How to elicit semi-spontaneous focus realizations with specific tonal patterns [*]

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This article presents a situation description production experiment investigating the interaction between syntax and information structure in Akan, a tone language that belongs to the Kwa branch of the Niger-Congo family spoken in Ghana. Information structure was elicited via context questions that put the object in narrow informational focus or narrow corrective focus while controlling for the tonal structure of the target word. Contrary to the prediction that corrective focus is marked by fronting and morphological marking of the focused constituent the data suggest that the in-situ strategy is the preferred one.

Keywords: Akan, information structure, syntax

1 Introduction

Akan is a tone language exhibiting lexical high (H) and low (L) tones (Dolphyne 1988). It is one of the major languages of Ghana spoken by about 8.3 million people (Lewis (ed.) 2009), belonging to the Kwa languages, within the Niger-Congo phylum (Storch 2001). This paper focuses on Asante-Twi, although throughout the paper we will use the name Akan. This is in order to preclude tonal and segmental differences among the dialects (for a detailed discussion about the differences see Cahill 1985; Dolphyne 1988; Abakah 2002; 2005 and

Abakah & Koranteng 2007 among others). Akan is a SVO language (Kobele & Torrence 2006). The following example (1) illustrates this.

(1)   Kofi bɔ-ɔ[1]   ama
         kofi hit-PST[2] ama
         'Kofi hit Ama.'
(adapted from Kobele & Torrence 2006, p. 162 gloss adjusted)

A simple clause as in (1) uttered without any further context is considered to be used with information focus. The usage of information structural terminology is inspired by Krifka (2008) distinguishing between information and correction focus. Both can be either wide or narrow, and refer to the corresponding alternatives that the context may evoke. If a constituent appears in its base position we will refer to this construction as in-situ, while the term ex-situ means that the constituent is moved from its base position to a designated focus position. Narrow focused constituents in Akan can be left in-situ, or marked by an ex-situ construction which shows the following characteristics:

   (i)   left-peripheral dislocation of a constituent

   (ii)   introduction of a clitic morpheme after the dislocated element

   (iii)   pronoun resumption in a canonical clause position
(Marfo & Bodomo 2005, p. 180)

If, for example, the direct object in (1) is narrowly focused it moves to the left periphery and is followed by the focus marker *na*. The following example (2) illustrates this.

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[1] In the examples we will use the Akan orthography as laid out in Dolphyne (1988).
[2] The abbreviations used follow the Leipzig Glossing Rules (Comrie et al. 2008).

(2) (ɛ-yɛ) ama na kofi bɔ-ɔ no (no)[3]
      PRO-be.PRS ama FM kofi hit-PST PRO the
      'It was Ama who Kofi hit.'
(adapted from Kobele & Torrence 2006, p. 164 gloss and bracketing adjusted)

All NPs can be pronominalized in object position, the resumptive pronoun is overt if the dislocated element is animate and covert if it is inanimate (Saah, 1988). According to Boadi (1974) two particles, *na* and *deɛ,* may function as the clitic morpheme after the dislocated element. *Na* is characterized by him as exclusive focus marker, which narrows down the referential range of the constituent it attaches to and places it in an exclusive class so that it contrasts with other members of the sets of alternatives (Boadi 1974, p. 7). *Deɛ* however is not exclusive. Moreover it presupposes a weaker commitment of the speaker towards the new information (see Ameka 2010 for an analyis of *deɛ* as topic marker). *Na* can be used to mark any constituent whereas *deɛ* is more distributionally limited (Boadi 1974, p. 9). Concerning the prosodic marking of the ex-situ constructions, Boadi (1974) claims that L toned *na*-focused elements are raised to H and that H toned elements are raised one step higher (Boadi 1974, p. 19).

In Akan, focus-constructions and wh-questions show interesting common characteristics (Saah 1988, p. 26). With respect to wh-questions, Saah (1988) and Kobele & Torrence (2006) report that Akan has two options for wh-placement: the wh-element may appear in-situ (3a) or ex-situ (3b). In the ex-situ variant the fronted question word is also followed by the focus marker *na*.

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[3] Brackets indicate optionality.

(3) a.   Kofi   bɔ-ɔ   hena
            kofi   hit-PST   who
            'Who did Kofi hit?'

     b.   Hena na ɔ-bɔ-ɔ   kofi
            who   FM PRO-hit-PST   kofi
            'Who is it that Kofi hit?'
(adapted from Kobele & Torrence 2006, pp. 165–166 gloss adjusted)

This is interesting for us, because the two options (3a) and (3b) are not equally distributed. The in-situ strategy seems to be more restricted in use. The wh-element has to be moved out of its base position if it is on the right of a negation particle, and/ or focus sensitive particles like *only*, or *even*, and in imbedded clauses (Kobele & Torrence 2006). Saah (1988) reports a slight semantic difference between the two wh-constructions with ex-situ wh-constructions being more emphatic. A similar claim is made by Ermisch (2006). For the focus construction she reports on a difference in marking between informational focus and identificational focus[4]. Informational focus goes along with the in-situ construction and identificational focus is marked by the ex-situ construction and has an exhaustive reading. Marfo & Bodomo (2005) also observe that a constituent cannot be contrastively focused in-situ in Akan (Marfo & Bodomo 2005, p. 187). It is not clear how exhaustive this statement is meant since they only show that in-situ focus with *na* is ungrammatical.

What becomes evident from this review is that there are two possible constructions for marking narrow focus in Akan, in-situ and ex-situ. Whereas the former is said to occur with informational focus, the latter with corrective focus. The dependence on focus type as put forward by Ermisch (2006) and Saah (1988) will be tested here.

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[4] We use the term corrective focus instead of identificational focus (see Krifka 2008).

2   Method

Eliciting information structure can be done in many ways. If the researcher has an advanced knowledge of the language under observation and is familiar with the different focus strategies a simple question-answer design brings good results in the laboratory. The main advance is that the researcher can fully control presuppositions and factors involved. Difficulties arise if the available literature does not exhaustively cover speaker's preferences of the possible strategies and/or environments of usage of one or the other syntactic strategy as it is the case for Akan. Before one can run a controlled experiment about e.g. the prosodic expression of focus in any language one should know the environment in which it is natural to use the one or the other syntactic strategy.

The Questionnaire on Information Structure (QUIS, Skopeteas et al. 2006) is a powerful tool to test for information structural effects. To kill two birds with one stone we adopted one of the QUIS tasks, the *Description of single situation.* First we wanted to find out about possible strategies of focus realisation for narrow informational focus and narrow corrective focus applied by the speakers, and which of the two attested is the preferred one for a controlled experiment testing the prosodic expression of focus in Akan (see Kügler & Genzel, re-submitted). And second we wanted to elicit a semi-spontaneous dataset with the same tonal configurations as used in the controlled experiment (see Kügler & Genzel, re-submitted).

2.1   Material

Figure 1 shows the two adapted pictures designed for the *Description of a single situation* task.

Figure 1 Adopted pictures for the description of a single situation task.

The picture on the left panel in Figure 1 illustrates the situation of the test sentence (4a) and the picture on the right of the sentence (4b).

(4) a. Agyeman boa-a   addo anɔpy   yi
         agymean help-PST addo morning this
         'Agyeman helped Addo this morning.'

    b. Anum tɔ-ɔ   amango anɔpa   yi
        anum buy-PST mango   morning this
        'Anum bought mangos[5] this morning.'

To elicit the desired information structure the following pre-recorded questions (5) and (6) were used. The first question (5a) was used for both pictures to make sure that the participants understood the situation displayed (5a = 6a).

(5/6) a. Deɛbɛn na wo-hunu   wɔ   saa mfoni yi   mu
          what   FM PRO-see.PRS be_at_a_place.PRS this picture this in
          'What do you see on this picture?'

The question in (5b) seeks to elicit narrow informational focus on the object. It is a wh-question asking for the object. The third question (5c) seeks to elicit

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[5] We translate *amango* as plural 'mangos', although there is a plural form *mmango* which is not used in our sample below. In the picture more than one mango is displayed and even if *amango* is used with the numeral *many* the speakers did use it in its singular form.

narrow corrective focus on the object by contrasting it with another name in the question.

(5) b. Hwan na agyeman boa-a   anɔpa   yi
        who   FM agyeman help-PST morning this
        'Whom did Agyeman help this morning?'

    c. Agyeman boa-a   anum anɔpa   yi
        agyeman help-PST anum morning this
        'Did Agyeman help Anum this morning?'

The question in (6b) elicits narrow informational focus on the object in the picture on the right panel in Figure 1. Question (6c) elicits narrow corrective focus on the object by contrasting it with another comestible good in the question.

(6) b. ɛdeɛn na anum tɔ-ɔ   anɔpa   yi
        what   FM anum buy-PST morning this
        'What did Anum buy this morning?'

    c. Anum boa-a   kobi   anɔpa   yi
        anum buy-PST salty fish   morning this
        'Did Anum buy salty fish this morning?'

2.2 Procedure

The pictures illustrating the situations (Figure 1) were presented to the participants on paper. They were asked to answer the pre-recorded wh-questions (see (5)–(6) above) in a natural way, using full sentences. The participants were informed that the whole situation happened *this morning* and were instructed to use the temporal information when answering the questions.

The questions were spoken by a young female native speaker and were recorded in a quiet room in Berlin directly on a laptop (Levono R61) using Audacity (Version 1.2.6) and a headset (Logitech Internet Chat Headset). The microphone was an electret condenser type with sensitivity of -39 dbV/Pascal.

The participants heard the pre-recorded questions over headphones. The headphones were binaural with a frequency spectrum from 20-20000 Hz and an acoustic impedance of 32 Ohm with an integrated volume control, so that every participant could adjust the volume. The answers were digitally recorded on a laptop (Levono R61) using Audacity (Version 1.2.6) in a quiet room in the Linguistics Department at the University of Ghana using the same headset.

2.3   Participants

Eleven native speakers of Akan (6 female and 5 male) as spoken in and around Kumasi participated in the experiment. Eight participants were students of the University of Ghana in Accra. For the other three, one was doing his national service in Kumasi, another working in the pharmacy, and the third one working as university lecturer. The average age was 26 years. All speakers declared English as their second language. Each speaker was paid a small fee for participation.

3   Results

In this section we list all answers given by the participants with the number of the question first and the number of the participant as second digit separated by a dot (e.g. (5a.9) is the answer to question 5a from speaker 9).

(5a.1) Me-hunu   sɛ   agyeman re-boa   a-yi   addo afiri
        PRO-see.PRS that agyeman PROG-help PRO-take_out.PRS addo from
        nsuo no mu anɔpa   yi
        water the out morning this
        'I see that Agyeman is helping to take Addo out of the water
        this morning.'

(5b.1) Agyeman boa-a   addo anɔpa   yi
        agymean   help-PST addo morning this
        'Agyeman helped Addo this morning.'

(5c.1) Daabi agyeman boa-a   addo anɔpa   yi
        no   agymean help-PST addo morning this
        'No! Agyeman helped Addo this morning.'

(5a.2) Me-hunu   agyeman ene addo
        PRO-see.PRS agyeman and addo
        'I see Agyeman and Addo.'
        Me-hunu   sɛ   addo ɛ-wɔ   nsuo emu
        PRO-see.PRS that addo PRO-be_at_a_place.PRS water in
        'I see that Addo is in the water.'
        Me-hunu   sɛ   agyeman nso e-te   kodoɔ bi   mu
        PRO-see.PRS that agyeman also PROG-sit boat   one in
        'I see that Agyeman is sitting in a boat.'
        Addo atene   ne   nsa   ma agyeman e-fa   no ɛ-si
        addo hold.PRS PRO hand out agyeman PROG-take PRO PRO-stand.PRS
        kodoɔ no mu
        boat   the in
        'Addo holds out his hand for Agyeman for taking him, he stands in the
        boat.

(5b.2) Agyeman boa-a   addo
        agymean   help-PST addo
        'Agyeman helped Addo.'

(5c.2) Daabi addo na agyeman boa-a   no anɔpa   yi
        no   addo FM agyeman help-PST PRO morning this
        'No! It was Addo who Agyeman helped this morning.'

(5a.3) Me-hunu   sɛ   agyeman ɛ-te   kodoɔ mu
        PRO-see.PRS that agyeman PRO-sit.PRS   boat   in
        'I see that Agyeman sits in a boat.'
        Na   addo nso   da   nsuo mu a   agymean pɛsɛ
        and addo also lie.PRS   water in and agymean want.PRS
        ɔ-boa   no   na   ɔ-yi   no   firi   nsuo no   mu
        PRO-help.PRS   PRO   and PRO-take_out.PRS   PRO from   water the out
        'And Addo also lies in the water and Agyeman wants to take him
        out of the water.'

(5b.3) Agyeman boa-a   addo anɔpa   yi
        agymean help-PST   addo morning this
        'Agyeman helped Addo this morning.'

(5c.3) Daabi agyeman boa-a   addo anɔpa   yi
        no   agymean help-PST   addo morning this
        'No! Agyeman helped Addo this morning.'

(5a.4) Me-hunu   sɛ   akɔdaa bi   a   yɛ-frɛ   no   addo ɔ-da
        PRO-see.PRS that child   one who PASS-call   PRO addo PRO-lie.PRS
        nsuo mu
        water in
        'I see that a child who is called Addo lies in the water.'
        Nsuo de   no   ɛ-ko   na   agyeman
        water do_sth_with.PRS   PRO   PRO-drawn.PRS and agyeman
        ɛ-pɛ
        PRO-want.PRS
        ɔ-boa   na   yi   no   firi   nsuo   no   mu
        PRO-help.PRS   and take_out.PRS   PRO from   water   the out
        'The water wants to drawn him and Agyeman wants to help him and
        take him out of the water.'

(5b.4) Agyeman boa-a   addo
        agymean help-PST   addo
        'Agyeman helped Addo.'

(5c.4) Daabi ɔ-boa-a   addo
        no   PRO-help-PST   addo
        'No! He helped Addo.'

(5a.5) Me-hunu   sɛ   addo a-tɔ   nsuo mu na agyeman pɛsɛ
        PRO-see.PRS   that addo PERF-fall water in and agyeman want.PRS
        ɔ-yi   no   firi mu
        PRO-take_out.PRS PRO from out
        'I see that Addo fell in the water and Agyeman wants to take him
        out.'

(5b.5) Agyeman boa-a   addo anɔpa   yi
        agymean help-PST   addo morning   this
        'Agyeman helped Addo this morning.'

(5c.5) Daabi agyeman boa-a   addo anɔpa   yi
        no   agymean help-PST   addo morning   this
        'No! Agyeman helped Addo this morning.'

(5a.6) Me-hu   m-barima mmienu
        PRO-see.PRS   PL-man   two
        'I see two men.'
        Agyeman te   suhyɛma mu w-a-tene   ne nsa pɛ
        agyeman sit.PRS boat   in PRO-PERF-stretch PRO hand want.PRS
        sɛ ɔ-sɔ   addo mu addo da   nsuo no mu
        that PRO-hold.PRS   addo in addo lie.PRS water the in
        'Agyeman sits in a boat, his hands are stretched, he wants to
        hold Addo, Addo lies in the water.'

(5b.6) Agyeman boa-a   addo
        agymean help-PST   addo
        'Agyeman helped Addo.'

(5c.6) Mepawokyɛw daabi ɔ-m-boa-a   anum
        please   no   PRO-NEG-help-PST   anum
        'Please no! He did not help Anum.'

(5a.7) Me-hu   sɛ   addo ɛ-da   nsuo mu na   agyeman gyina
       PRO-see.PRS that addo PRO-lie.PRS water in   and agyeman stand.PRS
       kodoɔ mu nanso nsuo re-fa   addo nti agyeman pɛ   sɛ
       boat   in but   water PROG-take   addo so agyeman want.PRS that
       ɔ-twe   no a-ba   kodoɔ no mu
       PRO-pull.PRS PRO PERF-come   boat   the in
       'I see that Addo lies in the water and Agyeman stands in the boat
       but the water is taking Addo so Agyeman wants to pull him to come
       in the boat.'

(5b.7) Addo
       addo
       'Addo!'

(5c.7) Daabi daabi ɛ-n-yɛ   addo na ɔ-boa   no
       no   no   PRO-NEG-be.PRS   addo FM   PRO-help.PRS PRO
       'No! No! It is not Addo whom he helps!'

(5a.8) Me-hu   sɛ   addo da   nsuo mu agyeman ɛ-te   hyɛn
       PRO-see.PRS that addo lie.PRS   water in agyeman PRO-sit.PRS ship
       mu a ɔ-pɛ   sɛ   ɔ-yi   no   firi nsuo no mu
       in who PRO-want.PRS that PRO-take_out.PRS PRO from water the in
       'I see that Addo lies in the water Agyeman sits in a ship he wants to
       take him out of the water!'

(5b.8) Agyeman boa-a   addo anɔpa   yi
       agymean help-PST   addo morning this
       'Agyeman helped Addo this morning.'

(5c.8) Daabi agyeman boa-a   addo anɔpa   yi
       no   agymean help-PST   addo morning this
       'No! Agyeman helped Addo this morning.'

(5a.9) Saa mfoni yi mu ɔbarima yɛ-frɛ no agyeman a ɔ-te
this picture this in man PASS-call PRO agyeman who PRO-sit.PRS
ɛhyɛn bi mu
ship one in
'In this picture: a man called Agyeman who is in a ship.'
W-a-tene ne nsa de re-ma abofra bi a yɛ-frɛ
PRO-PERF-stretch PRO hand for PROG-give child one who PASS-call
no addo
PRO addo
'He has stretched his hand for giving it to a child who is called
Addo.'
Addo da nsuo mu na ɔnɔ nso a-tene ne nsa de
addo lie.PRS water in and PRO also PERF-stretch PRO hand for
a-ma agyeman
PERF-give agyeman
'Addo lies in the water and he has also stretched his hands for
giving it to Agyeman.'

(5b.9) Anɔpa yi agyeman boa-a abɔfra bi a yɛ-frɛ no addo
Morning this agyeman help-PST child one who PASS-call PRO addo
'This morning Agyeman helped a child who is called Addo.'

(5c.9) Daabi agyeman boa-a addo
no agymean help-PST addo
'No! Agyeman helped Addo.'

(5a.10) Me-hu sɛ addo da nsuo no mu na agyeman nso
PRO-see.PRS that addo lie.PRS water the in and agyeman also
ɛ-te kodoɔ no mu na w-a-tene ne nsa pɛ
PRO-sit.PRS boat the in and PRO-PERF-stretch PRO hand want.PRS
sɛ ɔ-sɔ agyeman nso nsa
that PRO-hold.PRS agyeman also hand
'I see that Addo lies in the water and Agyeman sits in the boat also
and he has stretched his hand wanting to hold Agyeman's hand too.'

(5b.10) Agyeman boa-a addo anɔpa yi
agymean help-PST addo morning this
'Agyeman helped Addo this morning.'

(5c.10) Daabi agyeman boa-a   addo anɔpa   yi
        no   agymean help-PST addo morning this
        'No! Agyeman helped Addo this morning.'

(5a.11) Mfoni yi   mu me-hu   sɛ addo a-tɔ   nsuo no mu a
        Picture this in   PRO-see.PRES that addo PERF-fall water the in who
        neho   re-kyere   no
        himself PROG-point_out   PRO
        'In the picture I see that Addo has fallen in the water he is calling for his
        attention.'
        Agyeman a-tene   ne nsa sɛ ɔ-re-sɔ   ne mu na
        agyeman PERF-stretch PRO hand that PRO-PROG-hold PRO in   and
        w-boa   no a-ma   n-a-foro   kodoɔ no sɛdeɛ
        PRO-help.PRS PRO PERF-give PRO-PERF-climb boat   the so
        ɛ-bɛ-yɛ   o-bɛ-nya   nkwa sɛdeɛ ɛ-bɛ yɛ   nsuo no
        PRO-FUT-be PRO-FUT-get life   so   PRO-FUT-be water the
        m-fa   no
        NEG-take.PRS   PRO
        'Agyeman has stretched his hand to drip him and help him climb into the
        boat so that the water will not take him.'

(5b.11) Agyeman boa-a   addo anɔpa   yi
        agymean   help-PST addo morning this
        'Agyeman helped Addo this morning.'

(5c.11) Daabi agyeman boaa   addo anɔpa   yi
        no   agymean help-PST addo morning this
        'No! Agyeman helped Addo this morning.'

(6a.1) Me-hunu   sɛ   anum re-tɔ   amango wɔ
        PRO-see.PRS that anum PROG-buy mango   be_at_a_place.PRS
        mfoni   no mu
        picture the in
        'I see that Anum is buying mangos in the picture.'
        Me-hunu   ɔba   a   ɔ-tɔn   amango wɔ
        PRO-see.PRS woman who PRO-sell.PRS mango   be_at_a_place.PRS
        mfoni   no mu
        picture the in
        'I see a woman who is selling mangos in the picture.'
        Me nso hunu   dua wɔ   mfoni   no mu
        PRO also see.PRS tree be_at_a_place.PRS picture the in
        'I also see a tree in the picture.'
        Me-hunu   sɛ   amango gu ɛponɔ so   wɔ   mfoni
        PRO-see.PRS that mango on table much be_at_a_place.PRS picture
        no mu
        the in
        'I see a lot of mangos on the table in the picture.'
        Me-hunu   sɛ   anum a-ma   ne   nsa so
        PRO-see.PRS that anum PERF-lift PRO   hand up
        'I see that Anum has lifted his hands up.'

(6b.1) Anum tɔ-ɔ   amango anɔpa   yi
        anum buy-PST mango   morning this
        'Anum bought mangos this morning.'

(6c.1) Daabi Anum tɔ-ɔ   amango anɔpa   yi
        no   anum buy-PST mango   morning this
        'No! Anum bought mangos this morning.'

(6a.2) Me-hunu   abrantɛ bi
        PRO-see.PRS   boy   one
        'I see a boy.'
        Me-hunu   amango
        PRO-see.PRS   mango
        'I see mangos.
        Me-hunu   maame bi   nso
        PRO-see.PRS   woman one also
        'I also see a woman.'
        Afei me-hunu   ɛpɔnɔ sɛ   amango gu so
        now PRO-see.PRS   table   that mango   on much
        'Now I see a table with a lot of mangos on it.'
        Me-hunu   dua bi   nso sɛ   ɛ-wɔ
        PRO-see.PRS tree one also that PRO-be_at_a_place.PRS
        ahaban bebere
        leaves   many
        'I see also a tree with many leaves.'
        Me-hunu   kenten bi   so   sɛ   ɛ-si
        PRO-see.PRS   basket one also that PRO-be_situated.PRS
        ɛpɔnɔ ase
        table   under
        'I see also a basket under the table.'
        Me-hunu   sɛ   abrantɛ no   nso kura   sika
        PRO-see.PRS   that boy   PRO also carry.PRS money
        'I see that a boy carries money.'

(6b.2) Anum tɔ-ɔ   amango
        anum   buy-PST mango
        'Anum bought mangos.'

(6c.2) Daabi Anum tɔ-ɔ   amango anɔpa   yi
        no   anum   buy-PST mango   morning this
        'No! Anum bought mangos this morning.'

(6a.3) Me-hunu   barima bi   a   y-akyerɛ natadɛɛ addo mu
        PRO-see.PRS   man   one who   PASS-write shirt   addo in
        'I see a man, his shirt has the inscription Addo.'
        Me-hunu   sɛ   maame bi   nso re-tɔn   amango
        PRO-see.PRS   that woman one also PROG-sell   mangos
        'I also see that a woman is selling mangos.'
        Na   barima no ɛ-yɛ   sɛ   ɔ-pɛsɛ   ɔ-tɔ   mango
        And man   the PRO-be.PRS   that PRO-want.PRS PRO-buy.PRS mango
        no bi
        the some
        'And it is the man that wants to buy some mangos.'
        Me-hunu   adua nso sɛ   e-si   maame no akyi
        PRO-see.PRS   tree also that PRO-stand.PRS   woman the behind
        'I see also a tree that stands behind the woman.'
        Adua no ɛ-yɛ   ahahanmono
        tree   the PRO-be.PRS green
        'The tree is green.'

(6b.3) Anum tɔ-ɔ   amango anɔpa   yi
        anum buy-PST   mango morning this
        'Anum bought mangos this morning.'

(6c.3) Daabi anum tɔ-ɔ   amango anɔpa   yi
        no   anum buy-PST   mango morning this
        'No! Anum bought mangos this morning.'

(6a.4) Me-hunu   sɛ   maame bi   ɛ-tɔn   amango ena akɔdaa bi
        PRO-see.PRS   that woman one PROG-sell   mango and child   one
        gyina   ne   nykɛn ɛ-tɔ   bi
        PROG-stand[6] PRO nearby PRO-buy.PRS some
        'I see that a woman is selling mangos and a child is standing
        nearby her, he wants to buy some mangos.'

(6b.4) ɔ-tɔ-ɔ   amango
        PRO-buy-PST mango
        'He bought mangos.'

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[6] Aspect is marked by a tonal shift (Dolphyne 1988, pp. 67–68).

(6c.4) Daabi ɔ-tɔ-ɔ   amango wa-n-tɔ   kobi
        no   PRO-buy-PST mango   PRO-NEG-buy.PRS   salty fish
        'No! He bought mangos not salty fish.'

(6a.5) Me-hunu   sɛ   anum gyina   maame bi   a   ɔ-tɔn
        PRO-see.PRS that anum PROG-stand woman one who PRO-sell.PRS
        amango ho
        mango   aside
        'I see that Anum is standing next to a woman who sells mangos.'
        Maame no ɔ-tɔn   amango no wɔ   dua ase
        woman the PRO-sell.PRS   mangos the be_at_a_place.PRS tree under
        'The woman sells mangos under the tree.'

(6b.5) Anum tɔ-ɔ   amango anɔpa   yi
        anum buy-PST mango   morning   this
        'Anum bought mangos this morning.'

(6c.5) Daabi anum tɔ-ɔ   amango anɔpa   yi
        no   anum buy-PST mango   morning   this
        'No! Anum bought mangos this morning.'

(6a.6) Me-hu   abaamoa bi   yɛ-frɛ   no   anum ɔ-gyina   maame
        PRO-see.PRS boy   one PASS-call PRO anum PRO-stand.PRS woman
        bi   nkyɛn
        one side
        'I see a boy called Anum he stands next to a woman.'
        Maame no tɔn   amango na ɔ-pɛ   sɛ   ɔ-tɔ
        woman the sell.PRS mango and PRO-want.PRS that PRO-buy.PRS
        amango no bi
        mango   the some
        'The woman sells mangos and he wants to buy some mangos.'
        Maame no te   dua bi   ase   na   w-a-yehyɛ   amango
        woman the sit.PRS tree one under and PRO-PERF-arrange mango
        no wɔ   ɛponɔ no so
        the be_at_a_place.PRS table   the top
        'The woman sits under a tree and has arranged the mangos on
        top of the table.'
        Abaamoa no yɛ-frɛ   no   anum no a-pɛgya ne   nsa   sɛ
        boy   the PASS-call PRO anum PRO PERF-lift PRO hand that
        ɔ-re-kyea   maame no a   ɔ-tɔn   amango no
        PRO-PROG-greet   woman the who PRO-sell.PRS mango   the
        'The boy called Anum has lifted his hand for greeting the woman who
        sells the mangos.'
        Me-hu   sɛ   anɔpa yi anum re-kɔtɔ   amango
        PRO-see.PRS that morning this anum PROG-go_buy mango
        wɔ   dua bi   ase
        be_at_a_place.PRS tree one under
        'I see that this morning Anum goes to buy mangos under the tree.'

(6b.6) Anum tɔ-ɔ   amango
        anum   buy-PST mango
        'Anum bought mangos.'

(6c.6) Daabi a-n-tɔ-ɔ   kobi
        no   PRO-NEG-buy-PST   salty fish
        'No! Anum did not buy salty fish.'

(6a.7) Me-hu   sɛ anɔpa   yi   na   anum ɛ-re-kɔtɔ   amango
        PRO-see.PRS that morning this PST anum PRO-PROG-go_buy mango
        wɔ   dua bi   ase
        be_at_a_place.PRS tree one under
        'I see that this morning, Anum was going to buy mangos under a
        tree.'

(6b.7) Deɛ me-hu   ɛ-yɛ   amango
        what PRO-see.PRS PRO-be.PRS mango
        'What I see are mangos.'

(6c.7) Daabi ɔ-tɔ-ɔ   amango
        no   PRO-buy-PST mango
        'No! He bought mango.'

(6a.8) Me-hu   sɛ anɔpa   yi   anum re-ɔ-kɔtɔ   amango
        PRO-see.PRS that morning this anum PROG-PRO-go_buy mango
        wɔ   dua bi   ase
        be_at_a_place.PRS tree one under
        'I see that this morning Anum is going to buy mangos under the tree.'

(6b.8) Anum tɔ-ɔ   amango anɔpa   yi
        anum buy-PST mango   morning this
        'Anum bought mangos this morning.'

(6c.8) Daabi Anum tɔ-ɔ   amango anɔpa   yi
        no   anum buy-PST mango   morning this
        'No! Anum bought mangos this morning.'

(6a.9) Anum   hyɛ   hyɛti akokɔsradeɛ
        anum   wear.PRS shirt   yellow
        'Anum wears a yellow shirt.'
        Maame no nso ɛ-fra   ntoma
        woman the also PROG-dress cloth
        'The woman is also dressed in cloth.'
        Kɔkɔɔ kakra wɔ   mu   na   w-a-san   a-bɔ
        red   little be_at_a_place.PRS in   and PRO-PERF-also PERF-create
        duku
        bandana
        'There is a little bit of red inside and she also has wrapped a bandana.'
        Wɔ-gyina   dua ahabanmono bi   ase
        PRO-stand.PRS tree green   one   under
        'They stand under a green tree.'

(6b.9) Anɔpa   yi   anum tɔ-ɔ   amango
        morning this anum buy-PST mango
        'This morning Anum bought mangos.'

(6c.9) Daabi anɔpa   yi   anum tɔ-ɔ   amango
        no   morning this anum buy-PST mango
        'No! This morning Anum bought mangos.'

(6a.10) Me-hu   abranteɛ bi   yɛ-frɛ   no   anum ɔ-pɛ   sɛ
        PRO-see.PRS boy   one PASS-call PRO anum PRO-want.PRS that
        ɔ-tɔ   amango
        PRO-buy.PRS mango
        'I see a boy called Anum he wants to buy mangos.'
        Afei nso me-hu   maame bi   a   ɔ-ton   amango
        again also PRO-see.PRS woman one who PRO-sell.PRS mango
        'Again I see also a woman who sells mangos.'
        Amango pii   nso gu ɛpon no so
        mango   many also on table the top
        'Also many mangos lie on top of the table.'
        Saa nso na me-hu   dua bi wɔ   maame no
        this also and PRO-see.PRS tree one be_at_a_place.PRS woman the
        akyi
        back
        'This too and I see a tree behind the woman.'

(6b.10) Amango pii   nso gu pono no so
        mango   many also on table the top
        'Many mangos, on top of the table too.'

(6c.10) Daabi anum tɔ-ɔ   amango anɔpa   yi
        no   anum buy-PST mango   morning this
        'No! Anum bought mangos this morning.'

(6a.11) Me-hu   sɛ maame bi re-tɔn   n-uaba bi   na abrantɛɛ
        PRO-see.PRS that woman one PROG-sell PL-fruit some and boy
        bi   nso a-gyina   ne nkyɛn sɛ ebia   ɔ-pɛ   sɛ
        one also PERF-stand PRO side   that perhaps PRO-want.PRS that
        ɔ-tɔ   bi
        PRO-buy.PRS some
        'I see a woman she is selling some fruits and a boy is standing beside her
        too, maybe he wants to buy some.'

(6b.11) Anum tɔ-ɔ   amango anɔpa   yi
        anum buy-PST mango   morning this
        'Anum bought mangos this morning.'

(6c.11) Daabi! Mango na anum tɔ-ɔ   no   anɔpa   yi
        no   mango FM anum buy-PST PRO morning this
        'No! It is mango that Anum bought this morning.

First of all the answers to questions (5a) and (6a) show that most of the
participants conceived the situation displayed correctly. In the sample (6a.9) the
participant does not describe the action displayed, emphasis is put on the
description of cloth and landscape. Nonetheless the participant answered the
follow up questions as expected.

Concerning the information structural marking the results show that in
case of narrow informational focus out of 22 answers no usage of the ex-situ
construction could be observed. There is remarkably little variation in the data.
We find one single word utterance, (5b.7), repeating only the questioned object,

two other constructions (6b.7) and (6b.10) but with no sign of fronting and/or morphological focus marking. Participant 7 uses a question word followed by the verb *see* and the questioned object, in the sample of participant 10 we see that the questioned object appears in the left periphery of the sentence but without the designated focus maker *na,* followed by a locative construction. Furthermore we find one instance of pronominalization (6b.4).

In the context of corrective focus three out of 22 answers are realized ex-situ (5c.2, 5c.7, 6c.11). Concerning variation we find two instances of pronominalization (5c.4, 6c.7) two participants used a negation on the verb (5c.7, 6c.6) and two combined pronominalization and negation on the verb (5c.6, 6c.4).

4 Discussion

We wanted to test the interaction of information structure and syntactic structure in Akan. Inspired by the work of Ermisch (2006) we hypothesized that narrow informational focus is not syntactically marked i.e. the focused constituent remains in-situ (see also Hartmann & Zimmermann 2007 for comparable results in Hausa). The results of the situation description task support Ermisch's claim. What is more surprising is that the in-situ strategy is the preferred one, even with narrow corrective focus contra Marfo & Bodomo (2005) and Ermisch (2006).[7] This does not mean that there are no linguistic means of focus marking at all in case of in-situ focus. In our study on the prosodic marking of focus in

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[7] One rewiever asked for question-answer congruency, which is also known as syntactic priming (see Bock 1986). We do not see any influence of syntactic priming, the wh-question asking for an informational focus shows a fronted wh-word which is followed by the focus marker *na*. The question eliciting corrective focus is an in-situ construction. If syntactic priming would matter here, we would have expected more ex-situ answers for informational focus, but the reverse was the case.

Akan (Kügler & Genzel re-submitted) we show contra Boadi (1974) that corrective focus is prosodically marked by means of register lowering on the corrective focused element and on subsequent post-focal constituents regardless of tonal specification. Narrow informational focus remains also prosodically unmarked.

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