

# Second Tenses in Egyptian-Coptic and Some Other African Languages

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## Abstract

Egyptian has special verb forms for non-main clauses in two varieties: one for relative clauses, one for complement clauses. More and more, the latter tend to serve one of the focalising constructions, whereas the cleft sentence constructions employ the forms for relative clauses. The cleft sentence is the preferred focalising construction throughout Africa. Many languages have, like Egyptian, special morphological features for complement clauses or relative clauses that often serve for focalising constructions of the cleft sentence type. In this way, Egyptian fits perfectly in the linguistic landscape of Africa, whereas, in this respect, it is here in contrast to Semitic.

## 1 Focus and Focus Constructions

Egyptian has special verb forms for non-main clauses: relative forms for relative clauses, and *that* forms for complement clauses.<sup>1</sup> These two categories seem to be identical in terms of morphology, except for the gender/number markers of the relative forms. We will not consider in this context the clauses of circumstance as they are identical with the continuative clauses in respect to morphology, hence belong to the realm of main sentences.

Although there are historical reasons why the *that* forms are often called emphatic forms, this term makes no sense in respect to their basic function. For in Old and Middle Egyptian, they are freely employed in all ways a noun is used, not only in an emphasising function.<sup>2</sup> Not so, however, in Late Egyptian, Demotic and Coptic: in these later variants of the Egyptian language the forms that are derived from the *that* forms are only found in the adverb-focalising construction.<sup>3</sup> As Polotsky – who called them “emphatic” – started his argumentation with the Coptic stage of the language, this “emphatic” use stood in his focus; in preserving the old term, sanctified by its use in the editions of Erman’s grammar of Middle Egyptian, he paid homage to the revered “Berlin school” (cf. Satzinger 1993: 189). Generally speaking, complement clauses play a prominent role in focalising constructions (where they exist), and this is also true of Egyptian. Therefore “focus” is the first topic in our present focus.

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<sup>1</sup> Main stream Egyptology has traditionally problems with the verb forms for complement clauses. On this, cf. Satzinger (1989, 1993). A recent attempt to argue against the existence of nominal clauses, or more precisely, against the existence of two formally distinct *sdm.n=f* forms as postulated by Schenkel (2009), is made by Stauder (2014). He can, however, at best indicate that Schenkel’s line of argumentation is not fully cogent. Still, he cannot disprove it.

<sup>2</sup> Satzinger (1989: 198).

<sup>3</sup> Werning (2014: 327 ex. 15; 328 ex. 17) gives two examples of Late Egyptian “emphatic forms” in Balanced Sentences. However, the motive for the use of these forms may in each case be seen in the focalisation of an adverbial expression.

There exist various types of focus (cf. Dik et al. 1981; Gundel 1999; Drubig 2001; Drubig 2007).

*In situ* focalisation is effected by acoustic means (stress), like German *Der Mann hat den Hund gesehen*, as an answer to a question like *Hat der Mann den Hund oder die Katze gesehen?* This phenomenon is, however, not visible in writing. Here is another example, viz. the answer to a question like “Did you see there Peter or Tom?”: “I saw P e t e r!” (German *Ich habe P e t e r gesehen!*; Russian *Я увидел П е т р а!*). Typical of Latin, Italian, German, Slavic languages.

*Fronting* the focal element (like *Den Hund hat der Mann gesehen*, as opposed to unmarked *Der Mann hat den Hund gesehen*); it is not possible in a language with rigid word order, like Egyptian, except for topicalisation. Rigid word order is, on the other hand, a *must* for languages that do not mark a complement (an object) otherwise.

This leaves us with *clefting*:<sup>4</sup> it means that the focal element enters athetic expression (*It is ...*), the remainder assuming the form of a relative clause or an adjectival phrase, having the role of the subject: Compare, e.g., the following (constructed) sentences, all meaning ‘It is the dog the man saw’:

- (1) a. *C'est le-chien que l'-homme a -vu,*  
 THET the-dog REL the-man see:PRET. 3SG-STEM  
 [French]
- b. *jw pw mʒ-n z,*  
 dog COP see-PRET.REL man  
 [Middle Egyptian]
- c. *pʒ-jw pʒ (i)ptr pʒ-rmt,*  
 ART:M.SG-dog FM see:PRET.REL ART:M.SG-man  
 [Late Egyptian]
- d. ΠΕΥΣΟΡ ΠΕΝΤΑΠΡΩΜΕ ΝΑΥ ΕΡΟΦ.  
*pe-whor pe-(e)nta-p-rōme naw ero-f*  
 ART:M.SG-dog FM-REL:PRET-ART:M.SG-man see to-3SGM:OBJ  
 [Sahidic Coptic]

Another environment that may trigger the use of complement clause forms are WH-questions: they tend to assume the form of a cleft sentence (cf. Late Egyptian *i.jrʒk jj.t tn*, Coptic *ἐντακεῖ τῶν*, ‘Where did you come from?’). This will not be particularly pursued here.

### 1.1 The focalising constructions of Egyptian (cf. Satzinger 2013).

It is not possible to find evidence of any *in-situ* focus in Egyptian, as this is merely expressed by stress or accent.<sup>5</sup> There exist, on the other hand, several distinct

<sup>4</sup> On cleft sentences see Weinert & Miller 1996; Miller 1996; Hedberg 1990; in Egyptian and Coptic: Polotsky 1976; Satzinger 1981.

<sup>5</sup> On focus see Howell & al. 2017; Aboh & al. 2007; Dik & al. 1981; Drubig 2001; Drubig 2007; Gundel 1999; Reinhart 1997; Papp 1994; Kiss 1989; Weinert 1995; on focus in Egyptian see

focalising constructions which operate with both syntactic and morphological means. In Egyptian there is a basic difference between constructions focalising nouns, and constructions focalising adverbs. As for the noun-focalising constructions, there exist two of them already in Old Egyptian: two types of an older one (the *jn* constructions), and a younger one, of the template of the tripartite nominal sentence with *pw*. We call the *jn* constructions older, as their build is not analysable in the framework of the grammar of the period. The other one, however, is analysable in Old- and Middle Egyptian as a tripartite nominal sentence with *pw*.

### 1.1.1 The *jn* constructions

They are obviously only used for topicalising the agent (*c'est lui qui ...*). The verb forms involved are the perfect and aorist (imperfective) participle in A2 (of which only the first one survives into Late Egyptian, though not later); in A1, the involved forms are, as far as actually attested, the nominal conjugated forms (“suffix conjugations”) *sḏm·nꜣf* and the prospective *sḏmꜣf*.

The particle *jn* is otherwise an agent marker with the infinitive and all kinds of passive constructions. It is not possible to analyse the constructions within the system of Old Egyptian: \*‘On part of N. is it that he has heard’ does not make more sense than \*‘on part of N. is he who has heard.’

Table 1 | Focalising constructions with *jn* in Old and Middle Egyptian

<i>Tense</i>	<i>Focalised Element</i>	<i>Remainder</i>
<b>Pattern A1 with finite verb form (“suffix conjugations”)</b>		
Perfect / Preterite	• <i>jn</i> plus noun or	Nominal <i>sḏm·nꜣf</i> (only till the First Intermediate Period)
Aorist	• absolute pronoun	— <sup>6</sup>
Prospective		Prospective <i>sḏmꜣf</i>
<b>Pattern A2 with participle</b>		
Perfect / Preterite	• <i>jn</i> plus noun or	Perfective participle
Aorist	• absolute pronoun	Imperfective participle
Prospective		— <sup>7</sup>
<b>Pattern A1–2 mixed paradigm (from Middle Kingdom on)</b>		
Perfect / Preterite	• <i>jn</i> plus noun or	Perfective participle
Aorist	• absolute pronoun	Imperfective participle
Prospective		Prospective <i>sḏmꜣf</i>

In Late Egyptian it is only the perfective participle that has survived, the other forms are replaced by auxiliary *jrj* + infinitive.<sup>8</sup>

Satzinger 1993; Satzinger 1989; in Egyptian and other African languages: Satzinger 2000; Satzinger 2001; Satzinger 2006.

<sup>6</sup> Very rare examples from the Old Kingdom with *sḏmꜣf* have been noted: Edel 1955/64: 444 § 876 (Pyr 1093b [P]); Allen 1984: 124 § 222 (Pyr 402a, 403a [W]).

<sup>7</sup> For an example with *sḏmtjꜣf* see Werning 2011: Bd. I, S. 96, Fn. 13

<sup>8</sup> Satzinger 1981: 492–97.

Table 2 | Focalising constructions with *jn* in Late Egyptian

<i>Tense</i>	<i>Focalised Element</i>	<i>Remainder</i>
Perfect / Preterite	<i>m</i> plus noun	Perfective participle
Aorist	or	Imperfective participle of <i>jrj</i> + infinitive
Prospective	absolute pronoun	Prospective <i>sdm=f</i> of <i>jrj</i> + infinitive

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1.1.2 The Cleft Sentences with *pw*<sup>9</sup>.

The construction is freely formed in Old Egyptian after the template of the nominal sentence #predicate *pw* subject#, the focalised element being in predicate role, the remainder following in the form of an adjectival phrase (*ntj* clause, participle, relative form, ...) in the function of the subject. The focalised element may be the agent (*c'est lui qui ...*) or any other element of the basic sentence (*c'est lui que je ...*, *c'est lui dont je ...*).

In Late Egyptian the basic template of the nominal sentence is bipartite: #predicate subject#. <sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, the Cleft Sentence has preserved its tripartite form: hence it cannot anymore be analysed as a regular nominal sentence. The element *p<sup>3</sup>* (variable again) was obviously interpreted otherwise, namely as focus marker.

The situation in Coptic is similar (Polotsky 1962).

The focalised element may be the agent (type of *c'est lui qui ...*; the verb form is here an active participle, if such exists in the idiom and the tense in question):

- (2) a.      *swt*                      *pw*                      *rdj*                      *n.j*                      *sn*  
                  3SGM [OEgn.]      DEM:M.SG              give:PP              to-1SG              =3PL  
                  'It is he who has given them to me' (CT 2,402 b)  
                  [Middle Egyptian]

- b.      ΠΧΘΕΙΣ ΠΕΤΜΟΟΝΕ ΜΜΟΪ  
                  *p-čois*                      *pe-(e)t-moone*                      *mmo-i*  
                  ART:M.SG-lord              FOC-REL-pasture              OBJ-1SG  
                  'It is the Lord who pastures me' (Ps 22.1)  
                  [Sahidic Coptic]

The focalised element may be the object (type of *c'est lui que je ...*). The verb form is here a relative form):

- (3) a.      *jnk*    *pw*                      *mrrw*                      *ntr*                      *s<sup>c</sup>nh.f*                      *wj*  
                  1SG    FOC                      love:REL~AOR              god                      make live:NOMIN~AOR-3SGM              =1SG  
                  'I am he whom the god wishes to preserve' (P. Ebers 1, 10).  
                  [Middle Egyptian]

<sup>9</sup> For Coptic, see Polotsky (1962: 416); for Late Egyptian, see Satzinger (1981: 480).

<sup>10</sup> But note the sequence #subject predicate# (1) with an absolute pronoun of the 1st and 2<sup>nd</sup> person in initial position, and (2) in explicative or parabolic utterances. Cf. for Middle Egyptian Satzinger (2006b: 120-123).

- b.      ⲟⲩⲟⲩⲛⲟⲩ   ⲛⲟⲩⲱⲧⲧ   ⲧⲈⲚⲧⲀⲮⲀⲗⲀⲤ
- ou-wnou*                      *n-wōt*                      *te-(e)nta-u-aa-s*
- INDF.ART.SG-hour(F)   ATTR-single              FOC.SGF-REL.PRET-3PL-do-3SGF
- ‘They spent only one hour’ (Matth 20.12)
- [Sahidic Coptic]

The reference between the focalised element and the remainder may also be indirect (type of *c’est lui dont je ...*; the verb form here: past relative form with *n*):

- (4) a.      *jnk*    *pw*    *ḏḏ-n*              *n-f*              *Šw*    *hn<sup>c</sup>*    (*Tfnt*)
- 1SG   COP   say:REL-PRET   to-3SGM   Shu   with   Tefnut
- ‘I am he to whom Shu and Tefnut have said’ (CT 4,092k).
- [Middle Egyptian]

- b.      ⲧⲈⲧⲚⲀⲬⲱⲬⲉ   ⲧⲈⲧⲚ̄ⲬⲱⲬⲈ   ⲛ̄ⲤⲬⲤ
- t-et-na-šōpe*                      *te-(e)tn-šīne*              *nsō-s*
- NMLZ.F-REL-FUT-happen   FOC.SFG-REL:1PL-seek   after-3SGF
- ‘It is the future we seek’ (Heb 13.14)
- [Sahidic Coptic]

The following Table 3 may demonstrate that the element *ne-* (earlier *p<sup>3</sup>-*) of the Cleft Sentence in Later Egyptian corresponds to the *pw* of the Cleft Sentence in Earlier Egyptian.

Table 3 | The Cleft Sentences with *pw* / *ne-*

<i>Noun or absolute pronoun</i>	<i>pw</i> / <i>ne-</i>	<i>Adjectival phrase: ntj clause, participle, relative form, ...</i>
<i>swt</i>	<i>pw</i>	<i>rdj n.j sn</i>
ⲡⲬⲟⲈⲓⲤ	ⲡⲈ-	(Ⲉ)ⲦⲘⲟⲟⲛⲈ ⲛ̄Ⲙⲟⲓ
<i>jnk</i>	<i>pw</i>	<i>mrrw ntr s<sup>c</sup>nh.f wj</i>
ⲟⲩⲟⲩⲛⲟⲩ   ⲛⲟⲩⲱⲧⲧ	ⲧⲈ-	(Ⲉ)ⲚⲧⲀⲮⲀⲗⲀⲤ
<i>jnk</i>	<i>pw</i>	<i>ḏḏ.n n.f Šw hn<sup>c</sup> Tfnt</i>
ⲧⲈⲧⲚⲀⲬⲱⲬⲉ	ⲧⲈ-	(Ⲉ)ⲧⲚ̄ⲬⲱⲬⲈ   ⲛ̄ⲤⲬⲤ

Note that Late Egyptian also has the plain nominal sentence #predicate - subject#, like

- (5)   *mtr-t*      *ʕ-t*    *n*    *md-t*      *tʕy-*    (*i*)*ḏḏ=k*      *nɛj*
- example-F   big-F   GEN   speech-F   DEM.F   say.REL.PRET-2SGM   to-1SG
- ‘That which you have said to me is a great example of (rhetoric) speaking’
- (Wenamun 2, 52–53 = LES 72, 9–10)
- [Late Egyptian]

Similarly, Coptic has a nominal sentence #predicate *pe* subject# (like ⲟⲩⲛⲛⲁ̄ ⲡⲈ ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲈ ‘God is a spirit’) whose subject expression is a nominalised relative clause:

- (6) οΥΜΕ ΤΕ ΤΕϋΧΩ ΜΜΟC  
*ou-me te te-(e)ti-čō mmo-s*  
 INDEF-truth.F 3SGF DEF+REL+1SG-say OM-3SGF  
 ‘What I say, is true’  
 [Sahidic Coptic]

### 1.2 Adverb focalising: the “emphatic construction”

The Egyptian template for this task must originally have been the sentence with adverbial predicate (adverbial sentence), the focalised adverb being in predicate role, in the second position;<sup>11</sup> the remaining sentence is in subject function, in the first position; its nucleus is a nominalised verb form.

Table 4 | Varieties of the adverb focalising construction

<i>Subject:</i> that <i>clause</i>	<i>Predicate:</i> <i>adverbial expression</i>
<i>sdm-nf</i> , ‘that he heard’	Adverb, preposition phrase, subjunctive
“Imperfective” <i>sdm-f</i> , ‘that he hears’	<i>sdm-f</i> (with final meaning), clause of circumstance
Prospective <i>sdm-f</i> , ‘that he will hear’	

Obviously, this construction was grammaticalised already before Old Egyptian, it is not a regular adverbial sentence.

(1) The regular adverbial predicate is restricted to locative expressions, in a wider sense (e.g., including the so-called *m* of predication); the emphasised adverb, however, may be of any type, it may even be a clause of circumstance, or a final clause.

(2) Independent adverbial sentences are embedded in the *jw* matrix, unless when of optative meaning; in the adverb-focalising construction, however, such an embedding is avoided.

The adverb-focalising construction survives in its grammaticalised form into Coptic. Its use is blurred in Coptic: it is not exclusively depending on the adverbial nature of the focalised element; the latter may also be a noun, as in *ef-na-r-ou* ‘what will he do?’), or even the adverbial verbal element of the present tense system, in the so-called autofocal construction (*eu-raše* ‘what they are doing is rejoicing’) (Shisha Halevy 1986).

In Late Egyptian, Demotic and Coptic, the adverb-emphasizing construction is the only context for the use of the old ‘that’ forms. In Old and Middle Egyptian, however, they could be used in any nominal function.

## 2 The Cleft Sentence in African Languages

The cleft sentence is wide-spread in African languages.

<sup>11</sup> A somewhat different account of the adverb-focalising construction is offered by Werning 2014 who derives this construction from a Balanced Sentence template with a verbal first member that is identical in both sentences, and adverbial second members in each of them. He argues inter alia with the absolute time reference of the substantival verb forms, for which see already Satzinger 1993 (p. 195, in particular).

“As for focus, the most common strategy of marking something as new information, which probably exists in all African languages (Watters 2000:216), is the cleft construction. In clefts, the focused constituent is introduced [or followed, we may add] by a copula and modified by a relative clause:

- (7) *nəḥna ina nə-ʔabrəhat zə-rəʔena.*  
 we COP OM-Abrahat REL-saw: 1PL  
 ‘It is we who saw Abraham.’  
 [Tigrinya; Semitic; Afro-Asiatic] (Gragg 1974:75)”

(Zeller 2015: 16–17 with ex. 28)

## 2.1 Cleft Sentence and Second Tense in Other African Languages

In many African languages with focalising constructions the relative construction is not preserved as such. However, they employ in its place verbal constructions (“Second Tenses”) that differ from those of the normal main sentence. In the following section, however, a Cleft Sentence with a complete, normal relative clause. WH questions, however, lack thethetic element in this language, though their relative clause is intact (see ex. 8a).

### 2.1.1 Byali (Biali; Eastern Oti-Volta, Gur, Niger-Congo), Benin

- (8) a. *bàṅānā è ù ḥ nōndá ḥá.*<sup>12</sup>  
 banana FM/COP CL.SUBJ REL buy.PFV CL.REL  
 ‘It is bananas that (s)he has bought.’  
 [Byali] (Reineke 2007: 5, ex. 9)

Compare with this the question to which it is the answer.

- (8) b. *bāārá ù ḥ nōndá ī?*  
 what CL.SUBJ REL buy.PFV CL.REL  
 ‘What is it that (s)he has bought?’  
 [Byali (Reineke 2007: 5, ex. 8)

The *class subject* (CL.SUBJ) is the personal pronoun of the respective noun class of (s)he.<sup>13</sup> It precedes the *relative marker*. The verb is followed by the *class relative marker* (CL.REL) that is in concord with the focalised noun: *ī* with the question word, and *ḥá* with *bàṅānā*. Note that only the answer displays (*l*)*è* (after nouns it has usually the form *è*, otherwise *lè*), identified by Reineke (2007: 5, ex. 8) as *focus marker* (FM); however, sentences like

- |                |                  |                                    |                 |
|----------------|------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>ā lè</i>    | It is you.       | <i>tā lè</i>                       | It is us.       |
| <i>ù lè</i>    | It is him/her.   | <i>bā lè</i>                       | It is them.     |
| <i>báb-á è</i> | It is the books. | <i>bíi-gè</i> (< <i>bíi-gā è</i> ) | It is the child |
- (Reineke 2007: 11, ex. 28)

<sup>12</sup> The accent diacritics mark tones: *á* with high tone, *ā* with middle tone, *à* with low tone.

<sup>13</sup> For noun classes in Gur languages (otherwise typical of Bantu and Atlantic) see Mieke, Reineke & Winkelmann (eds.) (2012).

show that *(l)è* is a thetic element, hence rather *copula* (COP), than *focus marker* (FM) in the example above (note that *-à* and *-gā* are class markers of *bāb-* ‘books’ and *bíi-* ‘child,’ respectively).

The question displays only the fronting of the question word; whereas the answer, with its thetic element *è*, is a proper cleft sentence, with a thetic focus-marker and a relative clause.

### 2.1.2 “Second Tenses” in Hausa (West-Chadic, Afro-Asiatic)

The Cleft Sentence of Hausa is similar insofar as it employs a thetic element, namely *nee* (fem. singular *cee*; Hartmann & Zimmermann 2007). The remainder of the sentence has the form, however, not of a relative clause (which employs the “relativiser” *da*), but rather merely one of the so-called relative tenses: probably the result of a grammaticalisation, that has preserved an older stage of the language (with relative clauses without *da*).

- (9) a. *Muu nèe su-kèe neemaa*  
 we COP they-PROG2 looking  
 It is us they are looking for.  
 [Hausa] (Newman 2000: 579)

- b. *nàawa nèe ya fi kyáu*  
 mine COP he:PF2 do good  
 ‘Mine is best’  
 [Hausa] (Newman 2000: 572)

- c. *Bintà cee ta-kèe biyà teelà*  
 Binta(F) COP.F 3FSG- PROG2 pay tailor  
 ‘It is Binta who payed the tailor’  
 [Hausa] (Hartmann & Zimmermann 2007: 572)

The two second tenses, or relative tenses, are found (Abdoulaye 2004)

- (1) in non-main clauses (temporal, ...): introduced by *dà* ‘with,’ *baayan dà* ‘after,’
- (2) in relative clauses: introduced by *dà* ‘with’; *zanèn dà munkà dāukà* ‘the tie-wraper that we took’
- (3) in focus constructions with a fronted noun or pronoun, *nàawa nèe ya fi kyau* ‘mine is the best,’
- (4) in questions with question word (“WH-questions”): *yàushée kukà gamàa* ‘when did you (pl.) finish?’;

furthermore, obviously different from Egyptian-Coptic,

- (5) in narrative (sequential, continuative) sentences: *Muusaa ya taashi ya shigèe* ‘Musa got up [and] went past.’

(All examples from Newman 2000: 571–572, § 5.)

### 2.1.3 “Second Tenses” in Mubi (East-Chadic, Afro-Asiatic)<sup>14</sup>

Also other Chadic languages have „second tenses,” often called “relative tenses” (as opposed to the “absolute tenses”) for similar purposes; they are, however, marked in

<sup>14</sup> Jungrathmayr (1994: 108–113).

a different way: not just by a deviating conjugation, but also by placing the pronominal element after the verb, rather than before.

Mubi does not have only one relative conjugation, but rather three. To say it in a slightly simplified way: the first relative conjugation is used when an object is fronted; it has two versions, one for single objects, the other for a plurality of them (**10 b**); the second is used when one of two objects is fronted (**10 c**); the third when an adverbial complement is fronted (**10 d**).

#### Normal prefix conjugation

- (10)a.      *ní*            *wě̀n*            *báàb*  
                  I            open.PRET1    door  
                  ‘I opened the door (Arabic *bāb*-).’ (Jungraithmayr 1994: 109)

#### Suffix conjugation

– If a direct or indirect object is fronted:

1<sup>st</sup> suffix conjugation,

- (10)b.      *báàb*      *wě̀n+na*  
                  door      open+PRET2/I:ISG  
                  ‘It’s the door I opened’ (Jungraithmayr 1994: 109)

– If one of two objects is fronted:

2<sup>n</sup> <sup>d</sup> suffix conjugation,

- (10)c.      *ká*            *wě̀n+ndé*            *báàb*  
                  you            open+PRET2/II:ISG    door  
                  ‘It’s for you I opened the door’ (Jungraithmayr 1994: 110)

– Adverbial complement fronted:

3<sup>rd</sup> suffix conjugation,

- (10)d.      *íbrè*            *dyémég+én*            *bèdígí*  
                  needle            sew+PRET2/III:ISG    gown  
                  ‘It’s with a needle (Arabic *ʔibraʔ*-) that I sewed the gown’ (Jungraithmayr 1994: 111)

Table 5 | The suffix conjugations of Mubi

	<i>Suffix conjugation 1</i>	<i>Dto., plural</i>	<i>Suffix conjugation 2</i>	<i>Suffix conjugation 3</i>
<i>Preterite</i>				
1SG	-á-nà	-á-nà	-á-ndé	-én <sup>s.l.</sup>
2SGM	-ká	-á-gá	-gát	-ká
2SGF	-ké	-á-gé	-gét	-kéf
3SGM	(-i-)-kū	(-i-)-í-gú	(-i-)-gút	(-i-)-kú
3SGF	(-i-)-kī	(-i-)-í-gí	(-i-)-gít	(-i-)-kí
1PL <sub>INCL</sub>	-á-nā	-á-nā	-á-nát	-á-nā
1PL <sub>EXCL</sub>	-á-nē	-á-nē	-á-nét	-é-nē
2PL	(-i-)-kún	(-i-)-í-gún	(-i-)-gún	(-i-)-kún
3PL	-kō	-á-gó	-got	-kó
<i>Present/Future</i>				
1SG	-á-nà		-á-ndé	-én
2SGM	-á-gá		-á-gát	-ká
2SGF	-á-gé		-á-gét	-ké

	<i>Suffix conjugation 1</i>	<i>Dto., plural</i>	<i>Suffix conjugation 2</i>	<i>Suffix conjugation 3</i>
3SGM	(-i-)-kū-		(-i-)-gút	-kú
3SGF	(-i-)-kī		(-i-)-gít	-kí
1PL.INCL	-á-nā		-á-nát	-á-nā
1PL.EXCL	-á-nē		-á-nét	-é-nē
2PL	(-i-)-kún		(-i-)-gún	-kún
3PL	-á-gō		-á-got	-kó

#### 2.1.4 Bidiya (East-Chadic, Afro-Asiatic)<sup>15</sup>

The normal tenses, labelled as *absolute*, are conjugated with prefixed pronominal elements. The Second Tenses, labelled as *relative*, display suffixed pronominal elements.

Table 6 | Prefix conjugation (*absolute*) and suffix conjugation (*relative*) in Bidiya

	<i>Perfective Aorist</i>		<i>Imperfective Progressive</i>	
	<i>Absolute</i>	<i>Relative</i>	<i>Absolute</i>	<i>Relative</i>
1SG	<i>no tál</i>	<i>tál-nó</i>	<i>noo(ra) tál-ga</i>	<i>tál-gí-nò</i>
2SGM	<i>ki —</i>	<i>— -kíŋ</i>	<i>kinda —</i>	<i>— -kíŋ</i>
2SGF	<i>ka —</i>	<i>— -káŋ</i>	<i>kanda —</i>	<i>— -káŋ</i>
3SGM	<i>ŋa —</i>	<i>— -yí</i>	<i>ŋanda —</i>	<i>— -y</i>
3SGF	<i>na —</i>	<i>— -tí</i>	<i>nanda —</i>	<i>— -t</i>
1PL.INCL	<i>ni —</i>	<i>— -yáŋ</i>	<i>ninda — -yaŋ</i>	<i>— -yàŋ</i>
1PL.EXCL	<i>ni —</i>	<i>— -níŋ</i>	<i>ninda — -yaŋ</i>	<i>— -níŋ</i>
2PL	<i>ku — -oŋ</i>	<i>— -kúŋ</i>	<i>kunda —</i>	<i>— -kùŋ</i>
3PL	<i>ŋu —</i>	<i>— -yó</i>	<i>ŋanda —</i>	<i>— -yò</i>

The conditions for the employment of the relative tenses are virtually the same as in Hausa.

#### 2.1.5 Dangaleat, East-Chadic<sup>16</sup>

The examples given for the sequence verb – pronoun (“relative forms”) display narrative (sequential, continuative) contents.

Independent sentences:  
subject pronoun – verb

Dependent sentences:  
verb – subject pronoun

(11)a. *no kata*  
I go:PRET1  
‘I went’

*kar kát+ino*  
then go:PRET2+I  
‘then I went’

b. *nà màte*

*ŋà gal – kar mát+dyo*

<sup>15</sup> Jungrathmayr (1994: 114–118).

<sup>16</sup> Jungrathmayr (1994: 118–120).

he die:PRET1 he fall:PRET1 then die:PRET2+he  
 ‘he died’ ‘he fell – and died’

### 2.1.6 Fulfulde (Fulani; Fula-Wolof, Atlantic, Niger-Congo)<sup>17</sup>

Hausa is a West Chadic language, Mubi, Bidiya and Dangaleat are East Chadic languages; all of them are Afro-Asiatic. It is astonishing to find very similar features in a West African language, namely in the Atlantic language Fulfulde (Fula, Fulani, language of the Fulbe). Obviously, this is an areal feature.

The Atlantic languages are noun class languages, like the Bantu languages. Every noun is of one of the numerous classes, which are to a certain degree characterised by their semantic category. Classes are visible in the class marker, i.e. the ending of the noun (so in Fulfulde; in the other Atlantic languages, as also in Bantu, it is a prefix), and by pronominal concord. There are numerous singular classes and fewer corresponding plural classes. A complicating feature, shared by a few closely related languages in the area (Sereer, Kobiana, Tenda languages, Biafada [Creissels 2014: 5]), is the mutations of initial consonants in three degrees (otherwise familiar from the Celtic languages), like *w- : b- : mb-*.

Table 7 | Some Fula noun classes and corresponding class pronouns<sup>18</sup>

Meaning	Class category	Class no. / Sg.	Pronoun	Class no. / Pl.	Pronoun
Man	Human	1	<i>gorko</i>	2	<i>worbe be</i>
Woman	Human	1	<i>debbo</i>	2	<i>rewbe be</i>
Visitor	Human	1	<i>kodo</i>	2	<i>hobbe be</i>
A Fula	Human	1	<i>pullo</i>	2	<i>fulbe be</i>
Small compound	Diminutive	3	<i>gurel</i>	6	<i>ngur-on kon</i>
Clay vessel	Miscellaneous	9	<i>fayande</i>	24	<i>payande de</i>
City	Miscellaneous	9	<i>saare</i>	24	<i>ca'e de</i>
Dog	Animal	11	<i>wordu</i>	25	<i>gordi di</i>
Field	Miscellaneous	18	<i>ngesa</i>	24	<i>gese de</i>

The personal pronoun has, apart from the forms of the 1st and 2nd persons, forms for each and every one of the noun classes for the 3rd person, either singular or plural. In the following, only the human classes, singular (class 1) and plural (class 2), are considered.

There are two series of subject pronoun: one pre-verb, for the absolute conjugation, one post-verb, for the relative conjugation.<sup>19</sup>

Table 8 | Pronominal elements of Fula conjugation

	<i>Pre-verb subject</i> (absolute conjugation)	<i>Post-verb subject</i> (relative conjugation)	<i>Object</i>
1SG	<i>mi</i>	<i>mi</i>	<i>yam</i>

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Satzinger (2000: 39).

<sup>18</sup> Gutman & Avanzati (2013) <http://www.languagesgulper.com/eng/Fula.html> (accessed: 14-11-2016).

<sup>19</sup> Mukarovsky (1957: 161-180).

2SG	'a	<i>dā, a</i>	<i>ma</i>
3SG (= class 1)	'o	<i>dō</i>	<i>mo</i>
1PL.INCL	'en	<i>dēn, 'en</i>	<i>en</i>
1PL.EXCL	<i>men</i>	<i>min</i>	<i>min</i>
2PL	'on	<i>dōn, 'on</i>	<i>on</i>
3PL (= class 2)	<i>be</i>	<i>be</i>	<i>be</i>

Note that the place of the object pronoun in the relative conjugation is usually between verb and subject pronoun. Compare:

- (12) *hande pī mo dā*  
 today beat:PRET2 him you (SG.)  
 'Today, you beat him' (Mukarovski 1957: 164).

These are the conditions for the use of the suffix conjugation (cf. above, for Hausa):

– Cleft sentence:

- (13)a. *ko gerlal maungal waru mi*  
 THET partridge big kill.PRET2 I  
 'It is a big partridge what I killed'  
 ('I kill' would be *mi wari*; *ko* 'it is'; Mukarovski 1957: 173).

– Initial question word:

- (13)b. *ndeye ngar dōn*  
 when come.PRET2 2PL.  
 'When did you (pl.) come?'  
 ('you came' would be *'on war*; Mukarovski 1957: 173).

– Topicalised adverbial expression:

- (13)c. *jango kirsan mi nagge*  
 tomorrow slaughter.PRES2 I cow  
 'tomorrow I'll slaughter a cow'  
 ('I'll slaughter the cow tomorrow' would be *mi hirsan nagge jango*;  
 Mukarovski 1957: 173).

## 2.2 Some other languages with a non-main clause conjugation that differs from the normal conjugation.

The languages mentioned in the following also possess alternative conjugations which are used for various motives: for non-main clauses, in sentences with fronted elements, in certain types of questions, etc.

### 2.2.1 Somali (Lowland East Cushitic, Afro-Asiatic)

In Standard Somali, the "restrictive conjugation" is employed for actor-focalising constructions; they may have developed from cleft sentences, like \*it is (*baa*) I who is eating (*cunaya*) ... (Sasse 1984: 112–113, referring to Hetzron 1974 [sic lege]).

All focalising statements employ a focus marker, usually *baa*.

No focus (normal conjugation):

- (14)a. *waan* (= *waa* + *an*)      *cunayaa*<sup>20</sup>      *muus*  
 IND.1SG (= IND + I)      eat:1SG.PRES      banana  
 ‘I’m eating a banana (Arabic *mūs-*)’

Object focus (normal conjugation):

- (14)b. *muus-k-a*      *baan*      *cunayaa*  
 banana-M-ABS      FOC+1SG      eat:1SG.PRES  
 ‘It’s a banana I’m eating’

Actor focus (“restrictive conjugation”):

- (14)c. *anig-a*      *baa*      *muus-k-a*      *cunaya*  
 1SG-ABS      FOC      banana-M-ABS      eat:1SG.PRES:RESTR  
 ‘It’s I who am eating a banana’

Table 9 | The two conjugations of Standard Somali.

	<i>Normal conjugation</i> ‘It’s a banana I’m eating’	<i>“Restrictive conjugation”</i> ‘It’s I who am eating a banana’
1SG	<i>muuska baan cunayaa</i>	<i>aniga baa muuska cunaya</i>
2SG	<i>muuska baad cunaysaa</i>	<i>adiga baa muuska cunaya</i>
3SGM	<i>muuska buu cunayaa</i>	<i>isuga baa muuska cunaya</i>
3SGF	<i>muuska bay cunaysaa</i>	<i>iyada baa muuska cunaysa</i>
1PL	<i>muuska baan cunaynaa</i>	<i>annuga baa muuska cunayna</i>
2PL	<i>muuska baad cunaysaan</i>	<i>idinka baa muuska cunaya</i>
3PL	<i>muuska bay cunayaan</i>	<i>iyaga baa muuska cunaya</i>

### 2.2.2 Nobiin (Nubian, Eastern Sudanic, Nilo-Saharan)

Unlike other Nilo-Saharan languages, Nubian has a morphological conjugation in the sense of Afro-Asiatic and Indo-European. Old Nubian, the older stage of Nobiin, has a subjunctive for all kinds of non-main clauses, and an indicative for the main clauses. The modern language has, in addition to the indicative and the subjunctive, two special conjugations: type 1 for WH questions, and type 2 for YES/NO questions.

Table 10 | Present tense conjugations of Nobiin<sup>21</sup>

	<i>Indicative</i>	<i>Subjunctive</i>	<i>Interrogative I (WH-)</i>	<i>Interrogative II (YES/NO)</i>
1SG	<i>-ir/il</i>	<i>-rī, (-rin?)</i>	<i>-re/-le</i>	<i>-ree</i>
2SG	<i>-nam</i>	<i>-in</i>	<i>-i</i>	<i>-naa</i>
3SG	<i>-i</i>	<i>-in</i>	<i>-i</i>	<i>-naa</i>
1PL	<i>-ir (-ur)</i>	<i>-ru (-rū),</i>	<i>-ro/-lo</i>	<i>-loo</i>
2PL	<i>-rokkom/lokom</i>	<i>-ru</i>	<i>-ro/-lo</i>	<i>-loo</i>
3PL	<i>-inna</i>	<i>-inan</i>	<i>-(i)nna</i>	<i>-(i)nnanaa</i>

Some examples (question words and question markers are underlined>):

<sup>20</sup> In Standard Somali spelling, “c” renders the ‘Ayin: *cunayaa* [‘unaya:].

<sup>21</sup> Indicative: Bechhaus-Gerst (2011: 75), following Werner (1987); Subjunctive after Abel (1921: 3); Interrogative I: Bechhaus-Gerst (2011: 101); Interrogative II (Bechhaus-Gerst 2011: 101).

- (15)a. WH-questions (paradigm type 1):  
mìn                      ámán                      túúł                      áányì?  
 what                      water                      in                      live:PRES.2/3SG~QUES1  
 ‘What lives in water?’<sup>22</sup>
- (15)b. hiddó                      níł                      mìrì?  
 where                      Nile                      run/flow:PRES.2/3SG~QUES1<sup>22</sup>  
 ‘Where does the Nile flow?’<sup>23</sup>
- (15)c. min-ikk-aag-oddi-k-e-eye (= min-ir-ka-aag-oddi-kire-i-eyeye)  
 what-you-CONT-sick-CAUS-2SG~QUES1-[DS]  
 ‘What is making you sick?’ (Bechhaus-Geerst 102; DS = direct speech).

Yes/no questions (paradigm type 2):

- (16)a. kumbuu-n    tu-le                      brukkeey    diie-da-fii-n  
 egg-GEN                      belly-in                      rat                      dead-be-STAT-3SG.PRES  
el-s-eyeye                      ennek-i-ye                      wala  
 find-1SG.PRET[-DS]                      bring-1SG:QUES2-[DS]                      or  
foog-j-ii-iyeye  
 throw away-1SG:QUES2-[DS]  
 ‘I found a dead rat in the eggs, shall I bring it or (Colloquial Arabic *walla*) throw it?’ (Bechhaus-Geerst 102; DS = direct speech).
- (16)b. ìr                      sààbúún-gà                      jàánnáà?  
 you                      soap-OM                      have: PRES.2/3SG. QUES2  
 ‘Do you have soap (Arabic *šābūn*- < Venitian *savon*)?’ (Bechhaus-Geerst 102; DS = direct speech).

No suggestion can be offered for paradigm 2. Paradigm 1, however, may originate in a relative form, like \*‘What is it that makes / is making you sick?’, with a paradigm specialised for relative or complement clauses.

### 2.2.3 Igbo (Benue-Congo, Niger-Congo)

Subordinate verb forms differ from primary verb forms in tone; they are used to make affirmative and negative conditional and relative clauses: e.g. a relative affirmative clause with change of subject:

- (17)a. ùwe                      unu                      tisì                      dì                      mmà  
 clothes2SG.SUB                      wear.PRES                      be                      good  
 ‘the clothes you are wearing are good’ (Campbell 1995: 245)

Compare with:

- (17)b. únù                      tisì                      ùwe  
 2SG                      wear.PRES                      clothes  
 ‘you wear clothes’ (Campbell 1995: 245)

<sup>22</sup> “Nobiin language” [http://www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/link-suggestion/wpcd\\_2008-09\\_augmented/wp/n/Nobiin\\_language.htm](http://www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/link-suggestion/wpcd_2008-09_augmented/wp/n/Nobiin_language.htm) (accessed: 20-07-2017).

<sup>23</sup> “Nobiin language” [http://www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/link-suggestion/wpcd\\_2008-09\\_augmented/wp/n/Nobiin\\_language.htm](http://www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/link-suggestion/wpcd_2008-09_augmented/wp/n/Nobiin_language.htm) (accessed: 20-07-2017).

### 3 Conclusion

A diachronic view of Egyptian-Coptic allows to see the development of non-main clause forms of nominal and of attributive-adjectival nature, and it makes visible the history of various focus constructions that necessarily employ non-main clause forms. An overview of modern African languages, on the other hand, presents various snapshots of these phenomena in different stages of their development. We can see that the Egyptian language's inclination to focus constructions is a trait that connects it with the African languages in general. Similarly, we gain the insight that the existence of special verb forms for non-main clauses is anything but abnormal in the spectrum of African languages, in a certain contrast to Indo-European and Semitic. It may be hard to find parallels in Africa (as elsewhere) to the template of the Egyptian adverb-focalising constructions, the so-called emphatic, or emphasising, construction that employs the typical 'that'-forms, the so-called emphatic forms or second tenses: the sentence starting off with an inflected nominal form, and concluding with the focalised adverbial. It is, however, the logical outcome of Egyptian syntax. Whereas the Cleft Sentence constructions derive from the nominal sentence, with its sequence of predicate — subject, the adverb-focalising construction derives from the Egyptian sentence with adverbial predicate, with its sequence of subject — predicate. It is another type of Cleft Sentence.

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OM	object marker
OBJ	object
PF	perfect
PP	passive participle
PRES	present
PRET	preterit
PROG	progressive
QUES1	question form type 1 (Nobiin)
QUES2	question form type 2 (Nobiin)
REL	relative
RESTR	restrictive conjugation (Somali)
STAT	stative
STEM	stem
SUB	subject
SUBJ	subjunctive
THET	thetic