Quotative marker *lē* in Guro (South Mande): issues of synchronic classification and diachronic origins

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- Possible historical relations between copulas, focus markers, and relative clause markers in South Mande languages, focusing on Guro.

— Guro: these markers are part of the complex cluster of homonymic/polysemic markers *lē*.

- Data: fieldwork by Olga Kuznetsova and me in 2006-2021, incl. the SpeechReporting corpus of Guro (O. Kuznetsova 2022).

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1. Introduction: Guro on the map
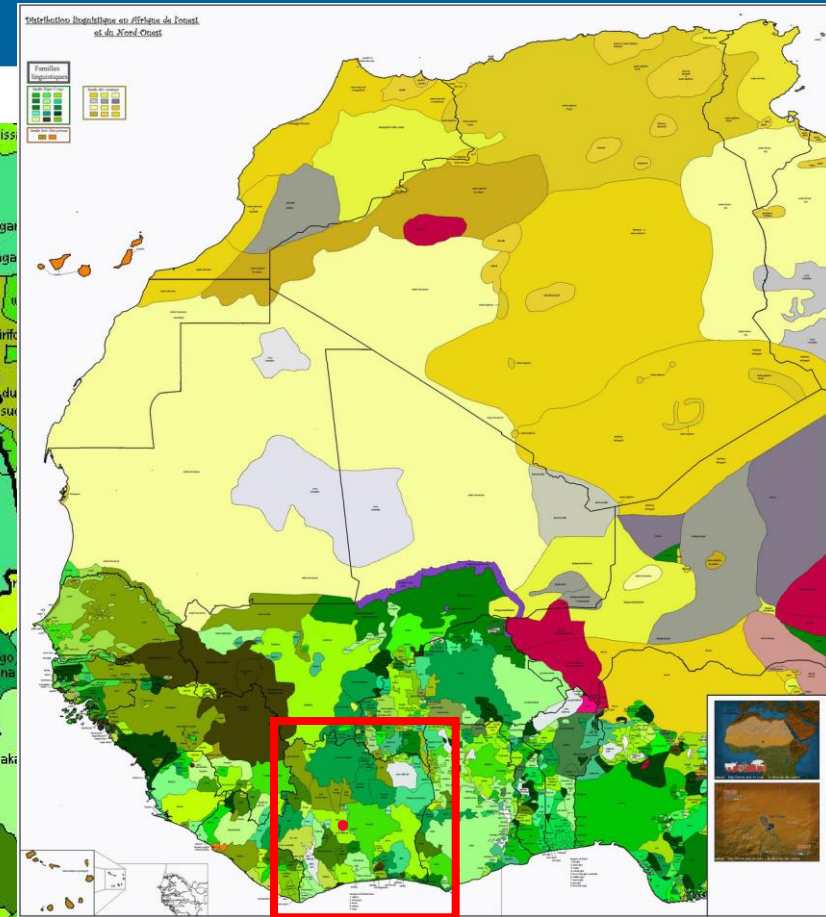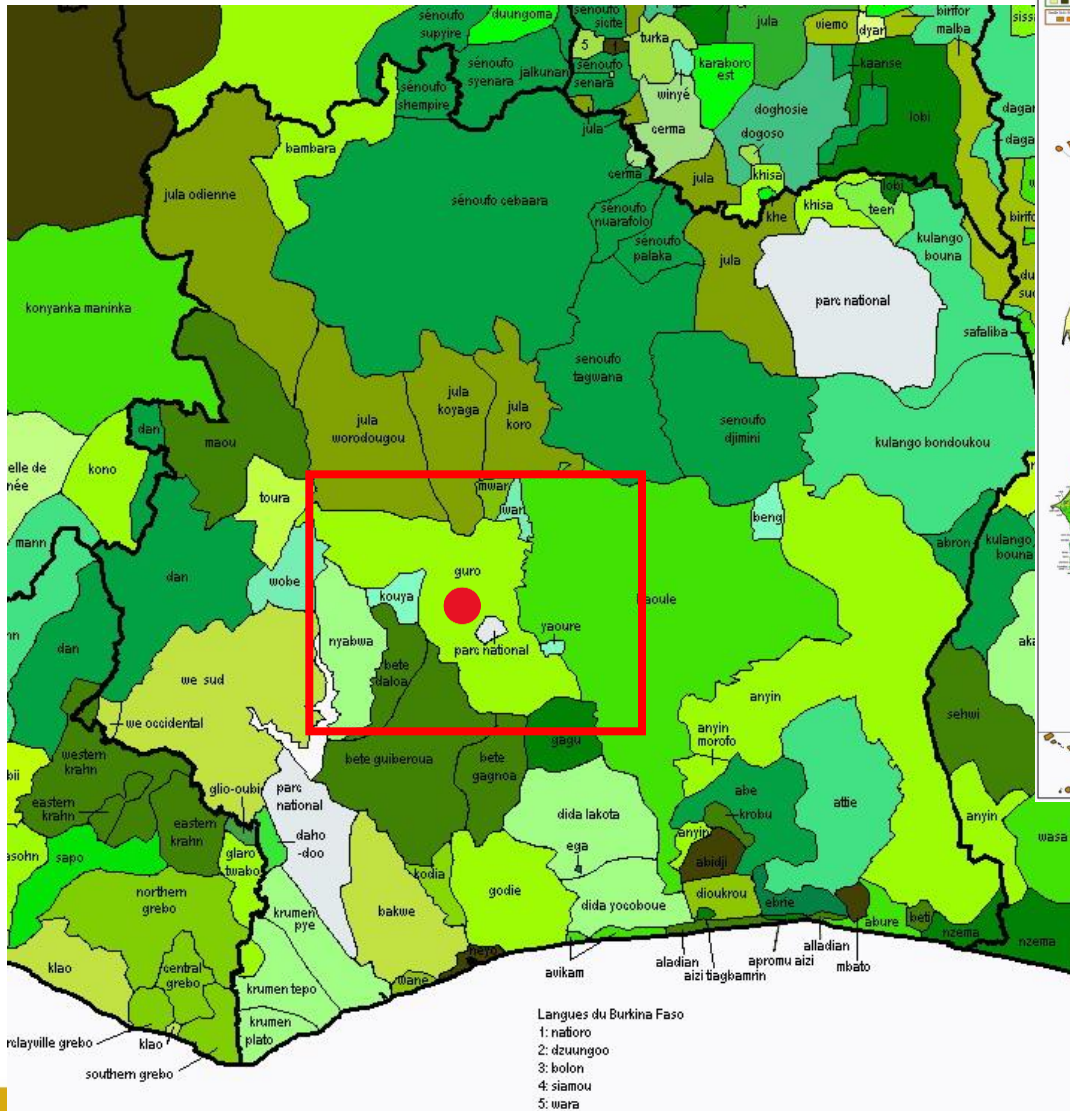
- Guro < South Mande < Mande < Niger Congo;
- Côte d'Ivoire, >500 000 speakers (2019).

3

- Kuznetsova (2023): two major clusters of *lē*, unlikely to be historically related:

— LĒ2: the marker of alienable possession;

— LĒ1.

- Within LĒ1, two sub-clusters are distinguished:

— (1) quotative predicator – complementiser;

— (2) focus marker – identificational copula – relative clause marker – cleft sentence.

- We will have a closer look at the **sub-cluster (2) of LĒ1**.

Language	Focus (non-predicative)	Id. /Pres. copula	Relative clause marker	Cleft(-like)	Conj. '(so) that'; Quotative (Q)	Posses-sive
Mano	lɛ́/tɛ́ **LĒ1 (2)**	lɛ́ wɔ̀ (neg)	lɛ́/tɛ́/nɛ́...{ā, ɓɛ́/wɛ̄}	lɛ́/tɛ́/nɛ́...{}; wɔ́/wɛ́...{}; gɛ̀...{ɓē/wē}	{kélɛ̄ / kélɛ̀ / ké}; ps-Q {kɛ̀} **LĒ1 (1)**	other **LĒ2**
Dan-Gweetaa	dʌ̰̀/dɛ̰̀/dṵ̄; yʌ̀, d̰a̰a̰̋	dɛ̰̀, ɓā	{ɤ́/kɤ́} {...ɓā, dɔ̀ɔ} {dʌ̰}	dʌ̰̀/dɛ̰̀/dṵ̄ {ɤ́}	dɛ̀ {ɤ́ / kɤ́} Q —	ɓä, gɔ̀
Kla-Dan	lɛ̰̀	ɓà, kè	ké/kéë (<ké ä) {...à(à)/ɛ̀(ɛ̀)}	lɛ̰̀{...ɓɯ́}	lɛ̈; lɛ̈ɛ̈, kɤ̀ Q —	ɓä/ä
Goo	ɓɤ̀	lɛ̈ɛ̈	{à...}yɛ̀	N/D	lɛ̀, kɤ́	ɓä, gɔ̰̀
Tura	dɛ̀; H ... dɛ̀; yé {ɛ́}	dɛ̀	H{... dáä̰, ɛ́}	N/D	ké	ɓä/-ä
Ben	ɲɛ̰̄...ɛ̰̄	ɛ̰̀; lɛ̄/lɛ̀	fɛ̰̄{...ná̰}	fɛ̰̄{...ná̰}	kē	—
Wan	lā; mɑ̋	ŋ̀; ɑ̋	é	N/D	kɛ̋	other
Gban	lí / lè; lìwò ~ lì	lè(è)	nɛ̀ɛ̀{... bɛ̀}	N/D	nḭ́ḭ́ (+ps-Q), lɛ̌, lɛ̈	í, mɔ̰́
Mwan	lè; > là, lá	lè	lá	lè	dɔɔ̄, káá (+ps-Q); kóókò {ké}	ā
Yauré	lɛ̋; rare {lɛ̀}	lɛ̰̀	lɛ̰̀{...ɓɛ́}	lɛ̰̀	lɛ̋, ɛ̀; dʊ́ʊ́, lɔ̀ɔ̀; Q lá̰á̰	lé
Guro	ɛ́; rare {lē} M/L, > lɛ̌, lǒ	lē M/L; or lè; >lɛ̌, lǒ	lē M/L {...ɓɛ̄,}; á̰/à̰{...ɓɛ̄}; > lɛ̌, lǒ	lē M/L or lè {...ɓɛ̄}; rare ɛ́	lē, ɓɛ̄lē; Q lē	lē {H+lé}

- **LĒ1 (2)**:
— focus marker – identificational/presentative copula – relative clause marker – cleft sentence;
— at least partial homonymy in 9 out of 11 South Mande languages;
— where no homonymy has not been attested by now (Goo, Wan), no data on cleft sentences in Vydrin et al. (2017).
- Different hypotheses on the mutual historical relations of these markers have been proposed.
— Types of homonymy between these markers also vary.

Language	Focus	Id. /Pres. copula	Relative clause marker	Cleft(-like)
Mano	**lέ/tέ**	lɛ̄ {ɓɛ̄}, **gɛ̀** {ɓɛ̄}, **lέ/tέ/nέ** + ɓɛ̄/wɛ̄, yā/ā **wɔ́** + ɓɛ̄/wɛ̄, yā/ā	**lέ/tέ/nέ**…{ā, ɓɛ̄/wɛ̄}	**lέ/tέ/nέ**…{ɓɛ̄/wɛ̄, yā/ā; ɓɛ̄/wɛ̄}; **wɔ́**/wέ…{ɓɛ̄/wɛ̄, yā/ā}; **gɛ̀**…{ɓɛ̄/wɛ̄}
Dan-Gweetaa	**dɛ̀/dʌ̀/dɯ̄**; yʌ̀, dɑ̀ạ̀	**dɛ̀**, ɓā	{ɤ́/kɤ́} {…ɓā, dɔ́ɔ̀} {**dʌ̀**}	**dɛ̀/dʌ̀/dɯ̄** {ɤ́}
Kla-Dan	**lɛ̀**	ɓà, kè	ké/kéë (<ké ä) {…à(à)/ɛ̀(ɛ̀)}	**lɛ̀**{…ɓɯ́}
Goo	ɓɤ̋	lɛ̈ɛ̈	{à…}yɛ̀	N/D
Tura	**ɗè**; H … **ɗè**; yé {é}	**ɗè**	H{… ɗáä, é}	N/D
Ben	ɲɛ̄…ɛ̄	ɛ̀; lɛ̄/lɛ̀	**fɛ̀**{…nɑ́}	**fɛ̀**{…nɑ́}
Wan	lā; mɑ̋	ŋ̀; a̋	é	N/D
Gban	lí / **lɛ̀**; lìwò ~ lì	**lɛ̀**(è)	nɛ̀ɛ̀{… ɓɛ̄}	N/D
Mwan	**lɛ̀**; > là, **lá**	**lɛ̀**	**lá**	**lɛ̀**
Yauré	lé̋; (rare) {**lɛ̀**}	**lɛ̀**	**lɛ̀**{…ɓέ}	**lɛ̀**
Guro	ɛ́; {**lē**} **M/L** > lɛ̆, lŏ	**lē M/L**; >lɛ̆, lŏ	**lē M/L** {…ɓɛ̄ etc.}; >lɛ̆, lŏ; ạ̀/à̠{…ɓɛ̄ etc.};	**lē M/L** {…ɓɛ̄}; ɛ́

■ ! No pronouns or PPMs are included.

- **LĒ1 (2)**: focus marker – id/pres copula – relative clause – cleft.
- predicative ↔ non-predicative function?
- Existing hypotheses on Mande:
— a) focus marker > identificational or presentative copula (Gweetaa - Vydrin 2017: 512, 2020; Gban - Fedotov 2017; Tura - Idiatov & Aplonova 2017);
— b) copula in cleft > non-predicative focus marker (Kla-Dan - Makeeva 2013 with a reference to Nikitina, p.c.; 2017);
— c) "evolutions involving copulæ and focus markers are not necessarily unidirectional and may go in cycles" (Mande languages - Creissels 2022: 16, with a reference to Idiatov p.c.);
— d) both can "originate from the same source, such as a demonstrative, rather than from one another" (ibid.);
— e) attention-drawing elements with co-existing predicative (main) and non-predicative functions (Mano - Khachaturyan 2023).

- My view on Guro:

— Generic function of LĒ1 (2) – **predicative demonstratives/ identifiers** (in line with the views by Makeeva, Nikitina, Khachaturyan; see also Sumbatova 1999 on Landuma; Heine & Kuteva 2002 for typology).

  — demonstratives: "introduce and verbally highlight a referent, …directing the addressee's attention to the object" (Killian 2022:14);

  — identifiers: "used for identifying, presenting, or indicating a referent" (ibid).

— Non-predicative function – secondary; a result of **co-optation** (Khachaturyan 2023, to particular pragmatic contexts:

  — more focus ↔ less focus

  — fuller construction ↔ more reduced construction

  — less grammaticalisation ↔ more grammaticalisation

  — clearer predicativity ↔ less clear predicativity

- **Identificational copula *lē*:**

— identifies/presents both visible (1) and invisible / abstract (2) referents.

(1)   *Kɔ̰́*   ***lḛ̄.***
         house idcop
         'It is a house'.

(2)   *Bòō*   *Gàlàú*   ***lē̄,***   *yē̄*   *Gṵ̄ɓɛ̄ɛ̀*   ***lè,***
         Boo   hyena   IDCOP   then   rabbit   IDCOP

         yē̄   *wàà*   *bē̄è*   *yā̰.*
         then   3PL.NSBJ:EXCOP   friend   with

         'Hyena and Hare are friends' (lit. 'It is Hyena, then it is Rabbit, then they are with friend(ship)') (Manfla_C1.177).

■ **Presentational copulas**:

(3)   *Kɔ̰́*   *lɛ̆.*
house pcop_def
'This is a house'.

(4)   *Kɔ̰́*   *lŏ.*
house pcop_prox
'Here is a house'.

— *lɛ̆* and *lŏ* are **derivatives** from the identificational copula *lē*.

— Benoist (1969: 84, 1977: 62, 64) also assumes that they are combinations of *lē* with deictic words, respectively *ɓɛ̄* 'this/here;DEF' and *kʋ́* 'right this/here'.

— But the story is a bit more complex.

■ Cf. with **existential copulas**:

— **à** in independent predications (often containing either a non-verbal part or an infinite form in verbal constructions):

(5)   *Kɔ̰́*   **à**.
        house excop
        'The house exists'.

(6)   *Kɔ̰́*   **à**   *fúú*.
        house excop
        'The house is white'.

(7)   *Tāàlā̰*   **à**   *fō̰*   **zō̰-lā̰̂**.
        Taana excop foutou grind-locn
        'Taana is grinding foutou'.

— *cī* in the same functions in dependent predications:

(7)   *Tāàl̰ā̰*   **à**   *f’õ*   **z̰ō̰-l̰ā̰.**
  Taana   excop foutou grind-locn
  'Taana is grinding foutou'.

(8)   *Tāàl̰ā̰*   **cī**   *â̰w̰ū*   *k̰ō̰ó*   *f̰õ*   **z̰ō̰-l̰ā̰,**
  Taana dcop   when   hod   foutou grind-locn

  b̰ḛ̄l̰ḛ̄   *wɔ̄là*   *wò*   *lē̄*   *g̰̀l̰̀=ǐ.*
  dog   enter\pfv   3pl.nsbj   poss   fence=in

  'When Taana was grinding foutou, a dog entered their yard'.

- Cleft sentence – a bi-clausal sentence expressing a single proposition (Lambrecht 2001).

- Cleft sentence in Guro:

— (X *lē*), (dependent clause {*ɓ$\bar{\varepsilon}$* or other DET}).

 'It is X, which... (dependent clause {DET})'.

- A cleft sentence in Guro contains **formal markers** of a **hypotactic** relation between its two parts:

— the main clause, where the identificational copula *lē* is the predicate;

— the dependent clause.

- **a)** *cī* (10) instead of *à* (9) in the dependent clause:

(9) *Bṵ̄=lṵ̂*　　　　*à*　　　*wó*　*jì*　　*sōī-lậ.*
　　　man=pl　　　　excop　3pl.rfl　inside　stretch-locn
　　　'People are relaxing' (lit. 'People are their inside stretching').

(10)　*Jì*　　*sōī-lī*　　　*lē̄,*　　*wò*　　*cī*　　*à*　　　*kē̄lē̄-lậ.*
　　　inside　stretch-ger　　idcop　3pl.sbj　dcop　3sg.nsbj　do-locn
　　　'They are RELAXING' (lit. 'It is the stretching of the inside
　　　that they are doing').

— This is similar e.g. to the use of a conjoint pronominal series (instead of an independent series) in the dependent clause of a cleft sentence in Kla-Dan (Makeeva 2013).

- b) the **irrealis** verbal construction (12), used in a dependent clause in place of the **imperfective** construction (11):

(11)   *Táá   wʋ̂-lī   é   ɓɪ̰̄   wɛ̄ɛ̄=ì   yā-ā̰.*
walk   carry-ger   ipfv   man   bone=in   hurt-ipfv
'The walk exhausts the man'.

(12)   *Ɓɪ̰̄   lē̄,   táá   à   wɛ̄lɛ̄=ì   yāā.*
man   idcop   walk   3sg.nsbj   bone=in   hurt
'It is the MAN whom the walk exhausts'.

- The transformation of cleft sentences follows two paths:
— **Path I**: reduction and loss of the bi-clausality of clefts, but but *lē* maintains predicativity;
— **Path II**: *lē* loses predicativity, when a (former) cleft is incorporated in a larger construction.
— The paths eventually cross, giving rise to non-predicative markers with focal functions.

- **Path I**: reduction and loss of bi-clausality of clefts, but *lē̄* maintains predicativity.

- **Step 1**: decomposable contraction *lè < lē̄ è*

— the clefted constituent is the 3sg subj of the dependent clause;

— the predicate of the dependent clause is a finite verb.

(13)   *Yˋíí   jē̄   lè (< lē̄ è)   vˇɔ*
        ref.ctr disease   idcop:3sg.sbj penetrate\pfv

        ā̰   ɓā̰   ɓē̄.
        1sg.nsbj   on   def
        'It is THAT disease which attacked me' (lit. 'It is that disease, it penetrated on me').

— Reduction of constructions with clefted subjects is especially typical (Sumbatova 1999).

- **Step 2**: non-decomposable contraction *lè (cī) < *lē̄ è (cī)*

— the clefted constituent is the 3sg subj of the dependent clause;

— the predicate of the dependent clause contains the dependent existential copula *cī*.

(14)   *Yìí   à   130   lè (< *lē̄ è)   cī   ế   yíá-līí.*

ref.ctr   3sg.nsbj 130   idcop(:3sg.sbj) dcop prep   lie-ger

'It is on his 130 [eggs] that he (crocodile) was lying' (Manfla_C1.200).

- In a different construction, the pronoun is overt.

— E.g. in reported speech, where a logophoric pronoun is used:

(15)   *à pɛ̰̄lɛ̰́ tâ   lē,   ế   cī   ế   yíá-līí kʋ́.*

3sg.nsbj other on   idcop log.sg dcop   prep   lie-ger here

'It is on the rest [of the eggs] that I am lying here' (Manfla_C1.202).

■ **Step 3**: omission of *cī* (the predicate of the dependent clause):

— No change in meaning:

(16) *Ą̄* *lē* *yį̃ǎ* *ɓą̄lę̀* *lè* *{cī}* *à* *lèè* *ɓɛ̄.*

1sg.nsbj poss success hen\g idcop(:3sg.sbj) dcop 3sg.nsbj hand def

'It is THE HEN OF MY KINDNESS that he has in his hands'.

— (Possible) change in meaning:

(17) *Ą̄* *tí* *lè* *cī* *Tālá* *yą̄.*

1sg.nsbj father idcop(:3sg.sbj) dcop Tra with

'It is MY FATHER, who is Tra'.

(18) *Ą̄* *tí* *lè* *Tālá* *yą̄.*

1sg.nsbj father idcop(:3sg.sbj) Tra with

'Tra is MY FATHER'.

- **Path II**: loss of the predicativity of *lē* through the grammaticalisation of clefts in larger constructions.

— a) True cleft:

(19)   *À*   *là̰*   *lè*,   *ɛ́*   ***cī̄***   *kʋ́.*

3sg.nsbj   on   idcop   log.sg   dcop   here

'That is why I am here' (lit. 'It is on this that I am here') (Manfla_C3.517).

— b) Complex conjunctions of time and purpose:

(20)   *Cɛ́ à*   *ɛ́*   *ɓílī̄*   *tūlū* *kʋ́=ḭ̌,*   *à*   *là̰* *lè*

        fire excop prep burn-ger hest house=in 3sg.nsbj on id

à   *jǐ*   *cɛ́*   ***à.***

        3sg.nsbj   in   fire   excop

'There has been fire in the house, that's why it is hot inside'.

- c) pragmatically marked relative clause:

— in postposition to noun, with correlative pronouns referring both to the clause and to its head, (optionally) left-extraposed.

(21)   *Á̰*   *tɔ̰lɛ̰*   *dɔ̄-ā*   [*lḭ̄-zà̰*   ***lè*** [*èé*   *lɛ̄lɛ̄*

              1sg.rfl   ear   put.up-ipfv   woman-mgn   id   3sg.ipfv   song

        zḭ̀í   *vɔ̄-ā*]   *ɓɛ̄*],   *à*   *lɛ̀.*

              truth   penetrate-ipfv   def   3sg.nsbj   for

'I listen to that woman which beautifully sings' (lit. 'I put ear the woman, which she penetrates the truth of song, to her').

— *lē* in a relative clause is not predicative (any more) → no change of the imperfective construction to the irrealis construction.

- Why can we assume that the relative construction was a former cleft?

— Because a relative clause with the existential copula still maintains (dependent) *cī* instead of the (independent) *à*:

(22)   [*Gɔ̰̄lɛ̰̄-zà̰*   *lè*   *{cī}*   *ɓṵ̄ṵ̄ý̰*],

         guy-mgn   id(:3sg.sbj)   dcop   over.there.

à   *yìà*   *tâ*   *fɛ̃*   *zū̄ʋ̀*   *à.*

         3sg.nsbj   sleep   on\g   thing   hardness   excop

ʻThat man's bed is hard' (lit. 'The guy which is over there, the hardness of the thing on which he sleeps exists').

- Crossing of Paths I and II – presentationals *lĕ* and *lŏ*:

      — **X lē, è cī ɓɛ̄.*   **X lē, è cī kʋ́.*

                this/def   right.this

      — *X lè cī ɓɛ̄.*   *X lè cī kʋ́.*

      — *X lè ɓɛ̄.*   *X lè kʋ́.*

(3)   *Kɔ̰́*   ***lĕ****.*   (4)   *Kɔ̰́*   ***lŏ****.*

        house   pcop_def   house   pcop_prox

‘This is a house’.   ‘Here is a house’.

— Here, the presentationals are clearly predicative.

- When these same former clefts occur within larger constructions and outside the main pragmatic focus:

(73)   *È   kɛ̄lɛ́   kâ,   yē   ī   sáá   lɛ̌ (= *lè cī ɓɛ̄),*

      3sg.sbj make\pfv what then 2sg.sbj rice pres.def

   à   gɔ̌   sūūlá,   yē   ɓè   tēé?

      3sg.nsbj stem pull.out\pfv then 2sg.sbj:3sg.nsbj gather\pfv

'What happened, that you pulled up this rice and gathered it [in a heap]?' (lit. 'It happened what, then you this rice (=the rice which is here), its stems pulled out, then you gathered it?') (Manfla_C3.255).

— Here, the presentational can be already considered non-predicative.

- In South Mande (and in general, in Mande) we often observe the homonymy of (a) predicative demonstratives/identifiers, (b) focus markers, and (c) relative clause markers.
  - It has been debated which function is historically primary.
  - It has also been suggested that both predicative and non-predicative functions co-existed from the beginning.
- Guro data rather support earlier Kla-Dan and Mano data suggesting that the **predicative** use might be still the main one.
- The linking structure between the three functions (a)-(c) might be the **cleft sentence**.
  - Clefts are still understudied for Mande languages and should be further explored.