# Quirks of progressive clauses in Kasem

**Introduction:** There is a growing body of cross-linguistic studies that shows that progressive sentences are bi-clausal in nature (see, more recently, Salanova 2007, Coon 2010, Martinović & Schwarzer 2018). These constructions often involve a locative clause embedding an adjunct clause or a nominalized complement clause. The questions around this kinds of progressive constructions have always been on (a) the nature of the complement clause, and (b) the nature of the progressive morpheme. In this talk, I present novel data on the progressive constructions of an under-studied Mabia (formerly, Gur) language spoken mostly in Northern Ghana called **Kasem** (see (1)). The progressive construction in (1) shows an interesting structure where the subject, that is followed by the progressive morpheme *wora*, is resumed within what I argue to be a complement clause. *NB*: The subject of a perfective clause is never resumed, as in [Adam (***o**) di mumuna]. The data presented here is from the Navrongo Kasem dialect (aka, NK1).

(1) *Adam* ***wora*** **(**o**) di mumuna.*
Adam PROG 3SG eat.IPFV rice
'Adam is eating rice.'

**Claims:** In this talk, I make four claims about (1). **First**, I argue that progressive constructions in Kasem are bi-clausal; consisting of a locative predicate and a finite imperfective complement clause. **Secondly**, in a novel addition to the earlier studies, I show that the (embedded) second clause in a bi-clausal progressive can be as big as a TP (but lacks a CP periphery). **Thirdly**, I propose that what has been called the progressive morpheme (*wora*) in the language, actually consists of a locative morpheme *wo* and a distal demonstrative *ra*. **Lastly**, I argue that *wora* appears to function as a raising predicate rather than a control predicate. This talk therefore contributes to our understanding of progressive structures both on an empirical/cross-linguistic and a theoretical ground.

**Tests for bi-clausality:** Evidence for a bi-clausal analysis comes from ***the use of negation*** and ***the distribution of PP-modifiers***. The negative marker in Kasem is realized as *ba* in imperfective clauses (and *wò*, with a low tone, in perfective clauses). It is always in preverbal position. Using (2-a) as a reference, the negative marker *ba* can precede *wora* (2-b), or follow the pronoun but precede the lexical verb *di* in what looks like a second clause (2-c). Notice the difference in the interpretation. I discuss the nature of *wora* below. The next test is the distribution of PP-modifiers in *wora*-clauses. Other adjuncts like time adverbials (like *diim* 'yesterday') in Kasem have a freer distribution as they can occur post-verbally and pre-verbally (3-a). However, PP-modifiers are employed because they can only follow, and never precede the verb in a given clause (3-b). Interestingly, in a progressive construction, the PP-modifier does not only follow the verb *di*, but it can also precede it (see (3-c) below). Since PP-modifiers only ever occur post-verbally, the option of a post-**wora** occurrence of the PP-modifier in ex. (3-c) shows that there has to be a higher predicate that licenses the occurrence of the PP-modifier in that high position. This further confirms the bi-clausality of the *wora*-clauses.

(2) a. *Adam* ***wora*** *o di mumuna.*
Adam PROG 3SG eat rice
'Adam is eating rice.'

b. *Adam* ***ba*** ***wora*** *o di mumuna.*
Adam NEG PROG 3SG eat rice
Lit. 'Adam is not there eating rice.'

c. *Adam* ***wora*** *o* ***ba*** *di mumuna.*
Adam PROG 3SG NEG eat rice
'Adam is not eating rice.'

(3) a. *Adam* ***(dììm)*** *tōŋē* ***(dììm)****.*
Adam yesterday work.PFV yesterday
'Adam worked yesterday.'

b. *Adam (*[****de foone****]) tōŋē *([****de foone****]).*
Adam with fear work.PFV with fear
'Adam worked with fear.'

c. *Adam* ***wora*** *([****de foone****]) o di wodiu kom ([****de foone****]).*
Adam PROG with fear 3SG eat food DEF with fear
(i) Lit. 'Adam is there with fear eating the food.'
(ii) 'Adam is eating the food with fear.'

**The nature and structure of the second clause:** I argue that the second clause is a reduced clause without a left periphery. This is evident on two grounds. First, the complementizer *we* which heads embedded CPs in Kasem (4-a) cannot occur in a *wora*-clause (4-b). Secondly, the embedded clause periphery in Kasem normally hosts partial *wh*-movement (5-a) or focus movement (5-b). However, in *wora*-clauses, *wh*-phrases can only be fronted to the left periphery of the entire clause (6-a) and not to the embedded clause periphery (6-b). Summarily, if the second clause is as big as a CP, it should be able to host both a complementizer and a *wh*-element. The fact that this is not the case means that it is a reduced clause smaller than a CP.

(4) a. *Adam boŋe* ***we*** *Sam di mumuna.*
Adam think COMP Sam eat rice
Adam thinks that Sam ate rice.

b. **Adam* ***wora*** ***we*** *o di mumuna.*
Adam PROG COMP 3SG eat rice
'Adam is eating rice.'

(5) a. *Ama bwēī wē* ***b*****ɛ** ***mó*** *John gōā?*
Ama ask COMP what FOC John slaughter
'Ama asked what John slaughtered.'

b. *Peter wē* ***chwóró mó*** *John gōā.*
Peter say fowl FOC John slaughter
'Peter say that John slaughtered a fowl.'

(6) a. ***B*ɛ** ***mo*** *Adam* ***wora*** *o di?*
what FOC Adam PROG 3SG eat.IPFV
'What is Adam eating?'

b. **Adam* ***wora*** ***b*ɛ** ***mo*** *o di?*
Adam PROG what FOC 3SG eat.IPFV
'What is Adam eating?'

*What then is the size and nature of the second clause?* I propose that first, the second clause must be as big as a TP. This is because of the possibility of having a sentential negative marker in the second clause which is obligatorily preverbal in the language (cf. (2-c)). The tense morpheme, on the other hand, is believed to be higher than negation (7). *Wò* is the negative morpheme for perfective clauses, which I analysed to have moved to T (in complementary distribution with the past tense morpheme *yaa*); thus: [T NEG Asp V]. The position of the pronoun in relation to tense is also an evidence for a clause that is as big as TP (8). Secondly, the second clause must be a complement clause because *wh*-phrases can be extracted out of it (as in (6-a) above), unlike adjunct clauses which are sensitive to A'-movement (islands) in the language.

(7) *Adam (*yaa)* ***wò*** *(*yaa) lɔge pɛ sɔŋɔ.*
Adam PST PST.NEG PST build chief house
'Ada did not build the chief's house.'

(8) *Adam* ***wora*** *o* ***yaa*** *di mumuna.*
Adam PROG 3SG HEST.PST eat.IPFV rice
'Adam was eating rice.'

**The status of *wora* and the structure of the higher predicate:** I propose that **wora** contains a locative morpheme *wo* which is assumed to be a locative copula because it is present in locative constructions (9) and bears the same mid tone as the first syllable of ***wo.ra*** (mid tone is not marked). *Wo* literally translates as 'be located (at)', and *ra* is used as a distal demonstrative (10-a) (see (10-b) for the proximal counterpart) (cf. Laka 2006 for Basque). It is assumed that *wo* grammaticalizes to *wora* for expressing progressive which contains a locative reading (cf. Freeze 1992, Ameka & Levinson 2007). Thus, the higher predicate in the bi-clausal structure is a locative predicate which can be dominated by negation and tense phrases, and possesses a left periphery as we have already seen above (11) (cf. Martinovic & Schwarzer 2018 on Wolof). The PredP can take a PP complement as in (9).

(9) *O* ***wo*** *sɔŋɔ ne.*
3SG LOC.COP home at
'He is at home.'

(10) a. *Adam* ***wo*** ***ra.***
Adam LOC.COP there
'Adam is there.'

b. *Adam* ***wo*** ***ywo.***
Adam LOC.COP here
'Adam is here.'

(11) [$_{CP}$ [$_{TP}$ O [$_{PredP}$ [Pred **wo** [$_{PP}$ sɔŋɔ ne]]]]]

The *wora*-clause therefore involves a PredP embedding a TP (12) (cf. (1)). The embedded predicate is not a nominalized verb. This is in contrast to what has been reported in some languages whose progressive structures have been argued to be bi-clausal (e.g. see Laka 2006 on Basque, Coon 2010 on Chol, a.o.).

(12) [$_{CP}$ [$_{TP}$ Adam [$_{T'}$ T [$_{PredP}$ [Pred **wora** [$_{TP}$ o [$_{T'}$ T [$_{vP}$ v di [$_{VP}$ [$_{DP}$ mumuna]]]]]]]]]]

**The nature of the embedded pronoun:** The pronoun in the lower clause agrees with the matrix subject both in number and person. Compare (13-a) with (13-b). Thus, it is co-referential with the matrix subject. There are at least two approaches that may account for the relationship between the pronoun and the matrix subject: *control* or *raising*. I argue in support of a raising analysis because of some properties that the *wora*-construction displays. One of it has to do with its occurrence with inanimate subjects, as in (14). Control clauses often appear with animate subjects because of their agentive status which is usually not the case with inanimate subjects. Secondly, *wora*-clauses can occur with expletives (15), a typical property of raising construction. Lastly, the subject of the progressive clause is assigned just a single theta role which is typical of raising constructions; control clauses usually assign two theta roles.

(13) a. ***Ba*** ***wora*** ***ba*** *leeni luseim lei.*
3PL PROG 3PL sing burial song
'They are singing a funeral song.'

b. ***N*** ***wora*** ***n*** *di mumuna.*
2SG PROG 2SG eat.IPFV rice
'You are eating rice.'

(14) a. *Na* ***bam*** ***wora*** ***ba*** *kora*
water DEF PROG 3SG dry
'The water is drying.'

b. *Tɔnɔ* ***kom*** ***wora*** ***ko*** *toe.*
book DEF PROG 3SG fall
'The book is falling.'

(15) ***Ka*** ***wora*** ***ka*** *nena.*
EXPL PROG 3SG rain
'It is raining.'

**Conclusion:** Building on earlier studies, I have argued that progressive constructions in Kasem are not only bi-clausal, but that the embedded clause can be as big as a TP (i.e. lacks a CP periphery). In addition, the study supports the view in the literature that progressive morphemes may be related to locatives. Lastly, the study expands the scope of progressive structures to involve possible raising constructions. As far as I know, this is a novel discovery and analysis in the literature on progressives.

**Selected references: Martinović, M. & M-L Schwarzer** 2018. *Locatives and bi-clausal progressives in Wolof*: NELS 48 proceedings; **Coon, J**. 2010. *Complementation in Chol (Mayan): A theory of split ergativity*: MIT Dissertation; **Laka, I**. 2006. *Deriving split ergativity in the progressive: The case of Basque*: Springer.

**NB:** To be considered for presentation in the **main session**, as well as an **in person talk or poster**