

SUBSTANTIVE AND ANAPHORIC ‘THING’ IN BOLE, WITH REMARKS ON HAUSA *abu/abin*¹

RUSSELL G. SCHUH
UCLA
schuh@humnet.ucla.edu

ALHAJI MAINA GIMBA
UNIVERSITY OF MAIDUGURI
gimba@unimaid.edu.ng

The word ‘thing’ in Bole, a language of the Chadic family spoken in northeastern Nigeria, has two phonological root forms: *’ya-* with a glottalized *’y-*, and *ya-* with a non-glottalized *y-*. Corresponding to this phonological difference is a corresponding functional dichotomy, which we refer to as *substantive ‘thing’* and *anaphoric ‘thing’*. The former, which can have both physical and cognitive reference similar to English “thing”, has a number of unique formal properties as compared with other common nouns. The latter takes the form of a syntactic anaphor in that it is always post-verbal and must be bound to a referential syntactic subject by agreement features. Functionally, it adds a meaning to a sentence which we liken to *middle voice*, in which the subject acts for self-benefit or with self-involvement, e.g. as seen in a special category of verb morphology in Fula, to which we compare the Bole construction. A number of syntactic restrictions apply to the use of anaphoric ‘thing’, including exclusion from sentences with overt object, negative sentences, and WH questions. Bole has three anaphoric expressions in addition to anaphoric ‘thing’: the intransitive copy pronoun (ICP), which indicates definitiveness of an event; regular reflexives, which are VP arguments co-referential to the subject; and emphatic reflexives, which indicate action of the subject without external intervention. The four anaphoric constructions form a complementary pattern in semantic and syntactic space. Like Bole, the word ‘thing’ in Hausa has special lexical properties and, moreover, has both substantive and anaphoric properties closely paralleling those of Bole. The morphemes themselves are not cognate, however, and there are some differences in the syntax, indicating that these lexical, syntactic, and semantic phenomena must be of a more general areal and/or typological nature rather than a specific West Chadic inheritance.

1. Introduction

Bole is a Chadic language spoken in Yobe and Gombe States of northeastern Nigeria. Bole is a member of the West-A subbranch of Chadic (Newman 1977), the same major subbranch that includes Hausa, though within the West-A branch, Bole and Hausa are not particularly closely related. The work here is based on the Fika dialect, the same dialect described by Johannes Lukas in the most extensive descriptive works on Bole so far published (Lukas 1969, 1971, 1970-72). More recent work on Bole is in Gimba (1998, 2000). See Gimba (2000:Chapter 1) for additional references on Bole.

A root in Bole translatable as ‘thing’ has a number of idiosyncratic morphological and syntactic properties. Lukas (1970/71:§36) and Schuh (199?) note some of these properties, which we repeat here. Other properties and constructions have not previously been described in print.

In its simplest form, ‘thing’ is *’yá*, which is cognate with Ngamo *’yà*, possibly with Tangale *waa*, Pero *wé*, Kanakuru *wói*, and also possibly with Kirfi *jè*, Galambu *jənáń*, and Gera (*mèn-)**jì*. A possible Hausa cognate is *đí-*, now part of the determiner system, serving as a sort of dummy carrier of the previous reference marker or the genitive linker. In this paper we will distinguish between *substantive ‘thing’* and *anaphoric ‘thing’*. The former is a pro-noun which provides a generalized reference to some (usually) concrete

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object; the latter is always an anaphor to the grammatical subject and functions as a sort of middle voice marker.

2. Substantive ‘thing’

In its morphologically simplest form, **’yá** can appear with no adjuncts at all in the negative, where it translates as ‘nothing’ and in non-negative contexts with a quantifier or the Previous Reference Marker **yê** as a modifier. It occurs unmodified in the expression **’yá íwò** ‘it’s done, the matter is concluded’ (= Hausa **àbù yaa yi**). Note that **’yá** can have plural reference but has no morphological plural form

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|----------------------------|---|
| (1) ’yá sá | ‘(it’s) nothing’ |
| ’yá móodì | ‘something, one thing’ |
| ’yá màd’fì | ‘some things’ |
| ’yá bòlòu | ‘two things’ |
| ’yá gòdón | ‘many things’ |
| ’yá shím | ‘a little something’ |
| Q: Éméé ’yá yé d’ó? | ‘Is this the thing (that we were talking about)?’ |
| A: ’Yá yê. | ‘(It’s) the thing.’ |
| Ñ wáatùu ’yá yê. | ‘I got the thing.’ (as a veiled reference to a known thing) |

With a nominal genitive, **’yá** requires a linking morpheme **-tí**. Only about 15 nouns, mostly kin terms, use this linker (Schuh 1983:§2.3). The root **’ya-** takes low tone when this suffix is added. This tonal alternation of the root (which also applies with pronoun possessors—see below) is idiosyncratic to **’yá**. It would at first appear to be a case of Pre-Clitic Lowering, which lowers a high tone to low before a clitic (Gimba 1998:§4.3, 2000:Chapter 2), but this rule applies regularly only in words where a high tone in the same word precedes the lowered high, e.g. **dóodó** ‘money’ but **dóodò-nó** ‘my money’, and it does not apply to other monosyllables that use the **-tí** linker, e.g. **záa-tí Bámói** ‘Bamoi’s compatriot’.

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| (2) ’yà-tí Bámói | ‘Bamoi’s thing’ |
| ’yà-tí máalá | ‘wild animal’ (“thing of bush”) |
| ’yà-tí inné | ‘something to see’ (“thing of seeing”) |

’yá + possessive pronoun clitic geminates the consonant of the pronoun. As with the **-tí** clitic seen in (2), the ‘thing’ root takes low tone with a pronominal clitic. Three other monosyllabic nouns have the gemination pattern with pronoun clitics, but only **’ya** takes low tone, i.e. **bán-nò** ‘my daughter’ with high on the root (from a root which does not occur unaffixed), **lôn-nó** ‘my meat’ with falling tone on the root (from **ló**), and **kón-nò** ‘my head’ with high tone on the root (from **kòoyí**).²

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| (3) ’yàn-nó | ‘my thing’ | ’yàm-mú | ‘our thing’ |
| ’yàk-kó | ‘your (m) thing’ | ’yàk-kú | ‘your (pl) thing’ |
| ’yàs-shí | ‘you (f) thing’ | | |
| ’yàn-nì | ‘his thing’ | ’yàs-sú | ‘their thing’ |
| ’yàt-tó | ‘her thing’ | | |

With a following adjective, demonstrative, relative clause, and in a genitive relation with a questioned word, substantive ‘thing’ takes the form **’yân**. Following regular

² The 3rd person masculine singular clitic bears low tone in all environments, the others have high tone when low precedes.

phonological rules, the final /n/ assimilates in point of articulation to a following obstruent or nasal and completely to a following liquid; words with initial vowels have a glottal onset, which conditions [ŋ]. The final *-n* is a linking morpheme that usually appears in Noun + Adjective constructions and in some Noun + Noun genitives, most commonly where N2 is a locative or temporal modifier of N1, e.g. **mèemù-n Pikkà** 'person of Fika, Bole person'. It does NOT appear with a following demonstrative or relative clause with nouns other than 'yà. The table in (4) contrasts a common noun with 'yá in parallel constructions.

(4) Adjectives

'yân póoyó	'new thing'	kúlàm póoyó	'new calabash'
*'yá póoyó		cf. kúlà póoyó	'the calabash is new'
'yân gàràŋ	'long thing'	záawàŋ gàràŋ	'long stick'

Demonstratives

'yân émèè	'this thing'	mèemù émèè	'this man'
*'yá émèè		*mèemùn émèè	
'yân ámáa	'that thing'	gàm ámáa	'that ram'
'yân óshèè	'this thing' (fem.)	mòondù óshèè	'this woman'
'yân ósháa	'that thing' (fem.)	tèmshí ósháa	'that ewe'
'yám màinée	'these things'	mí'y'yá màinée	'these people'
'yám màináa	'those things'	témká màináa	'those sheep'

Relative clauses

'yál làa ngáǎú-wòò yè	'the thing that he ate'	ló làa ngáǎú-wòò yè	'the meat that he ate'
??'yá làa ...		??lól làa ...	

Question words

'yál lò?	'whose thing?'	kúlà lò?	'whose calabash'
*'yá lò?		*kúlàl lò?	
'yál lè?	'what is it?' (“thing of what?”)	sùmmàná lè?	'conversation about what?'
'yân àu?	'thing associated with where?'	*sùmmànàl lè?	
		mí'y'yân àu?	'people from where?'
		*mí'y'yá àu?	
'yân sòttò?	'thing associated with what time?'	mèccên sòttò?	'trip associated with what time?'
		*mèccé sòttò?	

NOTES: (1) 'Thing' with the proximal demonstrative, 'yân émèè, is equivalent to Hausa *abin nan*, used as a hesitation marker and to mean “whatcha-ma-callit”. In this meaning, it is usually contracted to 'yànnée or ènnée.

(2) When 'yá has a specifically feminine referent, it can take feminine determiners, as in 'yân óshèè, parallel to Hausa *àbáa* 'thing (of feminine grammatical gender)' from *àbù*.

(3) With the question words *àu?* 'where?' and *sòttò?* 'when?', nouns other than 'yá also take the linker *-n*. These question words are specific cases of the general pattern noted above, whereby N1 + N2 genitive constructions use the linker *-n* when N2 is a locative or temporal modifier of N1.

3. Anaphoric ‘thing’

Anaphoric ‘thing’ has only the forms in (5). These are identical to substantive ‘thing’ with possessive pronoun clitics in (3) except that anaphoric ‘thing’ lacks glottalization of the initial *y*.³

(5)	yàn-nó	‘my thing’	yàm-mú	‘our thing’
	yàk-kó	‘your (m) thing’	yàk-kú	‘your (pl) thing’
	yàs-shí	‘you (f) thing’		
	yàn-nì	‘his thing’	yàs-sú	‘their thing’
	yàt-tó	‘her thing’		

Despite the phonological similarity between the forms in (3) and those in (5), the syntactic properties of the two sets of forms are entirely different. Anaphoric ‘thing’ is always coreferential to the syntactic subject, appearing in sentences such as those in (6):

(6) a. With intransitive verbs

̀̀n ndii yànnó (móod̄inó)	‘I went on my own (by myself)’
màtè à d̄òwá yàssú (môossú)	‘they will rest on their own (by themselves)’
pètè yàkkó!	‘go out on your own!’

b. With transitive verbs

̀̀n kónúu yànnó	‘I took (it) on my own’
ítá à d̄inkà yàttó	‘she will cook on her own’
tíkkó⁴ yàkkó!	‘eat on your own!’

The translations using “on X’s own” suggest the meaning element that anaphoric ‘thing’ seems to add. We return to the meaning/function of anaphoric ‘thing’ below, but first we consider distributional properties of anaphoric ‘thing’ and differences from substantive ‘thing’.

(7) a. Only anaphoric ‘thing’ can co-occur with intransitive verbs—cf. (6a)

*̀̀n ndii ’yànnó	‘I went “my thing”’
*màtè à d̄òwá ’yàssú	‘they will rest “their thing”’
*pètè ’yàkkó!	‘go out “your thing”!’

b. Anaphoric ‘thing’ must agree with the subject whereas reference for a pronominal clitic on substantive thing is free—cf. (6b)

̀̀n kónúu ’yàttó	‘I took her thing’
*̀̀n kónúu yàttó	

³ Paul Newman, in personal communication, has asked what the evidence is that *yà*- “substantive thing” and *yà*- “anaphoric thing” are, historically or synchronically the same word. This is a reasonable question since, in word initial position, the distinction /y/ vs. /ȳ/ in Bole is quite stable. Our response is to ask what, other than common origin, could account for the existence of the two forms with a the unusual **Ca**-root structure and the idiosyncratic genitives not shared by any other words.

⁴ Imperatives of mono-consonantal roots such as **tíi**- ‘eat’ require a subject agreement clitic with a geminate consonant—here, **-kkó** ‘you (m.sg.)’. Lukas (1971/72:§133-139) calls this form of the imperative the “Adhortativform”, contrasting it with an “Imperativstamm” consisting of a bare root.

ítá à dīnkà ’yàssú	‘she will cook their thing’
*ítá à dīnkà yassú	
tíkkó ’yànnó!	‘eat my thing!’
*tíkkó yànnó!	

- c. A sentence with anaphoric ‘thing’ requires a referential subject—it cannot appear in sentences with unspecified subjects (= French *on*, Hausa *an*, expressed in Bole as a non-referential plural like English “they” say) or an expletive subject

mí’y’yá/màté mbìssán yàssú	‘they/people shared out on their own’
*mbìssán yàssú	‘one shared out on one’s own’
cf. mbìssán ’yá móodī	‘things were shared out’
án (*yàssú) pító	‘it rained [“they did rain”]’
sùwáa (*yànni) màté ndài bònò	‘it is fitting that they go home’

- d. Anaphoric ‘thing’ occupies only the position of a direct object; substantive ‘thing’ may fill any NP functional role

Subject:	’yànnó jàbbúwò	‘my thing spoiled’
	*yànnó jàbbúwò	
Indirect object:	íshí íi ràamú n ’yànni	‘he did a repair to his thing’
	*íshí íi ràamú n yànni	
Object of prep:	ítá ndág gà ’yàttó	‘she went with her thing’
	*ítá ndág gà yàttó	

The heading of (7d) states that anaphoric ‘thing’ “occupies the position” of a direct object. At least two facts show that anaphoric ‘thing’ is not a direct object. First, it is not a semantic patient. Second, direct objects and anaphoric ‘thing’ differ in tonal behavior. Direct object nouns following a verb ending in high tone undergo Low Tone Raising, whereby a low tone is raised to high following high in “close” phrasal relationships (Lukas 1969, Gimba 1998; verbs in the perfective with objects constitute an exception—Gimba 1998, Gimba 2000:Chapter 7). Anaphoric ‘thing’ does *not* undergo Low Tone Raising. The examples in (8a) contrast the tones of direct objects with those of anaphoric ‘thing’. Nonetheless, SYNTACTICALLY anaphoric ‘thing’ preempts the direct object position of transitive verbs in that it conditions direct object verbal morphology (8b) and cannot cooccur with a semantic patient (8c).⁵

- (8) a. Low Tone Raising with direct objects but not anaphoric ‘thing’

à kóná shóowí (< shòowí)	‘she will take wood’
à kóná yàttó	‘she will take (it) on her own’
òn kónó kébé (< kèbé)	‘I take gypsum’
òn kónó yànnó	‘I take it on my own’

⁵ Each verbal Tense/Aspect/Mood (TAM) form of Bole has special morphology associated with types of objects following transitive verbs. In the examples in (8a), we contrast pre-direct object noun forms in the Perfective and Future with Ø object forms in those TAM’s.

b. Pre-direct object forms of verbs

Perfective:	̀̀ kónúu yànnó nzònó	‘I took (it) on my own yesterday’
	̀̀ kónúu kùl̀̀ nzònó	‘I took a calabash yesterday’
	̀̀ kónúwòo nzònó	‘I took (it) yesterday’
	*̀̀ kónú(wòo) yànnó nzònó	
Future:	ítá à d̀̀nkà yàttó d̀̀oshì	‘she will cook (it) on her own tomorrow’
	ítá à d̀̀nkà óttó d̀̀oshì	‘she will cook <i>otto</i> tomorrow’
	ítá à d̀̀nkàa d̀̀oshì	‘she will cook (it) tomorrow’
	*ítá à d̀̀nkàa yàttó d̀̀oshì	

c. Non-cooccurrence with semantic patient

*̀̀ kónúu kùl̀̀ yànnó	‘I took a calabash on my own’
*ítá à d̀̀nkà óttó yàttó	‘she will cook <i>otto</i> on her own’

There are further syntactic contextual restrictions on the occurrence of anaphoric ‘thing’, viz. it cannot appear in sentences with VP negation, or in WH-questions.

(9) a. Non-occurrence in VP negation

̀̀ ndíi sá	‘I didn’t go’
*̀̀ ndíi yànnó sá	
ítá à d̀̀nkàa sá	‘she will not cook (it)’
*ítá à d̀̀nkà yàttó sá	

b. Non-occurrence in WH-questions

ndíi lò?⁶	‘who went?’
*ndíi yànnì lò?	
ítá à d̀̀nkàa sòttò?	‘when did she cook (it)?’
*ítá à d̀̀nkà yàttó sòttò?	

Anaphoric ‘thing’ CAN occur in yes/no questions. Moreover, if the answer to a yes/no question containing anaphoric ‘thing’ is negative, anaphoric ‘thing’ can occur in the answer. We interpret the ungrammaticality of a negative such as (9a) vs. the grammaticality of a negative answer to a yes/no question in the following way: in the former, the scope of negative is only the VP—the sentences in (9a) make statements about what the subjects did not do; in the latter, the scope of negation is the entire sentence—in (10) below, the negative answers make a statement about what did not take place, including all the various modal properties of the events. These answers would best be phrased, “It’s not the case that”

(10) Q: Ká ndíi yàkkó d̀̀ó?	‘Did you go on your own?’
A: ̀̀ ndíi yànnó sá.	‘I didn’t go on my own.’
Q: Ítá à d̀̀nkà yàttó d̀̀ó?	‘Did she cook (it) on her own?’
A: À d̀̀nkà yàttó sá?	‘She didn’t cook it on her own.’

⁶ Bole questioned subjects fall after the VP. Other questioned constituents are *in situ*.

The syntactic distribution of anaphoric ‘thing’ that we have seen to this point and the suggested translation of “on one’s own” are reminiscent of *middle voice*, which appears sporadically in the world’s languages as a syntactically and/or morphologically marked category distinct from *active* and *passive*. The only West African language known to us which has a productive morphological form known as “middle voice” is Fula (= Fulfulde, Fulani, Pulaar). Introducing his discussion of Fula middle voice, Taylor (1953:92) says, “This voice ... has various meanings, the underlying idea being self-advantage, i.e. the doing of something for or to or by oneself.” This statement seems to capture fairly well the function of anaphoric ‘thing’ in Bole, though there are important differences with Fula middle voice, which consists of a special pattern of verbal morphology. Most obviously, Bole anaphoric ‘thing’ is not syntactically obligatory whereas every verb in Fula must include morphology from the mutually exclusive active, middle, or passive voices. Second, the meaning of a sentence containing Bole anaphoric ‘thing’ is compositional, deriving from the meaning of the verb plus the meaning added by anaphoric ‘thing’ (whatever that meaning may precisely be), whereas Fula voice morphology often has lexically specific effects, e.g. Active *waalo* ‘lie down’, Middle *waala* ‘spend the night’, Active *yeewto* ‘tell a story’, Middle *yeewta* ‘converse’ (Arnott 1970:259). Third, Fula middle verbs are often intransitives, with a transitive counterpart having active morphology. Bole does *not* use anaphoric ‘thing’ as a way to detransitize verbs. As in many West Chadic languages, most verbs in Bole that can be used transitively can also be used intransitively, with patient as subject and with no special detransitizing morphology.⁷ Compare the following Fula expressions with their Bole counterparts (Fula examples from Arnott 1970:256, 258):⁸

(11)	<u>Fula</u>		<u>Bole</u>	
	Active: ’o-moobtii-be		dàppí-súu-wó	‘he assembled them’
	Middle: be moobtake		màté dàppán-gò	‘they assembled’
	Active: ’o-namrii gawri ndin		òssá’ ’yàlá	‘she ground the corn’
	Middle: gawri ndin namaama		’yàlá òssú-wò	‘the corn has been ground’

Bole anaphoric ‘thing’ can occur with detransitized verbs, e.g. **màté dàppán yàssú** ‘they assembled on their own’.

Finally, we note that certain syntactic restrictions against the appearance of Bole anaphoric ‘thing’ do not apply to Fula middle: there are Fula middle verbs which can take overt direct objects (**mi-wu’yake deptere** ‘I borrowed a book’—cf. Active **mi-wu’yii-mo deptere** ‘I lent him a book’ (Arnott 1970:256)); Fula middle can appear in the negative (**ɗum waɗataako** ‘it is not doable’ [it not-do_{Middle}] (Arnott 1970:258)); and Fula middle can appear in WH-questions (**ko paɗɗorto-ɗa hande?** ‘what shoes are you going to wear today?’ [what shoe-yourself today] (Taylor 1953:97)).

The incompatibility of Bole anaphoric ‘thing’ with negative sentences and WH-questions seems anomalous. There is nothing about the syntactic structures per se which would exclude anaphoric ‘thing’, and there is nothing about the basic meaning as we have outlined it that would obviously conflict with the semantic properties of negation or WH-

⁷ Hausa presents an exception to this widespread West Chadic pattern with a special morphological form referred to as “Grade 7”, e.g. Grade 1 *ya tara mutane* ‘he **assembled** the people’ vs. Grade 7 *mutane sun taru* ‘the people **assembled**’. Though Grade 7 has been widely referred to as an “agentless passive”, e.g. Newman (2000:665-670), it is functionally and semantically more akin to Fula middle than it is, say, to English passive.

⁸ The verb roots in the Bole examples are **dapp-** ‘assemble’ and **oss-** ‘grind’. The different verb terminations are conditioned by number and gender agreement with the syntactic subject, not by verb valence (Lukas 1971/72:§§78-80, Gimba 2000:Chapter 3).

questions. Our explanation relies on semantic focus. We suggest that anaphoric ‘thing’ attracts semantic focus. In negative sentences and WH-questions, focus is automatically attracted to negation and the questioned constituent respectively. The focused nature of anaphoric ‘thing’ is rather weak compared to these strongly focused elements, making its presence anomalous in those environments.⁹

To explain the fact that anaphoric ‘thing’ cannot co-occur with an overt direct object, we have implied a syntactic explanation, viz. anaphoric ‘thing’ preempts the direct object position and moreover the presence of anaphoric ‘thing’ conditions verbal morphology found with nominal direct objects. However, conflict of focus attraction as an explanation for the incompatibility of anaphoric ‘thing’ in negative and WH-question environments may extend to the non-cooccurrence of anaphoric ‘thing’ and an overt direct object. Other things being equal, it seems to be a linguistic universal that semantic focus falls on an overt direct object of a transitive clause. For example, in English, “neutral” intonation of a sentence like *John rides horses* puts primary stress on *horses*. Bole does not utilize stress as a marker of focus, but if we assume that focus is a semantic rather than a syntactic or phonological phenomenon, then, like negation or a WH-question word, an overt direct object would draw focus away from anaphoric ‘thing’, creating an incompatibility if both elements were present.

The interpretation of anaphoric ‘thing’ as an indicator of middle voice with semantic properties like those in the statement form Taylor (1953) above explains the use or non-use of anaphoric ‘thing’ in other environments. Anaphoric ‘thing’ is incompatible with certain verbs, particularly some stative verbs.

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| (12) | ̀̀n g̀̀tt̀̀ẁ̀
̀̀l̀̀aẁ̀ẁ̀ s̀̀iir̀̀ù̀ẁ̀
̀̀m̀̀at̀̀e k̀̀aẁ̀ng̀̀
̀̀ỳ̀att̀̀l̀̀ L̀̀eng̀̀i | *̀̀n g̀̀tt̀̀ù̀ ỳ̀anǹ̀
*̀̀l̀̀aẁ̀ẁ̀ s̀̀iir̀̀ù̀ ỳ̀anǹ̀
*̀̀m̀̀at̀̀e k̀̀aẁ̀ǹ̀ ỳ̀ass̀̀
*̀̀ỳatt̀̀ỳ ỳatt̀̀t̀̀ (L̀̀eng̀̀i) | ‘I am tired’
‘the child has grown up’
‘they are full/replete’
‘she surpasses (Lengi)’ |
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The properties predicated by such verbs lack the feature of “doing of something for or to or by oneself”. Stativity or non-volitionality alone do not preclude the use of anaphoric ‘thing’, however, as seen in the verbs in (13).

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| (13) | <u>Without ‘thing’</u> | <u>With ‘thing’</u> | |
| | ̀̀inǹ̀aat̀̀ù̀ẁ̀
̀̀ish̀̀i m̀̀ont̀̀ù̀ ̀̀ǹ̀
̀̀nd̀̀aak̀̀o d̀̀oosh̀̀i
̀̀a m̀̀ot̀̀a | ̀̀inǹ̀aat̀̀ù̀ ỳ̀anǹ̀
̀̀ish̀̀i m̀̀ont̀̀ù̀ ỳ̀anǹ̀ ̀̀ǹ̀
̀̀nd̀̀aak̀̀o d̀̀oosh̀̀i
̀̀a m̀̀ot̀̀a ỳ̀anǹ̀ | ‘he saw (it) (on his own)’
‘he knows (on his own) that I will come tomorrow’
‘he will die (on his own)’ |

Taylor refers to “the underlying idea [of] self-advantage”. Instead of “self-advantage”, one might say “self-involvement”, a property that the verbs in (13) seem to have but which those in (12) do not. The property of self-involvement emerges with inanimate subjects used with anaphoric ‘thing’. Consider the following paradigm:

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| (14) a. | ̀̀os̀̀i b̀̀ok̀̀k̀̀ù̀ g̀̀aar̀̀e | ‘fire burned the granary’ |
| b. | ̀̀g̀̀aar̀̀e b̀̀ok̀̀k̀̀ù̀-ẁ̀ | ‘the granary burned’ |
| c. | (?)g̀̀aar̀̀e b̀̀ok̀̀k̀̀ù̀ ỳ̀anǹ̀ | ‘the granary burned on its own’ |
| d. | ̀̀os̀̀i b̀̀ok̀̀k̀̀ù̀ ỳ̀anǹ̀ | *‘the fire burned (it, e.g. granary) on its own’ |
| | | <i>but</i> ‘the fire burned out on it’s own’ |

⁹ Schuh (1998:173) notes a similar distribution for a type of aspectual marking auxiliary in Miya, also a West Chadic language. He suggests that the function of this auxiliary is to place focus on perfectivity, leading to its exclusion from environments with focus automatically drawn to negation and questioned constituents.

The sentence in (14a) is a straightforward SVO transitive sentence. In (14b), the patient is the subject, parallel to the Fula middle sentences in (11). The parallel sentence in (14c) with anaphoric ‘thing’ is somewhat difficult to interpret, with **gàaré** ‘granary’ having to self-involve itself in its burning. The sentence in (14d) is potentially syntactically ambiguous: **òsí** ‘fire’ could either be the subject of a transitive verb with the direct object preempted by anaphoric ‘thing’, like the examples in (6b), or it could be the subject of an intransitive verb meaning ‘burn out’. As the notations in (14d) indicate, the transitive interpretation fails—a fire does not seem to allow the interpretation that it is self-involved in what it does to something else. On the other hand, the fire burning out—acting on itself as it were—IS self-involved, making the intransitive interpretation felicitous.

Finally, we consider the interaction of anaphoric ‘thing’ with performative verbs. Performative verbs are verbs which, by pronouncing the verb itself, one performs the action expressed by the verb. Universally, performative sentences must include a performative verb, must have a first person subject, must be an affirmative declarative sentence, and must be in a particular tense/aspect. In English, performative sentences must be in the simple present. Thus, *I apologize* is a performative sentence, but *he apologizes*, *I don’t apologize*, *I apologized*, etc. are not. In Bole, performative sentences must be in the perfective. With performative and stative verbs, perfective is usually translated as English simple present (**ñ tùubú-wò** ‘I repent’, **ñ gàttú-wò** ‘I’m tired’), but with active verbs perfective is usually translated as English past or present perfect (**ñ ’yóru-wò** ‘I stopped’). One would think that the notion of self-involvement suggested for anaphoric ‘thing’ would be compatible with the performative function of performative verbs. However, the effect of using anaphoric ‘thing’ with a performative is to turn the sentence into a declarative sentence with an active verb!

- (15) **ñ kúttù-wóo** ‘I refuse’ **ñ kúttùu yànnó** ‘I refused on my own’
mú túubán-gò ‘we repent’ **mú túubán yàmmú** ‘we repented on our own’

At the moment we have no explanation for this interaction of verb type and anaphoric ‘thing’ other than to suggest that since a performative sentence, being a public act, may be incompatible with meaning of “self-involvement” associated with anaphoric ‘thing’.

4. Anaphoric ‘thing’ and Other Bole Anaphors

We have discussed anaphoric ‘thing’ in Bole, attempting to understand its function by looking at its syntactic distribution, comparing it with the Fula middle voice, with which it seems to share semantic properties, and looking at its interaction with certain semantic verb classes. Another way to understand the function of anaphoric ‘thing’ is a sort of Prague School approach using the concept of *opposition*¹⁰ within the system of Bole anaphoric constructions. Bole has four constructions in which an element in the VP is bound to the syntactic subject and must have morphology in agreement with it: *anaphoric ‘thing’*, *intransitive copy pronouns (ICP)*, *reflexives*, and *emphatic reflexives*.

4.1. Intransitive Copy Pronouns (ICP)

Intransitive Copy Pronouns (ICP’s) are widespread in Chadic languages.¹¹ As the name implies, they appear only with intransitive verbs and copy person, number, and

¹⁰ Speaking of phonological distinctiveness, Trubetskoy (1969:31) says, “One thing can be distinguished only from another thing: It can be distinguished only insofar as it is contrasted with or opposed to something else, that is, insofar as a relationship of contrast or opposition exists between the two.”

¹¹ Newman (1971) first proposed the term “Intransitive Copy Pronoun”. See Frajzyngier (1977) for a cross-Chadic survey of ICP’s and some proposals on their function and evolution.

gender features of the syntactic subject. In many languages, they are verbal clitics and are an obligatory part of intransitive verb morphology, e.g. Kanakuru **Basha à ga-to mēna** ‘Basha entered-she the house’ (Newman 1974:23). In such languages, ICP’s would probably best be considered part of the subject-verb agreement system. In Bole, on the other hand, the ICP has the structure of an NP, *jii* ‘body’ + Pronoun. Moreover, the ICP is not a syntactically obligatory part of any VP. We therefore consider it to be a type of anaphor. We give the full ICP paradigm with the verb **pàtáa-** ‘go out’ in (16):

(16) ñ pàtáa jìinó	‘I went out’	mú pátán jìimú	‘we went out’
ká pátáa jìikó	‘you (m) went out’	mǎa pátán jìikú	‘you (pl) went out’
shí pátáj jìishí	‘you (f) went out’		
íshí pátáa jìinì	‘he went out’	màté pátán jìisú	‘they went out’
ítá pátáj jìitó	‘she went out’		

Presence of the ICP in Bole adds a sense of finality, definitiveness, or irreversibility. Addition of the ICP sometimes evokes a Hausa translation using the Grade IV form, which has among its functions the marking of “totality” or “finality” (Newman 2000:648).

(17) <u>Bole</u>	<u>Hausa</u>	
mótú-wò	yā mutù	‘he died’ (without ICP)
mótúu jìinì	yā macè	‘he died’ (with ICP)

Of course, using the Hausa translation as an indicator of the meaning of the Bole ICP begs the question of what the added meaning element is for those who do not have intuitions about the meaning of Hausa Grade IV! A clearer indication comes from examples like the following:

- (18) a. **bònò bòkkúwò kálá dúwántùn wòsí yé jàajín bòkké jìinì**
 ‘the house burned but they put out the fire before it burned up completely’
- b. **ñ gàttúwò** ‘I’m tired’
 cá’ ’ñ gàttúu jìinó ‘I’m completely tired out’ (“all I am-tired ICP”)
***cá’ ’ñ gàttúwò**

In (18a), the verb **bòkkú-** ‘burn’ without the ICP might be translated ‘catch fire’, whereas **bòkké jìinì**, with the ICP, at the end of the clause means ‘burn completely’.¹² In (18b), the quantifier **cáp** ‘all’ (with obligatory assimilation of **-p** to the following consonant) takes the VP, or possibly the whole clause as its scope. As shown by the starred string, presence of this quantifier is incompatible with a clause not containing the ICP.

The distribution of the ICP differs in a number of respects from that of anaphoric ‘thing’. At least some of these differences follow from the difference in function, viz. marking definitiveness vs. marking self-involvement.

(1) Transitive vs. intransitive verbs: The ICP, by definition, is used only with intransitive verbs.¹³ Anaphoric ‘thing’ appears with both intransitive and transitive verbs, though it cannot cooccur with an overt direct object for reasons discussed above. More revealing of the meaning difference are the intransitive verbs that the two anaphoric

¹² The final vowels of the verbs mark tense/aspect. The form ending in **-u** is in the perfective, the form ending in **-e** is in the subjunctive (conditioned by being in a ‘before’ clause). Tense/aspect has no effect on ICP use.

¹³ The semantic counterpart of the ICP with transitive verbs is the Totality Extension, which Lukas calls *die intensive Erweiterung*. See Lukas (1971) and Gimba (2000:Chapter 8).

expressions can appear with. The ICP can appear with any intransitive verb whereas the self-involvement meaning of anaphoric ‘thing’ clashes with the meaning of some verbs. Thus, **ñ gàttúu jìinó** ‘I’m completely tired out’ (cf. 18b above) or **làawó sùirúu jìinì** ‘the child is fully grown’ (cf. 12 above) with the ICP are fine, whereas ***ñ gàttúu yànnó** and ***làawó sùirúu yànnì** with anaphoric ‘thing’ are not (cf. 12 above).

(2) Negative environments: Neither the ICP nor anaphoric ‘thing’ can appear in negative declarative sentences. Thus, the negative sentence **ñ ndíi sá** ‘I didn’t go’ from (9) would be ungrammatical both with the ICP (***ñ ndíi jìinó sá**) and with anaphoric ‘thing’ (***ñ ndíi yànnó sá**). We suggested above that the explanation for excluding anaphoric ‘thing’ from a negative environment had to do with a clash in semantic focus. This may be the explanation for the exclusion of the ICP as well, though Schuh (1972:457-458) proposes a different explanation for Ngizim, where the same semantic and distributional facts hold. We have claimed that the ICP indicates definitiveness or finality. If we view this meaning as an operator with the VP as its scope, and if the negative also has the VP as its scope, then the sentence ***ñ ndíi jìinó sá** would yield a meaning something like ‘?‘I completely didn’t go’ or ‘?‘I didn’t completely go’. There is some further evidence that the exclusion of the two anaphoric expressions from negative declarative sentences does, in fact, have different explanations. In (10), we showed that anaphoric ‘thing’ CAN appear in a negative environment in answer to a yes/no question. We suggested that this is possible because it is the entire clause which is in the negative scope, giving a reading of the type ‘it’s not the case that ...’. The ICP is excluded even from this negative environment. Compare the Q & A paradigms in (19):

- | | | |
|---------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| (19) a. | Q: mótúu jìinì d’ó? | ‘did he die good and dead?’ |
| | A1: òò’ó, mótúu jìinì | ‘yes, he died good and dead’ |
| | A2: áa’à, mótúu sá | ‘no, he didn’t die’ |
| | * áa’à, mótúu jìinì sá | |
| b. | Q: mótúu yànnì d’ó? | ‘did he die on his own?’ |
| | A1: òò’ó, mótúu yànnì | ‘yes, he died on his own’ |
| | A2: áa’à, mótúu yànnì sá | ‘no, he didn’t die on his own’ |

The negative answer to the question in (19a) could only mean that he DIDN’T die, i.e. the ICP, if it could be used, would seem to say something about the definitive manner of his not dying! The negative answer to (19b), on the other hand, means that he DID die, but not on his own, i.e. the reading of self-involvement of the subject in the action remains intact and it is the entire proposition which is negated.

(3) WH questions: WH questions do not allow either the ICP or anaphoric ‘thing’. We illustrate this for the ICP in (20). See (9b) for anaphoric ‘thing’.

- | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| (20) <u>Without ICP</u> | <u>With ICP</u> | |
| pàtáa sòttò? | *pàtáa jìinì sòttò? | ‘when did he go out?’ |
| pàtáa lò? | *pàtáa jìinì lò? | ‘who went out?’ |
| mòtás sòttò? | *mòtáj jùitó sòttò? | ‘when did she die?’ |

We suggested above that anaphoric ‘thing’ is excluded from WH questions because of a clash in semantic focus—both the WH word and the self-involvement feature of anaphoric ‘thing’ attract focus, but the focus attraction of a WH word is stronger than that for anaphoric ‘thing’. This explanation seems plausible for the ICP as well. With the ICP, focus is on the definitiveness of the event. The stronger focus attraction of the WH word preempts focus on the relatively weaker modal feature of the ICP.

- (23) Reflexive: **jájin án gáadi pàtáawò, dàashi púrsìnà bìd’èetí kónnì**
 ‘when the guard went out, then the prisoner freed himself’

Anaphoric ‘thing’: **án gòmá zaa úlàni, dàashí bìd’èetí yànnì¹⁴**
 ‘the trader put down his goods, and then he undid (them) on his own’

ICP: **òn déeyúu òoshínò, dàashí bìd’è jùito**
 ‘I left my goat, and she broke loose-ICP’

(2) Appearance in negative, in WH questions, and with performatives: A reflexive direct object is an internal argument of a VP just like any other NP direct object. A VP containing a reflexive will thus have the same cooccurrence patterns as any other VP, such as allowing negation, appearing within a WH question, or appearing as part of a performative.

- (24) Negative: **bìd’ák kóttò sá** ‘she did not untie herself’
 WH question (time): **bìd’ák kóttò sòttò?** ‘when did she untie herself?’
 WH question (subject): **bìd’áa kónnì lò?¹⁵** ‘who untied himself?’
 Performative: **bàa ká ndólúu sá, ò pòttùu kónnó kó gáani**
 ‘if you don’t like (this idea), I withdraw myself from it’

(3) Cooccurrence with other anaphors: Reflexives and ICP’s cannot cooccur because they are in complementary distribution with respect to verb type—reflexives appear only with transitive verbs and ICP’s only with intransitive. Likewise, reflexives cannot cooccur with anaphoric ‘thing’ inasmuch as anaphoric ‘thing’ cannot cooccur with an overt object (cf. 8b). Reflexives CAN cooccur with emphatic reflexives (and even double emphatic reflexives!), e.g.

- (25) **bìd’ák kóttò (ítá) yàttò** ‘she untied herself herself’
inné kókkó gà kókkó (yàkkò) ‘look at yourself yourself (yourself)’

4.3. Emphatic reflexives

Bole has two ways to express emphatic reflexives, illustrated in (26) with first persons singular and plural. For the full paradigm of **kó-** ‘-self’, see (23); for the full paradigm of **yàC-** ‘thing’, see (5).

- | | | | |
|------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (26) | <u>(Pronoun) + with + head-of ...</u> | <u>Pronoun + thing-of ...</u> | |
| | mè pàtáa (íná) gà kónnò | mè pàtáa íná yànnó | ‘I went out
(me) myself’ |
| | mú pátán (mímmú) gà kómmù | mú pátán mímmú yàmmú | ‘we went out
(we) ourselves’ |

¹⁴ Compare this to **án gòmá zaa úlàni, dàashí bìd’èetí ’yànnì** ‘the trader put down his goods and undid his thing’, where substantive ‘thing’ **’yá-** replaces anaphoric ‘thing’.

¹⁵ A questioned or focused subject falls at the end of the clause in Bole. Assuming that this is “movement” operation, Bole violates the *Crossover Constraint*, long held to be a universal of syntax, that a constituent may not cross over a constituent which it binds (Postal 1971), in this case the subject NP (*lò* ‘who’) which binds the reflexive anaphor *kónnì* ‘himself’.

The type in the left-hand column uses the “head” reflexive construction, the type in the right-hand column the “thing” expression with non-glottalized *y-* used for anaphoric ‘thing’. The former may be a calque on Hausa, which virtually all Bole people speak, though “head” in both reflexives and emphatic reflexives is widespread in Chadic. The emphatic reflexive indicates that the subject did an action without outside intervention. In some contexts it may mean that the subject acted as a direct participant rather than as an observer or bystander. This meaning can be seen in contexts such as the following:

(27) **léelò kúttùu ndíiná gómá, dàashí Dàadá ndày ítá yàttó**
 ‘everyone refused to go the market, so Mom went herself’

pòrángòò nà gà nĕem sá à gàa pààlì émèè, kálá ò ònnáawòò gà kónnò
 ‘they said there are no hippopotamuses in this pond, but I saw one myself’

làawò ndín sá, dàashí ò dèmé gàabìn íná gà kónnò
 ‘the houseboy didn’t come, so I swept the room myself’

(1) Emphatic reflexive as external to the VP: There is evidence that anaphoric ‘thing’, the ICP, and reflexives are all internal to the VP. Nothing can intervene between the verb and these anaphoric types, and the verb has morphological properties that show it not to be phrase final. With intransitive verbs such as those in (26) and the first example of (27) there is no overt evidence of the syntactic phrase structure. However, with transitive verbs such evidence does exist, and comparable evidence exists for intransitive verbs in one environment. Consider the following paradigms from the perfective, future, and habitual verb aspects:¹⁶

(28) Perfective

Verb + object: kónák kúlà	*kónákkò kúlà	‘she took a calabash’
Verb + ‘thing’: kónáy yàttó	*kónákkò yàttó	‘she took (it) on her own’
Verb + ER: kónág gà kóttò =	kónákkò gà kóttò	‘she took (it) herself’
Verb + ICP: gàdáj jìitó	*gàdákkó jìitó	‘she entered’
Verb + ‘thing’: gàdáy yàttó	*gàdákkó yàttó	‘she entered on her own’
Verb + ER: gàdág gà kóttò =	gàdákkó gà kóttò	‘she took (it) herself’

(29) Future

Verb + object: à kóná kúlà	*à kónáa kúlà	‘she will take a calabash’
Verb + ‘thing’: à kóná yàttó	*à kónáa yàttó	‘she will take (it) on her own’
Verb + ER: *à kóná gà kóttò	à kónáa gà kóttò	‘she will take (it) herself’

(30) Habitual

Verb + object: à áaró kóssù	*à áarò kóssù	‘they sing about themselves’
Verb + ‘thing’: à áaró yàssù	*à áarò yàssù	‘they sing (about it) on their own’
Verb + ER: *à áaró gà kóssù	à áarò gà kóssù	‘they sing (about it) themselves’

¹⁶ Any of the emphatic reflexive forms from (26) would be possible in the examples containing emphatic reflexives. We illustrate with only the *gà* + ‘head’ forms.

In the perfective examples in (28), the perfective marker **-ko** is obligatorily suppressed when an object, anaphoric ‘thing’, or ICP follows the verb, hence the ungrammaticality of the utterances in the second column. With an emphatic reflexive, **-ko** can be suppressed (the left hand column), but suppression is not obligatory, hence the grammaticality of the sentences in either column.¹⁷ In the future examples in (29) and the habitual examples in (30), the final vowel of the verb is short before an object or anaphoric ‘thing’. With no object, the final vowel of the transitive verb is obligatorily long, hence the ungrammaticality of the left hand column for the emphatic reflexives. (See fn. 17 for an explanation of the vowel lengthening in the future and habitual verbs with no overt object.)

The fact that both anaphoric ‘thing’ and the emphatic reflexive have the same base form **yà-**, without glottalization of the **y-**, raises the question of whether anaphoric ‘thing’ is simply a special form of emphatic reflexive (or alternatively, whether **yà-** appearing as an emphatic reflexive is not anaphoric ‘thing’, meaning that anaphoric ‘thing’ is, in fact, not really subject to the restrictions against cooccurrence with overt objects and the like). This suggestion gains plausibility when we point out that the pronoun preceding **yàC-** may be absent, e.g. **ñ ìnnáa nëem (íná) yànnó** ‘I saw the hippopotamus myself’. Aside from the meaning differences indicated by the translations in the examples in (28-30), however, there is evidence that anaphoric ‘thing’ and emphatic reflexives are syntactically distinct as well. Omission of the pronoun preceding **yàC-** used as an emphatic reflexive is marginal at best, and moreover, it is possible only if something intervenes between the verb and the emphatic reflexive. A “thing” expression alone directly after a verb **MUST** have the anaphoric ‘thing’ interpretation, as evidenced by verb morphology. The emphatic reflexive reading requires that the preceding pronoun be present. We illustrate with a verb in the future (cf. 29).

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (31) à kòná yàttó | *à kònáa yàttó | ‘she will take (it) on her own’ |
| *à kòná ítá yàtto | à kònáa ítá yàttó | ‘she will take (it) herself’ |

Despite the semantic and syntactic differences between anaphoric ‘thing’ and emphatic reflexives, they do share semantic properties. In particular, they both require self-involvement of the subject in the action. Thus, the first two sentences in (32) are strange, if not fully ungrammatical, for essentially the same reason as the comparable sentences with anaphoric ‘thing’ are, repeated from (12), viz. ‘getting tired’ and ‘growing’ seem to lack the necessary property of self-involvement. This “necessary property” involves a rather complex interplay of verb and subject type, however, since the third example seems acceptable with anaphoric ‘thing’ but not with the emphatic reflexive.

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (32) <u>Anaphoric ‘thing’</u> : | *ñ gàttúu yànnó | ‘I got tired on my own’ |
| | *làawò sìirúu yànnì | ‘the child grew on his own’ |
| | gàaré bòkkúu yànnì | ‘the granary burned on its own’ |
| <u>Emphatic reflexive</u> : | ??ñ gàttúu íná gà kónnò | ‘I got tired myself’ |
| | ??làawò sìirúu gà kónnì | ‘the child grew himself’ |
| | *gàaré bòkkúu gà kónnì | ‘the granary burned itself’ |

¹⁷ Note that the vowel of **-ko** is long with the transitive verb but short with the intransitive. The lengthening is conditioned by an underlying \emptyset object marker **-yí**, which is mutually exclusive with an overt direct object and which is also usually suppressed except phrase finally (Gimba 2000:Chapter 7). With emphatic reflexives, even this \emptyset object marker can optionally appear, e.g. **kònákkòoyí gà kóttò** ‘she took it herself’. The same comments hold for the future and habitual examples in (29-30), the emphatic reflexive examples could be realized respectively as **à kònáayí gà kóttò** ‘she will take it herself’ **à áaròoyí gà kóssù** ‘they sing about it themselves’.

(2) Appearance in negative, in WH questions, and with performatives: As with regular reflexives, there are no semantic or syntactic restrictions that prevent emphatic reflexives from appearing under negation or in WH questions. The readings of WH questions are as would be expected e.g.

(33) **gàǎǎgà gá kóttó sá; zòwáb báttò**
 ‘she didn’t enter herself; she sent her daughter’

à kòná kúlà gá kóttó sá; à kònátó yé báttò
 ‘she won’t take the calabash herself; HER DAUGHTER will take it for her’

(34) **Bámói kónúwò gá kónnì òkò lè?** ‘why did Bamoi take it himself?’
 Bamoi took by himself because-of what

With performative verbs, the presence of an emphatic reflexive has the same effect that we have observed with anaphoric ‘thing’ and the ICP, viz. the utterance becomes a report rather than a performative sentence.

(35) **ò túbúú íná yànnó/(íná) gá kónnò** ‘I repented myself’ (*not* ‘I myself repent!’)

(3) Cooccurrence with other anaphors: We have discussed cooccurrence of emphatic reflexives with other anaphors in the respective sections above. Emphatic reflexives cannot cooccur with anaphoric ‘thing’ or the ICP, probably because of semantic focus clash (end of §4.1). Emphatic reflexives *can* cooccur with regular reflexives and even with themselves! (end of §4.2).

4.4. Summary of Bole anaphors

Table 1 summarizes the functional and syntactic distribution of the four types of anaphors in Bole.

Table 1. Functions and distribution of Bole anaphors

	Anaphoric ‘thing’	ICP	Reflexive	Emphatic reflexive
Meaning	Self-involvement	Finality, definitiveness, totality of effect	Subject acts on self	Subject acts without outside intervention or as a direct participant
Cooccur with other anaphor(s)	No	No	Emphatic reflexive only	Reflexive only
External to VP	No	No	No	Yes
With intransitive verbs	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Semantic patient	No	No	Yes	No
In negative	No	No	Yes	Yes
In WH questions	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

With ‘get tired’, ‘grow’	No	Yes	NA (transitive verbs only)	No
“Detransitized” verb with inanimate subject (‘the granary burned’)	Yes	Yes	NA (transitive verbs only)	No
With performatives	Removes performative sense	Removes performative sense	Can be part of performative sentence	Removes performative sense

We conclude this section with one further paradigm, showing the same verb root with the four anaphors in order to demonstrate the meaning that each carries.

(36) **ngàǎáa-** ‘eat (something which requires chewing)’

Anaphoric ‘thing’: **ngàǎáy yàttó (báatáa sá)** ‘she just ate (without caring)’

ICP: **ló ngàǎúu jìinì** ‘the meat is eaten up’

Reflexive: **ngàǎí kósshì!** lit: ‘eat yourself!’ = “the hell with you!”

Emphatic reflexive: **ngàǎákkòò gà kóttò = ngàǎákkòò ítá yàttó** ‘she ate (it) herself’

5. Remarks on Hausa àbù/àbin

Noam Chomsky, in a video discussion on the nature of language (Searchinger 1995), says, “The very beginnings of science are always the capacity to be able to be amazed by apparently simple things.” A case in point is the Hausa word for ‘thing’. This word comes up so frequently in everyday expressions like **wani àbù** ‘something’, **àbin nàn** ‘whatchamacallit, ya’ know’, **tàfi àbinkà!** ‘get out of here!’ that it is part of the Hausa “woodwork” which no one even notices. If one looks in detail at the form and functions of this word, however, it turns out to have a number of unique properties, many of which parallel those of Bole ‘thing’. In this paper, we will not attempt a full analysis of Hausa ‘thing’, but rather we will follow the outline of the description of Bole above, showing how the Hausa word resembles the Bole word or is different from it. Our main purpose is to demonstrate that the special properties of the word meaning ‘thing’ are not an idiosyncratic property of one language, but rather are probably a widespread feature of at least the Chadic languages, if not of a broader range of languages.

5.1. Substantive ‘thing’

As in Bole, we can distinguish two formal/functional domains for the use of the Hausa word for ‘thing’. As with Bole, we will call these *substantive ‘thing’* and *anaphoric ‘thing’*, though unlike Bole, the formal properties of the Hausa word do not match the functional dichotomy. Hausa ‘thing’ has the following forms:

- (37) **àbù** unbound masculine singular noun
àbaa feminine form
àbi- bound form (always with –n genitive linker or `n previous reference marker)
abuubuwàa plural

Essentially every noun in Hausa can be used with no overt determiners or other modifiers, e.g. **littaafii saaboo nèe** ‘the book is new’, **zàree yaa tsinkèe** ‘the string broke’, **zàn sàyi kwàndoo** ‘I’ll buy a basket’. ‘Thing’ in its most “unmarked” form,

àbù, cannot be used in this way. Substituting **àbù** alone for any of the underlined words above would result in sentences viewed as incomplete, if not actually ungrammatical. With the exception of a few fixed expressions, such as **màì àbù** ‘wealthy person’ (“owner-of thing”) or **àbù yaa yi** ‘the matter is concluded’ (“thing it is-done”), some modifier must accompany **àbù**. Such modifiers can be of the following types:

- (38) Determiner: **wani àbù** ‘something’ (“some thing”), **wannàn àbù** ‘this thing’
 Quantifier: **àbù biyu** ‘two things’, **koowàné àbù** ‘each thing’
 Adjective: **farin àbù** ‘white thing’, **muugùn àbù** ‘evil thing’
màì ‘which-has’: **àbù màì àmfàanii** ‘useful thing’ (“thing which-has usefulness”)

Specific instances of ‘thing’ requiring an overt modifier are its uses in the bound form, **àbi-**. As noted in (36), the bound form requires either the previous reference marker **-n** (which functions something like a definite article) or the genitive linker **-n**. The word ‘thing’ is unique in Hausa in having a special bound form. All other nouns simply add the previous reference marker or genitive linker to the base noun, e.g. **zàree** ‘thread’, **zàreñ** ‘the thread’, **zàren Kànde** ‘Kande’s thread’. The previous reference marker is used with the noun alone and before the relative complementizer **dà**;¹⁸ the genitive linker appears before noun and pronoun genitives.

- (39) a. **àbîn** ‘the thing’
àbîn dà ya cèè ‘the thing that he said’
àbin Saalisù ‘Salisu’s thing’
àbin sô ‘something to like’ (“thing-of liking”)
- b. **àbiinaa** ‘my thing’ **àbinmù** ‘our thing’
àbinkà ‘your (m) thing’ **àbinkù** ‘your (pl) thing’
àbinkì ‘your (f) thing’
àbinsà ‘his thing’ **àbinsù** ‘their thing’
àbintà ‘her thing’

It is probably not coincidental that **àbù** is formally unusual among native common nouns in having a L-L tone pattern and ending in a short vowel. With a tiny number of exceptions, native (and most borrowed) common nouns end in a long vowel, and because of a restriction first noted in Leben (1971), words with a long vowel in the final syllable cannot end in the tone pattern ...L-L#. This is NOT the typical pattern for West Chadic languages, where common nouns nearly all end in short vowels and where the L-L# pattern is of high frequency. While the historical source of final lengthened vowels in Hausa remains something of a mystery, it almost certainly results from an alternation between original short final vowels and a conditioned variant with a lengthened vowel. The lengthened variant ultimately became lexicalized as the underlying form. Because of the special lexical status of **àbù**, it did not participate in this alternation, at least with any frequency, and hence retains a L-L# form with final short vowel.

Hausa has a robust system of grammatical gender, and many nouns referring to animates have feminine derived forms correlating with the female member of the pair, e.g. **jàakii** ‘(male) donkey’, **jàakaa** ‘(female) donkey’; **zàaboo** ‘(male) guinea fowl’, **zàabuwa** ‘(female) guinea fowl’. However, nouns that make generic reference to sets of nouns encompassing both masculine and feminine members have their own, invariant grammatical gender. For example, **dabbàa** ‘animal’ is grammatically feminine but can refer to either masculine or feminine nouns, e.g. **ràagoo dabbàa cee** ‘a ram is an animal’

¹⁸ The bound form **àbi-** + **-n** is also used with the post nominal demonstratives **nan** and **can**, e.g. **àbin nà** ‘this thing’. Tones of **àbin nan/can** vary depending on various semantic and pragmatic factors (Newman 2000:149-150), making it difficult to say whether **-n** is the PRM or the linker.

or **tinkiyaa dabbàa cee** ‘a ewe is an animal’ (where the “copula”, **cee**, distinct from masculine **nee**, shows feminine agreement with **dabbàa** in both cases). In contrast to this pattern of “gender stability” for most nouns of generic reference, the word ‘thing’ has a feminine form, **àbaa**. The feminine form never appears without some overt modifier. We see the feminine form in the following epithet for **àbàrbaa** ‘pineapple’, which is of feminine grammatical gender. (Note the alliterative play between ‘pineapple’ and the syllables **àbàr ban-**. The allusion is that a pineapple tastes nice but isn’t perceived as having any value as food.)

(40) **Àbàrbaa, àbàr banzaa: à bar kì banzaa, à shaa kì banzaa.**

pineapple thing-of uselessness one leave you uselessness one “drink” you uselessness

‘Oh pineapple, a worthless thing: for one to leave you aside has no value, for one to consume you is of no value.’

Unlike Bole, Hausa ‘thing’ has a morphological plural, **abuubuwaà** ‘things’, associated with **àbù**. Aside from the obvious formal association, however, the morphological plural has none of the special lexical properties of the singular. Like other Hausa nouns, it can freely appear unmodified, e.g. **naa sàyi abuubuwaà** ‘I bought (some) things’. It cannot be used as a plural counterpart in idiomatic expressions that use bare **àbù**, e.g. **màì àbù** means only ‘a rich person’, not ‘possessor of a thing’, whereas **màasu abuubuwaà** can mean only ‘possessors of things (i.e. a number of physical objects)’, not ‘rich people’. And **abuubuwaà** has no formal properties not shared by a number of other plural nouns of the same plural class such as **garuuruwaà** ‘towns’.

5.2. Anaphoric ‘thing’

Hausa can use ‘thing’ + Possessive pronoun in a way essentially identical to that of Bole to convey a notion of self-involvement. We have discussed similarities in the use of Bole anaphoric ‘thing’ to Fula middle, and we have contrasted the function and distribution of Bole anaphoric ‘thing’ to other anaphors in Bole. We will not discuss these issues with respect to Hausa inasmuch as the facts are essentially the same in the two languages, the only significant difference being that Hausa does not have a productive ICP structure, either in the form of an anaphor, as in Bole, or in the form of a verbal agreement affix, as in languages such as Kanakuru.

Hausa anaphoric ‘thing’ shares most of the properties of the Bole counterpart. We reiterate those here, referring to the Bole examples:

Use with both transitive and intransitive verbs (6)

(41) **naa tàfi àbiinaa** ‘I went off on my own, I just went off’
zaa tà dafàa àbintà ‘she will cook (it) on her own’

Anaphoric ‘thing’ must be an anaphor of the syntactic subject (7b)

(42) **zaa tà dafà(a) àbiinaa** ‘*she will cook (it) on my own’
 (OK meaning ‘she will cook my thing’)

The subject of a sentence with anaphoric ‘thing’ must be referential (7c)

(43) ***an tàfi àbinsà/àbinsù** ‘one went off on his/their own’
***yaa kàmaatà àbinsà** ‘it is fitting on its own’

Anaphoric ‘thing’ cannot appear under negation (9a)

- (44) ***bàn tàfi àbiinaa ba** ‘I didn’t go off on my own’
 ***bà zaa tà dafàa àbintà ba** ‘she will not cook (it) on her own’

Anaphoric ‘thing’ cannot appear in WH questions (9b)

- (45) ***wàa ya tàfi àbinsà?** ‘who went off on his own?’
 ***yàushè zaa tà dafàa àbintà?** ‘when will she cook on her own?’

Anaphoric ‘thing’ is infelicitous with certain verbs which lack “self-involvement” (9b)

- (46) ***naa gàji àbiinaa** ‘I got tired on my own?’
 ***yaaròo yaa girma àbinsà** ‘the child grew up on his own’

Anaphoric ‘thing’ makes a performative sentence into a report (15)

- (47) **naa tuuba àbiinaa** ‘I repented on my own’ but *not* ‘I repent!’

The Hausa use of anaphoric ‘thing’ does differ from Bole in some respects. The most important, and the one from which others probably flow, is that Hausa anaphoric ‘thing’ does *not* occupy the syntactic position of direct object. Most Hausa verb classes require differing final vowels and/or differing tone patterns on transitive verbs depending on the type of object which follows the verb (Newman 2000:Chapter 74). Compare the forms of the verbs below with following direct object and anaphoric ‘thing’.

- (48) **zaa tà d’auki kwaryaa** ‘she will pick up a calabash’
zaa tà d’aukàa àbintà ‘she will pick (it) up on her own’

naa kařàntà àbiinaa ‘I read my thing’
naa kařàntaa àbiinaa ‘I read (it) on my own’

In Bole we argued that anaphoric ‘thing’, though not a semantic or syntactic direct object, preempts the direct object position. Bole anaphoric ‘thing’ cannot cooccur with any sort of direct object. We offered two, not necessarily mutually exclusive explanations for this, viz. a purely syntactic explanation whereby anaphoric ‘thing’ preempts the syntactic position that the direct object would occupy and a semantic explanation whereby there would be a clash in semantic focus attraction between an overt object and anaphoric ‘thing’. As in Bole, Hausa anaphoric ‘thing’ does not freely cooccur with direct object nouns, e.g. ***zaa tà d’auki kwaryaa àbintà** ‘she will take the calabash on her own’ is infelicitous if not ungrammatical. Since, as seen in (48), the form of the verb shows that Hausa anaphoric thing is not in the syntactic direct object position, the semantic explanation seems preferable for Hausa, at least. There is further evidence for this conjecture. Compare the following Hausa and Bole sentence pairs:

- (49) Hausa: **taa yi waakàa àbintà** ‘she sang [did singing] on her own’
 Bole: ***á’ àarú yàttó** (“she did singing her thing”)
á’ àarútò ‘she sang [did her song]’¹⁹

- Hausa: **sunàa musùu, sai sukà faarà kòokawàa àbinsù**
 ‘they were arguing, and then they just started wrestling’
 Bole: **màtè à jìi sháaná, dàashì zàlí kámó (*yàssú)**
 ‘they were arguing, and then they started wrestling (*their thing)’

Hausa and Bole both have a number of “dynamic nouns” with no verbal counterpart (or with a verbal counterpart which differs substantially in function from the noun). Hausa **waakàa**, Bole **àarú** ‘singing, song’ and Hausa **kòokawàa**, Bole **kámó** ‘wrestling’ are dynamic nouns of this type. Both languages can use such words with the verb ‘do’ to express the equivalent of English verbs such as ‘sing’ or ‘wrestle’, and both languages can use such words as “infinitive” complements to verbs like ‘begin’. Syntactically, these words are direct objects of some verb, but semantically they function as if they were the head of a verb phrase. In the use of anaphoric ‘thing’, Bole adheres to the syntax, which precludes cooccurrence with a direct object, but Hausa, where anaphoric ‘thing’ does not preempt the syntactic position of the direct object, makes reference to the semantic nature of the construction.²⁰

There is one further difference in restrictions on the use of anaphoric ‘thing’ in the two languages, illustrated in (50):

- (50) Hausa: **yaa shigoo ðaakii àbinsà** ‘he entered the hut on his own’
 Bole: **gèðén bònò** ‘he entered the hut’
***gèðén bònò yànnì** (‘he entered the hut on his own’)
- Hausa: **jèe ka gidaa àbinkà!** ‘go on off home!’²¹
 Bole: **ndíkkó bònò!** ‘go home!’
***ndíkkó bònò yàkkó!** (‘go home on your own!’)

These examples comprise an intransitive verb of directional motion plus a locative goal. While not semantic patients, locative goals of intransitive verbs in both languages share certain properties with direct objects of transitive verbs. In particular, they must directly follow the verb, and they have no overt marker of function, such as a preposition meaning ‘to’. For Bole, explanations that we have offered for non-cooccurrence of direct objects and anaphoric ‘thing’ extend to locative goals: preemption of the immediate post-verbal syntactic position and/or attraction of semantic focus. It is not clear why Hausa does allow locative goals and anaphoric ‘thing’ to cooccur, unless perhaps fairly generic verbs of motion such as ‘go’ or ‘enter’ are felt to need a goal to complement their meaning, making the V+goal a sort of semantic unit (cf. fn. 20).

¹⁹ The Bole sentence with a possessive pronoun on **àarú-tò** ‘her song’ seems to be the closest counterpart to the Hausa sentence with anaphoric ‘thing’. Hausa can use an equivalent construction, **taa yi waakàrtà** ‘she did her song’. The meaning difference from the sentence with anaphoric ‘thing’ is subtle if, indeed, there is any difference in meaning.

²⁰ The cooccurrence of anaphoric ‘thing’ in Hausa with syntactic direct objects may extend more broadly to any construction where verb + object represent a relative tight semantic unit. Consider the following sentence (Yahaya 1971:43): **sai [Gizo] ya sauko ya ci gyaða ya sha ruwa abinsa** ‘then [Gizo] got down, ate peanuts, and drank water abinsa’. This type of construction needs further investigation.

²¹ This example is from Abraham (1962:5).

6. Conclusion

The special phonological properties of the word 'thing' in Bole draw attention to the special lexical properties of this word and to two distinct functions for the word 'thing', which we have called *substantive 'thing'* and *anaphoric 'thing'*. Description of the Bole phenomena in turn draw attention to the word 'thing' in Hausa, which shares many of the properties of the Bole counterpart.

Hausa and Bole substantive 'thing' are formally unusual: Bole 'yá has special linked forms for both nominal genitives and pronominal genitives, and it uses a linking **-n** in a number of constructions where other nouns do not; Hausa àbù is one of the very few native common nouns to end in a short vowel, and it has a special linked form, àbi-. With the exception of a small number of fixed expressions, neither appears without some sort of overt modifier. When they have a known referent, both agree in gender with the referent, though the agreement shows up in different ways—in Bole it shows up in words modifying 'thing', whereas in Hausa it shows up on 'thing' itself.

In both languages, 'thing' in its anaphoric use always has a pronominal suffix which must agree in person, gender, and number with the syntactic subject. Anaphoric 'thing' can be used with both intransitive and transitive verbs, but it is excluded from negative sentences and WH questions. With transitive verbs, it may not cooccur with an overt direct object. Bole and Hausa differ in that Bole anaphoric 'thing' actually preempts the direct object position, as shown by verb morphology, whereas in Hausa verbs before anaphoric 'thing' have the morphology that they would have if there were no object following. Probably as a consequence of this syntactic difference, Hausa, but not Bole, does allow the use of anaphoric 'thing' in constructions of the type Verb + dynamic noun ('do singing', etc.) where the dynamic noun is a syntactic direct object, but where the construction as a whole describes the action. The difference in syntactic status of anaphoric 'thing' in the two languages may also explain the fact that Hausa, but not Bole, allows anaphoric 'thing' with expressions of the form Intransitive Motion Verb + Locative Goal.

This suite of resemblances between Bole and Hausa is typological, i.e. its specific form in each language has come about through areal contact or from abstract lexical principles governing the use of the word meaning 'thing' rather than being inherited directly. The facts are reminiscent of the suggestion in Newman (1980:18) that grammatical gender is an abstract property associated with individual lexical items, but not with the specific word that a language uses to express that item. In the case of substantive 'thing' one is prompted to ask whether this most generic of "pro-nouns" might universally have special lexical properties. In the case of anaphoric 'thing', one is prompted to consider looking at a broader range of languages for the properties of constructions that seem to fall into the general semantic realm of "middle voice" or "self-involvement" which the Bole and Hausa constructions express.

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