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THE STRUCTURE OF THE DAGBANI VERB PHRASE

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DECLARATION

CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I, hereby declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Name: TOYIBU ABDUL-KAHAD

Signature: .....

Date: ..... ……

SUPERVISORS' DECLARATION

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work were supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of the thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

PROF. SAMUEL ALHASSAN ISSAH (PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR)

Signature: .....

Date: .....

DR. REGINA OFORIWAH CAESAR (CO-SUPERVISOR)

Signature……

Date…….....

DEDICATION

To my family

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1SG	1st person singular
2SG	2nd person singular
3SG	3rd person singular
2PL	2nd person plural
3PL	3rd person plural
ASS	Assertive marker
AUX	Auxiliary
EMPH	Ephatic marker
COND	Conditional
DEI	Deictic marker
DEF	Definite marker
FG	Functional Grammar
FOC	Focus marker
FUT	Future marker
HAB	Habitual
IMPERF	Imperfective
INCL	Inclusive marker
NEC	Necessity marker
NEG	Negation marker
NP	Noun Phrase
HYP	Hypothetical Marker
PERF	Perfective
PL	Plural
PRO	Pronoun
TD	Time depth marker
SG	Singular
V	Verb
VP	Verb phrase/verbal particle

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the structure of the Dagbani verb phrase, a Mabia language spoken in Northern Ghana within the framework of Functional Grammar (FG). The goals were to examine the various elements that occur within the Dagbani verb phrase and their roles. The data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were collected through unstructured interviews and focus group discussions while the secondary data were elicited from existing Dagbani literature. The study revealed that the pre-verbal particles are used to indicate future tense, negation, marking of habitual action, emphasis, condition, hypothetical and assertiveness in Dagbani. The pre-verbal *ni* and *yɛn* are used to mark the future. Also, negations are marked by *ku* (future-negative), *bi (past negative)* and *di*, while emphasis is marked by the pre-verbal particle *jɛndi*. The study also shows that *yaha* marks habitual whereas *naan, shiri* and *yi* mark hypothetical, assertiveness and conditional respectively. The thesis also looks at the post-verbal particles, it shows that, *sa/ha* and *na* function as a post-verbal particles performing various roles such as marking of deitic reference whereas *hali* marks emphatic. The study concludes with the interaction between pre-verbal and post-verbal particles.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

1.0 Introduction

This thesis focuses on the structure of the Dagbani verb phrase. Dagbani is a language that belongs to the Mabia group of the Niger-Congo language family. The study seeks to investigate the structure of the Dagbani verb phrase, focusing on the constituents of the verb phrase, their nature, the types of particles present in the language and their syntactic distribution using Functional Grammar as a framework for the analysis. This chapter deals with the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitations, delimitations and general outline of the study.

1.1 Background to the study

This thesis examines the syntactic structure of the Dagbani verb phrase, with special emphasis on the pre and post-verbal particles. Studies in some languages have investigated the linguistics behaviour of these particles using different linguistics frameworks and methodologies. Some of these works include: (Dakubu, (1989) Bodomo, (1997a) Olawsky, (1999) Atintono, (2004) Shaefer, (2004) Akanlig-Paare, (2005) Shwarz, (2005) Saanchi, 2006; Hudu, (2006) Adam, 2010; Issah, 2013; Gurundoo, (2012) and Adjong (2018). The verbal group as examined by Dakubu (1989) indicates that the verb is seen as the head word that is modified by the pre and postverbal particles. To Dakubu, the verb by nature syntactically functions as the head of the entire structure.

In examining the structure of verb phrases in Dagbani, Welmers (1979) shows that the grammatical labels that are assigned to some particles are found outside the domain of the verb. He contends that these particles perform numerous syntactic functions, is mark tense, aspect, mood, polarity and modality, some of which may be misinterpreted because they are not visibly specified in the verbal paradigm.

However, the verbal group carefully observed by Atintono (2004) shows that the Gurenɛ verb encodes state, process or activity. The verb is the lexical head of the verbal phrase. He opines that the verb phrase basically refers to the verb and its intimate modifiers which do not include the object noun phrase. He further observes that the Gurenɛ verb consists of an obligatory root or stem. Thus, the stem may take one or more suffixes. He concludes that there may be preverbal or postverbal modifiers modifying the verb.

In addition, various verbal markers are categorized as particles rather than affixes (Nicole, 1973). These particles usually precede the verb and perform certain functions such as modality, polarity and tense as well as negation. This observation is also made by Schaefer & Schaefer (2004) for Safaliba. To them, these particles mark "tense, negation and adverbal ideas." A careful study of these scholarly works and some other works in Dagbani shows that there is a need for a complete analysis of the structure of the Dagbani verb phrase focusing on the verbal particles. It is this background that motivates this study.

1.1.1 Dagbani and its speakers

Dagbani is a Mabia language that has been categorized within the Niger-Congo language family; it is a member that belongs to the Oti-Volta sub-group (Naden 1988; Naden 1989; Bendor-Samuel 1989). It is spoken in the Northern Region of Ghana. There are three dialects that are highly intelligible, namely: Tomosili (the Western dialect) which is spoken in Tamale, the capital town of Northern Region. The other two are Nayahili (Eastern dialect) and Nanuni spoken in Yendi and Bimbila respectively. Phonological differences between the dialects are reflected mainly in tone and intonation, and there are lexical and a few grammatical differences, Hudu (2010:4).

According to the 2021 Population and Housing Census, there are 2,310,939 people in the Northern Region who can speak the language. National censuses in Ghana group together four related ethnic groups who speak Moore-Gurima Dagbamba, Nanumba, Mamprusi and Moore (spoken mainly in Burkina Faso).

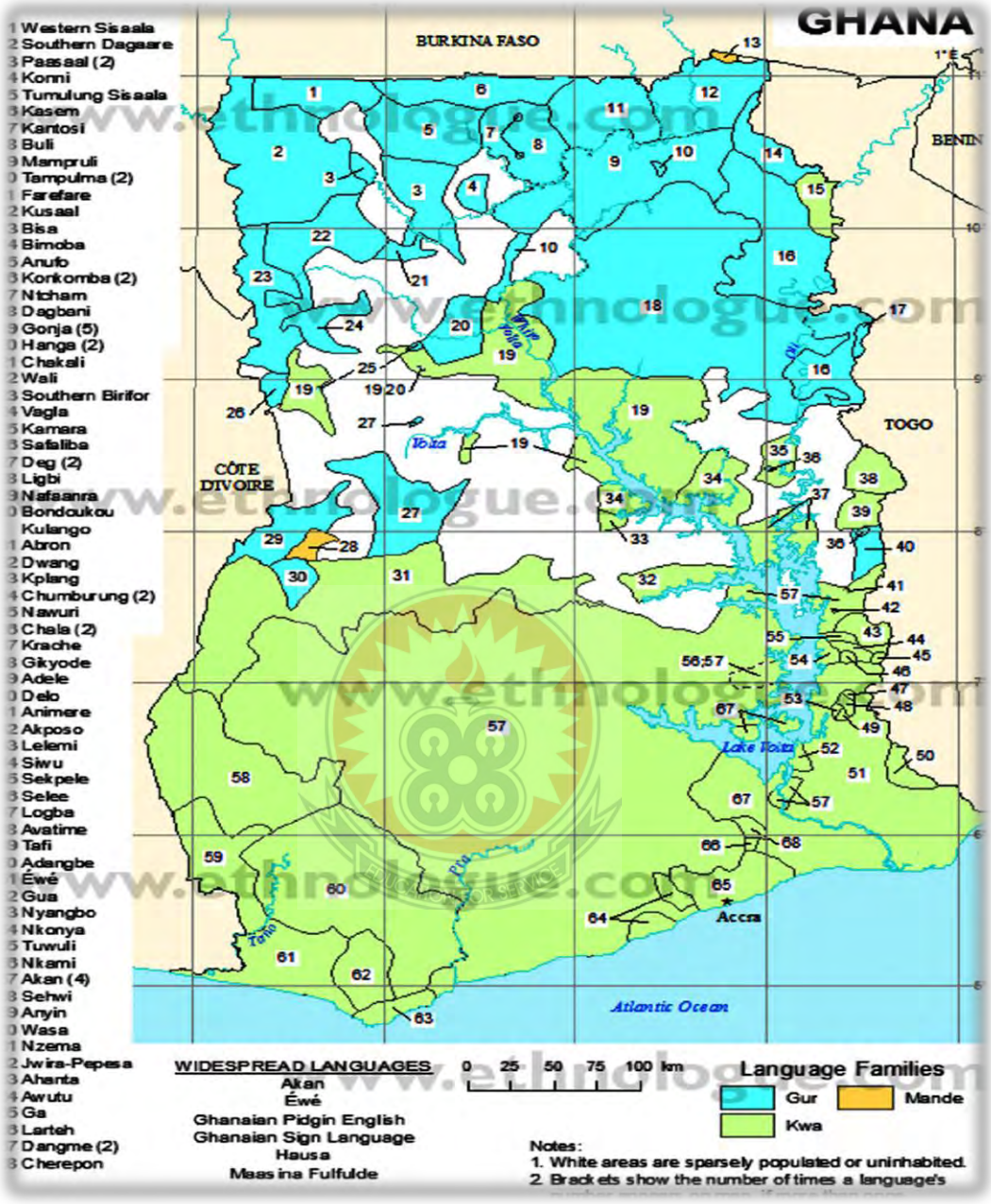


Figure 1: Language map of Ghana highlighting Dagbani in (18) and where it is spoken, (Lewis et al., 2013).

1.2 Statement of the problem

Linguists have developed an interest in the structure of the verb cross-linguistically. Among them are: Comrie, (1976) Dakubu, (1989) Payne, (1997) Bodomo, (1997, 2003) Atintono, (2004) Schaefer & Schaefer, (2004) Akanling-Paare, (2005) Schwarz, (2005) Saanchi, (2006) Annan, (2014) and Adjong, (2018). In Dagbani, the likes of (Olawsky, (1999) Hudu, (2006) Adam, (2010) Issah, (2013) Gurundow, (2012) and Abdul-Rahaman, (2013). All attempt to shed more light on understanding the nature, structure, role and function of these verbal particles in Dagbani.

Adjong (2018:1) points out that Mabia (Gur) languages such as Gurenɛ, Dagaare, Sisaali and Dagbani, Buli posses verbal particles which are assigned important grammatical and discourse functions such as tense, aspect, modality and polarity marking. Adam (2010) also shows that Dagbani makes use of preverbal particles within the domain of the verb phrase for the purpose of negation. However, following the work of Olawsky, 1999; Hudu, 2006; Issah, 2013. The particle *la* can occur in the post-verbal position in the language. For Olawsky (1999), the particle *la* could function as a focus, aspectual or emphatic marker. Contrary to that, Hudu, (2006) and Issah (2013) identify the same particle to mark only focus in the language. However, they hold different views about the type of focus marker it is; while the former claims that the particle marks contrastive focus on full NPs, adjuncts, emphatic pronouns and wh-phrases, the latter asserts that it marks presentational focus on NP complements, adjuncts or an entire VP. For instance, the particles *shiri* could be used to mark assertiveness while *yaa* could also be used to mark habitual action, as in (1)

(1) a. *Bɛ* *shiri* *kana.*
2PL ASS come.PERF

'They actually came.'

b. *Bɛ* *yaa* *di-ya*
2PL HAB eat-PERF

'They have eaten again.'

(2) a. *Bɛ* *di* *yaa* *kana.*
2PL TDM HAB come.PERF

'They came again.'

It could be seen that, in sentence (1a), *shiri* is used to mark assertiveness while *yaa* also presents a different syntactic role in (2a). According to Bendor-Samuel, (1976), there are over thirty of these verbal particles in Dagbani that are used to modify the verbal head. Thus, it has become a truism that 'verbal phrase' as a word category has not received much linguistic attention in Dagbani. Hence, it is the aim of this study to make a comprehensive description of these particles, and those that were not been captured in the previous accounts concerning their syntactic role, function and distribution in the language in which the present accounts make a provision of what were not captured in the previous works.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to examine the structure of the Dagbani verb phrase.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are to:

i. explore the various elements that occur within the Dagbani verb phrase;

ii. discuss the functions of Dagbani preverbal particles within the verb phrase;

iii. underlie the functions of post-verbal elements within the verb phrase.

1.5 Research questions

The study addresses the following research questions:

i. Which elements occur within the Dagbani verb phrase?

ii. What are the functions of the pre-verbal particles within the verb phrase?

iii. What are the functions of post-verbal elements within the verb phrase?

1.6 Significance of the study

The findings of the study are significant because it will provide a complete analysis of the structure of the Dagbani verb phrase. It will also help throw more light on the syntactic functions of Dagbani preverbal and post-verbal particles and preserve some important aspects of the Dagbani literature. Beyond that, the study will add knowledge to researchers, and students of Colleges and Universities to understand the linguistic behaviour of these particles in the Dagbani verb phrase, thereby addressing the divergent view some researchers hold about some of these particles. Again, the results of this study

will complement the existing literature in the area of syntax in Dagbani, and this will form the basis for similar studies in the area that the current account does not cover. This can be done both in Dagbani and in other languages of study.

1.7 Limitations of the study

One major weakness observed in this study has to do with the choice of two dialects of Dagbani to carry out the analysis. Although Dagbani has three major dialects as pointed out earlier, the Nayahili and Tomosili dialects were chosen for the analysis of the the study. This decision was borne out of the fact that although the researcher understands all three dialects, collecting data from all three dialects requires a lot of financial commitment which is practically not available. Hence the decision to settle on two dialects for this study.

1.8 Delimitation of the study

The study focuses mainly on a syntax-oriented approach to the study of the structure of Dagbani verb phrases, with emphasis on the particles. Indeed, semantic and pragmatics-driven motivations have been perceived to contribute to the understanding of the particles, especially the functions of pre and post-verbal particles. Irrespective of the fore-going, except in supportive cases, where the syntactic roles of these particles posit difficulties, all the functions are looked at only syntactically.

1.9 General outline of the study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one contains an introduction, background to the study, statement of the problem, the significance of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, limitations, delimitations of the study, and general outline of the study.

Chapter two presents a literature review that is in line with the objectives of this study as well as the theoretical approach or framework for the analysis. The literature is reviewed under the following themes: the notion of verbal phrase, the typology of verbal particles, previous works on verbal particles in Mabia languages, and the verbal particles in some Non-Ghanaian Languages. It also discusses the theoretical framework. Chapter three looks at the methodology and research design. It looks at the research design, population, sampling techniques, and sample size. Others are data collection instruments, data analysis, and data presentation. Chapter four focuses on data presentation on the structure of Dagbani verb phrases focusing on the Pre and post-verbal particles. Finally, chapter five deals with summary, conclusion, and recommendation.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant literature on the structure of the verb phrase as well as discusses the theoretical framework for the study. The chapter is organized as follows: the Notion of Verb Phrase, which is presented in section 2.1, while the typology of verbal particles is reviewed in section 2.2, and section 2.3 discusses previous works on verbal particles in Mabia (Gur) languages. Section 2.4 also discusses verbal particles in some non-Ghanaian languages. Finally, section 2.5 explores Functional Grammar as the theoretical framework adopted for this study.

2.1 The Notion of theVerb Phrase

A prototypical phrase is a group of words forming a unit and consisting of a head or 'nucleus' together with other words or word groups clustering around it (Declerck et al., 2006). Giannakis et al (2013) argue that a verb phrase (VP) is a phrase that is invariably headed by the verb. Tallerman (1998) also stresses that the head is an important element of a verbal phrase, which may occur with optional or obligatory dependents. Halliday (1994:196) uses the term 'verbal group' to describe a set of words that appear in a predefined set relation as an extension of the verb. Ondondo (2015) demonstrates that some elements are a necessary component of the verb phrase. He explains that while some dependents (components) are required for the head verb to fully express its meaning, others are not. The dependent elements that the head verb needs in order for its meaning to be complete are tightly tied to it, while those that the head verb does not need are just loosely related to it.

Oji (1978) studied the verb phrase in Igbo. He postulates that the verbal phrase can be finite or non-finite or either simple or complex. If it is simple, it entails one word, and complex if it entails two or more words. This implies that the entire VP can constitute only one word or combination of other modifiers that fall within the entire VP structure. Below in (3) and (4) present the simple VP and complex VP in Igbo.

Simple Verb Phrase

(3) a. *o bu kala*
'He lives here'.

b. *Eze siri ike*.
'Eze is strong.'

c. o du mma.
'It is good.'

Complex verb phrase

(4) a *o ga abia.*
'He will come.'

b. *o la ebo akwa*.
'She is crying (cry).'

c. *Nya mere mu Ji bia.*
'It made me hold come.'

d. *Mu aka abia nnyaa*
'I would have come yesterday.'

(Oji, 1978:173-174)

In a simple verb phrase structure in (3), there is only one verb without any other supporting verb unlike in structure (4) where either an auxiliary or additional verb such as a (serial verb) formed part of the VP. In relation to the VP constituents, Mwiinga, (2017) also shed more light on the literature concerning the VP structure and its element in Tonga. He stresses that the dependent elements in The Tonga VP relate differently to the head verb and further that there are those elements that the head needs while others are not obligatory; thus, the elements that are obligatory are known as arguments/complements. This behaviour is present in Dagbani, where noun phrase NP or prepositional PP or even verbal modifiers can occupy the peripherals of the main verb in VP structure. Thus, the phenomenon of the verb phrase consists of either the verb head or the verbal head together with other components (complements and adjuncts) which are directly or indirectly linked with the main verb.

Furthermore, Musah (2018) maintains that the central component of the verbal phrase in Kusaal is the head. The verb phrase can also be extended to cover or accompanied by pre-verbal modifiers, auxiliary verbs, and post-verbal modifiers. He indicates that the verb invariably preceded the object nominal which in turn precedes the only post-verbal particle in Kusaal. For Atintono (2004:91), he describes the verb phrase of Gurenɛ as, "any syntactic expression that involves the verb and all direct modifiers that precede it or immediately follow it that excludes complements and adjuncts".

(5). *Di*!

'eat!'

(6). *Kɔma la di ya*

Children DEF eat COMPL

'The children ate.'

(7). *Kɔma la daarɛ di ya*

Children DEF two. days. ago eat COMPL

'The children ate two days ago.'

(Atintono, 2004:91)

The Illustration in (5) shows that the verb phrase consists of only one word (main verb). In (6) the verb phrase is made up of two elements (the main verb and a modifier). The post-verbal modifier *ya* indicates that the action has been completed. In sentence (7) three elements are made up of the verb phrase, that is, two modifiers plus the verbal head. In relation to Dagbani, similar patterns have been observed - the verb phrase can appear as a bare (one word) like *di* 'eat' or it may be accompanied by other modifiers that give additional information about the main verb. The constitutes or modifiers that can co-occur with the verbal head can either precede the verb or follow it like that of Gurunɛ, where a verb phrase can be formed together with one or more modifiers. In addition, the verb in Dagbani, invariably occurs before the post-verbal elements and the NP at the object place. Thakur (1998) on the other hand, claims that verb phrases in English are different from other phrases like the NP, PP, and others, such that, the main difference lies in the fact that verb phrases cannot have post-modifiers in them while other phrases like nouns and adverbials have those particles. This is explicitly distinct in Dagbani - modifiers that modify the verb within the verb phrase can be either pre-verbal modifiers

or post-verbal modifiers in Dagbani, though the post-verbal modifiers are few as compared to the pre-verbal modifiers. I exemplified the occurrences of both pre and post-verbal modifiers in Dagbani using the following:

(8) *O* *yi yɛn kana, di ni viɛla*

3SG COND FUT come it FUT good

'If he/she will come, it would be good'

(9) *O* *kana yaha*

3SG come.PERF again

'He/she has come again.'

The syntactic distributions of the verbal phrase in English and Dagbani are distinct in the sense that, English only allows pre-verbal modifiers with VP while Dagbani permits both pre-verbal and post-verbal modifiers with the VP realization.

2.2 The typology of verbal particles

Walters (2010) defines verbal particles as "abstract grammatical functions which do not stand alone in real speech, but which are considered to be separate words". According to Zwicky (1985), particles are the words left over when all the others have been assigned to syntactic categories. In some languages, some groups of words have been assigned to a particle category: markers of mood and sentence type, honorifics, indicators of topic and focus, case-markers, tense/aspect morphemes, markers of emphasis, subordinators,

coordinators, indicators of direct vs. indirect discourse, negators, vocative markers, deictics, definiteness/indefiniteness markers, classifiers, (Zwicky, 1985). Particles are multifunctional and heterogeneous, encompassing various categories of word functions such as conjunctions, adverbs, interjections, and prepositions, and they perform interactional, referential, and structural functions, regardless of their categorization (whether they are words or not) (Tzartzanos, 1946). Welmers (1979) suggests that verbal particles frequently mark functional categories such as tense, aspect, modality, and polarity. For instance, in Modern Greek, the particles *na, θa,* and *in* are used to denote modality (Roussou & Tsangalidis, 2010). Besides, in Awing, a Bantu language, the particle *lə* marks exhaustive focus while the particles *tsoə* 'only' and *kə* 'also' mark exclusiveness (Fominyam & Simık, 2017). In Kinande, a Bantu language, the particle *na/naye* '*also/too*' indicates addition (Schneider-Zioga, 2015). Additionally, in other languages, such as *Kikisi*, *Kindendeule,* and *Chingoni* particles function to indicate negation (Ngonyani, 2003). Languages vary in the degree of precision with which they express situational location on the time axis. Different languages clearly differentiate a unique number of tenses and differ in how these are communicated, that is, morphologically or lexically (Comrie, 1985:7). Some convey past, present, and future, but some have two distinctions: general, or neutral, which is non-past, and past, or the other way around – future, and non-future (Timberlake 2007:305). There are indeed languages that do not use grammatical tenses at all, instead expressing time through lexical means such as temporal adverbs. According to Dahl, (1985: 116), the past tense is perhaps the only class whose character as a category of tense is unquestionable. However, the fact that it may be specified in several ways, and in particular by TAM sets

other than the past, makes it rather complicated to figure out the exact role of the past in different TAM systems (Dahl, 1985:116).

Bybee et al. (1994:125) makes a distinction between perfective and imperfective aspect, they opine that the perfective aspect is the aspect of narratives as they narrate the sequence of events while imperfective aspects overlap or coincide with each other in terms of time, and thus they do not advance the narrative. Bar-Moshe (2007) also affirms that imperfective is typically used in narratives to represent a situation as ongoing and incomplete, thus it is typical in setting up background information such as description, characterization, and commentary. However, according to Comrie (1976:52), perfective implies “the continuing present relevance of a past situation". He opines that it expresses a relation between two time points – the time of a prior situation, and the time of the state resulting from it. In this respect, the perfect is retrospective (Comrie 1976:64). In reply to Comrie's description of the perfect, Bar-Moshe (2007) suggests that Comrie's explanation of the perfect has to do with tense rather than aspect since it doesn't look at the internal structure of a situation but rather relates two points in time. Indeed, the perfect in the past and perfect in the future are less concerned with the resulting state and more with the location of one situation relative to another, and so Timberlake (2007) categorizes them as "relative tenses" (:192). Bybee, et al. (1994:54) on the other hand, choose the term "anterior" for this category, which also suggests their temporal rather than aspectual essence.

Comrie mentions four types of perfect situations

i. Perfect of result – a present state is referred to as being the result of some past situation.

ii. Experiential perfect – a given situation has been held at least once during some time in the past leading up to the present.

iii. Perfect of persistent situation – a situation that started in the past but continues into the present. The situation referred to is both past and present.

iv. Perfect and recent past – the present relevance of the past situation referred to is one of temporal closeness, i.e. the past situation is very recent.

(Comrie, 1976:56-60)

In Dagbani, both imperfective and perfective forms are best marked by the use of inflectional morphemes. Tense is however marked using particles which are not inflected to the verb forms in Dagbani.

2.3 Previous works on verbal particles in Mabia languages

The verbal particles are frequently used in Mabia languages, (Naden, 1988:36, Dakubu, 1996; Bodomo, 1997 Saanchi, 2003; Atintono, 2004). Bodomo (1997) opines that tense in the Mabia languages (including Dagaare, Dagbane, Gurenɛ (Frafra), Mampruli, Kusaal, and Moore) is conveyed by means of a system of preverbal particles in conjunction with the lexical verb(s) in the clause. He maintains that these particles can also express a wide range of other verbal systems in this language group. Bodomo (ibid) observes a distinction between the perfective and imperfective aspects of Mabia verbs.

He notices that while Mabia verbs with the perfective aspect describe an event or action as ending or completed, those with the imperfective aspect describe the action as unfinished or yet to be completed. According to Bendor-Samuel (1976), a verb phrase in the majority of Mabia languages consists of a verb, which may be preceded optionally by one to four particles. He affirms that Tampulma has six of the particles while Bimoba and Dagbani have twenty-seven and over thirty respectively.

Dong (1981:43) in his study of the Dagaare verbal phrase records close to eighteen modifiers found in the Dagaare verb phrase. Saanchi (2006) also demonstrates that, in Dagaare, the verbal head can co-occur with particles at both pre-verbal and post-verbal positions that are used to modify the verbal head. Moreover, he identifies as many as sixteen (16) particles which include (15) pre-verbal particles and (1) post-verbal particles in Dagaare. He claims that these pre-verbal particles serve the grammatical function of indicating tense, aspect, and polarity. Saanchi (ibid) further demonstrates that a single verbal particle can have various grammatical functions. However, he disagrees with Bodomo's (1997) classification of time adverbials *zaa* 'yesterday' and *daari* 'three days ago' as pre-verbal particles. He proposes that the two-time adverbials, like most adverbials, are not pre-verbal particles because they are syntactically movable. Furthermore, Saanchi's research demonstrates that Dagaare marks tense by the use of pre-verbal particles *da*. He notices that the pre-verbal particles *man*, and *ba,* could also be used to mark habitual aspect and negation. He also shows that, whereas *là* is a pre-verbal repetitive marker that indicates a previously occurring situation, its counterpart *lá* is the

only post-verbal marker in Dagaare and serves as an affirmative marker. He uses the data below to buttress his argument:

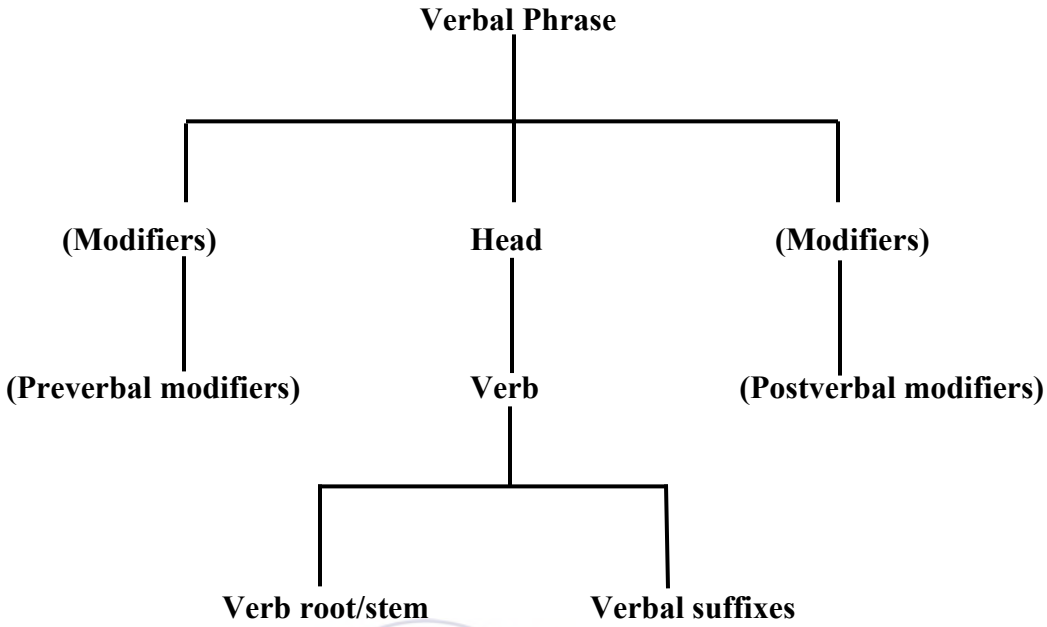
(9) a. *A bie da ba maŋ wa kyɛ.*
DEF child PAST NEG HAB com here
'The child did not use to come here.'

b. A *Pɪɪrɪ da maŋ là ɔɔ lá a kyɪ.*
DEF sheep PAST HAB REP chew AFF DEF millet
'The sheep used to re-eat the millet.'

(Saanchi, 2006:57)

Another observation made is from Atintono (2004) who examines the morphosyntax of Gurenɛ verbal phrase. He argues that the Gurunɛ verbal phrase consists of preverbal modifiers, the verb, and post-verbal modifiers. He adds that verbal modifiers invariably occur at either a pre or post-verbal position in order to indicate or perform a particular grammatical function in the language. The structure below represents Gurunɛ verbal phrase structure:

Figure 2: **The structure of Gurenɛ Verb phrase** (Adopted from Atintono, (2004:93).



Dagbani VP structure exhibits the same pattern as that of Gurenɛ as illustrated in Figure 2. The pre-verbal and the post-verbal particles occur at the periphery of the main verb.

Furthermore, Atintono (2004) tries to sequence his verbal modifiers to demonstrate how it occurs within VP. He indicates that the verbal particles in Gurenɛ can occur before the verbal head to mark time, tense, condition, aspect, etc. He maintains that most of the pre-verbal particles can co-occur in a particular syntactic sequence, that is, time particles precede the tense particles followed by the conditional, aspectual, and then future particles. The schema below represents the sequence of both preverbal and post-verbal modifiers in Gurenɛ.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
(Time)	(Tense)	(Conditional)	(Aspectual)	(Future)	(Negation)	(Emphatic)

H	I	X	Y
(Epistemic)	(Purpose)	**VERB** (Tense)	(Focus/Affirmative/Completive/Directional)

(Atintono, 2004:95)

From the schema above, the pre-verbal particles range from A-I while the post-verbal particles range from X-Y. However, the tense particle has the potency to occupy both pre and post-verbal positions. Atintono (2004) defines verbal modifiers as particles that can co-occur with the verb and categorizes them into nine groups. The time adverbs *daam*, *daar,* and *dayita*, which mean "yesterday" "two days ago" and "three years ago" respectively, are among the particles he recognizes. He buttresses that, time is marked by the use of a temporal adverbial which is predominantly found at pre-verbal positions as exemplified in (11).

(11) a.

Budaa	*la*	*zaam*	*kiɛ*	*da'a*
Man	DEF	TM	go	market

'The man went to market yesterday.'

b. *A daar di paga*

He TM eat wife

'He married a wife two days ago.'

c. *Ba diyita ny kuurɛ la*

3PL TM burn funeral DEF

'They performed the funeral three days ago.'

(Atintono, 2004:100-101)

The pre-verbal particles from (11) above are used to indicate a specific time reference. While sentence (11a) indicates that such action is been carried out one day past the time of the conversation, sentence (11b) also indicates a specific time reference, which suggests that the marriage ceremony occurred two days away from the time of speaking. In (11c), the funeral was performed three days prior to the time of speaking. Meanwhile, in response to data postulated in (11) above, Adjong (2018) maintains that those adverbs, he treated as verbal modifiers fall outside of what he defines as verbal modifiers. Adjong, claims that the absence of other types of adverbs like the place and the manner adverbs might have motivated his inclusion of such adverbs as verbal modifiers in gurenɛ.

The study of Adjong (2018) also affirms that, in Buli, the pre-verbal *pòòm'* 'some time ago' and '*nyièm'* is typically used to encode time in the language. Whereas *pòòm'* 'some time ago' is used to denote an action that occurred some time ago, i.e., prior to the speaking time, *nyièm'* is used to indicate that, a particular action or event is yet to occur.

(12)a *Adem pòòm tāā bàn.*

Adem PST owns. bangle

'Adem owned a bangle (some time ago).'

'He no longer owns it (bangle).'

b. *Baaba* *pòòm* *bōō* *yérí.*
Baaba PST be.there.FOC home
'Baaba was at home.' = Baaba is no longer there.'

(13)a. *Zúéwá* *nyìèm* *nyūū* *wúúk.*
thief.DEF PRES drink.FOC weed
'The thief would have smoked weed.'

b. *Zúéwá* *nyìèm* *bóràà* *nyūū* *wúúk.*
thief.DEF PRES PROG drink.FOC weed
'The thief would have been smoking weed.'

c. *Bísíná* *nyìèm* *óràà* *pōtī* *ká* *sùnkpáám.*
child.PL.DEF PRES ROG deshell FOC groundnut
'The children would have been deshelling groundnut.'

(Adjong, 2018:88-91)

The time particles/markers in Buli are contrary to what was observed for Gurenɛ, where the time particles at the pre-verbal position make a specific time reference. Atintono (2004) further, posits that there are two tense markers in Gurenɛ, that are used to mark two-time boundaries, he opines that the language does not mark a present tense, that, *dáá* and *yùùm* are used to mark tense. He indicates that *dáá* is used to denote time that is relatively remote from speech time, at least more than a week but certainly less than a

year while *yùùm* denotes remoteness or time far removed from speech time; at least one year or more as exemplified in 14) below:

(14) a. *Bà* *dáá* *yèlè* *bá*

3PL.NOM PST tell 3PL.ACC

'They told them.'

b. *Mam* *dáá* *ze* *la* *bilam* *gee* *nyɛ* *wana*

1SG PST stand FOC there CONJ see this

'I stood there and saw this.'

c. *Kaareba* *la* *dáá* *le p* *sɛ* *tuuma*

Farmers DEF PST ASP start work

'The farmers started work again.'

These time reference markers (TRMs) are present in Dagbani, which Bendor-Samuel (1978) and Olawsky, (1999) refer to as time depth markers. Moreover, there are three of such particles in Dagbani, *di* 'past but not exceed one day' *sa* 'past one day or one to come' and *daa* 'past more than one day or at least two or more days to come in the future'.

Atintono (2004) discusses other verbal particles apart from the tense markers. He indicates that the pre-verbal particle *sán* is used as a conditional marker. He indicates that the particles can be compared to the English "if", "It is used in a subordinate clause in which the actualization of one clause depends on the other" (104).

(15)a. *Fu* *sán* *tara* *lagef fu* *da'* *naafu* *la*

2SG COND has.HAB money 2SG buy cow DEF

'If you have money you buy the cow.'

b. *Fu* *san* *nyɛ* *nyuurɛ* *fu* *ku* *dua* *bo* *fus*

2SG COND see life 2SG kill animal give 2SG father

'If you become healthy you sacrifice an animal for your father (deceased).

(Atintono, 2004:105)

In sentence (15a), it is indicated that the subject can only buy the cow if he/she has money. (15b) indicates that the person should sacrifice an animal only if he/she becomes healthy. He opines that, aspect is marked in the language by the use of the following pre verbal particles, *k'm, púgúm, pílúm, nán yèèm, kèlùm, tábélɛ, wá, lé mààn, ná, ní, yà'àm, lèèm,* túgúm**,** *yɛrúm and yí* are in variety of context. He indicates that the pre-verbal *k'm, púgúm, pílúm, nán, and yèèm* are aspectual modifiers that modify the verb to show that the action or event occurred without any internal complications, as exemplified in (16) below:

(16) a. *Kusebego* *la* *k ' m* *vige* *tiisi* *la*

Wind DEF ASP uproot trees DEF

'The wind just uprooted the trees.'

b. *Pɔká* *là* *púgúm* *lé* *tárá* *là* *púúr*

Woman DEF ASP ASP have FOC stomach

'The woman is even pregnant.'

c. *Ma* *púgúm* *soke* *ni* *p gesi* *la* *yele*
1SG ASP ask PST women DEF ase
'I have even asked about the women's case.'

(Atintono, 2004:111)

He indicates that pre-verbal *kèlùm* and *nàn* are used to indicate a continuative aspect while the affirmative aspectual is marked by the use of pre-verbal tábélɛ and wá.

(17) a. *À* *ká* *wá* *dí*
3SG NEG ASP eat
'S/he did not eat.'

b. *À* *ká* *wà* *dí*
3SG NEG FUT eat
'S/he will not eat.'

(Atintono, 2004:111-112)

He maintains further that, the repetitive aspects on the other hand are realized by the use of two preverbal particles: *lé* and *mààn.*

(18) a. *Ba* *lé* *p`ɔs`ɛ* *kua*
3SG ASP started farming
'They started to farm again.'

b. *Ba daa lé lebe sige boko la puan*

3SG PST ASP return enter hole DEF LOC

'They returned and entered into the hole again'

(19)a. *Ataŋa mààn k va'am la*

Ataŋa ASP weed farm DEF

'Ataŋa weeded the farm once more.'

b. A lé mààn n dugɛ dia la

3SG ASP ASP cook food DEF

'S/he again deliberately cooked the food.'

(Atintono, 2004:112-113)

Following the work of Naden (n.d) in his study of Mampruli sentences, she suggests that the language makes use of pre-verbal particles. He indicates that polarity is marked by the selection of one of the following pre-verbal particles - {*ku}*, {*di}* or {*bu}*. That, pre-verbal {*ku*} is used to mark future negative while {*di*} and {*bu*} mark *imperative+negative and* 'elsewhere' *negative respectively*. He affirms that *gba* and *min* also function as pre-verbal particles but he doubts the syntactic roles which these particles play in the language. He argues that the function which those particles play could be discourse/pragmatic rather than syntactic. That *gba* 'also' applies in a situation where two clauses or other units are parallel in structure and sense but a particular slot or role is filled by different comparable participants in each. The similarity between his work, and that of this present study is that Dagbani also marks negative – by the use of closely related particle *ku*, *di* and that of *bi.* The particles *ku* and *di* in Dagbani also marks

future negative like that of Mampruli in Naden's work. While *bi* marks past negative in Dagbani.

Musah (2010) maintains that the perfective aspect can be expressed using the preverbal particles *pa* (hodiernal past time), *sa* (recent past time), and *da* (remote past time), which label various degrees of past time reference, which is exemplified below:

(20) SIMPLE PERFECT (without the particle)

a. *M* *so. ja*
1SG bath.PERF
'I have bathed.'

b. *Fʋ* *so. ja*
2SG bath.PERF
'You have bathed'

c. *Ada:m* *so. ja*
Name bath.PERF
'Adaam has bathed.'

(21) HODIERNAL PAST (Restricted to only events of today)

a. *M* *pa* *so.ja*
1SG HOD.PST bath.PERF
'I bathed earlier today.'

b. *Fʋ* *pa:* *so.ja*

2SG HOD.PST bath.PERF

'You bathed earlier today'

(22) RECENT PAST (Refers to only yesterday's events)

M *sa:* *so.ja*

1SG REC.PST bath.PERF

'I bathed yesterday.'

(23). REMOTE PAST (Refers to events before yesterday)

M *da:* *so.*

1SG REM.PST bath

'I bathed some time ago'

(Musah, 2010:131-133)

He further suggests that the future tense is realized by the used of the pre verbal *na* with a high tone.

(24). *M* *na* *zɔ*
"I will run"

Fʋ na zɔ
"you will run"

y *na* *zɔ*
"S/he will run"

Ti *na* *zɔ*
"we will run"

Ya na zɔ a
"you will run"

Ba na zɔ
"They will run"

(Musah, 2010:134-135)

To communicate various grammatical purposes, the particle *la*, however, is used in Dagbani and other Mabia languages at various syntactic points (see Bodomo 1997; Olawsky 1999:29; Dakubu, 1991; 2000; Issah, 2008; Atintono, 2003:2013). The focus particle *la* occurs after the verbal head. Indeed, it is one of the most controversial particles by Dagbani scholars including the work of Olawsky, (1999); Issah, (2008) 2013) Fusheini, (2006); Gurundow, 2012). Olawsky (1999:38) argues that the particle *la* as a post-verbal element marks both focus and continuous aspect, and he uses the data below in (25) and (26) to support his argument.

(25) a. *Fati* *bari* *la* *ʧɛeʧɛe*
Fati ride IMPERF FOC bicycle
'Fati is riding a bicycle.'

b. *M* *bɔhindi* *la* *Dagbanli*
I learn IMPERF FOC Dagbanli
'I am learning Dagbanli.'

(Olawsky, 1999:38)

In responding to the data postulated in (25) above (Issah, 2013) claims that it is possible to have imperfective aspectual reading without the particle *la* as presented below:

(26) a. *Napari* *ku-ri* *bu-hi*
Napari kill-IMPERF goat-PL
'Napari is killing goats.'

b. *Tiyumba* *di-ri* *bindirigu maa*
Tiyumba eat-IMPERF food DEF
'Tiyumba is eating/eats the food.'

c. *Napari* *ku-ri* *la* *bu-hi*
Napari kill-IMPERF FOC goat-PL
'Napari is killing goats.'

However, sentences (26a) and (26b) have the same habitual reading, with and without the particle *la*. Issah (2013) strongly affirms that it is also possible to have the particle *la* in perfect sentences. The absent of *la* in (2b) does not render the construction ungrammatical, it deprives the sentence of a certain semantic notion. However, the presence of the focus particle *la* in a sentence (2c) marked focus on the complement.

(27)a. *Tiyumba* *ku-Ø* *la*[1] *bua*
Tiyumba kill-PERF FOC goat
'Tiyumba has killed a goat.'

[1] The glossing of focus has been changed to FOC to ensure comformity, though it is glossed as focus marker (FM) in Issah (2013).

b.	*Bi-hi*	*maa*	*tu-Ø*	*la*	*Napari*
	Child-PL	DEF	insult-PERF	FOC	Napari

'The children have insulted Napari.'

Issah (2013:162) claims that when the post-verbal *la* follows a verb, it marks focus on the entire predicate including the complement. Issah further suggests that the *la* particle could also be motivated by a pragmatic factor(s). He asserts that when the particle is present at the post-verbal position, it could mean that the information that is conveyed is new to the hearer while the absence of the particle implies that, such information is old or shared between the speaker and the hearer. We use the data below to exemplify his claim.

(28)a.	*Napari*	*da-Ø*	*la*	*loori*
	Napari	buy-PERF	FOC	lorry

'Napari has bought a lorry.

b.	*Napari*	*da-Ø*	*loori*
	Napari	buy-PERF	lorry

'Napari has bought a lorry.'

(29)a.	*O*	*nya-Ø*	*la*	*Napodoo*
	3SG	see-PERF	FOC	Napodoo

'S/he has seen Napodoo.'

b.	*O*	*nya-Ø*	*Napodoo*
	3SG	see-PERF	Napodoo

'S/he has seen Napodoo.'

(Issah, 2013:164)

In Gurenɛ, Atintono (2013) affirms that *la* can occur at the post-verbal position in order to mark focus and convey emphatic meaning on the verb and the postpositional phrase that follows it. He indicates that the absence of the particle in the locative construction renders the expression not having an emphatic meaning.

(30) *Bɔgetɛ* *la* *boi* *la* *bɛ*
Bucket DEF be at FOC where
'Where is the bucket?'

(31) *Bɔgetɛ* *la* *ze'* *la* *bɔ'ɔ* *la* *tiŋa*
Bucket DEF stand.STAT FOC room DEF land
'The bucket is standing on the floor of the room.' (emphatic)

(32) *Bɔgetɛ* *la* *ze'* *bɔ'ɔ* *la* *tiŋa*
Bucket DEF stand.STAT room DEF land
'The bucket is standing on the floor of the room.' (non- emphatic)

(Atintono, 2013:139)

The Dagbani focus particle *mi* is typically used to encode or mark focus on the verbal head, which precedes it. Hudu (2006:22) indicates that the Dagbani post-verbal particle *mi* is used to mark a contrastive focus on the action being expressed by the verb. Contrary, to this Olawsky, (1999) views it as an emphatic marker of the imperfective morpheme *-ri/-di,* the interest here will only be limited to its syntactic distribution and function. Hudu uses the following data in (33-35) to buttress his argument. Focusing on the particle *mi*

(33)a. *Adam* *da-Ø (li) mi*

Adam buy-PERF (3SG.INANIM.) FOC.

'Adam bought (it).' (He did not receive it for free).'

b. *Baba* *kuhɨ-rɨ mɨ*

Baba cry-IMPERF. FOC.

'Baba is crying.' (He is not laughing).

c. *Tɔha da: ji kulɨ ʧanɨ moʔuni, o olɨ -mɨ.*

hunter TD when. Ever go.IMPF. bush LOC. 3SG. follow.PERF.- FOC.

'Whenever the hunter was going to the bush he would follow.' (not stay at home)

d. *Kande* *ka-Ø-mi-* *na* *da: ni*

Kande come-PERF.-FOC.- LOC. market LOC.

'Kande came to the market.' (She did not wander about in the neighbourhood

e. *Abu* *yelɨ -Ø- mi* *ni* *kum* *malɨ* *o*

Abu say-PERF.- FOC. That hunger has 3SG.

'Abu said that he is hungry.' (he did not leave us to guess from his look)

f. *Fatima* *bɔb* *bɔb-gɨ mi*

Fatima wears headscarf-SG FOC.

'Fatima has worn a headscarf.'

(Hudu, 2006:22)

Now, the post-verbal *mi* can follow a complement phrase to indicate that, it is only a specific action that was ongoing at the time of the departure of the speaker.

(34) a. *Bi-hi maa di diɛmdi mi, ka n chaŋ daa*
Child-PL DEF PST play FOC COMP 1.SG go.PERF market
'The children were playing as the time I went to the market.'

b. *Bi-hi maa di diɛmdi, ka n chaŋ daa*
Child-PL DEF PST plays COMP 1.SG go.PERF market
'The children were playing when I went to the market.'

(35) a. *Bɛ zaa dihi mi n kpena*
2PL all rash FOC 1SG come.PERF
'All the child just rashed in"

b. *Bɛ zaa dihi, n kpena*
2PL all rash FOC come.PERF
'All the children rashed in.'

(Hudu, 2006:22)

From sentence (34a) the presence of the post-verbal *mi* postulates that the action that was ongoing before the speaker left was the "playful" action demonstrated by the subject. This action contrasts with any other action(s) which might be demonstrated by the subjects. The absence of the post-verbal *mi*, in sentence (34b), does not make the action

contrastively focus with other actions that might be demonstrated by the subjects. Similarly, sentence (35a) posits that the action carried out by the subject is a contrastively focused mark of the action of *dihi* 'rash' while (35b) gives us a neutral reading with regards to the absences of the post-verbal *mi.* This subsection has examined the syntax of the verb phrase in some Mabia (Gur) languages. I have shown that some of the particles are typically used to encode or mark focus on the verbal head which precedes it. It also indicates that some of the post-verbal particles are used to mark a contrastive focus on the action being expressed by the verb.

2.4 The verbal particles in some non-Ghanaian languages

Kayne (1985), states that preverbal particles in Old English can be regarded as small clauses, optionally attached to the left of the verb in Old English. Diesing (1997) also suggests that the position of the particle in Yiddish does not reflect a head complement order; nonetheless, it is a consequence of an obligatory incorporation of the prefix into the verbal head. She concludes that the preverbal particles are not phrasal, but, instead, instances of head-incorporation. Pintzuk and Taylor (2006) use the distribution of verb particles in the history of English to argue for a competition between object verb OV and verb object VO grammars. They claim that particles are prosodically light and hence that the existence of postverbal particles must be taken as evidence for an underlying VO order.

Walters (2010) explores the post-verbal particles in *Nuosu*, a language spoken in Northern China. He opines that several post-verbal particles occur in the language to perform a series of grammatical functions, which include the expression of new

information, habitual aspect, experiential aspect, polite request, and others. He maintains that some of the particles have multiple functions at the same, and he identified over thirty different particles. That is if the head verb is *[dzu]* 'eat', it may be followed by directional, resultative, modals or particles of various sorts, but they all modify, limit, or specify the idea of 'eating', resulting in 'has eaten', 'came to eat', 'is unable to eat. He classified the classes of particles, which can follow the main verb in table 1 below:

Table 1: Classes of elements which follow a head verb

Class	Description
Directional	involve motion and directionality
Resultative	that carry the event of the head verb to an end-point or their goal
Modal	add ideas of intention, potentiality, or volition to the meaning of the head verb
Aspect	particles that express the time internal working of the verb
Currently Relevant State (CRS)	a single particle expressing that a state of affairs is relevant to the present situation
Validational	particles that express (un)certainty of the information in the clause
Evidential	particles that express the source of information of the clause
Speech act	particles that express things such as the attitude of

	the speaker, or his wish for
Response Clause connector	conjunctions used between clauses to mark things such as 'because' 'then', etc

(Walters, 2010:4)

Baso (2006), studied pre-verbal negative particles in Modern Standard Arabic, he opines that four pre-verbal particles are observed to mark negation in the language, that is, *ma:*, *la:, lam* and *lan.* He indicates that the negative particle *ma:* is usually used to negate perfect tense whereas particle *la*: is employed to negate progressive imperfect tense. This is exemplified below:

(36) *ma: kataba zaid risa: lata-n*
Neg wrote-3SGM12 Zaid letter-a
'Zaid did not write a letter'

(37) *la: yaktubu zaid risa: lata-n*
Neg write-3SGM Zaid letter-a
'Zaid is not writing a letter.'

(Baso, 2006:165)

From sentence (36) above, the presence of the pre-verbal *ma:* indicates that the subject was not able to execute a particular past action while (37) implies that, the subject will not perform a particular future action. He further affirms that *lam* and *lan* are always used to negate imperfect tense, particularly in activities that will be done in the future., the pre-verbal negative *lam* carries a meaning in which a possible activity is planned for the

future but the exact time of the action is not decided while the preverbal negative *lan* carries the meaning of impossibility. This is exemplified in (38) and (39):

(38)a. *lam* *yazhab* *zaid* *ila* *astra:liya:*
Neg go-3SGM Zaid to Australia
'Zaid has not gone to Australia yet.'

b. *lam* *tazhab* *Maryam* *ila* *ja:mi atin*
Neg go-3SGF Maryam to university
'Maryam has not gone to university yet'

(39) a. *lan* *yazhaba* *zaid* *ila* *astra:liya:*
Neg go-3SGM Zaid to Australia
'Zaid will not go to Australia'

b. *lan* *tazhaba* *Maryam* *ila* *ja:mi atin*
Neg go-3SGF Maryam to university
'Maryam will not go to university.'

(Baso, 2006:166)

Hottori (2012) discusses pre verbal particles in *Pinglelapese*, he point out four pre-verbal negative markers in the language, which are, *saewaeh* "not", *seuhla* "no longer", *soah* "not", *dae* "don't" and *kahsikaeh* "not yet". He opines that, *saewae* is the most common/ default negative particle in the language while the negative *seuhla* express a state or

activity that once existed but no longer does. That, *soah* "not" can only occur with an auxiliary verb *aen* whereas *dae* "don't" can also co-occur with over subjects. He also identified other preverbal particles, which are summarized in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Pre-verbal particles in *Pinglelapese*

Kah	May	Expressing indefiniteness
Ke	Habitual	Expressing habitual aspect
Kaein e	Just/simpl	Expressing an important change in
Peinaeh	Still/only	Expressing the stability of the Situation
Naemaen	Want	Expressing desire
Kakaen	Can	Expressing ability, sometimes and Permission

(Baso, 2006:102)

VanBik (2017) discusses the directional pre-verbal particles in *Hakha Lai,* and opines that several pre-verbal particles can have varied directional functions. He indicates that *hei* and *va* are used when the interlocutors are on relatively the same spatial level.

(40) *Angmang nih vok a hei cheh*

ʔâŋmăŋ niʔ vok ʔa-hăy-tsheʔ/

Angmang ERG pig 3SG.S-Lv.DIR(S&L with A)-throw.II1

'Angmang stones a pig from afar.'

(41) *Angmang nih vok a **va** cheh*

/ʔâŋmăŋ niʔ vok ʔa-va-tsheʔ/ Angmang ERG pig 3SG.S-Lv.DIR(S&L with A) throw.II

'Angmang moves towards a pig and stones it.'

(VanBik, 2017:141).

In sentence (40), the subject stone the pig from being far away but in the same location as the listener while in (41) the subject move towards the pig and stone it.

VanBik (2017), further maintains that the two sets of pre-verbal particles *rak* and *ra* are used when the ground levels of the locations of the agent and the patient are equal, or at least the difference is so minimal that it can be disregarded. This is exemplified below:

(42) *Angmang nih vok arak cheh*

ʔâŋmăŋ niʔ vok ʔa-rak-tsheʔ/

Angmang ERG pig 3SG.S-Lv.DIR(S&L with P)-throw.II

'Angmang stones a pig from afar.'

(43) *Angmang nih vok a ra cheh*

/ʔâŋmăŋ niʔ vok ʔa-ra-tsheʔ/ Angmang ERG pig 3SG.S-Lv.DIR(S&L with P)-throw.II

'Angmang moves towards a pig (and us) and stones it.'

(VanBik, 2017:143).

Whitman (2000) Studied pre-verbal particles in Korean and Japanese, he opines that the Korean negative potential particle *mos* 'cannot' can serve as a pre-verbal and post-verbal particle in Korean.

(44) *Mica ka hakkyo ey mos ka-ss-ta*. (*Korean*)
Mica NOM school to cannot go-PAST-INDIC
'Mica couldn't go to school.'

(45) *Mica ka hakkyo ey ka-ci mos hay-ss-ta.* (*Korean*)
Mica NOM school to go-SUSP cannot do-PAST-INDIC
'Mica couldn't go to school.'

(Whitman, 2000:6)

From the above in sentence (44), the verbal particle '*mos'* is found before the verbal head in order to mark negation whereas in sentence (45) the same particle is found after the verbal head in order to indicate the same grammatical role.

He posits that the particle *na* is also present in Japanese in order to indicate or mark negative as exemplified in (46-48) below:

(46) *Me2gusi mo na mi1 so2/ ko2to2 mo to2gam-u na*
Worry too NEG sees PRT deed to blame-(CONC). NEG
'Don't pity me / Don't blame me.'

(47) *Za* *k* *1domo* *tapa* *waza* *na* *se* *so.*

Hey children foolish trick NEG do.IRR PRT

'Hey kids, don't try any foolish tricks.'

(48) *Titi* *papa* *mo* *upe* *pa* *na* *sakari-i*

Father mother too me TOPIC NEG depart- (CONT).

'Father, mother, don't leave me.'

(Whitman, 2000:6)

He maintains that Japanese make use of two pre-verbal particles which are used as modal and aspectual markers in the language. He opines that pre-verbal *e* 'can' is used in expressing (nondeontic, nonepistemic) possibility whereas *ari,* expresses ongoing action.

(49) *Sa-wo-pune* *no2* *e* *yuk-i1te pat-e-mu.*

PREF-small-boat GEN POT go-ing stop-IRR-CONJ

'The small boat will likely be able to go and dock.'

(50) *Sima* *no2* *sakizaki* *ari* *tat-er-* *panatatibana.*

STand GEN capes PROG stand-IMPERF-ADNOM flower

'The flowers that are standing on the capes of the islands.'

(Whitman, 2000:20-21)

From the above in (49), the presence of the pre-verbal *e*_indicates the speaker's view towards the propositional content. (50) indicates incomplete action. He argues that

Korean lacks preverbal aspect or modal markers, but it has a preverbal adverb corresponding to another "low" functional head, that the Korean pre-verbal *cal* 'well.' He maintains that the distribution of *cal* can be accounted for in the same fashion as the premodern Japanese mood/aspect markers. That, the verb moves to the head of the projection hosting *cal* in its specifier; the remnant then moves to the left of *cal*.

Julius (2020) examines the role of a particle with respect to their discourse functions, he argues that the particles *aná* and *ngáti* are usually used for interrogation, and each of them has a definite communicative context and effect. He contends that the speaker uses the particle *ana* at the beginning of a clause to get the addressee's attention to the question he/she is about to pose while *ngati* uses it to present a question but with two additional conditions: the question elicits a yes/no answer, and that answer is clear; it is, therefore, a rhetorical question.

(51) *Aná* *a-mbusánga* *mmwé* *ngáti* *m-kúwóná* *sálâ?*
PART 1a-friend you PART 1SM-feel hunger
'Hey my friend, do you see that you are starving?'

(52) *Akulu* *vao* *ni* *va-janga-aga,* *'ambáno* *tu-tende uli?'*
Elder his then 2SM-answer-PST PART 2SM-do what
'Their elders then asked, 'so what should we do?'

(Julius, 2020:3)

He opines that the canonical marker for negation in *Chiyao* is the morpheme *nga-* which is inserted in the verb's initial position before the subject marker in addition to the verbal particle *ngu.*_The negative construction in (51) appears without a negative particle while its counterpart in (52) contains a particle *ngu*. Although both sentences have a negative reading, the negative sentence in (58) is understood to be more emphatic than (59) due to the addition of a negative particle ngu which yields an extra interpretation.

(58) *nga-ngw-aula*

NEG-1SG.PRES-go

'I am not going.'

(59) *nga-ngw-aula ngu!*

NEG-1SG.PRES-go PART

'I am not going (at all).'

(Julius, 2020:5)

Asheli (2020) discusses the form and functions of particles in *Shinyiha*, he demonstrates that *Shinyiha* has a variety of particles that perform various syntactic and communicative roles. He pays attention to *haa, pee, ishi, mwee, –ope, nziila, alaa and bhuulo* as particles in *Shinyiha.* He indicates that, *haa*, is used with negative sentences, which is equivalent to English 'no' and appears at the post-verbal position in order to denote a negative reading. This is exemplified in (60-67) below:

(60) *Inin-ta-ku-lil-a haa I*

SM1SG-NEG-PRES-cry-FV no

'I am not crying.'

(61) *Tu-ta-ku-lim-a haa*

SM1PL-NEG-PRES-cultivate-FV no

'We are not cultivating'

(Asheli, 2020:17)

He suggests that the particle *pees i*s used to express condition and as well as attention calling element in a sentence.

(62) *Pee mu-ku-lim-a, na-sogol-a*

Since SM2PL-PRES-cultivate-FV I am –leaving-FV

'Since you are cultivating, I am leaving.'

(63) Pee a-bhal-a ku-i-jenje, mu-lesh-e

Since SM3SG-go17-AUG-river, SM2PL-leave-FV

'Since he/she has gone to the river, leave him/her alone.'

(Asheli, 2020:18)

Other particles, which he describes are *Ishi* and *mwee*. That, *ishi* is used by the speaker to attract the attention of the addressee, while *mwee* plays an emphatic role in the post-verbal position:

(64) *Ishi, na-bha-lol-a a-bha-jeni Ishi*

SM1SG-OM-see-FV AUG-2-visitors

'I have certainly seen the visitors.'

(65) *Ishi tu-a-mala i-sha-kulya Ishi*

SM1PL-PT-finish AUG-7-food

'We have surely finished the food.'

(Asheli, 2020:19)

(66) *I-n-zala ya-tu-lum-a mwee*

AUG-9-hunger SM9-OM1PL-bite-FV mwee

'We have suffered from hunger very much.'

(67) *A-bha-jaha bha-lim-il-e mwee*

AUG-2-youth SM2-cultivate-perf-FV mwee

'The youth have cultivated very much.'

(Asheli, 2020:20)

Chang (2008) indicates that aspectual particles are more functional constituents specifying the locational perspective of the speaker expressed by the post-verbal particles, namely directional and evidential particles. He indicates that the directional particles imply a spatial point-reference to the speaker, consequently centripetal and centrifugal motions are always anchored with respect to the speaker's location. He adds that the evidential particles also demonstrate a formal syntactic role, and that, *me* and ʦŋ are particles that are used to express evidentiality. He maintains that *me* is used when a

claim is made by the speaker on the basis of his direct knowledge or first-hand information whereas ʦʅ is used by a *Naxi* speaker to make a statement without direct evidence. He also contends that directional verbs play a crucial role in the development of functional post-verbal particles, most significantly in the workings of the modal or aspectual expressions, that, the modal contrast between *realis* and *irrealis* is made on the directional verbs in *Naxi*.

2.5 Theoretical framework

The theoretical model adopted for the study is Functional Grammar (Halliday, 1994; Givón, 1984).

2.5.1 The Functional Grammar

There are several variants of the functional approach to grammar analysis, but they all share the same fundamental orientation, which is meaning. The Functional Model's main argument is that in order to understand the linguistic meaning, we must recognize the function of structural components. As a result, in contrast to its generative counterpart, the approach contends that the language's formal features, such as structure, are informed by meaning rather than the other way around (Halliday, 1994; Givón, 1984). The functional approach appeals because it is concerned with understanding how language's configuration has been influenced by the various ways in which it is used for various purposes and in various contexts.

The primary function of language, according to functionalists, is communication. Language, in their opinion, seeks to represent experience in a natural context. "The two

primary functions of language are the representation and communication of knowledge or experience," Givón (2001:77). Dik (1981:2) observed in a similar vein "the functional paradigm holds that linguistic inquiry should be preoccupied with accounting for the communicative function of language." As a result, rather than simply expressing thoughts, language is fundamental for human communication. DeLancey's (2000:4) observation that "human language is not simply a device for presenting and pointing to interesting objects and events in the world" is also worth noting.

The logic behind the functional model is that in order to understand the linguistic meaning we have to appreciate the function of elements in a structure. As a result, the approach unlike its generative counterpart posits that the formal characteristics of language such as its structure are informed by meaning, not the reversed (Halliday 1994; Givón 1984; 2001, I; Tomasello 1998; Van Valin and Lapolla 1997, Dryer 1999; Dik 1981). The motivation for adopting the functional approach is grounded on the fact that it is interested in understanding how the manner in which language is used for different purposes, in different contexts has shaped and outlined its structure. The framework differs from the generative or formalist tradition championed by Chomsky (1957, 1965) Government and Binding theory (Black, 1999) where the focus is on form instead of function. However, the push of the Chomskyan stance is that syntax is independent of other cognitive processes in the speaker's mind. This contrasts with the functionalist stand on language in which communication is perceived as part of cognitive abilities. Atintono (2004:10) posits that, even though the representation of structure is important, it only comes after meaning, which is the purpose of any interpersonal interaction. The

structure arises because it has to encode the meaning that is conceived in the mind of the speaker. In the formalists' paradigm therefore languages are analyzed with representations of structure and rules, but in the functionalists' which is the guiding principle of this thesis, theorizing involves explanations of linguistic phenomena with meaning in focus. Thus Givón (1984) argues that the structure of language must be linked with the functions of language. It is my hope that adopting the functionalist model will provide me with the right framework to do a comprehensive analysis of the verb phrase and the verbal particles in Dagbani.

2.6 Summary of the chapter

The chapter reviewed relevant literature that is pertinent to this study. It looked at the notion of the verbal phrase, and the typology of the verbal phrase and discussed the verbal particles in Mabia languages as well as non-Ghanaian languages. The chapter ends with a discussion of the Functional Grammarians Approach as the theoretical framework that aids the analysis in this research.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology used in conducting this research. The chapter is divided into nine sections as follows: section 3.1 deals with the research approach and design. Section 3.2 discusses the data types and data collection procedures whereas section 3.3 discusses the study population, sampling size and study sampling techniques and section 3.4 outlines the research site. Section 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7 discusses the instrument used for data collection, accessibility and ethical considerations respectively. The data analysis procedure is explained in section 3.8 and the summary of the chapter is in section 3.9.

3.1 Research approach and design

According to Mungenda and Mungenda (2003), a study approach guides the researcher on whether to do the research using a qualitative, quantitative, or triangulation technique. The methodologies employed in any research are dictated by the nature of the research, which in turn determines the processes that should be followed. It is important to understand that the term qualitative refers to non-statistical descriptive research. On the other hand, quantitative research is defined as an examination that calls for the application of statistics. Triangulation or mixed methods research refers to a study that uses both descriptive and statistical approaches. This research collected and analyzed data using qualitative research rather than quantitative methods because it did not seek numerical data. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research methods are frequently helpful when investigating subjects when little is known about a phenomenon. The

descriptive research design was used in this study. As the name suggests, this type of research involves delivering an explanation of a specific phenomenon. James (1997) claims that descriptive research is utilized to gather information on the current status of a phenomenon. Its primary goal is to carefully observe and precisely document an interesting phenomenon (Bhattacherjee, 2012), as well as to present a comprehensive 'picture' of the phenomenon by outlining the circumstances or events in which it takes place (Rubin & Babbie, 1997).

3.2 Data types and data collection procedures

In this study, two key types of data were collected: these were primary and secondary data. The primary data were taken from recordings of speeches amongst native speakers. These consisted of spontaneous utterances made by these native speakers as they interacted with the researcher and among themselves. The secondary data were sourced from available Dagbani written texts such as Abu-Bakari (2014, 2017), Olawsky (1999) and Adam (2016).

3.3 Study population

Population "is the totality of all subjects that conform to a set of specifications, comprising the entire group of persons that are of interest to the researcher and to whom the research results can be generalized" (Pilot & Hungler, 1999). According to Dörnyei (2007: 96), population refers to "the group of people whom the study is about". In other words, the population is the group of people that the researcher will use to generalize the results of their study.

The population for the study are speakers of Nayahili and Tomosili dialects of Dagbani in the Northern Region of Ghana. According to the reports of the 2021 Population and Housing Census conducted by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), a body nationally authorized to collect and keep data on the population and the demography of Ghana, the total population of the Northern Region is about 2,310,939. It is estimated that over two million people speak Dagbani in the Northern Region. The reason is that the language is the main medium of communication in the Region, and it is also taught in schools at all levels. Dagbani is the only northern language spoken on both Ghanaian popular television and radio stations such as GTV, Sagani TV, Zaa TV, N TV, GBC, Radio Tamale, Radio Justice, Radio Zoya and Mighty FM.

3.3.1 Sample and sampling techniques

According to Dörnyei (2007), sampling is the process of selecting a subset of a population to characterize the entire population in a given study. In this study, a purposive sampling technique was used to select thirty (30) speakers of Dagbani from all four geographical areas. (See table 3 for the details on the participants). In purposive sampling, the selected participants are recommended and chosen because the samples that are chosen are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the issues that the research tries to analyze. I considered the age, gender as well as social class of each of the participants in the selection. This is because age and gender influence participants' knowledge about the constituents of the verb phrase and the verbal particles. Participants that were selected were between the ages of twenty-five (25) and sixty (60) for both males and females. The reason was that people within these ages have gathered a lot of

experience concerning their knowledge of the grammar of the language. The study included women at the ages of forty (40) and sixty (60) because certain aspects of language usage and expressions are associated with women. So, data on verbal particles can be compared in order to gather reliable data for the study.

Table 3: Sample size for the study

Town	Respondents		Number
Sang	Males 7	Females 3	10
Tamale	Males 7	Females 3	10
Yendi	Males 3	Females 2	5
Sambu	Males 3	Females 2	5
Total	**20**	**10**	**30**

3.4 Research site

The study was conducted in Dagbon, in the Northern Region of Ghana. Dagbon is one of the oldest and most organized traditional kingdoms in Ghana founded by Tohazie 'the red hunter', but the field research was conducted in four localities of Dagbon namely Tamale, Yendi, Sambu and Sang. The researcher chose these places because they are representative of the Tomosili and Nayahili dialects of Dagbani. Those localities are where the custodians and indigenous form of the language is used. Below is the traditional map of Dagbon showing areas where the language is spoken in Ghana.

Figure 3: (Adapted and modified from Tomomatsu, 2014:156)

3.5 Instruments for data collection

In this study, the primary data collection instrument employed is interviews and focus group discussions. The researcher used these instruments because they allowed participants to discuss easily some verbal particles in their language, their meanings, roles and functions and their syntax as well as how they co-occur in discourse. I used the unstructured interviews with the assumption that speakers would freely talk about and share ideas about verbal particles in Dagbani since speakers use the language but might not have taken cognizance of the particles in their expressions. With unstructured interviews and focus group discussions, the researcher had to interact with participants with a particular motive in mind (Kumar, 1999). The researcher used these instruments because they enabled the participants to freely talk about verbal particles in their

language in terms of their meaning. Data were also collected from Dagbani literature books which form my secondary data.

3.5.1 Documents

This is a method of obtaining data by extracting data from existing written documents. The secondary data were also sourced from available written texts in the literature books such as *Amina* (Abu-Bakari, 2014), *Wunibimbirili,* (Adam, 2016), *Duligu mini guŋa* (Abu-Bakari, 2017) *Dagbani Grammar by* (Abu-Bakari, 1988). The selected books were read and the sentences with the particles were underlined, after which they were coded and classified for the analysis.

3.5.2 Unstructured interviews

Unstructured interviews were conducted to elicit data for this study. According to Kumephor (2002), interviews provide an opportunity for the researcher to translate questions into a local language for easy participation by respondents. The researcher interacted with participants in order to obtain relevant information from them during the data collection process for any research work. The unstructured interview was used to allow respondents to freely discuss the verbal particles in their native language without restriction. **(**Both literate and illiterate in the language) native speakers of Dagbani were engaged. According to Zhang and Wildemuth (2009), the purpose of an unstructured interview is to expose the researcher to unexpected themes and to support him or her in developing a better understanding of the interviewees' social reality from the interviewees' perspectives. Also, interviews were conducted on mobile phone

interactions with the respondents. Some of the sentences and constructions that include verbal particles were thrown before the native speakers to test whether they (native) actually allowed or used those forms, for instance, a conversation was made in one of the radio stations in the local language *n kanina yee* 'I said I am coming'. The participants were asked to read those sentences, which were written on paper for them to pronounce. However, the researcher read out sentences to the illiterate, who were not able to read.

3.5.3 Focus group discussions

Focus group interviews, according to Dörnyei (2007) are interviews in which a small group of people (typically between six and twelve) are asked questions and their responses are recorded.

Participants are encouraged to converse freely with one another in a natural setting, sharing personal experiences and discussing current issues such as chieftaincy, politics, teenage pregnancy, low educational standards, health, agriculture, flooding, and the high unemployment rate in Northern Ghana. While the participants participated in the talks, the researcher acted as a moderator to guarantee that the discussions were not hijacked by a few individuals in the group.

A total of twenty (20) respondents were selected out of the thirty (30) for the focus group discussions, five (5) from each of the four-research sites chosen. The focus group discussions were held first at Sang and Sambu, on the 13th and 14th of August, 2022 respectively, because the researcher resides in the locality (Sang), so it was perceived as a starting point for the discussion. The discussions were held in Sang at one of the

respondent's houses on the 13th of August, 2022, and at Sambu on the 14th of August 2022 at the silo clip. Because Sang and Sambu are geographically close to each other, it was easier to conduct the focus group discussions at those localities within two days. The researcher gathered the remaining data from participants in Tamale (at my friend's house) and Yendi (at one of the respondent's houses) on 29th August and 8th September respectively. As for Sang and Sambu, five (5) participants were selected from Tamale and five (5) from Yendi, where the focus group discussions were held. Each group was given the task of telling stories, describing activities and events in their town, and debating societal topics like agriculture, education, health, sports, and marriage. These discussions lasted thirty (30) to forty-five minutes (45) and were audio-recorded with notes made. The chats were recorded using a digital recorder. All the sentences and constructions were identified and transcribed for analysis after the recordings were played in a quiet environment. This data-gathering approach was chosen because it is a cost-effective way to acquire a huge volume of information. It is also more natural because the data comes directly from the participants rather than through a third party. It is also adaptable, allowing the researcher to tailor it to the group's mood.

3.5.4 Researcher's native intuition

I used my native intuition to obtain some of the data for the study as a Dagbani speaker. I created sentences and phrases that focused on the thesis's main point. I also made generalizations from the other data sources that are pertinent to the syntactic realization in the language. The researcher engaged five native consultants to check the grammaticality of the data produced, two of them hold their master's degrees in Ghanaian language Studies from the University of Education, Winneba while the remaining three

hold their Master's in Linguistics at the Department of Applied Linguistics of the University of Education, Winneba. All of them teach the language at least five years in colleges of education and senior high schools.

3.6 Accessibility

The researcher is a native of the research area but lives in Tamale, which is about 106 kilometres away. The researcher visited each of the communities twice (Sang, Sambu, Tamale and Yendi). The researcher went on his first journey to find respondents and get to know them. This was accomplished with the assistance of my childhood friend, Mr. Damba, who also happened to dwell in Yendi. I used two weeks to gather data in Tamale, that is, from 10th to 26th July 2022. I also used the whole of August to gather data from my home town Sang as well as Sambu. However, Yendi was the last place I gathered some aspect of the data from the participants, and that was within the first week of September 2022.

3.7 Ethical Consideration

It was critical to consider ethics when doing this type of study. Ethics is concerned with issues of right and wrong. As a result, a researcher must ask pertinent questions to determine whether it is appropriate to explore a particular occurrence. The researcher was also able to mitigate the study's research ethics concerns, according to the chapter. Before the study began, the researcher obtained approval from the respondents by informing them about the purpose of this research. They were also informed that their confidentiality and privacy would be respected throughout the study.

3.8 Data analysis procedure

Data were analyzed sequentially from the perspectives of syntax in order to answer the research questions that were proposed in chapter one (1). This discussion took into account all of the syntactic restrictions as well as the verbal particles that occur in the data. Functional grammar was used in all discussions and analyses. The outcomes of the discussions were stated, and conclusions were drawn.

3.9 Chapter summary

This chapter dealt with the methodology employed for this study on the structure of Dagbani verb phrases with a focus on the verbal particles. The research approach and design, data types and collection procedures, research areas, the population, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, accessibility, ethical considerations and data analysis procedure were discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE STRUCTURE OF THE DAGBANI VERB PHRASE

4.0 Introduction

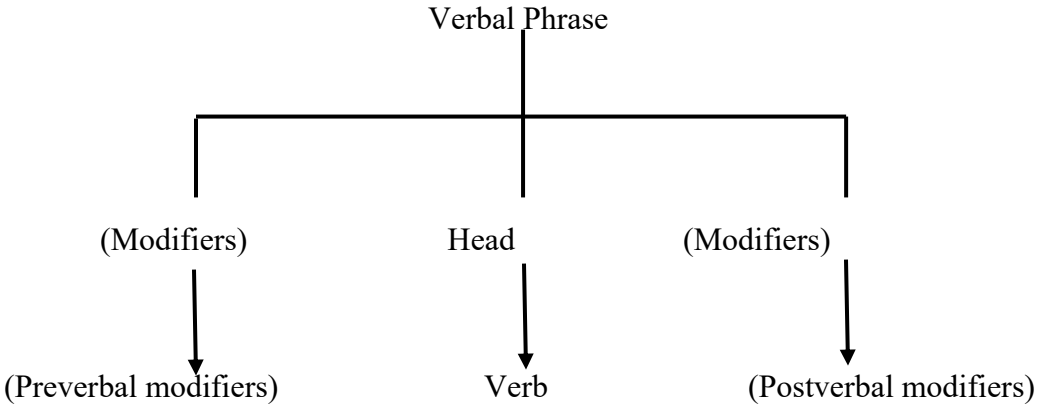
This chapter examines the structure of the Dagbani verb phrase, focusing on the pre-verbal and post-verbal particles and their syntactic functions. The verbal particles form an integral part of Dagbani grammar, and the analysis concerning its syntactic realization and distribution will be significant to the speakers and linguists, especially those who are interested in the morphology and syntax of the language.

The chapter is divided into six (6) major sections as follows: section 4.1 examines the structure of the Dagbani verb phrase, sections 4.2 and 4.3 describe Dagbani pre-verbal and post-verbal particles, section 4.4 also describes the functions of Dagbani post-verbal particles, section 4.5 provides the interaction between pre-verbal and post-verbal particles 4.6 presented the chapter summary.

4.1 The structure of the Dagbani verb phrase

Dagbani has an SVO (subject-verb-object) structure. The verb predominantly is found in the middle position between the subject and the object. The verb could appear as a bare form with a meaning like *di* 'to eat', *go* 'to travel' *ku* 'to kill'. It could also be preceded or followed by particles or verbal particles known as pre and post-verbal particles/modifiers which may be arranged according to a particular syntactic distribution. The structure of the Dagbani verb phrase is summarized in the figure below.

Figure 4: (Adapted and modified from Atintono, 2004:93).



(68). *O* *di* *yaa* *tu* *o* *pam* *zuŋɔ.*

3SG TDM HAB insult 3SG much today

'he/she insulted him/her much once again today.'

(69). *Bi-hi* *maa* *sa* *bi* *yɛn* *kana*.

Child-PL DEF TDM NEG FUT come.

'The child will not come tomorrow.'

(*Source:* Family discourse)

From the constructions in (68) and (69), the verbal head is presented together with the preverbal particles, which are underlined. The time *daa* and habitual particle *yaa* can co-occur with the verbal head in the same syntactic distribution as presented in (68). Also, in (69) it is realized that three preverbal particles can co-occur, which comprise, *sa* for the time, *bi* for negation and *yɛn* for future tense particle.

4.2 The Dagbani pre-verbal particle

Verbal particles are an integral part of the Mabia (Gur) language grammar (Naden 1988; Bodomo 1997). Bendor-Samuel (1971) indicates that Tampulma has six particles, while Bimoba has twenty-seven. He affirms that there are over thirty particles in Dagbani, which include *ni* 'subordinator', *yi* 'conditional', *di* 'hypothetical', *di,sa,daa* 'time depth markers', *yi* 'habitual', *na* 'still (not) yet' *naan* 'hypothesis or apodosis', *ti* 'focus' *yipa* 'just now (past)' *shiri* 'actuall', *naɣi* 'necessity', *naanyi* 'and then', *pun* 'already', *yaa* 'once again' *lee* 'but, emphatic interrogative' *kuli* 'emphasis verb (just)' *dii* 'suddenly' *bi* 'future nagetive', *ku* 'future negative', *di* 'imperative/subjunctive negative' *jɛndi* 'actually' *lan/lah/mann* 'again' and *yɛn* 'about to'. In addition, Dagbani demonstrates a more composite but critical related system with particles assembled into fifteen orders happening after and before the verb stem (Bendor-Samuel, 1971).

4.2.1 The future particles, *ni* and *yɛn*

The future time particles are used to denote an action or state of an event that is yet to happen. In Dagbani, the pre-verbal particles that are usually used to denote future time are *ni* and *yɛn*. However, some particles like *ku* could denote future time negatively. My interest now is the future time *ni* and *yɛn* with regards to their syntactic role and distribution at the pre-verbal position.

(70) a. *Paɣa la ni kana zuŋɔ*

Woman DEF FUT come today

'The woman will come today.'

b. *Paɣa la ka-na zuŋɔ*

Woman DEF come-Perf today

'The woman came today.

(71) a. *M ba yɛn go mi*

1SG.POSS father FUT travel FOC

'My father is going to travel.'

b. *M ba go mi*

1SG.POSS father travel FOC

'My father has travelled.'

The constructions above in (70) contain two sets of sentences with and without the particle *ni.*

The sentence (70a) which contains the future particle *ni* indicates that the *woman,* who is the subject will carry out the intended action in the future. However, the future reading has been omitted as in the case of sentence (70b), which does not contain the particle. Similarly, sentence (71a) contains the future pre-verbal particle *yɛn,* which indicates future action within the construction while sentence (71b) does not indicate any future action due to the absence of the particle *yɛn.*

However, the choice of *ni* or *yɛn* as a future marker has to do with the future time range, that is, *yɛn* is used when the future action is very closed or about to happen. Let us look at the sentences in (72) below.

(72) a. *m* *ba* *ni* *go*
1SG.POSS father FUT travel
'My father will travel.'

b. *m* *ba* *yɛn* *go*
1SG.POSS father FUT travel
'My father is about to travel.'

The sentences in (72) above contain the two future particles *ni* and *yɛn*. Although both denote the future action, semantically *yɛn* is used when the speaker intends to carry out the future action within the shortest possible time as compared to *ni* which occurrence may take some time in the future.

4.2.2 The time depth particles *di*, *sa* and *daa*

The term 'Time Depth Marker' (TDM) denote a specific point in time in relation to the occurrence of an action/event, (Bendor-Samuel, 1976: Olawsky, 1999). The pre-verbal particles *di* 'past within a day', *sa* 'one day away of past', and *daa* 'at least two days above or past' mark specific time references in Dagbani, (Olawsky, 1999). However, Baker (1995:338) indicates that time and tense are two different syntactic properties but closely related, and hardly distinguishable in some languages. He affirms that time

modifiers specify the time at which some event or state happened. While Atintono (2004:102) also indicates the relationship between time and tense stating that whereas the former modifies an event definitely, the later modifiers an event indefinitely. Consequently, the time particles are typically used to encode the time at which a particular action or event has occurred. It may be used to make reference to a particular point in time which occurs previously or yet to happen. The syntax of Dagbani time depth markers *di, sa* and *daa* are examined in this subsection.

The pre-verbal particle *di* is typically used to encode time which occurs not more than a day after a speech time. The time of the event/action should not exceed a day, otherwise, it would be rendered as infelicitous. The speakers are generally conscious of the usage of this form, and it is hardly heard wrongly in most contexts.

(73) a. *Bi-hi* *maa* *di* *chaŋ-ya*

Child- PL DEF TDM go-PERF

'The children left today.'

b. *Bi-hi* *maa* *sa* *chaŋ-ya*

child-PL DEF TDM go-PERF

'The children left yesterday.'

c. *Bi-hi* *maa* *daa* *chaŋ-ya*

child-PL DEF TDM go-PERF

'The children left two or more days ago.'

(*Source:* Group conversation)

From the above, the presence of the pre-verbal particle *di* in the sentence (73a) makes reference to a specific time about the occurrence of the action of *chaŋ* 'go', which happens within just a day. In sentence (73b), the presence of the TDM *sa* indicates that the action that was carried out by the subjects took place 'one day past' the speech time. Similarly, sentence (73c) indicates that the subjects carried out the action 'two or more days ago' to the time of the conversation.

However, it should be noted that the time depth markers *di and sa* are used appropriately with the time adverbial; *di* 'past within day' collocates with the time adverbial 'today' while sa 'one day away or past' collocates with the time adverbial *sɔhila* or *zuŋɔ* 'yesterday or tomorrow'. And, inappropriate usage would render the construction ungrammatical. Let us consider the below sentences in (74):

(74). a. **Bi-hi maa di chaŋ-ya sɔhila*
Child-PL DEF TDM go-PERF yesterday

b. **Bi-hi maa sa chaŋ-ya zuŋɔ*
child-PL DEF TDM go-PERF today

4.2.3 Negation markers

The negation particles that occupy the pre-verbal positions are *bi*, *di*, *ku*, these particles have already been discussed in the literature so far. Now, my purpose here is to look at its syntactic distribution in relation to other pre-verbal particles. However, the particle *bi*,

marks negative action that has already occurred, when it co-occurs with the time depth like *sa,* it implies that the said action was not able to be carried out in one day before the conversation time. The sequence between the time depth particles and the negative particles follows strict order, as has already been claimed in the previous sections.

(75) a. *A bi di sayim maa?*
2SG NEG eat. PERF T.Z DEF
'You have not eaten the T.Z?'

b. *A di sayim maa?*
2SG eat. PERF T.Z DEF
'Have you eaten the T.Z?'

(Bawa-Sibdoo, 2014:9)

(76) a. *Bia la sa bi kana.*
Child.SG DEF TDM NEG come
'The child did not come here yesterday.'

b. **Bia la bi sa kana.*
Child.SG DEF NEG TDM come

(77) a. *Doo maa di bi di bindirigu maa.*
Man DEF TDM NEG eat food DEF
'The man did not eat the food.'

b.	*Doo	maa	bi	di	di	bindirigu	maa.
	man	DEF	NEG	TDM	eat	food	DEF

(78) a.

O	daa	bi	kana	kpe.
3SG	TDM	NEG	come	here

'He/she was not here more than two days ago.'

b.

*O	bi	daa	kana	kpe
3SG	NEG	TDM	come	here

(*Source:* Group discussion)

The constructions in (75-78) show the distribution of the negative particle *bi* in relation to the time depth. In sentence (75a), contains the negative *bi,* which indicates that the subject was not able to carry out the action while sentence (75b) gives a neutral reading due to the absence of the particle. In (76) and (77) the pre-verbal negative particle *bi*, occurs with the time depth markers in the same syntactic distribution. In (76a), the negative particle *bi* follows the time depth marker, which indicates that the subject was not able to carry out the action one day away from the time of speaking. In (76b), re-ordering the two particles makes the sentence ungrammatical, which is not recognized by the speakers. Similarly, (77a) and (77b), posit the distribution of the particle *bi* and the time depth maker *di*. In (77a), it indicates that the said action was not able to be carried out by the subject within that particular day while (77b) is ungrammatical or illicit as a result of placing the negative particle before the time depth particle. Also, the construction in (78a) indicates that the subject fails to perform the action at least beyond

two days before the time of the speech while (78b) is regarded as illicit as a result of re-arranging the position of the particle, that is, making the negative particle *bi* to precede the time depth particle *daa*.

The negative particle *ku*, marks an action that is yet to be carried out. It is used when the intended action is treated as a potential action, which indicates the subject failure or denial to carry out the action. It can also co-occur with the time depth markers in a strict order as presented below.

(79) a. *Adisa sa ku chaŋ daa*
Adisa TDM NEG go market
'Adisa will not go to market tomorrow.'

b. **Adisa ku sa chaŋ daa.*
Adisa NEG TDM go market

(*Source:* Group discussion)

It is observed from the above that, in the sentence (79a), the negative particle *ku*, follows the time marker *sa,* in the same syntactic distribution, however, it implies that the intended action which is yet to occur, is given a pre-denial signal to turn-down the request to carry out the potential action. It is also possible for a time marker *sa*, to have a past reading. The sentence (79b) is ungrammatical because of the distribution of the negative and time depth particles, that is, the particle *ku* should not precede the time depth particle *sa*, and that contributes to the ungrammaticality of (79b).

The pre-verbal negative *di* is used to indicate a denial to carry out a potential action by the subject. When accompanied by the time marker *sa* or *daa*, unlike the other negative particles which always follow the time depth markers, the negative *di* can be preceded or follow the time depth without posing any grammatical complexity, as illustrated in (80a) and (80b).

(80) a. *Tia yɛli mi ni, n sa di kana.*
Tia said.PERF FOC that 1SG TDM NEG come
'Tia says that I should not come tomorrow.'

b. *Tia yɛli mi ni, n di sa kana*
Tia said.PERF FOC that,1SG NEG TDM come
'Tia says that I should not come tomorrow.'

(*Source:* Group discussion)

4.2.4 The assertive particle *shiri*

This particle is used to indicate the actuality or reality that a particular action has occurred. The speaker uses it if he/she is sure about the occurrence of the action by the subject in question.

(81) a. *Pumaaya shiri chaŋ puuni*
Pumaaya actually goes.PERF Farm
'Pumaaya has actually gone to the farm.'

b. *Pumaaya* *chaŋ* *puuni*

Pumaaya go.PERF Farm

'Pumaaya has gone to farm.'

(82) a. *Bia* *la* *shiri* *kana.*

Child.SG DEF actually came.PERF

'The child actually came.'

b. *Bia* *la* *kana.*

Child.SG DEF come.PERF

'The child has come.'

(*Source*: Native intuition)

Sentence (81a), contains the particle *shiri*, which indicates the speaker's confidence that a particular action has occurred, it implies that the subject 'Pumaaya' actually went to the farm, whereas sentence (81b) gives a neutral reading with respect to the actuality or surety of the matter. Also, sentence (82a) indicates the surety of the action being carried out by the subject, that the goat actually came, while (82b), no surety or actuality about the action being carried out about the subject has been expressed.

Now, this particle can co-occur with the negative particle to indicate the speaker's confidence that, a particle action was not occurring or has not taken place. When they co-occur, the assertive particle usually precedes the negative particle, this is presented in sentences (83a) and (83b) below.

(83) a. *Bia* *la* *shiri bi* *kana.*

Child.SG DEF actual NEG come.PERF

'The child has actually not come.'

b. *Pumaaya* *shiri bi di* *bindirigu* *maa.*

Pumaaya actual NEG eat food DEF

'Pumaaya has actually not eaten the food.'

(Source: Native speaker intuition)

Sentence (83a) indicates the speaker's confidence that the said action *kana* 'come' was not carried out by the subject, i.e., the subject *bia* 'the child' did not actually carry out the intended action. Sentence (83b), expresses the idea that the subject *Pumaaya* did not actually eat the food.

4.2.5 The conditional particle *yi*

Conditional particles are used to indicate a requirement, which needs to be fulfilled before a certain action or event happens. The Dagbani conditional particle *yi* is closely related to the English "if". When it is used in a preverbal position, it typically means that the verb must undergo a certain action or state before certain conditions can occur. Below I presented two sets of examples, that possess the conditional *yi***.** This conditional particle could occur alone or accompanied by other preverbal particles in a strict order.

(84) a. *O* *yi payi* *nɛma* *maa* *ka* *a* *mi* *diɛli.*

3SG COND wash dress DEF CONJ 2.SG PRT dry

'If he washes the clothes, then you dry.'

b. *A* *yi bi paai* *yuma* *anii* *a* *ku* *tooi* *nyu* *li*

2SG COND NEG reach years eight 2SG NEG AUX drink it

"If you are not up to eight years old, you cannot drink it.'

(*Source:* Family discussion)

In sentence (84a), the presence of the conditional marker implies that the dress can only be dried if the first condition, that is washing the dress is done by the subject in charge. Failing to adhere to the first condition means the second action cannot be taken. Also, in the sentence (84b), there is a condition that must be met before you can drink that particular drink. It is clear that you can drink it, if you are eight years or above, meaning if you are less than that, the drink is not recommended for your consumption. The conditional particle can co-occur with 'time depth makers' *di*, *sa*, *daa* to set a specific time condition.

(85) a. *Adam* *yi* *di* *be* *kpe* *n* *naan kuli.*

Adam COND TD was here 1SG could go

'If Adam was here today, I would have gone.'

b. *O yi sa bi da kodu, ti sa bi yɛn di bindirgu*
3SG COND TDM NEG buy banana 3.PL TDM NEG FUT eat food
maa
DEF
'If he/she does not buy the banana, tomorrow we will not eat the food.'

c. *Doo maa yi daa kana ti ni yɛli di yɛltɔya.*
Man DEF COND TDM come 3PL FUT talk it story
'If the man comes days later, we will talk about the matter.'

(*Source:* Group discussion)

It could be inferred from the above in (85) that, the conditional particle *yi* could be combined with the time reference particles to impose a condition on potential future action. In sentence (85a), there is a condition that, the person can only go home if the first subject 'Adam' was around within that particular period. But, the absence of 'Adam' meant that the person must still stay. Also in sentence (85b), the condition that needs to be fulfilled requires that they will only eat the food tomorrow if the subject *doo* 'the man' buy a banana. However, construction in (85c), postulates that they will only talk about the matter if the person comes in two or more days after the time of speech. It is inferred from the above in (85) that, the sequence between the conditional marker *yi* and other pre-verbal particles that I have discussed so far is interesting. We have already observed that the 'Time Depth Markers' always precede the future negation makers. Now, the conditional particle *yi* is seen to occupy the first slot in the syntactic distribution with other particles including the time particles at the pre-verbal position, as observed in (85a-

c). Now, a new sequence could be viewed about the occurrence of the preverbal particles with respect to the syntactic slots they occupied. Conditional particle comes first, then, time particles, followed by a negation particle, and then, the future tense particle. The future tense particle is always the closest to the verbal head, meaning occupying the least position, from the left-to-right ranking of the preverbal particles from now.

4.2.6 The habitual particle *yaa*

The habitual particle is used in the indicative to present a habitual reading of the verb to show that an action lasts for an extended period of time (Adjong, 2018). The Dagbani pre-verbal particle *yaa* is usually used to show re-occurrence or the habitual form of an activity. The particle *yaa* is equivalent to the English expression "once again. Below in (86) illustrated the habitual *yaa.*

(86) a. *Doo la yaa kana.*
Man DEF HAB come.PERF
'That man has come again.'

b. *John yaa tu ti.*
John HAB insult.PERF 3PL
'John insulted us once again.'

c. *John tu ti.*
John insult 3PL
'John insulted us.' (*Source*: Native intuition)

It should be observed that both examples (86a) and (86b) contain the habitual particle *yaa*. Sentence (86a) indicates the re-occurrence of the action demonstrated by 'the man', i.e., his coming back for at least the second time. Similarly, sentence (86b) indicates repetitive behaviour that is put up by *John* about the 'insult' he raised on the people. (86c) does not contain any habitual particle, so it does not exhibit any re-occurrence of the 'insult, meaning the activity was only expressed at once.

However, the habitual particle *yaa* can occur alone or accompanied by other particles such as the future time and time depth particles at the pre-verbal position. The habitual *yaa* usually precedes the future time, and when the time depth markers such as *di* or *sa* or *daa* are also found together with the habitual and future time, the time depth markers usually precede all. Below (87) contains the three pre-verbal particles occurring together within one sentence.

(87) a. *Bihi* *maa* *di* *yaa* *yɛn* *kamina*

child.PL DEF TDM HAB FUT come

'The children once again intended to come today.(Within the day)'

b. *Bihi* *maa* *sa* *yaa* *yɛn* *kamina*

child.PL DEF TDM HAB FUT come

'The children once again will be coming tomorrow.'

c. *Bihi* *maa* *daa yaa yɛn kamina*

child.PL DEF TDM HAB FUT come

'The children once again will be coming two or more days to come.'

(*Source:* Native intuition)

It is observed in sentence (87a) that, a repetitive behaviour that was demonstrated by the subject's *bihi* 'children', is their intention to come back (once again). Sentence (87b) indicates the coming of the children (once again) the following day. Sentence (87c) is also explicit in expressing a habitual action about the coming of the children in a few days to come at the time of speech. The particle *yaa* and the negation particles such as *bi* or *ku*, can co-occur to mean that, the action that is always performed as a habitual/repetitive ceases to perform at a certain point.

(87) a. *Asana* *yaa bi kana.*

Asana HAB NEG come.PERF

'Asana has not come again.'

b. *N* *yaa ku chaŋ.*

1SG HAB NEG.FUT go

'I will not go as usual.'

(Source: Native intuition)

From sentence (87a), it is seen that the habitual action that is expressed in the form of 'repetitive session' has ceased when the negative particle is added to indicate that, the subject '*Asana'* who used to be performing this habitual action in a form of 'coming' is

no longer interested in doing so. Also in the sentence (87b), the person who used to be doing habitual action in the form of 'moving from one location to the other' is no longer interested in doing so. However, it should be noted that the habitual particle *yaa,* is synonymous with *maan/lahi/lan*. In the data collection process, some speakers alternatively used *maan*/*lahi* or *lan* as they are less frequent than *yaa,* which is heard most in many contexts. In the sentences (88a-c) below, I give examples of the use of *maan*/*lah*i or *lan* as markers of habitual.

(88) a. *Bia* *la* *maan* *kana*

Child.SG DEF again come.PERF

'The child left once again.'

b. *O* *lahi* *kana.*

3SG again come.PERF

'He/she came once again.'

c. *O* *sa* *lan* *kana.*

3SG TD again came.PERF

'He/she came again yesterday.'

4.2.7 Emphatic particle *jɛndi*

The pre-verbal particle *jɛndi* is used to emphasize or stress the action that is been undertaken by the subject. It typically highlights the relevance or importance of an action.

(89) a. *Lansa n jɛndi di saɣim maa.*

Lansa 1SG EMPH eat.PERF T.Z DEF

'It is Lansa who really ate the T.Z.'

b. *Lansa ku bua maa.*

Lansa kill.PERF goat DEF

'It is Lansa who killed the goat.'

(*Source:* Native speaker's intuition)

In sentence (89a), the speaker uses the emphatic particle *jɛndi* to highlight or emphasize the action of *ku* 'kill'which is carried out by *Lansah* 'the subject'. Sentence (89b) does not highlight or stress the action being carried out by the subject as a result of the absence of the emphatic particle.

4.3 Other pre-verbal particles

There are other preverbal particles that are used to modify the main verb in Dagbani. Here, I attempt to look at the distribution as well as the functions of those particles. They include *tooi*, *mo*, *kuli*, *yoli*, *lee*, *dii*, *yaa*. However, these particles can also accompany other preverbal particles in a strict order. Now, I attempt to look at the distribution and functions of these particles in the sub-sections below.

4.3.1 The particle *tooi*

The particle *tooi* acts as an auxiliary verb, which helps the main verb to express its meaning. It can co-occur with the other pre-verbal particles like the future time particle *ni*

or the negative particles *ku* or *bi.* When the particle *tooi* co-occur with the future particle *ni*, *tooi* usually precedes it while the negative particles *ku* and *bi* turned to follow *tooi* as illustrated in (90).

(90) a. *Adisa ni tooi bu Azima.*
Adisa FUT AUX beat Azima
'Adisa can beat Azima.'

b. **Adisa tooi ni bu Azima.*
Adisa AUX FUT beat Azima

(91) a. *N ku tooi chaŋ nimaani zuŋɔ.*
1SG NEG AUX go there today
'I cannot go there today.'

b. **N tooi ku chaŋ nimaani zuŋɔ.*
1SG AUX NEG go there toda

(92) a. *m bi tooi di-ra viɛnyɛla*
1SG NEG AUX eat.IMPERF well
'I am not eaten very well.'

b. * *m* *tooi* *bi* *di-ra* *viɛnyɛla*

1SG AUX NEG eat.IMPERF well

(*Source:* Native speaker's intuition)

The above sentence (90a) contains both the auxiliary *tooi* and the future particle *ni,* which modifies the main verb to express its meaning. However, the auxiliary *tooi* precedes the future *ni* as they occurred in (90a) to indicate that, the subject *Adisa* can carry out potential action of *bu* 'beat'. While sentence 90b) is ungrammatical due to re-ordering the positions of *tooi* and *ni,* that is, the future *ni* should always precede *tooi.* Sentence (91) contains the occurrence of the particle *tooi* and the negation particle *ku,* to express an idea that, the subject will not be able to carry out a future action of *chaŋ 'go'*. The particle *tooi* precedes the negative *ku* as they co-occurred in (91a), and an attempt to re-order it will render it ungrammatical as in (91b) when the negative ku comes before the auxiliary *tooi.* Similarly, the particle *tooi* precedes the negative *bi* as they co-occurred in (92a), and an attempt to re-order it will render it ungrammatical as in (92b) when the negative *bi* precedes the auxiliary *tooi.*

4.3.2 The particle *pun*

The pre-verbal particle *pun* is used to express the speaker's view about a particular action, which started and ended not long ago. It could also mean that an action has already been accomplished, and no further action is required. It is further observed that the particle *pun* can co-occur with the time markers that usually precede the particle *pun* 'already.'

(93) a. *Ti* *pun* *da* *li.*

1SG already buy 1SG

'We bought it already.'

b. *Ti* *da* *li.*

1PL buy 1SG

'We bought it.'

(94) a. *Ti* *sa* *pun* *da* *li.*

1PL TD already buy.PERF it

'We already bought it yesterday.'

b. *Ti* *daa* *pun* *da* *li.*

1PL TDM already buy it

'We had already bought it yesterday'

(*Source:* Group discussion)

It is observed from (93a) that, the presence of the particle *pun* 'already' means that, the action was already completed not long ago, and no further action is needed. The speaker indicates that they have already bought the thing that was expected to be bought, and no form of buying is needed for that item. However, in structure (93b) that particle is not present and hence does not express an idea about new completion of an action. In structures (94a) and (94b), the particle *pun* co-occurs with the time particles *sa* and *daa.* It should be noted that in (94a) the action was already completed one day away from the

time of speaking, and no new action is required again. Example (93a), indicates that the action was already completed at least one day away from the speaking time, and no further action is needed to satisfy it.

4.3.3 The particle *yoli*

The particle *yoli* occurs at the pre-verbal position to indicate the speaker's assumption about the action, that is carried out by the subject(s). When used, it means that the action that is carried out is recent. The English word 'just'could be compared to *yoli* while "already" could also be much *pun.*

(95) a. *Paɣa* *maa* *yoli* *kuli* *la* *yiŋa.*
Woman DEF Just go FOC home
'The woman just went home.'

b. *Paɣa* *maa* *kuli* *la* *yiŋa.*
Woman DEF go FOC home
'The woman has gone home.'

(96) a. *Bia* *maa* *yoli* *di* *la* *shinkaafa.*
child.SG DEF just eats FOC rice
'The child just ate rice.'

b. *Bia* *maa* *di* *la* *shinkaafa.*
Child.SG DEF go FOC rice
'The woman went home.'

(*Source:* Radio discussion)

It is observed from construction in (95) and (96) that, the presence of the mood particle *yoli* signals the completion of a very recent action. Structure (95a) indicates that the woman just went home before something strange or important happened. In (95b), there is a neutral reading due to the absence of the particle. In (96a) indicates that the child just finished eating the food before anything else might have happened, while (96b) gives a neutral reading, as there is no expression of recent activity.

4.3.4 The particle *naan*

The particle *naan* is used to indicate the assumption about the likelihood or possibility of the occurrence of an action/event, which necessarily depends on the application of certain obligations. When used, one action necessarily needs to trigger the other. The particle *naan* usually occurs in the independent clause whereas the obligation that influences it, occurs in the dependent clause.

(97) a. *paɣa maa ni bu o zuɣu o naan di bindirigu maa*

Woman DEF FOC beat 3SG because 3SG could eat food DEF

'He/she would have eaten the food, if the woman had not beaten him/her.'

b. *samba maa ni kana zuɣu, ti naan chaŋ daa*

strangers DEF FOC come.PERF because 2PL could go market

'We would have gone to market, if the strangers had not come.'

(*Source*: Radio talk show 2022)

From sentence (97a), the speaker hypothesized that, if the woman had not beaten the boy, he would have eaten the food. Sentence (97b) which also contains the particle *naan* 'if not' revealed that if not because of the arrival of the strangers, they would have left for market. In sentences (97a) and (97b), the action that triggers, the usage of the hypothetical particle *naan* is contained in the dependent clause, whereas the subject(s) assumption is found in the independent clause.

When the hypothetical particle *naan* co-occurs with the negative particle *ku,* it indicates the speaker's assumption that the occurrence of prior action necessitates the occurrence of new action, which was not intended by the subject in question. This is presented in sentences (98a) and (98b).

(98) a. *A konko ni ziya zuɣu, n naan ku yina.*
2SG only FUT seat.PERF because 1SG could NEG come.out
'Because you are sitting alone, I would have come out.'

b. B*ihi maa ni kpena zuɣu, bɛ naan ku ti ti*
child.SG DEF FUT come.PERF because 3PL could NEG give 2PL a seat
'If not the children came, they would not have given us a seat.'

(*Source*: Native speaker's intuition)

4.3.5 The particle *kuli*

The particle *kuli* is used to indicate the speaker's view about an action, which is done consciously or deliberately, (Gurundow, 2012). It can accompany other particles, which

can affect its syntactic distribution. When accompanied by the pre-verbal negative marker, it typically indicates that the speaker's assertion about the action is done more than it is required. Below we present a few sets of examples with the particle *kuli* and without the particle.

(99) a. *O* *kuli* *di* *la* *bindirigu* *maa* *zaa.*
3SG just eat.PERF FOC food maa all
'He/she has just eaten all the food.'

b. *O* *di* *la* *bindirigu* *maa* *zaa.*
3SG eat.PERF FOC food maa all
'He/she has eaten all the food .'
(*Source:* Audio-visual content)

(100). c. *Nayili* *maa* *daa* *kuli* *furila* *tiŋa* *maa* *sunsuuni.*
Palace DEF TDM just within town DEF middle
'The palace was just in the middle of the town/community.'
(Adam, 2016:1)

The speaker uses the structure in (99a) to express an action that is done deliberately While the structure in (99b) gives us a normal reading when the particle is not present. The particle can occur as a pre-verbal particle in serial verb construction to indicate that the action was done more than it is necessary. Similarly, in (100) the particle *kuli* occurs

with the time depth marker, daa, which gives the speaker judgment about the fact of the proposition towards Nayili 'the palace'.

Below I, attempt to present examples, where the *kuli* co-occur with serial verbs in the same syntactic distribution.

(111) a. *Dayu maa ka o kuli yaai fɛbi bia maa.*
Stick DEF FOC 1.SG just lift beat.PERF child.PL DEF
'It is the stick that he used to beat the child intentionally.'

b. *Bindirigu maa ka o kuli yaai di ka che Tampuli.*
Food DEF FOC 1SG just lift eat CONJ leave.IMPERF Tampuli
'It is the food that he/she just ate alone intentionally.'

(*Source:* Native intuition)

From constructions in (111a) and (111b) the particle *kuli* occurs before two verbal forms. Construction in (111a) implies that the speaker views the act of caning to be deliberately done as it is required, while in (111b), the speaker perceives the act of eating to be done deliberately. There is a symmetrical relationship between the pre-verbal *kuli* and the habitual particle *yaa* with respect to their syntactic distribution. The particle *kuli* can precede the habitual particle *yaa*, and can also preceded by the habitual *yaa* without posing any grammatical complexity, this is presented in sentences (112a) and (112b) below.

(112) a. *O kuli yaa bi yɛn kana.*

3SG just HAB NEG FUT come

'He/she will not come again.'

b. *O yaa kuli bi yɛn kana*

3SG HAB just NEG FUT come

'He/she will not come again.'

(*Source:* Staff discussion)

From sentence (112a), the particle *kuli* comes before the habitual to indicate that the subject will not carry habitual action which he/she used to be doing. However, in sentence (112b), the habitual particle also precedes the particle *kuli,* and it indicates an idea that the subject will not carry out a usual action, which it used to be doing. The occurrence of the particle *kuli* and the habitual particle *yaa* as treated above does not pose any grammatical complexity in the language.

4.3.6 The particle *dii*

The particle *dii* is used to indicate a purpose for which a certain action has been carried out. Two kinds of particles are identified in Dagbani to dictate the purpose that is associated with the action concerned. When the particle *dii*, is used it means, the doer of the action has a certain motive in mind. I presented two sets of sentences, one with the particle and the other one without the particle, to clarify the syntactic role of that particle.

(113)a. *Doo maa dii yiɣisimi kana, ni ŋuni bɔri ma mi*

Man DEF PURP stand-up come.PERF, that who likes 1SG FOC

'The man just rashed to me, that he likes me.'

b. D*oo maa yiɣisimi kana, ni ŋuni bɔri ma mi.*

Man DEF stand-up come.PERF, that who likes 1SG FOC

'The man rushed to me, that he likes me.'

(114) a. *O ni kpena ka bihi maa zaa dii guui n-tuhi o soli*

3SG FOC come.PERF CONJ child.PL DEF all just run towards 1SG way

'When he came in, all the children just run towards his way.'

b. *O ni kuli kpena ka bihi maa zaa guui n-tuhi o soli*

3SG FOC just come.PERF CONJ child.PERF DEF all run towards 3SG way

'When he came in, all the children run towards his way.'

(*Source:* Group discussion)

The construction in (113a), indicates the subject purpose to carry out that particular action, in (113b) the absence of the purposive particle gives us a neutral reading with respect to the purposive modification of the action being carried out. Also, in (114a), the children's reaction to the arrival of the subject in the initial clause, indicates the notion of

disapproval between the speaker and the want looking for him, whereas (114b) gives a neutral reading.

4.3.7 The particle *naɣi*

The particle *naɣi* is used to indicate the necessity that, the subject(s) is compelled to go through a certain obligation - hence, there is no need for fulfilling the request or obligation demanded by the subject. The subject is only entitled to a primary entity over the secondary ones. The sentences below exemplify the use of *naɣi* as the pre-verbal particle.

(115). *Bɛ naɣi ni kpini dama bindirigu kani.*

2PL NEC FUT die because food no

'Then, they would die because there is no food'

(116).*O ni je li, o naɣi ni kpimi dama shɛli lahi kani.*

3SG FUT NEG it 3SG NEC FUT die.PERF because nothing NEG more

'If he/she does not want it, then he/she will die because there is no other one available

(*Source:* Group conversation)

From the above in sentences (115) and (116) the presence of the particle indicates the necessity that the subjects are limited or entitled to gain the basic or primary entity over secondary ones.

4.4. The functions of Dagbani post-verbal particles

This subsection discussed the syntax and functions of Dagbani post-verbal particles. The post-verbal particles are limited as compared to the preverbal particles which was discussed already in the preceding sections. I examined the habitual *yaha, la* and *mi* as post verbal particles in Dagbani.

4.4.1 Habitual post-verbal *yaha*

This particle occurs invariably at the post-verbal position to indicate the repetition of the action performed.

(117) a. *Baa maa kpe-na yaha.*
Dog DEF come-PERF again.
'The dog has come again.'

b. *Baa maa kpena.*
dog DEF come.PERF
'The dog has come.'

(118) a. *Paɣa maa kana yaha.*
Woman DEF come.PERF again
'The woman has come again.'

b. *Paɣa maa kana.*
Woman DEF come.PERF
'The woman has come.'

From sentences (117a) and (118a), the presence of the post-verbal particle *yaha* performs a repetitive function. In sentence (117a), it indicates that, the subject "the dog" comes again at least a second time while sentence (117b) which lacks the post-verbal habitual *yaha,* does not indicate repetitive or habitual occurrences of an action carried out by the dog. Similarly, in (118a) which has the particle *yaa* at the post-verbal position indicates that the woman once again has come, at least her second time coming. Conversely, sentence (118b) indicates that, the coming of the woman but not in repetitive or habitual form due to the lack of the post-verbal particle *yaa* in the sentence.

4.4.2 The post-verbal focus particles

Dagbani has focus markers that occur post-verbally to mark focus in the language. They include *la* and *mi*. The focus particles *la* and *mi* are discussed in this. In this study, the focus *la* occurs with transitive verbs, which require an object to make the meaning clear while *mi* invariably does not require an object in order to complete its meaning. The upcoming sections will give a detailed explanation of those particles.

4.4.2.1 The focus particle *la*

The focus particle *la* occurs after the verbal head. It is one of the most controversial particles across the Mabia cluster, and the scholars of Dagbani include the work of (Olawsky, 1999; Issah, 2008, 2013, Fusheini, 2006; Gurundoo, 2012). Olawsky (1999:38) argues that the particle *la* as a post-verbal element marks both focus and continuous aspectual, and he uses the data below to support his argument.

(119) a. *Fati* *bari* *la* *ʧeeʧe*

Fati ride.imperf foc bicycle

'Fati is riding a bicycle.'

b. *M* *bɔhɔndi* *la* *Dagbanli*

I learnimperf. foc Dagbanli

'I am learning Dagbanli.'

(Olawsky 1999:38)

In response to the data postulated in (119) above Issah, 2013) claims that it is possible to have imperfective aspectual reading without the particle *la* as presented below.

(120) a. *Napari* *ku-ri* *bu-hi*

Napari kill-IMPERF goat-PL

'Napari is killing goats.'

b. *Tiyumba* *di-ri* *bindirigu* *maa*

Tiyumba eat-IMPERF food DEF

'Tiyumba is eating/eats the food.'

c. *Napari* *ku-ri* *la* *bu-hi*

Napari kill-IMPERF FM goat-PL

'Napari is killing goats.'

(Issah, 2013:156)

However, sentences (120a) and (120b) have same habitual reading without the particle *la*. while sentence 120c) contains the particle *la,* and also gives habitual reading Issah (2013) strongly affirmed that it is also possible to have the particle *la* with perfective sentences.

(121) a. *Tiyumba* *ku* *la* *bua.*
Tiyumba kill.PERF FOC goat
'Tiyumba has killed a goat.'

b. *Bi-hi* *maa* *tu-Ø* *la* *Napari.*
Child-PL DEF insult-PERF FOC `Napari
'The children have insulted Napari.'

I share the same view with Issah (2013), that, the function of the post-verbal *la* functioning as an imperfective aspect is in doubt as claimed by Olawsky, 1999). Issah, (2013:162) claims that, when the post-verbal *la* follows a verb, it marks focus on the entire predicate including the complement. Issah further suggests that the *la* particle could also be motivated by pragmatic factor(s). He uses the data in (122) and (123) to buttress his claim.

(122) a. *Napari* *da* *la* *loori.*
Napari buy.PERF FM lorry
'Napari has bought a lorry.'

b. *Napari* *da* *loori*
Napari buy.PERF lorry
'Napari has bought a lorry.'

(123) a. *O* *nya* *la* *Napodoo*

3SG see.PERF FM Napodoo

'S/he has seen Napodoo.'

b. *O* *nya* *Napodoo*

3SG see.PERF Napodoo

'S/he has seen Napodoo.'

(Issah, 2013:164)

As can be seen in (122) and (123) when the particle is present at the post-verbal position, it could mean that the information that is conveyed is new to the hearer while the absence of the particle implies that, such information is old or is shared knowledge between the speaker and the hearer.:

4.4.2.2 The focus particle *mi*

The focus particle *mi* is typically used to encode or mark focus on the verbal head that precedes it. Hudu, (2006:22) indicates that the Dagbani post-verbal particle *mi* is used to mark contrastive focus on the action being expressed by the verb. Contrary, to this (Olawsky, 1999) views it as a morpheme but not a verbal particle to mark the imperfective aspect, the interest here will only be limited to its syntactic distribution and function. Hudu, (2006) uses the following data to buttress his argument.

(124) Focusing on the particle *mi.*

a. *Adam da-Ø (li) mi.*

Adam buy-perf (3SG.INANIM.) FOC.

Adam bought (it). (He did not receive it for free).

b. *Baba kuhɨ-rɨ mɨ.*

Baba cry-IMPERF. FOC.

'Baba is crying. (He is not laughing)

c. *Tɔha da: ji kulɨ ʧanɨ moʔu ni, o dolɨ -mɨ.*

hunter TDM when. Ever go.IMPF. bushLOC. 3SG. follow.PERF.-FOC.

'Whenever the hunter was going to the bush he would follow'. (not stay at home)

d. *Kande ka-Ø-mi-na da:ni*

Kande come-PERF.-FOC.-LOC. market LOC.

Kande came to the market. (She did not wander about in the neighborhood)

e. *Abu yelɨ -Ø- mi ni kum malɨ o*

Abu say-PERF. -FOC. that hunger has 3SG.

'Abu said that he is hungry'. (he did not leave us to guess from his looks).

f. *Fatima bɔb bɔb-gɨ mi.*

Fatima tie headscarf-SG FOC.

'Fatima has worn a headscarf'.

(Hudu, 2006:22-23)

The data in (125) below indicate that the post-verbal *mi* can follow a complement phrase to indicate that, it is only a specific action that was ongoing at the time of the departure of the speaker.

(125) a. *Bihi maa di diɛmdi mi, ka n chaŋ daa.*

child.PL DEF PST play FOC COMP 1.SG go.PERF market

'The children were playing at the time I went to the market.'

b. *Bihi maa di diɛmdi, ka n chaŋ daa.*

child.PL DEF PST play COMP 1SG go.PERF market

'The children were playing when I went to the market.'

(126) a. *Bɛ zaa dihi mi n kpena.*

2PL all rash FOC `1SG come.PERF

'All the children just rashed in.'

b. *Bɛ zaa dihi, n kpena.*

2PL all rash FOC come.PERF

'All the children rushed in.'

From the sentence (125a) the presence of the post-verbal *mi* postulates that the action that was ongoing before the speaker left was the 'playful' action demonstrated by the subject, this action contrasts with any other action (s) which might be demonstrated by the subjects. The absence of the post-verbal *mi,* in sentence (125b), does not make the action contrastively focus with other actions that might be demonstrated by the subjects.

Similarly, sentence (126a) posits that the action being carried out by the subjects is a contrastively focused mark to other actions while (126b) gives us a neutral reading with regards to the absences of the post-verbal *mi*.

4.4.2.1.1 The syntax of *la* and *mi*

This subsection discusses the distribution of the post-verbal particles *la* and *mi*. It is noted that when the focus *la* is used, it requires an obligatory complement but this is not the same as *mi.* Thus, *mi* does not necessarily require obligatory complement.

(127) a. *Bi-hi maa di la sayim*

Child-PL DEF eat.PERF FOC TZ

'The children ate TZ'

b. **Bi-hi maa di la*

Child-PL DEF eat.PERF FOC

(128) a. *O sa chaŋ la daa*

3SG TDM go.PERF FOC market

'He/she went to the market yesterday'

b. **O sa chaŋ la*

3SG TDM go.PERF FOC

The examples in (127) and (128) show the distribution of the focus particle *la* within the VP. It has been realized that, when *la* is used as a focus marker, there should be an NP or

compulsory complement. In example (127a) the focus marker *la*, marks focus on the entire VP including the NP complement *saɣim* 'TZ'. The sentence in (127b) is ungrammatical due to the absence of the complement. Similarly, example (128a) possesses the *la* as a focus marker, which calls for NP complement in order to make the sentence meaningful while sentence (128b) is ungrammatical due to the omission of the NP complement.

The focus *mi* does not necessarily need complement, unlike the focus *la* which was seen to obligatory take complement, this is seen contrary to *mi.* Let us look at the examples below:

(129) a. *Doo maa di mi*
Man DEF eat.PERF FOC
'The man has eaten.'

*b. *Doo maa di mi zuŋɔ*
Man DEF eat.PERF FOC today

(130) a. *O nyu mi*
3SG drink.PERF FOC
'He/she has drunk.'

b. ** O nyu mi dam*
3SG drink.PERF FOC alcohol

The constructions in (129) and (130) show that the focus *mi* cannot occur with a complement unlike *la* which was observed to compulsorily take complement. So, sentences (129a) and (130a) are grammatically correct because complement is not required when *mi* is used, however, the ungrammaticality in (129b) and (130b) has resulted due to the presence of the complement.

However, it is also noted that, the focus particles *la* and *mi* mark focus on the VP including nominal entities that occur with it. The focus *la* occurs with pronouns but not nouns within the verbal paradigm. The same applies to *mi, mi* does not focus on the VP that contains a noun unless it is a pronoun.

(131) a. *Bia maa da li la daa ni*
child DEF buy.PERF 3.SG (INANIM.) FOC market in
'The child bought it in the market.'

b. *Bia maa da o la daa ni*
child DEF buy.PERF 3.SG (INANIM.) FOC market in
'The child bought him/her in the market.'

(132) a. **Bia maa da buku la*[2] *daa ni*
child DEF buy.PERF book FOC market in

[2] The *la* in this case is glossed as a focus marker but not any function for which it might be eligible.

b. **Bia maa da daa ni*

child DEF buy.PERF market in

From the above in sentence (131a-b), the focus particle *la,* marks focus with the verb *da* 'buy'. However, it has been realized that *la* marks focus only on certain nominal entities that occur within the verbal paradigm, that is a pronoun (exophoric referent) whose referent is already known but not present in the conservation. The sentence in example (132a) is regarded as ungrammatical due to the fact that *la* fails to mark focus on the VP, which includes the noun *buku* 'book'. In sentence (132b), the ungrammaticality results due to the absence of the particle *la* and the pronoun.

Unlike the focus *la,* the syntax of the focus *mi* is also questionable in some cases where *mi* fails to mark focus when there is a noun that co-occurs with the *mi* within the verbal paradigm. An example is presented below the data.

(133) a. *Paɣa maa da li mi daa ni*

woman DEF buy.PERF 3.SG (INANIM.) FOC market in

'The woman bought it in the market.'

b. **Paɣa maa da buku mi daa ni*

Woman DEF buy.PERF book FOC market in

'It was a book the woman bought in the market.'

c. **Paya maa da mi daa ni*

Woman DEF buy.PERF FOC market in

'It was in the market the bought.'

Example (133) discusses the syntax of the focus *mi* as a post-verbal particle. It has been observed that when *mi* mark*s* focus within the verbal phrase which includes a nominal entity, the nominal form should be a pronoun rather than a noun like in the case of the sentence in example (133a). Example (133b) is regarded as ungrammatical due to the presence of the noun *buku* 'book' rather than the pronoun. For sentence (133c) the ungrammaticality resulted from the absence of the pronoun, which helps to complete the sentence's meaning.

4.3.4 Deitic particles *na*, *ha* and *sa*

Gurundow (2012) argues that the Dagbani post-verbal particles *na*, *sa/ha* have a deictic function when following a motion verb. He opines that whereas *na* indicates a proximal direction towards the speaker, the particle *sa* or *ha* indicates a distal form, i.e., when the subject is far away from the speaker. The data below is used to support the above assertion from Gurundow, (2012).

(134)a. *Mali narim na.*

Bring canoe DEI

'Bring a canoe.'

b. *Kam na kpe.*

come DEI ADV

'Come here'

(Gurundow, 2012:70)

(135)a. *Ka kpatindariga nya o puhi o sa*

CONJ spider see 3SG greet 3SG DEI

'And spider saw him and greeted him at distance.'

b. *Kpan nun yɛli o sa*

Guinea-fowl then say 3SG DEI

'Guinea-fowl then told him from far.'

(Gurundow, 2012:71)

It was also observed that a particle could mark the simple completion of an action carried out by the subject. When it does, it indicates that the action was already completed prior to the time of speaking. This is presented in sentences (136a) and (136b) below.

(136)[3]a. *N yuri kuli mi na*

1POSS lover return FOC PST

'My lover, come back/return.'

b. *Ka bɛ kulisi o na yiŋa*

CONJ 2PL bring 3SG PST home

'They sent her to the house.'

[3] The data in (136) is taken from (Gurindow, 2013). However, there are changes that are made in the data above; including the glossing and function of the particle *na.*

The above data in (136a) and (136b), indicate that the action was completed before the time of conversation. It further posits, that, the subjects get to the final destination, and no further movement or action is required.

4.3.5 The emphatic particle *hali*

Dagbani can mark emphasis by the use of the post-verbal particle *hali.* The emphatic particle *hali* occurs after a verb, to indicate the emphasis or importance the speakers place on the event or action that has been carried out by the subject. The presence of this particle indicates that a particular action actually or really occurred.

(137) a. *O* *kana* *hali.*

3SG come.PERF EMPH

'In fact, he/she has come.'

b. *O* *kana*

3SG come.PERF

'He/she has come.'

(138) a. *Adisa* *sa* *gbe* *kpe* *hali*

Adisa TDM sleep here EMPH

'In fact, Adisa slept here yesterday.'

b. *Adisa sa gbe kpe*

Adisa TDM sleep here

'Adisa slept here yesterday.'

From sentence (137a) above, the presence of the particle *hali* indicates the speaker's emphasis that, the subject is actually completely carrying out the said action while sentence (137b) gives us a neutral reading, i.e., without stressing or emphasizing the said action. Similarly, sentence (138a) indicates that the speaker is certain that the subject is actually involved in performing such an action, while (138b) gives us a neutral reading with regard to laying emphasis on the action.

4.5 The interaction between pre-verbal and post-verbal particles

This subsection discussed the interactions between pre and post-verbal particles in Dagbani. It examines the combinational restriction for the occurrence of the pre-verbal and post-verbal particles in Dagbani. It explores the future tense particles *ni* and *yɛn* and their interaction with the post-verbal particles *la* and *mi.* It also examined the interaction between the negative markers, *bi, di,* and *ku,* and the post-verbal particle *la*. I present the data below:

(139) a. *N ni yɛli a yɛltɔɣa ti ba.*

1SG FUT say 2SG story give 3PL

"I will tell them your story"

b.	*N*	*yɛn*	*yɛli*	*la*	*a*	*yɛltɔɣa*	*ti*	*ba*
	1SG	FUT	say	FOC	2SG	story	give	3PL

'I will tell them your story.'

(140) a.	**N*	*ni*	*yɛli*	*la*	*a*	*yɛltɔɣa*	*ti*	*ba*
	1SG	FUT	say	FOC	2SG	story	give	3PL

b.	**N*	*yɛn*	*yɛli*	*a*	*yɛltɔɣa*	*ti*	*ba*
	1 SG	FUT	say	2SG	story	give	3PL

It has been observed that both *ni* and *yɛn* could serve as a (future time particle occurring at preverbal position) only as seen in the sentence (139a-b). Indeed, the selection of two future time particles has been observed to follow a particular syntactic distribution. The future particle *yɛn* is used when presenting new information and this requires the post-verbal *la* to precede the verbal head, as observed in (139b). Hence, when *yɛn* is used, the focus particle *la* usually precedes the verbal head but when the future time marker *ni* is used the post-verbal *la* always disappears, otherwise it will render the sentence ungrammatical as can be seen in (140a), for details about the post-verbal particle *la* see, (Issah, 2008, 2013). The presence of the post-verbal *la* and the pre-verbal future time marker *ni* as in (140a) has rendered the construction. Sentence (140b) is also ungrammatical following the same logic, i.e., the future time marker *yɛn* usually requires the verbal head to be followed by the post-verbal particle *la,* and hence its omission in (140b) makes the meaning incomplete.

However, unlike the focus particle *la* and the future particles *ni* and y*ɛn,* which have a restriction on their syntactic distribution. The focus *mi* does not pose any syntactic restriction when they co-occur with the future particles *ni* and *yɛn.* I present the data below:

(141) a. *Ti* *yɛn* *da* *mi*

1PL FUT buy FOC

'We are going to buy it'

b. *Ti* *ni* *da* *mi*

1PL FUT buy FOC

'We will buy it.'

The sentence (141) illustrates the occurrence of the focus *mi and* the future particle *yɛn* and *ni.* Sentence (141a) contains the future *yɛn* and the focus particle *mi*, which indicates that the subjects are about to carry out the action while sentence (141b) contains the future *ni* and the focus *mi,* which implies that, the subjects will be carrying out a potential action.

The interaction between the negative particles *ku*, *bi,* and *di* with the focus *la* has restrictions with regard to the proper negative marker that, can co-occur with *la.* However *ku* or *di* co-occurrence with the focus *la* render the sentence ungrammatical except *bi.*

(142). a. *O bi chaŋ la daa*

3SG NEG go FOC market

'He/she did not go to the market.'

b. **O ku chaŋ la daa*

3SG NEG go FOC market

c. **O di chaŋ la daa*

3SG NEG go FOC market

The sentences in (142) show the distribution of the negative particles *ku*, *di,* and *bi*, preceding the focus particle *la.* Incorrect use of a negative marker can affect the meaning or render the structure ungrammatical. Sentence (142a) contains the negative *bi* and the focus *la,* which indicate that the subject is unable to carry out an action. Sentences (142b) and (142c) contain the negatives *ku* and *di* respectively, which render the structures ungrammatical.

4.6 Chapter Summary

The chapter discussed the functions and structure of Dagbani verb phrases focusing on pre-verbal and post-verbal particles. It argued that there are several forms of pre-verbal particles that are used to modify the verbal head. The pre-verbal particles discussed in the chapter includes the future particles, negation particles, conditional particle, habitual

particle, hypothetical particle, assertive particle, and emphatic particle. Other pre-verbal particles, that have also been examined include, *kuli, tooi, nayi,* and *dii.*

The chapter also discusses the post-verbal particles in Dagbani. It revealed that different post-verbal particles occur in the language to modify the verb. It discusses the repetitive particle *yaha*, focus particles *la* and *mi*, and the deictic particles *sa*/*ha* and *na.* The chapter argues that the repetitive particle *yaha*, indicates repetitive or re-occurrence of an action being carried out by the subject(s). It also shows that the focus *la* and *mi* mark focus on the verb, whereas the deictic particles *na, sa*/*ha* are used to mark direction towards or away from the speaker, whilst *na* functions as a proximal directional marker *sa*/*ha* indicates is a distal directional marker. It concludes with the interaction between pre-verbal and post-verbal particles.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The study is divided into five chapters, each of which focuses on a different issue and seeks to provide answers to the research questions that serve as the thesis's guiding principles. However, the findings and conclusive inferences drawn from the study's results are highlighted in this chapter. The chapter proceeds as follows: The findings of the thesis are summarized in section 5.1 while section 5.2, presents the conclusion. Section 5.3 presents the recommendation for further studies.

5.1 Summary of Findings

This thesis explores the structure of the Dagbani verb phrase, focusing on pre-verbal and post-verbal particles within the Theory of Functional Grammar. The study revealed that various pre-verbal particles can be employed to modify the verbal head in Dagbani. They include, *ni, bi, ku, di, daa,, da, jɛndi, naan, shiri, yaha, la, mi, ha, tooi, kuli, yoli, , dii* and *yaa*. The study revealed that such particles are used to mark time, condition, negation, habitual, assertiveness, and emphasis. The findings confirm that *ni* and *yɛn* are used to mark future time, which is supported by (Olawsky, 1999), that *ni* and *yɛn* denote the future in the language. However, it was observed that, when these co-occur with other particles at the pre-verbal position, the future time particles usually come after the particle(s) that it co-occurs with as seen in section 4.2.1 of the thesis. The particles *di, sa,* and *daa* are known to mark time reference in the Mabia literature (Bendor-Samuel, 1979). When any of these particles (time particles) co-occur with the future particle, it

usually precedes the future particle. The thesis looked at the distribution of the negative particles *bi, ku,* and *di* and observed that the particle *bi* occurred with a time depth particle like *sa* to denote an activity that has already occurred but uncompleted within one day or before the speech time.

The data revealed *that ku* is a negative particle that denotes an activity that has not yet been completed - when the intended action is considered a potential action, it is used to denote the subject's refusal or failure to follow the intended action. The pre-verbal negative *di* is used to show that the subject is refusing to do a potential action. The negative *di* can precede or follow the time depth particle without creating any grammatical confusion, unlike the other negative particles that invariably follow the time depth markers when accompanied by the time markers *sa* or *daa*.

The study showed that the assertive particle *shiri* is used to denote the fact or actuality that a specific action has taken place. If the speaker is confident about the occurrence of a particular action, *shiri* is employed to modify the verb about assertiveness towards the action. The conditional particle *yi* was identified as similar to the English word 'if.' It usually means that the verb must go through a particular action or state before a particular condition can occur when it is used in the pre-verbal position. The study revealed that the Dagbani pre-verbal particle *yaa* is typically used to indicate a repetition or habitual form of a frequent event. In addition, the particle *yaa* functions as the English word 'again.' *Yaa* might appear in a pre-verbal position alone or in combination with other particles in the construction. The data showed that the particle *naan* is used to show the speaker's

supposition about the chance or possibility of the occurrence of an action/event, which necessarily depends on the application of certain obligations. When used, it gives the indication that one action necessarily needs to trigger another. The study revealed that the pre-verbal emphatic particle, *jɛndi* is used to emphasise or stress the action that the subject has taken. It typically draws attention to how pertinent or significant the activity is.

In examining the post-verbal particles in Dagbani, It is revealed that eight post-verbal particles occur in the language to modify the verb. The study makes the case that the repetitive particle *yaha* denotes a repeated action carried out by the subject (s). It also demonstrates how the focus markers *la* and *mi* denote different types of focus on the verb, with *la* denoting presentational/new information and *mi* denoting contrastive verb focus. When *la* is used in a sentence as a verbal focus marker, there should be compulsory NP complement, (see Hudu, 2006 and Issah, 2013).

The deictic markers *na, sa,* and *ha* are also utilized to designate or indicate direction towards the speaker, *na* serves as a proximal directional marker. A distal directional marker is indicated by *sa/ha*. Furthermore, the data demonstrates that there are restrictions with regards to the interaction between the pre-verbal and post-verbal particles. Below in Tables 4 and 5 are the summaries of Dagbani pre-verbal and post-verbal particles and their functions. The study also confirms that there are no syntactic difference among the three dialects, as already report by (Hudu, 2006; Issah, 2008; Ziblim, 2018 and Issahaku, 2021) and some others, eeven if there are it has not being discovered by scholars.

Table 4: Summary of Pre-Verbal Particles

Pre-verbal particles	Function
Ni	Future marker
Yɛn	Future marker (Potentiality)
Di	Time marker (past the same day)
Sa	Time marker (one day away from past or future)
Daa	Time marker (above one day away from past or future)
Bi	Negation marker (Non-future negative)
Ku	Negation marker (Future negative)
Di	Negation marker (imperative/subjunctive negative)
Shiri	Assertive marker
Yi	Conditional marker
Yaa	Habitual marker
Naan	Hypothetical marker
Jɛndi	Emphatic marker
Tooi	Mood marker
Yoli	Just
Pun	Already
nayi	Necessity marker

Table 5: Summary of Post Verbal Particles

Post verbal particles	Function
La	Focus marker
Mi	Focus marker
na/sa/ha	Deitic marker
Hali	Emphatic marker

5.2 Conclusion

The study looked at the structure and functions of the pre-verbal and post-verbal particles of Dagbani, a Mabia language spoken in the Northern Region of Ghana. It shows that verbal particles are an integral part of Dagbani grammar. The study discussed twenty-two pre-verbal particles as well as eight post-verbal particles in Dagbani. Moreover, the study revealed that there are some restrictions with regard to the interaction between pre and post-verbal particles such as the future particle *yɛn* and *ni* and the post-verbal *la*, as well as the interaction between the negative *bi, ku* and *di* and the post-verbal *la.*

5.3 Recommendation

Although the thesis examined the structure and functions of Dagbani verb phrases focusing on the pre-verbal and post-verbal particles, there are still some areas that need thorough studies. It is recommended that future research deal with areas such as pragmatics, sociolinguistics and phonological functions of these particles.

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APPENDIX A

Recorded data of spontaneous speech from the participants

Kɔm ŋɔ miisim galisi gari binshɛɣukam, yali tini yɛli dari mini sala. Saha shɛli, kɔm kalinsi zuɣu na min che ka ti kɔŋ duɣibu. Adam goli bɔ ni ka ti be maa? February, February, din tooi kuli niŋ ka yi ka din **kuli yɛn duɣi gba**. Nyama, Karimi bia maa, **o lahi kana.** Ti yaŋɔ zan gbaa fɔŋ shɛŋa din miri ŋɔ zaa ka pumpi kɔm. nyama, dali maa ni zaa tinima ka kɔm gba, ka pa, hali din yɛn nyu gba. Bihi maa mi vɛnyɛɣili yaɣiya, a yi yɛli ni chema m bɔ kɔm, bɛ zaŋsim kani, oii, botaa yɛla n-ti bala ŋɔ.

Wula ka yi che ka o kana ti lahi ŋmaai bindirigu maa shɛm maa. M ma XX chɛli di yi pa paɣa maa di bu o zuɣu, o naan di bindirigu maa zaa. Wula bia n-ti bɔŋɔ?A mali alaafee? A b ani kuna ni yɛli o.

Ti yi bi maai ti ni bɛ ni ti ti yɛlli, lihimi n-zo maa nis a diri feela shɛli. N daa zaŋla maʒine n tib a, ni bɛ go be gɔrim maa, ka ŋun chaŋ ka di ti ʒimi ni bɛ yɛlmi t ilala**. Adam yi di be kpe n naan kuli** afanima, di bi lahi mahi ma. Ya ka o chaŋ? M bi mi. A sa tooi chaŋ ti suuna maa ni? M mini biɛli n sab ala, o sa bɔhi a yala. Ti tuma maa ni be shɛm maa, shɛli ni a ku tooi naɣili, ti masa yɛla tɔ pam, o yi kuli bɔri ya nimmoo, ka niŋ fawaɣili dinzuɣu ni tooi che ka o kari a. Yi masa maa yɛla tɔ wooi! Iin, lala ka o ku niŋ ti kari Fataw. Yuun'dini ka a kpe tuma maa ni? 2019 maa, ka laɣ'dira bee bahibu m-be ti mini o sunsuuni. Ma, nyini yi kpe tuma ni, baŋsim ka a bɔri a masa sani ka liɣiri. Iin, a maa shɛli ni, di ku ni o niŋ binshɛɣu.

M ma bɔ ka a dira. Tim m-bela, bia bi diri li**. A yi bi paa yuma anii a ku tooi nyu li,** chema a taba sani gba ka chema. Di yi niŋ bɛ ni zaŋ yi bindirigu na, a biɛli chaŋ di dabu. N yɛli o mi ye o da, shinkaafa na ka yi ti nyubi, ma a ni nyubi beebo? Iin. Tɔ chɛma ti

ʒini ka o kana. ʒinimi, bɛ sani ka o kana. Ɔun n-lee booni a maa? Rachinima. Tɔ, chɛmi bi sani ti ʒimi. M ma Tia yɛlimi ni, n sa di kana. ʒiri ka o ŋma maa, o yoondi a mi maa, o ku tooi yɛla lala gba, chɛma ti ʒini.

Adisa sa ku chaŋ daa, miri ka a sa zaŋ o chaŋ. Bɔ, ka o niŋ m biɛli, o ningbuna dii ka alaafee. Paɣiba maa ni kana nyin deemi chibo maa n-zali, ka yɛli ni n kani. M bɔrimi ye kpe suuna yili maa. M maa ka ti liɣiri. M bi yɛli a ye di pa teebula maa zuɣu duu puuni ha?

O ni kuli di hali ni zuŋɔ, bɔ ka o niŋ. N wummi **ni o daa yɛn kamina,** Alizumdali. O ka ti anfaani shɛli ka daa kuli di wahala n-vooti ti o maa.

APENDIX B

Extract from Dagbani literature books (Amina, Wunibimbiril and students' creative works in Dagbani)

Palidaa yi Tizaa n-zaŋ di zuɣu ʒi tiŋa yuli booni Taampe polo, n-zaŋ lala hali nti ŋmaligi zani nayili sambani ni. Nayili maa daa kuli furila tiŋa maa sunsuuni. Di daa kuli nyɛla yil'titali din ka ŋmali tiŋ maa ni. Nira kam yi daa paai tiŋ maa ni, pa so n daa lahi yɛn yɛli dilana ni kpɛŋ be yili maa ni. Yili maa ni daadam biɛligu daa galisya pam ka di sambani gari lala. Tiŋa maa yad aa kaɣimi yi kpaŋa ka che nayili maa. Di zɔŋ maa daa gam sariya. Di daa malila daantalisi Anahi ka di bimbini du ka yɛlima ka naa ʒiiini ka dooni di zuɣu

CHENTIMA: Lala ka ban nyuri ka piɛbiri li zaa yɛra. Ka naan yi che din mali shɛriti ka bɛ chibira li la.Bɛ ti yɛn baŋla, bɛ ŋmaligi bɛ zuɣu tabili bɛ zuli n-lee ziŋ' kuŋ bia. Ka ti zaŋ ba chaŋ ti sɔɣi. ka kuhi dabisa ayi, ka tam bɛ yela. Ka bɛ mini Naawuni nina pali taba. Ka buɣim la lari pampam, ka kuŋ daa ŋme!

ASANA: **Ka ya polo ka bɛ lee kuli nyari li diri ka di be shɛm maa?**

AMINA: Bahi! Bɛ di gbubi ma mi ka n luhi Chentima ka dim Asana nubile.

MARIAM: A kpaŋ a maŋ pam! A yidi bi niŋ lala, a di pala n dahalali. Zaŋmi saɣim di ka kana. M bɔri a mi. a biɛrimi yɔɣu

AMINA: Bɔ ka a nya, m ma

MARIAM: **A bi di saɣim maa?**

Biɛhigu puuni miri ka a ti tɛhi so zaɤ` biɛɤu, so yi niŋ la zaɤ` biɛɤu, nyin yomi o zaɤ` viɛlli Gbubi yɛlimaŋli ka che ʒiri . A yi niŋ lala a bokaatanima zaa ni mali. Musah s ani chaŋ o ya maa ni, o di kana ti chibsi ma zuŋɔ, ni o bɔri ni o gbaala soli.

Iin! A ni niŋ waɤilim maa, di zuɤu ka n di na bi baŋ a maa. Ka a ma mini Wumpini be wula? Sokam mali alaafee.

A zaŋ ma labi zaa. Nyini ŋun ni kuli gɔ a gɔrim maa, a bi lahi yɛli ni a

kana nti puhi ma gba

N tumi taali.

Ka bɔ saha ka a sa paana

Yuŋ maa ka n sa paana.

Ni maa ni nima zaa be wula?

Sokam mali alaafee.

A nya binshɛɤu din paai ma, bebɔ

Baako kpaŋmi a maŋa ka a sa kana. Di zaa yila Amina sani, ka paɤa ka ti daa ku bo maa. Baako a mi gba daa bi yɛri ma yɛlimaŋli.Ti yaŋɔnima n-na yina n-ti na gaai-gaai guutanima maa ka che kam kom maa zɔra.Mani bɔrila m saɣim ka bɛ mi gba bɔri shinkaafa. Bɛ gba ni kana zuŋɔ.

Napari! Ti kpuɤi ŋmana maa chaŋ ti zali, ka kana nti neei Wumpini

ka yi kpe duu, dama wari beni pam. **O daa da buku la**? Dama biɛɣuni

sa nyɛla Atani. Iin. Tɔ neemi o ka yi kpe duu puuni n-ti domi. Alaasani: Alaafee ka m bɔli a maa. M bɔrimi ye a zaŋ a zaŋsim n-niŋ ti ni, domin di ŋmanila pumpɔŋɔ a zaŋsim dii lahi ka ti ni. A maŋmaŋa mi ni m ba ni daa be o nyɛvuli ni, m mini a zaa daa chanila shikuru, ka m ba daa ti yɛli ni o ku tooi lihiri m mini a , ni dinzuɤu mani ŋun chɛli ka m mini o kɔri n-lihiri a, ka a chana, dini n-nyɛ mani ni ti ʒiya zuŋɔ ka shɛli kani maa. Di pala n daa kɔŋla shikuru maa chaŋdi, amaa ti zaa daa naan ku tooi laɤim n-chaŋ li, dinzuɤu ka mani daa pahi m maŋa suɤulo, ka mi ni dahinshɛli din viɛli n-ti ti.

Adam: Aba! M biɛli.

Alassani: Dinzuʏu kpaŋmi a maŋa pam, ka che ka a zaŋsim be ti ni. Lahi kpaŋmi a maŋa, ka a che zo yoya dəlibu, domin zəri ŋuna di yi niŋla nyaʏisim ka yi beni maa, di yi ku bi viɛla , yi yɛn zəmi ka che taba.

Adam: N dɔʏirikpɛma, a ni yɛli maa n wumya.

Alaasani: M mini a ko n-kpalim ti daŋ ŋɔ maa ni, dinzuʏu di bi tu ni a zaŋ ma n-labi.

Adam: M biɛli, yɛl`bihi maa n-yaʏi, dini n-nyɛ ni bi tooi lahi kanina nti puhiri a maa.

Alaasani: Naawuni ni niŋ alibarika n-niŋ a ni. Mani n-di tu ni n-niŋdi yallikam ti daŋ ŋɔ maa ni, amaa Naawuni bi larigi ma, dini niŋ ka nyin ŋun bi kɔŋ maa, m bɔrimi ye n-zaŋ ti daŋ ŋɔ maa binshɛʏukam n-niŋ a nua ni.

Adam: N dɔʏirikpɛma, a ni yɛli shɛm maa zaa n wumya. yi kawana maa na beni?

Alaasani Iin! Amaa di guui la biɛla.

Adam: Biɛʏuni, n sa n-che ka bɛ zaŋ kawana mini liʏiri na nti ti a.

Alassani: Ka bihi maa shikuru yɔri maa mi, domin biɛʏuni sa nyɛla Atani.

Adam: N sa n-zaŋ di gba ti na..

Alaasani: Labimi yiŋa , dama saha chaŋya.

Adam: Tɔ! N kuliya

Alaasani: Naawuni ni yiʏisi ti.