

Morphosyntactic Analysis of Fulfulde Voice and Tense in Adamawa Dialect: A Case Study of Yola South

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Abstract

Voice is a relationship between subject and object with reference to verb in a sentence. Fulfulde verbs have three types of voices: active voice, middle voice and passive voice. The three voices also mark tenses such as past, present, habitual and future. In Fulfulde language, voices are attached with tenses and marked on verbs. This paper intends to look at the voice and tense affixes that are attached to verbs, with the aim to identify which affixes are frequently used, which are less frequently used and which are not used in today Adamawa dialect. The paper will then describe the productivity of these affixes and how some are lost over time, which is probably an evidence of 'language change in progress'.

Keywords: *Fulfulde Dialects, Language Change, Fulfulde Morphology, Voice and Tense.*

Introduction

Fulfulde language is a family member of Niger Congo, under West Atlantic group of African languages classification (Greenberg 1963). It has six dialects across West Africa, which are: Fuuta Tooro, Fuuta Jaaloon, Masina, Sokoto and Western Niger, Central and Eastern Northern Nigeria, and Adamawa. Great majority of Fulfulde dialects are extra-ordinarily uniform throughout the Fulaphone area as regards to the voice and tense suffixes. Where there are differences, the variants may be presumed to have a common origin (Arnott 1974:14). Example: the general future active suffixes can be –at, –an, or –ay, the general past middle can be –ake, –oke, or –ike, and the general past passive can be –ima, –iima or aama.

Prominent among the scholars in Fulfulde morphology are Arnott (1970), Palletier and Skinner (1981), McIntosh (1984) and Mukoshy (1991), to mention but few. These scholars discussed much on noun and verbal system of the language; thus far, they could not capture the slow diffusion of voice in Adamawa dialect. The recent works of Girei (1999), Usman et al (2016), and Goshe (2016) on Adamawa dialect could not also single out voice and tense in the dialect and make it a case of study. Although Girei (1999) made an attempt to describe some of the lost features of the dialect but he could not address the case of voice and tense in the dialect. This paper will therefore attempt to describe the 'diffusion' in Adamawa dialect in respect to voice and tense. Diffusion across communities shows weakening of the original pattern and a loss of structural features of a language, as a result of the difference between the learning abilities of children and adults (Labov 2007:344). Factors such as social, cognitive and physiological are contributing to the language change over a period of time.

Adamawa dialect is a dialect which is spread across the boundaries of Nigeria and Cameroun. Is a dialect which is progressively being simplified, fast losing its widely acclaimed grammatical richness and complexity as a result of the loss of some features of the language (Girei 1999:72). Adamawa dialect and the spoken variety in Yola in particular have lost almost two out of the three voices (active, middle and passive) found in Fulfulde language. Only the active voice (such as the general future active –an) is used predominantly by young and middle ages.

Example: general future active: 6e 6ornan limsere 'they will wear cloth'. General past middle: 6e 6ornake limsere *(6e 6ornii limsere). General past passive: limsere 6ornaama.

However, very few of the old ages, mostly in villages can be found using the middle and passive voices in Yola town. The aim of this paper is to find out the voice and tense suffixes that are attached to verbs in Fulfulde language. The objectives are 1) to identify which voice and tense suffixes are frequently used in Adamawa dialect. 2) Identify voice and tense suffixes that are less frequently used in the dialect and 3) which voice and tense suffixes are not used in today Adamawa dialect.

Fulfulde Dialects

The same language with several names such as Fulfulde, Fula, Pulaar, Peul, is being spoken by Fulani all over West Africa and the world at large. The present day distribution of Fulani is as a result of three types of movements which resulted to dialectal variations (Arnott 1974:2). The first movement is a long ago apparently fairly large-scale movement from the North West of present day Mali to Fuuta Tooro in Senegal,

to Fuuta Jaalon in Northern Guinea, to the fertile Masina area and the western part of Niger bend, to Upper Volta towards West and South of Niamey, to Sokoto, Kano, Katsina, Bauchi area and via Borno to Adamawa.

The second movement is a recent movement on a small scale, northwards from Senegal into Mauritania, from Sokoto and Southern Niger into edge of Sahara, into Borno, from Sokoto and Katsina into Zaria and Jos Plateau, from Kano into Bauchi into Borno and Adamawa. The third movement is seasonal movements between wet season and dry season grazing grounds.

The extent to which a particular group intermingles with other Fulani groups and with other local peoples has its linguistic consequences. In some areas such as Adamawa, the speakers are sufficiently large and powerful for Fulfulde to become lingua franca, with corresponding interference from some of the local languages while in most of the Hausa states they are minor to the extent that the language gave way to Hausa. Consequently the above mentioned movements gave birth to six dialects across West Africa (Arnott, 1974). These dialects are: Fuuta tooro, Fuuta Jaaloon, Masina, Sokoto and Western Niger, Central Northern Nigeria and Eastern Northern Nigeria, and Adamawa. The three dialects found outside Nigeria are: Fuuta tooro, a dialect found in Senegal, Fuuta Jaalon found in Guinea, and Masina found in Mali. The three dialects in Nigeria are: Sokoto and Western Niger which is found in states, such as, Sokoto, Kebbi, Kwara, and Kogi. Central Northern Nigeria and Eastern Northern Nigeria which is found in states, such as, Borno, Bauchi, Yobe, Kaduna, Plateau, Kano, Katsina, Jigawa, and Gombe. Adamawa is found in Adamawa and Taraba, up to Adamawa of Cameroun. The epicenter of Adamawa dialect in Nigeria is Yola town, which is the capital of Adamawa state.

Yola Town

The area of the Yola metropolis roughly lies between latitude 10° north and 9° south, established in 1841 as the permanent capital of the Emirate of Fombina (Adamawa of Nigeria and Cameroun). Its metropolitan area extended west to Mayo Belwa, Mayine, and the borders of the Bata chiefdom of Demsa. The borders of Yola extended to Vere and Alantika mountains to the South. To the North, it extended to the sub-emirates of Song, Zumo and Malabu, whose border was marked by the Wuro Bokki hills (Abba 2003:1).

The physical features of the area exercised considerable influence on the settlement pattern of the people. The riverine Bata people, who were actively engaged in fishing, settled in the Benue trough. Most of their settlements were actually located on the banks of river Benue. The Fulbe pastoralists, like the riverine Bata, were on the other hand attracted to the Benue valley because of its perennial pasture. The Benue trough therefore has a very high concentration of Fulbe pastoralists. The highlands on the other hand provided retreats or safe havens for smaller for smaller communities. The Vere for example were forced to retreat to the hills following the immigration of the Bata into the area in the 17th century. The Fulbe came into the area in significant numbers in the 18th century and settled within and occasionally side by side of the existing settlements, mainly among the Bata in the Benue valley. Bata, Vere and Fulbe pastoralists were politically the most important groups inhabiting the area (Abba 2003:3)

Methodology

The primary source of data obtained in this paper is through introspection. The researcher being a native speaker of Fulfulde language, born and bred in Yola town, the competence of the language in him is adequately placed in analysis of the language. To avoid being bias on describing the language, a Participant Observation (socializing with the speakers of the language) is performed. The Representative Sampling of the native speakers of Adamawa dialect of Fulfulde language, of Yola town in particular is observed. Visits to various University libraries and Colleges of Education made it possible to consult books, journals, theses and lot of relevant materials which contributed to this paper.

Language change

Language change can be universal, continuous and regular (Lyons 2009:179). Although some changes can be linked to major social changes caused by wars, invasions and other upheavals, the most general source of change in language seems to be in continual process of cultural transmission. Each new language user has to create for himself the language of the community, with a tendency to pick up some elements exactly and others only approximately. There is also occasional desire to be different. Giving this probable transmission process, it should be expected that languages will not remain stable (Yule, 1991:176).

These changes can occur at different levels of language, such levels as phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. At the morphological level, the morphemes which are the building blocks of words

can either be shortening, missing or changed in shape. For instance the Adamawa dialect has shorten the possessive *maa-* + class to *ma-* + *-n*. Example *maangol* ‘for the rope’, *maange* ‘for the cow’, *maango* ‘for the river’, *maanga* ‘for the bigger one’ e.t.c to *man* ‘for it’(Girei 1999). In the case of missing morphemes, the middle and the passive voice morphemes that are found in other dialects are missing in Adamawa dialect. The missing morphemes are the middle voice suffixes such as Past *-ake* suffix, Habitual *-(o)too* suffix, Future *-oto* suffix. The missing passive voice suffixes are the Habitual *-(e)tee* suffix (Aminu 2015). The nominal class which is attached to the noun it belongs most often is changed with the neuter class *dum* or *jum* in the dialect. Example: *maajum*, ‘for it’, *kanjum* ‘is it’ e.t.c.

Fulfulde Morphology

It is required in Fulfulde to change the suffix of a noun according to its noun class to form its plural (Aminu 2016). The Fulfulde noun classes includes: *be*, *dé*, *nge*, *ki*, *ngel*, *nde*, *dí*, *ngo*, *ko*, *ngum*, *ndi*, *dum*, *ngol*, *kol*, *kal*, *ndu*, *nga*, *ngu*, *o*, *ko*, *dám*, *ngal*, *ka*, *nga*, *kon*. Each class in Fulfulde is attaching to a noun that belongs to it. The classes are suffixed to its stem to indicate human class, non-human class, augmentative class and diminutive class. Nominal stems must be accompanied by a nominal class suffix (McIntosh 1984:43) and it is difficult to get an inseparable word in Fulfulde because of the noun class system (Ahmed, 2011). Besides the suffixing of a noun class to form plurals in Fulfulde, there is an initial consonant mutation. Consonant in Fulfulde changes depending on the environment which it occurs. An initial consonant mutation is a change in consonant in a word at the initial environment. Examples: *f*→*p*: *fawru* ‘hyena’ *pobbi* ‘hyenas’. *s*→*c*: *sawru* ‘stick’ *cabbi* ‘sticks’. *h*→*k*: *hunduko* ‘mouth’ *kundufe* ‘mouths’. *r*→*d*→*nd*: *reedu* ‘abdoment’ *deedi* ‘abdoments’ *ndeera* ‘big abdoment’. *w*→*b*→*mb*: *waandu* ‘monkey’ *baadi* ‘monkeys’, *mbeewa* ‘goat, be’i ‘goats’. *w*→*g*→*ng* (before a, o, u only): *wuro* ‘town’ *gure* ‘towns’ *ngaari* ‘bull’ *ga’i* ‘bulls’. *y*→*g*→*ng* (before e, i only): *yitere* ‘eye’ *gite* ‘eyes’ *ngito* ‘big eyes’. *y*→*j*→*nj* (before a, o, u only): *yaare* ‘scorpion’ *jahé* ‘scorpions’ *njamdi* ‘iron’ *jamde* ‘irons’ (Aminu, 2015)

McIntosh (1984:154) discusses voice aspect and polarity suffixes in complex final position. She stated that the form of the suffixes is influenced by the verbal root and also by the morphs that follow it in the complex. She divided the voice into active, middle and passive, the aspect into completive and incomplete, and polarity into positive and negative as follows.

Table 1: Voice, Aspect and Polarity

ASPECT	ACTIVE	MIDDLE	PASSIVE
COMPLETIVE			
Emphatic	-u	-i	-a
Stative	-i	-ii	-aa
Relative	-i	-ii	-aa
Negative	-aayi	-aaki	-aaka
General	-ii	-ake	-aama
Imperative	-u	-a	-
INCOMPLETE			
Exhortative	-u	-oo	-
Subjunctive	-a	-oo	-ee
Progressive	-a	-oo	-ee
Relative	-(a)ta	-(o)too	-(e)tee
Negative	-(a)taa	-(a)taako	-(a)take
General	-ay	-(o)to	-(e)te
Vague	-(u)ma	-ooma	-eema
Imperative	-(a)tay	-(a)tay	-

McIntosh (1984:155)

Arnott (1956) described some detailed affixes that are found in tense and voice of Fulfulde verbs. Whereas A represents active voice, B represents middle voice, and C represents passive voice. He divided them into positive and negative series as follows:

Table 2: Voice, Aspect and Polarity

POSITIVE SUB-SERIES	A	B	C
PAST:			
1.(a)General	-ii	-ake	-aama
(b) Emphatic	ø/-u	-i	-a
2.Relative/narrative	-i	-ii	-aa
FUTURE/HABITUAL:			
1.(a)General	-ai	-oto	-ete
(b)Indefinite	-ma/-uma	-ooma	-eema
2.Relative	-(a)ta'	-(o)too'	-(e)tee'
IMPERATIVE/SUBJUNCTIVE			
1.(a)Imperative general	-ø/-u	-a	
(b)Imperative habitual	-atai	-atai	
2.Subjunctive	-a'	-oo'	-ee'
Stative	ḍon...-i'	ḍon...-ii	ḍon...-aa
Progressive	ḍon...-a	ḍon...-oo	ḍon...-ee
NEGATIVE SUB-SERIES			
A.(past and state)	-'aayii	-'aaki	-'aaka
B.(future,habitual,process)	-(a)'taa	-(a)'taako	(a)'taake
C.(quality)	-aa		

(Arnott 1956:131)

He points out some prefixes such as ḍon, as in: o ḍon dar-i 'he is standing', o ḍon loot-oo 'he is washing'. There are also infixes in some infinitives as in: loot-u-dō 'one who has washed (something), loot-ii-dō 'one who has washed himself', loot-aa-dō 'one who has been washed'

Radical extensions occur between radical and suffix, and are associated with certain aspects of meaning such as:

1. Reversive:

maḅḅ-ii 'closed', maḅḅ-it-ii 'opened', taar-ii 'circle', taar-t-ii 'uncircle'

2. Causative:

o hul-ai yam 'he fears me', o hul-n-ai yam 'he frightens me'

3. Celerative:

dogg-a 'running', dogg-ilaw-a 'running quickly'

Pelletier and Skinner (1981:143) discussed about the negative of the stative, stating that when negative statives do occur in Fulfulde, they take one and two forms: The ḍon preceding the verb is dropped and the -i suffix is replaced by either -aaki or more rarely -aay.

Examples:

o ḍon waali 'he/she is lying' o waalaaki 'he is not lying'
 o ḍon dari 'he/she is standing' o daraaki 'he/she is not standing'
 o ḍon roondi 'he/she is carrying' o roondaay 'he/she is not carrying'

Also, the -no suffix is used in a variety of ways to place actions back in time. When -no is used with continuous and statives, the result is what Palletier and Skinner call the "past continuous and past stative"

Example:

Continuous	Past Continuous
Alim ḍon yaha 'Yola	Alim ḍon-no yaha 'Yola
'Alim is going to Yola'	Alim was going to Yola
Stative	Past stative
Bello ḍon ḍaani	Bello ḍon-no ḍaani

‘Bello is sleeping’

‘Bello was sleeping’

Mukoshy (1984:88-89) identified ‘base morpheme’ as the morpheme to which other morphemes are added. The morphemes which are added to the base morpheme are of two types. These are: ‘post-base morpheme’ and ‘suffix morpheme’. The post-base morpheme is the type which can be followed by another morpheme after being added to the base morpheme. Example: nyaam ‘eat’ (base morpheme) nyaam-na ‘to feed’, nyaam-oy ‘eat at a distance’. The –na and –oy are the post-base morphemes. The suffix morpheme is the type which is always suffix to the base morpheme, with or without post-base morpheme, and followed by a juncture. They occur always at the end of a word. They are the tense/voice marker, the class/number marker, the concord and the mode marker.

Mukoshy (1991:21) further clarifies Fulfulde morphemes and their forms. He stated that “Fulfulde morphemes can be seen as base morphemes, which Arnott (1970:45) calls ‘root’ in the case of verbs and ‘stem’ in the case of nouns; post-base; or suffix morphemes...” In Fulfulde, base morphemes are of two types; free and bound. The free morphemes are the pronouns while the bound-base morphemes in Fulfulde are recursive. They can be followed by affixes. The bound morphemes are attached to verbs, nouns, some pronouns, adjectives, and ordinal numbers.

Example of bound morphemes of verbs:

	Past	Present/continuous	future
Active	-ii	-a	-an, -ay, -at
Middle	-ake/-ike	-oo	-oto
Passive	-aama	-ee	-ete

Daudu (2008:26-41) describes the morphological processes in Fulfulde which he gave more attention to derivation. Derivation uses affixes to create new words, however, only suffixes are identified in Fulfulde. Those forms that appear as infixes are described as post-base morphemes.

Example:

- Noun from basic noun: ree- (stem) –du (class) jo (class) _reeduujo ‘pregnant woman’
- Nouns derived from names of place denoting people of: kano: kanoo-jo/kan-ankeejo ‘kano man’
- Abstract noun derived from name of a place or tribe denoting character: Kano: Kanoo-ku ‘kano behavior’.
- Noun derived from verbs: fer (root) –ndam (suffix) _ perndam ‘civilization’.
- Infinitives derived from verbs: war (root) –go/-ol/-ki (suffixes) _ warugo/warol/waruki ‘coming’.

Voice and Tense in Fulfulde

Voice is a relationship between the subject and object with reference to verb. There are three types of voices in Fulfulde. These are: the active, middle and passive.

The active voice: The active voice describes a sentence where the subject performs the action. Example: o senday be ceede He-share-will-them-money ‘he will share money to them. The following are the active voice suffixes that are attach to the verb roots with regard to tenses:

- a) Past: -ii or -i suffix (b) Present: -a suffix (c) Habitual: -(a)ta suffix (d) Future: -ay/-an suffix

The middle voice: an emphatic voice that is associated with reflexivity which has elements of both the agent (subject) and the patient (object). Example: ceede be cendoto Money-they-share-will-themselves ‘the money will be shared to themselves’.

The following are the middle voice suffixes that are attach to the verb roots with regard to tenses:

- a) Past: -ake suffix (b) present: -oo suffix (c) Habitual: -(o)too suffix (d) Future: -oto suffix .

The passive voice: The subject receives the action and the unspecified object performs the action. Example: ceede cendete money-shared-will-be ‘money will be shared’.

The following are the passive voice suffixes that are attach to the verb roots with regard to tenses:

- a) Past: -(aa)ma suffix (b) Present: -ee suffix (c) Habitual: -(e)tee suffix (d) Future: -ete suffix

Table 3: Voice and Tense in Fulfulde

TENSE	Active	Example	Middle	VOICE			Gloss
				Example	Passive	Example	
Past	-ii	wi'ii	-ake	wi'ake	-aama	wi'aama	Said
present	-a	wi'a	-oo	wi'oo	-ee	wi'ee	Saying
Habitual	-(a)ta	wi'ata	-otoo	wi'otoo...	-etee	wi'etee	Says
Future	-an	wi'an	-oto	wi'oto	-ete	wi'ete	will say

Voice and Tense in Adamawa Dialect

The active voice:

- a) Past: -ii or -i suffix. Example: mi jaḅ-ii 'I collected'
- b) Present: -a suffix. Example: ɓe ðon dill-a 'they are going'
- c) Habitual: -(a)ta suffix. Example: an jal-ata 'you are the one that laughs'
- d) Future: -an suffix. Example: o jang-an 'he will read'

The middle voice: The middle voice is missing in the dialect.

The passive voice:

- a) past: -aama suffix. Example: jaḅ-aama 'has been collected'
- b) future: -ete suffix. Example: jang-ete 'will be readable'

Table 4: Voice and Tense in Adamawa Dialect

TENSE	Active	Example	Middle	VOICE			Gloss
				Example	Passive	Example	
Past	-ii	jaḅ-ii	Ø	*jaḅ-ake	-aama	jaḅ-aama	Collected
Present	-a	dill-a	Ø	*dill-oo	Ø	*dill-ee	Going
Habitual	-(a)ta	jal-ata	Ø	*jal-otoo...	Ø	*jal-etee	laughs
Future	-an	jang-an	Ø	*jang-oto	-ete	jang-ete	will read

Summary

Fulfulde language is a family member of African languages, under West Atlantic of Niger Congo branch. It has six dialects across West Africa which we have three out of the six dialects in Nigeria. Adamawa dialect is a dialect among the three Fulfulde dialects found in Nigeria which has over a period of time lost some of its grammatical features in voice. The voice which is part of the verb also goes with tense with a suffix that is applicable and inseparable to either of the two. The voice which is active, middle or passive goes with past, present, habitual and future tenses. There are 12 suffixes in all for the 3 voices with 4 tenses to each voice. Out of the 12 suffixes, the dialect do not use 6 suffixes, less frequently use 2 suffixes and frequently use 4 suffixes. The not use suffixes are past middle -ake, present middle -oo habitual middle -otoo, future middle -oto, present passive-ee, and habitual passive -etee. The less frequently used suffixes are, past passive -aama, future passive -ete. The frequently used suffixes are all active voice and its tenses. These are the past active -ii, present active -a, habitual active -(a)ata and future active -an.

Conclusion

In the above morphosyntactic analysis of voice and tense in Adamawa dialect, it has been established that the variety of Fulfulde spoken in Yola town is losing some of its grammatical features at the morphological level by missing some of its voice and tense suffixes. By so doing, the future generation of Adamawa speakers may likely not speak or even understand the unsimplified variety of the language. If this continues to spread across the diatlossia, the survival of the language, particularly Adamawa dialect is being threatened.

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