

Conn.
draft

~~SARAMACCAN NON-VERBAL~~
study of the Saramaccan
connectors 'Biga' and 'Nöö'

work paper
prepublication draft

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- o. If one is to understand very much about Saramaccan non-narrative discourse, ^{he} they must first have some understanding of the two connectors ^{which} ~~both~~ ~~divide the discourse~~ ^{signal the section, sub-section} ^{paragraph breaks of the discourse} ^{as well as give it cohesion} and give it cohesion.

Biga

- 1.1 The first of these connectors is biga. Biga basically introduces ^{information} ~~material~~ which is the basis for some statement, conclusion, decision, ^{or} ~~and~~ action(?). This material may be evidence, or primary or secondary cause. Time does not seem to be relevant.

1.1.1 Examples 1. Main clause: command Biga clause: evidence

i koti wan piki njannjan, i manda da i pai.
you cut a small food you send to your father-

(i) koti wan piki njannjan i da i
in-law y_ou cut a small food you give your

mai. Biga di manu di pai u
mother-in-law the husband the son-in-law of

mi de kai Bandja an ta- njan söndö mi
mine they call Bandja not cont eat without me.

"You (must) cut a piece of food (meat) and send it to your father-in-law. You cut a piece of food and send it to your mother-in-law. Biga my son-in-law doesn't eat without me."

1.1.2 2. Main clause: conclusion Biga clause: evidence

Di mujöö pasa aki an siki biga a waka
the woman passed here not sick she walked

tjala tjala tjala pasa dou ala
lively pace passed arrived overthere.

"The woman who passed by here was not sick because she was walking at a lively clip and went on over there."

1.1.3 3. Main clause: conclusion Biga clause: evidence

Hën o- mbei tu deewei fëën biga ën
it incom make two dry weather of him it

mbei tu pasi de o- koti goon
makes two times they incom cut fields.

- 1.1.4 4. Main clause: desire/command Biga clause: primary cause

ma kē a libi fanjanfanjan ...biga de
I neg want him to live disorderly they

o- kosi ēn.
incom insult him

"I don't want him to live disorderly because people will talk about him."

- 1.1.5 5. Main clause: Action Biga clause: primary cause

Mi tuwe ēn a kape biga am bunu.
I threw it in the weeds it neg good

"I threw it in the weeds because it was no good."

- 1.1.6 6. Main clause: action Biga clause: primary cause

Mi ko wooko aki biga wooko an dē a di
I came to work here work neg is on the

sē u Faansi möön
side of French Guyana anymore.

"I came to work here because there was no longer any work in French Guyana."

- 1.1.7 7. Main clause: ^{Command} ~~prediction~~ Biga clause: secondary cause
~~Biga clause: evidence~~

Jā musu mbei taa i da leon biga i
you neg must pretend that you are lion you

ta- fan kuma makaku
cont talk like monkey.

"You mustn't pretend you are a lion because you talk like a monkey."

- 1.1.8 8. This example with three biga's shows it introducing both primary and secondary causes for certain statements.

hēn a taki taa 'Wē womi wi o- da i
then he said that well man, we incom give you

tide ma na ko möön wa o- da
today, but don't come anymore. we neg incom give

i möön biga ja kē tja di wēti
you anymore you neg want carry the white

fisi ^{fii} fēn ko fuu njan Di
fish ~~of him~~/of you come for us to eat. that one

tja da

tja di wēti fisi go dēēn mama Biga u
 carry the white fish go to his mother.

woto a' mama tu Biga u mama
 others have mothers also. our mothers

kē njan wēti fisi tu.
 want to eat white fish also.

"Then he said: 'Hey man, we will share with you today,
 We aren't going to share with you anymore.
 but don't come back anymore. [^]Because (primary cause)

you don't bring your fish and put in our common pot.'

He had taken his fish to his mother. 'Biga (secondary
 cause) the rest of us have mothers also. Biga and
 the reason I say that is because our mothers would
 like to be eating fish also.'

The first two biga's ~~xx~~ give arguments to support
 the statement, "We~~x~~ aren't going to share with you
 anymore." The third biga gives an argument to sup-
 port the statement, "The rest of us have mothers also."

1.1.9 9. Main clause: command Biga clause: secondary cause -

Un musu abi ten fu
 you (pl) must have time for (the purpose of)

sa du ēn biga mi dē ku hii hati fu
 can do it I am with all heart for

sa heepi unu.
 can help you (pl)

"You must have/take time to do it because I am
 wholeheartedly ready to help you."

1.2 The above examples seem to be fairly clear cut, but there are others which come somewhere on a sliding scale between evidence and cause.

1. mi o- go a Saamaka tuu biga
I incom go to Saramacca country truely

di wojo fu mi aki mi hangi u si ën
the eyes of me here I hunger to see it.

"I really am going to Saramacca country because my
x eyes long to see it."

2. Fan ku di bakaa fini biga soni
talk with the white man in detail things

o- dë fuun taki eti
incom be for you (pl) talk yet.

"Discuss things in detail with the white man because
there are going to be lots of things to talk about."

1.3 Above the ^{sentence} ~~clause~~ level biga connects clause clusters, paragraphs, and sections, but its function is essentially the same: to introduce grounds material.

Example connecting clauses:

Wë i seei tu ee mati di fan
wekk you yourself also, hear friend, the talk

i si i fan ku u aki nöö wa
you see you talk with us here, we neg

sa taki taa u teki ën Biga jee
can say that we take/accept it. if

wan sëmbë fan ku i nöö i taa i
a person talks with you and you say you

jei ee na sö i taa wë mi teki
hear if not thus you say well I take/accept

di fan nöö i musu du di fa nöö
the talk then you must do the manner. therefore

wa sa taki da i taa u piki ën ma
we neg can say to you that we respond it but

For examples connecting paragraphs and sections, see below.

Example: Text: You Don't Love People, But You Should

Paragraph 6 GROUND: Biga You need people. They help you and you help them. That's the way to live right.

NUU

2.0 The second of these connectors is nöö. Nöö functions on all levels from the phrase to the discourse.

2.1 On the phrase level (and sometimes clause level) it functions as an emphazzer.

Examples:

20; hën nöö da di soni
it only is the thing

"That's the thing" or "that's what counts."

21. hën di buka aki nöö mi ko da unu
it the message here only I came give you(PL)

" It, this message here is the only thing I came to give you."

22. dee dë nöö "Only those things (are mine)"
those there only

23. ju o- wooko ën dii daka nöö
you incom work it three days only

"You won't work but three days." or "You ~~will~~ work only three days."

2.2 On the clause level, its simplest function is to introduce the second and subsequent clauses in a series in unaccomplished time such as ~~xx~~ hypothetical situations, procedures, instructions etc.

Examples:

2.2.1 30. ~~Hypothetical~~ Hypothetical Situation

Te i buta- dee mii a siköö
whenever you put the (pl) children in school

nöö dee mäsätë o- ta- lei de
then the (pl) teachers incom cont teach them

te de ko möön köni sabi hii soni
until they become more smart know all things

these look like
glorified tennoo
constructions.

mööm gaan siköö nöö a di möön gaan
more bigger school then at the more bigger

siköö wan dē naandē de o- go lei
~~siköö~~ one there, there they incom go learn

ko möön hei nöö a di juu ten dē
become more important at the hour time there

nöö de sabi hii söötu pei wooko u goon-
then they know all kinds various work of earth

liba kaa.
already.

"Whenever you but your children in school, then the
teachers will teach them until they are smart, knowing
everything, then they will send them to a higher school.
Then at the higher school they will learn until they
become important people. Then at that time they will
know how to do any kind of work on earth."

2.2.2

31. Procedural

Te i o- tai muunga
whenever you incom tie a rice/peanut dish

nöö i o-puu di fania ku di pinda mökisi
then you incom the flour with the peanut mixed
produce

nöö i puu ěn te a hia maani te i
then you produce it til it much sift til you

kaba gbege de ku satu nöö i tjako
finish completely with salt then you bring

nöö i ko tuwe suki tuwe wata
then you come throw sugar throw water ...

"Whenever you are going to make this certain rice/
peanut dish, first you make the flour from pounding
rice and peanuts mixed, then ~~you~~ when you have made
alot of it you sift it and salt, then you bring it
(over to the house?) ~~add~~, then you add sugar and
water."...

*in does this
mean end?*

2.2-3

32. Instructions

- a. Mujëë, un go, nöö un go boi soni
 woman you (pl) go you (pl) go cook something.

"Woman, ya'll go, ~~xxx~~ on upriver and cook something."

- b. A musu lo' Anata
 he must love Anata

"He must love Anata,

nöö a lobi Sela
 he love Sela

and Sela,

nöö a lo' Sidonu
 he love Sidonu

and Sidonu.

de must libi pizii
 they must live in harmony

They must live in
 harmony,

biga a ko de
 because he become their

because he has become
 their brother."

baaa
 brother.

- 2.3 ~~Still~~ on the sentence level, nöö connects clauses that are linked logically. The first clause gives some point-of-departure. The nöö clause follows with some implication or comment on the first clause.

Examples:

2.3.1

40. Te..nöö clauses Whenever..then

- a. Te a ko nöö a ta- fika nëën
 whenever he comes, then he cont remains in his
 mujëë köndë nö?
 wife's village ?

"Whenever he comes, does he remain in his wife's
 village?"

- b. Te sapate nöö mi nango a pe
 Whenever evening, then I go visiting

"I go visiting in the evenings."

This construction has already been illustrated in
 the hypothetical situation and procedural examples

see 30 and 31 above.

*in order to ?
 no stat ?*

time - event

2.3.2 41. Ee...nöö clauses if...then*condition
consequence*

- a. Efi/ee hati u de bunu, nöö un
If heart of them good then you(pl)
- dee bëë u de ku de seei
the (pl) family of them with them selves
- tuu o- ko dë gaan guduma
all incom become there great rich ones.

"If their hearts are right, then all you relatives of theirs along with them will become very rich people."

- b. Jee/ee fou fatu nöö a faja joo
If bird fat then in fire you will
- si ën
see it.

"If a bird is fat, you will see it in the fire."
(the fire will melt it.)

2.3.3 42. Di...nöö clauses Since..then*reason
result*

- a. Di a nango pëë bali nöö wa fan
Since he going play ball we neg talk
- ku ën
with him.

"Since he was going to play ball, we didn't talk to him."

- b. Di i jei ën nöö an hati
since/when you heard it, it neg hurt
- i poi nö, womi?
you terribly ?, Man?

"When you heard it, didn't it hurt you terribly, Man?"

topic-comment

2.3.4 43. Topic...Comment clauses

- a. I si fa i si i o- kii ën dë
you see as you see you incom kill her there,
- nöö de o- tjëkë awaa da i.
then they incom dance now for you.

"In the case that you do kill her, then they will really dance for you (in joy)."

or

Topic: You will kill your child.

Comment: People will be so happy about it that they dance for joy.

b. fa mi ko fan ku unu aki
as I came talk with you(pl) here

nöö un musu jei nöömö
you (pl) must hear without fail

"In regard to what I said to you here,
you must surely obey me."

c. ma dee gaan wan nöö de ma
but the (pl) older ones they, I neg

sa' soni u de möön
know something of them anymore.

"But concerning the older ones, I don't know
anything about them anymore."

2.3.5

44. Sometimes the 'point-of-departure' clauses seem to be grounds or causes for the comments or conclusions in the nöö clauses.

a. kaa u ku Asayseka bi libi
where (because) we with Asayseka past live

bunu tjika nöö a o- ko a u ko
well ~~xxxxx~~ he incom come to us come
enough

fan ku u nöömö
talk with us without fail.

Considering / based on the fact that
"Because we and Asayseka have lived so much in harmony in the past, (we know that?) he will surely come and talk to us."

Spacio-Semantic relation.



Why isn't
this one
big?

Perhaps an
example of the
context will
show us.

That's a
good
question
would have to
turn around

yes

b. ka lanti ta- si taa mi ku
 where/because people cont see that I with

unu guënti tjika...nöö a abi fa
 you (pl) are familiar enough it has how

fuun pasa mi buka tjika ..nöö de o-
 for you pass my month enough then they incom

si taa sösö mati mi ku unu ta-
 see that worthless friends I with you(pl) cont

hoi.
 hold.

*I can't see
 how the
 free translation
 links up with
 the gloss*

"Because people see or think that you all and I are
 close friends, there is an extent to which you can
 disregard what I say and cause them to think our
 friendship is worthless." or "...if you completely
 disregard what I say, people are going to think *
 that our friendship is worthless."
not genuine

*needs
 rewording*

2.3.6

45. Sometimes the 'point-of-departure' clauses seem to
 be neither topics nor causes. They add nothing to the
 conversation except to act as a 'springboard' for the
 comment in the nöö clause.

introduction to emphasize the following statement

a. Fa mi ko aki nöö mi kë fan ku
 as I came here, I want to talk with

unu wan soni ee
 you (pl) a thing hear.

"In regard to my coming here, I want to talk to
 you all about something." or "The reason I came
 here is to talk to you about something."

*What's the
 difference
 topic & cause
 are parts of
 the following
 comments etc.
 a 'spring board'
 is not.*

b. Biga a kandë sö nöö mi nöö wë
 because it may be thus I only emph

un bi ta- luku ...
 you (pl) past cont looking for ...

"(I am not going to leave you alone) because it
 may be that you are just sitting there waiting for
 me (to come)."

*I need
 some
 context*

*also I can't
 match free transl
 with gloss
 sorry, but it's*

c. Womi Asano, fa i si i ta- mbei buka
 man Asano, as you see you cont make mouth
 kamian kuma te i go u go piñi
 place like when you go to go proposition
 mujëë hati an tjika i naandë, nöö i
 woman heart beg enough you there you,
 ja ta- jei soni a di goonlaba
 you neg cont hear something on the earth
 u dë aki möönsö
 we are here ever.

"Asanö, Boy, standing there making a face like you'd
 like to make overtures to a woman, but don't have
 the courage, you never listen to anything (in-
 structional)"

The exhortation had nothing to do with women. The
 speaker was warning him not to go to the river alone.
 But he needed to say something derogatory before
 the 'you don't listen to anything' clause.)

why?
 good voice discourse style

Is this just
 a (semi-facetious)
 description of the
 addressee?

2.4 Above the sentence level the function of nöö is essentially the same as on the sentence level. The difference is that the 'point-of-departure clauses' and/or the 'nöö clauses' are clause clusters or paragraphs rather than single clauses. Often there is considerable embedding.

2.4.1 50. Clause cluster: the point-of-departure ~~clause~~ consists of several clauses.

..jee wan sëmbë fan ku i nöö i taa i
 if a person talks with you and you say you
 jei ee na sö i taa wë mi teki di fan
 hear if not so you say well I take the talk
 nöö i musu du di fa
 then you must do the manner
nöö wa sa taki da i taa u piki ën
 therefore we neg can say to you that we obey it.

is this one
 embedded

Point of departure:

"If someone talks to you and you say that you hear(will obey) or you say, 'well, I accept that,' then you have to do it."

nöö clause: (therefore)

"We can't say that we will obey it."

- 2.4.2 51. Clause cluster: the 'nöö clause' or material introduced by nöö consists of more than one clause.

...fa mi ku unu
as I with you(pl) guënti tjika aki
are familiar enough here

nöö ee wan ta- kë ta- piki mi buka
if you(pl) neg cont want cont obey my mouth

a soni nöö un pakisei taa woto
about something then you(pl) think that other

sëmbë de o- ta- piki mi buka a soni
people they incom cont obey my mouth about something?

point-of-departure:

"In regard to your and my being such good friends,"

nöö clause:

"If you don't obey me, do you think that other people will?"

The nöö in the last clause corresponds to the ee in the clause before it.

- 2.4.3 52. Clause cluster: both point-of-departure and ~~nöö~~ material introduced by nöö consists of more than one clause.

point-of-departure:

① ..ka u ku Asayseka bi libi bunu tjika
where we with Asayseka past live well enough

② nöö a o- ko a u ko fan ku u nöömö
he incom come to us come talk with us without fail.

corresponding nöö clause:

③ nöö tee a ko fan ku u kaa
when he comes talks with us already

④ nöö u sa piki ën buka
then we will obey his mouth/message

Notice the various elements of cohesion in this unit. The unit opens with a speech orienter (#1). Then the argument starts off (Point of Departure #2) with an anaphoric reference to the question the speaker is about to answer (why the addressee should believe in God). It is the first and mildest of the three injunctions that tie the unit together. ("2, #5, #7) The speaker supports his injunction first with a specific argument, 'God is the Creator of you and your ancestors' (#3). Then he continues to expand the same argument with the assertion, 'God not only created you and your ancestors, He created the whole earth.' (#4) The argument gains momentum as he repeats the injunction. This time it is frank, not implied. Then comes the final and most important aspect of his argument concerning God as Creator, He is the Creator of Life itself. That 'trump card' is followed by the final injunction made stronger by (1) the specific reference to the addressee (un 'you(pl)'), (2) the emphasizer ee 'hear' and (3) the vocative mii 'child'.

clarify this!

"Because Asayseka and we have lived in harmony in the past, surely he will come and talk to us and when he comes, we will obey him."

Note: The nöö at the beginning of the second clause introduces the implication of clause 1. The nöö at the beginning of clause 3 introduces the Comment of clauses 3&4 with the Topic of clauses 1&2. The nöö at the beginning of clause 4 corresponds to the tee in clause 3 in a when..then relationship.

2.4.4

53. Clause clusters with embedding:

ka lanti ta- si taa mi ku unu guënti
where people cont see that I with you(pl) are familiar
tjika,
enough,

nöö ka de sabi taa mi ku unu dë
where they know that I with you(pl) are

gaan mati tjika
big friends enough,

nöö ee mi taki wan soni,
if I say a something,

nöö a ahi fa fuun pasa mi buka tjika,
it has how for you(pl) pass my mouth enough,

wë nöö de o- si taa sösö mati
they incom see that empty friend(ship)

mi ku unu ta- hoi
I with you (pl) cont hold

nöö de si taa sösö guëntima mi
they see that empty familiar ones I

ku unu dë.
with you(pl) are.

signals
speaker's
conclusion?

- a. "Because people regard us as being on familiar terms,
- b. because people regard us as being close friends,
- c. then if I say something,
- d. there is a way in which you can disregard what I say
- e. that will cause people to say that our friendship is worthless,
- f. that will cause people to say that our familiarity is worthless."

Note:

- a. Presents the point-of-departure #1.
- b. Repeats clause a. The function of the nöö at the beginning is uncertain. It probably introduces a comment on clause a. even tho that comment is only a restatement.
- c. This nöö introduces clauses c,d,e, & f as the real comment on the point-of-departure #1 in clauses a & b.
- d. This nöö introduces clauses d,e, & f as the consequence of the condition in clause e.
- e. This nöö introduces e & f as the comment on the point-of-departure #2 in clause d.
- f. Repeat of clause e.

2.5 The absence of nöö

Nöö is usually but not always present in these point-of-departure= comment constructions. I suggest that its absence defocuses the 2nd clause, putting the 1st clause in the spotlight.

60. Ee tatai sai dë i si ën.
If snake is there you see it.

"If a snake is there, you see it."

This one is rough—is it like 32 p 8

-light!

—let's see the context

61. Ee wan soni ma fëëë a dë a lafu
If a thing I neg fear, it is in laughter.

"If I am not afraid of a thing, then it lines up with the pleasant things of life."

62. Fandimbei di i ko aki ja piki mi?
Why when you came here, you neg tell me?

"Why didn't you tell me when you came here?"

63. Di mi bëtë mi go a wooko baka
When/since I recovered I went to work again.

"Since I recovered, I went back to work."

1.6 Nöö at discourse level.

Saramaccan hortatory discourse in its simplest form consists of ± Setting + Topic + Comments on the topic. This breaks down into smaller and smaller embedded units all following this pattern of Topic/Point-of-Departure + Comment, Implication, etc. Nöö functions on all levels connecting the points-of-departure to what follows. The highest level nöö's are identified by the large units they connect. (Paragraph breaks are made on the basis of semantics.)

Example: Text: Advice to Asedu

Setting

The speaker calls Asedu over to her and begins the conversation with "I say.."

THEME

Grounds

THEME

Grounds

THEME

Parental Grounds

THEME

Par 1	Topic or Point-of Departure	Everybody is going to tell you to kill your child.
Par 2	Comment #1 on Topic	<p>① Nöö when you do</p> <p>② Nöö Everybody will dance for joy saying "She killed her child didn't she? I'm happy."</p>
Par 3	Implication of Com. "1"	<p>③ Nöö Since you have so many children and they are counting them.</p> <p>④ Nöö (implication) they don't want you to benefit from them. (That's why they are telling you to kill her.)</p>
Par 4	Conclus of Par 1-3	⑤ Nöö you must not kill the girls, you must not kill the boys.
Par 5	Comment #2 on Topic	<p>If the ancestors hadn't done this evil... But you older ones should have told them and since you didn't...</p> <p>⑥ Nöö Love doesn't keep old family grudges. Love has cause you this problem.</p>
Par 6	Conclus of Com #2	⑦ Nöö you must not kill either of them, you must leave them alone.
Par 7	Parenth or back gr mat.	(she wouldn't have stayed with her former husband anyway after what he said ((it amounted to putting a curse on her)))
Par 8	Conclus of whole discourse	⑧ Nöö that particular boy, Sema, shouldn't have taken her but since he has, let's not kill them. Let's just forget about it. Give her the husband and get all the benefit from him you can.

Notes on above example:

1. NöÖ #1 connects the discourse topic with the extended comment on it, which is the rest of the discourse.
2. NöÖ #2 connects the point-of-departure 'when you do' with comments on it which includes the rest of Par 2 and all of Par 3.
3. NöÖ #3 introduces the implication of the events in Par 2.
4. NöÖ #4 introduces the implication of the events in the first half of Par 3.
5. NöÖ #5 introduces the conclusion of Par 1-3.
6. NöÖ #6 introduces the comment on the Topic
'Love doesn't keep old family grudges.'
7. NöÖ # 7 introduces the conclusion of Par 5.
8. NöÖ #8 introduces the conclusion of the whole discourse.
9. In Paragraph 5 the speaker seems to have made two attempts at a topic before she finally carries through with one. (Love doesn't keep old family grudges.)

3.0 Biga/Nöö Text

The following mini-text (an embedded argument in a narrative) is an illustration of biga and nöö in the same text.

Background information: Tiini came from upriver with a boatload of casava bread and rice. Anata, a retarded boy tried to help her unload the boat and caused her to fall in the river instead. His family was ready to 'kill him', but she defended him with this argument.

Setting

I called them saying:

THEME

Topic or Point-of Departure

① "Nöö, don't kill him."

BACKGROUND
GROUNDS

Her Decision

②

∅

When I come from upriver,

③

nöö Anata is the one who helps me unload my boat and take stuff home.

④

Nöö

in regard to what happened to him here

⑤

∅

I am not going to kill him.

THEME

GROUNDS

Grounds for her decision

⑥

Biga

when I come again

⑦

∅

I will again want him to help me carry things.

THEME

Conclus of Dis

⑧

Nöö

don't kill him.

CLOSURE

Closure

⑨

I have my casava

⑩

I have my rice. (they weren't lost)

yes

Notes:

1. The absence of nöö at the beginning of clause 2 is probably due to the fact that clauses 2 & 3 are back ground information.
2. The nöö in clause 3 corresponds to 'when' in clause 2.
3. The nöö in clause 4 connects clauses 2 & 3 with clauses 4 & 5 in a statement-implication relationship.
4. The absence of nöö at the beginning of clause 5 probably causes the entire sentence to be in focus rather than the last clause only.
5. Biga at the beginning of clause 6 introduces the grounds for clauses 2-5.
6. The absence of nöö at the beginning of clause 7 probably causes the entire sentence (6&7) to be in focus and not just the last clause (7). *but doesn't it*
7. The nöö at the beginning of clause 8 introduces the conclusion to the entire discourse. *no*
8. Clauses 9 & 10 correspond to the denouement of narrative discourse.

Theeeeeeee END