing assertions when added to presuppositions... such denotata are either predicates or arguments (including adjuncts), or else complete propositions” (ibid.). Lambrecht does, however, allow that contrasts within words can involve focus, citing the example “That’s not an **advantage**, that’s a **disadvantage**” (ibid. 240). In the case of “**disadvantage**,” the prominence of “**dis-**” is caused by the “free-accent position” (ibid.) of English overriding its phonological stress rule.

As opposed to focus, “focus domains must be allowed to contain non-focal elements” (ibid. 216), and thus may contain constituents which refer to propositions of the pragmatic presupposition (ibid. 217). Again using the example “His **father** is here,” the focus domain is the noun phrase “his father,” of which “his” is part of the pragmatic presupposition.

The **focus structure** of a sentence is “the conventional association of a focus meaning with a sentence form” (ibid. 222). Lambrecht identifies three major focus structures which convey assertions: **predicate focus**, **argument focus**, and **sentence focus** (Lambrecht and Michaelis 1998:496), which are discussed in the next sections.⁶

Within a given language, the different focus structures are encoded by particular constructions. In these constructions, as stated earlier, languages vary as to the means by which they signal the constituent in focus. “The focus of a proposition may be marked prosodically, morphologically, syntactically, or via a combination of prosodic and morphosyntactic means” (Lambrecht 1994:218). Despite the occurrence of different mechanisms, the accenting of at least one syllable of a focal constituent is a widespread trait among languages (ibid. 225).

The **focus marker** of a language is the means or device – be it syntactic, morphological, or prosodic – by which it signals the focus structure of a sentence (ibid. 15). For instance, the focus marker of English is principally prosody. Since English depends heavily on accent in identifying the constituent in focus, it is important to

⁶ Lambrecht considers these “the three major focus-structure types” (ibid. 236), but admits that other focus structures could exist. “A likely candidate for a fourth type is the ‘counterassertive’ or ‘counterpresuppositional’ type proposed by Dik et al. (1980), which involves the polarity of a proposition rather than some semantic domain within it” (ibid.). An example is: “A: Let’s go into the **kitchen** and get something to **eat**. B. There’s nothing **to eat**.” (ibid. 254).

identify the **locus of main sentence accent** in the sentence under consideration (ibid. 14). As a precautionary reminder, however, one must not restrict the role of prosody in English to simply marking focus: besides marking focus, accent may reactivate a referent (ibid. 213).

We now present the characteristics of the major categories, predicate-focus, argument-focus, and sentence-focus information structures, as well as briefly describe the background-establishing presuppositional structure.

2.4.3 Topic and focus in the predicate-focus information structure

The most common information structure, and therefore that which is unmarked, is the predicate-focus structure (or PF). Predicate focus corresponds with the **topic-comment articulation** (ibid. 222); Lambrecht claims as a language universal that the majority of sentences are topic-comment (ibid. 136). In the topic-comment structure, the topic of a proposition is generally the subject, and it is generally not accented (ibid. 121). Referring back to the definition of topic as **aboutness**, the subject is “what the sentence is about” (ibid.). Given that the subject is topic and is part of the presupposition, it most often occurs as a pronoun or in null reference.

Concerning the assertion of the predicate-focus structure, the event of the predicate will have something to say **about** the topic (ibid. 226). English signals its focus by the accent falling on at least one constituent of the predicate (ibid.). Finally, the focus domain is the predicate,⁷ shown by the fact that a constituent of the predicate receives the accent (ibid. 227).

⁷ Lambrecht equates the terms “predicate,” “verb phrase,” and “predicate phrase” (ibid. 227).

Lambrecht (2000) further specifies prosodic prominence for the predicate-focus construction. If an object is present, the accent will fall on it (with certain exceptions); the object is thus the **unmarked focus argument** (ibid. 616). If a sentence is intransitive, “the main sentence accent will fall on the verb (or some postverbal adjunct) by default” (ibid.). Yet in certain cases, a predicate expression in the focus domain may not be accented, a fact he predicts in the Principle of Accent Projection (ibid. 617). We return to these claims in the discussion on predicate-focus prosody (see Section 4.7).

Yet a predicate accent is not the only accent possible in the predicate-focus information structure of English. An accent may also fall on a referent to indicate its activation state (Lambrecht 1994:112). A speaker uses this “topic-ratifying” or activation accent to signal to the hearer that he is again “lighting up” a presupposed referent (ibid. 219).

Related to the activation of referents is the detachment construction. It is a specific predicate-focus structure used to raise the accessibility of a referent, and one which occurs frequently in Byali. In it, a non-active referent that nevertheless has a degree of accessibility is encoded as a full noun phrase, often just preceding the main sentence (ibid. 182). A pronoun referring to the full noun phrase is the topic of the main clause (ibid.). An example is “As for the boy, he came late.” This device is especially useful in enabling a shift in the topic of the discourse (ibid. 183), and allows the speaker to reactivate a referent and assert something about him in the same sentence (ibid. 184).

An example of a predicate-focus structure is “His balloon **popped**.” This sentence could be uttered in a situation in which the current topic of the discourse is a child, and the speaker wants to add this event. Since the noun phrase is definite, it is presupposed

that the NP is identifiable; also, given the presence of the pronoun “his,” the child is topical and active in the minds of both the hearer and speaker. Thus, the sentence evokes a presupposition of consciousness: “the referent of ‘child’ is active in the hearer’s short-term memory.” It also involves a presupposition of topicality: “‘balloon’ is topic for comment c.” The assertion is that “c = popped.” The focus is “popped.” The focus domain is the predicate (see Lambrecht 2000:616).

Another example of predicate focus is “He popped a **balloon**,” referring again to the situation of a child with a balloon. In this case, since the direct object is present, it receives the accent. The referent of ‘he’, expressed as a pronoun, constitutes a presupposition of consciousness: “the referent of ‘he’ is active in the hearer’s short-term memory.” A presupposition of topicality is evoked as well: “the referent of ‘he’ is ratified topic for comment c.” The assertion is that “c = popped a balloon.” The focus is “popped a balloon.” The focus domain is the predicate.

Finally, consider “He **popped** it,” again referring to the child and his balloon. In this case, the direct object “it” is topical and is in the presupposition, shown by its pronominal form. As such, the predicate accent falls on the verb. The topic “he” is in the presupposition and is expressed in pronominal form. In this sentence, the presupposition of consciousness is “the referents of ‘he’ and ‘it’ are active in the hearer’s short-term memory.” The presupposition of topicality is “the referent of ‘he’ is ratified topic for comment c.” The assertion is that “c = popped.” The focus is “popped.” The focus domain is the predicate.

2.4.4 Topic and focus in the argument-focus information structure

A second type of information structure is the argument-focus information structure (or AF), generally associated with the **identificational articulation**. In this construction, the speaker's purpose is to identify a certain referent as being the missing, or unspecified, argument in a preceding "open proposition" (Lambrecht 1994:122). For example, in the proposition "Who broke the window?" "who" represents an unspecified argument. An identificational sentence, such as "The **boy** broke it" may well follow that proposition, supplying the argument, the previously unknown information (ibid.). Elements other than strict arguments may be identified. For example, a speaker may specify adverbial or prepositional expressions, entire propositions (ibid. 215), or any "non-predicating expression in a proposition" (ibid. 224).

Where the subject argument is missing, English signals that the sentence is not about the subject by accenting the subject. This structure, in which the subject is in focus (ibid. 122) and the predicate has no accent, is marked.

Concerning other characteristics of the structure, the assertion is the identification of the missing argument. The focus domain is the entire phrase that is identified. The stipulation "entire phrase" is important because a focus domain must be at least at the phrase – and not simply lexical – level (ibid. 228). Mechanisms that languages use to identify argument focus include accent and syntactic means such as morphology, a marked constituent order, or different structures such as the cleft construction (ibid. 229-30).

An example of an argument-focus information structure is "His **balloon** popped." Again, the context would involve a situation where the current topic of the discourse is a

child, and one adds this event. In this sentence, a knowledge presupposition is evoked: “child’s x popped.” Furthermore, a presupposition of consciousness is involved: “the referent of ‘his’ is active in the hearer’s short-term memory.” The assertion is that “x = balloon.” The focus is “balloon.” The focus domain is the NP (ibid. 228).

2.4.5 Topic and focus in the sentence-focus information structure

A third type of information structure is **sentence focus** (or SF). In the sentence-focus structure, the entire sentence serves as the assertion, focus (ibid. 233), and focus domain (ibid. 234). The whole proposition is previously unknown information to the hearer (ibid. 124).

As in the case of the argument-focus structure, languages vary as to the mechanisms they use to signal their sentence-focus structures. Furthermore, many of the sentence-focus mechanisms are the same as those used with the argument-focus structure (ibid. 321). One important characteristic of sentence focus, however, is that a language will make clear that the subject is not topic (Lambrecht 2000:612); the subject argument of the construction must be encoded as a lexical noun phrase, not as a pronoun or by null anaphora (ibid. 618). Furthermore, “in English, and in other languages relying on prosodic focus marking, a SF construction is minimally characterized by the presence of a pitch accent on the subject and by the absence of prosodic prominence on the predicate portion of the sentence”⁸ (ibid. 617). He generalizes these claims in positing what he holds to be a universal tendency of language typology. This Principle of Detopicalization

⁸ Lambrecht considers that sentence-focus accent is explained by prosodic inversion. Consider these sentences: “My **knee** aches,” which has sentence-focus accent, and “My knee **aches**,” with predicate-focus accent. To explain this contrasting focus pattern, Lambrecht posits that the grammars of certain languages have dictated that there be an inversion in the placement of an accent or in word order in order to differentiate a marked information structure from an unmarked one (Lambrecht 1994:320).

states: “SF marking involves cancellation of those prosodic and/or morphosyntactic subject properties which are associated with the role of subjects as topic expressions in PF sentences” (ibid. 624).

Lambrecht treats two subtypes of sentence-focus information structure in detail. One subtype is the **event-reporting** construction (1994:124). The subject of the event-reporting structure is not the topic; the sentence is not “about” the subject (ibid. 169). Instead, the proposition as a whole is intended to disclose an event concerning the subject (ibid. 124). As an example of an event-reporting sentence, one could take the situation of a mother who hears her child crying and rushes to the scene. On arriving, an older sibling explains: “His **balloon** popped.” Despite the presence of the pronoun “his,” no presuppositions are evoked since the referent of ‘his’ does not function as an argument of the clause (Lambrecht 2000:617). The assertion is that “child’s balloon popped.” The focus is “child’s balloon popped.” The focus domain is the sentence (Lambrecht 1994:233).

The second subtype is the **presentational construction** (ibid. 178). As in the case of the event-reporting constructions discussed above, the focus of a presentational construction is likewise the entire sentence (ibid. 233). In using this kind of construction, a speaker is not asserting something about a referent: he introduces a brand-new referent as a full lexical noun phrase, which can then become a topic (ibid. 177).

The **existential construction** is one kind of presentational construction (ibid. 178). An example is “There was once a young girl who had few friends,” termed a biclausal presentational construction (ibid.). In this sentence, a full noun phrase introduces the referent. Furthermore, the relative pronoun “who” functions as the preferred topical

expression for the newly activated referent (ibid. 180), after which the speaker immediately adds a comment. In the example of the young girl, the referent “girl” is signaled as indefinite, although the referent may also be encoded via “definite accented lexical noun phrases” (ibid. 178). The verbs of many such sentences lack agentivity: they involve such verbs as “be,” “live,” “have,” and “arrive” (ibid. 180).

In a second kind of presentational sentence, the **deictic**, the speaker makes reference to something in the text-external world (ibid. 179). For example, while talking to a friend, one could point to a child and say, “There is the girl who won the match” and proceed to describe the event of her winning.

Before leaving the discussion concerning sentence focus, one should note the potential ambiguity between sentence-focus and argument-focus information structures, specifically where the missing argument of the latter occupies the subject slot. Consider the following sentences. In the first, a neighbor hurriedly runs to a parent, saying: “Your **daughter** fell,” a sentence-focus event-reporting construction. In the second, we again have: “Your **daughter** fell,” this time the argument-focus response to the question: “Who fell?” In both cases, the accent must be on the subject (ibid. 307). In considering English, however, Lambrecht prefers to call this sharing of a common accent a case of homophony, where “two distinct meanings are encoded in one form” (ibid. 321), rather than a case of vagueness.

2.4.6 The background-establishing presuppositional structure

While the three information structures convey assertions (Lambrecht and Michaelis 1998:496), the **background-establishing** structure conveys presupposed material. In this type of construction, an adverbial clause creates the context for the

matrix clause (Lambrecht 1994:125). An example is, “After the boy fell, Mary ran to tell the teacher.” In this case, the subject of the adverbial clause is not a typical topic, since it is an argument in the pragmatic presupposition of the utterance. Likewise, the predicate of the adverbial is in the presupposition (ibid.). Furthermore, “topic-focus articulation is neutralized or maximally reduced” in the adverbial clause (ibid. 126).

2.5 Further issues involving information structure constructions

Having provided the characteristics of four information structures, Lambrecht addresses theoretical issues pertinent mainly to languages which mark information structure by means of accent.

2.5.1 Predicate-focus accent

In his final position concerning prosodic stress, Lambrecht argues that neither a language’s phonological rules nor its grammar can account for it alone. One needs to refer as well to “the communicative intentions of speakers in given discourse situations” (ibid. 241).

He concludes that pragmatic principles stipulate that an accent be applied (ibid. 242). Yet it is the rules of grammar – what he calls syntactic phrasal accent rules – that govern on which element of a constituent the accent falls (ibid. 246). One such rule is the General Phrasal Accent Principle: “A phrasal accent marks the right boundary of a syntactic domain expressing a pragmatically construed portion of a proposition” (ibid. 247).

To exemplify the existence of such rules, he compares the sentences in (1), the first in English, followed by its French counterpart:

(1) She doesn't have a particularly interesting **job**.

Elle n'a pas un métier particulièrement **intéressant**. (ibid. 243)

He states that the sentences have the equivalent semantic and pragmatic meanings. Furthermore, in both examples “the accent which defines the focus domain falls within the object noun phrase, which is the last phrase of the sentence, and within this phrase, it falls on the last word” (ibid.). Yet in English, the last word is a noun, while in French, it is an adjective. The common element, therefore, is the placement of the accent (ibid. 244). That placement is governed by the shared grammatical-level General Phrasal Accent Principle of the languages.

This accent principle also plays a role in a case of ambiguity – what he calls “focus vagueness” – in predicate-focus sentences (ibid. 305). Take, for instance, the predicate-focus sentence, “He called **Tom**,” in which a speaker comments on the topic Bill. We can compare this with the argument-focus response, “He called **Tom**,” an answer to the question: “Whom did Bill call?” The accent falling on “Tom” in the case of argument focus is predictable. In the case of predicate focus, the General Phrasal Accent Principle accounts for the accent placement, specifically stipulating that it not fall on the verb, but on the right-boundary element (ibid. 298).

Lambrecht attempts to further resolve the matter of predicate-focus ambiguity by his Principle of Predicate-focus Interpretation: “Sentences whose verb phrases carry an accent have predicate-focus structure. The predicate-focus structure is the unmarked focus structure and allows for alternative focus readings. Such alternative readings are contextually determined” (ibid. 304). However, a language may have within its repertoire a means to overcome ambiguity with predicate focus (ibid. 296). He writes: “When

alternative focus readings of predicate-accented sentences are to be made formally explicit, prosodic focus marking has to be supplemented with, or replaced by, morphosyntactic marking, by means of word-order variation or special grammatical constructions” (ibid.).

2.5.2 The discourse status of predicates

Lambrecht uses his stipulation that focus domains may contain non-focal elements (ibid. 250) and such principles as the General Phrasal Accent Principle (ibid. 251) to account for various hard-to-explain accent placements. Having made his case that topical elements in a focus domain cannot be accented (ibid. 250), he argues that certain other elements of focus domains are less “accentable” than others, a determination which is based on the discourse context (ibid. 251). In this regard, he makes special mention of predicating expressions (ibid. 264).

Overall, while predicating expressions have some impact on information structure matters (ibid. 268), they have a different status in discourse than that of referents (ibid. 264); furthermore, their “pragmatic status ... is in some sense less important than that of nouns” (ibid. 266). He asserts that this difference in discourse status has at its root the great effort needed to process referents, including the use of long-term memory. Processing predicating expressions, meanwhile, requires less effort, and uses short-term memory (ibid. 267-68).

Therefore, while predicating expressions may be accented, it may be for a different reason than when a referent is accented. For example, the activation state of a verb, adjective, or a preposition does not affect accentuation (ibid. 266). Lambrecht cites examples from Bolinger: “I have a **point** to make” as opposed to “I have a **point** to

emphasize” (ibid.). In these examples, the fact that the verb “emphasize” receives an accent while the verb “make” does not may be due to their relative “semantic weight” (ibid.).

2.5.3 The common role of activation and focus accents

Lambrecht explains why activation and focus are marked by the same phonetic means, that is, accent. Both the focus and the activation (or topic [ibid. 325]) accent have at their root the same purpose: to establish or signal a relation within a proposition. Thus, he offers his Discourse Function of Sentence Accents: “A sentence accent indicates an instruction from the speaker to the hearer to establish a pragmatic relation between a denotatum and a proposition. An utterance must have at least one sentence accent to be informative” (Lambrecht and Michaelis 1998:498).

To explain this common role, Lambrecht’s states that focus involves establishing a relationship between the “new” in an assertion and the rest of the proposition (1994:210). Activation likewise establishes a relation, this time between a representation of a referent and the proposition (ibid. 224); that is, it serves “to establish the role of a given referent as a topic or a focus argument in a pragmatically structured proposition” (ibid. 323).

As an example, let us again refer to a sentence with both an activation accent and a focus accent: “Oh my God! My new downstairs **neighbor** is a **pianist!**” (ibid. 275). The accent on “neighbor” establishes its pragmatic role as topic, while that on “pianist” shows the placement of the focus accent in the predicate-focus construction.

Given the characterization of the activation accent as establishing a relation, he sets forth his Discourse Condition on Unaccented Argument Expressions: “An argument

expression is unaccented iff the speaker assumes that its referent can be construed as a ratified topic at the time of the utterance” (Lambrecht and Michaelis 1998:498).

Drawing from this statement, he posits a default rule for accents: except where the condition on unaccented constituents applies, a constituent will have an accent (Lambrecht 1994:324).⁹

Having posited these principles regarding accents, Lambrecht addresses the matter of more than one focus in a proposition. To do so, he cites the following example: “The American travel writer Paul Theroux once defined an Englishman as someone who apologizes if **you** tread on **his** foot. To extend the analogy, a Frenchman could be defined as someone who expects you to apologize if **he** treads on **your** foot” (ibid. 328). Specifically, he treats the clause “**he** treads on **your** foot.”

Lambrecht argues that if multiple focus were possible, the assertion for the clause would read “ $x = \text{he}; y = \text{you}$ ” (ibid.), an assertion which he considers ill-formed (ibid. 329). Thus, he discounts Selkirk’s and Gussenhoven’s “multiple-focus analysis” on semantic grounds: “A single proposition cannot express two assertions, therefore it cannot have two foci” (ibid.). Instead, Lambrecht draws on his Discourse Condition on Unaccented Constituents to explain the presence of the accents. It falls on “he” since “he” is an unexpected referent as topic. Regarding the accent on “your,” it too signals that “the referent of the pronoun is not the one most naturally expected to fill the given argument

⁹ Lambrecht adds two related principles in a later article. The Principle of Accent Projection reads: “The accent on an argument expression may project its value onto an unaccented predicate expression. In such cases, the predicate and argument are integrated into the informational unit” (Lambrecht and Michaelis 1998:498-99). Following from that is the Topic-comment Principle: “If a predicate capable of integration with its argument is not subject to accent projection, i.e. if both the predicate and the argument constituent are accented, the two denotata have a topic-comment relation to each other” (ibid. 499).

role in the proposition... [and] that the relation between the referent and the proposition cannot be taken for granted from preceding discourse” (ibid. 328).

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has summarized Lambrecht’s theoretical framework. As a reminder for the analysis to follow, one must identify a sentence’s presupposition, assertion, focus, and focus domain in determining its information structure (ibid. 226).

As Lambrecht’s work has been in use for almost ten years, it is important to apply his framework to languages from a variety of families. With this in mind, the next chapter will prepare the way for studying Byali information structure by providing pertinent elements of Byali syntax.

CHAPTER 3

DEFAULT CONSTITUENT ORDER IN BYALI

In this chapter, Section 3.1 provides characteristics of Byali which impact the written form of the examples, Section 3.2 presents the basic constituent order in Byali, and Section 3.3 presents other characteristics of the language relevant to this study.

3.1 Characteristics of the Byali language which impact its written form

Byali is a tonal language, with tone signaling meaning differences, both lexical and grammatical. In this study, I will follow the present orthographic conventions for marking tone in Byali. Tone is currently not marked on every word. Only certain high tones are marked, using the diacritic ´ on a vowel of one member of an otherwise ambiguous pair or triplet of elements, and only when the ambiguous elements could occupy the same syntactic position in the Byali clause. This convention allows for ambiguity in a word such as *bə* ‘they’ and ‘Conj.SS.Sim’ (conjunction for the same subject/simultaneous action), which differ by tone.

Byali nouns are divided into eight classes, seven of which distinguish between singular and plural; the eighth designates uncountable items, for instance *niim* ‘water’. Each noun ends in a suffix which corresponds to a particular noun class: to the root *bi-* ‘child’ is added the suffix *-si*, resulting in *bisi* ‘children’. In text glosses for this study, the noun class “designators” follow the gloss of the root. For instance, *sanhu*, ‘vehicle’ of the *hu/tu* noun class is glossed ‘vehicle-hu/tu’ (*hu* is the singular form and *tu* the plural).

Singular and plural pronominal forms also exist for each class. This pronominal system helps a hearer track referents in a discourse. For example, the plural pronoun *sə* of the *kə/si* noun class is glossed ‘3pl.kə/si’ in the texts below.

Table 1 includes the orthographic form of the suffixes, the personal and possessive pronouns, and the demonstrative pronouns for each class.¹⁰

Table 1. Noun Class Suffixes and Pronouns

Class Name (singular / plural)	Noun Class Suffixes		Personal and Possessive Pronouns		Demonstrative Pronouns	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
u/bə	-u	-bə	u	bə	akwei	aba
kə/si	-kə, -gə	-si	kə	sə	aka	asi
fə/i	-fə	-i	fə	i	afa	ahi
bu/a	-bu	-a	bə	a	abu	aha
hu/tu	-hu	-tu, -ru	hu	tə	ahu	atu
u/i	-u	-i	u	i	ahu	ahi
i/a	-i	-a	də	a	ali	aha
m	-m		m		aməm	

3.2 Unmarked constituent order in Byali

Byali is a Subject-Verb-Object language with a rather fixed constituent order. This basic constituent order applies to clauses with both active and non-active predicates, as seen in (2) through (4).

¹⁰ I have followed the order of classes as used in Sambieni (1999:35, 80).

	Subject	Verb	Direct Object	
(2)	Dyagərau Dyagəra-u/bə	pirənə take-toward	ci-bworəhu . . . beehive-hu/tu	
	<i>Dyagarau took the bee-hive...</i>			(beehive 17)
(3)	Kə 3sg.kə/si	pirə take	bi-kunkwansi child-little-kə/si	hyansi, aforementioned-kə/si
	<i>He took those small children,</i>			(young man 19)
(4)	Bə 3pl.u/bə	kwa not.have	daru. quarrel-hu/tu	
	<i>They have no quarrels.</i>			(sheep 32)

As with the direct objects of (2) - (4), indirect objects follow the verb when in their full lexical form, as seen in (5).

	Subject	Verb	Indirect Object	
(5)	Bə 3pl.u/bə	yegə cagə again say	bwaməm sickness-m	sanhu ... vehicle-hu/tu
	<i>They again announced to [the people in] the ambulance...</i>			(boy tree 19)

Direct and indirect objects never co-occur as full lexical noun phrases in the corpus.

Object pronouns occur between the subject and verb. Certain adverbials, verbal tense, aspectual and negation particles also occur between the subject and verb. We see the characteristic order in (6).

	Subject	Tense / Aspect Particle	Negation	Object Pronoun	Verb
(6)	U 3sg.u/bə	tən Hab.Pst	pə not	i 3sg.fə/i	yuku. take.out-Hab
	<i>He had not taken it before.</i>				(steal money 26)

Postpositional phrases and adverbials occur after the verb, and in main clauses, follow the direct object in most cases. See (7), (8) and (9) below.

	Subject	Verb	Direct Object	Peripheral Element
(7)	u 3sg.u/bə	sandə leave	ya millet-i/a	hwam-biim hyahə calebash-small-m in (only child 11)
			<i>she left millet in the calabash</i>	
(8)		Cigərə receive	tusa pwigə ¹¹ thousand-i/a ten-kə/si	hyamə. like.that (steal wife 19)
			<i>Take 5000 francs like that.</i>	
(9)	Hirəbə people-u/bə	bou be.exist		yagəlai today (robbers 2)
			<i>People exist today</i>	

In subordinate clauses, however, adverbials normally precede direct objects. In (10), the adverbial of manner *hyamə* ‘like that’ occurs in a subordinate clause.

	Subject	Verb	Adverbial	Direct Object
(10)	Kə 3sg.kə/si	n doúm Cont enter-Pft	hyamə like.that	dakoru, school-hu/tu
			<i>He having entered school like that,</i>	(schoolboy 02)

3.3 Byali conjunctions

Clauses with the same topic are joined by one of two conjunctions, *bə* or *bə*; the subject pronoun is elided as well. The conjunction *bə* indicates that the topic of consecutive clauses is the same and that the events of the two clauses occur sequentially, as seen in (11).

¹¹ Monetary values in Byali are expressed by multiplying the actual figure in francs by two. Thus, “five francs” is expressed as *pwigə* ‘ten’.

	Conjunction	Subject	Verb	Direct Object
(11)		Kə 3sg.kə/si	tei go	
	<i>He went</i>			
<hr/>				
	bó Conj.SS.Seq		dou climb.up	
	<i>and climbed up</i>			
<hr/>				
	bó Conj.SS.Seq		hwasə pick	te-fehu. baobab.tree-leaf-hu/tu
	<i>and picked baobab leaves.</i>			(boy tree 08)

Bə, which has a lower pitch than the first, signals that the events – and more commonly the states – of the two predicates occur simultaneously.

Nateni, a language closely related to Byali, has a similar chaining system (Neukom 1995:151-53).

3.4 The Byali particles *e* and *nwa*

One identifies an entity by means of the particle *e*, which has two main allomorphs, pronounced [e] and [de]. In (12b), it occurs at the end of a phrasal unit in response to the question “What is that?” (12a) and (12b) are examples of argument-focus (see Section 2.4.4 and Chapter 5), and the complements of (12a) and (12b) are preposed. (The particle *e* is in bold.)

- (12)
- a. Barə ala?
what? there.close
- b. Dafigəhu **e.**
fan-hu/tu Foc
- What is that? It's a fan.* (from conversation)

On the basis of (12b), one might interpret *e* as an identificational *be*-verb. However, in (13a), *e* follows *kwa*, the negative form of the existential *be*-verb. It does not seem plausible that two *be*-verbs be juxtaposed clause-finally.

(13) *Here is some money: receive this money, and you be getting to work.*

a. Baa dɔ̃ m kwa e,
even if 1sg not.be Foc

b. a yí tiim m bigə.
2sg Fut.Indef help 1sg child-kə/si

Even if I'm (truly) dead (Lit: even if I'm [truly] not present), you will help my child. (friends 07)

In rapid speech, the presence of *e* is not always clear to the unaided ear, unless, for example, the particle follows a consonant, as discussed in Section 5.3.2. The particle is difficult to distinguish because it coalesces with certain preceding word-final vowels. Also, the qualities of some word-final vowels change pre-pausally.

The particle *e* has a negative counterpart, *nwa*. In (14b), it occurs in clause-final position, and corrects a false identification.

(14)

a. Hanfə e fwa.
guinea.fowl-fə/i Foc pay.attention

b. Dobu nwa.
animal-bu/a Neg.Foc

It's a guinea fowl -- pay attention. It's not an animal.

(from conversation)

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, we examined the syntactical elements of Byali pertinent to this study. In the following chapter, we turn to the predicate-focus information structure.

CHAPTER 4

PREDICATE-FOCUS INFORMATION STRUCTURE

We now consider predicate focus, which Lambrecht calls the unmarked focus structure.

The predicate-focus information structure is associated with the topic-comment sentence articulation type (Lambrecht 1994:228). Because the subject is topic and is active or accessible, it is encoded by a pronoun or by null anaphora in Byali. However, one may encode the topic with a lexical noun phrase to: (1) reactivate a referent, (2) clearly identify referents (ibid. 95-96), or (3) help the hearer resolve problems in processing information (Dooley and Levinsohn 2001:112). In Byali, one commonly reactivates a referent as topic by means of the left-dislocation of either the full noun phrase or a demonstrative pronoun.

The sections to follow are organized according to two criteria: the different topic expressions that are possible (lexical noun phrase, pronoun, and null anaphora) and the presence or absence of presupposed material in the focus domain, that is, the predicate.

4.1 Topic encoded as lexical noun phrase

A lexical noun phrase may be the topic expression in a predicate-focus structure. In the context of (15), two friends have worked to succeed and one of them does so.

(15) *There was once a certain man, with his friend, and they were very good friends. Their being friends like that, they got up and looked for commerce, the path of getting rich.*

U dwopu karə.
 3sg.u/bə friend-u/bə succeed

His friend succeeded. (friends 03)

Lambrecht uses a schema to indicate the essential elements of an information structure analysis, which includes concepts discussed in Sections 2.2 to 2.5.¹² The table below presents the analysis for (15). A prose explanation follows this table.

Presuppositions:	
(i) of consciousness	“referents of ‘his’ and ‘friend’ are active in hearer’s short-term memory”
(ii) of topicality	“referent of ‘his’ is ratified topic in hearer’s short-term memory”
Assertion:	“c = succeeded”
Focus:	“succeeded”
Focus domain:	Predicate

Two presuppositions are evoked. A presupposition of consciousness is present: the “referents of ‘his’ and ‘friend’ are active in hearer’s short-term memory,” being accessible from the discourse’s initial sentence. A presupposition of topicality is evoked, as the “referent of ‘his’ is ratified topic in hearer’s short-term memory.” The assertion of the sentence is “succeeded.” The focus is the entire predicate, “succeeded.” Finally, the focus domain is the entire predicate.

¹² As mentioned in Section 2.2, Lambrecht asserts that the presence of a consciousness presupposition presumes that an identifiability presupposition also holds (Lambrecht 2000:613). Thus, his schema as presented on p. 616 does not include the identifiability presupposition. As seen in comparing schema (4) (ibid.) with (6) (ibid. 618), Lambrecht’s schemas include only those presuppositions he deems most pertinent; this analysis will follow that convention.

The referent ‘friend’ is made topic by being anchored to the story’s initial referent, through the use of the personal pronoun *u* ‘his’. In fact, both referents were topic of the previous sentence, included in the plural topic expression *bə* ‘they’.

4.2 Topic encoded as pronoun

One commonly encodes active referents as topic by using a reduced form, such as a pronoun. In (16), the topics “thief” and “sheep owner” are referred to by a pronoun.

(16) *That thief and the sheep's owner, now, they get along well -- they go around together, they drink -- that being as it should be.*

Bə kwa daru.
 3pl.u/bə not.have quarrel-hu/tu

They do not have quarrels. (sheep 32)

The following is the analysis for (16):

Presuppositions:	
(i) of consciousness	“referent of ‘they’ is active in hearer’s short-term memory”
(ii) of topicality	“referent of ‘they’ is ratified topic for comment c”
Assertion:	“c = do not have quarrels”
Focus:	“do not have quarrels”
Focus domain:	Predicate

4.3 Topic encoded as null anaphora

Null anaphora also signals that a topic is ratified. As mentioned in Section 3.3, Byali uses two conjunctions in connection with null anaphora: one signals a sequential relation; the other, a simultaneous relation. In (17), the referent “customs officials” is the ratified topic. In (17a) to (17d), we see four actions carried out sequentially by the customs officials.

(17) *And they got (all from him), even ten (francs) they did not leave him.*

- a. Bó u pwom
 Conj.SS.Seq 3sg.u/bə hit
- b. bó u bia,
 Conj.SS.Seq 3sg.u/bə jail-Caus
- c. bó u yeranu
 Conj.SS.Seq 3sg.u/bə make.leave-Caus-together
- d. bó u kaam,
 Conj.SS.Seq 3sg.u/bə let.go
- e. u hundənə.
 3sg.u/bə go.home-toward

And they beat him and locked him up, and then set him free and let him go, and he went home. (friends 39)

The following represents an analysis of clause (b) of (17). (The analyses of clauses (a), (c), and (d) are similar.)

Presuppositions:	
(i) of consciousness	“referents of Ø (null) and ‘him’ are active in hearer’s short-term memory”
(ii) of topicality	“referent of Ø (null) is ratified topic for comment c”
Assertion:	“c = locked him up”
Focus:	“lock up”
Focus domain:	Predicate

4.4 Focus domain without presuppositional information

In the Byali predicate-focus construction, the entire predicate may be in focus. In (18a), the referent “small hawk” is topic, introduced in the comment of the previous topic-comment sentence. The focus domain of (18a), the predicate “usually grabs another’s own child,” has no presuppositional material.

(18) *There are people nowadays, and they are people who live and it's on others' own sweat. He says that they will ruin another, and they redirect his direction. We would be able to take and compare them to small hawks. He calls them (Lit: says) small hawks.*

- a. Cɪpəpyogə tən mwei
 small.hawk-kə/si Hab.Pst grab
- tuou í bigə
 other-u/bə own child-kə/si
- b. bə tei
 Conj.SS.Seq go
- c. wobə kə yahə.
 keep 3sg.kə/si at.home

A small hawk usually grabs another's own child and goes and keeps it at his home. (robbers 04)

The analysis for (18a) is given in the following table.

Presuppositions:	
(i) of consciousness	“referent ‘small hawk’ is active in hearer’s short-term memory to receive comment c”
(ii) of topicality	“referent ‘small hawk’ is topic for comment c”
Assertion:	“c = usually grabs another’s own child”
Focus:	“usually grabs another’s own child”
Focus domain:	Predicate

4.5 Focus domain with presuppositional information

The focus domain of predicate focus may have presupposed elements. Consider clauses (c) and (e) of (19). The active and presupposed referents “bicycle owner” and “thief” have been reduced to the pronouns *u* and *kə*. In (19), a person has had three bicycles stolen by an individual. He takes action, ambushing and attacking the thief.

(19) *And he (the bicycle owner) shot his arrows (Lit: quiver) and struck him in the middle of his back, and he (the thief) fell.*

- a. Kə n deim hyamə,
 3sg.kə/si Cont fall-Pft like.that
- b. u nində
 3sg.u/bə arrive
- c. bə forə u cari,
 Conj.SS.Seq take.out 3sg.u/bə knife-i/a
- d. bə magə
 Conj.SS.Seq set.attention.to
- e. bə catə kə yuoi.
 Conj.SS.Seq cut 3sg.kə/si head-i/a

He (the thief) having fallen like that, he (the owner) arrived and took out his knife and cut his head. (bicycle thief 08)

The schema below represents the analysis for (19e).

Presuppositions:	
(i) of consciousness	“referents of Ø (null) and ‘his’ are active in hearer’s short-term memory”
(ii) of topicality	“referent of Ø (null) is ratified topic for comment c”
Assertion:	“c = cut his head”
Focus:	“cut head”
Focus domain:	Predicate

4.6 Numerical sampling of syntactic forms in predicate-focus sentences

Lambrecht claims that predicate focus is the unmarked information structure (Lambrecht 1994:228): this is true for the Byali data. In a sample of the focus structure types in the clauses of one story, 90% are predicate focus.¹³

¹³ This text, found in Appendix A, is the basis for the discussion of Sections 4.6 and 4.7.

Certain subordinate clauses which provide linkage within a text contain much repetitive and thus presupposed material; these were excluded so as not to skew the percentages. See Section 2.4.6 concerning

Lambrecht also argues that the unaccented pronominal, including null anaphora, is the preferred topic expression for predicate focus (ibid. 165). This prediction also holds true for the Byali data. In one text, 88% of the topics of predicate-focus clauses were encoded as pronouns or null anaphora and 12% as full noun phrases.

4.7 Prosody as it relates to predicate-focus information structure

Lambrecht makes various claims concerning prosody, particularly regarding the placement of accent. In applying these claims to Byali, I will refer to an unpublished manuscript by Joan Baart, as well as to his evaluation of Byali data.

4.7.1 Correlates of prosodic prominence

One must identify a reliable correlate of stress in examining prosody. Drawing from Heuven and Sluijter (1996), Baart lists the following as possible correlates: (1) **fundamental frequency**, an example being the lowering of pitch in English to express incredulity (Baart 2001:74); (2) **duration** of the rimes of syllables (ibid. 75); and (3) **intensity**, which Baart defines as the correlate of loudness or energy (ibid.).

Baart examined samples of the Byali data and concludes that duration is the most significant cue to prominence. Intensity is a significant indicator only in conjunction with duration (Baart, p.c., July 7, 2004).

4.7.2 General prosodic characteristics of pronouns

As noted in Section 4.6, pronominal forms commonly encode topical referents in predicate-focus structure. One must consider the prominence of these pronouns relative to their contexts.

Byali phonology provides strong evidence that pronouns are unaccented (and ratified [Lambrecht 2000:614]). In Byali, the schwa is a weak vowel. Evidence is that certain vowels are reduced to [ə] when an additional syllable is added to a root. For instance, the stem-final [ɑ] in [‘begɑu] ‘king’ is reduced to [ə] in [‘begəbə] ‘kings’. Furthermore, very few, if any, stressed syllables have [ə] as their nucleus. Seven of the fifteen noun class pronouns have [ə] as their nucleus.

For a more quantitative measure with regards to the prominence of pronouns, I took measurements of the duration of each syllable in the text of Appendix A.¹⁴ 93% of the 139 pronouns were relatively shorter than that of surrounding syllables. This is illustrated in (20), in which the pronouns *m* ‘1sg’ occurs in clauses (a) and (b), *a* ‘2sg’ in clause (c) and *də* ‘that’ in clause (d).

¹⁴ This quantitative analysis is problematic. The acoustic correlates for stress have not been definitively established: while the analysis of Chapter 7 offers evidence, it nevertheless does not constitute a sufficiently thorough evaluation. Determining the correlates of stress requires controlled frames, in which one can carefully assess the different variables involved in prominence, such as pitch, intensity, and duration. They also require a certain number of elicitations of each utterance, to which one applies statistical analysis. Ultimately, the definition of prominence is based on native speaker intuition, and determining such attitudes requires detailed and careful study.

While one might assume that quantitative studies are by nature quite objective, several possibilities for subjectivity may arise. For instance, normal conversational speech introduces many variables, including different rates of speed, the influences of pauses, etc. Furthermore, individual phones are not the same length, and as one phone transitions into another, it is not always clear where one ends and another begins.

(20) *The famine having killed (him) like that, he went and said: "Ah!*

- a. **M** dwopu,
1sg friend-u/bə
- b. **m** da teise bwogətwoli.
1sg Pst.Rec go-Pft clinic-i/a
- c. **A** n ba hunə ama,
2sg Cont as go.home thus
- d. **də** n nam pugə m wei,
that Cont still keep 1sg self

*My friend, I had gone to the hospital. Since you have thus come back,
that is still hanging on to me, (friends 26-27)*

In Table 2, we see the lengths of the syllables of (20).¹⁵

¹⁵ These lengths are noted in milliseconds, rounded to the nearest hundredth.

Table 2. Syllable Lengths from Example (20)

a.	Word	M	dwopu,				
	Syllable	m	dwo	pu,			
	Duration	0.13	0.14	0.19			
b.	Word	m	da	teisə			
	Syllable	m	da	tei	sə		
	Duration	0.08	0.13	0.16	0.07		
	Word	bwogətwoli.					
	Syllable	bwo	gə	two	li		
	Duration	0.06	0.11	0.11	0.10		
c.	Word	A	n	ba	hunə		ama,
	Syllable	a	n	ba	hu	nə	a ma
	Duration	0.07	0.06	0.14	0.12	0.09	0.06 0.16
d.	Word	də	n nam	pugə		m	wei,
	Syllable	də	n nam	pu	gə	m	wei
	Duration	0.08	0.17	0.11	0.05	0.13	0.21

Typically, the pronouns are shorter than other syllables in a phrasal unit. The length of *m* ‘1sg’ differs from clause (a) to (b), yet in both phrases, *m* is shorter than the syllables which follow. (I exclude *m* ‘1sg’ of the reflexive *m wei* ‘myself’ of clause (d), as it is part of an emphatic – and thus atypical – pronominal.)

A pronoun that is lengthened in relation to surrounding syllables sometimes results from its coalescence with the word-final schwa of a conjunction (e.g. [dó] ‘if’ + [u] ‘s/he’ becomes [dúu]). Furthermore, the possessive pronoun *m* ‘1sg’ in the left-detached vocative *m dwopu* ‘my friend’ is sometimes uncharacteristically long. The

prominent nature of a vocative with its sentence-initial (and post-pausal) position may cause this.¹⁶

Lengthening also occurs in cases of parallelism. In (21a), the pronominal antecedent *m* ‘1sg’ is lengthened.

(21) *That friend having gotten ahead in getting wealthy, and his having succeeded like that, and that friend of his, he not having gotten wealthy, he said: "Ah! My friend, we're good friends.*

a. **m** dyem ama
1sg get.ahead.of thus

b. bɔ́ karə,
Conj.SS.Seq succeed

c. də nwanu
that resemble

d. a karə e.
2sg obtain Foc

Thus, with me having gotten ahead of you to get wealthy, it's like you've gotten wealthy too. (friends 05)

In Table 3, which includes syllable lengths for (21), *m* ‘1sg’ is uncharacteristically longer than the verb. The pronoun *a* ‘2sg’ is uttered in parallel to *m* (both occur in clauses with the verb *karə* ‘succeed’) and is relatively short. The second element in parallelism may be typically shorter, and the presence of the prominence marker in the final clause may also affect the length of *a*.¹⁷

¹⁶ Lambrecht predicts that left-detached vocatives “necessarily receive a pitch accent of greater or lesser intensity” (Lambrecht 1996:279).

¹⁷ In this example, *m* is a foil, a constituent that “sets off a later constituent to advantage by contrast” (Levinsohn 2004:NARR04:12). In this example, the later constituent is *a* ‘2sg’. It is common for foils to be given prominence (ibid.).

Table 3. Syllable Lengths from Example (21)

a.	Word	M	dyem	ama	
	Syllable	m	dyem	a	ma
	Duration	0.20	0.10	0.06	0.07
b.	Word	bó	karə,		
	Syllable	bó	ka	rə	
	Duration	0.05	0.16	0.15	
c.	Word	də	nwanu		
	Syllable	də	nwa	nu	
	Duration	0.10	0.10	0.06	
d.	Word	a	karə + e.		
	Syllable	a	ka	rə e.	
	Duration	0.10	0.16	0.17	

4.7.3 Default prominence pattern for predicate-focus clauses

In his General Phrasal Accent Principle, Lambrecht predicts that “a phrasal accent marks the right boundary of a syntactic domain expressing a pragmatically construed portion of a proposition” (Lambrecht 1994:247). This principle applies to English and French, and we repeat the English example from Chapter 2: “She doesn’t have a particularly interesting **job**” (ibid. 243). This principle could potentially apply to Byali predicate focus since direct and indirect objects and adjunct material follow the verb, and might constitute the right boundary of the clause.

Lambrecht is more explicit about accent placement in a later article:

In English (as in many other languages), a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for PF [predicate-focus] construal is the presence of a point of prosodic prominence within the predicate portion of the sentence. If the sentence is intransitive, the main sentence accent will fall on the verb (or some

post-verbal adjunct) by default. If the sentence is transitive, the accent will by necessity fall on the object (unless the object is a ratified topic or is non-referential or referentially vague) (Lambrecht 2000:616).

I evaluated prominence in predicates by my own hearing, since the exact correlate of stress has not been identified. In the text studied, twenty-six clauses had post-verbal constituents. Post-verbal constituents were prominent in eleven clauses, the verb was prominent in twelve clauses, and three clauses were especially difficult to assess. In light of this, I conclude that the General Phrasal Accent Principle does not apply to Byali (as it does to English and French).

Thus, it is necessary to determine the principles of accent placement. I found that, by default, the **verb** is prominent in independent clauses when post-verbal constituents are present. In (22d), the verb *nundə* ‘buy’ is more prominent than the direct object noun phrase, and in (22e), *mwana* ‘give’ is more prominent than the indirect object noun phrase. (Prominent constituents are shown by bolding.)

(22) *He came and said: "My friend, don't abandon me; hunger will kill me.*

- a. M yi nagə,
1sg Pst.Indef want
- b. dɔ́ a tahi pefə bou kunkwangə,
if 2sg at.house money-fə/i be.present little
- c. a m mwanasu,
2sg 1sg give-Caus-Hab
- d. m **nundə** nin-digəhu
1sg buy food-hu/tu
- e. bɔ́ **mwana** m bisi.
Conj.SS.Seq give-Caus 1sg child-kə/si

I would like, if there is a little money at your house, that you give (some) to me, that I buy food and give to my children." (friends 12)

Firbas (1964:112), Levinsohn (1975:16-17), and Heimerdinger (1999:168) would predict the object of (d) and the goal of (e) to be ‘dominant focal elements’ (DFEs) in (22). However, the prosodically prominent constituent in Byali is not the DFE, but the verb that precedes it.

Since prominence falls on the verb by default, then a post-verbal constituent having prominence is marked. In such clauses, a speaker indicates that the information in the following clause is particularly significant (the DFE of the sentence). In (23b), the post-verbal adverbial *tahi* ‘there where’ is prominent, to indicate that the information in the following clause (“Leave it be!”) is particularly significant. (Clause [d] has default accent placement.)

(23) *I say that it's not with regards to money that I came; it's the famine that has me, (so) I have come.*"

- a. U sə:
3sg.u/bə say
- b. "M n bou **tahi** ama,
1sg Cont be.present there.where thus
- c. **yasə**,
leave.be
- d. m **teisū** coú
1sg leave-away.from trip-u/i

He replied: "There where I am thus, leave it be. I am going away on a trip..." (friends 18)

(24) is exceptional, in that all the post-verbal constituents are prominent.¹⁸ (24) constitutes the text’s climax; Levinsohn (2004:NARR05:13) notes that climaxes are often characterized by deviations from the normal pattern.

¹⁸ The word *baa* in (24) and (13) is a scalar additive (König 1991:69). It is not treated in this study.

(24) *He went on a trip, and when he was returning, they seized him on the road.*

a. Dwanədyebə u mwei
 customs.agent-u/bə 3sg.u/bə grab

b. bə cigərə
 Conj.SS.Seq receive

c. u n yi tou
 3sg.u/bə Cont Pst.Indef have

fwai n dyeli səsai.
 wealth-i/a Comp each-i/a all

d. Bə cigərə;
 Conj.SS.Seq receive

e. **baa pwigə** bə pə u sandə.
 even five.franc.coin-kə/si 3pl.u/bə not 3sg.u/bə remain

The customs officials seized him and got from him whatever wealth he had. And they got (all from him), even ten (francs) they did not leave him. (friends 37-38)

(25), which has two points of parallelism,¹⁹ is residual.

(25) *Here is some money: receive this money, and you be getting to work. Even if it's that I'm not here, you will help my child. Tomorrow, I think that*

a. **tə bisi** yí n you
 1pl child-kə/si Fut.Indef Cont get.along
 sə twasi
 3pl.kə/si other-kə/si

b. bə nwanu
 Conj.SS.Seq resemble

c. **tə n you kama tə twabə.**"
 1pl Cont get.along thus 1pl other-u/bə

our children will be getting along with each other like we are thus getting along with each other." (friends 08)

¹⁹ Lambrecht (1994) considers somewhat analogous examples; see pages 291 and 328. It appears that he would refer to such an example as a case of contrastive topics.

Table 4 corresponds with (25). Note that prosodic prominence marks the speaker's crucial point, the parallelism between the subjects of clause (a) and clause (c). The noun phrase subject *tə bisi* 'our children' is particularly prominent, as seen in the length of the last syllable of *bisi*. The possessive pronoun *tə* 'our' that precedes *bisi* is also lengthened, especially when compared with the verb *you* 'get along with'. In addition, the first syllables of the 'each other' constituent in both (a) and (c) receive prominence. The pronominal subject *tə* 'we' of the second element of the parallelism is not as lengthened as the first element. This was also the case in (21) (p. 54).

Table 4. Syllable Lengths from Example (25)

a.	Word	tə	bisi		yí	n	you
	Syllable	tə	bi	si	yí	n	you
	Duration	0.11	0.11	0.27	0.11	0.03	0.09
	Word	sə	twabə [sic], ...				
	Syllable	sə	twa	bə			
	Duration	0.13	0.15	0.04			
c.	Word	tə	n	you	kama		
	Syllable	tə	n	you	ka	m(a)	
	Duration	0.09	0.06	0.16	0.12	0.11	
	Word	tə	twabə.				
	Syllable	tə	twa	bə			
	Duration	0.11	0.16	0.09			

4.8 Summary of predicate focus

The analysis of Byali data confirms several of Lambrecht's assertions about predicate focus. First, predicate focus is the unmarked information structure in Byali.

Second, the topic is signaled as active and ratified in most cases: its referent is very often represented by a pronominal – possibly null – expression, and this topic expression is generally unaccented.

However, we conclude that Lambrecht’s General Phrasal Accent Principle does not apply to Byali. Rather, the dominant focal element of a clause or sentence typically **follows** the prosodically prominent elements. Lambrecht, however, does not set forth this principle as a universal tendency (Lambrecht 1994:247), so the Byali data only signals a limitation on the principle’s use.

In Chapter 5, we turn to the first of the marked information structures in Byali, argument focus.

CHAPTER 5

ARGUMENT-FOCUS INFORMATION STRUCTURE

This chapter treats the argument-focus information structure in Byali. The argument-focus structure serves to identify a missing argument in a proposition; it is the form used in responding to a question such as: “Who broke the window?” See Section 2.4.4 for further details.

The particle *e* is used to transform the unmarked predicate-focus information structure into the marked argument-focus information structure. This particle was introduced in Section 3.4 in connection with the identificational construction. In the chapters which follow, it will be referred to as the prominence marker. In argument focus, *e* follows the focal argument. If the focal argument is the subject, a cleft construction is used, and a complement clause follows the particle. A cleft construction does not occur when a non-subject argument is focal.

Section 5.1 concerns focus on subject arguments, while Section 5.2 deals with focus on non-subject arguments. Section 5.3 concerns prosodic marking involved in the two argument-focus constructions.

In the following examples, the prominence marker and the accented English argument appear in bold print.

5.1 Argument functioning as subject put in focus

The argument which serves as subject may be put in focus by clefting, as seen in (26b). The focal subject argument is followed by the prominence marker, which forms the right boundary of the first part of the cleft construction. The predicate of the clefted argument follows in a complement clause. We posit a silent or implicit copula between the parts of the cleft. In exceptional cases, an aspectual particle or adverbial may occur between the clefted argument and *e*, as in (49) (p. 90) and (55) (p. 95).

In (26), the speaker is relating a story about an older man hoping to buy a grain mill from his savings. However, when he counts his money, his eldest son exclaims that there is little. At this point, the father states that it is his youngest son who has stolen it. He thus answers an implicit question that both he and his eldest son had: who took the money?

(26) *The day of the eldest son's return home, he wanted to go and buy a grain mill, and hear what the money from the sales of his father was worth. He returned and wanted to go and buy a grain mill, and said, "My father, let's go and see that money." His father entered and set his sights on the money and took it, and came out and counted it. He (the eldest son) exclaimed: "My father, this money, it's really little!"*

a. U sə: "A!
3sg.u/bə say Ah

b. Bigə e n pirə-kə."
child-kə/si Foc Comp take-kə/si

*His father said: "Ah! It's the **child** (youngest son) who took it."*

(rich man 17)

The schema below represents the analysis for clause (26b).

Presuppositions ²⁰ : of consciousness	“x took it (the money)”
Assertion:	“x = child”
Focus:	“child”
Focus domain:	NP

Other examples of this argument-focus construction are (30b) (p. 68); (48) (p. 90); and (54) (p. 95).

5.2 Argument functioning as non-subject put in focus

In (27), the speaker is identifying a missing argument which functions as the direct object. In this construction, the non-subject argument is followed by the prominence marker,²¹ and clefting does not occur.

As to the context, the main participant of the story is approaching the market place with a strange object. Many ask him, “What are you carrying?” He replies that they should be patient, but adds, “It’s the very marvel of all the people that I’m carrying.”

- (27) *And he was entering in the market, whoever saw him asked:
 "Dyagərau, you're carrying what? Dyagərau, you're carrying what?"
 He replied, "No. Be patient, and no one will miss out." And he said,
 "M toúinə hirəbə səsai í hywosəm e."
 1sg carry-toward person-u/bə all very marvel-m Foc
 "It's the very **marvel** of all the people that I'm carrying."*

(beehive 14)

²⁰ As in the discussion of predicate-focus, the tables will not include the types of presuppositions which do not apply.

²¹ I have analyzed this construction as argument-focus. As stated in 2.5.1, Lambrecht rules out an argument-focus interpretation if accent alone indicates the argument-focus of an object, according to his Principle of Predicate-focus Interpretation (Lambrecht 1994:304). However, he allows for an argument-focus interpretation if morphosyntactic marking is present (ibid. 296).

The schema below represents the analysis for clause (27).

Presuppositions: of consciousness	“proposition ‘referent of ‘I’ is carrying x’ is active in the discourse”
Assertion:	“x = very marvel of all the people”
Focus:	“very marvel of all the people”
Focus domain:	NP

5.3 Phonological and prosodic characteristics of argument focus

To determine the characteristics of the prominence marker, we compare (26b) and (27) with their structural variants, which lack the prominence marker.

The use of structural variants is integral to this section and to Chapter 7. To elicit them, I played a clause containing the prominence marker to the original storyteller or to a native Byali linguistic student. For some clauses, I asked if the clause was grammatical without the marker; for others, I asked in what other clausal positions the prominence marker could occur. I recorded these variant clauses, and later the linguistic student stated the contexts in which they could be uttered. In most cases, I verified their grammaticality with another Byali speaker.

5.3.1 Structural variants involving the identification of subject

(28) is a structural variant of (26b) (p. 62).

(28) Bigə pirəse."
 child-kə/si take-Pft

The child has taken (it).

(rich man 17, ver. 2)

(28), unlike (26b), has no focus marker, no complement clause, and the verb occurs in the perfect.²²

Morphophonemically, the prominence marker in (26b) coalesces with the word-final schwa of [‘bigə], resulting in the surface form [‘bigɛ]. (As we shall see in Sections 7.3 and 7.4, coalescence is typical when the prominence marker follows a word-final schwa.)

As in the discussion of predicate focus, I measured the duration, pitch, and intensity for the two instantiations of *bigə*. These figures are seen in Table 5. The only significant difference in measurements is the increase in duration of the syllable in which coalescence occurs (Baart, p.c., July 7, 2004). An increase in duration is not surprising since the surface form has two underlying vowels.

Table 5. Comparison of *bigə e* and *bigə*

	With <i>e</i> (26b) (p. 62)		Without <i>e</i> (28)	
Word:	bigə	e	bigə	
Phonetic:	[‘bigɛ]		[‘bigə]	
Syllable:	bi	gə + e	bi	gə
Duration:	0.20	0.12	0.21	0.08
Pitch:	227.64	130.89	217.26	118.13
Intensity:	82.02	84.49	85.28	81.41

²² The **perfect** is not to be confused with the **perfective**, in which the event is conceived as a whole (Comrie 1976:12). The perfect signals that the action of the verb was finished before the time of the utterance (ibid); in Byali discourse, the perfect is one means to signal an event that is backgrounded, that is, not a part of the story’s event line (Levinsohn and Dooley 2001:81).

5.3.2 Structural variants involving the identification of non-subjects

We now compare (27) (p. 63) to its structural variant, (29), which occurs without the prominence marker. The marker intensifying possession, *í*, is also omitted in (29), as its presence was judged to make the sentence ill-formed.

(29) "M toúinə hirəbə səsai hywosəm."
1sg carry-toward person-u/bə all marvel-m
I am carrying the marvel of all the people. (beehive 14, ver. 2)

In (27), because the direct object ends in [m], *e* cliticizes to the end of the direct object; it forms a new syllable, the onset of which is heard as [n]. The change in the place of articulation of a word-final nasal is typical when the prominence marker follows, as we shall see in Section 7.4. The formation of a new syllable is natural for Byali, whose preferred syllable type is CV.

As for the prosodic effects of *e* in (27), see Table 6. The durations of the syllables *hywo-* and *-sə* both decrease when the prominence marker is added and the extra syllable created. Baart writes that as the number of syllables in a word increases, their durations tend to decrease (Baart, p.c., July 7, 2004).

Table 6. Comparison of *hywosəm e* and *hywosəm*

	With <i>e</i> (27) (p. 63)			Without <i>e</i> (29)	
Word:	hywosəm e			hywosəm	
Phonetic:	[ˈhywõsə̃nɛ̃]			[ˈhywõsə̃m]	
Syllable:	hywo	sə	ne	hywo	səm
Duration:	0.25	0.15	0.33	0.26	0.35
Pitch:	118.39	115.36	109.55	116.75	113.41
Intensity:	80.81	85.4	73	77.52	71.88

5.4 Negative argument focus

Byali uses the particle *nwa*, seen in (30d) and discussed in Section 3.4, to negate an argument in a proposition or to correct a wrong assumption (see Lambrecht 1994:229). In (30), a man has given his good friend money to start a business. When the man himself has a need, he comes to that friend. The friend asks him if he is after the money he had originally given. The man replies that it is not the original money that he is seeking.

(30) *He replied: "My friend, there where I am thus, there is no money. I am thinking, are you following that money that you had given me?" He (the other) said: "Oh!*

- a. M dwopu, m wei,
1sg friend-u/bə 1sg self
- b. bwani e n m tou-i,²³
famine-i/a Foc Comp 1sg have-i/a
- c. m pə maanə
1sg not come-toward
- d. bó a kaám bini nwa.
Conj.SS.Seq 2sg ask debt-i/a Neg.Foc

My friend, myself, it's the famine that has me. It's not the debt that I came to ask you for. (friends 15)

The following is the analysis for (30d):

Presuppositions: of consciousness	“x is not that which the speaker is requesting” (the speaker corrects a wrong assumption)
Assertion:	“x = debt”
Focus:	“debt”
Focus domain:	Noun Phrase

5.5 Conclusion

Through answers to explicit or implicit questions, we noted that Byali signals argument focus by means of the prominence marker *e* and its negative counterpart *nwa*. We also examined the surface forms of *e* in two environments, following a schwa and following a nasal consonant.

Chapter 6 will center on the sentence-focus information structure, in which *e* again plays a part.

²³ In (30b), *e* marks the subject as focal – see Section 5.1.

CHAPTER 6

SENTENCE-FOCUS INFORMATION STRUCTURE

In Chapter 4, the discussion centered on the unmarked information structure, predicate focus. In Chapter 5, we turned to a marked structure, argument focus. Another marked information structure, and the final major one which Lambrecht treats, is sentence focus.

As stated in Section 2.4.5, Lambrecht divides sentence focus into two subtypes. One is the presentational sentence-focus structure: it may introduce entities in reference to the text-internal world (Section 6.1), or in reference to the text-external world (Section 6.2). A second subtype is event-reporting (Section 6.3), a clause encoding a proposition about a brand-new referent in answer to the question “What happened?”

The essential characteristics of this information structure are: (1) the entire sentence serves as the assertion and the focus (Lambrecht 1994:233); (2) “the focus domain is the sentence, minus any topical non-subject arguments” (Lambrecht 2000:617);²⁴ and (3) the structure clearly signals that the subject of the sentence is not the topic (Lambrecht 1994:234).

6.1 Presentational sentence-focus information structure

The purpose of presentational sentences is “to introduce not-yet activated referents into a discourse” (ibid. 143). In this section, we treat referents introduced into the text-internal world. Moreover, we distinguish between constructions which create a

²⁴ Lambrecht allows a contradiction in his 1994 work (ibid. 234). In sentence-focus, he states that the entire sentence is the assertion, focus, and focus domain. Focus by definition has no presuppositional material, yet he states that focus domains must “be allowed to contain non-focal elements” (ibid. 216). The formulation here reflects the change in definition.

new mental representation (Section 6.1.1), and those which introduce referents into an existing mental representation (Section 6.1.2).

6.1.1 Presentation of referents in a new mental representation

In the initial clause of a Byali narrative, the speaker creates a new mental representation for the hearer. He introduces a brand-new referent and most often comments about it.

In Byali, the prominence marker *e* occurs in the default construction for the presentational sentence. Specifically, the new referent is followed by the prominence marker, which forms the right boundary of the first part of the cleft construction. The predicate follows in a complement clause. The speaker then adds a comment about the activated referent in the same sentence.

This construction is nearly identical in form to the argument focus of a subject (Section 5.1). The one exception is that the intransitive verb *bou* ‘be present’ occurs in the complement clause in the presentational construction.

Consider (31), the initial sentence in a story about a young man who did not like to work hard.

- (31)
- | | | | | | |
|----|-----------------|-----------|------------------|--|----------|
| a. | Kuntagə | | hingə | | e |
| | young.man-kə/si | | Indef-kə/si | | Foc |
| | n | yi | bou-kə, | | |
| | Comp | Pst.Indef | be.present-kə/si | | |
| b. | bə | pwam | twaməm | | magərə. |
| | Conj.SS.Sim | not.like | work-m | | too.much |

There was once a certain young man, and he did not like work much.

(young man 01)

The analysis for (31a) is in the schema which follows.

Presuppositions: of knowledge	“this is a story about someone”
Assertion:	“c = there was once a certain young man ”
Focus:	“certain young man”
Focus domain:	Clause

In the schema above, the focus does not include the existential verb. Indeed, the prominence marker is not applied to the existential verb: it occurs immediately after the noun phrase. This matter will be addressed in Section 6.4.4.

The presence of *e* in the presentational construction indicates that it is not a marker of argument focus per se (see Chapter 5), but rather a more general marker of prominence. Lambrecht argues that unidentifiable and inactive referents are “necessarily prominent” (ibid. 105, 108). Knowing that s/he is creating a new mental representation, the speaker must attend to the main referent of the story.

This Byali construction bears some resemblance to the **bi-clausal presentational construction** (ibid. 180) referred to in Section 2.4.5, and whose form in English is: “Once there was a man who was very smart...” Yet it differs in an important respect: in the English form, the dummy subject “there” allows the accent to fall on the complement, the brand-new referent. In the Byali construction, the accent similarly falls on the referent being introduced, but this referent is the initial constituent of the clause. A partial parallel nonetheless exists in English. In another presentational construction, the brand-new referent, encoded as a full noun phrase, occurs as the sentence-initial constituent and is accented. For example, a story may begin: “A **salesman** was going around, and appeared at my **door** one day...”

There appears to be no strong justification for analyzing the structure “NP + *e* + complement clause” as a cleft construction with two propositions, though a noun phrase followed by *e* can constitute a complete proposition, as in (12b) (p. 42). In the presentational construction, the structure is referential, and not propositional. In other words, although the literal translation of the Byali construction is “There was a certain young man who existed,” it is the equivalent of “There was once a certain young man.” This single-proposition interpretation better fits Lambrecht’s claims.

Much less frequently, the referent is introduced by a construction identical to (31), minus the prominence marker. An example is (32). The referent is encoded as a full noun phrase, which is then followed by a complement clause; that in turn is followed by a comment.

- (32)
- | | | | | |
|----|--------------|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| a. | Dacani | n | yi | bou-i, |
| | old.man-i/a | Comp | Pst.Indef | be.present-i/a |
| b. | sunswamə, də | byen-nundi | | hyamə. |
| | now that | year-fifth-i/a.sg | | like.that |
- There was once an old man, now, that (makes) the fifth year like that.*
(rich man 01)

It may be that a speaker chooses this construction when the referent is not as highly salient as in the default one. In (32b), the speaker notes when the story took place, rather than describing an event that involves the referent.

The schema for (32) closely resembles the one for (31a), except that the existential verb and temporal adverbial are included in the assertion and focus for (32).

Presuppositions: of knowledge	“this is a story about someone”
Assertion:	“there was once an old man (five years ago)”
Focus:	“there was once an old man (five years ago)”
Focus domain:	Clause

6.1.2 Presentation of referents into an existing mental representation

A speaker may also introduce referents into a discourse – an established mental representation – “without linking this element either to an already established topic or to some presupposed proposition” (ibid. 144). In the Byali corpus, one finds two constructions for doing so.

The first follows the structure of (31) (p. 70), the default presentational structure. In the context of (33), the speaker has not yet mentioned a particular referent. The new referent is anchored to the story’s main participant by the pronoun *kə* ‘his’.²⁵

(33) *There was once a certain student, and his father then enrolled him in school. Even I myself who am speaking this in this way, and he, we were together to begin school. And then, as time went on, his father did not have anything at all.*

a. Ama, *kə* dape-ciau e
but 3sg.*kə*/si older.brother-u/bə Foc
n yi bou-u,
Comp Pst.Indef be.present-u/bə

b. bə nwam kawekuhu.
Conj.SS.Sim be supervisor-hu/tu

But he had an older brother (Lit: it was his older brother who was there), and he was a supervisor. (brother 05)

The following is the schema for (33a):

²⁵ The recorded story does not include the prominence marker and complement clause: these were added by the editor of the story.

Presuppositions:	-----
Assertion:	“his brother was there”
Focus:	“brother”
Focus domain:	Clause

The second construction, seen in (34b), involves the existential verb *bou* ‘be present’ in an intransitive clause: neither the prominence marker nor a complement clause are present. (34b) has other sentence-focus characteristics: the subject is encoded as a full noun phrase and is prosodically prominent (to my hearing), while no prominence is discernable on the predicate.

The referent *diditi* ‘insecticide’ has not yet been mentioned in the text. An adverbial, *hyahə* ‘inside’, occurs clause-finally; adverbials did not occur in the presentational sentence-focus structures discussed in 6.1.1. Here, a wife who has never given birth is jealous because her husband’s second wife has given birth. Thus, she does not prevent the second wife’s child from eating seed treated with insecticide.

(34) *And what of the first wife? She got jealous. They went another day to the field and were planting millet. The millet seed was lacking, and they told that last wife that she should return and get millet. She returned and went and set her sights on it,*

a. də bə burə yia
 Conj 3pl.u/bə sow millet-i/a

b. də diditi bou hyahə.
 Conj insecticide-i/a be.present inside

-- *and they planted millet and DDT was inside.* (only child 09)

Understanding (34b) as presentational, the following is its schema:

Presuppositions:	-----
Assertion:	“insecticide was inside”
Focus:	“insecticide was inside”
Focus domain:	Clause

(35a) is a residual example and involves the negative particle *nwa* (see Section 3.4). The speaker is introducing the new referent *bigə* ‘child’ in reference to other participants, although he has not specifically mentioned “children” to this point in the story.

(35) *Another adult warned, "If it (the crocodile) falls in the water, he will thus not have strength!" If you thus go and stomp and water enters in his hole there, inside it, it's that he'll die. They went, and were stomping;*

a. *bigə twagə masə sagə nwa,*
child-kə/si other-kə/si as.a.result also Neg.Foc

b. *də kə pə hyá kwai baa n cerəm.*
Conj 3sg.kə/si not know forest-i/a even one.time

another child was there besides, and he didn't know the forest even a bit (one time). (crocodile 13)

I interpret (35a) as presentational; the speaker’s goal is to introduce another referent into the discourse. The words *masə sagə nwa* may be translated ‘was there besides’. The following is the analysis for (35a):

Presuppositions: of knowledge	“referent of ‘other’ is one of a group of young males” (in the culture, young men accompany older men on hunts)
Presuppositions:	-----
Assertion:	“child was there”
Focus:	“child was there”
Focus domain:	Clause

6.2 Deictic presentational sentence-focus information structure

In the deictic presentational construction, a referent is introduced in reference to the text-external world. The only deictic presentational construction occurring in the Byali data involves *ntə* ‘here’. In one of its uses, *ntə* occurs clause-initially and is followed by the referent which the speaker is (physically) indicating, followed by a pause. This is seen in (36a).

(36) *That friend having gotten ahead in getting wealthy, and his having succeeded like that, and that friend of his, he not having gotten wealthy, he said: "Ah! My friend, we're good friends. Thus, with my having gotten ahead of you to get wealthy, it's like you've gotten wealthy too.*

- a. **Ntə** pefə,
here money-fə/i
- b. a cigərə pefə afa,
2sg receive money-fə/i that.fə/i
- c. bə n dyahəsu.
Conj.SS.Seq Cont work-Hab

Here is some money: receive this money, and you be getting to work.
(friends 06)

The schema below represents the analysis for (36a).

Presuppositions:	-----
Assertion:	“here is some money (that he is holding)”
Focus:	“some money”
Focus domain:	Clause

The prominence marker does not occur in (36a): as seen in (37), *e* cannot co-occur in the same clause with *ntə*. In (37), the prominence marker is applied to the noun phrase following *ntə*, and a pause separates *ntə* from the noun phrase.

focus clause from its predicate-focus counterpart. Therefore, the paradigmatic contrast may motivate the presence of the prominence marker (and accompanying cleft construction) in the majority of presentational sentence-focus constructions, as seen in (38):

- (38) *Dau e n yi bou-u*
man-u/bə Foc Comp Pst.Indef be.present-u/bə
There was once a man... (only child 01)

The subject of the presentational construction is thus distinguished from that of predicate-focus constructions. (39) is a predicate-focus sentence in which the lexical noun phrase *dau* ‘man’ occurs.

- (39) *It's that I (the wife) am asking you to forgive me, you let it be, we be gathering to be together like we used to be; now, I have acknowledged that I was wrong, and I will not again do you any wrong." And then,*
dau twangə u buoi
husband-u/bə follow 3sg.u/bə chest-i/a
the husband followed his heart (Lit: chest)... (runaway wife 17)

Recall that four of sixteen story-initial presentational sentences occur without the prominence marker (while still having the complement clause), as in (32a) (p. 72). Consequently, although it is the norm to give prominence to the referent that is being introduced, it is not obligatory to do so.

Finally, the presentational sentence-focus construction is structurally identical to that of argument focus in which the subject is focal (see Section 5.1). This fact illustrates Lambrecht’s claim that “in many languages, including English, AF [argument-focus] sentences can be formally indistinguishable from SF sentences” (ibid. 615). Sentence-focus contrast with argument focus is more easily tolerated in a language (ibid. 628).

6.4.2 *The Principle of Subject-Object Neutralization (PSON)*

Lambrecht also posits the Principle of Detopicalization, quoted in Section 2.4.5, as well as a stronger, positive version of this principle, the Principle of Subject-Object Neutralization (PSON). The PSON, to which we shall refer often in the following discussion, states: “In a SF construction, the subject tends to be grammatically coded with some or all of the prosodic and/or morphosyntactic features associated with the focal object in the corresponding PF construction” (ibid. 626).²⁶ This is so because languages tend to signal that “the proposition expressed by the sentence is not pragmatically construed as being about the referent of this [subject] NP” (ibid. 627). The fact that SF subjects have object characteristics will inhibit objects from occurring in SF constructions (ibid.). Lambrecht concludes that “this neutralization of the subject-object opposition is perhaps the most important grammatical feature of SF constructions across languages” (ibid.).

As a logical outworking of PSON, Lambrecht affirms that “SF sentences are intransitive (with certain exceptions...)” (ibid. 617). Similarly, he writes: “the class of intransitive predicates permitting SF construal is restricted to those with non-agentive subjects (again, with certain apparent exceptions...)” (ibid.). Indeed, in the Byali texts, fifteen of sixteen²⁷ story-initial presentational sentences include the intransitive existential verb *bou* ‘be present’,²⁸ and *bou* does not take agentive subjects.

²⁶ Lambrecht offers this as a universal tendency, but admits that this formulation may be overly strong (ibid.).

²⁷ In three text-initial clauses, participants are introduced as comments in a topic-comment articulation, such as “I knew a girl...”

²⁸ While we are not yet sure if the prominence marker has prosodic effects, the following quote may

Many languages work around the sentence-focus constraint of only one full noun phrase per sentence (ibid. 651)²⁹ by using the bi-clausal presentational construction (ibid. 653), mentioned in Sections 2.4.5 and 6.1.1. In the Byali texts, such a dual coding construction occurs thirteen out of a possible sixteen times, and is exemplified by (31).³⁰ (See Section 6.1.1, p. 70.)

However, the prominence marker may be followed by a complement clause that has a transitive verb. For example, in (40c), the verb *yurə* ‘steal’ occurs with the direct object *swofə* ‘sheep’.

- (40)
- | | | | | | | |
|----|-------------|---------|------------|-------------|------------|--------|
| a. | Tə | yahə, | tə | syeli | | hyahə, |
| | 1pl | at.home | 1pl | village-i/a | | in |
| b. | hirau | | tuou | | | e |
| | person-u/bə | | other-u/bə | | | Foc |
| c. | n | da | yurə-u | tuou | swofə. | |
| | Comp | Pst.Rec | steal-u/bə | other-u/bə | sheep-fə/i | |
- At our home, in our village, there was once another man who stole another's sheep.* (sheep 01)

Such an example does not violate the PSON constraint against co-occurring lexical objects: since *bou* is not the verb of the complement clause, the sentence is interpreted as

apply to Byali: “In certain languages with syntactic rather than prosodic SF marking, SVO sentences... cannot receive SF construal for syntactic reasons, because in such languages lexical objects may not cooccur with SF subjects in a single clause... As a corollary, when sentences with two lexical NPs do occur in such languages, they necessarily receive PF construal, i.e. one of the NPs is necessarily construed as a topic” (ibid. 621-22).

²⁹ Lambrecht states that unaccented pronominals functioning as objects may occur in sentence-focus constructions, as these are not “focus expressions” (ibid. 627).

³⁰ Because a single-proposition interpretation better fits Lambrecht’s claims, we interpret the “NP + *e* + complement clause” as one proposition, on the condition that the verb of the complement clause is the existential *bou*.

However, I tested for the presence of the prominence marker in presentational sentences by careful listening. I found evidence for the prominence marker in eleven of the twelve story-initial presentational clauses transcribed with it;³¹ the marker's presence was manifested either in the audible presence of an allomorph or in length. One clause that was not transcribed with the marker may indeed have it. Until a thorough study is done, firmer conclusions cannot be drawn.

6.4.4 Partitioning of the presentational construction

Lambrecht allows for presupposed elements in SF sentences in exceptional cases, such as the pronoun “he” found in “There he **is**” (ibid. 614). However, he states that “the SF category differs from the two other categories in that it lacks a bipartition of the proposition into a focal and a non-focal, or presupposed, portion” (ibid. 615).

The placement of the prominence marker after the referent in presentational constructions contradicts Lambrecht's claim. The marker creates a partition between what is in focus and what is not in focus. In comparing argument-focus and sentence-focus constructions in (42) and (43), we see that the marker signals prominence on the preceding constituent. In (43), the presentational construction, *e* does not apply to the existential verb since *e* immediately follows the initial referent.

³¹ In one clause, the prominence marker appears to occur after the existential verb of the complement clause. However, native speakers state that such a placement is not possible.

- (42) Argument-focus clause
 Bigə e n pirə-kə."
 child-kə/si Foc Comp take-kə/si
It's the child (youngest son) who took it. (rich man 17)
- (43) Presentational sentence-focus clause
 Bigə e n yi bou-kə.
 child-kə/si Foc Comp Pst.Indef be.present-kə/si
There was once a child. (boy tree 01)

Thus, in (43) the presentation of the referent is key, and adding that s/he exists is less important. Levinsohn, in fact, claims that the focus in presentational sentence-focus clauses is typically on the referent being introduced (Levinsohn 2004:NARR02:5). One may conclude that the presence of the Byali prominence marker creates a partition, if not between focal and non-focal, then at least between more and less prominent constituents.

6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter we examined Byali's sentence-focus information structure. The default presentational construction occurring in the Byali corpus involves a full noun phrase being introduced clause-initially, with the noun phrase followed by the prominence marker and a complement clause. Variations of this construction occur when referents are introduced within an existing mental representation. We also recognized one existential presentational construction, using *ntə*.

Furthermore, we have seen that Byali complies in general with Lambrecht's Principle of Subject-Object Neutralization.

Finally, Byali's preferred presentational sentence-focus structure contradicts Lambrecht's claim that sentence focus by nature lacks a focal/non-focal partition. The

use of the prominence marker in the Byali construction leads one to the following conclusion: the referent has more prominence than stating that it exists.

CHAPTER 7

AN EXPANDED VIEW OF THE PROMINENCE MARKER

In Chapter 5 we saw that the prominence marker serves as the syntactic means to signal the argument-focus information structure and, in Chapter 6, that it plays a major role in the presentational sentence-focus construction. In this chapter, we shall see that the same marker has a broader function.

7.1 The prominence marker *e* in topic-comment articulations

When Byali speakers transcribed the Byali data, they noted the presence of the prominence marker in constructions other than argument focus and sentence focus. Not only does it follow noun phrases, but also verbs and other predicating expressions.

Consider (44), the context of which involves men hunting. They have cornered a crocodile in its hole and are digging to reach it.

(44) *They began to dig for the crocodile; having dug for the crocodile, they were going to reach the crocodile, and their companion took a flashlight and lit up the hole and said, "Ah!*

a. Tə nində e yogə hyangə;
1pl arrive Foc crocodile-kə/si aforementioned-kə/si

b. yasəni,
leave.be-2pl.Imp

c. m kə pwom twonhu."
1sg 3sg.kə/si shoot gun-hu/tu

*We have **reached** that crocodile; move aside, I'll shoot him with the gun."* (crocodile 06)

Clause (a) of (44) displays the characteristics of the topic-comment articulation. The subject of the clause is active – and thus presupposed – in the discourse context, signaled by its pronominal status.³² The predicate adds information about this topic. Yet the presence of the prominence marker after the verb requires that other interpretations be considered.

(44a) cannot be a sentence-focus construction. As we saw in the preceding chapter, a pronoun may not occupy the subject position in sentence focus (Lambrecht 2000:618) since a pronominal form signals that the constituent is in the presupposition. Likewise, a full noun phrase may not occur as object.

Furthermore, the clause cannot be argument focus, since the speaker is not identifying a missing argument. Both *tə* ‘1pl’ and *yogə* ‘crocodile’ are active within the context, and thus presupposed. And the verb cannot be considered an argument; Lambrecht’s definition excludes active verbs. He writes: “a finite verb phrase cannot play an argument role in a sentence, unless it is made into a referential expression by being ‘nominalized’” (Lambrecht 1994:75).

We thus conclude that this sentence has a predicate-focus information structure. The following is the analysis for (44a):

³² Lambrecht writes: “the clearest evidence for assumed activeness is no doubt the morphological evidence of pronominal coding, with the possible exception of generic pronouns like English you [and] they...” (Lambrecht 1994:95).

Presuppositions:	
(i) of consciousness	“referents of ‘we’ and ‘crocodile’ are active in hearer’s short-term memory”
(ii) of topicality	“referent of ‘we’ is ratified topic for comment c”
Assertion:	“c = have reached that crocodile”
Focus:	“have reached”
Focus domain:	Predicate

Given that (44a) is predicate focus, the pragmatic effect of *e* in (44a) is to highlight the arrival, the accomplishment of the men’s goal.

The post-verbal position of the prominence marker in (44a) is not an isolated occurrence. Consider (45c), taken from the story of the eldest son returning home so that he and his father can buy a grain mill. They discover that the money is less than expected.

(45) *The day of the eldest son's return home, he wanted to go and buy a grain mill, and hear what the money from the sales of his father was worth. He ... said, "My father, let's go and see that money." His father entered and set his sights on the money and took it, and came out and counted it.*

- a. Kə kaám
3sg.kə/si ask
- b. bə tə:
Conj.SS.Seq say
- c. "M pweu, pefə afa,
1sg father-u/bə money-fə/i that.fə/i
- fə pə sahə e!"
3sg.fə/i small Foc

He (the eldest son) exclaimed: "My father, this money, it's really little!"
(rich man 16)

(45c) also has the basic characteristics of predicate focus. The referent *pefə* ‘money’ is active within the context. It is activated as topic by the left-detached construction, which is separated from the main clause of (c) by a pause. As proof of the

referent's status as ratified topic, it is expressed within the main clause of (c) by the pronominal *fə* 'it'. The predicate again serves as comment about the topic.³³

(45c) cannot be categorized as having another information structure. A sentence-focus interpretation is not possible: as noted above, the subject of a sentence-focus clause must be expressed as a full noun phrase. The Byali sentence is analogous to Lambrecht's example "Something's **burning**" (Lambrecht 1994:142). He classifies "something" as an indefinite pronoun, and as such, he disallows a sentence-focus interpretation.

An argument-focus interpretation is ruled out by Lambrecht's definition of argument. "They [arguments] cannot normally be expressed in phrases which serve as predicates" (ibid. 75). In (45c), the prominence marker follows the predicating expression *pə sahə* 'little'. Furthermore, the speaker is not identifying which one of several sums of money his father is holding, an assertion which might be translated "It is **the small one.**"

We conclude that this sentence is predicate focus. The pragmatic effect of *e* is apparently to signal degree. The information structure analysis for (45c) is as follows:

Presuppositions:	
(i) of consciousness	"referents of 'my', 'father', and 'money' are active in hearer's short-term memory"
(ii) of topicality	"referent of 'money' is ratified topic for comment c"
Assertion:	"c = is (really) small"
Focus:	"is (really) small"
Focus domain:	Predicate

³³ Lambrecht classifies certain exclamations as predicate focus and others as sentence focus (Lambrecht and Michaelis 1996:382). Given the context, I have interpreted this clause as an exclamation. I assume that Lambrecht would accept a predicate-focus interpretation.

Thus, in both Byali examples, the pragmatic effect of the prominence marker is to highlight the predicating expression in a special way, despite the position of the predicating expression within the focus domain. We shall consider this a non-identificational use of the prominence marker.

7.2 Structural variants involving a verb with a nominal direct object

The original clause for the following discussion is (44a) (p. 85). The structural variants below demonstrate the range of constituents to which the prominence marker may be applied. The free translations which accompany the structural variants are approximations, since the sentences were elicited outside of a natural pragmatic context.

(46) is an argument-focus construction. The speaker identifies the direct object as the missing argument for the question: “**What** have we reached?”

(46)	Tə	nində	yogə		e;
	1pl	arrive	crocodile-kə/si		Foc
	<i>We have reached a crocodile;</i> ...				(crocodile 06, ver. 2)

(47) is a slightly different type of argument-focus structure. The determiner *hyangə* ‘that (aforementioned)’ is used; as a result, this structural variant answers the question “**Which** crocodile have we reached?”

(47)	Tə	nində	yogə	hyangə	e;"
	1pl	arrive	crocodile-kə/si	aforementioned-kə/si	Foc
	<i>We have reached that crocodile;</i> ...				(crocodile 06, ver. 3)

(48) is another argument-focus construction. The speaker signals the subject as the missing argument to the question “**Who** has reached that crocodile?”

- (48) Tə e n nində-bə
 1pl Foc Comp arrive-u/bə
 yogə hyangə;
 crocodile-kə/si aforementioned-kə/si
We have reached that crocodile;... (crocodile 06, ver. 4)

(49) is a variation of (48). The speaker appears to counter a contrary expectation as to who reached the crocodile.

- (49) Tə ba e n nində-bə
 1pl truly Foc Comp arrive-u/bə
 yogə hyangə;
 crocodile-kə/si aforementioned-kə/si
It is indeed we who have reached that crocodile;... (crocodile 06, ver. 5)

(50) is the default predicate-focus construction: no prominence marker is present.

- (50) Tə nində yogə hyangə;
 1pl arrive crocodile-kə/si aforementioned-kə/si
We have reached that crocodile;... (crocodile 06, ver. 6)

7.3 Prosodic evidence for *e* from a simple construction

Having offered evidence for an enlarged role for the prominence marker, I must ensure that the morpheme used for these examples is the same as used in argument focus and sentence focus. For this, I will again rely on Baart's evaluation of the data.

Compare (45c) (p. 87) with (51), which is the same clause but without *e*. In (51), the clause has the unmarked predicate-focus structure.

- (51) "M pweu, pefə afa,
 1sg father-u/bə money-fə/i that.fə/i
 fə pə sahə."
 3sg.fə/i small
 "My father, this money, it's *little*." (rich man 16, ver. 2)

In (45c), *e* occurs after the predicating expression *pə sahə* 'little' in sentence-final position. In this position, *e* coalesces with the [ə] of *sahə*. See Table 7: the increased duration of the syllable in which the coalescence occurs is significant, according to Baart. The increase in duration can be explained by the coalescence of *e* with the word-final [ə] of *sahə* (Baart, p.c., July 7, 2004).

Furthermore, I perceive that the accent on *sahə* has shifted from the first to the second syllable. Thus, a Byali hearer, sensing either this increased duration (see Section 4.7.1 concerning Baart's conclusions on significant correlates for prominence) or some other unidentified factor, will recognize the presence of the prominence marker *e*.

Table 7. Comparison of *sahə e* and *sahə*

	With <i>e</i> (45c) (p. 87)		Without <i>e</i> (51)	
Word:	sahə	e	sahə	
Phonetic:	[sã'hẽ]		[sãhõ]	
Syllable:	sa	hə + e	sa	hə
Duration:	0.22	0.32	0.19	0.25
Pitch:	139.9	142.62	144.82	148.88
Intensity:	80.66	79.6	80.8	73.77

The phonological effects of *e* in this example resemble those of the argument-focus construction in (26b) (Section 5.1, p. 62; Table 5, p. 65).

7.4 Structural variants involving a complex verbal construction

We turn to a more complex construction. The context of (52) is that a man is drinking away his family's income, so that there is not enough money either to buy basic necessities or to offer food to visitors (a high cultural value). Meanwhile, his friend is trying to steal his wife, and is slandering him.

The original formulation of the sentence is given in (52). The marker occurs in clause (b), after the verb *di* 'eat'.

(52) *His friend_i, then, began to realize that his friend_j was slandering him. His friend_j, then, also seeing, he got up and went to see his_i wife. And he_j asked her, "You, they give you how much per day, when you go to market?" He came and asked her:*

- a. "M yi nagə
1sg Pst.Indef want
- b. bə di e."
Conj.SS.Seq eat Foc
- c. U sə
3sg.u/bə say
- d. nin-digəhu pə sandə.
food-hu/tu not remain

"I'd (really) like to eat." She said that no food was left.

(steal wife 30-31)

The position of *e* in this sentence creates an ambiguous information structure reading. Depending on the pragmatic context, the sentence could be interpreted as either predicate focus or argument focus. (Sentence focus is excluded due to the pronominal subject.)

An argument-focus interpretation is possible if the man, by expressing the statement "I want to **eat**," were identifying which of several possible things he wanted to

do, for example, “to borrow corn,” “to wash my hands,” etc. The placement of the prominence marker after the direct object, analogous to (27) (Section 5.2, p. 63), allows for such an interpretation.

Such an interpretation does not fit (52b). The man’s statement is a comment about himself, akin to: “(You know), I’d really like to **eat**.” Yet this comment has a hidden motive. He knows that the woman, having nothing to give him, will feel shame; this is a sentiment one avoids at all costs in the Byali culture. In making his request for food, then, he is assured of creating resentment in the wife’s heart toward her husband.

Compare (52a-b) with (53), in which *e* follows *nagə* ‘want’. One might use (53) in response to the question: “Did anyone force you to eat?”

(53) M yi nagə e
 1sg Pst.Indef want Foc
 bə di.
 Conj.SS.Seq eat

*(Did anyone force you to eat?) I really **wanted** to eat.*

(steal wife 30, ver. 2)

The interpretation (53) is more straight-forward. A sentence-focus interpretation is ruled out because of the pronominal subject. An argument-focus interpretation is also not possible because Lambrecht’s definition of argument excludes verbs. (53) therefore has predicate focus: it is a comment about the speaker in which special prominence is given to the verb. This is a non-identificational use of the marker.

We must again verify that the morpheme in (52b) and (53) is the same as used in argument focus. We first examine the effects of the prominence marker when it follows the verb *di* ‘eat’, which occurs in sentence-final position.

Segmentally, when *e* follows [i], an epenthetic [j] is introduced to maintain CV syllables. In this context, we see a different manifestation of the marker than seen previously, yet the prominence marker is clearly distinguishable. Consequently, a discussion of acoustic measurements is unnecessary.

We now compare the verb of desire, *nagə* from example (52a), with *nagə e*, from example (53). This comparison involving a word-final schwa is not completely analogous to those discussed in 7.3 and 5.3.1 because in (53) the prominence marker occurs in sentence-medial position before a pause, presumably caused by the conjunction *bá*.

Segmentally, the *e* coalesces with the word-final [ə] of *nagə*. See Table 8: Baart again draws attention to the increased length of the syllable in which the coalescence occurs. In this example, the lengthening is greater than in the cases of *sahə e* (Section 7.3) and *bigə e* (Section 5.3.1), perhaps because it is pre-pausal (ibid. July 7, 2004). The accent has shifted from the first to the second syllable in [nã'gɛ], as it did in [sã'hẽ].

Table 8. Comparison of *nagə e* and *nagə*

	With <i>e</i> (53) (p. 93)		Without <i>e</i> (52) (p. 92)	
Word:	nagə	e	nagə	
Phonetic:	[nã'gɛ]		['nãgə]	
Syllable:	na	gə + e	na	gə
Duration:	0.28	0.17	0.23	0.07
Pitch:	134.51	141.55	125.31	120.34
Intensity:	83.57	81.72	80.77	78.23

In (54), the prominence marker follows the subject, the first person singular pronoun *m*. A Byali speaker understands this sentence to answer the question: “Which of

you was wanting to eat?” It is an argument-focus construction (as discussed in Section 5.1); as such, a complement clause follows the prominence marker.

- (54) M e n yi nagə-u
 1sg Foc Comp Pst.Indef want-u/bə
 bə di.
 Conj.SS.Seq eat

*(Which of you was wanting to eat?) It's **me** who was wanting to eat.*
 (steal wife 30, ver. 3)

Various phonological changes apply to the first part of (54). The prominence marker *e* causes the insertion of an epenthetic alveolar stop, providing an onset to form a syllable with *e*. The pronoun's nasal assimilates to the point of articulation of [d]. These processes produce the form [ndɛ]. Since the marker is clearly distinguishable, acoustic data are not provided.

We include (55) to again show that there are slight variations in structure when *e* occurs (see [49], p. 90). In (55), *e* follows an adverbial expression, enhancing the meaning of that adverb. It is understood that it is not someone else who wants to eat, and that he who asks the question has no interest in eating.

- (55) M ba e
 1sg indeed Foc
 n yi nagə-u
 Comp Pst.Indef want-u/bə
 bə di.
 Conj.SS.Seq eat

*It is indeed **me** who wanted to eat.* (steal wife 30, ver. 4)

7.5 The prominence marker *e* as a single morpheme

Three facts provide evidence that *e* is the same morpheme, whether occurring in identificational or non-identificational contexts. The first is speaker intuition: Byali speakers transcribing the data believe that one morpheme is at work. The second involves similar phonological and prosodic effects of *e* following a word-final schwa. The third involves function: in the different contexts examined, *e* always gives prominence to the constituent that immediately precedes it.

7.6 Restrictions on the use of the prominence marker *e*

Byali grammar does not allow multiple occurrences of the prominence marker within a clause; such sentences are judged to be ill-formed, as seen in (56), a modification of (52) (p. 92) and (53) (p. 93):

- (56) *M yi nagə e
1sg Pst.Indef want Foc
bá di e.
Conj.SS.Seq eat Foc
**Not grammatically correct.*

Likewise, (57) is ungrammatical because the prominence marker follows both the subject and the verb that complements ‘want’:

- (57) *M e n yi nagə-u
1sg Foc Comp Pst.Indef want-u/bə
bá di e.
Conj.SS.Seq eat Foc
**Not grammatically correct.*

Lambrecht predicts this restriction. He writes: “a single proposition cannot express two assertions, therefore it cannot have two foci” (Lambrecht 1994:329). The Byali sentence in (57), if acceptable, would assert both “x = me” and “c = wanted to eat.”

However, multiple instances of *e* are possible in a single sentence provided they occur in different assertions. In (58), a prominence marker follows a personal pronoun; a pause is clearly audible after the prominence marker. In the main clause, a second *e* occurs after the verb *di* ‘eat’. Thus, the referent functioning as subject is identified and activated by the left-detached argument-focus structure, and prominence falls on one of the constituents of the main clause.

- (58) M e, m yi nagə
 1sg Foc 1sg Pst.Indef want
 bə di e.
 Conj.SS.Seq eat Foc
It's I, I wanted to really eat. (steal wife 30, ver. 5)

As a final point, (59) is considered ill-formed, and demonstrates the necessity of the complement clause following the prominence marker.

- (59) *M e yi nagə
 1sg Foc Pst.Indef want
 bə di.
 Conj.SS.Seq eat
 **Not grammatically correct.*

7.7 The prominence marker *e* in a related language

We must ask if prominence markers in related languages produce similar effects. Neukom, in his study of Nateni, a language closely related to Byali, has noted a particle

-dà that functions in a similar way to Byali's *e*. It identifies the arguments functioning as subject and object and also occurs after predicates (Neukom 1995:135-36, 138).³⁴

7.8 The prominence marker *e* within Lambrecht's framework

The presence of *e* distinguishes the non-subject argument-focus construction (Section 5.2) from a predicate-focus one (see Chapter 4). However, *e* may also be applied to a predicating expression in a predicate-focus clause (Section 7.1). Lambrecht's writings do not treat a morpheme with this distribution.

Moreover, Lambrecht is hesitant to consider prominence on predicating expressions (Lambrecht 1994:264), as seen in Byali examples involving the non-identificational use of *e*. He acknowledges, however, that his treatment of focus-marking devices does "not exhaust the grammatical possibilities found across languages. A more complete typology of focus-marking mechanisms would have to mention for example the marking of focus-structure distinctions within the morphology of the verb, as in various African languages" (ibid. 224-25).

7.9 Conclusion

The prominence marker in Byali does more than simply mark argument focus (the limited conclusion of Chapter 5) and render more prominent a referent as it is introduced (as discussed in Chapter 6). It may also be applied to various clausal constituents, including predicating expressions in the predicate-focus information structure. This suggests that a non-identificational use be posited for it.

³⁴ Neukom notes, however, a second marker of prominence, *-ma*, and concludes that it operates on a higher syntactic level than *-dà* (ibid. 137).

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

The goals of this thesis, as set forth in Section 1.1, were: (1) to provide an overview of Lambrecht's framework; (2) to provide an analysis of Byali data using this framework; and (3) to evaluate the suitability of Lambrecht's framework for analyzing Byali focus structure. A further specific goal was (4) to more fully understand the characteristics and use of the particle *e*. Having met goals (1), (2), and (4) in previous chapters, I turn to (3), an evaluation of Lambrecht's framework.

Lambrecht presents a coherent framework for categorizing the major syntactic constructions of a language as they perform particular communication functions. Furthermore, he clearly outlines the essential elements in evaluating the information structure of a clause. He addresses the major theoretical issues involved in information structure, not simply accepting traditional conceptions of key elements such as mental representations, topic, and focus, but attempting to refine these concepts as used by those preceding him. In applying Lambrecht's work to Byali, many of his conclusions regarding the major information structures have proved very useful.

While I find much that is useful in Lambrecht's works, I must also add some critical comments. First, the non-identificational use of Byali's prominence marker *e* does not easily fit into Lambrecht's framework. Although *e* is the morpheme that specifies the missing argument in a proposition, it also gives prominence to verbs in sentences which

have the characteristics of predicate focus. As data from different language families become available, Lambrecht's model will hopefully be able to "stretch."

A second comment involves Lambrecht's conception of focus in the presentational sentence-focus construction. As stated earlier, Lambrecht argues that "the SF category differs from the two other categories in that it lacks a bipartition of the proposition into a focal and a non-focal, or presupposed, portion" (Lambrecht 2000:615). Yet the Byali prominence marker appears to create just such a partition, signaling that the referent being introduced has more prominence than the fact that it existed. As such, its use supports Levinsohn's observation as to the role of this construction.

Third, the Byali data provide evidence of a language whose predicate-focus construction does not follow the General Phrasal Accent Principle. Although Lambrecht does not claim this principle as a universal, Byali provides data for a limitation on the principle's application.

A final area of critique has to do with "usability," the ease of applying Lambrecht's framework to Byali. I find his 1994 publication somewhat difficult to apply to a language that is very different from those he treats. In that work, for example, he offers few full analyses of clauses. His 1998 and 2000 articles help clarify practical matters which he does not discuss in great detail in his 1994 publication. For example, his 1998 article offers a clearer explanation for the implementation of different kinds of presuppositions initially posited in his 1994 work. It also provides a fuller explanation of the evaluation of the information structure of presuppositional material. In a similar way, his 2000 article on sentence focus provides further details on evaluating sentence types, and offers a wide range of linguistic data.

As a final consideration, I suggest two directions for further research: (1) deeper understanding of intonational phonology; and (2) application to non-narrative material.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Friends Text

- 01 Dau hiau e n yi bou-u
man-u/bə Indef-u/bə Foc Cont Pst.Indef be.present-u/bə

də u dwopu
Conj 3sg.u/bə friend-u/bə

də bə dwopə magərə.
Conj 3pl.u/bə be.friends well

There was once a certain man, with his friend, and they were very good friends.

- 02 Bə n dwopəm hyamə,
3pl.u/bə Cont be.friends-Pft like.that

bə yisə
Conj.SS.Seq get.up

bə byahə cendi, karəm couí.
Conj.SS.Seq look.for commerce-i/a getting.rich-m path-u/i

Their being friends like that, they got up and looked for commerce, the path of getting rich.

- 03 U dwopu karə.
3sg.u/bə friend-u/bə succeed

His friend succeeded.

- 04 U dwopu n dyem karə,
3sg.u/bə friend-u/bə Cont get.ahead.of obtain

u n karəm hyamə,
3sg.u/bə Cont obtain-Pft like.that

də u dwopu hyau,
Conj 3sg.u/bə friend-u/bə aforementioned-u/bə

də u pə karə,
Conj 3sg.u/bə not obtain

u sə: "A!
3sg.u/bə say Ah

That friend having gotten ahead in getting wealthy, and his having succeeded like that, and that friend of his, he not having gotten wealthy, he said: "Ah!"

05 M dwopu, tə n dwopə ama,
 1sg friend-u/bə 1pl Cont be.friends thus
 m dyem ama
 1sg get.ahead.of thus
 bə karə,
 Conj.SS.Seq succeed

də nwanu a karə e.
 that resemble 2sg obtain Foc

My friend, we're good friends. Thus, with my having gotten ahead of you to get wealthy, it's like you've gotten wealthy too.

06 Ntə pefə,
 here money-fə/i
 a cigərə pefə afa,
 2sg receive money-fə/i that.fə/i
 bə n dyahəsu.
 Conj.SS.Seq Cont work-Hab

Here is some money: receive this money, and you be getting to work.

07 Baa də m kwa e,
 even if 1sg not.be Foc
 a yí tiim m bigə.
 2sg Fut.Indef help 1sg child-kə/si

Even if I'm (truly) dead (Lit: even if I'm [truly] not present), you will help my child.

08 Saam sə derə,
 morning-m Fut.Imm light.up
 m maam
 1sg think-Hab
 tə bisi yí n you sə twasi
 1pl child-kə/si Fut.Indef Cont get.along 3pl.kə/si other-kə/si
 bə nwanu tə n you kama tə twabə."
 Conj.SS.Seq resemble 1pl Cont get.along thus 1pl other-u/bə

Tomorrow, I think that our children will be getting along with each other like we are thus getting along with each other."

09 U dwopu hyau, u cigərə pei,
 3sg.u/bə friend-u/bə aforementioned-u/bə 3sg.u/bə receive money-fə/i
 bə n dyahəsu.
 Conj.SS.Seq Cont work-Hab

That friend of his, he took the money and was working.

10 U n dyahəsum hyamə,
 3sg.u/bə Cont work-Hab-Pft like.that
 u dwopu hyau,
 3sg.u/bə friend-u/bə aforementioned-u/bə
 u n pa pa
 3sg.u/bə Cont go go
 n u bində-u hyau pei,
 Comp 3sg.u/bə lend-u/bə aforementioned-u/bə money-fə/i
 u n pa pa,
 3sg.u/bə Cont go go
 u tahi, fwai wasə.
 3sg.u/bə at.house wealth-i/a finish

He having gotten to work like that, that friend of his, as he was going along, he who had loaned him that money, as he was going along, at his house, the wealth finished.

11 U maanə
 3sg.u/bə come-toward
 bə tə:
 Conj.SS.Seq say
 "M dwopu, pə m kaam;
 1sg friend-u/bə not 1sg abandon
 bwani yí m wua."
 famine-i/a Fut.Indef 1sg kill

He came and said: "My friend, don't abandon me; hunger will kill me."

- 12 M yi nagə,
 1sg Pst.Indef want
 də a tahi pefə bou kunkwangə,
 if 2sg at.house money-fə/i be.present little
 a m mwanasu,
 2sg 1sg give-Caus-Hab
 m nundə nin-digəhu
 1sg buy food-hu/tu
 bə mwana m bisi.
 Conj.SS.Seq give-Caus 1sg child-kə/si
*I would like, if there is a little money at your house, that you give (some) to me,
 that I buy food and give to my children."*
- 13 U sə: "M dwopu,
 3sg.u/bə say 1sg friend-u/bə
 m n bou tahi ama,
 1sg Cont be.present there.where thus
 pefə kwa.
 money-fə/i not.be
He replied: "My friend, there where I am thus, there is no money.
- 14 M maam,
 1sg think-Hab
 a twangə pei
 2sg follow money-fə/i
 a n yi m mwana-hi hyei?"
 2sg Comp Pst.Indef 1sg give-Caus-fə/i aforementioned-fə/i
I am thinking, are you following that money that you had given me?"

- 15 U sə: "Youu!
 3sg.u/bə say oh
- M dwopu, m wei,
 1sg friend-u/bə 1sg self
- bwani e n m tou-i,
 famine-i/a Foc Comp 1sg have-i/a
- m pə maanə
 1sg not come-toward
- bó a kaám bini nwa.
 Conj.SS.Seq 2sg ask debt-i/a Neg.Foc

He (the other) said: "Oh! My friend, myself, it's the famine that has me. It's not the debt that I came to ask you for.

- 16 M yi a tə,
 1sg Pst.Indef 2sg say
- dó a karə,
 if 2sg obtain
- dó a karə,
 if 2sg obtain
- baa dó m kwa e,
 even if 1sg not.be Foc
- a yí tiim m bigə.
 2sg Fut.Indef help 1sg child-kə/si

I had said to you, if you got wealthy, if you got wealthy, even if I'm (truly) dead (Lit: even if I'm [truly] not present), you will help my child.

- 17 M pə tə
 1sg not say
- m maanə pei hyahə nwa;
 1sg come-toward money-fə/i in Neg.Foc
- bwani e n m tou-i,
 famine-i/a Foc Comp 1sg have-i/a
- m maanə."
 1sg come-toward

I say that it's not with regards to money that I came; it's the famine that has me, (so) I have come."

- 18 U sə:
 3sg.u/bə say
 "M n bou tahi ama, yasə,
 1sg Cont be.present there.where thus leave.be
 m teisu couí
 1sg leave-away.from trip-u/i
 bó hunə;
 Conj.SS.Seq go.home
 də m hyambə pefə,
 if 1sg find money-fə/i
 m a mwana."
 1sg 2sg give-Caus

He replied: "There where I am thus, leave it be. I am going away on a trip and will return: if I find money, I will give it to you."

- 19 U yisə
 3sg.u/bə get.up
 bó tei u couí.
 Conj.SS.Seq leave 3sg.u/bə trip-u/i

He got up and went on his trip.

- 20 U n teim hyamə u í couí
 3sg.u/bə Cont go-Pft like.that 3sg.u/bə own trip-u/i
 bó hunə,
 Conj.SS.Seq go.home
 bó n nua, u yahə,
 Conj.SS.Seq Cont see 3sg.u/bə at.home
 u dwopu hyau,
 3sg.u/bə friend-u/bə aforementioned-u/bə
 də u tou bigə
 Conj 3sg.u/bə have child-kə/si
 də kə pə sahə.
 Conj 3sg.kə/si small

After he had gone on his trip and come back, he was seeing at home, that friend of his, he had a child and it was small.

- 21 Bwani kangə,
famine-i/a refuse
kə bwatə mworu,
3sg.kə/si partake grass-hu/tu
kə dogə hyahə dwongə.
3sg.kə/si belly-kə/si in hurt
The famine persisted: the child ate some weeds, and his belly ached.
- 22 Də u dwopu hyau,
Conj 3sg.u/bə friend-u/bə aforementioned-u/bə
də u yise Kutwonu
Conj 3sg.u/bə leave-Pft Cotonou
bə pə wondə
Conj.SS.Sim not look
u dwopu hyau.
3sg.u/bə friend-u/bə aforementioned-u/bə
And that friend of his, he left for Cotonou and he did not look after that friend.
- 23 Bwani kangə.
famine-i/a refuse
The famine persisted.
- 24 U hunə
3sg.u/bə go.home
bə n nua
Conj.SS.Seq Cont find
u dwopu bigə hyangə,
3sg.u/bə friend-u/bə child-kə/si aforementioned-kə/si
kə sən yiese.
3sg.kə/si Pst.Imm die-Pft
He came home, and saw that that child of his friend, he had died the day before.

- 25 U dwopu bigə hyangə,
 3sg.u/bə friend-u/bə child-kə/si aforementioned-kə/si
 kə n sən yia ama,
 3sg.kə/si Cont Pst.Imm die thus
 bwani e n kə wua-i.
 famine-i/a Foc Comp 3sg.kə/si kill-i/a

That child of his friend, he having died the day before like that, it was the famine that had killed him.

- 26 Bwani n wuom hyamə,
 famine-i/a Cont kill-Pft like.that
 u tei
 3sg.u/bə go
 bə tə: "A!
 Conj.SS.Seq say Ah
 M dwopu,
 1sg friend-u/bə
 m da teise bwogətwoli.
 1sg Pst.Rec go-Pft clinic-i/a

The famine having killed (him) like that, he went and said: "Ah! My friend, I had gone to the hospital.

- 27 A n ba hunə ama,
 2sg Cont as go.home thus
 də n nam pugə m wei,
 that Cont still keep 1sg self
 m pwa fi
 1sg not be.able
 bə tə, "Youu!
 Conj.SS.Seq say oh
 M pwa yatənə.
 1sg not leave.again-toward

Since you have thus come back, that is still hanging on to me, I will not be able to say: "Oh, I won't return.

- 28 Dó a tahi pefə bou,
 if 2sg at.house money-fə/i be.present
 m ba sa nagə
 1sg as however want
 bó mwana bwogətwoli pei e."
 Conj.SS.Seq give-Caus clinic-i/a money-fə/i Foc
If at your house there is some money, it's the money for the hospital that I would only want to give."
- 29 U sə: "M dwopu, ama,
 3sg.u/bə say 1sg friend-u/bə but
 m pə nwansə,
 1sg not deny
 m nəm a mwana a pefə."
 1sg Fut.Indef 2sg give-Caus 2sg money-fə/i
He replied: "My friend, but I will not deny it, I will give you the money."
- 30 Bó pirə u dwopu hyau,
 Conj.SS.Seq take 3sg.u/bə friend-u/bə aforementioned-u/bə
 u pei,
 3sg.u/bə money-fə/i
 bó u mwana
 Conj.SS.Seq 3sg.u/bə give-Caus
 bó tə: "A!
 Conj.SS.Seq say Ah
 M a mwana a pei.
 1sg 2sg give-Caus 2sg money-fə/i
*And he took the money that friend of his had given him and he gave it and said:
 "Ah! I give you your money."*
- 31 M hyá
 1sg know
 a m kaámsu a pei hyahə."
 2sg 1sg ask-Hab 2sg money-fə/i in
I know that you were asking for your money."

32 U sə: "A!
3sg.u/bə say Ah

M dwopu, dǒ hyamə e,
1sg friend-u/bə if like.that Foc

yasə."
leave.be

He replied: "Ah! My friend, if it's like that, let it be."

33 U sə: "A!
3sg.u/bə say Ah

M hyá
1sg know

a m kaámsu a pei hyahə;
2sg 1sg ask-Hab 2sg money-fə/i.pl in

pirə a pei,
take 2sg money-fə/i.pl

a hundə."
2sg go.home

He replied: "Ah! I know that you were asking for your money; take your money and you go home."

34 Akwei hyau,
that.u/bə aforementioned-u/bə

bǒ u mwana u pei,
Conj.SS.Seq 3sg.u/bə give-Caus 3sg.u/bə money-fə/i

u tǎ hyamə, bǒ ywabə
3sg.u/bə then Conj.SS.Seq bow.head

bǒ yousə.
Conj.SS.Seq cry

That one, and he gave him his money, and he, then, he bowed his head and cried.

35 U dwopu hyau, u pə yuu.
3sg.u/bə friend-u/bə aforementioned-u/bə 3sg.u/bə not stay

That friend of his, he did not stay around.

- 36 Bó tei coú
 Conj.SS.Seq go trip-u/i
 bó n hundə̀nə,
 Conj.SS.Seq Cont go.home-toward
 bə u korə coú hyahə.
 3pl.u/bə 3sg.u/bə seize path-u/i in
He went on a trip, and when he was returning, they seized him on the road.
- 37 Dwanədyebə u mwei
 customs.agent -u/bə 3sg.u/bə grab
 bó cigərə
 Conj.SS.Seq receive
 u n yi tou fwai n dyeli sə̀sai.
 3sg.u/bə Cont Pst.Indef have wealth-i/a Comp each-i/a all
The customs officials seized him and got from him whatever wealth he had.
- 38 Bó cigərə;
 Conj.SS.Seq receive
 baa pwigə bə pə u sandə.
 even five.franc.coin-kə/si 3pl.u/bə not 3sg.u/bə remain
And they got (all from him), even ten (francs) they did not leave him.
- 39 Bó u pwom
 Conj.SS.Seq 3sg.u/bə hit
 bó u bia,
 Conj.SS.Seq 3sg.u/bə jail-Caus
 bó u yeranu
 Conj.SS.Seq 3sg.u/bə make.leave-Caus-together
 bó u kaam,
 Conj.SS.Seq 3sg.u/bə let.go
 u hundə̀nə.
 3sg.u/bə go.home-toward
And they beat him and locked him up, and then set him free and let him go, and he went home.

APPENDIX B

Rich Man Text

- 01 Dacani n yi bou-i,
old.man-i/a Comp Pst.Indef be.present-i/a
sunswamə, də byen-nundi hyamə.
now that year-fifth-i/a like.that
There was once an old man, now, that makes the fifth year like that.
- 02 Də í dacani bou,
that own old.man-i/a be.present
bə tou fwai magərə suu,
Conj.SS.Sim have wealth-i/a well well
bə tou bisi tari,
Conj.SS.Sim have child-kə/si three
sə dia yisə yworəhu.
3pl.kə/si two leave foreign.land-hu/tu
And this old man was there, and he had great wealth, and he had three sons, two of them left for a foreign region.
- 03 Bó yasə kə cagə cincani,
Conj.SS.Seq leave 3sg.kə/si one-kə/si courtyard-i/a
hyangə də dacani,
aforementioned-kə/si Conj old.man-i/a
bə n wagə bou.
Conj.SS.Sim Cont gather.together be.present
And that left one of them at home, he and the old man, they were there together.
- 04 Dacani hyani, də tən kwosə nahi,
old.man-i/a aforementioned-i/a that Hab.Pst sell ox-fə/i
bə bea pei.
Conj.SS.Seq put.down-Caus money-fə/i
And that old man, he would sell cows, and set aside the money.

- 05 Bó kwosə swobi,
 Conj.SS.Seq sell sheep-fə/i
 bə bea pei.
 Conj.SS.Seq put.down-Caus money-fə/i
And he (would) sell sheep, and set aside the money.
- 06 Bó kwosə busi,
 Conj.SS.Seq sell goat-kə/si
 bə bea pei.
 Conj.SS.Seq put.down-Caus money-fə/i
And he (would) sell goats, and set aside the money.
- 07 Hywambəkə hyangə, kə tən doú
 younger.brother-kə/si aforementioned-kə/si 3sg.kə/si Hab.Pst enter
 bə magə dacani pei
 Conj.SS.Seq set.attention.to old.man-i/a money-fə/i
 bə pirə,
 Conj.SS.Seq take
 dacani pə hyá.
 old.man-i/a not know
That younger brother, he would enter and set his sights on the money of the old man and take it, the old man didn't know.
- 08 Bó tei kari,
 Conj.SS.Seq go market-i/a
 bə di
 Conj.SS.Seq eat
 bə wasə.
 Conj.SS.Seq finish
And he would go to the market, and eat.

- 09 Saam derə,
morning-m light.up
kə yegə sagə doú
3sg.kə/si again also enter
bó magə pefə twafə,
Conj.SS.Seq set.attention.to money-fə/i other-fə/i
bó pirə;
Conj.SS.Seq take
də dacani pə hyá,
Conj old.man-i/a not know
tusa pwisi dia diadyebə.
thousand-i/a twenty two-u/bə

The next day, he would again enter and set his sights on other money and take it, and the old man didn't know, some ten thousands.

- 10 Kə yi tən doú
3sg.kə/si Pst.Indef Hab.Pst enter
bó pirə tusa pwisi dia,
Conj.SS.Seq take thousand-i/a twenty
bó cahəri tusa pwigə
Conj.SS.Seq exchange thousand-i/a ten
bó bea,
Conj.SS.Seq put.down-Caus
bó magə pwisi dia
Conj.SS.Seq set.attention.to twenty
bó pirə.
Conj.SS.Seq take

And he would enter and take ten thousand, and exchange it for five thousand and set it back, and set his sights on ten thousand and take it.

- 11 Sani fə wasə,
time-i/a 3sg.fə/i finish
kə yegə sagə hunə
3sg.kə/si again again return.home
bó magə tusa pwisi dia,
Conj.SS.Seq set.attention.to thousand-i/a twenty
bó yera.
Conj.SS.Seq make.leave-Caus
When it was finished, he would again return and set his sights on ten thousand, and take it out.

- 12 Bó magə tusa pwigə
Conj.SS.Seq set.attention.to thousand-i/a ten
bó bea,
Conj.SS.Seq put.down-Caus
bó ha n pugə pugə,
Conj.SS.Seq Fut.Near Cont keep keep
bó magə dacani pei,
Conj.SS.Seq set.attention.to old.man-i/a money-fə/i
pe-ceti sai
money-big-i/a all
bó wasə.
Conj.SS.Seq finish
And set his sights on five thousand and set it back, and in taking [from the money] over and over, he set his sights on the old man's money, all of the large sum, and finished it.

- 13 Bicangə hunə dai,
 child-big-kə/si return.home day-i/a
- bə nagə
 Conj.SS.Seq want
- bə tei nundə mansini,
 Conj.SS.Seq go buy grain.mill-i/a
- bə cesə
 Conj.SS.Seq hear
- kə pweu n kwosə pei də i mingəm.
 3sg.kə/si father-u/bə Cont sell money-fə/i that 3pl.fə/i equal-Pft
- The day of the eldest son's return home, he wanted to go and buy a grain mill, and hear what the money from the sales of his father was worth.*

- 14 Kə hunə
 3sg.kə/si return.home
- bə nagə
 Conj.SS.Seq want
- tei nundə mansini,
 go buy grain.mill-i/a.sg
- bə tə:
 Conj.SS.Seq say
- "M pweu, tə doú
 1sg father-u/bə 1pl enter
- bə hyambə pei hyei."
 Conj.SS.Seq see money-fə/i aforementioned-fə/i
- He returned and wanted to go and buy a grain mill, and said, "My father, let's go and see that money."*

- 15 Kə pweu doú
 kə/si.sg father-3sg.u/bə enter
- bə magə pei hyei
 Conj.SS.Seq set.attention.to money-fə/i aforementioned-fə/i
- bə pirənə,
 Conj.SS.Seq take-action.with
- bə yenə
 Conj.SS.Seq come.from
- bə hei.
 Conj.SS.Seq count

His father entered and set his sights on the money and took it, and came out and counted it.

- 16 Kə kaám
 3sg.kə/si ask
- bə tə:
 Conj.SS.Seq say
- "M pweu, pefə afa, fə pə sahə e!"
 1sg father-u/bə money-fə/i that.fə/i 3sg.fə/i small Foc

He (the eldest son) exclaimed: "My father, this money, it's really little!"

- 17 U sə: "A!
 3sg.u/bə say Ah
- Bigə e n pirə-kə."
 child-kə/si Foc Comp take-kə/si

His father said: "Ah! It's the child (youngest son) who took it."

- 18 Bə wusə bi-hywambəkə hyangə.
 Conj.SS.Seq call child-small-kə/si aforementioned-kə/si

And he called that youngest son.

- 19 Bi-hywambəkə hyangə, kə sə: "A!
 child-small-kə/si there 3sg.kə/si say Ah
- I da yisə
 2pl Pst.Rec get.up
- bó m yasə, m wei də m pweu,
 Conj.SS.Seq 1sg leave 1sgself Conj 1sg father-u/bə
- m pwa fi
 1sg not be.able
- bó n dyahəsu
 Conj.SS.Seq Cont work-Hab
- bó pə hyim."
 Conj.SS.Seq not eat

That youngest son, he said, "Ah! You got up and left me, myself and my father; I wasn't able to work without eating."

- 20 Bə tə hyamə, bi-cangə hyangə,
 3pl.u/bə then child-big-kə/si aforementioned-kə/si
- kə magə pei hyei,
 3sg.kə/si set.attention.to money-fə/i aforementioned-fə/i
- bó pirə
 Conj.SS.Seq take
- bó tə: "A wei,
 Conj.SS.Seq say yourself
- a narə;
 2sg be.right
- a pə pyeta,
 2sg not mistake-Caus
- bó magə pei."
 Conj.SS.Seq set.attention.to money-fə/i

That oldest brother, he set his sights on that money and took it and said, "You, you are right. You didn't do wrong in setting your sights on the money."

- 21 Bó tə:
 Conj.SS.Seq say
 "A e n pugə-u tə pweu
 2sg Foc Comp keep-u/bə 1pl father-u/bə
 bó maanə
 Conj.SS.Seq come-toward
 bó tu yagə ama,
 Conj.SS.Seq attain today thus
 tə bei, tə bounə mwəhu,
 1pl self 1pl be.present-toward grass-hu/tu
 tə n a tiim.
 1pl Cont 2sg help

And he said: "It's you who are taking care of our father up to today thus. And we ourselves are living in the bush, we are helping you."

- 22 Sunswamə, a sa yasə,
 now 2sg however leave.be
 a pə yegə
 2sg not again
 bó swanə tə pweu fwai,
 Conj.SS.Seq destroy 1pl father-u/bə wealth-i/a
 tə karə pei."
 1pl obtain money-fə/i

Now, you let it go, you don't come back and ruin our father's wealth, and we'll come up with the money."

- 23 Bó tə hyamə,
 Conj.SS.Seq then
 bó magə pei sabəhu,
 Conj.SS.Seq set.attention.to money-fə/i bag-hu/tu
 bó pirə.
 Conj.SS.Seq take

He then, he set his sights on the bag for the money, and took it.

24 Bó tei
Conj.SS.Seq go

magə mansini
set.attention.to grain.mill-fə/i

bó nundə.
Conj.SS.Seq buy

And went and set his sights on a grain mill and bought it.

25 Bó magə kə
Conj.SS.Seq set.attention.to 3sg.kə/si

hywambəkə hyangə,
younger.brother-kə/si aforementioned-kə/si

bó mwana,
Conj.SS.Seq give-Caus

bó n yegu.
Conj.SS.Seq Cont return-Hab

And set his sights on that younger brother, and gave it to him, and went back (to the foreign region).

26 Bi-hywambəkə hyangə,
child-small-kə/si aforementioned-kə/si

kə bou sunswamə cincani.
3sg.kə/si live.in now courtyard-i/a

And that younger brother, he is living now at home.

27 Kə pweu yiese,
3sg.kə/si father-u/bə die-Pft

kə hywambəkə sa e
3sg.kə/si younger.brother-kə/si however Foc

n ham-kə cincani
Comp stay-kə/si courtyard-i/a

bə pugə kə hyuou
Conj.SS.Sim keep 3sg.kə/si mother-u/bə

də də sui magərə suu.
Conj that good well well

His father has died, and it was his youngest son, nevertheless, who stayed in the courtyard, and he took care of his mother, and it was very good.

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