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THE CHAD LANGUAGES  
IN THE  
HAMITOSEMITIC-NIGRITIC  
BORDER AREA

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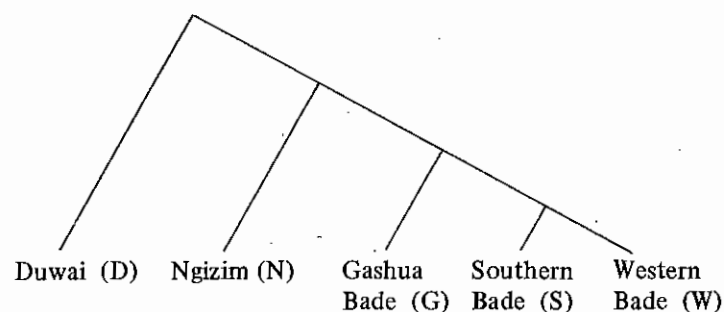
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## Questioned and Focussed Subjects and Objects in Bade/Ngizim\*

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### 1. Introduction

Newman (1977) classifies the Bade/Ngizim language group of northeastern Nigeria as belonging to the B Subbranch of West Chadic. There are three distinct languages in this group – Bade, Ngizim, and Duwai – with Ngizim being spoken in an area fanning out to the east from Potiskum, Bade to the west and south of Gashua, and Duwai to the east of Gashua. Bade is the largest and dialectally most diverse, with three major dialects; Ngizim has no significant dialect differentiation; Duwai has some, but less than Bade. Though Bade and Duwai are geographically contiguous and Ngizim is separated from the rest of the group by Kanuri and Fulani, Bade and Ngizim are more closely related to each other than either is to Duwai. The classification of languages in this group, including the different Bade dialects is shown in the diagram below:



This paper presents a description of questioned direct objects and subjects and of focussed subjects in these languages/dialects followed by a historical account of how these systems of question and focus have changed from the reconstructable proto-system. In order to understand the differences in the present systems, it is also necessary to describe questioned "associative" ("possessive/genitive") noun phrases (2.2). To restrict the scope of the paper, only the question words 'who?' and 'what?' will be considered. The "focus" construction to be described is the one normally realized by contrastive stress or clefting in English ('we wrote the story' or 'it was us who wrote the story'), by fronting and use of "relative" verb forms in Hausa (*mu ne muka rubuta labarin*), etc. Only focussed subjects are considered, quite simply because only subjects are available for syntactic focus. Whenever sentences with constituents other than subjects in focus are offered for translation, speakers of all languages and dialects in this group are consistent in giving sentences with neutral word order, morphology, and intonation.<sup>1</sup>

Some other constructions of potential interest which will not be included here are questioned constituents other than subjects and direct objects, question words other than 'who?' and 'what?', questioned or focussed subjects of non-verbal sentences,

and effects that various combinations of predicate constituents (indirect objects, instruments, etc.) might have on overall structure of questions and focus sentences.

Sections 2 and 3 will present brief synchronic descriptions of the constructions of interest in the five languages/dialects given in the diagram above. For ease of exposition and cross reference the same examples (with minor differences) are used for each language, with Arabic numbers for the examples corresponding from one section to the next and capital letters (D, N, G, S, W) referring to the respective languages. Section 4 is a reconstruction and history of the constructions in this group, and section 5 considers the questioned and focussed subject constructions in a wider Chadic framework.

### 2. Questions

#### 2.1. Questioned objects of finite verbs

By "finite" is meant verbs in a tense/aspect/mood other than the Imperfective, which uses the verbal noun (see 2.2). Objects of all finite verbs are formally the same. Examples here are in the Perfective. Questioned direct objects for all these languages occupy the same position as normal noun phrase objects, viz. following the verb.

2.1.1. *Duwai*. 'What?' is mù, 'who?' is ñdíyè or ñdúunyè (examples list the version found in my notes). The initial nasal of 'who?' is desyllabified after a vowel.

(1D)	ké-ksé mù?	'what did you catch?'
(2D)	Sáakú bènè mù?	'what did Saku cook?'
(3D)	ké kúrvè ñdíyè/ñdúunyè?	'who did you accompany?'
(4D)	Dùgwè màaké ñdúunyè?	'who did Dugwe look for?'

2.1.2. *Ngizim*. 'What?' is tà̀m, 'who?' is tà̀i.

(1N)	ká jǒbtàm?	'what did you catch?'
(2N)	Sáfíyà bǎn tà̀m?	'what did Safiya cook?'
(3N)	ká gùrvé tà̀i?	'who did you accompany?'
(4N)	Tijáani máaké tà̀i?	'who did Tijani look for?'

2.1.3. *Gashua Bade*. 'What?' is tà̀mù, 'who?' is tà̀i.

(1G)	ké gáfá támù?	'what did you catch?'
(2G)	Sáakú bènè támù?	'what did Saku cook?'
(3G)	ké kúlvé tà̀i?	'who did you accompany?'
(4G)	Dùgwí máaké tà̀i?	'who did Dugwai look for?'

2.1.4. *Southern Bade*. 'What?' is *tâm*, 'who?' is *tâi*.

- |      |                            |                              |
|------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| (1S) | <i>kó gâ fá tâm?</i>       | 'what did you catch?'        |
| (2S) | <i>Sáakù bènè tâm?</i>     | 'what did Saku cook?'        |
| (3S) | <i>kó kûrvé tâi?</i>       | 'who did you accompany?'     |
| (4S) | <i>Ádábzèkí màakò tâi?</i> | 'who did Adabziki look for?' |

2.1.5. *Western Bade*. 'What?' is *tâam*, 'who?' is *tê*.

- |      |                          |                           |
|------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| (1W) | <i>gó gâ fá tâam?</i>    | 'what did you catch?'     |
| (2W) | <i>Sáakù bènè tâam?</i>  | 'what did Saku cook?'     |
| (3W) | <i>gó kûrvé têt?</i>     | 'who did you accompany?'  |
| (4W) | <i>Dùkwée máaké têt?</i> | 'who did Dukwe look for?' |

2.2. Questioned associative noun phrases and objects of Imperfective verbs

These constructions may be taken together since the verb form used in the Imperfective is the verbal noun. Verb + direct object is formally the same as an  $N_1 + N_2$  associative (possessive/genitive) noun phrase. A complete description of how such noun phrases are formed is found in Schuh (1977). Briefly, nouns in such constructions are linked by a morpheme reconstructable as \**kó*. The reconstructed morpheme has a variety of realizations in the modern languages, the relevant details of which are listed below (tones of these constructions are complex and will not be described here – see Schuh (1977)).

2.2.1. *Duwai*. In (6D), /*bàn-kó*/ → [*bàŋáə*] by regressive and progressive assimilation to [*ŋŋ*], followed by degemination and compensatory lengthening of the vowel. In (5D) /*wàanà-kó*/ → [*wàanóə*] by weakening and loss of /*k*/ through an intermediate stage  $\gamma$  (still heard in some constructions), followed by vowel assimilation. In (7D–8D), there is no surface sign of the linker: when  $N_2$  begins in a vowel /*kó*/ is always realized as  $\emptyset$ , and for purposes of this rule the initial syllabic nasal is /*ən*/. The question words themselves are identical to those in 2.1.1.

- |      |                              |   |
|------|------------------------------|---|
| (5D) | <i>ákshí mərə wàanóə mù?</i> | 'what kind of work did they do?'<br>(lit: 'they did work-of what?') |
| (6D) | <i>Sáakú ó bəŋáə mù?</i>     | 'what will (Imperf.) Saku cook?'                                    |
| (7D) | <i>kó tfá ŋwá ndíyè?</i>     | 'whose house did you enter?'  |
| (8D) | <i>kə kûrvé ndúunyè?</i>     | 'who will you accompany (Imperf.)?'                                 |

2.2.2. *Ngizim*. There are four allomorphs of the linker: *gó* when preceded and followed by consonants and optionally after a vowel when  $N_2$  begins in a sonorant consonant; *g* after a vowel before a voiced sound; *k* after a vowel before a voiceless or

glottalized consonant;  $\emptyset$  optional in all environments. The examples in (5N–6N) show the first allomorph, those in (7N–8N) the second. The question words can be segmented off as *mò* and *áyè*, but in modern Ngizim the associative question words are probably best thought of as units *gámò* and *gáyè*: *mò* and *áyè* are not found outside associative constructions, they never have the  $\emptyset$  linker option (which is in fact preferred with regular nouns), and *mò* never occurs with the *g* allomorph (a frequent variant with nasal-initial nouns).

- |      |                                  |   |
|------|----------------------------------|---|
| (5N) | <i>ákshí jlàm wánà-gó mò?</i>    | 'what kind of work (work of what) did they do?' |
| (6N) | <i>Sáfíyà àa yée bènà-gó mò?</i> | 'what will Safiya cook?'                        |
| (7N) | <i>kwá tf íi wúndùwà-g-áyè?</i>  | 'whose house did you (pl.) enter?'              |
| (8N) | <i>kàa yée gúrvà-g-áyè?</i>      | 'who will you accompany?'                       |

2.2.3. *Gashua Bade*. The linker has five allomorphs:  $\emptyset$  before velars, *kó* between consonants, *g* after vowels and before voiced obstruents, *ŋ* after vowels and before nasals, *k* elsewhere. The question word can be segmented as *m* in (5G–6G) and *ai* in (7G–8G). The constructions thus appear to be synchronically analyzable as  $N_1 + \text{linker} + \text{Q-word}$ . However, as in Ngizim, the correct analysis is probably one of unit associative question words *kəm* and *kai*. The main evidence is from *kəm*, where we would expect \**ŋ mù* (cf. *tàmù* in 2.1.3). The tones of *kəm* and *kai* are also difficult to explain if analyzed as constructions containing the linker.

- |      |                              |   |
|------|------------------------------|---|
| (5G) | <i>ákshí jlàm wánà-kə-m?</i> | 'what kind of work (work of what) did they do?' |
| (6G) | <i>Sáakw-áa bènà-k-əm?</i>   | 'what will Saku cook?'                          |
| (7G) | <i>wùn ətf íi ŋwà-k-ai?</i>  | 'whose house did you (pl.) enter?'              |
| (8G) | <i>yà kúlvà-k-ai?</i>        | 'who will you accompany?'                       |

2.2.4. *Southern Bade*. On inspection of the SB sentences below, it looks as if the same remarks would apply as in GB (except for 'who?', where \**ai* > *e* by a regular sound change). However, there is even stronger reason to believe that *kəm* and *ke* should be treated as units than in GB. In SB, the allomorphs of the linker are  $\emptyset$  before velars, *g* before voiced obstruents, *k* before voiceless and glottalized obstruents, and *ŋ* before nasals and vowels (epenthetic *ə* is inserted before the linker if  $N_1$  ends in a consonant). If the linker in (5S–8S) were analyzed as a separate morpheme we would expect \**ŋəm* and \**ŋe*, forms which do not exist. The modern *kəm* and *ke* must thus have been analyzed as units before the changes that give the modern SB linker allomorphs.

- |      |                              |   |
|------|------------------------------|---|
| (5S) | <i>ákshí jlàm wánà-kə-m?</i> | 'what kind of work (work of what) did they do?' |
| (6S) | <i>Sáakw-áa bènà-kə-m?</i>   | 'what will Saku cook?'                          |
| (7S) | <i>wùn j-fi gá-k-è?</i>      | 'whose place did you go to?'                    |
| (8S) | <i>yà kúrvà-k-è?</i>         | 'who will you accompany?'                       |

2.2.5. *Western Bade*. The allomorphs of the linker in WB are the same as those of SB, and thus the same remarks apply here as in 2.2.4 with respect to the analysis of kam and ke.

- |      |                       |   |
|------|-----------------------|---|
| (5W) | ákci jlàmè wáná-ká-m? | 'what kind of work (work of what) did they do?' |
| (6W) | Sáakú áa bènà-kè-m?   | 'what will Saku cook?'                          |
| (7W) | áwùn òkf íi ñgwà-k-è? | 'whose house did you enter?'                    |
| (8W) | yà kúrvà-k-è?         | 'who will you accompany?'                       |

### 2.3. Questioned subject

Questioned subjects in these languages all follow the verb, though the normal position for subjects is before the verb. There is some language/dialect variation as to where questioned subjects are placed if constituents other than the verb are also found in the predicate; in fact, some speakers prefer to remove such constituents from the predicate altogether by topicalizing them (note that these sentence initial topicalized constituents are not focussed). Examples are as found in my notes.

2.3.1. *Duwai*. The question words are identical to those in 2.1.1. When subjects are questioned, the postposed question word is preceded by a morpheme ná.

- |       |                           |                              |
|-------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| (9D)  | àvgè ná mù?               | 'what fell?'                 |
| (10D) | zóniirák, tlàatlàr ná mù? | 'your gown, what tore (it)?' |
| (11D) | dée ná ndiyè?             | 'who came?'                  |
| (12D) | àksó biidàgùr ná ndiyè?   | 'who caught the giant rat?'  |

This means of questioning a subject is not altered by verb tense/aspect/mood, though in the following Imperfective sentences the speaker with whom I worked preferred not to topicalize the object NP, perhaps because it is in an associative relation with the verb (see 2.2).

- |       |                                   |                             |
|-------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (13D) | tláimè-γ zàniirák ná mù?          | 'what will tear your gown?' |
| (14D) | ó bèn <sup>η</sup> úudú ná ndiyè? | 'who will cook the tuwo?'   |

2.3.2. *Ngizim*. The question words are identical to those in 2.1.2. When subjects are questioned the postposed question word is preceded by 'n (→ nán after consonants or diphthongs).

- |       |  |                        |
|-------|--|------------------------|
| (9N)  | vàgè-ngári-n tâm?  | 'what fell?'           |
|       | (the verb has a pronominal suffix indicating action "well done") |                        |
| (10N) | tlèmply záníicí-n tâm?   | 'what tore your gown?' |
| (11N) | dée-n tâi?   | 'who came?'            |

- |       |  |                             |
|-------|--|-----------------------------|
| (12N) | nèm méndùwà tkú-n tâi?                             | 'who built this house?'     |
|       | (the parallel sentence to (12D) was not collected) |                             |
| (13N) | áa tlèmpiyà záníicí-n tâm?                         | 'what will tear your gown?' |
| (14N) | áa bènà ábèn nèn tâi?                              | 'who will cook the food?'   |

2.3.3. *Gashua Bade*. The forms of the question words (m and ai) are identical to those in 2.2.3, the associative constructions, but instead of the linker k seen there, questioned subjects are preceded by a morpheme n(ə), similar to that of Duwai and Ngizim.

- |       |  |                              |
|-------|--|------------------------------|
| (9G)  | àgvé nò-m?   | 'what fell?'                 |
| (10G) | tlèmpèté záníicí nè-m?                                       | 'what tore your gown?'       |
| (11G) | dàawà n-ái?  | 'who came?'                  |
| (12G) | dàamè wáná-tkó-lù-wù n-ái?                                   | 'who has finished his work?' |
|       | (the parallel sentence to (12D) and (12N) was not collected) |                              |
| (13G) | à tlèmpótà-k záníicí nè-m?                                   | 'what will tear your gown?'  |
| (14G) | áa bènè kájìwà n-ái?   | 'who will cook the tuwo?'    |

2.3.4. *Southern Bade*. The same remarks apply to SB as to GB (cf. the form of question words in 2.2.4).

- |              |   |                             |
|--------------|---|-----------------------------|
| (9S)         | àgvé nò-m?  | 'what fell?'                |
| (10S)        | tlèmpèté zánéeni nè-m?  | 'what tore your gown?'      |
| (11S)        | dàawà n-è?  | 'who came?'                 |
| (12S)        | gáfá viidàdùgùr n-è?  | 'who caught the giant rat?' |
| (13S), (14S) | No Imperfective examples with questioned subjects were collected in SB. |                             |

2.3.5. *Western Bade*. The question words here are kàm 'what?' and kè 'who?'. These are identical to the questioned associative words seen in 2.2.5, where it was suggested (parallel to a similar situation in SB—2.2.4) that these words should be considered unit morphemes rather than bi-morphemic linker + Q-word constructions. The data below confirm the correctness of this hypothesis since here there is no associative construction involved to explain the presence of the k. Rather kàm and kè have been introduced into this construction as units. The historical explanation for this is given in 4.3.

As in the other dialects, the postposed questioned subject in WB is preceded by a nasal morpheme, represented here as η. While it may appear that this is the same n(ə) seen in 2.3.1–4 with simple assimilation to the velar, the data on focussed subjects in WB (3.5) suggests that a complete reanalysis of constructions with postposed subjects has taken place and that the η here has a historically different origin from n(ə).

- |       |                         |                        |
|-------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| (9W)  | àgvé-η kàm?             | 'what fell?'           |
| (10W) | tlèmpèté-η kàm zánéeni? | 'what tore your gown?' |

- (11W) jàawá-η kè? 'who came?'  
 (12W) gà fá-η kè viiviiidgwàró n? 'who caught a giant rat?'  
 (13W) à tlóm pátá-η kəm zànéηi? 'what will tear your gown?'  
 (14W) áa bènà-η kè kájlùwáw? 'who will cook the tuwo?'

### 3. Focussed Subjects

#### 3.1. Duwai

Subjects are focussed in exactly the same way they are questioned (2.3.1), viz. they are postposed and preceded by the morpheme *né*. The sentences in (15D–16D) are answers to the questions in (10D–11D), the sentences in (17D–18D) are answers to the questions in (13D–14D). Here and in the following sections the focussed word is shown in the translations by italics.

- (15D) zónitii, tlàatlàr nó 'iidəm 'my gown, *wood* tore (it)  
 (16D) dèe nè Sáakù/Múusá 'Saku/Musa came'  
 (17D) tlérmà-g zènitii nó 'iidəm 'wood will tear my gown'  
 (18D) uúdáu, á bèn-wè nó Sáakù 'tuwo *Saku* will cook it'

When pronoun subjects are focussed, the pronouns in postposed position are the independent pronouns. In the first and second persons, the independent pronouns are *gè* (1 p. ex.), *gò* (1 p. in.), *kù* (2 p.); an extra nasal element appears with these persons, but it is not possible to tell whether it is part of the pronoun or the focussed subject marker. Preverbal subject pronouns in first and second persons are obligatory even when a focussed subject pronoun is present. The sentences in (19D) mean 'I tied', 'you tied', etc.

- (19D) 1 s. yí dàarè n-iyò 1 p. ex. gè dàarè nó-η-gè  
 1 p. in. gù dàarè nó-η-gò  
 2 s.m. kó dàarè nó kî 2 p. kù dàarè nó-η-kù  
 2 s.f. kó dàarè nó kəm  
 3 s.m. dàarè n-ici 3 p. dàarè nó-kshì

#### 3.2. Ngizim

Subjects are focussed in the same way they are questioned (2.3.2), viz. they are postposed with the morpheme 'n inserted. Sentences (15N–16N) answer questions (10N–11N) and (17N–18N) answer (13N–14N). When pronoun subjects are focussed, the independent pronouns are postposed, but preverbal subject pronouns are still required for first and second persons. The sentences in (19N) mean 'I tied', 'you tied', etc.

- (15N) tləmpiyá-n dəm 'wood tore (it)'

- (16N) dèe-n Múusá 'Musa came'  
 (17N) áa tləmpiyá-n dəm 'wood will tear (it)'  
 (18N) áa yé bènà-n Sáfiyá 'Safiya will cook (it)'  
 (19N) 1 s. ná táksó-n iyù 1 p. ex. jà táksó-n jà  
 2 s.m. ká táksó-n ci 1 p. in. wà táksó-n wà  
 2 s.f. ká táksó-n kəm 2 p. kwá táksó-n kùn  
 3 s.m. táksó-n áci 3 p. táksó-n ákshì

#### 3.3. Gashua Bade

As in Duwai and Ngizim, subjects are focussed in the same way they are questioned (2.3.3). The remarks on focussed pronoun subjects for Ngizim (3.2) also apply to GB. Sentences (15G–16G) and (17G–18G) answer the questions in (10G–11G) and (12G–13G) respectively. The sentences in (19G) mean 'I tied', 'you tied', etc.

- (15G) tləmpètə záninánii nó dəm 'wood tore my gown'  
 (16G) dàawà-n Sáakù/Múusá 'Saku/Musa came'  
 (17G) à tləmpát-áa nó dəm 'wood will tear (it)'  
 (18G) áa bènà-n Sáakù 'Saku will cook (it)'  
 (19G) 1 s. nán táaksó n-iyù 1 p. ex. jàn tàaksè nó jà  
 2 s.m. kó táaksó nó gi 2 p. wùn tàaksè nú wùn  
 3 s.m. tàaksó n-áci 3 p. tàaksè n-áksi

#### 3.4. Southern Bade

Like questioned subjects, focussed subjects are postposed. However, the morpheme *n(ə)* used with questioned subjects (2.3.4) is not used with focussed subjects. Instead what appears to be one of the allomorphs of the associative linker described in 2.2.4 is used, with one difference: when the focussed subject begins in a velar, it is preceded by *η* rather than  $\emptyset$  as the discussion in 2.2.4 would lead us to expect – see the third example in (16S). This will be elaborated on in 3.5 in the discussion on WB, where the same situation obtains. The sentences in (15S) and (16S) answer the questions in (10S) and (11S) respectively.<sup>2</sup>

- (15S) tləmpətə-g dəm 'wood tore (it)'  
 (16S) dàawá-k Sáakù }  
 dàawá-η Àadámú } 'Saku/Adamu/Musa/Kaku came'  
 dàawá-η Múusá }  
 dàawá-η Káakù }

The focussed subject marker before pronoun subjects (which all begin in either a vowel or a velar) is also always *η*. The following sentences mean 'I tied', 'you tied', etc.

(19S) 1 s.	à tàksá-η iyú	1 p. ex.	jà tàksá-η ájà
		1 p. in.	wà tàksá-η áwà
		2 p.	wùn tàksá-η áwùn
2 s.m.	ká tàksá-η gii		
2 s.f.	ká tàksá-η gèm		
3 s.m.	tàksá-η áci	3 p.	tàksá-η áksi

### 3.5. Western Bade

As in the other languages, focussed subjects in WB are postposed. WB is like SB in having a focussed subject marker with allomorphs much like the associative linker (2.2.5) rather than an alveolar nasal n(ə) like that found in the other languages. Sentences (15W–16W) and (17W–18W) answer the questions in (10W–11W) and (13W–14W) respectively. The sentences in (19W) mean ‘I tied’, ‘you tied’, etc.

(15W)	zánéηāa, tləmpətá-g dəmáan	‘my gown, wood tore (it)’
(16W)	jàawà-k Sáakù jàawà-g Jáaji jàawá-η Àadàmú jàawà-η Múusá jàawà-η Káakù	‘Saku/Jaji/Adamu/Musa/Kaku came.’
(17W)	zánéηāa, à tləmpətá-g dəmáan	‘my gown, wood will tear (it)’
(18W)	áa bènà-k Sáakù	‘Saku will cook (it)’
(19W) 1 s.	nó tàksá-η áyú	1 p. ex. jə tàksá-η ájà
		1 p. in. wù tàksá-η áwà
		2 p. áwùn tàksá-η áwùn
2 s.m.	gá tàksá-η ágii	
2 s.f.	gá tàksá-η ágèm	
3 s.m.	tàksá-η áci	3 p. tàksá-η ákci

In SB and WB the one difference between the allomorphs of the associative linker as illustrated in 2.2.4–5 and the focussed subject marker is the use of Ø before velars with the former but η before velars with the latter. Although the allomorph of the linker in N<sub>1</sub> + N<sub>2</sub> noun phrases is Ø before velars where N<sub>1</sub> and N<sub>2</sub> are common nouns, e.g. ðàcə kwámán ‘hair of a bull’ (cf. ðàcə-k tàmàkún ‘hair of a sheep’, ðàcə-η aktlán ‘hair of a cow’), an η allomorph is used before velars when N<sub>2</sub> is a proper noun (see Schuh (1977) for details). Compare the allomorphs of the linker in (20W) with the N<sub>1</sub> + N<sub>2</sub> constructions where N<sub>2</sub> = common noun, as illustrated above.

(20W)	ðàcá-k Càakwà ðàcá-g Jáaji ðàcá-η Ábdù ðàcá-η Múuzà ðàcá-η Kábò	‘Cakwa’s/Jaji’s/Abdu’s/Muza’s/ Kabo’s hair’
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Though the linker allomorphs in (20W) are identical to the focussed subject allomorphs in (16W), we cannot say that the focussed subject marker is the linker. First,

the η allomorph of the linker is used only before proper nouns, where the η allomorph of the focussed subject marker is used before all nouns, e.g. ùktlè-w tállà dà dàami sée dá gaptàkə-η gəájú ‘all the children died off until only the youngest remained’.<sup>3</sup> Also, if this were the associative linker we would expect the special paradigm of associative pronouns to be used in focussed subject constructions rather than the independent pronouns seen in (19W). Compare ðàcə-η-áa ‘my hair’, ðàcə-η-ii ‘your (m.s.) hair’, ðàcə-rí ‘his hair’, etc. with the forms in (19W).

In short, SB and WB must have a rule such as the following which yields identical allomorphs for morphemes in two distinct syntactic constructions:

– focussed subject marker	} →	η / _ vowels, nasals, and velars
– associative linker when		k / _ voiceless and glottalized
N <sub>2</sub> = proper noun		g / _ other voiced sounds

### 4. Reconstruction and History

The following forms and syntactic constructions can be reconstructed for proto-Bade/Ngizim:

- proto-Bade/Ngizim question words: \*mù ‘what?’ \*(á)yè ‘who?’<sup>4</sup>
  - questioned direct object: \* {Subject Verb mù/(á)yè?}
  - questioned associative NP: \* {NP ká mù/(á)yè?}
  - questioned subject: \* {Verb (Object) ná mù/(á)yè?}
  - focussed subject: \* {Verb (Object) ná Subject}
- (If focussed subject was first or second person pronoun, preverbal subject pronoun was required as well as postposed pronoun.)

#### 4.1. Direct object of finite verbs

All the languages preserve the proto-word order in this construction, the only differences from the reconstruction being in the forms of the question words themselves. Duwai mù ‘what?’ must be identical to the original form. The Duwai word for ‘person’ is ñdi, suggesting that ñdiyè ‘who?’ may be a compound ‘person + who?’; the exact derivation of the alternative ñduunyè is not clear (but cf. fn. 4).

In all Bade dialects and Ngizim, the words for ‘what?’ and ‘who?’ as direct objects share an innovative prefix t(a)- added to reconstructed \*mù and \*(á)yè (+ minor phonetic changes).<sup>5</sup> This prefix is also seen in Bade and Ngizim táwàn ‘which (one)?’ (cf. Duwai wúnyì and Bade and Ngizim náwàn ‘how much?’). The original function of this prefix remains a mystery, but it seems to have originally been restricted to question words in “independent” functions, i.e. not following subordinating morphemes such as the associative linker. One such independent function is direct objects of finite verbs; all languages of this group use morphemes, including personal pronouns, in their independent forms in this position.

#### 4.2. Questioned associative noun phrases

The original construction is retained in fairly transparent form in all the languages/dialects. For the Bade dialects it was hypothesized that modern *kām* and *kai/ke* have been reanalyzed as unit morphemes similar to English 'whose?' (2.2.3–5). This reanalysis is clearly confirmed for Western Bade by evidence from questioned subjects (see below).

#### 4.3. Questioned and focussed subjects

All languages preserve the reconstructed word order, with questioned and focussed subjects being postposed. The distribution of the reconstructed morpheme *\*nó* in the three most distantly related languages of this branch shows the forms found in SB and WB (2.2.5, 3.4–5) to be innovative.<sup>6</sup> The origin of *\*nó* is probably in the demonstrative system, but at the proto-Bade/Ngizim period it must have already been specialized to its use in these postposed subject constructions.

For questioned subjects, Duwai preserves the original situation intact (2.3.1) except for the innovative form of the word for 'who?'. Gashua Bade (2.3.3) and Southern Bade (2.3.4) show the original construction. Ngizim has extended its independent question words *tām* and *tài* to this function (2.3.2). Western Bade (2.3.5) represents the most complex innovation, which can be understood only in the context of focussed subjects.

Duwai, Ngizim, and Gashua Bade (3.1–3) all retain the original form of the focussed subject construction. In Southern and Western Bade, instead of a reflex of reconstructed *\*nó*, a marker is inserted which has allomorphs identical to those of the associative linker used before proper nouns (3.4–5). The SB and WB situations can be explained in terms of a two stage development:

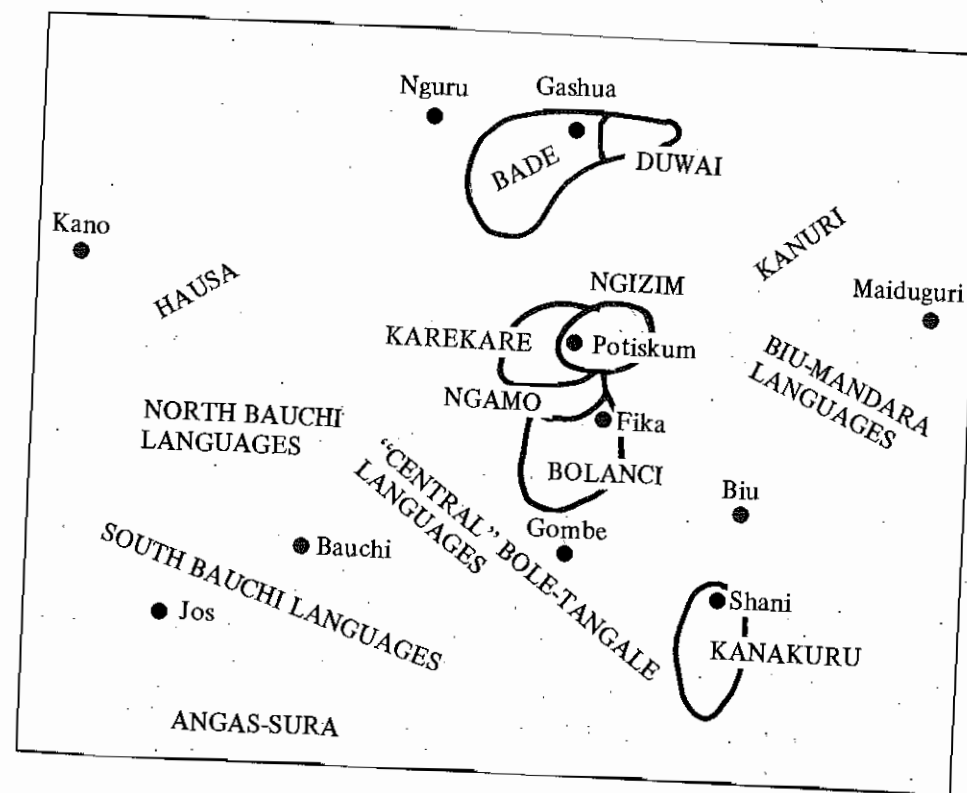
*Stage I* (shared by SB and WB – cf. fn. 6) – In focussed subject constructions, *\*nó* is replaced by a morpheme with allomorphs identical to those of the associative linker used before proper nouns (*k*, *g*, or *ŋ* depending on phonetic environment).

Though the exact path for this innovation cannot be determined, a strong possibility is the following: in proto-Bade (possibly proto-Bade/Ngizim) in  $N_1 + N_2$  associative constructions where  $N_2$  was a proper noun, the linker *\*kó* was not used, but rather a morpheme *-n* was used when  $N_1$  was a masculine noun and *-tk-* when  $N_1$  was a feminine noun.<sup>7</sup> This situation is still preserved in Gashua Bade, e.g. (masculine 'yàt 'hair, feathers') 'yàtá-n Zábá 'Zaba's hair' (cf. 'yàtò-g dúuzi 'feathers of an owl'), 'yàtò-n Kábáú 'Kabau's hair' (cf. 'yàt Ø kwám 'hair of a bull'); (fem. dà 'eye') dà-tkèk Cákwa 'Cakwa's eye' (cf. dà-k tlá 'cow's eye'). At some point SB/WB must have formed some sort of "connection" between *\*n(ó)* as a focussed subject marker and *\*n* used as a linker after masculine nouns before proper nouns. At a yet later date, linker *\*n* was replaced by the more commonly used linker *\*kó*, but with a remnant of the *\*n* seen in the nasal allomorph *ŋ* before velars, where *\*kó* always had a Ø allomorph. Since focussed subject *\*nó* and linker *\*n* had been "connected" with each other, the shift of linker *\*n* carried focussed subject *\*nó* along with it, giving the same allomorphs (*k*, *g*, *ŋ* depending on environment) for both morphemes. Note that

"connected with" does not mean "identified as", for had the two morphemes been identified as "the same" we would expect the surface forms of both constructions to be the same. We have seen that they are not, especially in the case of associative pronouns vs. focussed subject pronouns but also in the use of *ŋ* before any focussed subject beginning in a velar, whether it is a proper noun or not.<sup>8</sup>

*Stage II* (WB only) – Associative forms of question words (*kām*, *ke*) replace the original question words (*\*m*, *\*e*).

Once the "connection" was formed between the focussed subject marker and the linker, the situation was ripe for elements in the postposed subject position to be "identified as" elements in an associative construction. While no dialect has carried this to its logical syntactic conclusion (no dialect uses associative pronouns as focussed subjects), WB has gone one step further than SB by extending associative forms of question words to these constructions. Here, moreover, we see clearly that in WB the original bimorphemic *\*/kó mù/* 'of what?' and *\*/kó áyè/* 'of whom?' have been analyzed as monomorphemic units, since they occur in a construction following *ŋ*, which itself is a reflex of a "linking" morpheme.<sup>9</sup>



## 5. Comparative Remarks

While the history of the constructions discussed here is fairly clear within the Bade/ Ngizim group, it is not so clear in a wider Chadic context, in particular with respect to placement of questioned and focussed subjects. Concentrating only on West Chadic, one finds that for most languages the normal place for question words is the same position as the position of the neutral NP. Since these languages are all SVO, this means post-verbal for objects, preverbal for subjects, etc. If any displacement of questioned constituents does take place, it is movement to the beginning of the sentence, the best known example of this being Hausa. Likewise, fronting is the most common device for focussing noun phrases in all functions.

As far as I can determine, *postposing* of questioned and focussed subjects is restricted to the following West Chadic languages: languages of the Bade/ Ngizim group, the northern Bole-Tangale languages (Bolanci, Karekare, Ngamo), and Kanakuru (a southern Bole-Tangale language). Rough geographic distribution is given in the map above. Names in all capitals are languages or language groups, others are place names. Potiskum is about 120 km south of Gashua and about the same distance north of Gombe.

A number of hypotheses may be advanced for the origin of this construction:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Retention with loss in languages not having it | a. Reflex of proto-(West-)Chadic question/focus subject construction                          |
|   | b. Reflex of proto-(West-)Chadic VSO word order, replaced by SVO order in "neutral" sentences |
| 2. Innovation in languages now having it          | a. Contact with other languages using this construction                                       |
|   | b. Result of universal tendency of putting "new information late" in sentences                |

While a definitive answer will require more research, these hypotheses can be considered in terms of relative likelihood. Retention, at least from proto-West-Chadic, seems more likely than innovation. Were subject postposing restricted to the Bade/ Ngizim and the northern Bole-Tangale region, the areal nature would make relatively late innovation very likely; but the presence of subject postposing in Kanakuru, the southernmost Bole-Tangale language, linguistically and geographically distant from the northern languages, indicates that this is not simply an areal phenomenon. Independent innovation in Kanakuru and the other languages, while possible, seems unlikely as well. None of the Chadic or non-Chadic languages which have contact with any of the Chadic languages at issue use subject postposing in this way as far as I know. It would also be unlikely for the universal tendency mentioned as 2b to have affected two isolated areas without touching surrounding languages.

As for subject postposing reflecting an original VSO word order, there is simply no way at our present state of knowledge to demonstrate this. VSO order is fairly common in Biu-Mandara, but it is not found at all in West Chadic, making it an open

question how far back it can be reconstructed. As our only remaining possibility, then, we are left with the hypothesis that questioned/focussed subject postposing is a retention from proto-West Chadic with loss in those West Chadic languages or groups that no longer have it. Since the languages having this construction are from the two most distantly related branches of West Chadic and since it is found at the geographical extremities of the area in question, this hypothesis looks very strong. The construction has been lost in all the "central" Bole-Tangale languages; it shows signs of being lost in the northern languages of this group as well, but here contact with Bade/ Ngizim may have been the reinforcing factor that has allowed it to be retained. Elsewhere, the idiosyncratic nature of the construction and contact with languages lacking it, in particular the all-pervasive influence of Hausa, have caused it to be lost, perhaps at a very early date. Postposing of subjects for focus may have been innovative within Chadic, but it must date to at least proto-West Chadic.

## Footnotes

- \* Research on Ngizim was conducted during 1969-70 in Potiskum, Nigeria under the auspices of National Science Foundation grant GS-2279 (Paul Newman, Principal Investigator). Research on Bade and Duwai and some further research on Ngizim was done during 1973-75 in Gashua, Nigeria while I was employed as a Senior Research Fellow in the Centre for the Study of Nigerian Languages of Abdullahi Bayero College, Kano (now Bayero University). Attendance at the Symposium on the Chad Languages in the Hamitosemitic-Nigrific Border Area was made possible by funds from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft.
- <sup>1</sup> In Ngizim this proved to be consistently true both in direct elicitation and in texts, where in several hundred pages, the only focussed constituents ever found were subjects. Some dialects, esp. WB, are developing a construction where other constituents can be fronted followed by a focus marker, e.g. (WB) *ágii máankò ná jìlémòdáaii sádákáw* 'it's you I'll make the sacrifice with', where the "instrument" *ágii* 'you' is fronted, followed by *máankò*. Such constructions were rarely volunteered in direct elicitation.
- <sup>2</sup> Examples parallel to (17-18) in other sections were not collected in SB.
- <sup>3</sup> Note that if  $\emptyset$  rather than  $\eta$  were used in such constructions, potential confusion between direct objects and focussed subjects could arise, e.g. *táksó Gárbà* would mean 'he tied Garba', not 'Garba tied (it)', which would be *táksó- $\eta$  Gárbà*.
- <sup>4</sup> Comparative Chadic evidence would suggest a "pre-proto-Bade/ Ngizim" reconstruction *\*(á)wè* for 'who?', a reconstruction supported by the vowel *uu* in the Duwai alternant form *áduunyè*.
- <sup>5</sup> This is one of several innovations showing Bade and Ngizim to form a linguistic subgroup separate from Duwai.
- <sup>6</sup> This shared innovation is a major criterion for putting SB and WB as a subgroup within Bade.
- <sup>7</sup> These "proper noun" linkers were part of the demonstrative system originally, not linkers per se. Literally, such constructions were thus 'this hair (of) Zaba', 'this eye (of) Cakwa', etc. See Schuh (1977).
- <sup>8</sup> Another possible path for Stage I is that first, linking *\*n* was replaced by *\*kó*, then its nasal allomorphs were confused with the nasal *\*nó*, which then took over *k* and *g* allomorphs by analogy with the *k* and *g* allomorphs of *\*kó*.
- <sup>9</sup> Some speakers of WB preserve at least one reflex of the pre-Stage II situation in the semi-fixed expression *bá gii nèm?* 'what's the matter with you?' (lit: 'what has got you?').