5

A SYSTEM-BASED TYPOLOGY OF mood IN NIGER-CONGO LANGUAGES*

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Introduction

This chapter examines the mood systems of Niger-Congo languages. mood systems have been studied in language typology for the past four decades (e.g., Ultan, 1978; Chisholm et al., 1984; Sadock & Zwicky, 1985; Bybee et al., 1994: Ch. 6; Palmer, 2001; König & Siemund, 2007), with certain properties of imperative and interrogative moods being included in the *World Atlas of Language Structures* (*WALS*) (Dryer & Haspelmath, 2013; see also the contributions in Nuyts & van der Auwera, 2016). In addition, systemic functional linguists have investigated the systemic organization of options in mood and of their modes of realization in grammar and phonology (e.g., Matthiessen, 2004; Teruya et al., 2007; Teruya & Matthiessen, 2015; Matthiessen, 2015). In our exploration of the typology of mood systems in Niger-Congo languages, we will draw on findings in systemic functional typology as a guide; these findings shed light on variation in mood systems in terms of three views (cf. Halliday, 1996; Matthiessen, 2007):

1 Viewed "from above," from the vantage point of the semantics of speech functions (speech acts): the organization of mood systems according to the nature of the exchange of meanings in dialogue.
2 Viewed "from below," from the vantage point of the grammatical and phonological resources used in realizing options in mood: the strong tendency for mood options to be realized either by phonological prosodies or by modal particles placed as juncture prosodies finally or initially in the clause, indicating its status as a dialogic move. Segments may also occur at a lower rank as modal affixes of the verb or particles within the verbal group.
3 Viewed "from roundabout," from the vantage point of the system of mood itself—what speech-functional distinctions are grammaticalized, but also from the vantage point of its systemic environment—other interpersonal systems (in particular, polarity), textual systems (e.g., whether the interrogative element of an elemental interrogative is given the status of Theme or of Focus) and experiential systems (e.g., which transitivity roles may be interrogated in an elemental interrogative clause).[1]

Of these three views, it is the view "from below" that has been adopted for the largest number of languages in language typology in general, and this view is reflected in the database of languages in *WALS*. But to understand typological variation in the MOOD systems of African languages—and of languages in general—we need to combine the three views; and it is the views "from above" and "from roundabout" that will enable us to explain the realizational patterns that have been identified "from below." Thus, we define MOOD as the grammar of speech functions, that is, in principle, the grammatical reflexes of statement, question, command and offer (cf. König & Siemund, 2007). We say 'in principle' because, across languages, there is no typical or specialized grammatical form realizing offers (cf. Halliday, 1984: 20). It is realized by mood types typical of the other three speech functions.

The study is based on a range of data sources: discourse data from languages we have analysed closely, namely, Akan (Kwa: Tano), Dagaare (Gur: Mabia),[2] Kulango (Gur: Kulango-Lorom) and Ọ̀kọ́ (Benue-Congo: Nupe-Oko-Idoma), elicited and constructed sentences and descriptive material on a wide range of languages in the Niger-Congo phylum.[3] Our unit of analysis is free (or 'independent') clauses as opposed to bound clauses (e.g., relative, adverbial and nominal clauses), since it is free clauses that serve as the domain of MOOD as defined in this study. Regarding glossing of examples from secondary sources, we use the original glosses by the various authors but, where possible, we make a few modifications for uniformity with our own rules, which is largely based on the Leipzig glossing rules. We begin our analysis by sketching a typological overview of the interpersonal structure of the clause in Niger-Congo languages (the second section) and then discuss the different types of mood and their realizations (the third section).

Interpersonal structure of the clause in Niger-Congo languages

Niger-Congo languages typically have the following interpersonal clause structure: (Subject •) Predicator (• Complement) (• Adjunct) (• Negotiator) (cf. Figure 5.1).[4] The brackets show elements that are optional and the dot indicates that the element does not necessarily appear in the order in which it is presented, although this order is typical across the Niger-Congo phylum (see Akerejola, 2005 and Mwinlaaru, 2017: Ch. 3; forthcoming on Ọ̀kọ́ and Dagaare respectively; see also Watters, 2000: 197–200). Bantu languages notably display a radical flexibility in the order of elements (Aboh, 2007a). It should also be noted that Complement, Adjunct and Negotiator can occur more than once in the clause.

Languages vary in relation to the degree to which the Subject is treated as a distinct element of the clause (cf. Comrie, 1989: 66–70, 104–123). While it is prominent in many languages of the Gur, Kru and Adamawa-Ubangi families, Kwa and many Benue-Congo languages often

'You will weed the farm well, right?

Fʊ	*na*	*kɔ*	*=n*	*a*	*wɪɛ*	*vla*	*wɛ?*
2SG	POS.IND.FUT	weed.PFV	FOC	DEF	farm	good	INT
Subject	Predicator			Complement		Adjunct	Negotiator

Figure 5.1   Illustration of the interpersonal structure of the clause in Dagaare

indicate modal responsibility in the clause with pronominal subject affixes in the Predicator. A notable exception within the Gur family is the Kulango cluster, which is typologically like Kwa languages in this regard. The Predicator itself is realized by the verbal group, consisting of the verb, auxiliary verbs and accompanying particles (in languages that have particles). One difference between verbal affixes and particles across Niger-Congo is that while affixes normally agree with the root verb in terms of vowel harmony and other harmony systems, particles maintain their phonological quality irrespective of that of the co-occurring verb, except when they are cliticized.

The possible positions of Adjunct, realized by adverbial units, are clause initial, pre-verb and post-verb positions and this is normally determined by the kinds and sub-classes of adverbs. The Negotiator element, on the other hand, is realized by modal particles that occur as juncture prosodies in clause initial or clause final position (cf. Matthiessen, 2004: 619–621), and, in a few languages such as Gbadi (Kru: Eastern), in clause medial position (cf. Koopman, 1984: 87). It enacts the clause as a negotiable unit in exchange. There are two types of modal particles: those that show delicate mood distinctions in the clause and those that are only attitudinal markers. The Negotiator is another element of typological variation across languages in the sense that it is more prominent in some languages (e.g., Dagaare and Buli, Gur: Mabia; Ọ̀kọ́, Benue-Congo: NOI) than in other languages (e.g., Akan, Kwa: Tano; Kulango, Gur: Kulango-Lorom).

Let's consider the following dialogue between a vendor (B) and a customer (A) to illustrate how some of the elements of the clause are deployed in enacting it as a move in exchange:

(1) Ọ̀kọ́, Benue-Congo: NOI

A:	*A-ma-wa*	*egin*	*owowo*	*ro.*
	3SG.NHM-NEG-be	guinea:corn	new	AGREE
	Predicator	Complement		Negotiator

'It is not the new guinea corn, right?'

B:	*Aye*	*ya*	*go.*
	3SG.NHM.EMP	be	ASSR
	Subject	Pred.	Negotiator

'It is.'

A:	*I-me-roro*	*ka*	*aye*	*ya*	*ro.*
	1SG-NEG-think	that	3SG.NHM.EMP	be	AGREE
	Predicator		Subject	Pred.	Negotiator

'I don't think that it is.'

B:	*Ena*	*e-mi-wa*	*a*?
	what	3SG.NHM-PFV-be	INT
	Wh/Complement	Predicator	Negotiator

'What is it then?'

A:	*I-me-din*	[[*onene*	*a*	*wa*	*na*]].
	1SG-NEG-know	DEF.one	REL	be	COMPL
	Predicator	Complement			

'I don't know which one it is.'

B:	*Egin*	*owowo*	*ya*	*o*.
	guinea:corn	new	be	okay
	Subject		Pred.	Negotiator

'It is the new guinea corn, okay.'

This dialogue is rich in negotiation. Almost all clauses end with a Negotiator, mostly indicating the speaker's attitude towards the proposition. The Predicator indicates the process and, in most part, includes pronominal prefixes, polarity and aspect markers. It carries the burden of the argument enacted by the clause. Òkó accords little importance to Subject. However, the emphatic pronoun *aye* in the second clause and the nominal group *egin owowo* ('new guinea corn') in the last clause are elevated to the status of Subject.

Languages vary with regards to the elements that are essential in showing mood contrasts. In some Niger-Congo languages (typically Gur languages) the Subject, Predicator and Negotiator stand out as the essential elements for enacting the clause as a move in exchange and in showing mood contrasts, either by their presence, absence or their morphological realization. In languages where both the Subject and Negotiator have little importance (e.g., typically Kwa languages), however, the morphology of the verb realizing the Predicator is the key item in determining the mood of the clause. This gives a typology of languages where more interpersonal work is done at clause rank and those where it is done at word rank respectively. These typological differences are, however, a matter of degree and tendencies across languages, with some languages (e.g., Òkó) occupying a mid-region.

Typology of MOOD systems in Niger-Congo languages

The MOOD systems in Niger-Congo show a clear primary distinction between indicative and imperative clauses. There is often some grammatical signal that distinguishes these two primary mood types. Two motifs can be identified here. One is the use of special particles in the Predicator to show differences between indicative and imperative clauses (example (2)) and the other is the difference in verbal morphology (example (3)). While the Predicator in indicative clauses normally include markers of grammatical categories of (primary) tense and modality (including the option of zero-realization in the case of tense), these are absent in the imperative clause. A common realization is also the presence of distinct polarity markers in indicative and imperative clauses. An illustration is given below from Gurene:

(2) Gurene, Gur: Mabia

(a)	*N*	***kan***	*kinyɛ*.
	1SG	NEG.IND.FUT	go.PFV

'I will not go.'

(b) *N*   ***ka***   *kini.*
1SG   NEG.IND.NFUT   go.IPFV
'I am not going.'

(c) *Kinyɛ!*
go.PFV
'Go!'

(d) ***Da***   *kinyɛ!*
NEG.IMP   go.PFV
'Don't go!'

Examples (2a) and (2b) are indicative clauses while (2c) and (2d) are imperative clauses. It can be observed that each indicative clause has tense marking, future or non-future. The system of tense is, however, absent in the imperative clause. In addition, the polarity markers in the clauses also show mood contrast. The particles *kan* (negative future) and *ka* (negative non-future) do not only realize polarity but also show that the clauses in which they occur are indicative (2a, 2b). This systemic contrast is established by using a different particle *da* to realize negative polarity in the imperative clause (2d).

The second motif is common among Kwa and in many Benue-Congo languages but also in Kulango, which systematically display idiosyncratic characteristics within the Gur family (cf. Bendor-Samuel, 1971: 149). Here, instead of particles, affixes that are normally present in the verb in indicative clauses are absent in the imperative verb form. These are also typically tense markers. The result is that there is a distinction between indicative verb forms and imperative verb forms in these languages. An illustration is given below from Ga:

(3) Ga, Kwa: Nyo

(a) ***Mi-i-ya***   *jaanɔ.*
1SG-PROG-go   market
'I am going to the market.'

(b) ***M-a-ya***   *jaanɔ.*
1SG-FUT-go   market
'I will go to the market.'

(c) ***Yaa***   *jaanɔ!*
go   market
'Go to the market!'

(d) ***Nyɛ-yaa***   *jaanɔ!*
2PL-go   market
'You go to the market!'

Table 5.1 Primary mood distinctions and their possible sub-types in Niger-Congo

MOOD		Possible subtypes
indicative: declarative		Affirmative/non-affirmative [e.g., Dagaare, Kulango and other Gur languages].
indicative: interrogative	polar	Biased/non-biased 'yes/no' interrogative (marked by different particles) [e.g., Dagaare and other Mabia languages; Òkó], negative 'yes/no' interrogative often indicates bias towards a positive response; alternative interrogative (realized by alternative conjunction and, normally, the diachronic source of non-biased 'yes/no' interrogative particles).
	elemental	Number and kinds of Q-words – participants: human/non-human, singular/plural, quantity and value and, in some languages, noun class [e.g., Wolof, Zulu]; circumstances; process [e.g., Dagaare, Kpelle, Kulango, Yoruba].
imperative		Non-prohibitive/prohibitive (different negative marker from indicative) [e.g., Dagaare, Dagbani, Gurene, Kulango, Yakoma, Zulu]; subjunctive [e.g., Bantu – Sotho, Swahili, Xhosa, Zulu]; immediate/non-immediate [e.g., Mabia languages, Zulu].

Examples (3a) and (3b) are indicative clauses while (3c) and (3d) are imperative clauses. They display different verb forms. For one thing, while the Predicator in the indicative clauses carries tense affixes in addition to person affixes, the Predicator in the imperative clauses does not occur with tense markers (3b, 3c) and can occur without a person marker (3c) (see page 112–113 for details on MOOD in relation to PERSON). In addition, the form of the root verb, *yaa*, in the imperative clause is different from that of the indicative clauses, *-ya*.

Table 5.1 summarizes the delicate distinctions within the indicative and imperative MOODS across the Niger-Congo phylum (see Matthiessen, 2004: 613; Teruya et al., 2007: 874 for a universal account). The rest of the chapter will proceed to discuss them in detail.

Indicative: declarative

The declarative clause is the default realization of statements, the act of giving information. Within the declarative mood, a further distinction is often made between affirmative and non-affirmative in Niger-Congo languages. An affirmative clause asserts and negotiates the positive value of the clause while a non-affirmative clause asserts and negotiates the negative value of the clause. This distinction is exemplified by (4) and (5) below:

(4) Dagaare (Lobr), Gur: Mabia[5]

   (a) *Bɛ*   *na*   *wa*   ***na***.
        3PL   POS.IND.FUT   come.PFV   AFFR
        'They will come.'

   (b) *Bɛ*   *kʋ̃*   *wa*   *ɪ*.
        3PL   NEG.IND.FUT   come.PFV   NAFFR
        'They will not come.'

(c) | *Bɛ* | *na* | *wa* | *nı* | *nı* | *libir*.
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
| 3PL | POS.IND.FUT | come.PFV | CAUS | FOC | money.SG

'They will bring money.'

(5) Dagaare (Central), Gur: Mabia[6]

(a)	*Ba*	***na***	*wa*	***la***.
3PL	POS.IND.FUT	come.PFV	AFFR

'They will come.'

(b)	*Ba*	*kong*	*wa*.
3PL	NEG.IND.FUT	come.PFV

'They will not come.'

(6) Linda, Adamawa-Ubangi: Banda (Watters, 2000: 208)

(a)	*Àndà*	*ʒú*.
house	COMPL.burn

'A house burned.'

(b)	*Àndà*	*ʒúʒú*	***nē***.
house	COMPL.NEG.burn	NAFFR

'A house did not burn.'

The non-affirmative marker has often been described by many studies on African languages as a double negative marker. It is, however, important to distinguish between POLARITY as a system and the mood contrast established by affirmative and non-affirmative markers in clause final position to emphasize the semantic (or pragmatic) role of these final particles as prosodic cues or stance markers. In the clauses above, for instance, POLARITY is realized by particles (examples (4) and (5)) or the morphology (example (6)) of the verbal group realizing the Predicator. At the end of the clause, the speaker however resonates the polarity value of the clause as an interpersonal 'punch', that is, to establish the negotiatory value of the proposition, as s/he is potentially about to hand over the turn to the listener (see examples (4a, b), (5a), and (6b)). Again, while the modal particles or affixes normally placed within the verbal group also realize primary mood contrast such as indicative and imperative, the final modal particles indicate specific sub-types of the mood such as affirmative (4a) versus non-affirmative (4b) (also see example (2) on indicative-imperative distinction by modal particles in the verbal group). It is interesting that out of the various meanings realized in the Predicator, it is the polarity that is picked up for negotiation at the end of the clause. This prosodic resonance between polarity and mood reflects a general characteristic of interpersonal systems (cf. Halliday, 2008).

Among languages with this affirmative/non-affirmative distinction, there is variation as to which of the mood types is overtly marked. In some languages, such as the Lobr dialect of Dagaare, both are overtly marked as in (4a) and (4b), unless there is end (or completive) focus in the affirmative clause, in which case it is not overtly marked (4c). In other languages, such as Linda and also Kulango, only the non-affirmative is overtly marked (6b), and, in Central Dagaare, only the affirmative is overtly marked (5a). From a cross-linguistic point of view, the

non-affirmative is more often overtly marked than the affirmative. One possible explanation for this is that the negative clause is a marked choice in the system of POLARITY and requires more grammatical energy. That is, it puts pressure on the speaker to do more negotiation work. In a corpus of 18 million words, Halliday and James (1993) found that the probability of the occurrence of positive to negative clauses in English discourse is a ratio of 09:01 respectively. The figure we encounter in Dagaare (Lobr), for instance, is not much different. Out of 375 clauses across different registers, positive is 362 (96.5 per cent) and negative is 13 (3.5 per cent), i.e., an average ratio of 9.7:0.3 per text analysed (Mwinlaaru, 2017: §5.4.3). Given this probabilistic tendency, it is understandable that the negative is often favoured for a special mood marking at clause final position, where it serves the need to remind listeners of the negative value of the clause. Further research is, however, required for a detailed investigation of this tendency across languages.

It is also worth noting the absence of one declarative sub-type in Niger-Congo, namely, the exclamative clause. In many languages, there is no specific grammatical marker for exclamation and, where one exists (e.g., in Dagaare and Òkó), it is interpreted as an attitude marker, occurring across declarative and imperative clauses rather than being a specialized term in the system of mood (cf. Moutaouakil, 1999; Mwinlaaru, forthcoming).[7]

Indicative: interrogative

Two main types of interrogative clauses are identified in the languages around the world, namely polar interrogative and elemental interrogative. This section discusses their realization across Niger-Congo.

Polar interrogative

The polar interrogative clause, as the name suggests, enacts a question about polarity, offering an option to the listener to affirm or deny a proposition. Two main types are identified: (1) 'yes/no' interrogative clause and (2) alternative interrogative clause.

(1) Yes/no: 'Yes/no' interrogatives have the following realization possibilities in Niger-Congo:

1   they are either realized by phonological prosody, or
2   they are realized segmentally by juncture prosodies—clause final or initial particles serving as Negotiator.

Phonologically, 'yes/no' interrogative can be realized by a high-low tone on the final syllable in the clause, a rise-falling intonation, final vowel lengthening (or vowel insertion in clauses ending with a closed syllable). Languages that deploy only phonological prosody mostly belong to the Kwa and Benue-Congo families. In the examples from Ga in (7) below, for instance, the interrogative has the same grammatical form as the declarative, with the only contrast being the use of a high tone on the last syllable of the interrogative clause (7b) as opposed to the use of the low tone in the corresponding declarative clause (7a):

(7)   Ga, Kwa: Nyo

(a)   *O-yè*   *òmɔ̀*   ***Jùfɔ̀***.
2SG-eat.PST   rice   Tuesday
'You ate rice on Tuesday.'

(b) | *O-yè* | *òmɔ̀* | ***Jùfɔ́*?** |
|---|---|---|
| 2SG-eat.PST | rice | Tuesday |

'Did you eat rice on Tuesday?'

In some languages such as Nkore-Kiga (Benue-Congo: Bantoid), the 'yes/no' interrogative is distinguished from the declarative clause with a voiced vowel in the final syllable in the interrogative clause and by whispering the vowel in the final syllable of the corresponding declarative clause (Taylor, 1985: 6; Dryer, 2013a).

On the other hand, segmental realization of 'yes/no' interrogative is prominent among Gur languages. In languages that are oriented towards this mode of realization, however, there is normally a complementary option of realization through phonological prosody. In the Dagaare examples, for instance, while 'yes-no' interrogative is indicated by the clause final particle *bɩ* in (8a), it is alternatively realized by vowel lengthening in the final syllable of the sentence and a simultaneous high tone, resulting in a Low + High tone combination on *yà(á)*. (In Dagaare orthography or written language, the vowel lengthening is not indicated):

(8) Dagaare (Gur: Mabia)

(a) | *Fʋ* | *tèr =ɩ* | *lìbìr* | *na* | *yà* | ***bɩ*?** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2SG | POSSESS.PFV=FOC | money.SG | POS.IND.FUT | pay.pfv | INT |

'Do you have money to pay?'

(b) | *Fʋ* | *tèr =ɩ* | *lìbìr* | *na* | ***yàá*?** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2SG | POSSESS.PFV=FOC | money.SG | POS.IND.FUT | pay.PFV |

'Do you have money to pay?'

Languages with segmental marking vary, based on the textual status of the Negotiator in the clause (cf. Matthiessen, 2004: 648–649; Teruya et al., 2007; Dryer, 2013b). It may be assigned (1) thematic status (cf. endnote 1 on 'Theme'), where it orients the clause interpersonally in the initial position (e.g., Ewondo, Benue-Congo: Bantoid; cf. Redden, 1979: 153; Obolo, Benue-Congo: Cross-River; cf. Faraclas, 1984: 96–97; Wolof, West Atlantic: Senegambian; cf. Njie, 1982: 260, 264); (2) clause final position, where it has no special textual status but serves as an interpersonal punch to the clause (e.g., Akan, Dagaare and Ewe); and (3) some languages, such as Dagbani (Gur: Mabia) and Hunde (Benue-Congo: Bantoid), are flexible, allowing either positions. An example is given in (9) from Dagbani:

(9) Dagbani, Gur: Mabia (Issah, 2015: 48)

(a) | ***Bee*** | *doo* | *maa* | *di-ri* | *nyuli*? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| INT | man | DEF | eat-IPFV | yam |

'Does the man eat yam?'

(b) | *Doo* | *maa* | *di-ri* | *nyuli* | ***bee*?** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| man | DEF | eat-IPFV | yam | INT |

'Does the man eat yam?'

Both clause (9a) and (9b) realize the same proposition, the only difference being the position of the Negotiator. In both cases, it serves as a juncture prosody. In (9a) it enacts the negotiatory value of the proposition at its point of departure while, in (9b), this negotiatory value punctuates the clause. In some languages, such as Hunde, the clause initial particle (i.e., *mbéni*) and clause final particle (i.e., *hé*) are morphologically distinct (cf. Kahombo, 1992: 171; Dryer, 2013b).

Some languages also have a range of particles for adding attitude to the 'yes/no' interrogative, extending its delicacy into a contrast between (1) neutral (10a), and (2) biased (10b, c) sub-types:

(10)   Ọ̀kọ́, Benue-Congo: NOI

(a)	*Y-ŏsúdá*	*gó*	*tu*	*uba*	***họn***
	3SG-elder:sibling	assist	1PL.ACC	hand	INT
	'Did his/her brother help us?' – neutral question				

(b)	*Y-ŏsúdá*	*gó*	*tu*	*uba*	***sọ̌***
	3SG-elder:sibling	assist	1PL.ACC	hand	INT
	'Did his/her brother help us (I believe he didn't)?'				

(c)	***Ámá***	*y-ŏsúdá*	*gó*	*tu*	*ubâ*?
	INT	3SG-elder:sibling	assist	1PL.ACC	hand
	'Did his/her brother help us (I believe he did)?'				

In these Ọ̀kọ́ examples, clause (10a) is a neutral 'yes/no' interrogative and this is signalled by the Negotiator *họn*. Clause (10b) is a biased 'yes/no' interrogative, where the speaker expects an opposite pole answer to the question (i.e., negative bias interrogative). This is realized by the Negotiator *sọ̌*. Example (10c) is similarly a biased 'yes/no' interrogative. However, the Negotiator *ámá*, at the beginning of the clause, indicates an expectation of a same pole answer by the speaker (i.e., positive bias interrogative). These interrogative particles are functionally like intonation and question tags in Indo-European languages (cf. Halliday & Greaves, 2008: 109–125 on intonation and MOOD in English).

(2) Alternative interrogative: The alternative interrogative is a special kind of polar interrogative clause. Instead of anticipating 'yes/no' for an answer, it poses two conjoined propositions as alternative responses to the listener. It is related to the 'yes/no' interrogative diachronically as it is the typical source of 'yes/no' interrogative particles across languages. Particles that serve as Negotiator in the 'yes/no' interrogative normally have the same form as the conjunction *or*, used in the alternative interrogative. This phenomenon is very widespread in Niger-Congo and has been reported for many other African and non-African languages (cf. Heine & Kuteva, 2002: 226–227). Let's consider the following example from Dagbani:

(11)   Dagbani, Gur: Mabia (Issah, 2015: 56)

Bɛ	*nyu-ri*	*kom*	***bee***	*bɛ*	*bi*	*nyu-ra*?
3PL.NOM	drink-IPFV	water	CONJ	3PL.NOM	NEG	drink-IPFV
'Do they drink water or they do not drink?'						

If we compare (11) to (9a) and (9b) above, it becomes clear that the 'yes/no' interrogative results from a split of the alternative interrogative clause, where the erstwhile conjunction (11) has grammaticalized to become a juncture prosody, either occurring clause initially (9a) or clause finally (9b) to negotiate the clause as a dialogic move. In the alternative interrogative clause itself, there is no explicit question marker (11). The interrogation is realized by using the alternative conjunction.

Elemental interrogative

Elemental (or 'wh-') interrogative is the most widely studied mood type in Niger-Congo. Cross-linguistically, a distinctive characteristic of this mood type is the presence of a question word ('Q-word') in the clause that queries missing information that the listener is expected to supply. Every language has a special class of Q-words for querying different elements of the clause. Examples of elemental interrogative are given below from Akan (taken from the Kumawood movie *Agya Koo Ahuoyaa*):

(12) Akan, Kwa: Tano

Ɛdeɛn	*na*	*wo-re-yɛ*	*yi*	*a*?	***Ɛdeɛn***	*na*	*wo-hu*
what	FOC	2SG-PROG-do	this	PRT	what	FOC	2SG.see
aduane	*a*	*wo-kɔm*	*sei*	*yi*?	*Wo-kɔm*		
food	PRT	2SG-be:restless	like	this	2SG-be:restless		
saa,	***adɛn***?						
like:this	why						

'What is this that you are doing? Why is it that when you see food you become so restless? You are so restless, why?'

In this text, the speaker uses the Q-words *ɛdeɛn* ('what') and *adɛn* ('why') to enact the clauses as a move in exchange, a demand for information from the listener. Q-words in Niger-Congo languages are typically not similar in their morphological form as they are in Indo-European languages. One language that comes close to morphological similarity is Ọ̀kọ́, which has the following forms: *ẹ̀ra* (who, singular), *ẹ̀rána* (who, plural) (who), *ẹ̀na* (what, singular), *ọ̀ọ́na* (which, singular, which), *ẹ̀ẹ́na* (which (one), plural), *éteka* (where), *ẹ̀mọ̀óna* (when), *ẹ̀naǎ* and *gàna* (how). Wolof also has two sets of Q-words, one of which is composed of the morpheme *–u* and a class marker, and the other composed of *-na* and a class maker (cf. example (20)). These are characterised as *u*-forms and *na*-forms respectively (Torrence, 2003).

In addition, Q-words in Niger-Congo are versatile in two ways. First, different Q-words may query the same or similar kinds of information and, second, the same Q-word can query different kinds of information. The first is illustrated by the Akan example in (12), where *ɛdeɛn* ('what') in the second clause and *adɛn* ('why') in the third clause both query reason. As the gloss for *ɛdeɛn* suggests, although it is always possible to assign one meaning to such semantically versatile Q-words in isolation, they do take on different meanings in discourse. The second motif is still illustrated by the Akan Q-word *sɛn* below (from our conversational data):

(13) | *Nti* | *wo,* | *wo-re-kɔ* | *a* | | *ɔmo* | *gye* | *wo* | ***sɛn?*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| so | 2SG | 2SG-PROG-go | PRT | | 3PL | take | 3SG | how:much |

'So you, when you are going, how much do they charge you?'

(14) | *Na* | *wei* | *nso* | *wo-haw* | *ne* | ***sɛn?*** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| CONT | this | too | 3SG-problem | be | how |

'This one too, how does it concern you?'

(15) | *Wo-din* | *di* | ***sɛn?*** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2SG-name | call | what |

'What is your name?'

(16) | *Auntie* | *se* | ***sɛn?*** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Auntie | say | what |

'What did Auntie say?'

Sɛn is used here to query value (13), manner (14), attribute (15) and locution (16). Although native speakers will render its default meaning in isolation as 'how much' or 'how many', in discourse, its meaning shifts, querying different kinds of information based on context.

Finally, elemental interrogatives may also take Negotiators (17). This has been reported as a characteristic of Eastern Kru languages such as Gbadi, Guébie and Vata (Koopman, 1984: 87; Sande, 2014).

(17) Vata, Kru: Eastern (Sande, 2014: 6)

Alɔ	*ɔ*	*le*	*saka*	***la*?**
who	3SG	eat	rice	INT

'Who eats rice?'

Although we are not able to verify the essence of the Negotiator in the Vata example in (17), in Ọ̀kọ́ (Benue-Congo: NOI) and in languages where such particles occur optionally, the Negotiator adds attitudinal meaning to the clause. In Dagaare, for instance, the particle *ya* can be added to any 'wh-' interrogative clause to show surprise or realize an echo question, as in (18). (The three dots in square brackets indicate suspension points; the dialogue is from *St. Maria* play).

(18) Dagaare (Gur: Mabia)

Son:	*Mãa*	*lɪɛbɛ*	*nɪ*	*faara*	*o*! [. . .]
	1SG.	turn.	FOC	priest	PRT
	EMP	IPFV			

'I am becoming a priest!'

Father:	*Bʋnʋ*	***ya*?**	*A*	*sukuul*	*ĩ*	*na*	*ɣaw*	*fʋ,*	*fʋ*	*bɛ*	*zawrɪ*	*ɛ*? [. . .]
	what	INT	DEF	school	1SG	REL	put.PFV	2SG	2SG	NEG.	refuse.	NAFFR
										IND.	PFV	
										NFUT		

'What? The school I put you in, didn't you stop?'

The next sub-section will proceed to discuss the characteristics of Q-words in Niger-Congo in detail in relation to the range of transitivity roles they query and their textual statuses in the clause.

Q-WORDS IN RELATION TO EXPERIENTIAL ROLES IN THE CLAUSE

Languages differ with regard to the range of transitivity roles that can be queried by Q-words and the nature and kinds of these Q-words. The relevant variables here are (1) participants,

Table 5.2 Illustration of number contrast in Q-words

Dagaare		Òkó		Akan		gloss
singular	plural	singular	plural	singular	plural	
ãã / ãnʊ	ãmɪnɛ	èra	èrána	hwan	hawnom	who
bʊnʊ / bʊʊ	bʊnʊ / bʊʊ	èna	èna	Ɛdeɛn	Ɛdeɛn	what
buor	bobe	òóna	èéna	deɛ ɛwo hen	deɛ ɛwo hen	which (one)

(2) circumstance, and (3) process (cf. Matthiessen, 2004: 616; Teruya et al., 2007: 877–879). While perhaps every language has Q-words for querying participants and circumstances, only a few languages have Q-words corresponding to processes.

(1) Participants: Regarding participants, Niger-Congo languages have Q-words for querying human participants ('who'), non-human participants ('what') and participant identification ('which'). While these characteristics are largely universal across languages, in Niger-Congo Q-words also normally take on the typological characteristics of nouns in the language concerned. Thus, depending on the language and the Q-word, they can show number distinction, noun class marking, and may take definite articles. Table 5.2 illustrates the range of possibilities across languages in relation to the system of NUMBER, using data from Dagaare, Òkó and Akan. As the table shows, human participants ('who') and, to a lesser extent, identifying Q-words ('which'), tend to show number distinctions. Akan queries participant identification with a fossilized construction (*deɛ ɛwo he*) best translated as 'which of them'. Non-human participants ('what') normally do not show number distinction.

In the Mabia family of Gur languages, the definite particle can be used with Q-words to show definiteness where the speaker presupposes that the item to be supplied as an answer will be definite. In such contexts, the interrogative realizes a confirmation-seeking question. The interrogative clause in (19), for example, is a suitable question where both speaker and listener are deciding to divide labour among themselves, with one of them, for instance, going to the farm and the other to the market. Here, the definite article is used to indicate this presupposed meaning and the answer to the question is expected to be definite:

(19) Dagaare

    (a) **A nyɪnɛ na fʊ cere?**
           DEF where IDENT.PL 2SG go.IPFV
           'Where is it (that) you are going?' (to the market or the farm?)

    (b) *A wɪɛ pʊɔ na.*
           DEF farm inside IDENT.PL
           'To the farm.'
           Lit. 'In the farm it is.'

This situation reflects a general exotic use of the definite marker in Gur languages, especially those of the Mabia sub-family, where the definite marker even occurs with personal names and other proper nouns. Wolof (West Atlantic: Senegambian) presents an interesting scenario of special Q-words with class marking (cf. Torrence, 2003).[8] As mentioned earlier, the Q-word consists of either the morpheme *-u* or *-na* and a class marker that agrees with the class of the queried item. This resonates with the robustness of class agreement in Wolof (Torrence, 2003). We illustrate this phenomenon below:

(20) Wolof, West Atlantic (Torrence, 2003: 3, 6)

    (a) **K-u**   *sàcc*   *gato*   *bi*?
          CL-u   steal   cake   the
          'Who stole the cake?'

    (b) **L-u**   *Isaa*   *sàcc*?
          CL-u   Isaa   steal
          'What did Isaa steal?'

Another interesting generalization is the existence of single Q-words across Niger-Congo languages for querying quantity and value ('how many', 'how much', 'how long', 'how far', etc.). Examples are given below:

(21) Denya, Benue-Congo: Bantoid (Abangma, 2002: 56)

    (a) *Bɔɔ́*   **á-níí**   *a-cwɔɔ-ɔ́*?
          person   SP.HM-how:many   SP.HM-come-PFV
          'How many people came?'

    (b) *Upú*   *ú-kwé*   **ú-níí**?
          houses   SP.NHM-fall   SP.NHM-how:many
          'How many houses collapsed?'

(22) Ga, Kwa: Nyo

    (a) **Ehiɛ**   *ohɔ̃ɔ̃*   *oyɔɔ*?
          how:much   2SG.sell.PROG   2SG.beans
          'How much are you selling your beans?'

    (b) (*Maŋo*)   **ehiɛ**   *ohe*?
          mango   how:many   2SG.buy.PST
          'How many (mangoes) did you buy?'

Related to the point raised earlier on the overlapping sense of Q-words, it is common in Niger-Congo languages to find Q-words that query specific kinds of participants. For example, while Dagaare has a general Q-word that translates as 'what', *bʋnʋ/bʋʋ*, it has specific words, *ŋmɪn* ('what') and *bo* ('what'), for querying events (23) and idea/locution (24) respectively:

(23) Dagaare, Gur: Mabia (*St. Maria* play)

    ĩ   *pãa*   *ɩ*   **ŋmɪn**?
    1SG   ADV   do.PFV   what
    '**What** can I do now?'

(24) Dagaare, Gur: Mabia (*Sɛb-Sow Yɛr-bie*, 1996)

    A   *Sɛb-sow*   *yel*   *a*   *kɛ*   **bo**?
    DEF scripture-holy   say.PFV   AFFR   PROJ   what
    '**What** does the holy scripture say?'

These Q-words lie on the borderline between processes and participants. Although they are by themselves participants in the clause, compared with *bʋnʋ/bʋʋ*, they are abstract and query processes rather than entities. It should be noted that while the more general Q-word *bʋnʋ* can substitute both *ŋmɪn* and *bo* in these examples, the two can only be used for the specialized participants they query. *Ŋmɪn* can also query 'whereabout' and can combine with the definite article (*a ŋmɪn*) to query quantity ('how many') or value ('how much').

(2) Circumstances: Circumstantial roles that are queried in the clause consist of time ('when'), place ('where'), manner ('how'), and reason ('why'). Time is typically queried by units that translate as 'which time' (e.g., *debor* or *dabor* in Dagaare; *saha dini* in Dagbani and *ɛmɛrɛ bɛn* in Akan), 'which day' (e.g., *dabɛn* in Akan and *bondali* in Dagbani) and 'what day' (e.g., *nígbà wo* in Yoruba). Although manner can be queried by single morpheme Q-words as in (25), it is often queried metaphorically by the interrogative noun group 'what path' or 'what thing' (26):

(25) Kulango, Gur: Kulango-Lorom[9]

Zɪ	*bɔɔ-hɛ*	*ɛ*	*kuu*	*ye*	*daagɛ*?
how	3PL-DO	3SG.ACC	born.PFV	3SG.ACC	again

'**How** will they give birth to him again?'

(26) Kulango, Gur: Kulango-Lorom

Bɛɛ	*bɔɔgɔ*	*bɪɪ-tɪɪ*	*ti*	*lɛ*	*nyɪ*	*Yowomolia*
what	path	3PL-PASS	on	CONJ	get	God
bɔ	*hohom*	*gʋʋ*	*bɔɔ-dʋm*?			
3SG	spirit	matter	3PL-talk			

'**How** can we get this spirit of God they are talking about?'
Lit. 'On **what path** can we pass and get this spirit of God they are talking about?'

Among circumstantial Q-words, it is only 'where' that is consistently realized by single morpheme Q-words across languages.

Reason ('why'), in particular, stands out in some special way in relation to the other circumstances. First, it is the role that is most unlikely to be queried by a single morpheme Q-word. Examples are *ɛdeɛn enti*, *èná-wore-ka*, and *nítorí kí* ('what reason') respectively in Akan, Ɔ̀kɔ́ and Yoruba and, on the other hand, *bɔ-zuɣu* and *bʋʋ so* ('what owns') in Dagbani (Issah, 2015: 58) and Dagaare respectively. We illustrate this further below with data from Kulango (27) and Ga (28):

(27) Kulango, Gur: Kulango-Lorom

Bɛ-zɪngɛ	*tii*	*daa*	*ho-goi*	*yaa*	*bɔ*	*pɛrikɛn*?
what-thing	owns	always	3SG-return	go	3SG	mud

'**Why** does it [pig] always go back to its mud?'
Lit. '**What thing owns** (that) it always goes back to its mud?'

(28) Ga, Kwa: Nyo

Mɛni	*hewɔ*	*o-ye*	*omɔ*	*Jufɔ*?
What	reason	2SG-eat.PFV	rice	Tuesday

'**Why** did you eat rice on Tuesday?'

This phenomenon can be interpreted in relation to other Q-words. The general situation is that the more abstract the transitivity role queried by the Q-element is, the more likely that it will be realized metaphorically by more than a single morpheme. Based on this variable, we posit the following scale of abstractness among circumstantial Q-words, starting from the least to the most abstract: 'where > when > how > why'. In other words, across languages, the rightmost item in the scale is more likely to be realized metaphorically than items to the left.

Another characteristic of the amorphous nature of reason is that it is most likely to be realized by a wide range of Q-words. Torrence and Kandybowicz (2015: 257), for instance, list three Q-words for 'why' in Krachi (Kwa: Tano): *nanι, nɛ kumusʋ, nɛ sʋ*. This phenomenon is best illustrated by the following clauses from Dagaare, where different Q-words are used in querying reason:

(29) *St. Maria* play

Bʋʋ	**so**	*fʋ*	*yele*	*a*	*lɛ*?
what	own	2SG	say.IPFV	DEF	DEM

'Why are you saying that?'
Lit. '**What owns** you saying that?'

(30) *St. Maria* play

Bʋʋ	*fʋ*	*mì*	*lɛ*	*yêrɛ*	*lɛ*?
what	2SG	too	also	say.IPFV	DEM

'Why are you too speaking like that?'

(31) Sɛb-Sow Yɛr-bie (1996)

Bʋnʋ	**yâw**	*na*	*nyι*	*bɔbr*	*mɛ*?
what	sake	IDENT.PL	2PL	look.PFV	1SG.ACC

'For the sake of what are you looking for me?'

(32) Sɛb-Sow Yɛr-bie (1996)

Ɗmιnŋmιn	**yâw**	*na*	*fʋ*	*bɔbr*	*kɛ*	*fʋ*
how	sake	IDENT.PL	2SG	speak.PFV	PROJ	2SG

zɛbr =ι	*a*	*Naaŋmin?*
quarrel=FOC	DEF	God

'It is for what sake that you want to quarrel with God?'

As the examples show, Q-words that are typically associated with participants (29, 30, 31) and manner (32) combine with other words to query reason in incongruent ways. It is even possible to express (29) in a cleft construction: *Bʋʋ nʋ so fʋ yele a lɛ*? (literally, 'What is it that owns your saying that?').

(3) Process: As mentioned earlier, only a few languages use interrogative verbs (or 'wh-' verbs) (cf. Table 5.1). They are notably restricted to circumstantial processes, especially location, as the following examples from Kulango (33) and Kpelle (34) illustrate:

(33) Kulango, Gur: Kulango-Lorom

Ʋ	*nyιna*	**waι**?
2SG	mother	be:where

'Where is your mother?'

(34)   Kpelle, Mande: Western (Welmers, 1973: 419)
       Sumo   ***kɔɔ*?**
       Sumo   be:where
       'Where is Sumo?'

In these clauses, the Predicator, *wai* (33) and *kɔɔ* (34), is the element that queries the location of the Subject. Yoruba has two interrogative verbs, one of which queries Attribute (35b) and Matter (35c) in addition to Place (cf. Bamgbose, 1966: 54; Akanbi, n.d.). These are *dà* ('be where') and *nkọ́* ('how be', 'what about', 'be where'):

(35)   Yoruba, Benue-Congo: Defoid (Akanbi, n.d.: 14)

   (a)   *Baba*   *àgbà*   ***dà*?**
         father   elder   be:where
         'Where is grandfather?'

   (b)   *Ilé*   ***nkọ́*,**   *ṣé*   *àlàáfíà*   *nílé*   *wà*?
         house   be:how,   do   peace   in:house   be
         'How is home, hope the home is at peace?'

   (c)   *Owó*   ***nkọ́*,**   *ṣé*   *ìwọ́*   *náà*   *fẹ́*?
         money   be:what:about   do   you   also   love
         'What about money, do you also want?'

In (35a), the Predicator *dà* interrogates the whereabouts of the Subject. On the other hand, in (35b), *nkọ́* interrogates the attribute of Subject, *Ilé* ('house'), while, in (35c), it queries matter, the aboutness of the Subject, 'money', in relation to the listener's desire towards it.

Q-WORDS IN RELATION TO TEXTUAL SYSTEMS

One important typological variable of Q-words across languages is their interaction with textual systems of the clause, notably THEME and INFORMATION (cf. Aboh, 2007b; Heath, 2008: 464). The placement of the Q-element varies with respect to the default textual status they are assigned across languages. Three motifs have been identified across the languages of the world (cf. Matthiessen, 2004: 616–617; Teruya et al., 2007: 877–879):

1   The Q-element is not given any distinct textual treatment in the clause; it occurs *in situ*, where it would appear in a corresponding declarative clause (cf. example (36)).
2   The Q-element is assigned the status of unmarked (i.e., default) Theme in the clause (cf. example (37)).
3   The Q-element is by default assigned information focus (i.e., unmarked focus) in the clause (cf. examples (38) and (39)).

The first is by far the most common in African languages in general, and Niger-Congo in particular (cf. Watters, 2000: 204). An equally prominent corollary to this is that the Q-element can be placed clause initially in a thematic equative (or cleft-construction) as a marked (or contrastive) focused element. In the following example from Kinyarwanda, the default choice is (36a), where the Q-word *nde* ('who') occurs in Complement position, that is, where the queried participant would occur in a corresponding declarative clause. Example (36b), however, illustrates the marked instance, where the Q-element is thematized for marked focus, indicated by the focus marker *ni*:

(36)   Kinyarwanda, Benue-Congo: Bantoid (Maxwell, 1981: 167, 168)

(a)   *Umogore*   *jiše*   ***nde***?
woman   kill.PST   **who**
'The woman killed whom?'

(b)   *Ni-* ***nde***   *umugore*   *jiše*?
FOC-who   woman   kill.PST
'**Who** is it that the woman killed?'

Languages where the Q-element is elevated to the status of unmarked Theme are illustrated by Ahan (Benue-Congo: Defoid; cf. Akanbi, 2015), Wolof (West Atlantic: Senegambian; cf. Torrence, 2003) and Ga (Kwa: Nyo). As illustrated in (20), Wolof Q-words are composed of either the morpheme *–u* or *–an* and the class marker of the item queried. By default, they are placed clause initially as unmarked Themes (see page 106). However, the *an-*forms, but not the *u-*forms, can also occur *in situ*, where they take on marked meaning as echo questions (Torrence, 2003). Ga, which also treats the Q-element as default Theme (37a), presents a more flexible scenario, where it is normally possible to also place the Q-element *in situ* (37b) for echo questions (33b) (but see further below on 'why'):

(37)   Ga, Kwa: Nyo

(a)   A: ***Mɛni***   *O-ye*?
what   2SG.PST-eat.
'**What** did you eat?'
B: *Mi-ye*   *omɔ*.
1SG.PFV-eat   rice
'I ate rice.'

(b)   A: *Mi-ye*   *omɔ*.
1SG.PFV-eat   rice
'I ate rice.'
B: *O-ye*   ***mɛni***?
2SG-eat.PFV   what
'You ate **what**?'

In summary, as a comparison of the glosses in (37a) and (37b) indicates, one characteristic of languages with the Q-element as unmarked (i.e., default) Theme is that, where it occurs *in situ*, it normally has a marked reading as an echo question.

The third motif, where the Q-element receives default information focus, is exemplified by Yoruba and Aghem below:

(38)   Yoruba, Benue-Congo: Defoid (Akanbi, n.d.: 6)

(a)   ***Ta***   *ni*   *ó*   *kú*?
who   FOC   3SG   die
'**Who** died?'

(b)   ***Kí***   *ni*   *o*   *rí*?
what   FOC   2SG   see
'**What** did you see?'

(39) Aghem, Benue-Congo: Bantoid (Hyman, 2005: 1)

    (a)   *Fil*   *a-mɔ̂*   *zì*   ***zín***   *bɛ́-kɔ́?*
         friends   SP.PST   eat   when   fufu
         '**When** did the friends eat fufu?'

    (b)   *À*   *mɔ̀*   *zì*   ***ndúghɔ́***   *bɛ́-kɔ́?*
         EXPL   PST   eat   who   fufu
         '**Who** ate fufu (today)?'

As example (38) shows, the Yoruba clauses relatively have the same structure as the cleft-constructions discussed for languages with option 1 above. However, in Yoruba, the focused position is the default choice and, even where the Q-element is the Subject of the construction, it is still obligatorily indicated for focus (38a). Unlike in Yoruba, where the information focus position of the clause is initial, in Aghem (Benue-Congo: Bantoid), the default focus position is immediately after the verbal group. Thus, any clausal element can be assigned information focus by placing it immediately after the Predicator, without any special morphological marking (Aboh, 2007b). In (39a), the Q-word *zín* is focused by placing it after the verb *zì* ('eat') and, in (39b), where the queried item is the Agent, the Q-word, *ndúghɔ́* ('who'), is still placed in post-verb position and the Subject of the clause is realized by an expletive pronoun *À*. Readers are referred to Aboh (2007b) for a detailed discussion on the relationship between 'wh-'words and focus in African languages.

It must further be mentioned that there is pressure on languages to place the Q-element in clause initial position and even in languages with option 1, the marked choice is common and sometimes it is the most appropriate choice for particular Q-words. One notable Q-word in this regard is 'why' (cf. pages 107–108). Even in languages where the default placement is *in situ*, 'why' is always thematized (cf. Torrence & Kandybowicz (2015) on Krachi). In Gichuka (Benue-Congo: Bantoid), although it is possible for 'why' to occur *in situ*, it is typically thematized without any focus marking as is required for other *ex situ* Q-elements (Muriungi et al., 2014: 193). In other words, it maintains the same form irrespective of its position in the clause. The implication is that 'why' is treated uniquely as unmarked Theme in Gichuka although, in some languages (e.g., Akan), it is normally given marked (or contrastive) focus.

Further on the imperative

A widespread distinction in the imperative across Niger-Congo is the prohibitive versus non-prohibitive imperative, which resonates with the affirmative/non-affirmative contrast in the indicative mood (cf. pages 98–100). It is common in languages of the Gur (e.g., Dagaare, Dagbani, Kulango), Adamawa-Ubangi (e.g., Yakoma; cf. Boyeldieu, 1995: 131–132) and Bantu (e.g., Zulu; cf. Poulos & Bosch, 1997: 19) families (see also van der Auwera et al., 2013). This distinction is made by the Predicator element in the clause. The typical realization is the presence of a special negative marker in the verbal group. In other words, this negative particle is distinct from the negative particles associated with the indicative clause. In the Dagbani examples below, the non-prohibitive is realized by only the verb as Predicator (40a) while the prohibitive takes negative imperative particles (40b, 40c). The negative marker for a corresponding indicative clause will be *ku* (for future) and *bi* (for non-future).

(40) Dagbani, Gur: Mabia

  (a) *Kamna*!
       come.PFV
       'Come!'

  (b) ***Di***   *kana*!
       NEG.IMP.IM   come.PFV
       'Don't come!'

  (c) ***Diti***   *kana*!
       NEG.IMP.NIM   come.PFV
       'Don't come (when I leave)!'

Alternatively, some languages show this contrast by the presence of both a negative and a person marker on the verb realizing the Predicator in prohibitive clauses (41a) but not on the verb in the non-prohibitive (41b):

(41) Kulango, Gur: Kulango-Lorom

  (a) *Mɪ*   *hanawɔ,*   *mɪ*   *vɛɛmɔ,*   ***ǐ-a-si***
       1SG   elder: siblings   1SG   younger:siblings   2PL-NEG-receive
       saa   *gʊʋ*   *hɔɔ*   *lɛ*   *tʊ*   *sa*   *cɛngɛ*   *ɪ*!
       this   message this   CONJ   take   put   aside   NAFFR
       'My elder siblings, my younger siblings, don't receive this message and put it aside!'

  (b) ||| ***Su*** *ge*   *awaawaatuu*   *lɛ*   *dɛ*   *bɔ-kuu*   *u*   daagɛ! |||
       accept 3SG.INA embrace   let   PRT   3PL-born   2SG   again.
       'Embrace it and be born again!'

Examples (41a) and (41b) constitute a continuous flow of text (cf. endnote 9). The command here is directed to a plural interactant, signalled by the Vocative element at the beginning of the clause. The Predicator in the first clause requires a person prefix because it is in the prohibitive mood. However, the Predicator in (41b) cannot take a person prefix since it is non-prohibitive. The implication is that the prohibitive clause has the same structural form as a corresponding declarative clause. The difference is indicated by a high-low tone on the pronominal subject prefix in the declarative and a low-high tone on that of the imperative clause.

Another contrast in the imperative mood across languages is that between immediate and non-immediate imperatives, although it seems this is not a common distinction. It has been reported in Zulu (van Rooyen, 1984) and is prominent in Mabia languages (e.g., Dagaare, Dagbani, Gurene, Mampruli), as a sub-distinction within the prohibitive mood. It is exemplified in (40b) and (40c), where respectively the immediate prohibitive is realized by the negative imperative particle *di* and the non-immediate is realized by a distinct negative particle *diti*. In Dagaare, the non-immediate requires an imperfective verb form in addition to the particle.

In addition to these imperative sub-types, a subjunctive mood is predominant in the southern Bantu languages such as Swahili, Zulu and Sotho and it is realized by a distinct verbal morphology (cf. van Rooyen, 1984).[10]

Another important typological variable is the interaction of the imperative with the PERSON system. Three generalizations can be made in relation to this variable:

1   The imperative occurs with all persons – interactant: speaker/speaker plus; interactant: addressee (singular/plural) and non-interactant.

2   A Subject (for languages where it is always a separate element) or a pronominal subject affix (realized in the Predicator) is required in the imperative mood except where modal responsibility is assigned to a singular addressee.

3   As an alternative to 2, in some languages a pronominal subject affix is required for the prohibitive (i.e., negative imperative) mood but is absent in the non-prohibitive (i.e., positive imperative) mood.

Generalization 1 is found in all the languages where data on the imperative is accessible to us (e.g., Akan, Dagaare, Dagbani, Ga, Gurene, Kulango, Ọ̀kọ́), and perhaps applies to all Niger-Congo languages. Variable 2 is also dominant in Niger-Congo in comparison to 3. Examples can be found in (3c, d) introduced earlier and repeated below as (42a, b):

(42)   Ga (Kwa: Nyo)

    (a)   ***Yaa***   *jaanɔ*!
          go   market
          'Go to the market!'

    (b)   ***Nyɛ-yaa***   *jaanɔ*!
          2PL-go   market
          'You go to the market!'

Native speakers of Ga will automatically interpret the imperative clause in (42a), where there is no subject marker on the verb, as a command made to a single interactant and (42b), where there is a pronominal subject marker (*Nyɛ-*) on the verb (*yaa*, 'go'), as addressed to more than one interactant (see also example (43) further below for instances of first person plural (43a) and third person (43b) imperatives). We recorded variable 3 in the Kulango dialect cluster only and an illustration is provided in (41), where the Predicator in (41a) carries both a subject and a negative prefix and the Predicator of the clauses in (41b) is realized by the bare form of the verb.

    Further, imperative clauses, other than those where modal responsibility is assigned to the addressee, overlap with the semantic region of MODALITY as it is defined for Indo-European languages (for instance), specifically obligation (cf. Palmer, 2001; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014: 176–192). In this sense, where modal responsibility is assigned to speaker, speaker plus addressee or to a non-interactant, the function of the imperative is to indicate and modulate obligations imposed upon the person concerned (43):

(43)   Ọ̀kọ́, Benue-Congo: NOI

    (a)   ***Te***   *ke*   *yo*!
          1PL   PFV   go
          'We should go!' (= 'Let's go!')

    (b)   ***Itiye***   *akè*   *n'-íkíba*!
          Itiye   IPFV   collect-money
          'Itiye should be receiving the donations.'

While the English translations here are modalized declarative clauses, the original Ọ̀kọ́ clauses are simply imperative. The 'modality' meaning is, as it were, added to the clauses by the choice of non-addressee as the Subject of the clause. Such imperative clauses enact speech acts ranging from wishes, suggestions through requests to regulations. The specific speech function realized will normally depend on the choice of person, tenor and other contextual variables.

Conclusion

This study examined MOOD systems in Niger-Congo languages. It has shown how various speech functions, specifically statement, question and command, are grammaticalized as mood types across languages. Second, the study discussed the realizations of the mood types by phonological and by lexicogrammatical resources. It also considered the interaction of mood systems with Theme and Focus and the transitivity roles that are queried by Q-elements in elemental interrogative clauses.

Due to space constraints, the study could only present an overview of these issues, and it is practically impossible to exhaust the MOOD systems of the over 1,400 languages of Niger-Congo in a single chapter (cf. Heine & Nurse, 2000: 1). We, however, hope that it will motivate scholars of African languages to undertake an in-depth description of MOOD in individual languages and genetic families. Notably, there is a long tradition of research on MOOD in Southern Bantu, emerging from the work of C.M. Doke (see Gough (1993) for an early review). However, there are many inconsistencies from author to author and MOOD is often confused with tense, mode (in the sense of Whorf (1938[2012]: 146–150)) and other systems of the verbal unit (cf. van der Auwera & Aguilar (2016) for a historical account on the terms 'mood', 'modality' and 'mode'). A system-based approach oriented by the semantics of speech functions can extend our knowledge of the MOOD systems in these languages.

Abbreviations

ACC – accusative; ADV – adverbial particle; AFFR – affirmative; AGREE – agreement (modal) particle; ASSR – assertive; COMPL – completive; CL – class marker; CONJ – conjunction; CONT – continuative; COP – copula; DEF – definite; DEM – demonstrative; EMP – emphatic; EXPL – expletive; FOC – focus; FUT – future; HM – human; IDENT – identifying pronoun; IM – immediate; INA – inanimate; IND – indicative; INT – interrogative; IPFV – imperfective; N- – non; NEG – negative; NOM – nominative; PFV – perfective; PL – plural; POS – positive; PROJ – projection marker; PROG – progressive; PRT – particle; PST – past; REL – relativizer; SG – singular; SP – subject particle; 1 – first person, 2 – second person; 3 – third person.

Notes

* We use small caps (e.g. MOOD) to indicate a grammatical system (which can have different realisations within and across languages) and regular font (e.g. mood) for the same term when it refers to the function of a morpheme or structure or to realisations of the system.
1 Theme in this chapter is used in the sense of the Prague school notion of Functional Sentence Perspective and as it has been defined in systemic functional linguistics (see, e.g., Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014: Ch. 3). It consists of initial elements in the clause that orients it towards its interpretation; a point of departure in the clause. It is thus a pragmatic concept and not a participant role.
2 The Mabia sub-family has also been called Oti-Volta: Western. The name Mabia (which means 'mother's child') was introduced by Bodomo (e.g. Bodomo, 1997, this volume) to appropriately represent

the cultural unity within this group. It is a common address term among speakers in the sub-family for showing solidarity.

3 We thank Comfort Anafo, Elizabeth Agyeiwaa, Mark Nartey, and Raymond Adongo for data on their languages.

4 We write functional labels with initial capitals.

5 Unless otherwise stated, Dagaare examples in this study are from the Lobr dialect, entered in Ethnologue and Glottolog together with the Wule dialect as 'Dagara, Northern' (cf. Mwinlaaru, 2017: Ch. 1).

6 Central Dagaare is known locally among some speakers as 'Ngmere'. It is entered in Ethnologue as 'Dagaare, Southern'. We maintain 'Central Dagaare' because it is the term used by native writers of the dialect (e.g., Bodomo, 1997).

7 In English, although exclamation can be realized by minor clauses and incongruently by interrogative and imperative clauses, it is grammaticalized as a sub-type of the declarative clause (e.g., *What a beautiful girl she is*!) (cf. Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014: 164–165, 195–197).

8 This phenomenon is however not limited to participants (or nominal Q-words), but extends to circumstances since Wolof has classifiers for circumstantial elements in the clause. See an example below (Torrence, 2003: 3):

N-u	*Isaa*	*sàcc-e*	*gato*	*bi*?
CL-u	Isaa	steal-manner	cake	DEF

'How did Isaa steal the cake?'

9 The Kulango examples in this chapter are from *World Language Movies* www.youtube.com/watch?v=vhIUu9JNZmM (except example (33), which is constructed).

10 We found several studies discussing the subjunctive in southern Bantu languages (e.g., Van Rooyen, 1984; du Plessis & Visser, 1993; Taljard & Louwrens, 2003). But we could not find suitable illustrations since the relevant examples are not glossed.

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