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Sentence Perspective In Mampruli

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Against the background of the basic clause structure of Mampruli, described in theory-neutral terms, the possibilities for marked sentence perspective are described.

These are not available in negative clauses, but in positive structures can have one of the nominal participants selected for special emphasis, attention or focus, notably by 1) frontshifting/leftward movement or by 2) deployment of a system of assertive particles {**N**}, **ni** and **la** whose distribution is also affected by interaction with the aspect system and the purely surface consideration of whether the verb is final in the clause.

Some special consideration is given to the particular outworking of these mechanisms in interrogative (Q-word, WH) constructions and when the verb is of the semantic class of descriptive.

Ici présenté :

La structure à base da la phrase mamprouli: la description utilise une formulation préthéorique. Ensuite on présent les possibilités dans la langue pour indiquer des perspectives marquées de la phrase.

Dans une structure positive quelconque on peut sélectionner l'un des actants comme objet d'attention emphase, topicalisation ou focalisation, surtout par 1) mouvement vers la gauche : ou bien

2) l'utilisation d'un système de particules assertifs {**N**}, **ni**

et **la** dont la distribution se détermine aussi par l'interaction avec le système d'aspect et la question superficielle de position finale ou non dans la phrase.

Aussi traités sont les manifestations de ces mécanismes dans le cas des structures interrogatives et si la verbe soit de la classe sémantique 'verbe descriptive'.

0. Introduction

Mampruli is a language of the Western Oti/Volta subgroup of Gur languages, being particularly close to Kusaal, Talni, Nabit, Dagbani, Nanun, Kamara and Hanga (the cluster I have called 'Southeastern' - Naden 1989).

The Mamprusi people number some 100-200,000¹, mostly living in the Mamprusi homeland in the Northern Region of Ghana, an area about 160 Km. from Yizeesi in the west (1° 30' W) to Nakpanduri in the east (0° W), and about 50 Km. from the Gambaga scarp in the north (10° 40' N) and the Nasia river in the south (10° N) [Map]. Chief towns are Nalerigu, Gambaga, and Walewale. This is an area of savannah land, with a rainfall averaging some 1000mm. per year which falls almost entirely in the rainy season from May to October. Quantity, duration and distribution of the rains vary very widely from year to year. The soils are lateritic on sandstones

¹ Even with the census data available it is difficult to be precise about numbers because of immigration and emigration – both permanent and temporary – affecting the area, and the different rates and degrees of assimilation or retention of 'homelands' contacts and identity by migrants (cf. Drucker Brown, 1975, Ch.1, § 3 and Ch. 2 where, however, the confusion of identity is probably overstated).

which drain southwards down the slope of the Gambaga scarp to the river Nasia on the east side of the White Volta, eastwards to the Volta on the other side.

In their own language one member of the group is a **ŋmampuriga**², plural **ŋmampurisi**, the language **ŋmampurili**³, and the territory **ŋmampurigu**.

1. Basic Clause Structure, Neutral Perspective

The basic template of the Mampruli clause may be formulated in pre-theoretical form as :-

Subject NP – Preverbals – Verb – Complement I – Complement II – Adverbial/s

1. The slot marked 'Preverbals' may contain several items taken from a repertory of 'Tense' (time-depth), Polarity, and Modal particles, and various others expressing adverbial senses including time phase ("already", "yet", "again") and pragmatic confidence-level ("certainly", "indeed", "just", "if", "maybe"). These are usually referred to as 'pre-verbal' particles although one may note that in Bisa, with a very-similar system but with S-O-V order, they retain the post-subject place and are separated from the verb by the object, if present (Naden 1973, pp.144, 161-170). The attempt of Wilson (*e.g.* 1972 pp. VPI-2) to tabulate these in a system of classes occupying mutually-exclusive 'slots' is probably premature: the amount of (particularly oral) data which would be needed to establish whether such a categorial syntagmatic/paradigmatic system in fact operates, and its details, is not yet possible to collect. Working on a limited range of texts in Mampruli, Tony Pope (p.c.) analysed a by-no-means-complete set of eleven particles into five ordered classes, but a further six items could not be fitted into the scheme but occurred in more than one position.
2. The verb word may be inflected for Aspect.
3. If both Complement slots are filled, Complement I is usually realised by a pronoun which is suffixed or cliticised to the verb⁴
4. Verbs which have an underlying predicate structure with more than two non-agent rŋles (*e.g.* buy/sell [recipient or vendor + merchandise + price], shoot [target + projectile + weapon]) do not normally express all possible complements in a single clause. One or more non-subject participant becomes the object of a secondary verb which may be considered as functionally reduced to a thematic- rŋle marker (Wilson 1971).
5. Adverbials often come at the beginning of the clause but in that case are usually marked as topicalised by left-movement (see §4.1 below). They include temporal and locative words, a few manner adverb words, ideophones,

² Mampruli cited in bold is in orthographic form. Where sub-orthographic matters are in focus, phonetic transcription is enclosed in [], phonemic in // and morphemic in { }.

³ And abstract, as in **ŋmampurili kaari** "Mamprusi tradition, custom".

⁴ Though in orthography written as a separate word. For clitic status in a related language see Purvis MS

nominal phrases with a postposition (in MP **ni** (4)⁵) or relational noun (like ‘head’ = “top, on, because” or ‘back’ = “after, beyond, following”).

6. The minimal Clause is a verb word (usually imperative); normally a NP subject is also present, and the other elements may appear in any combination.

1. **Kyema!** “Go!”
2. **N sa ku laan ti o ligidi beoo.** “I won’t give him money again tomorrow.”
 | 2-days fut.neg again give 3.sg moneys morrow

The neutral sentence-perspective with this basic structure is that the subject is Theme, Topic and the predicate (verb-plus-complements) Rheme, Comment.

2. Aspect

Aspect in the stricter sense (not the wider-ranging *Aktionsarten* represented in the preverbal particles – see Bache 1981) is an asymmetrical 3-term system marked by verbal suffixation.

1. The verb-suffix morpheme {-Ri1}⁶ marks the imperfective aspect.
3. a. **U daa kyenni la Tammali.** “He was going to Tamale (when something happened).”
 b. **U kyenni.** “He is walking (child’s development).”

It is used for action pictured as being in progress at the focal time, or habitual action.

2. The suffix {-ya} marks perfective very much in the sense of the English Perfect – past with present relevance. Contrast:

4. a. **U kyaŋŋi Tammali.** “He went to Tamale (but may be back now).”
 b. **U kyaŋŋiya.** “He has gone (and is still away).”

This is not used very commonly, and it is further restricted by a rule that nothing must follow a verb marked as perfective (except for one special case described below §7).

- c. * **U kyaŋŋiya Tammali.**
- d. * **U kyaŋŋiya soosa la.** ‘He went yesterday.’

⁵ Fourth of five homonyms.

⁶ The realisation of the consonant in the four different suffixes summarised as “{-Ri}” is too complex to discuss here.

3. The unmarked verb is used in all other instances and has a neutral or aorist aspect.

3. Polarity : Negative Clause

Syntactic polarity is marked by selection of the pre-verbal particles {**ku** (2)}, {**di** (2)} or {**bu** (2)}. The first is *future+negative* (as in *e.g.* 2 above), the second *imperative+negative* and the third the ‘elsewhere’ *negative*. There are also lexical negatives, verbs with the senses “not be”, “not be-there”, “not have” and “not know” (**m⁷-pa** (2), **n-ka** (4), **n-ka** (5), **n-zi** (2)). In general, negation resists marked sentence perspectives. This is not a categorial rule: **m-pa** “not be” often has attention marked on its complement, and this occurs sometimes with **n-ka** (4) “not be there”.

4. Marked Topic

As a ‘transformation’ from the neutral structure and perspective, a marked topicalisation of any of the elements (except the particles) may occur. Two types of case need to be considered.

1. Non-Subject elements are topicalised by frontshifting, left-movement/dislocation. The topicalised element comes first in the clause and is followed by a marker **ka**⁸ which indicates the resumption of the main clause (*i.e.* what follows is the subject/theme but not topic). There is no overt trace in the place where the frontshifted element would be in a normal clause.

5. **Pusiga ka Gbewaa daa di u sa'abu n-tigi.** *Mampurugu 2.3-4*
“(It was at) Pusiga that Gbewaa stuck his spoon in the wall. (‘ate his t.z. and was sated’ – euphemism for dying)
6. **U saha ka Kambɔnsi daa boori ni ba tuusi ti tɔppu,** *Mampurugu 2.42*
(It was in) his time that the Ashantis wanted to confront us in war
7. **Tɔppu wa ni ka Kyakoosi daa kye na nti sunɔɔi u pam.** *Mampurugu 3.8-9*
(It was) in this war that the Chakosi came and helped him a lot.
8. **Tanni, ni siri, ni bisim ka ba daa zaŋɔɔi m-me goomni maa.** *Nalerigu Walls 20*
(It was) mud, and honey and milk that they used to build the wall.

⁷ The citation-form of a verb includes the syllabic homorganic-nasal ‘infinitive’ prefix.

⁸ I assume this to be **ka** (1) which also functions as conjunction and complementiser.

A very similar construction is found in Dagbani (Wilson 1972 pp. 29.1/2 *ee.g.* **Na-Ya ka o chaŋ**. “It was Yendi that he went to.”, **Zuŋɔ ka n ni chaŋ**. “It is today that I will go.”). In Farefare (the conjunction is **te**) “unusual word order ... heightens the prominence: **Kɔ'ŋɔ te ho vuunla. Norɔɔ te ho zanla**. (Guinea fowl that you smoke. Cock that you carry.)” (Schaefer 2003, p.118).

2. Topicalisation of the subject is somewhat different. As the subject is the leftmost element in normal structure it is placed in a hanging topic before the main clause: there is a prosodic break before the clause resumes, there is a pronoun holding the place of the topicalised item: the hanging topic phrase is marked by a following particle **muna**.

9. **Nɔlɔri gɔriⁱ muna – kanɔna kanⁱ kur nye la saha kam.** SRV4.9
As for Fasting month – this is how it always is.

10. **Nyinⁱ muna, iⁱ yi ya sunɔŋi ŋɔn susira, di kye ka ba baŋɔi di yɛla.** MAT 6:3
As for you, if you want to help a beggar, don't let them know about it.

11. **Neesim maaⁱ muna - diⁱ neaari la zibsim ni** JHN 1:5
As for the light – it shines in darkness

Especially in more-complex structures this pattern may also be used for non-subject elements, and even for oral ‘headings’ which cannot be considered the extraction of any element within the following sentence. This strategy may be particularly characteristic of informal discourse in Ghanaian languages and spill over into Ghanaian English (Owusu-Ansah 1998).

In informal contexts the hanging topic may be used without any particle, only intonation (represented by a dash here) signals the end of the topic and the beginning of the clause proper:

12. **Noosi diibu la – ka pɔtti la naari.** SL “The chickens’ feed – it’s nearly finished.”

13. **Saala la – a piibu tɔ pam.** SL “The charcoal – its extraction is very difficult.”
[Topic is syntactically associative in a complex NP Subject, notionally object of a nominalised verb]

3. **gba** and **min** : the items glossed as “also” are often given fairly cavalier treatment in grammatical analyses, if they are not ignored altogether. This is probably because their function is primarily discourse/pragmatic rather than syntactic. ‘also’

applies in a situation where two clauses or other units are parallel in structure and sense but a particular slot or rôle is filled by different comparable participants in each.

14. “I went to market yesterday and my brother also went.”

- as in the example some of the identical material is deleted in the second item. In Mampruli the particle **gba** follows the parallel rôle-filler:

15. **N sa kyaŋŋi daa ka m sunzɔ gba sa kyaŋŋi.** [same sense]

As long as this basic pattern holds, the expression of the ‘also’ leg doesn’t have to follow precise parallelism:

16. **N sa kyaŋŋi daa ka n sunzɔ gba sa dɔla.** “... brother also followed⁹ (me).”

Characteristically it is the verb or other predicator which is constant, either the subjects (above) or the objects (below) being counterchanged:

17. “We picked some plums and also a couple of peaches.”

The construction becomes strained if more than one main element is changed:

18. ³“I went to market and my brother also went to farm.” [*only “went” is ‘also’: would only be used if accounting for why nobody was at home*]

In Mampruli there is another item which presents the activities or fates of more than one participant as equally worthy of attention, but different. The translation is usually “... for his part” or “As for ... , she ...”. The forms are **min** or **mun** with strong form **mina** or **muna**:

19. Bugum min Toobu: tɔ, di min niŋi la ... *Funeral/Fire 35-6*
 “As for Fire Throwing: OK, this takes place ...” [*introducing second subject, first was funeral customs*]

20. **Kpaŋŋu yeliya, ni, u ma pa noaa ka u min laa n-dɔli u.** *Proverb 222*
 “Guineafowl says that the hen isn't his mother but as for him – he still follows her.”

21. **booli u biiya – u bii mun yuuri n daa boonni Bugri.** *Goat 67*
 “called his son – now this son was called Bugri”

22. **Yelimaŋni, pɔ'a ni doo m mari yiri ka ka veela. Pɔ'a n su yiri ni tuma, ka doo min su puu ni tuma.** *Marriage 2*
 Truly, a woman and a man keep house and it is fine. The woman is in charge of the housework, and the man is in charge of the farm-work.

⁹ This Ghanaian ‘follow’ means “accompany”.

It is also possible, though less common, to use the emphatic relative pronoun:

23. **Seeba nyoori la moo n-kuuri numni.**
Seeba ɲɔn nyoori kariwaasi n-kuuri bunkɔbri.
Seeba ɲɔn gbiiri vɔya n-kuuri numni.
Seeba ɲɔn niɲni kɔpeeri n-kuuri bunkɔbri. Toosigu 9-13¹⁰
 Some (hunters) set fire to old bush to kill game ('meat').
 Some again set fire to virgin bush to kill animals.
 Some again dig pits to kill game.
 Some again use wicker fish-traps to kill animals.

The 'ideal' situations (where the contrasted parallel item is present or can be reliably reconstructed) give way in conversational and real-life pragmatic contexts to situations where the parallel is manifested non-verbally or indirectly:

24. **U gba saari ni.** "He also has diarrhoea." SL [in a clinic queue -
 speaker's child has same complaint as previous patient was just
 treated for]
25. **U gba daa kpi la Gambaa.** Mampurugu 2.38
 He also died at Gambaga. [History of ancient Paramount Chiefs. Some time
 back is has been stated that the previous Chief passed away (different
 expression) at Gambaga]
26. **halli ni zuna ka ti min na mari la koobu maa** SRV 6 007
 "Until today we [sort of, in contrast with our ancestors] are still involved in
 farming."
27. **Sambulli yi zaɲɲi di nira ni n-kyanɲi Naa yiri ni ... Ka ɪmaanɲa gba**
daa zaɲɲi Sambulli n-kyanɲi Naa yiri ni, Spider Stories 401
 "Spider just took that person to the Chief's house ... And Monkey also took
 Spider to the Chief's house"

and even:

28. **Nyini, bee i biiya? – U min gba kɔmsiri ni.** SL
 "You, or your child?" - As for him, he too has a cough."
 [The mother is one participant ("You"), the child another: he has his own
 separate diagnosis but it is of the same problem as the mother, so both "as for"
 and "also"!]]

¹⁰ In the same text the writer uses an exactly comparable structure with **Seeba min ... Seeba min** (ibid. 49-51)

4. Where one of the participants is represented by a pronoun, there is an additional possibility of adding emphasis or contrast by using the emphatic form of the pronoun:

	singular		plural	
person	regular	emphatic	regular	emphatic
1 st .	N	mani	ti	tirima
2 nd .	i	nyini	ya	yarima
3 rd .	u	ɲɔna	ba	bana ¹¹

29. “**Mani n tɔ u n-lusi!**” *Toosigu*
 “I (was the one who) shot him down!” [prey in group-hunt]
30. **Tiikya! Nyini ka u puusiri la.** *SL*
 Teacher! It's you he's greeting.
31. **Nira ɲɔn ti i gyilima, ɲɔna n gaari ɲɔn ti i salima.** *Proverb 1104*
 The person who gives you honour, he does more than the one who gives you gold.
32. “**Tirima nyaya, ban kpalim ku nya!**” *Naam*
 “We got it (chieftaincy), the rest won't get it!”
33. “**yarima daa deaai di la yɔri, ka ya gba tisima di yɔri.**” *MAT 10:8*
 “you [pl.] received it free, so you also give it free.”
34. **Bana n-su ka.** *SL*
They are in charge of it, own it.

5. Assertive Particles

Against this broad outline, which is largely paralleled in many languages, Mampruli has a further system of three assertive particles. These are less strongly-marked in their effect on the sentence perspective but much more pervasive in text, particularly multi-person oral discourse. They are described as forming a system because they do not co-occur and they have a complementary effect on sentence perspective in that they

¹¹ The expected **ba(n)dima** is used as interrogative “who [pl.]?”

indicate attention on the subject, the verb and the predicate (or complement) respectively. However each has its own peculiarities in addition to its paradigmatic relationship to the other two. They are described as “assertive” because they are largely absent in negative, especially syntactically-negated, and in polar question clauses. They play a large part in the formation of question-word questions, however, as the questioned element is intrinsically in focus and the corresponding element in the answer is equally prominent (§6 below).

The closely-similar language Dagbani has closely-similar particles, and others of the Western-Oti/Volta group have some comparable items as will be noted more specifically below. It may be worthy of comment, however, that Agole Kusaal, in general very close to Mampruli, does not appear to have anything at all resembling these particles.

1) Subject attention particle [N(1)]: the first problem with this particle is its phonological form: it is a syllabic nasal, homorganic with the following consonant, and often forming a syllabic coda to a preceding vowel-final item or is assimilated into a preceding nasal consonant. In some cases therefore it is very lacking in phonological prominence. It follows the Subject and precedes the Verbal phrase. Given that the Subject is thematic in unmarked sentence perspective and can be made emphatic or contrastive by use of a strong pronoun, or given marked focus as described above, it is difficult to relate the assertive force of this particle to these other comparable perspectives. It is not contrastive but rather adds a mild strengthening to the thematic status of the subject. It is often used at the beginning of a text or utterance (or in a one-clause utterance which is by definition initial) or in introducing new participants (see *ee.g.* 22 above, 35, 36, 38.a below).

In addition it shares with the other members of this system a tendency to belong with imperfective verb-forms and progressive/stative meaning. The subtlety of the semantic/pragmatic force is also brought out, as in the case of **la**, by the difficulties writers, editors and transcribers of texts have in deciding whether the particle is, or should be, present in a text.

35. **Asambulli n daa be ni ...** *Spider Stories 1:001* “Once there was Mr. Spider ...”
36. **Wɔɔɔgu n daa be ni, m-mari u naafu.** *Spider Stories 318*
“Once upon a time there was an Elephant and he had a cow ...”
37. **M puu n daa beera,** *Goat 37* “My stomach was hurting ...”
[beginning of embedded story]
38. **Naa Zɔmsaa kum nyaanɔɔa, Naa NaMɔ'alli (Naa Mɔ'ari) n daa zinni**
“After Chief Zomsaa's death, Chief Namo'alli (Chief River) sat
u gbana maa zugu. Naa Zɔmsaa bii n daa nye u. *Mampurugu 2.38-9*
on his skins. Chief Zomsaa's son, he was. ”
39. **Asuba MBɛDahamani n sa daɔɔɔi n-kye na** *Farm Palaver 22*
“In the morning yesterday Bro.Dahamani came early”

In *e.g.* 38.b note that when the complement of the identificational copula verb **nye** is a pronoun, the topic/theme is marked with this particle (*cf./ct.* 54, 55 ; for a comparable phenomenon in Dagbani see Wilson 1972 p.27.6 *ee.g.* 11. **O nye la Dagbana.** / 12. **Dagbana n nye o.** “He/she is a Dagomba.”).

A very similar statement could be made for Dagbani, and also the much less closely-related Farefare (See Dakubu 2000, p.62 foot [“marks subject focus and is extremely common”]; 2003, *ee.g.* 2.b, 7, 9, 12, 16 ... [glossed ‘FOC’] and comment on ‘focus’ p.66).

2) Verb attention particle {NI(3)} : Apart from the existence of five other particles of form /ni/ (most of which can be distinguished by element-order), the distinctive characteristic of the verb-assertion particle is that it follows the verb and only appears when nothing further follows in the clause: the syntactic or semantic function of anything that might follow is irrelevant: if **ni** is not final in the clause then it cannot appear. A syntactic object may be present but only if it is an enclitic pronoun and therefore precedes **ni** (47.a). This particle occurs obligatorily with transitive verbs in the imperfective without an external complement expressed, and with asserted (not gnomic) meaning. Also very common with statives (*ee.g.* 45, 48, **Error! Reference source not found.** below). The classic set of examples is :

- 40.a **U di sa'abu.** “He ate t.z..”
 .b **U di la sa'abu.** *ditto* with slight emphasis on **sa'abu**
 .c **U diri la sa'abu.** “He is eating t.z..”
 .d **U diri ni.** “He is eating.”
 .e **U diri bu ni.** “He is eating it.”
 .f **U dira.** “He eats (it).” [hab.]
 .g **U diri sa'abu.** “He eats t.z..” [hab.]

text examples:

41. **u daa tuusi tɔppu n-yeligi u tinɔa paalu.**
 he waged war and extended the area of his country.
42. **U daa tuusi ni halli nti paai ŋmampurugu.** *Mampurugu 2.10-11*
 He waged (it) as far as Mampurugu.
43. **taɔɔa maa pun tɔ'asiri ni** *Goat 207* “The shea-tree was already speaking.”
44. **N kunni ni.** *SL* “I am going home.”
45. **Koom maa kɔtti ni.** *SL* “The water is boiling.”

46. **U peaai ka ni.** SL “He washed it.”
47. **M boori ka ni. / M bu boori ka.** SL “I want it.” / “I don't want it.”
48. **U kpi ni.** SL “He/she is dead.”

The clitic **ŋ** in Dagaare as described in Saanchi 2003 may be a related phenomenon, being always clause-final, though in this language **la** (see next section), of which Saanchi considers it a variant, can also be final. There is a comparable particle in Dagbani with form **mi** (Wilson 1972 27.7-8), which has similar distribution (“In the new information clauses in which **-mi** is used the verb has no complement other than optionally a weak pronoun” *ibid.* 27.7), though it can in fact be followed by material in the same clause (*ee.g.* 12 on p.27.3¹², 15, 17 on p. 27.8). Compare also ‘Gurene’ **me** “new information” (Dakubu 2000 p.63 and *ee.g.* 34/5 pp. 63/4).

3) Predicate attention particle {LA(1)} : in contrast with the foregoing, **la** only occurs when something follows in the clause, irrespective of the form or function of the following item. It follows the verb word and any enclitic pronoun which may be attached to the verb (*e.g.* 52, 40) Even more than the others in this system it is liable to be inserted and removed by successive editors and proof-readers depending, I suspect, on how fluently they read: on the one hand a non-fluent reader takes each sentence or even clause as a separate utterance, and as such more apt to receive marked assertion; on the other hand a fluent reader better grasps the natural flow of the text and may approximate more to oral deployment of the markers.

49. **Ti ŋmampurisi yi la Wuntampusiri zii wa.** *Mampurugu 1.11*
We Mamprusi came from that Eastern area.
50. **ba zaŋŋi la kuya maa koobu yetto'a n-wulisi ti** SRV 6.2
“they took hoe-farming principles and taught us”
51. **U be la kpa.** SL “He is here.”
52. **i pun mari ka la nuusi ayi** SRV 6.3 “You have already taken it up with both hands”
53. **“Ti kuuri wa, ti nin gbaai ka la gɔri kani?”** *Funeral/Fire 10*
“This our funeral, we will fix it for which month?”

¹² **Ti kul kun'mi maa.** “We're off home then.” which is in direct contrast to the equivalent MP form of this common social formula: **Ti kur kunni la maa.**

54. **i nye la ɲɔn dɔ'ara** *Goat 177* “you are someone who brings-forth”
55. **Di nye la yelimɔɲni ...** *Funeral/Fire 1* “It is true (that) ...”
56. **Gbewaa daa zaɲɲi u n-ti la doowa,** *Mampurugu 1.27*
“Gbewaa took her and gave (her) to a man”
57. **u daa ti Kyakoosi maa la pɔ'aba** *Mampurugu 3.9-10*
he gave the Chakosi wives
58. **N da ka la Langbiɲɲu sulli.** *SL* “I bought it at Langbinsi for a shilling.”
59. **Ba yetti ya la yan nin niɲ seem** *ACT 16 :17*
They are telling you how you should act.
60. **Kɔzulunɲu bunni zaɲɲni la ni suguru.** *Proverb 2454*
“Things in deep water are taken with patience.”
61. **Di pa la i lɔ la Naaba zugu** *Nolori 10* “It is not that you fast [‘tie’] for the sake of the Chief.”

Note that while there is always something following the **la** in the clause this may be the object of the verb (50), locative or source complement of verb (51, 49), indirect object (56 [direct object extracted under dummy verb], 57 [direct object clitic precedes]), instrument (with object clitic preceding the **la** – 52), complement of copula (54, 55 – cf. 38.b and comment thereon), indirect speech complement of speech verb (59), prepositional instrument phrase (60), and an external locative adjective itself followed by second complement/instrument (58).

Besides the identification verb **nye** as in **Di nye la yelimɔɲni ...** (55), two very common constructions requiring **la** are with **wula** “how, why?”:

62. **Ti niɲi la wula ka ... diri wahala** *Goat 79-80*
‘We will do how and ... experience suffering?’ (“How we are suffering”)
63. **di nye u la wula?** *Goat 159* “How will it feel?” (“It will be it how?”)
64. **Di ya niɲi a wula ... ?** *Goat 180* “How can it be that ... ?”

– the short form **a** as in 64 is quite common in speech: and with **ɲmani** “resemble, be like” : –

65. **di ŋmani la hoo** [*+ sent*] *Goat 180, 190* “It is as if ...”

66. **Naam boobu gba ŋmani la pɔ'a boobu.** *Naaba 18*
“Seeking a chieftaincy is also like seeking a wife.”

another common use is with the negative identification copula **pa**¹³ : -

67. **di yi pa la yiri ni zamma ...** *Goat 214* “If it was not for domestic (‘house in’) troublemaking”

68. **Veelim pa la yem.** *Proverb 511* “Beauty isn't wisdom.”

showing that the ‘assertive’ force of these particles is less resistant to semantic than to syntactic (*cf.* 47) negation. However other similar proverbs do not use the **la**, as in the Ghana-wide proverbial expression (popular as a lorry-motto) : -

69. **Laari pa wurilim.** *Proverb 1184* ‘Laugh is not love.’

A similar particle is found in Dagbani, where Wilson explains its function in terms of marking a predication which is new information (1972, 27.4/6) - “it comes between the verb and its complement, that is, before the object of a verb, or a place or time expression. While used as a signal of new information, its function is to focus on, or draw attention to, the expression that follows it. Dakubu's description and examples in Booni¹⁴ (2000 pp. 61-2) is extremely close to the Mampruli usage, except that in Booni the obligatory following item must be a syntactic complement of the verb (“it never occurs with an intransitive verb or a verb whose complement ... is not expressed” *ibid.* p.61). The verb itself may or may not be new ...” (*ibid.* 27.4) - and also in Dagaare (Saanchi 2003 though this has a different distribution).

6. Interrogatives

While polar questions mostly exclude these marked-perspective devices, interrogative (question-word) questions and their answers make extensive use of them because there is an intrinsic attention on the item which the speaker wants to have supplied.

Where the subject is a question word it usually has the {N 1} subject-assertion particle (§5, 1 above) :

70. **Bɔ n lee n-dɔli pɔ'a wa.** *Goat 205* “What on earth is the matter with (‘follows’) this woman?”

71. **Ka bɔ la hazibu duu n zeya ŋɔ wa ?** *Spider Stories 50*
And what wonderful room is standing this here?

¹³ see also *e.g.* 52 above

¹⁴ The dialect of Farefare spoken at Bongo, confusingly headlined as ‘Gurene’.

72. **ŋɔni n dee m-boonni u maa?** *Spider Stories 329*
 “who on earth was calling him?”
73. **ŋɔni n wulisi bii wa yam ŋɔa?** *Spider story* “who taught this kid such
 good sense?”

Where the question word occupies another r̄le it is often front-shifted with **ka** (§4, 1 above) :

74. **Bɔ ka u di?** *SL* “What did he eat?”
75. **Yeni ka i kyenna?** *SL* “Where are you going?”

It is possible, however, in either case to leave the emphasis to be carried by the semantics of the question word itself:

76. **ŋɔni lee n-kaasira?** *SL* “Who on earth is crying?” [*cf./ct.* 72]
77. **U diri la bɔa?** *SL* “What is he/she eating?” [*cf./ct.* 74]
78. **U wa la yeni?** *SL* “Where is he/she going?” [*cf./ct.* 75]

Essentially similar data for Dagbani are given in Wilson 1972 30.3/4 and frontshifted examples in 29.1 *e.g.* **Ya ka o chaŋ?** “Where did he/she go?” (*cf.* 75 above). In Farefare Dakubu 2003 61-62 *ee.g.* 17.c-e show a comparable use of frontshifting, and 19.a/b of the subject focus marker, discussion on p.66.

7. Descriptives

Within this overall system, there are special patterns which are specifically relevant to predications where the verb is semantically descriptive or stative. These do not intrinsically have a second argument though most ‘intransitive’ verbs can be made transitive or causative by adding an object nominal, where an appropriate sense is available. Hence descriptive/stative verbs can be used in action-process predicates frames “widen [sth.]”, “blacken [sth.]” (the terminology ‘Action’ - ‘State’ - ‘Process’ - ‘Action-Process’ is that of Chafe 1970: Carlson (2000) uses ‘CAUSE-view’ - ‘STATE-view’ - ‘BECOME-view’ - ‘CAUSE...BECOME...STATE’). Given the affinity of the Mampruli assertive particles for the imperfective, the intrinsic link between imperfective and state (Naden [1997] §2.2), and the requirement for the marked Perfective (§2 above) and verb-attention particle (§5.2) to be without following material, so *a fortiori* without verb complements, and so with only a single r̄le filled, it is not unexpected that a number of the examples show the patient as subject, and other

passive-like structures (and see Carlson, *op. cit.* p.61 "In Supyire there is an affinity between imperfective aspect and object-suppression"). This can be seen in data such as :

79. **U niŋiya.** SL "He has been done. (treated in clinic)"

80. **Kyekye maa kabiri ni. / Ka kabiya.** SL
"The bicycle is breaking/has broken."

81. **Ka kyisiya.** SL "It has snapped. (fiddle-string)"

82. **Ka yoaai ni.** SL "It is open."

(on these 'unaccusative' verbs see Carlson, *op. cit.* 45-6)

83. **A zoaai ni. or A zoaaya.** SL "They are many."

cf./ct. 84. **A zoaari ni.** "They are increasing."

In *e.g.* 60 above, repeated here as :

85. **Kəzulunŋu bunni zaŋŋni la ni suguru.** Proverb 2454
"Things in deep water are taken with patience."

with **la** it is presumably the imperfective which encourages the passive usage; with its requirement of something to follow, possibly a verb complement, **la** more naturally adds a rŋle

86. **Ti goori la kyuu.** SL
"We are wandering the festival." [a sort of 'wassailing' custom in which prepubertal girls dress up and make up and go around soliciting small money gifts on a Muslim fest-day]

In the case of state, and particularly descriptive verbs, there is some polysemy between state and process ('BECOME') perspectives; the *-g- verb extensor (Naden [1997] §3.1, 2004) adds the process dimension, but forms without it can still have a process interpretation and those with it a state interpretation, consonant with the 'lability' described by Carlson *op. cit.* for Supyire which is also exhibited, though not in precisely the same ways, in Mampruli and friends. The state view, particularly with the -g- process morphology, is forced by the use of the perfective aspect ('has become big' = "is big (now).") :

87. **Ka galisi. / Ka galisiya.** SL "It is (getting) big." / "It is big."

88. **U nimbiri yinni ... məriya** SL "One of his eyes has/is swollen."

The **ni** assertive particle, however, is also used in this way:

89. **Di bii ni.** SL “It is hot.”
90. **U gyε ni.** “(say that) he was tired” *Nalerigu Walls 16*
91. **Ka naai ni.** SL “It is finished/has run out/is not available.”
92. **Kugri la tibsā ni.** SL “The stone is heavy. ”

Very commonly, however, such clauses use the unique (to this construction) combination of the perfective aspect suffix on the verb with the **ni** assertive marker:

93. **Ka peeliḡiya ni.** SL “It is white.” (‘has become white’)
94. **A zoaaya ni.** SL “They are many.” [*cf.* 83]
95. **U gyeya ni.** SL “He is/was tired.”
96. **Ka kyεbḡiya ni.** SL “It (tooth) is broken.”
97. **Ka berigiya ni. / Ka bu berigi.** SL “It is (not) rotting.”
98. **Ka n daa mɔriya ni.** SL “It swelled up/is swollen.” [*cf.* 88]

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SOURCES OF MAMPRULI EXAMPLES

<i>Farm Palaver</i>	Transcription of taped account of a dispute over farmland (12-year-old boy)
<i>Funeral/Fire</i>	Transcription of taped account of Funeral customs and Fire Festival (fifth survey text – a village chief)
<i>Goat</i>	Transcription of taped session in which two people exchange greetings and folktales (2 adult brothers)
<i>Mampurugu</i>	Written text on the history of the Paramount Chiefs (middle-aged schoolteacher and chieftaincy contender)
<i>Marriage</i>	Written text on traditional marriage customs. (middle aged teacher and language organiser)
<i>Naam</i>	Written text on traditional chieftaincy customs. (middle aged teacher and language organiser)
<i>Nalerigu Walls</i>	Historical account given orally to schoolchildren by chief and dictated from memory by 14-year-old boy
<i>Nolori</i>	Transcription of taped account of Ramadan fast, probably re-hashed from mosque Friday sermon (one of the ‘Goat’ brothers)
<i>Proverb</i>	Corpus of Mampruli proverbs based on Plissart 1983 edited by R. Kofi Lange, James E. de G. Stickings, Tony Naden
<i>SL</i>	‘Slip’ material, jotted down from utterances in everyday life
<i>Spider Stories</i>	Published collection of Spider folktales from various sources, mostly transcribed from taped oral tellings.
<i>SRV4</i>	Fourth Survey text (a clan elder)
<i>SRV 6</i>	Sixth survey text : Farming (a village chief)
<i>Toosigu</i>	Written text on traditional hunting customs. (middle aged teacher and language organiser)