Hypothesis: The *ME*-particles have a basic pragmatic status and function as verb-and-predication focus marker in all four languages.
1. Determination of morphological means according to scope in the (affirmative) focus system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scope of focus</th>
<th>Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. complement</td>
<td>SVxO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. subject</td>
<td>ká</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(topicless)</td>
<td>-wÁ, -Á́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. non-subject</td>
<td>là</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(marked topic)</td>
<td>la</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. verb</td>
<td>canonical transitive sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ predication</td>
<td>imperfective affinity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. verb / predication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SV(O)x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ká-má</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mìŋ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mì</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>canonical intransitive sentence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Buli ká le /g5/tè /g77/g67/g34/g179/g79/g67/g5/g2
Konni

Dagbani lá N kà /g79/g4/g186/g2
Gurene la N ti /g79/g39

1 aspectually differenciated:
- wÁ in the perfective,
- Á in the imperfective 
2 only after lexical subject
Focus Marking by "Affirmative" Markers

Focus as pragmatic and not necessarily marked notion:

"The focal information in a linguistic expression is that information which is relatively the most important or salient in the given communicative setting, and considered by S[peaker, A.S.] to be most essential for A[ddressee, A.S.] to integrate into his pragmatic information"

(Dik 1997: 326)

Assertive and contrastive focus subtypes applying to:

- term focus
- verb focus: verb's lexical meaning
- predication focus: predicative operators (verum / auxiliary focus)

(Hyman & Watters 1984; Güldemann 1996; Wolff 2003)

Pragmatic Focus Control:

the speaker determines the element(s) on which the grammar will express focus

Grammatical Focus Control:

the grammar determines how the speaker will express focus

(Hyman & Watters 1984, Wolff 2003)
Result: highly appropriate use of *ME*-particle in contrastive contexts in affirmation, even in the perfective aspect
Result: language-specific restrictions towards use of ME-particle in assertive predication focus in affirmative perfective
Result: language-specific restrictions towards use of ME-particle in contrastive predication focus in affirmative perfective

Result: appropriate use of ME-particle even with negative perfective predicates in counterfactual conditional clauses
4.3 Comparative Results

6a. Affirmative perfective, SV(O) X type / scope
- assertive: Konni, Buli, Dagbani, Gurene
- contrastive: Konni, Buli, Dagbani, Gurene

6b. Affirmative imperfective, SV(O) X type / scope
- assertive: Konni, Buli, Dagbani, Gurene
- contrastive: Konni, Buli, Dagbani, Gurene

- highest degree of pragmatic control for the ME-particles in all sample languages: contrastive focus in the affirmative perfective
- especially in Konni and Gurene, ME-particles are subject to restrictions diminishing the pragmatical control
- greater choice for use of ME-particles in Buli and Dagbani

7. Degree and parameters of grammatical control for marked verb/predication focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>focus marking</th>
<th>aspectual marking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buli</td>
<td>Konni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagbani</td>
<td>Gurene</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- grammatical control
- pragmatic control
- verb / predication focus
Evidence: Results of *kama*-test corroborate the initially postulated pragmatic function of the *ME*-particles as verb-and-predication focus markers.
“affirmative” markers (ME-particles and -YA-suffixes) mark verb/predication focus and their function is comparable with “in-focus” verb forms in Chadic languages and “disjoint” verb forms in Bantu -complementary marked “verb” focus constructions: (i) secondary focus on verb via marked complement in complex VP, (ii) exclusive verb focus and predication focus by ME- and -YA-particles -focus interacts with grammatical categories, including the aspect system, absorption by aspect is possible -parallels between contrastive verb/predication focus marker (ME) and postnominal morphemes used with a subgroup of contrastive topics -future necessity to integrate negative markers and constructions into investigation -further research in Gur will reveal other morphemes marking verb/predication focus and probably other strategies to express this focus category

Reference
Anne Schwarz: Predication Focus and “Affirmative Markers” in Gur


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