Complex sentences
Section 13
Denis Paperno
13.1. Postverbal embedded clauses

This chapter describes various types of complex sentences attested in Beng. Two types of subordinate clauses, complement and goal clauses, can be properly embedded inside another clause in a postverbal position inside the main clause, while temporal and conditional clauses occupy a position before the main clause.

13.1.1. Complement clauses

Complement clauses are marked by complementizers ke, kesë, së and së, which appear to be mutually interchangeable. Often, the complement clause is coreferent with a 3SG pronoun in an argument position in the same clause:

| (232) | ɗ | ā | pè | ke | mj | nj.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1SG-PST*</td>
<td>3SG</td>
<td>say:L.</td>
<td>that</td>
<td>2SG-PST*</td>
<td>come:L</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'I said that you had come' (literally 'I said it that you came').

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(233)</th>
<th>ɗ-ɗ</th>
<th>ŋ</th>
<th>nj</th>
<th>ke</th>
<th>mj</th>
<th>njū</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3SG-ST*</td>
<td>1SG</td>
<td>BENEF</td>
<td>that</td>
<td>2SG-HAB+</td>
<td>come</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'I want you to come' (literally 'It's for me that you come').
Such Beng sentences with complement clauses are reminiscent of the English sentences with embedded clause extraposition, and the 3SG pronoun seems analogous to the dummy it in English. The pronoun is not always present in sentences with complement clauses, but only when required by the argument structure of the main predicate. For instance, the verb 'to say' as in (232) is transitive, and requires the direct object position to be filled in, and the subject position is obligatory in the volitive construction in (233). In contrast, the intransitive verb we 'to reply' does not select for a direct or indirect object with the semantic role of content of response, and it combines with a complement clause without any 'dummy' pronoun present:

(234) ó wé kè à nù ė.

3SGPST* reply that 3SGPST- come.L NEG

'He replies that he wasn’t coming'.

Furthermore, complement clauses can combine with arbitrary verbs, adding the speech component to the sentence meaning regardless of whether the main verb has anything to do with speech:

(235) ó bê kê ó mlê yë-nâ.

3SGPST* run:L that 3SGPST- snake see-PRF

'He was running saying that he had just seen a snake' (literally: ‘He ran that he has seen a snake’).

13.1.2. Goal clauses

The main strategy of marking goal clauses uses complementizer nù followed by a clause in optative mood:

(236) Zrû nà mì gbó pl.

hunker for.to 2SGHAB+ feces excrete

'Hunker down in order to defecate'.

(237) fô sòŋ čćálô nù wà wó cán fì nù.

1SG-ST* person search-PROG for.to 3SGHAB+ IN watch 1SG BENEF

'I am looking for someone to read me this letter'.
Complementizer nà can be omitted if the subject or the direct object of the matrix clause is coreferent to one of the participants of the goal situation:

(239) ŋ̰ ́ i kp̰ ɛ́ p̰ ɔ́ lù ŋ̰ l̰ ḏ̰ g̰ ɔ̄ n̰ (nà)

1SG: PST + play-Mns buy:L 1SG child man BENEF for.to

ŋ̰ i dr̰ ɛ̰ w̰ m̰̄ j̰̄ d̰̄ l̰̄ ło̰.

1SGCHAB+ work do calmness with

'I bought my son toys in order to work undisturbed'.

When such coreference does not hold, the complementizer is obligatory, compare (241) where the subject of the goal clause is not coreferent to the subject or the direct object of the matrix clause but to the indirect object:

(241) ŋ̰ ́ k̰̄ p̰ ɛ̰̄ lù ŋ̰ ́ l̰̄ ḏ̰ g̰ ɔ̄ n̰ (ŋ̰ ́ ó̰ dr̰ ɛ̰̄ w̰̄ ə̰ ḭ ło̰)

1SGPST+ hoe buy:L 1SG child man BENEF

(n̰ ́) ́ ó̰ dr̰ ɛ̰̄ w̰̄ ə̰ ḭ ło̰.

for.to 3SGCHAB+ work do 3SG with

'I bought my son a hoe to work with'.

Sometimes, the goal semantics is expressed with the complementizer kē followed by a sentence in optative mood, but it has an additional semantic component in addition to the goal. kē is only compatible with a verbalized goal:

(238) ŋ̰ ́ ŋ̰ ́ k̰̄ p̰ ɛ̰̄ d̰̄ n̰ ́ s̰̄ ḏ̰̄ b̰̄ ɛ̰̄ ɔ̰̄ ḡ̰ ā.

1SG-ST+ fetish fall for.to person this-DEF 3SGCHAB+ die

'I will pray the fetish for this person to die'.

When such coreference does not hold, the complementizer is obligatory, compare (241) where the subject of the goal clause is not coreferent to the subject or the direct object of the matrix clause but to the indirect object:
Essentially, this goal usage of \( k\ddot{e} \) is a special case of its function, described in 13.1.1, of adding the speech component to the meaning of the sentence. The goal semantics in this case is just a pragmatic consequence of the optative.

### 13.2. Ways of encoding clausal arguments

Strategies of encoding clausal arguments include:

- complement clause with \( k\ddot{e} / s\ddot{a} / k\ddot{e}s\ddot{a} \), with various matrix predicates:

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
\text{(243)} & 0\cdot & p\ddot{a} & k\ddot{e} & m\ddot{j} & n\ddot{u}.\\
& 35G-\text{ST} & \text{necessary} & \text{that} & 25G\text{HAB} & \text{come[35G]}\\
\end{array}
\]

'You have to come'. (literally 'It is necessary that you come'.)

- nominalization is used in NP positions:

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
\text{(245)} & M\ddot{e} & & [m\ddot{j} v\ddot{\ddot{a}}] & m\ddot{a}\\
& \text{begin} & 25G & \text{hole} & \text{build-NMLZ CONT}\\
\end{array}
\]

'‘Start to dig your yam field!’
13.3. Serial construction

Beng has a very limited instantiation of the serial construction in the form of “ŋū or tá + verb phrase”. The verb ŋū ‘to come’ or tá ‘to go’ has the same morphological form as the second verb:

(250) ó tá á wò.

12 Another constraint on the serial construction is that it is used only in those TAM values where the verbs are not marked by suffixes: in the preterite, the habitual, the optative,
and the conditional; so the two verbs not only have identical form but the form is suffixless. In other TAM constructions (perfect, progressive, stative, and future) a goal converb (see 13.4) of the second verb is used instead of the serial construction with identical verb forms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(251)</th>
<th>1SGPST</th>
<th>tā-nū</th>
<th>dr̃ē</th>
<th>*wō-nū</th>
<th>/wō/</th>
<th>2wō-yā.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

'He went and worked / He went to work'.

### 13.4. Converb constructions

A goal converb can depend on three verbs: with tā ‘to go’ and nū ‘to come’ it describes the goal of movement; with bō ‘to come from’ it depicts the subject’s activity at the point of departure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(252a)</th>
<th>1SGPST</th>
<th>nū</th>
<th>dr̃ū-yā.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

'I came to walk'.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(252b)</th>
<th>1SGPST</th>
<th>*t̃</th>
<th>dr̃ē</th>
<th>wō</th>
<th>dr̃ū-yā.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

('I worked to walk'.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(253)</th>
<th>1SGPST</th>
<th>bō</th>
<th>dr̃ū-yā.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

'I came from a walk'.

The goal converb cannot be separated from the motion verb by any constituent, behaving as a typical argument, rather than a modifier (see 12.2; compare (Gusev 2004)).

As mentioned in 6.2, the locative nominalization in -ya can be used to express action simultaneity, although this usage is rare:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(254)</th>
<th>1SG-ST</th>
<th>jātēlī</th>
<th>kē-lō</th>
<th>dr̃ū-yā.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Mandenkan, 51 | 2014
13.5. Temporal and conditional clauses

This section describes subordinate clauses that precede the main clause and are structurally outside of it. Goal and complement clauses that are embedded inside the main clause have already been characterized; interestingly, the preposed vs. embedded subordinate clauses are marked with two distinct positional classes of complementizers. Embedded clauses (such as goal clauses) have a complementizer on the left edge; preposed subordinate clauses have a complementizer on the right edge. The distinction follows the predictions of J. Hawkins’ theory of word order whereby the head of a subordinate constituent should gravitate towards linear proximity to the head of the superordinate phrase (Hawkins 1990).

13.5.1. Temporal clause: the topic construction

It is noteworthy that two common constructions (not counting juxtaposition) that express temporal relations between clauses are marked exactly like information structure relations of topic and focus. The main temporal complementizer is ŋá, identical to the topic marker:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(255)</th>
<th>gbɔŋ</th>
<th>ɗ</th>
<th>tã</th>
<th>pɔʊ</th>
<th>ŋá</th>
<th>ŋ</th>
<th>zrã</th>
<th>klẽ</th>
<th>nì</th>
<th>wọ.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gbong</td>
<td>3SGPST+</td>
<td>go</td>
<td>field</td>
<td>TOP</td>
<td>3SGPST+</td>
<td>get.lost</td>
<td>forest</td>
<td>DEF</td>
<td>IN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘Gbong went to the field and got lost in the forest’ (literally: ‘When Gbong went to the field, he got lost in the forest’. Beng’s fields are often located quite far from their villages, and there are even special temporary settlements for people working in those remote fields.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(256)</th>
<th>ŋ</th>
<th>nŋ̃</th>
<th>nŋ̃</th>
<th>ɲ</th>
<th>zrɔ.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1SGPST+</td>
<td>come:L</td>
<td>TOP</td>
<td>1SGPST+</td>
<td>wash:L</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘I came and washed’ (literally: ‘When I came, I washed’).

The selection of TAM values in the main clause (after ŋá) follows general TAM semantics. TAM marking in the embedded clause adheres to special rules. If the situation of the subordinate clause precedes that of the main clause, as in (256), the preterite construction is used in the subordinate clause. Simultaneity of the two situations is marked in the subordinate clause by the future (sic!) construction, which has in this case progressive interpretation, or with a semantically appropriate construction with default present time reference (stative, adverbial clause, etc.). Clearly, this usage of the future construction reflects the fact that the future construction historically had a progressive
meaning, even though it was replaced in the core progressive contexts by a newly grammaticized form in -lɛ́lo, and was only retained in subordinate contexts and as a future form. Compare (255) and (257a):

\[
(257a) \begin{array}{llllllll}
\text{Gbong} & \text{3SG-ST} & \text{go} & \text{field} & \text{TOP} & \text{3SGPST+} & \text{get.lost} & \text{forest} & \text{DEF} & \text{IN} \\
\end{array}
\]

‘Gbong got lost when he was going to the field’.

\[
(257b) \begin{array}{llllllll}
\text{1SG-ST} & \text{little} & \text{TOP} & \text{3SG} & \text{mother} & \text{3SGHAB+} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{llll}
\text{gbéné} & \text{lè} & \text{zɔ̀} & \text{fɛ̱́} & \text{dɔdɔ.} \\
\text{manioc} & \text{DEF} & \text{pound} & \text{day} & \text{some} \\
\end{array}
\]

‘When I was little my mother would pound manioc sometimes’.

Finally, conditional mood is used in the sense of habitual aspect:

\[
(258) \begin{array}{llllllll}
\text{Gbɔŋ} & \text{3SG-COND} & \text{go} & \text{field} & \text{TOP} & \text{3SGHAB+} & \text{get.lost:L} & \text{forest} & \text{DEF} & \text{IN} \\
\end{array}
\]

‘When Gbong goes to the field he usually gets lost in the forest’.

Particle fɛ̱ when added to a temporal clause gives it a conditional flavor, which can be expressed in English with the complementizer since:

\[
(259) \begin{array}{llllll}
\text{Rel} & \text{3SGPST+} & \text{say:L} & \text{3SG-ST} & \text{go} & \text{NEG} & \text{TOP} & \text{who} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{llllllll}
\text{ɔ́} & \text{blɔ́} & \text{nɛ́} & \text{ɔ́} & \text{ə} & \text{bɛ́} & \text{srɛ́} & \text{ɛ́?} \\
\text{ST+} & \text{here} & \text{for.to} & \text{3SGHAB+} & \text{3SG} & \text{trace} & \text{take} & \text{FOC} \\
\end{array}
\]

‘Since he said he’s not going, who’s here to replace him?’
13.5.2. Temporal subordinate clause: the focus construction

Temporal sequence of two clauses can also be marked by a special construction marked in the same way as the focus construction: clause A + ɲɛ̰̄ + clause C + ŋ, meaning ‘A, then C’.

Example:

\[(260) \begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c|c|c}
\text{ŋó} & \text{kpàŋ} & \text{nùŋ} & \text{ŋò} & \text{srà} & \text{nìŋ} \\
3\text{PL PST} & \text{whip} & \text{PL} & \text{1PL} & \text{take}:L & \text{FOC} \\
\end{array}\]

\[(ŋó nùŋ àŋmò mìŋ kpàŋ ŋ). \]

3\text{PL PST}  

come:L  

hyena  

beat:L  

much  

FOC

‘They took whips and then came and beat the hyena hard’.

13.5.3. Conditional clause

The structure of conditional clauses is protasis + conditional complementizer + apodosis. There are two conditional complementizers, déé, used with protasis in affirmative polarity and nìŋ, used with negated protasis. Before the protasis one can also find an optional marker fì or ò dɔ kë, literally ‘let it be set that...’

TAM marking in the apodosis follows the general semantics of TAM. Protasis exhibits some special rules of TAM marking:

• in case of a condition in the past or present that the speaker believes can be true (‘real conditional’), the same TAM constructions are used as in independent clauses:

\[(261) \begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c|c|c}
\text{fì} & \text{wà} & \text{mìŋ} & \text{à} & \text{là} & \text{é} & \text{nìŋ} \\
3\text{SG PST} & \text{meet}:L & \text{3SG} & \text{with} & \text{NEG} & \text{if NEG} \\
\end{array}\]

\[\begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c|c|c}
wà-à & \text{jrēŋ} & \text{dɔ-ɛ} & \text{é}. \\
3\text{SG ST} & \text{3SG} & \text{enough} & \text{know-RES} & \text{NEG} \\
\end{array}\]

‘If he didn’t meet her he doesn’t know much’ (the protasis exhibits regular preterite construction);

• in case of a condition in the future or a habitual condition without concrete time reference (‘potential conditional’), protasis is marked with conditional mood (or more rarely with the appropriate indicative TAM constructions, future or habitual):

\[(262a) \begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c}
fì & ò & srò & déé & ŋó & nìŋ & gbò. \\
\end{array}\]
in case of a condition that the speaker believes to be false (counterfactual condition),
protasis is marked with optative mood when referring to past events, or appropriate
indicative forms when referring to the present. Besides TAM, counterfactual conditionals
are obligatorily marked with particle ŋgo after the conditional complementizer (this particle
can also optionally appear with potential future conditions that only possibly can be false).
Example:

(protasis is marked with optative mood expressed by a combination of a habitual subject
pronoun with the base form of the verb).

13.6. Relative clause

Discussion in this section follows (Paperno 2008b), omitting the relativizing function of
nominalizations that have been briefly characterized in sections 6.2, 6.3, 6.6, and 6.7.

13.6.1. Head-external relative construction

Relative clauses are marked with the combination of a preposed particle ɓɛ (which can
also be thought of as a relative determiner, see 13.6.2 for arguments to this effect) and a
postposed marker ng that equals the topic marker. The ng element can be omitted before
a pause, and is always omitted before another ng marker in the topic-marking function.
The relativized position in the relative clause is filled by a resumptive pronoun that
agrees in person and number with the head NP if a pronoun is possible in the given
position or left empty otherwise. Rarely, when the noun phrase is topicalized and
separated by a pause, the complementizer can, but does not have to, be omitted (264b).
As mentioned above, the most common complementizer in relative clauses is n̄. Relative clauses can also employ a conditional complementizer d̄ɛ̄ /n̄ (d̄ɛ̄ occurs after affirmative conditional clauses and n̄ after negative conditional clauses). Relative clauses with the conditional (d̄ɛ̄) differ in meaning from the main type of relative clauses (with n̄) and include a conditional element in their semantics (246d). Unlike in relative clauses with n̄, the statement expressed by a relative clause with a conditional is not presupposed to be true. Relative clauses with d̄ɛ̄ (examples 264d,e) can be roughly rendered in English using words whenever, whichever, etc. All of the following examples come from real texts; all of them feature topicalization of the whole relative construction.

The conditional construction can be used to modify a noun with reference to a future event (264e), even when there is no sense of uncertainty as to whether this event will happen (uncertainty as to whether condition would hold seems to be a common meaning element of English conditionals). Compare (264e) to an analogous example but with a past event in the relative clause (264f), and no conditionality involved (the relative clause is presupposed true); n̄ is used in this case. Examples:

(264a) Ọ blânu [f̄g] yó à klâ Kûâsî d̄j n̄ j klû̀.
3SG.PST+ banana Rel 3SG.PST+ 3SG put Kouassi APUD TOP steal:1L

’He stole the banana that had been put next to Kouassi’.

(264b) Zrh̄ [f̄g] mî-ō à yél̄ mj mj [zrh̄ bì-ê] yâ.
way Rel 2SG-ST+ 3SG on 2SGHAB+ 2SG way this-DEF walk

’Walk on the way you’re standing on’.

(264c) ŋ̄ ba bâ bâ mḡ mō yō dè d̄f̄ n̄l̄ ȳm m̄ ȳ ọc̄.
1SG sheep PL Rel 2SGPST+ 3PL kill:1L TOP 1SGGIVE 3PL other

’Give me the replacement for the sheep you killed’.

(264d) P̄b̄k̄ [f̄g] ō yōn̄ d̄f̄ wà zìn gō ĝō.
scar Rel 3SG:ST+ forehead if 3SGCHAB- can:1L hide NEG

’You can’t hide a scar on your forehead’ (literally: ‘Whichever scar is on a forehead, it can’t be hidden’).

(264e) Yr̄m̄ [f̄g] bânuŋ̄ŋ̄ nyé lè ō p̄ ō d̄f̄ wà m̄ wà ō lè gā.
time Rel end.of.rain.season DEF 3SGCND come if 3SGCHAB- 2SGHAB+ yam DEF pick
'When the rain season ends, gather yams' (literally: 'whenever there's end of the rain season, gather yams').

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(264f)</th>
<th>Gbèle</th>
<th>[fɛ̰̄ ◊ή]</th>
<th>zëë</th>
<th>yë</th>
<th>ló</th>
<th>wë</th>
<th>cà</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yesterday</td>
<td>Rel</td>
<td>1SGPST+</td>
<td>kapok</td>
<td>this</td>
<td>on</td>
<td>there</td>
<td>look</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(264f)</th>
<th>sìŋ</th>
<th>nëŋ</th>
<th>ŋ</th>
<th>dòbà</th>
<th>dō</th>
<th>yè</th>
<th>wë</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>closely</td>
<td>TOP</td>
<td>1SGPST+</td>
<td>monkey</td>
<td>one</td>
<td>see:L</td>
<td>there</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'Yesterday while watching this kapok tree closely, I saw a monkey there'.

13.6.2. Head-internal fɛ̰̄-construction with dɛ̰ɛ̂ and other arguments for treating fɛ̰̄-constructions as originally head-internal

Some properties of fɛ̰̄ suggest that it is not simply a relative clause marker but a relative determiner. For instance, before fɛ̰̄, the definite article lɛ̀ is blocked. After a demonstrative, lɛ̀ is generally required, but lɛ̀ is absent in the presence of a relative clause, cf. (265a) vs. (265b).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(265a)</th>
<th>Pɔ̀ bi fɛ̰̄ mį̀ à lù nāŋ ḗ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>thing</td>
<td>this</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'This thing that you bought, it is not pretty'.

| (265b) | Pɔ̀ bi *(lɛ̀) wà-ɑ | gëŋ ḗ |
|--------|------------------|
| thing | this | DEF | 3SG-ST- | good | NEG |

'This thing is not pretty'.

The interaction of fɛ̰̄-relativization with the expression of the definite article can be explained if fɛ̰̄ is, at least historically, a determiner occupying the same position as the article lɛ̀. And fɛ̰̄ does occupy the position of a determiner (after the head noun) in a rare variant of the relativization construction with dɛ̰ɛ̂, in which a head NP with fɛ̰̄ is found within the relative clause (such constructions are head internal):

| (265c) | [lō | [pɔ³ | fɛ̰̄] | srà | dɛ̰ɛ̂] | wà | klà | ì | bɛ̊ïló | ḗ |
|--------|------|-----------|------|------|----|----|----|------|----|
| 3SGCND | thing | Rel | take | if | 3SGCHAB- | putL | 3SG | place | NEG |
"He doesn’t put things where they belong" (literally: ‘whatever thing he takes, he doesn’t put it in its place’).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(265d)</th>
<th>[Tɔ̀ wa [sɔ̃ŋ fɛ̊]ɔŋ mɔ̀ ɛ́ nɔ́] yɔ́bi tà wa sɔ̃ɔ̃ bi ɛ̊ɛ̊.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>curse</td>
<td>ST- person Rel on NEG if water.snake 3SG/HAB-3 bite:L NEG</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"If there’s no curse on a person, a water snake won’t bite him’ (literally: ‘If a curse is not on whichever person...’).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(265e)</th>
<th>[Mù wò [gbè fɛ̊]ɔŋ wò dđè]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2SGCCND</td>
<td>move village Rel in if</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ŋà gbôpì à yé ë́. |

33 'One doesn’t defecate in the village one is moving from’ (literally: ‘whatever village you are moving from...’).

34 These examples suggest that even when the head noun is outside the relative clause, fɛ̊ might still be a determiner of the head NP.

35 Another instance of head internal relativization can be seen in relative clauses with presentative markers like è ‘this is’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(265f)</th>
<th>[l̃p̃ fɛ̊]ɔŋ è nɔ̃]ɔŋ wà-á pɔ̃ bi-ɛ́ dɔ̃-lè è</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>thing</td>
<td>Rel this.is TOP 3SG-ST thing this-DEF know-RES NEG</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'This thing (lit. the thing that this is), he doesn’t know this thing’.

36 Since è cannot function as a full sentence on its own, we have to assign this relative clause a structure where the head noun is its subject. This construction is essentially idiomatic, functioning as a complex demonstrative. Such demonstrative relativizations form a closed class, so they could be treated as lexicalized relics of head-internal fɛ̊-relativization.

37 An additional piece of evidence comes from topicalization of phrases modified by relative clauses. Such topicalized phrases are never accompanied by an additional topic marker ( nɔ́), to which the complementizer nɔ at the end of relative clauses is phonologically identical. The topic marker nɔ can often be omitted, but it is usually present in topicalization of adverbial elements (265h). However, such a topic marker is not introduced if the topicalized adverbial is modified by a relative clause, compare (265g) vs. (265h).
(265h). Topic markers are not used after relative clauses with the complementizer déɛ̄, either, compare (265i) vs. (265j).

### (265g)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[Flɔ́ɔ Flɛ́ à léŋ nù ó ɣ  wɔ́h nɔ́lɛ̄]np</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>today Rel 3SG child DEF ST+ 1SG at TOP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1SG love-AG this.is

'Today when I have her daughter she is my friend'.

### (265h)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[Flɔ́ɔ Flɛ́ ɣ vɔ́-li ɛ́]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>today TOP 1SG love-AG this.is</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'Today she is my friend'.

### (265i)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[Flɛ́ dɔ̄]np nà ɣ vɔ́-li ɛ́</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>day one TOP 2SG and 3SG with 2SGHAB+ agree:L again</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'Some day you and she agree again'.

### (265j)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[Flɛ́ Flɛ́ à têtè ó à bō à yù́ö]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>day Rel 3SG self 3SGCND+ 3SG take 1SG mouth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

kè mŋ sì nà [déɛ̄]la,la,lnp

that 1SGPST+3 take Perf if

mŋ nà à lô à bëè mûŋ?

2SG and 3SG with 2SGHAB+ agree:L again

'The day she (mother-in-law) says "I took her (your wife) away", will you and she agree again?'

The facts outlined above can be given a straightforward interpretation: the relativization marker fɛ́ is, at least historically, a determiner; the most widespread relativization strategy features an extraction of the NP with fɛ́ from the relative clause.

The original syntax of relative clauses could have been correlative which is still found in the cases discussed above, examples (265c-265f):
with the option of topicalizing the \( \text{f} \text{ɛ̰̄} \) noun phrase:
\[
[[N \text{f} \text{ɛ̰̄} ... \text{Comp}]] \text{S}_2, \text{cf. example (265)}.
\]
These types of sentences could have been reanalyzed as involving a topicalized noun phrase with a relative clause, extracted from the main clause \( \text{S}_2 \):
\[
[N [\text{f} \text{ɛ̰̄} ... \text{Comp}]] \text{S}_2
\]
Undoing such topicalization gives the basic relativization pattern:
\[
[[...N [\text{f} \text{ɛ̰̄} ... \text{Comp}]] \text{S}_2], \text{see example (264a)}.
\]
The development proposed here is reminiscent of the scenario proposed by Nikitina (2012) for what she labels as ‘the rise of clause-internal correlatives’ in Southeastern Mande languages.

40 To summarize the argument of this section, relative clauses in Beng are originally head-internal, at least in the historical sense. The argument can also be interpreted in favor of analyzing relative clauses as originally head-internal in syntactic derivation (Kayne 1994). Historical and derivational interpretations of head-internal syntax of relative clauses are compatible but not isomorphic, reminiscent of the relation between historical and derivational processes in phonology.

41 There is one argument in favor of the historical rather than synchronic interpretation of the head-internal status of Beng relative clauses. One important piece of evidence used in the argument above was that the determiner \( \text{l} \text{ɛ̀} \) is not used in the presence of a relative clause marker \( \text{f} \text{ɛ̰̄} \). However, the definite article \( \text{ ni} \text{̰̀} \) (variant of \( \text{l} \text{ɛ̀} \) after /ŋ/, see 8.3), is attested before \( \text{f} \text{ɛ̰̄} \):

\[
(265k) \quad \text{ʃ} \quad \text{baba} \quad \text{l} \text{ɛ̀} \quad \text{̣a} \quad \text{sārīŋ} \text{ŋ} \quad \text{l} \text{ɛ́} \quad \text{ʃ} \text{a}
\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1SG</th>
<th>sheep</th>
<th>DEF</th>
<th>3SG</th>
<th>mark</th>
<th>3SGPST+COP=Ł</th>
<th>1SG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ʃ</td>
<td>baba</td>
<td>lɛ̀</td>
<td>̣a</td>
<td>sārīŋ</td>
<td>ŋlɛ́</td>
<td>fala</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[
\text{ble} \text{ɛ̰̄} \quad \text{troŋ} \quad \text{ŋ} \quad [\text{f} \text{ɛ̰̄} \quad \dot{0} \quad \text{c} \text{j}-\text{le} \text{ɛ̰̄} \quad \text{n} \text{̰̀}] \text{ŋ} \quad \text{̣a} \quad \text{ʃ} \text{a}.
\]

left ear | DEF | Rel | 3SGPST+ | cut-RES | TOP | FOC

‘The mark of my sheep is its left ear which is cut’.

42 Examples like this suggest that the incompatibility of \( \text{f} \text{ɛ̰̄} \) and determiners is not strict, and the determiner status of \( \text{f} \text{ɛ̰̄} \) might not be synchronically valid but could rather be a historical relic.