

Verbal Alternations in Kusaal and Related Languages

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Introduction

Verbal alternation refers to the **conjoint/disjoint (CJ/DJ) alternation** which is the phenomenon where the morphology of a verbal form has direct correspondence on the ability of the verb to take a complement or adjunct:

(1) a. Ò kē-ø búúg lá. **CJ**
3SG kill.PERF goat DEF
'S/he killed the goat.'

b. *Ò kē-yá búúg lá. **DJ**
3SG kill.PERF goat DEF UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
Lit. 'S/he killed the goat?'

Introduction con't

- This phenomenon is a major areal feature in Bantu languages, (Buell 2005, 2006; Nurse 2006; Creissels 1996; Givon 1975; van der Wal 2013; Sharman 1956; Voeltz 2004) with, perhaps, little expectation of same phenomenon in Mabia (Gur) languages of West Africa.

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Introduction con't

- The hypothesis is that the conjoint/disjoint alternation phenomenon exists in Mabia languages but at a rather gradually fading stage:
 - ❖ Dagaare unavailable (Bodomo 1997, Saanchi 2003; Dakubu 1989, PC)
 - ❖ Kusaal Partially available
 - ❖ Mampruli Fully/partially
 - ❖ Dagbani Fully available (Issah 2015)

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Objectives

This talk aims to:

- examine the CJ/DJ alternation in Kusaal with the main purpose of explaining some observed co-occurrence restrictions exhibited in the verbal morphology of the language where the perfective aspectual form of the verb with the suffix **-ya** blocks object NPs, temporal adverbials as well as negative particles.

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Objectives con't

- analyse the various restrictions as evidence of the presence of CJ/DJ alternations in the language.
- explore the phenomenon in other Mabia languages in an attempt to find out the degree of its manifestation in these languages.

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Research Questions

- i. What is CJ and DJ alternation?
- ii. What is the nature of the verbal morphology of Kusaal?
- iii. How does the CJ/DJ phenomenon relate to Kusaal?
- iv. What is the case with other Mabia languages?

Method & Data

- This research is entirely qualitative.
- It is carried out using data gathered from several field trips to Bawku and its surrounding environs in the Upper East Region of Ghana.
- Data on Dagbani is picked from Issah (2015) Dagaare (Bodomo 1997; Saanchi 2003, Dakubu 1989 and PI) and Mampruli (PI)

Outline

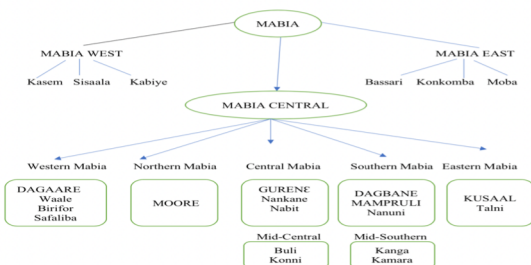
- The language Kusaal and its speakers /Mabia languages of West Africa
- Background on CJ/DJ forms and its manifestation in Bantu languages.
- Parameters for CJ/DJ forms and application to data from Kusaal
- Trends of CJ/DJ in Mabia languages
- Conclusion

The Kusaal Language and its speakers



Source: Mary Esther Kropp Dakubu (n.d.). Online material:
<http://oedl.org/oralnarratives/farefari/object/4A-1CS-B/>

Fig. 2: Mabia Languages (Bodomo 2020)



Background on CJ/DJ Forms

- Meeussen (1959) first used the term “conjoint” and “disjoint” in his description of Kirundi.
- He observed that some conjugations form pairs and described them as expressing **a difference in the relation of the verb with the element following it.**
- The following are taken from Meeussen (1959:125).

Background on CJ/DJ Forms

- Kirundi Meeussen (1959:125)
- (2) a. **CJ** Imuúngu **zi-rya** i-gíti.
10.woodworms 10SM-eat 7.wood
'(The) woodworms eat wood (and nothing but wood).'
- b. **DJ** Imuúngu zi-**ra-ryá** uruugi.
10.woodworms 10SM-PRES.DJ-eat 11.door
'(The) woodworms eat through the door.'

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Difference between CJ/DJ forms in Kurundi

- the disjoint form is marked by an extra prefix-**ra** in (1b) and
- the verb has a different tone as well.
- in a main clause, it is **impossible to have the conjoint verb form at clause final**.
- The disjoint form, on the other hand,
 - ❖ **can occur at clause final though it needs not to.**

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More explanations

- The CJ/DJ alternation is informally described as *verbal conjugations which differ in their relation with what follows the verb* (van der Wal 2017).
- Makhuwa (P31, van der Wal 2011:1735)
- (3) a. **CJ** Nthiyáná o-c-aalé nramá.
1.woman 1SM-eat-PERF.CJ 3.rice
'The woman ate the RICE.'
- b. **DJ** Nthiyáná o-hoó-cá (nramá).
1.woman 1SM-PERF.DJ-eat 3.rice
'The woman ate the RICE'

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More explanations

- The conjoint form in the example above cannot occur sentence finally and the element following the verb is (part of) the focus,
- whilst the disjoint form occurs elsewhere and is also allowed sentence-finally.

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Parameters for CJ/DJ forms (van der Wal 2017)

- Van der Wal (2017) outlines parameters for determining CJ/DJ forms in individual languages.
- These parameters are used in assessing the data in Kusaal.

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Distribution of form

- The parameter referred to as the distribution of forms, is divided into two:
- the first establishes an **opposition in sentence-finality** between the alternating verb forms and
- the second diagnoses if **constituent finality has an influence in the language**

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Parameter 1a: No Sentence-finality with CJ

- The most striking property of the CJ form in Kusaal is its **inability to occur sentence-finally**.
- It is ungrammatical to have the CJ form of the verb occur without an argument.
- The CJ form in Kusaal allows all manner of phrases to follow it: DPs/NPs, manner adverbs, adverbs of location, Place adverbial etc.

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No Sentence-finality with CJ

- (4) a. **CJ:** O di mui
3SG eat.PERF.CJ rice
's/he ate rice.'
- b. *O di
3SG eat.PERF.CJ
- c. **DJ:** O di-ya.
3SG eat.PERF.DJ
'S/he ate.'

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No Sentence-finality with CJ

- (5) a. Dau la sa kiŋ sibti
man DEF PAST go.PERF.CJ hospital
'The man went to the hospital yesterday.'
- b. *Dau la sa kiŋ
man DEF PAST go.PERF.CJ

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No Sentence-finality with CJ

- c. DJ: Dau la sa kiŋya
man DEF PAST go.PERF.DJ
'The man went.'
- d. DJ: *Dau la sa kiŋya ba'alim
man DEF PAST go.PERF.DJ calmly
'The man went without any resistance.'

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Parameter 2: Constituent finality with DJ

The DJ forms in Kusaal, generally, occur in constituent final positions. It is ungrammatical for an element to occur after a DJ form. The DJ form is inherently emphatic.

- (6) a. O sa kul yin
3SG PAST go.home.PERF.CJ house
'S/he went home yesterday.'

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Parameter 2: Constituent finality with DJ

- b. O sa kulya.
3SG PAST go-home.PERF.DJ
'S/he went home yesterday.'
- c. *O sa kulya yin
3SG PAST go.home.PERF.DJ home

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Observation 1: Distribution of forms

- Whilst DJ forms occurs constituent final and are inherently emphatic, CJ forms occur elsewhere.
- Whilst CJ forms take objects with optional adjuncts, DJ forms do not take objects and complements



Parameter 3: segmental morphology

- The distinction between the CJ and DJ forms in Kusaal are primarily based on the morphology which is closely knit with aspectual markings in the language.



Aspect

Aspect is morphologically marked as illustrated below with the verb *kuos* 'to sell'.

- (7) a. *kūōs* perfective aspectual form (transitive).
 b. *kūōs-ya'* perfective aspectual form (intransitive)
 c. *kūōs-id* imperfective aspectual (habitual)
 d. *kūōs-id-né* imperfective aspectual (progressive)



Aspectual markings on verbs

Table 4. Aspectual morphological markings on verbs in Kusaal

Verb Root/Bare Infinitive	Gloss	Perfective		Imperfective	
		PERF A	PERF B	IMPERF A	IMPERF B
dūg	'cook'	dūg	dūgya'	dūgūd	dūgūdne'
bū'	'beat'	bū'	bū'ūya'	bū'ūd	bū'ūdne'
gbīs	'sleep'	gbīs	gbīsīya'	gbīsīd	gbīsīdne'
dā'	'buy'	dā'ād	dā'āya'	dā'ād	dā'ādne'
būt	'sow'	būt	būya'	būt	būne'
kūōs	'sell'	kūōs	kūōsiya'	kūōsid	kūōsidne'
dī'	'eat'	dī'	dīya'	dīd	dīdne'
tū	'dig'	tū	tūya'	tūūd	tūūdne'
mē'	'build'	mē'	mē'īya'	mē'ēd	mē'ēdne'
tīs	'give'	tīs	tīsīya'	tīsīd	tīsīdne'
dū'ō	'go/get up'	dū'ō	dū'ōya'	dū'ōd	dū'ōdne'
kārim	'read'	kārim	kārimīya'	kārimīd	kārimīne'



Aspect

- (8) a. N nuud (kuom) ...habitual
 1SG drink.hab.CJ water
 'I drink water.'
- b. N nuudne (kuom) ...progressive aspect
 1SG drink.imperf.CJ water
 'I am drinking water.'



Aspect

- c. N sa nu kuom (Past,yesterday)
 1SG PAST drink.CJ water
 'I drunk water.'
- d. *N sa nu
 1SG PAST drink



Aspect

e. N sa nuya.....perfective aspect
1SG PAST drink.PERF.**DJ**
'I drunk yesterday.'

f. *N sa nuya kuom
1SG PAST drink.PERF.DJ water

Observation 2: CJ/DJ with Aspectual Markings

- The **CJ** forms use the suffix *-d* and *-dne* for the habitual and progressive, respectively, with optional object complements.
- the **DJ** verb form uses the suffix *-ya* with an obligatory absence of an object complement.

CJ/DJ and Questions/Negation

- Another observation in Kusaal where the CJ/DJ alternation appears is in the use of negation.
- The long form of the verb which is also emphatic is used when one wants to insist on the action implied by the verb.
- The verb form which is used in such negative constructions is always the DJ forms. No complements can be used after such verbs.

CJ/DJ and Questions/Negation

■ (9) Q: Fu bor lor laa?
2SG like.**CJ** car DEF
'Do you like the car?'

a. Ayei, m pu borda!
no, 1SG NEG like.**DJ**
'No, I don't.'

CJ/DJ and Questions/Negation

b. *Ayei, M pu borda lor la!
no, 1SG NEG like.**DJ** car DEF
LIT.: 'No, I don't like the car.'

- Though the CJ form as below can be used, (10a) expresses extra emphasis compared to (10c) below.

c. Ayei, M pu bor lor la
no, 1SG NEG like.**CJ** car DEF
'No, I don't like the car.'

Observation 3: CJ/DJ and Questions/Negation

- The CJ and DJ forms are in complementary distribution.
- They occur in mutually exclusive contexts.
- Whilst the DJ forms are used in questions and negation and are often sentence final constituents; the CJ forms occur elsewhere.

CJ/DJ and Focus Particles

To encode an interpretation of exhaustivity (see E-Kiss 1998; Abubakari 2019, 2018), the particle *ne* can be introduced with the CJ forms as demonstrated below:

(10) Ayei, ba pu kul *ne*
no 3PL NEG go.home.PFV.CJ FOC

‘No, they have not gone home.’ (Perhaps: they went to the market/farm/hospital)



CJ/DJ and Focus Particles

(11) *Ayei, ba pu kule *ne*
no 3PL NEG go.home.PFV.DJ FOC

Intended: ‘No, they have not gone home.’
(Perhaps: they went to the market/farm/hospital)

The example in (11) shows that it is infelicitous to use the DJ form with a focus particle.



Observation 4: CJ/DJ and Focus Particles

- The DJ forms in these instances are focus sensitive constructions compared to the CJ counterparts.
- Unlike the CJ forms that are more of mere information packaging, the DJ forms have common backgrounds shared by both interlocutors after which the need for further information either for marking emphasis, salience, correction or contrast necessitate the use of the DJ forms.



SUMMAARY OF CJ/DJ FORMS IN KUSAAL

Verbal Alternation		Suffix Morpheme	Use in Negation	Syntactic Requirements	Use with Postverbal Particles
IPFV A [HAB.]	CJ	-t/-d	yes	can optionally take object and adjuncts	Yes
IPFV B [PROG.]	CJ	-tne/ -dne	yes	can optionally take object and adjuncts	No
PFV A	CJ	-Ø	yes	Obligatory NP, optional adjunct	Yes
PFV B	DJ	-ya	no	NO NP NO ADJUNCT	No



Other Mabilia languages: Dagaare

Verbal Alternation		Suffix Morpheme	Use in Negation	Syntactic Requirements	Use with Postverbal Particles
IPFV A [HAB.]	CJ	-re	yes	can optionally take object NP and adjuncts	obligatory use of <i>la</i>
IPFV B [PROG.]	CJ	-ree	yes	Obligatory object and optional adjuncts	No <i>la</i>
PFV A	CJ	-Ø	yes	Obligatory NP, optional adjunct	yes (obligatory <i>la</i>)
PFV B	CJ	-e/-e	No	can take NP and Adjunct	yes (optional <i>la</i>)



Other Mabilia languages: Dagbani (Issah (2015))

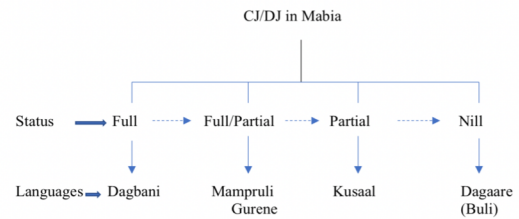
Verbal Alternation		Suffix Morpheme	Use in Negation	Syntactic Requirements	Use with Post-verbal Particles
IPFV	CJ	-ri/di/ti	Compatible with negative sentences	obligatory object NP and compatible with adjuncts	compatible with <i>mi</i> and <i>la</i>
IPFV	DJ	-ra/da/ta	Compatible with negative sentences	Cannot occur with NP objects and incompatible with adjuncts	compatible with <i>mi</i> and <i>la</i>
PFV	CJ	-Ø	Occurs with negative clauses	Obligatory NP, can take adjunct	compatible with <i>mi</i> and <i>la</i>
PFV	DJ	-ya	incompatible with negative sentences	Cannot occur with object NPs can take Adjuncts	incompatible with <i>mi</i> and <i>la</i>



Other Mabia languages: Mampruli

Verbal Alternation	Suffix Morpheme	Use in Negation	Syntactic Requirements	Use with Post-verbal Particles	
IPFV A [HAB.]	CJ	-ri	Yes	requires object and can take adjuncts	Optional <i>la</i> when NP is used.
	DJ	-ra	Yes	No object and adjuncts	
IPFV B [PROG.]	CJ	-ri	Yes	can optionally take object and adjuncts	Obligatory <i>ni</i> when no object or adjunct is used. Optional <i>la</i> when object NP is used.
PFV A	CJ	-Ø	Yes	Obligatory NP, optional adjunct	Optional <i>la</i>
PFV B	DJ	-ya	No	NO NP NO ADJUNCT	No

Trends of CJ/DJ in Mabia languages



Conclusion

- ❑ This discussion has examined the CJ/DJ verbal alternation in Kusaal and concludes that the various co-occurrence restrictions exhibited in the verbal morphology of the language where the perfective aspectual form of the verb with the suffix *-ya* blocks object NPs, temporal adverbials as well as negative particles serve as evidence of the presence of CJ/DJ alternations in Kusaal.
- ❑ It is also observed that whilst some Mabia languages have CJ/DJ forms in both the imperfective and the perfective aspectual forms: Dagbani, others have it only in the perfective form of the verb: Kusaal, and yet others do not show traces of this at all: Dagaare.
- ❑ The trend of the manifestation of the CJ/DJ verbal alternations in Mabia languages, leads to the assertion that though the CJ/DJ phenomenon exists in Mabia languages, it is gradually fading.

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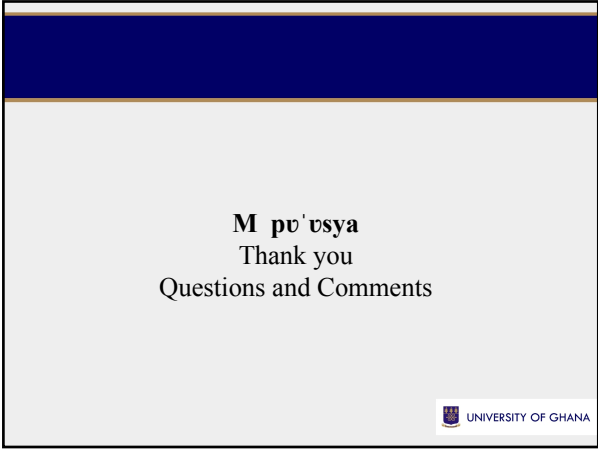
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M pɔ'vsya
Thank you
Questions and Comments

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