Information structure in Nda'nda'

Hugues Carlos Gueche Fotso
The University of Bamenda
guechefotso@gmail.com

Information structure in Nda'nda'

Hugues Carlos Gueche Fotso

The University of Bamenda
guechefotso@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper describes how a syntactic constituent can be manipulated within the structure of a sentence in Nda'nda' in order to give it pragmatic prominence. To achieve this, attention has to be paid to the various means used by Nda'nda' speakers to bring listeners to focus their attention on the constituent bearing the special information they want to pass across. Two main categories of prominence in information structure are usually differentiated in language generally: topic and focus. Focus in Nda'nda' is encoded by cleft constructions, pseudo-cleft constructions and the adverbial *ndàʔ* 'only'. While analyzing focus via cleft construction we argue that there is similarity between the object cleft construction and the relative clause. The focus marker *ndaʔ* marks restrictive focus with concomitant morphosyntactic changes. Topic constructions are restricted to noun phrases and are achieved essentially through left-dislocation to mark contrastive topic with an additional pronoun in resumptive function whose form varies depending on whether the topicalized element is human or non-human.

Keywords: Bamileke, cleft constructions, Eastern Grassfields Bantu, focus, information structure, left-dislocation, topic

1 Introduction

According to Chafe (1976), as quoted by Dejan (2015), "the term information structure refers to the ways linguistically encoded information is presented relative to the speaker's estimate of the temporary mental state of the receiver of the message". Information structure is a vital concept in linguistics because it helps us understand how information is organized, encoded, and transmitted in both spoken and written language. It focuses on how speakers or writers structure their propositions to highlight specific information and make it more comprehensible for the listener or reader. In par-

ticular, the study of information structure examines how focus and topic are used to manage the flow of information in discourse. While focus is concerned with presenting new or unexpected information, topic deals with given or expected information around which the sentence is structured. To illustrate these concepts, each example in this study is introduced with a question that the given utterance answers. This approach provides a clear context for understanding focus and topic, demonstrating their functions in discourse and enhancing the reader's comprehension of these concepts. By using questions in this way, the study not only clarifies the concepts of focus and topic but also helps to demonstrate their pragmatic functions and improve the overall readability of the analysis. Before delving into the expression of focus and topic in Nda'nda', it is important to first understand the language's background and basic grammatical structures, which provide the necessary context for analyzing how these elements are used to manage information flow and create coherence in discourse.

2 Language background

Nda'nda' is an Eastern Grassfields Bantu language of the Bamileke subgroup spoken in the Nkam division of the Littoral Region and in the Nde and Koung-Khi divisons of the West Region of Cameroon.[1] It has two main dialects: Undimeha (East Nda'nda') and Ungameha (South and West Nda'nda'). Our data was collected from Batoufam, an East-Nda'nda' sub-dialect, referred to by native speakers as *ghom a tswefap*. The language is spoken in the Batoufam village and the neighbouring villages either speak Nda'nda' (Bandrefam, Bangwa and Bagang-Fokam) or Ghomala' (Bayangam and Bandjoun). According to Hammarstöm et al. (2023), the language is not endangered but rather vigorous. Nda'nda' speakers are in their majority bilingual as they also speak French, one of the two official languages of the country. Some, mostly learned ones, also speak English, the second official language. Generally, those living in the village speak and/or understand neighboring languages such as Ghomala' (spoken in the neighbouring villages of Bayangam and Bandjoun) and Medumba (Bangangté).

---

1 Its Glottolog and ISO codes are ndan1241 and nnz, respectively.

There are a number of works that are relevant in understanding the structure of the language on the one hand, and focus in Grassfields Bantu languages on the other hand. As far as Nda'nda' is concerned, four works can be presented. Ngantchui Debana (2009), in the field of discourse analysis, studies the preeminence of nominal structures in Nda'nda'. Gueche (2019) discusses multiverb constructions and the homorganic nasal in Nda'nda'. Gueche (2021) investigates noun formation processes in the language to account for the way the language expands its vocabulary and explores the Nda'nda' noun class system (Gueche 2022). As concerns information structure few authors can be accounted for. Aboh et al. (2007) study focus strategies and focus-related phenomena in a range of African languages, most of which have been under-represented in the theoretical literature on focus. Tamanji (2009) highlights the similarity between content question formation and focus marking in Ngemba-Bafut. For instance, in both construction types, the questioned constituent and the focused constituent occur in situ. Chiarcos et al. (2009) describe tools and resources for the study of information structure in African languages developed at the Collaborative Research Centre "Information Structure". Nana (2018) discusses the way focus and topic find linguistic expression in a number of African languages. The chapter presents the prosodic, syntactic, morphological and lexical strategies that speakers explore in their attempt to highlight significant and/or new information. Fiedler et al. (2018) analyze the different patterns found across sub-Saharan African languages to express information structure. Based on languages from all four African language phyla, they document the great diversity of linguistic means used to encode information-structural phenomena and are therefore highly relevant for some of the most pertinent questions in linguistic theory.

3 Preliminaries on Nda'nda'

Nda'nda' is a language with analytic structure and inflexible SVO word order, as illustrated in (1).

(1) *pɩ́g-ǎ nɛ̄tsɜ̄ pà?*
    pɩ́k-ǎ   MT-*nɛ̀tsɜ̀*   *pà?*
    2PL-P$_1$ P$_1$-arrange   house
    'You have arranged the house.'

From their syntactic position, *pík* 'you' is the subject, *ǎ nētsə̄* 'have arranged' is the inflected verb and *pàʔ* 'house' is the direct object.

Nda'nda' is a gender language with six noun classes defined by their agreement patterns. Gueche (2022) observes that these noun classes are not marked as pervasively as in other Grassfields Bantu languages, since the only contexts in which the full range of noun classes can be differentiated are in the concord of possessive and demonstrative determiners. In the following noun phrases in 2), the concord prefix of each of the six noun classes is exemplified, glossed by numbers 1 through 6.

(2) a. *sɔ́gà wɔ́*
    sɔ́k   **ø-à**   **w-ɔ́**
    bird   **1**-1SG.POSS   **1**-D$_2$
    'This bird (that is mine).'

   b. *sɔ́k pìgɔ̀ pɔ́*
    sɔ́k   **p-ìgɔ̀**   **p-ɔ́**
    birds   **2**-2SG.POSS   **2**-D$_2$
    'These birds (that are yours).'

   c. *súbá jɔ́*
    súp   **ø-à**   **j-ɔ́**
    needle   **3**-1SG.POSS   **3**-D$_2$
    'This needle (that is mine).'

   d. *súp mɛ̀ mɔ́*
    súp   **m-ɛ̀**   **m-ɔ́**
    needles   **4**-1SG.POSS   **4**-D$_2$
    'These needles (that are mine).'

   e. *tʃɔ́ʔ tsɛ̀ tsì*
    tʃɔ́ʔ   **ts-ɛ̀**   **ts-ì**
    hat   **5**-1SG.POSS   **5**-D$_3$
    'That hat (that is mine)'

   f. *lɔ̀ŋgé tsùp tsɔ́*
    lɔ̀ŋgé   **ts-ùp**   **ts-ɔ́**
    buckets **6**-3PL.POSS   **6**-D$_2$
    'These buckets (that are theirs)'

Concordial patterns of the possessive determiners are summarized in table (1).

Table 1. Concord in the Nda'nda' possessive determiners

	My	Your	His/Her	Our	Your	Their
Class 1	*ø-ɛ̀/à*	*ø-ò/ù*	*ø-è/ì*	*w-ɔ̀*	*w-ìgɔ̀*	*w-ùp*
Class 2	*p-ɛ̀*	*p-ò*	*p-è*	*p-ɔ̀*	*p-ìgɔ̀*	*p-ùp*
Class 3	*ø-ɛ̀/à*	*ø-ò/ù*	*ø-è/ì*	*j-ɔ̀*	*ʒ-ìgɔ̀*	*ʒ-ùp*
Class 4	*m-ɛ̀*	*m-ò*	*m-ɔ̀*	*m-ɔ̀*	*m-ìgɔ̀*	*m-ùp*
Class 5	*ts-ɛ̀*	*ts-ù*	*ts-ɔ̀*	*ts-ɔ̀*	*ts-igɔ̀*	*ts-ùp*
Class 6	*ts-ɛ̀*	*ts-ù*	*ts-ɔ̀*	*ts-ɔ̀*	*ts-ìgɔ̀*	*ts-ùp*

An overview of concords of the demonstrative determiners is presented in table (2).

Table 2. Concord in the Nda'nda' demonstrative determiners

	Close to the speaker	Close to the person spoken to	Far from both speaker and person spoken to
Class 1	*w-ɔ̀*	*w-ɔ́*	*w-ì*
Class 2	*m-ɔ̀*	*m-ɔ́*	*m-ì*
Class 3	*j-ɔ̀*	*j-ɔ́*	*ʒ-ì*
Class 4	*p-ɔ̀*	*p-ɔ́*	*p-ì*
Class 5	*ts-ɔ̀*	*ts-ɔ́*	*ts-ì*
Class 6	*ts-ɔ̀*	*ts-ɔ́*	*ts-ì*

Nda'nda' distinguishes seven tenses, as presented and exemplified in table (3). All of them are expressed by means of morphological or/and tonological markers. The tonological marker for tense is a replacive floating tone which docks rightwards to replace the tone(s) of the verb. Apart from tone, the tense marker includes a segmental component which is placed in front of the verb and a homorganic nasal which, depending on the tense, associates to the verb. Most of the time, this homorganic nasal consonant triggers some morphological changes in the initial consonant of the verb (Gueche 2015).

Table 3. Tenses in Nda'nda'

Tenses	Markers	Examples
Immediate past	$ǎ$ + MT	*pǎ kpē*
		pɔ̀ ǎ-MT kpè
		1PL P_1-P_1 eat
		'We have eaten'
Recent past	$â$ + HT	*pâ kpé*
		pɔ̀ â-HT kpè
		1PL P_2-P_2 eat
		'We ate'
Remote past	$â$ + MT + *láʔ* + N-	*pâ láʔ ŋkpē*
		pɔ̀ â-MT láʔ N-kpè
		1PL P_3-P_3 UM P_3-eat
		'We had eaten'
Present	HT + N	*pɔ́ ŋkpé*
		pɔ̀ HT-N-kpè
		we PRS-PRS-eat
		'We eat'
Simple future	*ʃí* + HT + N-	*pɔ́ ʃí ŋkpé*
		pɔ̀ ʃí HT-N-kpè
		1PL F_1 F_1-F_1-eat
		'We will eat'
Distant future	*ndzí* + HT + N-	*pɔ́ ndzí ŋkpé*
		pɔ̀ ndzí HT-N-kpè
		1PL F_2 F_2-F_2-eat
		'We will eat'
Uncertain future	*láʔ* + MT + N-	*pɔ́ láʔ ŋkpē*
		pɔ̀ láʔ MT-N-kpè
		1PL UM F_3-F_3-eat
		'We shall eat'

4 Focus in Nda'nda'

According to Crystal (2008: 192) focus is "a term used by some linguists in a two-part analysis of sentences which distinguishes between the information assumed by speakers, and that which is at the centre (or 'focus') of their communicative interest; 'focus' in this sense is

opposed to presupposition". In other words, focus is on unexpected information that might be new. To bring listeners to focus their attention on the constituent bearing the special information they want to pass across, Nda'nda' speakers will make use of cleft, pseudo-cleft constructions and the adverbial *ndàʔ* 'only'.

4.1 Focus via cleft and pseudo cleft constructions

Cleft and pseudo cleft sentences are used to highlight specific information within a sentence. Though they differ in their structure and the way they emphasize the focused elements, both of them involve a relative clause which contains background information in contrast to which the focus is construed in the main clause as complement of the copula. This section will start with a brief presentation of relative clauses before elaborating on each of the focus constructions.

4.1.1 Relativisation in Nda'nda'

In Nda'nda' relativization is carried out with the help of the relative marker, *jɔ̀* and a definitivizer that can either be *lɔ́* or either *á* or *é* depending on the last vowel of the preceding word. Within the relative clause, the relativised constituent can either be represented by the ordinary personal or the possessive pronouns in resumptive function (Gueche 2015), as demonstrated by examples (3a–f).

(3) a. *màtwá jɔ̀wě mɔ́ ndʒí mɔ̀pfɔ́k lɔ́ sɔ̀sɔ̀*

màtwà	jɔ̀	w-ě	mɔ́	N-HT-*jí*	lɔ́	sɔ̀sɔ̀
car	REL	CL1-PR	ASP	PRS-PRS-go	DEF	black

'The car that is moving well is black.'

b. *ŋwɔ́ jǐ ʃí hɔ́ʔ á mɔ́ fáʔ*

ŋwɔ́	jɔ́	ʒìk	ʃí	HT-N-*hɔ̀ʔ*	á	mɔ́	N-*fàʔ*
child	REL	3SG	F_1	F_1-F_1-come	DEF	ASP	work

'The child who will come is working.'

c. *ntóp jɔ̀ pɨ́k ʃí ŋkpé ɛ́ pfɔ́k*

ntóp	jɔ̀	pɨ́k	ʃí	HT-N-*kpé*	ɛ́	pfɔ́k
potatoes	REL	2SG	F_1	F_1-F_1-eat	DEF	good

'The beans you are eating are delicious.'

d. *wúp mə́ ntʃɔ́k ŋwə́ jɜ̀ mɔ́k ʃí ŋké lə́*

wùp	*mə́*	N-*tʃɔ́k*	*ŋwə́*	*jɜ̀*	*mɔ́k*	*ndʒí*	HT-N-*ké*
3PL	ASP	PRS-seek	child	REL	1SG	F_2	F_2-F_2-carry

lə́
DEF

'They are seeking the child that I will carry.'

e. *mɔ́k ʃí ŋkpé tsúp jɜ̀ wú ʃí ndʒú lə́*

mɔ̀k	*ʃí*	HT-N-*kpé*	*ŋkú*	*jɜ̀*	*wù*	*ʃí*	N-HT-*jú*	*lə́*
1SG	F_1	F_1-F_1-eat	rice	REL	2SG	F_1	F_1-F_1-buy	DEF

'I will eat the rice that you will buy.'

f. *fɔ̀ jɜ̀ ŋwê mə́ nɔ̀k lə́ â kpík*

fɔ̀	*jɜ̀*	*ŋwə́*	*ø-é*	*mə́*	HT-N-*nɔ̀k*
chief	REL	child	1-3SG.POSS	ASP	PRS-PRS-dance

lə́	*â*	*kpɨk*
DEF	P_2	die

'The chief whose child is dancing is dead.'

In subject relative clauses, the antecedent is replaced by a subject personal pronoun (here achieving resumptive functions), the form of which depends on whether the head noun is a non-human (*wě* in 3a) or a human (*ʒɨ̀k* in 3b) entity. The head noun can be the grammatical object of the relative clause, therefore yielding an object relative clause like in (3c–e). Object relatives and subject relatives make use of the same relative elements whether human (3d) or non-human (3e). In contrast to the subject relative clauses in (3a–b), where the antecedent—the relativized subject—is resumed by a personal pronoun in the subject position within the relative clause, it appears that in object relative clauses (3c–e), the antecedent—the relativized object—leaves a gap within the relative clause. This gap remains empty and is not filled by any element. When a genitive construction is relativized, the possessor leaves behind a possessive determiner (achieving a resumptive function), namely the 3rd person singular possessive pronoun *é* (3f).

4.1.2 *Focus via cleft constructions*

The clear case of syntactically marked focus in Nda'nda' is the cleft construction. The cleft sentence is basically used to mark counter assertive focus. A cleft construction can be considered as a focusing

construction in which the focused constituent (focus) occurs as a predicated element preceding the background dependent clause. The focused constituent is highlighted by a cleft marker, the copula *ɔ́*. The background dependent clause can either be a relative clause or a subordinate clause depending on the nature of the focused element, as schematized in the following formula: COP FOC {SUB, REL}.

When the subject is focused via cleft constructions, a conjunctive subordinate clause is used instead of a relative clause and the subordinating morpheme introducing it varies depending on whether the subject is human or non-human. In case it is human, the subordinator is *mbí* as exemplified in (4–5).

(4) a.
ɔ́	*wɔ́*	**mbí**	*mɔ́*	N-*kwí*	*pà?*
COP	3SG	CONJ	ASP	PRS-build	house

'Who is it that is building the house?'

b. *ɔ́ ʒík mbí mɔ́ ŋkwí pà?*

ɔ́	**ʒík**	*mbí*	*mɔ́*	HT-N-*kwí*	*pà?*
COP	3SG	CONJ	ASP	PRS-PRS-build	house

'It is her who is building the house.'

(5) a.
ɔ́	*ʃímí*	*mbí*	*ʃí*	N-*kúp*	*késàŋgɛ́*	*ljè?*
COP	Chimi	CONJ	F_1	F_1-peel	cassava	today

'Is it Chimi that will peel cassava today?'

b. *ŋgák. ɔ́ Sáʔbɛ́t mbí ʃí ŋkúp késàŋgɛ́ ljè*

ŋgák	*ɔ́*	**sáʔbɛ́t**	*mbí*	*ʃí*	HT-N-*kúp*	*késàŋgɛ́*	*ljè*
no	COP	Sabet	CONJ	F_1	F_1-F_1-peel	cassava	today

'No. It is Sabet who will peel cassava today.'

When the subject is non-human, it is *pí* that is used as subordinating conjunction as exemplified in (6–7).

(6) a.
ɔ́	*kɔ́*	**pí**	*mɔ́*	N-*tʃwɛ́*	*páʔá*
COP	3SG	CONJ	ASP	PRS-cry	so

'What is crying like that?'

b. *ɔ́ púsí pí mɔ́ ntʃwɛ́ páʔá*

ɔ́	*púsí*	**pí**	*mɔ́*	HT-N-*tʃwɛ́*	*páʔá*
COP	3SG	CONJ	ASP	PRS-PRS-cry	so

'It is the cat that is crying like that.'

(7)a.   *ə   kɔ́   **pí**   ndə̀p pə̀ɣə̀*
         COP 3SG CONJ on   bag
         'What is on the bag?'

    b.   *ə́ mbák pí ndə̀p pə̀ɣə̀*
         *ə́   mbák **pí**   ndə̀p pə̀ɣə̀*
         COP   pot   CONJ on   bag
         'It is the pot that is on the bag.'

When the object is focused in cleft constructions such as (8–9), the background clause is a typical relative clause.

(8)a.   *ə́   kɔ́   jə̀   wùp   ǎ   jɔ̄   ntíp mbák   lɔ́?*
         COP what   REL   3PL P_1 see   in   pot   DEF
         'What is it that they have seen in the pot?'

    b.   *ə́ ɲú jə̀ wubǎ jɔ̄ ntíp mbák lɔ́*
         *ə́   **ɲú**   jə̀   wùp   ǎ   MT-jɔ́   ntíp   mbák   lɔ́*
         COP snake REL   3PL P_1 P_1-see   in   pot   DEF
         'It is the snake that they have seen in the pot.'

(9)a.   *ə́   wɔ́   jə̀   wú   ʃí   N-kχútsə́ fíndzìk   á?*
         COP man   REL   2SG F_1 F_1-help   morning DEF
         'Who is it that you will help in the morning?'

    b.   *ə́ mbàɣà jə̀ mɔ́k ʃí ŋkχútsə́ fíndzìgá*
         *ə́   **mbàɣà** jə̀   mɔ́k   ʃí   HT-N-kχútsə́ fíndzìk   á*
         COP man   REL   1SG F_1 F_1-F_1-help   morning DEF
         'It is the man whom I will help in the morning.'

When adverbials of time or prepositional phrases are focused via cleft constructions as in (10), the relative marker *jə̀* is replaced by the subordinating conjunction *tə̀* and the definitiser *lɔ́* which is generally restricted to relatives is also necessary.

(10)a.   *ə́ fíndzìk tə̀ mɔ́k ʃí ŋkχútsə́ mbàɣà lɔ́*
         *ə́   **fíndzìk** tə̀   mɔ́k   ʃí   HT-N-kχútsə́ mbàɣà lɔ́*
         COP morning CONJ 1SG F_1 F_1-F_1-help   man   DEF
         'It is in the morning that I will help the man.'

b.   *ɔ́ ntíp mbák tɔ̀ wúbǎ jɔ̄ ɲú lɔ́*

    ɔ́   **ntíp mbák**   tɔ̀   wùp   ǎ   MT-*jɔ́*   ɲú   lɔ́

    COP in   pot   CONJ 3PL P_1 P_1-see snake DEF

    'It is in the pot where they have seen the snake.'

Using *tɔ̀* without the definitiviser will render a sentence such as (11b) ungrammatical as shown in (11a).

(11)a. **ɔ́ Dwélɛ́ tɔ̀ mɔ́k ʃí ndʒí*

    ɔ́   **Dwélɛ́**   tɔ̀   mɔ̀k ʃí   HT-N-*jí*

    COP Douala CONJ 1SG F_1 F_1-F_1-help

    Intend. 'It is to Doula that I am going.'

b.   *ɔ́ Dwélɛ́ tɔ̀ mɔ́k ʃí ndʒí lɔ́*

    ɔ́   **Dwélɛ́**   tɔ̀   mɔ̀k ʃí   HT-N-*jí*   lɔ́

    COP Douala CONJ 1SG F_1 F_1-F_1-help DEF

    'It is to Doula that I am going.'

When the clefting concerns an adverbial of place (that is not preceded by a preposition like in (10b), a relative clause is used and the gap left by the adverbials, i.e. *ntɔ́* 'market' (12a) and *nʃɔ̀* 'river' (12b), is filled by the place adverb *wá* 'there'.

(12)a.   *ɔ́ ntɔ́ jɔ̀ mɔ́k ʃí ndʒí wá lɔ́*

    ɔ́   **ntɔ́**   jɔ̀   mɔ́k ʃí   HT-N-*dʒí*   wá   lɔ́

    COP market REL 1SG F_1 F_1-F_1-go   there DEF

    'It is to the market that I will go.'

b.   *ɔ́ nʃɔ̀ jɔ̀ sáʔbɛ́t ndʒí só màtwá wá lɔ́*

    ɔ́   **nʃɔ̀**   jɔ̀   sáʔbɛ́t ndʒí HT-N-*só*   ntáp

    COP river REL Sabet F_2 F_2-F_2-wash shoes

    wá   *lɔ́*

    there DEF

    'It is at the river that I will wash the shoes.'

Comparing the cleft structure in (12) with (10b) raises the following question: Why is the cleft focus on place adverbials different from that of other adverbials (time) and similar to the object cleft focus? The difference between the clefting of an adverbial of place and that of an adverbial of time stems from the fact that in Nda'nda' they belong to different syntactic categories. The adverbial of place is often a noun, e.g. *nʃɔ̀* 'river' (12b) and *ntɔ́* 'market' (12a) above, whereas

that of time is usually an adverb. This explains why the adverbial of place is focused like objects that are actually nouns in object position.

Table (4) gives an overview of cleft constructions in Nda'nda' and their crucial properties.

Table 4. Cleft constructions in Nda'nda'

Types of cleft constructions	Subordinating morpheme	Nature of the subordinating morpheme	Focused elements	Formula
Subject cleft constructions	*mbí*	Subordinating conjunction	human subject	COP FOC [{*mbí, pî*} CL]$_{\text{SUB}}$
	pí	Subordinating conjunction	non-human subject	
Adverbial of time and propositional phrases cleft constructions	*tà*	Subordinating conjunction	adverbials of time, prepositional phrases	COP FOC [*tà* CL DEF]$_{\text{SUB}}$
Object cleft constructions	*jà*	Relative marker	object	COP FOC [*jà* CL DEF]$_{\text{REL}}$
Adverbials of place	*jà*	Relative marker	adverbials of place	COP FOC [*jà* CL *wá* DEF]$_{\text{REL}}$

4.1.3   Focus via pseudo-cleft constructions

In the Nda'nda' pseudo-cleft construction as in the Bafut case (Tamanji 2009: 186), the focused element appears at the end of the sentence preceded by the copula that can also be referred to as highlighter. Both of them are preceded by a relative clause that is modifying a noun, as exemplified in (13) and (14), according to the following formula: REL COP FOC.

(13) a. *mbàɣà   jə̀   wúp   ʃí   N-ké   lə́   ə́   wɔ́?*
      man   REL   3PL F_1 F_1-carry   DEF   COP   who
      'Who is the man whom they will carry?'

   b. *mbàɣà jə̀ wúp ʃí ŋké lə́ ə́ ʃímí*
      *mbàɣà   jə̀   wúp   ʃí   HT-N-kè   lə́   ə́   **ʃímí***
      man   REL   3PL F_1 F_1-F_1-carry   DEF   COP   Chimi
      'The man whom they will carry is Chimi.'

(14) a. *ʒwə́   jə̀   wú   N-tʃɔ́k   lə́   ə́   ŋgə̀fí?*
      thing   REL   2SG   PRS-search   DEF   COP   corn
      'Is it corn you are searching for?'

   b. *ʒwə́ jə̀ mɔ́k mə̀ ntʃɔ́k lə́ ə́ ŋkɛ́*
      ʒwə́   jə̀   mɔ́k   mə̀   HT-N-tʃɔ́k   lə́   ə́
      thing   REL   1SG   ASP   PRS-PRS-search   DEF   COP
      ŋkɛ́
      money
      'The thing I am searching for is money.'

4.2   Restrictive focus with *ndàʔ*

Restrictive focus can be achieved with an independent word *ndàʔ* 'only' which is placed in front of the word or phrase to be highlighted. This type of focus can be used for either verb or noun phrases.

4.2.1   The focus marker *ndàʔ* with noun phrases

For indicating restrictive focus, the marker *ndàʔ* is simply placed immediately before the respective noun phrase, as exemplified in (15–16).

(15)a. *wú   ʃí   ndʒú   ŋgɔ̀fí   pú   kɔ̀lɔ̀k?*
        2PL   F₁   buy   corn   or   plantains
        'Will you buy corn and plantains?'

   b. *wú ʃí ndʒú ndàʔ kɔ̀lɔ̀k*
      *wú   ʃí   HT-N-jú   ndàʔ   **kɔ̀lɔ̀k***
      2PL   F₁   F₁-F₁eat   only   plantains
      'You will buy only plantains.'

(16)a. *wú   ǎ   kpē   ntóp   pú   ŋgɔ̀fí?*
        2PL   P₁   eat   corn   or   plantains
        'Have you eaten corn and plantains?'

   b. *mǎ kpē ndàʔ ntóp*
      *mɔ̀k   ǎ   MT-kpé   ndàʔ   **ntóp***
      1SG   P₁   P₁-eat   only   potatoes
      'I have eaten only potatoes.'

The item *ndàʔ* can also be used to apply restrictive focus in cleft (17b) and pseudo-cleft constructions (18b).

(17)a. *ɔ́   wɔ́   mbí   mɔ́   N-kwí   pàʔ*
        COP   who   CONJ   ASP   PRS-build   house
        'Who is building the house?'

   b. *ɔ́ ndàʔ ʒík mbí mɔ́ ŋkwí pàʔ*
      *ɔ́   ndàʔ   **ʒík**   mbí   mɔ́   HT-N-kwí   pàʔ*
      COP   only   3SG   CONJ   ASP   PRS-PRS-build   house
      'It is only her/him that is building the house.'

(18)a. *wúp   ʃí   ʒwɔ́   sábét   kɔ̀   ʃímí?*
        3PL   F₁   kill   Sabet   or   Chimi
        'Will they kill Sabet or Chimi?'

   b. *mbàɣà jɔ̀ wúp ʃí ʒwɔ́ lɔ́ ɔ́ ndàʔ ʃímí*
      mbàɣà   jə   wúp   ʃí   HT-N-ʒwɔ́   lɔ́   ɔ́   ndàʔ
      man   REL   3PL   F₁   F₁-F₁-kill   DEF   COP   only
      ʃímí
      Chimi
      'The man that they will kill is only Chimi.'

4.2.2   The focus marker *ndàʔ* with verbs

The use of *ndàʔ* with verbs follows the following formula: S V (O) (PP) *ndàʔ* V̀. For focalization the verb is repeated with a low tone and preceded by the restrictive focus marker *ndàʔ*, as illustrated in (19–20).

(19)a. *wù   ǎ   ɣə̄   kɔ́*
       2SG   P$_1$ do   what
       'What have you done?'

   b.   *mǎ fāʔ ndàʔ fàʔ*
       mɔ̀k   ǎ   MT-fàʔ   ndàʔ   fàʔ
       1SG   P$_1$ P$_1$-work   only   work
       'I have just worked.'

(20)a. *wù   ʃí   N-ɣɔ́   kɔ́*
       2SG   F$_1$ F$_2$-do   what
       'What will you do ?'

   b.   *mɔ̀k ʃí ŋkpé ndàʔ kpè*
       mɔ̀k   ʃí   HT-N-kpé   ndàʔ   kpé
       1SG   F$_1$ F$_1$-F$_1$-eat   only   eat
       'I will just eat.'

In (19b) *fàʔ* 'work' is a low tone verb. It becomes *fāʔ* due to the mid tone that is part of the immediate past tense marker. The reduplicand after the restrictive focus marker has to bear a low tone. In (20b) the high tone verb *kpé* 'eat' receives a homorganic nasal by the tense marker for simple future becoming *ŋkpé*. Its reduplicand receives a low tone to become *kpè*.

    When the tense requires a homorganic nasal on the verb, as in the present tense (21a) and the simple future (21b, 20b), it is only the first instance of the original verb that is inflected by it; the reduplicand following the focus marker does not inflect with the homorganic nasal.

(21)a. *mɔ́k ndzí ndàʔ tsì*
       mɔ́k   HT-N-tsí   ndàʔ   tsì
       1SG   PRS-PRS-sleep   only   sleep
       'I am just sleeping.'

b. *sáʔbɛ́t ʃí ŋgyú ndàʔ ɣù*
   sáʔbɛ́t   ʃí   HT-N-ɣú   ndàʔ   ɣù
   Sabet   F₁   F₁-F₁-laugh   only   laugh
   'Sabet will just laugh.'

In transitive constructions where the complement of the verb can either be a direct object or a prepositional phrase, it is only the verb that is repeated, but not its complements, as shown in (22a–b).

(22)a. *wú mɔ́ ndɔ́ kák ndàʔ lɔ̀*
   wú   mɔ́   HT-N-lɔ́   kák   ndàʔ   lɔ̀
   2PL   ASP   PRS-PRS-take   dishes   only   take
   'You are just taking dishes.'

b. *ʃímí ʃí ndʒí mɔ̀ ntɔ́ ndàʔ jì*
   ʃímí   ʃí   HT-N-jì   mɔ̀   ntɔ́   ndàʔ   jì
   Chimi   F₁   F₁-F₁-go   to   market   only   go
   'Chimi will just go to the market.'

5 Topicalization in Nda'nda'

The topic is something the speaker assumes is known or can be inferred from the context, and the rest of the sentence provides new information about that subject. In Nda'nda', like in other languages, topicalisation helps in highlighting the given information being introduced, setting it apart from the new information in the rest of the sentence. In Nda'nda', this process is restricted to noun phrases. In other words adjectives, verbs, and other phrasal categories cannot be topicalized.

   One of the most prominent functions of Nda'nda' topics is the contrastive one. Topics are marked by fronting as in (23b) and (24b) and generally with intonation as there can be a rise in the pitch too.

(23)a. *ʃímí   mɔ́   ŋkpé   kɔ́?*
   Chimi   ASP   eat   what?
   'What is Chimi eating?'

b. *sáʔbɛ́t, ʒík mɔ́ ŋkpé mbɛ̀*
   sáʔbɛ́t   ʒík   mɔ́   HT-N-kpé   mbɛ̀
   Sabet   3SG   ASP   PRS-PRS-eat   meat
   'Sabet, she is eating meat.'

(24)a. *wɔ̌   ʃí   ŋkpé   ŋgɜ̀fí?*
      who $_{F_1}$ eat   corn
      'Who will eat corn?'

   b. *mbɜ̀, sáʔbɛ́t ʃí ŋkpé jé*
      mbɜ̀   sáʔbɛ́t ʃí   HT-N-kpé   jé
      meat   Sabet $_{F_1}$ $_{F_1}$-$_{F_1}$-eat   it
      'The meat, Sabet is eating it.'

The contrastive topic in (23b) is *Sáʔbɛ́t* and in (24b) it is *mbɜ̀* 'meat'. In both sentences they are left-dislocated and the gap they leave is filled by personal pronouns achieving resumptive functions namely *ʒík* for *sáʔbɛ́t* and *jé* for *mbɜ̀*. In both sentences, it is clear that there is a shift in prominence. For instance in (23b) *Sáʔbɛ́t* is in contrast with *ʃími* because the person asking the question in (23a) is interested in what *ʃímí* is eating but the answer he receives is about what somebody else, *Sáʔbɛ́t*, is eating, making it contrast with their expectations. In (24a) the person asking the question has only corn to propose and is asking who could join them. But the answer in (24b) indicates instead another foodstuff *mbɜ̀* 'meat' that will be eaten, therefore creating a contrast.

Topicalization in Nda'nda' can be achieved through several syntactic strategies, including fronting, clefting, and right dislocation. However, the most productive strategy in Nda'nda' is left-dislocation. Left-dislocation involves moving a constituent, usually a noun phrase or a clause, to the beginning of a sentence, thereby marking it as the main topic of the discourse. According to Augustin (2007), this construction serves to introduce new topics into the discourse, a function typically associated with focus. In this process, the speaker assumes that the referent is accessible to the hearer based on prior discourse or the physical context. By placing the topic at the left edge of the clause, speakers can highlight the most important or salient information in the discourse, creating a more fluid and coherent structure. This strategy often establishes a contrast between the left-dislocated topic and the rest of the sentence, drawing attention to new or unexpected information. Barnes (1985) describes left-dislocation as a construction where a full lexical noun phrase (NP), prepositional phrase (PP), or pronoun is placed at the beginning of a sentence, immediately preceding a syntactically complete clause. This initial element is then typically co-referred to by a pronoun later in the sentence. In

Nda'nda', when a noun is left-dislocated and occupies the pre-subject position, a pronoun is needed to perform a resumptive function, filling the gap left by the moved element. Both subjects and direct objects can undergo left-dislocation in the language.

(25)a. ŋwɔ́   lá?   ə̀   wɔ́   ʃí   fɔ́?
        child   home COP   who F_1 come_back
        'The child is at home. Who will come back?'

  b.   ŋwɔ́ ʃí ntɔ́p
        ŋwɔ́   ʃí   HT-N-*tɔ́p*
        child F_1 F_1-F_1-go_out
        'The child will go out.'

  c.   ŋwɔ́, ʒík ʃí ntɔ́p
        ŋwɔ́   ʒìk   ʃí   HT-N-*tɔ́p*
        child 3SG F_1 F_1-F_1-go_out
        'The child, it will go out.'

Many sentences typically have a theme-rheme structure, where the theme is what is given or known, and the rheme is what is new or added. In (25a), a question is asked about the identity of the person coming back. Contrastively, the answer in (25b) is about someone, ŋwɔ́ 'child', going out. In this context, ŋwɔ́ 'child' serves as the theme, as it is the starting point or point of departure of the sentence, indicating what the sentence is about. The phrase ʃí ntɔ́p 'will go out' is the rheme, providing the new information about the theme. The terms "theme" and "topic" are often used interchangeably, but they have distinct functions in discourse. The theme is the element of the sentence that provides a contextual anchor, setting the stage for the information that follows. It is what the sentence is about. The topic, however, is the element that is being highlighted as the main point of interest in the current discourse. The pragmatic effect of left dislocation in this example is to create emphasis or contrast. By placing ŋwɔ́ 'child' at the beginning of the sentence and resuming it with the pronoun ʒík 'it', the speaker signals that ŋwɔ́ is particularly salient or noteworthy in the context of the conversation. This strategy can enhance clarity, foreground important information, or facilitate the flow of discourse. In summary, while ŋwɔ́ 'child' in its usual position as the subject would provide a contextual anchor for the sentence (the "theme"), left dislocating ŋwɔ́ 'the child' and resuming it with ʒík

'it' emphasizes *ŋwɔ́* as the main point of interest (the "topic"). This syntactic strategy highlights the topic and distinguishes it from the background information. The left dislocation of a subject differs from a normal sentence in several ways. In (23b), there is a discontinuity between the dislocated subject *Sáʔbɛ́t* and the rest of the sentence. As discussed earlier, this discontinuity is marked by the insertion of the personal pronoun *ʒík* to fill the gap left by the moved subject. Additionally, in spoken language, this prominence is marked by intonation through a rise in the pitch of the voice. This adds pragmatic information to the sentence, such as emphasizing the topic and connecting it to previous discourse.

5.1 Topicalisation of the subject

Left-dislocation of a subject in a topic construction is a syntactic process that involves moving a subject to the front of a sentence and leaving a coreferential pronoun in its original position. This way, the subject is marked as the topic of the sentence or the discourse. When the nominal subject is left dislocated, a pronoun fills the gap that the movement has created. This pronoun varies according to semantic parameters of the subject.

When the subject is a noun (common or proper) referring to a human being, the pronoun used for resumptive function is a subject personal pronoun, i.e. *ʒík* (26c) and (27c) and *wúp* (28c).

(26)a.   ŋwɔ́   láʔ   ɔ̀   wɔ́   mɔ́   fáʔ?
       child   home   COP   who   ASP   work
       'The child is at home. Who is working?'

     b.   *ŋw ɔ́ mɔ́ ŋkpé*
         ŋwɔ́   mɔ́   HT-N-*kpé*
         child   ASP   PRS-PRS-sleep
         'The child is eating.'

     c.   *ŋwɔ́ jɔ̀, ʒík mɔ́ ŋkpé*
         ŋwɔ́   j-ɔ̀   ʒìk   mɔ́   HT-N-*kpé*
         child   3-D$_1$ 3SG   ASP   PRS-PRS-sleep
         'This child, it is eating.'

d. *ŋwâ, ʒík mɔ́ ŋkpé*
   | *ŋwɔ́* | *ø-à* | | *ʒìk* | *mɔ́* | HT-N-*kpé* |
   | child | 3-1SG.POSS | | 3SG | ASP | PRS-PRS-sleep |

   'my child, it is eating.'

(27)a. *Sáʔbɛ́t ndɔ́ɣɔ́ ə̀   wɔ́ ʃí nɔ́k?*
   | Sabet | inside | COP | who | F_1 | dance |

   'Sabet is inside the house. Who will dance?'

b. *Sáʔbɛ́t ʃí ndzí*
   | *sábɛ́t* | *ʃí* | HT-N-*tsí* |
   | Sabet | F_1 | $F_{1-}F_1$-sleep |

   'Sabet will sleep.'

c. *Sáʔbɛ́t, ʒík ʃí ndzí*
   | *sábɛ́t* | *ʒìk* | *ʃí* | HT-N-*tsí* |
   | Sabet | 3SG | F_1 | F_1-F_1-sleep |

   'Sabet, she will sleep.'

(28)a. *bɔ̀ʔkɔ́p   pú   ʃímí   láʔ   ŋgéʃə̀   mɔ́   ndzí?*
   | Bokop | with | Chimi | house | Gueche | ASP | sleep? |

   'Bokop and Chimi are in the house. Is Gueche sleeping?'

b. *bɔ̀ʔkɔ́p pú ʃímí ké tsí pɔ́ʔ*
   | *bɔ̀ʔkɔ́p* | *pú* | *ʃímí* | *ké* | *tsí* | *pɔ́ʔ* |
   | Bokop | and | Chimi | NEG | sleep | NEG |

   'Bokop and Chimi do not sleep.'

c. *bɔ̀ʔkɔ́p pú ʃímí, wúp ké tsí pɔ́ʔ*
   | *bɔ̀ʔkɔ́p* | *pú* | *ʃímí* | *wúp* | *ké* | *tsí* | | *pɔ́ʔ* |
   | Bokop | and | Chimi | 3PL | NEG | sleep | | NEG |

   'Bokop and Chimi, they are the ones not to sleep.'

Common nouns need to be specified by a demonstrative (26c) or a possessive (26d) under left dislocation. In ex. (26), (27) and (28), it is actually the pronouns *ʒík* and *wúp* of the independent personal pronoun set shown in table (5) that are used for resumptive function to stand for *ŋwɔ́, sáʔbɛ́t* and *bɔ̀ʔkɔ́p pú ʃímí*.

Table 5. Independent personal pronouns

PERSONS	SINGULAR	PLURAL
First	*mɔ̀k*	*pɔ̀*
Second	*wù*	*pɪ̀k*
Third	*ʒɪ̀k*	*wùp*

However, when the subject refers to a non-human entity like an inanimate item such as a pot (29b) or a car (30b) for instance, a resumptive pronoun is used to fill the gap left by subject dislocation.

(29)a. *mbák   kíʃɪ́p   ɔ́   kɔ́   j-é   mɔ́   N-kχɔ́?*
        pot   kitchen   COP   what   3-RP   ASP   PRS-burning
        'The pot is in the kitchen. What is burning?'

  b. *mbák jɔ́ mɔ́ ndáp*
      mbák   j-ɔ́   mɔ́   HT-N-láp
      pot   3-D_2 ASP   PRS-PRS-stink
      'This pot is stinking.'

  c. *mbák jɔ́, jé mɔ́ ndáp*
      mbák   **j-ɔ́**   j-é   mɔ́   HT-N-láp
      pot   3-D_2 3-RP   ASP   PRS-PRS-stink
      'This pot, it is stinking.'

(30)a. *màtwá   mbɔ́k,   páʔ   wɔ́   w-é   kɛ́   pfɔ̀k?*
        car   near   house   who   1-RP   NEG   nice
        'The car is near the house. Whose house is not nice?'

  b. *màtwá sáʔbét kɛ̀ pfɔ̀k*
      màtwá   sáʔbét   kɛ́   pfɔ̀k
      car   sabet   NEG   nice
      'Sabet's car is not nice.'

  c. *màtwá sáʔbét, wé kɛ̀ pfɔ̀k*
      màtwá   sáʔbét   w-é   kɛ́   pfɔ̀k
      car   sabet   1-RP   NEG   nice
      'Sabet's car, it is not nice.'

The resumptive pronouns *jé* (29c) and *wé* (30c), respectively, stand for the nouns *mbák* 'pot' and *màtwá* 'car', as indexed by agreement markers for noun classes 3 and 1. Table 6 presents resumptive pronouns that replace non-human entities in Nda'nda'. These resumptive

pronouns are peculiar in the Nda'nda' pronominal system because they are used only when the subject is left-dislocated. Resumptive pronouns of classes other than 1 are illustrated in (31).

(31)a. *ŋgíp, pé ʃí mbé*

 ŋgíp   ***p-é***   *ʃí*   HT-N-*pè*
 hens   2-RP   F$_1$ F$_1$-F$_1$-come_back
 'Hens, they will come back.'

 b. *kíʃìp mɔ̀ mì, mé ʃí ndáp*

 kíʃìp   *m-ɔ̀*   *m-ì,*   ***m-é***   *ʃí*   HT-N-*làp*
 kitchens   4-1PL.POSS   4-D$_3$ 4-RP   F$_1$ F$_1$-F$_1$-stink
 'Those kitchens (that are ours), they are stinking.'

 c. *ntóp tsɔ́, tsé mɔ́ máʔnŏ*

 ntóp   *ts-ɔ́,*   ***ts-é***   *mɔ́*   N-*máʔnɔ̀*   *ŏ*
 tomato   5-D$_2$ 5-RP   ASP   PRS-disturb   2OBJ
 'This tomato, it is disturbing you.'

 d. *tsɔ́ʔ tsú, tsé pfɔ́k*

 tsɔ́ʔ   *ts-ú*   ***ts-é***   *pfɔ́k*
 place   6-2SG.POSS   6-RP   good
 'Your place, it is not good.'

Table 6. Resumptive pronouns

Noun class	Resumptive pronoun
1	*wé*
2	*pé*
3	*jé*
4	*mé*
5	*tsé*
6	*tsé*

Irrespective of whether referring to humans (ex. 26, 27, 28) or non-humans (ex. 29, 30, 31), common noun antecedents require determination by a possessive (31d), a demonstrative (31c) or a nominal (30c) for the topicalization process to be effective. Proper nouns such as *Sabet* in (27c), however, do not require such a determiner because they usually have unique reference. Only when there are

many people bearing the same name, demonstrative pronouns must be used with the proper noun to identify the referent, as in (32).

(32) *sáʔbɛ́t jɔ́, mâ kê*
    sáʔbɛ́t   j-ɔ́   mɔ̀k   â   HT-ké   è
    Sabet   3-D_2 1SG P_2 P_2-carry 3OBJ
    'This Sabet, I carried her.'

The above sentence is only grammatical if there is more than one person bearing the name Sabet.

5.2   Topicalisation of the direct object via left-dislocation

The direct object in Nda'nda' can also be left-dislocated as illustrated in (33–34).

(33)a. *pɔ́   mɔ́   ntʃɔ́k   mbàʔ   ʒík ʃí   ndʒú ntáp?*
      1PL   ASP look.for houses 3SG F_1 buy   shoes
      'We are looking for a house. Will she buy shoes?'

    b. *mbàʔ mɔ̀, ʒík ʃí ndʒú mé*
      mbàʔ   m-ɔ́   ʒík ʃí HT-N-jú   m-é
      houses 4-D_2 3SG F_1 F_1-F_1-buy 4-RP
      'These houses, she/he will buy them.'

(34)a. *pɔ̀ntɨk láʔ   wù   â   ké   wɔ́?*
      people house 2SG P_2 carry who
      'People are in the house. Whom have you carried?'

    b. *ŋwɔ́ fɔ̀, mâ ké*
      ŋwɔ́   fɔ̀   mɔ̀k â   ké   é
      child   chief 1SG P_2 carry 3OBJ
      '(As for) the chief's child, I carried her.'

    c. *pfɔ́ŋkχɔ́ jɔ̀, mâ ké wúp*
      pfɔ́ŋkχɔ́   j-ɔ̀   mɔ̀k â   ké   wúp
      children 2-D_1 1SG P_2 carry 3PL
      '(As for) these children, I carried them.'

The resumptive pronouns for non-human entities do not vary whether they are in subject position (29c) or in object position (33b). As for human entities in object position, they use object personal pronouns for resumptive functions as summarized in table 7 below.

Table 7. Object personal pronouns used for resumptive function

	SINGULAR			PLURAL		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
First series: verbs ending with *a, ɔ, o* or *ə*	á	ó	é	wɔ́	wə́gə́	wúp
Second series: verbs ending with *i*	ɛ́	ú	í			
Third series: verbs ending with *ɛ* or *e*	ɛ́	ó	é			
Fourth series: verbs ending with *ɨ* or *u*	á	ú	í			
Fifth series: verbs ending with a long vowel or the structure VCV	wɛ́	ɣú	ʒík			

6 Conclusion

This paper set out to discuss strategies used by the Nda'nda' speaker to narrow down their attention to a single point of interest either for focus or for topic functions. Focus is that piece of information that the speaker or writer highlights as most salient for the hearer or reader, often contrasting it with other possibilities or expectations, whereas topic is given information that the speaker presupposes as known to the hearer about which a statement is being made. Morphosyntactic strategies used in Nda'nda' to mark focus include cleft, pseudo-cleft constructions and the restrictive focus marker *ndàʔ*. As for topic, only left-dislocation has been identified as a relevant syntactic strategy. Both focalisation and topicalisation allow Nda'nda' speakers and writers to effectively profile information in a sentence or conversation. This helps them in ensuring clarity, coherence, and effective communication. Focus and topic therefore appear to be the two key concepts that determine how information is organized in discourse. This consecrates the similarity between topic and focus that is highlighted by Gundel et al. (1999) who observe that topic and focus have been associated to various syntactic structures across languages, especially ones where a constituent has been displaced from its canonical position in a clause to occupy a syntactically more prom-

inent position. While the study has effectively illustrated how these strategies contribute to clarity, coherence, and effective communication in Nda'nda', it became evident that a more in-depth exploration of prosodic focus was needed. Consequently, the section on prosodic focus has been omitted from this version of the paper to maintain clarity and coherence in the current analysis. Future research will investigate the nuanced role of prosody in marking focus, specifically examining how different tonal categories—such as high, mid, and low tones—are utilized to express focus in Nda'nda'. This would involve exploring how pitch variations, intonation patterns, and duration contribute to the expression of focus and how these features interact with existing morphosyntactic strategies. Additionally, instrumental studies could provide valuable insights into the phonetic realization of focus across tonal categories, which was beyond the scope of this paper.

Abbreviations

ASP aspectual marker, AM associative marker, CONJ conjunction, COP copula, D$_1$ speaker-proximal demonstrative, D$_2$ hearer-proximal demonstrative, D$_3$ distal demonstrative, F$_1$ simple future, F$_2$ distant Future, F$_3$ uncertain future, FOC focus, HT high tone, MT mid tone, N homorganic nasal, NEG negation marker, NP noun phrase, OBJ object, P$_1$ immediate past, P$_2$ recent past, P$_3$ remote past, PL plural, PP prepositional phrase, PR pronoun, PRS simple present, QM question marker, REL relative marker, RP resumptive pronoun S subject, SG singular, SUB subordinate clause, UM uncertainty mood marker, V verb.

References

Aboh, Enoch O., Katharina Hartmann & Malte Zimmermann (eds). 2007. *Focus strategies in African languages; the interaction of focus and grammar in Niger-Congo and Afro-Asiatic.* New York: Mouton de Gruyter

Augustin, Maryanne. 2007. Topic and focus in Swahili. *GIALENS* 1(1). 1–12. https://www.diu.edu/gialens/vol1num1/

Barnes, Betsy. 1985. *The pragmatics of left-dislocation in spoken standard French.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Chafe, Wallace. 1976. Givenness, contrastiveness, definiteness, subjects and topics. In Charles N. Li, (ed.), *Subject and topic.* New York: Academic Press. 27–55.

Chiarcos, Christian, Ines Fiedler, Mira Grubic, Andreas Haida, Katharina Hartmann, Julia Ritz, Anne Schwarz, Amir Zendes & Malte Zimmermann. 2009. Information structure in African languages: Corpora and tools. In Lori Levin, John Kiango, Judith Klavans, Guy De Pauw, Gilles-Maurice de Schryver & Peter Waiganjo Wagacha (eds.), *Proceedings of the First Workshop on Language Technologies for African Languages.* Athens: Association for Computational Linguistics. 17–24. https://aclanthology.org/W09-0703/

Crystal, David. 2008. *A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics.* 6th edition. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Dejan Matić. 2015. I*nformation structure in linguistics. International encyclopedia of the social & behavioral sciences. 2nd edition, Vol. 12.* Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Eberhard, David, Gary Simons & Charles Fennig (eds.). 2021. *Ethnologue: Languages of the world.* 24th edition. Dallas: SIL International. http://www.ethnologue.com.

Fiedler, Ines & Anne Schwarz. 2018. *The expression of information structure. A documentation of its diversity across Africa.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Gueche, Fotso Hugues. 2019. Multiverb constructions and the homorganic nasal in Nda'nda'. In Pius Akumbu & Esther Chie (eds.), *Engagement with Africa: Linguistic essays in honour of Ngessimo M. Mutaka.* Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag. 47–78.

Gueche, Fotso Hugues. 2021. Noun formation processes in Nda'nda'. *Language in Africa* 2(2). 3–25.

Gueche, Fotso Hugues. 2022. The Nda'nda' noun class system. *Journal of Arts and Humanities* 5(1). 137–162.

Gundel, Jeanette. 1999. Topic focus and the grammar pragmatics interface. *Proceedings of the 23rd Annual Penn Linguistics Colloquium.* (University of Pennsylvania Working Papers in Linguistics 6). 185–200. https://repository.upenn.edu/handle/20.500.14332/45475

Hammarström, Harald, Robert Forkel, Martin Haspelmath & Sebastian Bank. 2023. *Glottolog* 4.8. Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8131084.

Kroeger, Paul. 2004. *Analyzing syntax. A lexical-functional approach.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nana, Abba. 2018. The encoding of information structure in African languages. In Adams Bodomo & Augustine Agwuele (eds.), *The Routledge handbook of African linguistics*. 1st ed. New York: Taylor & Francis

Ngantchui, Evelyne. 1989. *Analyse du discours: étude de la prééminence des structures nominales du Batoufam*. Yaoundé: University of Yaoundé Doctorat de troisième cycle.

Strawson, Peter. 1964. Identifying reference and truth values. *Theria* 3. 96–118.

Tamanji, Pius. 2009. *A descriptive grammar of Bafut*. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag.