

THE CONDITIONAL PARTICLE *KA* IN WAAMA (BENIN)

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The particle *ka* in Waama has an underlying conditional function, and serves most frequently to set up possible worlds in the minds of interlocutors. By virtue of its function as a conditional, it can also mark topics. It occurs as the basis of conditional-type structures, including conditionals, contrafactuals, and concessions. It also serves to express options, exceptions, and complements of some verbs of uncertainty. When functioning within a discourse, *ka* may also serve to introduce an adverbial time clause which recapitulates given information.

0. Introduction

Whenever people talk, they need at each point to have a common framework which restricts the applicability of the speaker's predications. The term "framework" is used here in the same sense as it was originally used by Chafe [1976:50] but with rather greater generality. He used it to refer to the spatial, temporal or individual structure within which the main predication holds.

The particle *ka* in Waama¹ is one of the devices which set up such frameworks. One of its primary functions is to mark conditional-type subordinate structures as

¹Waama is a language spoken in the north of Benin, West Africa, by some 32,000 people [Commission Nationale de Linguistique 1980a:12]. These people are located within the province of Atacora and are scattered throughout the administrative districts of Natitingou, Toukountouna, Tanguiéta, and Kouandé [Commission Nationale de Linguistique 1980b:62-63]. The language has been classed by Manessy [1975:1] as belonging to the eastern group of the Oti-Volta sub-family. The Société Internationale de Linguistique began research work among the Waama people in 1981. I was a member of the project from December 1985 to December 1987. The present paper is based on some 130 pages of text representing the following discourse genres: narrative, conversational, procedural, and expository/exhortatory. Field research has been carried out under an agreement with the Centre National de Linguistique Appliquée of Benin. I

frameworks (§§1.1-3). Besides setting up frameworks, *ka* may also function to mark complements of some verbs of cognition (§1.4), options (§§2.1-3) and exceptions (§2.5).

In many instances where the particle *ka* occurs, its function is to set up possible worlds, i.e. situations which differ only slightly from the actual world and which would come true if the actual world were slightly altered.

When the particle *ka* occurs in a subordinate clause, its normal syntactic position is immediately following the subject. When marking a proposition serving as the complement of a verb of cognition, *ka* retains this post-subject position. Similarly, it follows the subject (or object) when it occurs in a main clause where options or exceptions are expressed. Instances of each of these will be found in examples below.

1. *Ka* in subordinate clauses

1.1. Straightforward conditions. When the particle *ka* occurs in a conditional clause, its function is to set up a possible world as a framework which restricts, and therefore to some extent determines, what the speaker is going to say in the main clause. In general, frameworks may be spatial, temporal or individual [Chafe 1976:50], or they may consist of conditional structures which set up possible worlds (signaled by the presence of *ka* in Waama). We consider conditionals to be topics in Waama (cf. Haiman [1978:564]) because, just as a topic is a given, so the contents of a conditional (the protasis) must be accepted as true—at least provisionally—if what follows (the apodosis) is to make sense. Straightforward topics in Waama contain the particle *maa* which directly follows the subject. (Brückner, [1987], talks about this function of *maa* as one which adds emphasis and draws an element out of the background. I interpret this as a topical function.)

An example of a conditional in English is *If it rains, we'll go home*. The *if* clause ('if it rains') refers to a possible state of affairs; it is not yet raining, but it could. Were this state of affairs to be realized (that is, to become part of the actual world), the main predication ('we'll go home') would also come true.

am grateful to them for their permission to conduct research in that country. Many Waama people, particularly Samuel Pormaté and Martin Sakoura, generously contributed their knowledge and time to this project. Special thanks go to Dr. Ivan Lowe, International Linguistic Consultant of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, for his invaluable help in the preparation of the initial version of this paper at a workshop held in Lomé, Togo from November to December 1986. Very helpful comments on that draft were received from Russell G. Schuh and incorporated into the present paper. In Waama there are 14 consonant phonemes: voiceless stops *p, t, c, k, kp*; voiced stops *b, d*, (one allophone of *d* is represented by *r* in the orthography); fricatives *f, s* nasals *m, n, ŋ*; semivowels *y, w*. Oral vowels are *i, e, ε, a, u, o, ɔ*; nasal vowels are *ĩ, ē, ā, ũ, ɔ̃*. There are two phonemic tones, high and low, but they are not written in the orthography. By convention certain particles and pronouns are marked with the accent, ' ` ' , when confusion between minimal tone pairs is possible.

The following simple example of a conditional in *Waama* (1) shows clearly the normal clausal position of the particle *ka* (immediately after the subject of the subordinate clause). The subordinate clause functions as a framework which is an alternative to the actual world. It is said by someone contemplating the weather and its effect on his plans for the day. He is considering the possible world in which rain is a reality.

- (1) ¹*Tando* *KA* *dori*, ²*n da* *kori n yete*.
 rain if fall.perf 1sg fut go home.df 1sg house

‘¹If it rains, ²I shall go home.’

In example (2) we examine two conditionals which occur one right after another in the context of a narrative. It is clear that each conditional clause (clauses 1 and 3) sets up a framework for its respective main clause (clauses 2 and 4). The conditions in this particular case are mutually exclusive, that is, if one is fulfilled the other cannot be. (Note that each time examples are situated in their discourse contexts, the context will be given in English only and indented. A key to the abbreviations used in glosses may be found in the Appendix.)

- (2) (context) A hunter was out hunting one day. He had shot all the animals on his side of the stream when he saw a deer on the other side. His father had told him not to cross the stream, but he did so anyway, reasoning that he couldn't go home empty-handed. He wanted to shoot the deer he saw. The deer then said to him,

¹*O KA m tai*, ²*yiporipe da kp̄ii-di*; ³*o KA m n̄ɔ̄ɔ̄*,
 2sg if 1sg shoot.perf white wife fut die.df-foc 2sg if 1sg leave.perf

⁴*yiribitiriwo ñ kpi*.
 black wife seq die.df

‘¹If you shoot me, ²the white wife will die; ³if you leave me, ⁴the black wife will die.’

- (context) Now it happened that the hunter had two wives, a white one and a black one.

In several cases, *KA* occurs in conditional clauses which function metaphorically. We shall look at some of these cases below.

The conditional clause *dà ka t̄ɔ̄ɔ̄ɛ* literally means ‘if it adds’, but is used idiomatically to mean ‘later’.

- (3) ¹DÀ KA TŌŌSE ²n da kori.
 it if add perf 1sg fut go home.df

‘¹Later ²I’ll go home.’

The conditional clause *da ka pa* ‘if it refuses’ is used metaphorically to mean ‘perhaps’ and to indicate that the speaker is fairly certain, i.e. has a reasonable expectation, that the main clause which follows will come true. If the surface form of this expression makes it seem a strange equivalent to ‘perhaps’, it should be noted that Waama speakers themselves find it somewhat puzzling. They do not see a connection between its literal meaning of ‘refuse’ and the uncertainty in the mind of the speaker. Some Waama speakers have even gone so far as to replace *dà ka pa* with *dà ka neki*, which means ‘if it wants’, in their speech because they find this a more logical way to express uncertainty.

In example (4) below, the conditional clause *dà ka pa* marks the main clause with a ‘perhaps’. The sentence is said by someone who has suggested to others that they all go home to see if their meal is ready. He is not absolutely sure whether it is ready or not, but it could very well be, because in that home a meal is usually ready at that hour of the day.

- (4) ¹DÀ KA PA, ²diima bei-dì.
 it if refuse.ep food be ready.perf-foc

‘¹Perhaps ²the food is ready.’

Notice that in example (5) below, the feeling of fair certainty applies to the whole sentence (clauses 2 and 3) following *dà ka pa*. The *dà ka pa* here expresses the speakers’, i.e. the termites’, reasonable suspicion that the devil, if released, would eat them. This suspicion is justified by their knowledge of the devil’s ways. Hence, their reluctance to release him.

- (5) (context) Hare has tied Devil up. The termites see Devil and ask who tied him up. They offer to release him, but are afraid he will eat them if they do.

¹DÀ KA PA maa ²n wo fŏkire ³o m wētire diima.
 it if refuse.ep but 1sg 1sg release.df 2sf
 1sg turn into.df food

‘¹But perhaps ²I will release you and ³you will make me your prey.’

Irrelevance of a condition may be expressed in Waama by a conditional *ka* clause containing a metaphorical use of the verb *neki* ‘like, want’. In such a case,

- (8) ¹O KA NEKI o m ò ko, ²n ba wo
 2sg if want.stat 2sg 1sg seq kill.df 1sg not 2sg

pɛɛti diima.
 give.ingr food

‘¹(Whatever nasty things you may do to me)—you may even kill me—²I won’t give you any food.’

In example (9) the verb *nɛki* retains its literal sense ‘want’. By comparing (9) with (8), we see clearly that the two *ka* clauses have exactly the same surface form. However, it is clear that these clauses have different meanings in the two examples. In (9), the truth of the main clause depends on the truth of the conditional, but in (8) it does not.

- (9) ¹O KA NEKI o m ò ko,
 2sg if want.stat 2sg 1sg seq kill.df

²mɛn maakan, n da wo ko-di.
 1sg.em too 1sg fut 2sg kill.df-foc

‘¹If (you decide) you want to kill me, ²I will kill you too.’

The conditional *ka* clause may also have a narrative function of recapitulation or cohesion. Its structure remains the same as previously treated *ka* clauses, as does its function, namely, signaling an event which has been or must be accomplished before the next event. However, when the truth of a *ka* clause can be inferred from the discourse context or is common knowledge in the Waama culture, this clause represents an actual rather than a possible world. It may be translated as an adverbial time clause introduced by ‘when’.

In (10) below, an excerpt from a folktale, the action referred to in the *ka* clause (clause 3) was accomplished in the preceding sentence (clauses 1 and 2) and is therefore given information. By the way, clause 1 is marked as a straightforward topic because it contains the particle *maa*.

- (10) ¹Yiriba maa ò tòn taka ²bà nɛɛ daari Kuun. ³Bà KA
 people and seq hab go.df 3pl there greet.df Death 3pl when

daari Kuun, ⁴Kuun ò seji, ⁵bà wa: ‘⁶Ti takinde
 greet.perf death death seq accept.df 3pl say.ep 1pl go-perf.al

⁷sa o ti pɛ taanya-di ⁸ti mɔki.’
 so 2sg 1pl give.df butternuts-foc 1pl suck.df

¹People used to go and ²greet Death there. ³When they greeted Death, ⁴Death accepted and ⁵they said, “⁶We came ⁷so you would give us butternuts ⁸to eat.”’

Information generally known to be true (common knowledge in the Waama culture) is often expressed within procedural discourses. In such discourses, the speaker is imagining the realization of each step in the procedure as he talks about it, so as far as he is concerned each previous step is a given as he talks about the next step. It seems that it is the high frequency of *ka* clauses in certain discourses that serves to distinguish them as procedurals. At least at this point in our research we have not discovered any other linguistic device which distinguishes procedural from narrative discourse. Example (11) comes from a discourse on how to plant yams. The speaker has, both linguistically and mentally, already planted yams in the course of his instructions to the addressee. Now, assuming the planting to be an accomplished action and therefore a given fact, he can say:

(11) ¹*O KA bori,*²*o ì mandì.*
 2sg when plant.perf 2sg cont wait.df

‘¹When you've planted, ²you wait.’

The existence of situations such as night and day are given information since everyone knows they are real. Thus, we translate *ka* by ‘when’ in (12) as well.

(12) (context) A child was saying the rosary. When he had finished, he went to bed.

¹*Dà KA mun bo yēende,*²*Wejuro ñ cesun*
 it when past be.ep night God seq descend.df.al

³*ò wa,*“⁴*N daaso.*”
 3sg say.ep 1sg friend

‘¹When it was night, ²God descended and ³said, “⁴My friend.”’

1.2. Contrafactual conditions. When a speaker posits a condition which he knows was not satisfied (often a possible world at an anterior time which never came true), we can call this a contrafactual condition. The apodosis of a contrafactual is contained in the main clause and indicates what would have been the result had the condition (the protasis) been satisfied. Such conditions are expressed in Waama by placing a past temporal particle both before the *ka* of the conditional clause and after the subject of the main clause. The particles which may occur in

these slots are as follows: *mun* 'past', *den* 'distant past', *daande* 'a long time ago', *bintu* 'a few years ago', *diiwo* 'last year', *daaŋo* 'a few days ago', and *dee* 'yesterday'. The particle used in the main clause may be the same as that in the conditional clause, but it need not be. In the main clause it is always followed by either the future marker *da* or the negative marker *ba* (indicating negation in the future).

In example (13) below (an excerpt from a folktale explaining why Africans are not rich), the contrafactual condition (subordinate clauses 1 and 2) was never accomplished. The result (clause 3) therefore never came true.

- (13) (context) The hunter killed the deer and his white wife died. Riches entered his house and followed his wife's family back to their village when they came to get her body.

¹*Waaro MUN KA nɔŋo* ²*sa* *ò ba ko* *pɛɛri ŋa*
 hunter past if leave.perf so that 3sg not kill.perf deer that

³*yiribitiriba MUN-di DA ì kpaati.*
 Blacks past-foc fut cont be rich

'¹If the hunter had left the deer ²and not killed it, ³the Blacks [Africans] would be rich.'

Example (14) illustrates another contrafactual. This time there are two main clauses (4 and 5) containing situations which did not come true because the contrafactual condition (clause 2) was not satisfied.

- (14) (context) Four men were walking along one behind the other when one of them stepped on a snake. They fled and no one was bitten.

¹*Mamma ka-dan,* ²*wako DAANO KA* *yɛsɛ yonto yon,*
 that.em if-neg foc snake the other day if bite.perf one one

³*yerika ti daaŋo* *ta puke,* ⁴*ti DAANO BA*
 work 1pl the other day rel hold.perf 1pl the other day not

sookiti ti kà woosi, ⁵*ti DAANO DA*
 be able.prog 1pl it finish.perf 1pl the other day fut

kasinun -di ti kon.
 hurry.df.al-foc 1pl go home.df.alt

‘¹Otherwise, ²if the snake had bitten one of us the other day, ³the work we were doing, ⁴we would not have been able to finish it, and ⁵we would have hurried to go home.’

1.3. Concessions. The particle *baa* ‘even’, when prefixed to a conditional clause, turns it into a concessional clause. Concessions in *Waama* may express two related kinds of concepts: irrelevance and unlikelihood.

We first examine concessions in which the condition is irrelevant to the truth of the main clause. In these cases, the main clause will be true no matter how demanding the condition. In (15), taken from a sermon, the speaker sets up as a condition (in clauses 1 and 2) the situation which he thinks would be the most likely to force the main clause (clause 3) to be false. But the main clause holds nonetheless.

(15) (context) It's like the fetish chicken: if they sprinkle water on a chicken to leave it for the fetish, they don't sell it.

¹BAA *dampo* KA *neki* ò ò wo puke, ²o ba kòssiti
 even taxes if want.stat 3sg seq 2sg hold.df 2sg
 not sell.ing

dà kòka.
 that chicken

‘¹Even if taxes want to hold you [fall due], ²you don't sell that chicken.’
 [‘Whether or not taxes fall due, you don't sell that chicken.’]

When the interrogative personal pronoun *wan* ‘who’ is the subject of a concessional clause of irrelevance, it acts as an absolute universal quantifier, as in (16) below.

(16) ¹BAA WAN KA *seji* *Wejuro*, ²ò da won darima.
 even who if accept.perf God 3sg fut hear.df sweetness

‘¹Whoever accepts God ²will be happy.’

Next we examine a concessional clause which expresses unlikelihood. Such clauses differ structurally from concessional clauses of irrelevance in that they contain the contrast marker *maa* ‘but’ immediately preceding *ka*. In combination with this marker, *baa* serves to indicate that the condition is contraexpected. The possible world set up by *ka* is a highly unlikely one (in relation to the preceding context), but still possible.

Example (17) comes from a procedural discourse on how to plant yams. Clause 1 is a contraexpected concession, i.e. it is highly unlikely that a yam that is planted too deep will come up. But even if it does, when it starts growing it will soon reach the hard earth at the bottom of the yam mound and cease growing.

- (17) (context) Then you plant the yam. You don't plant it very deep. If you plant it very deep IT WON'T COME UP SOON.

¹BAA bu MAA KA yerinde, ²daare dee dà
 ta n̄eki
 even it but if come up.perf.al day that it rel want.stat

dà d̄ori, ³w̄ɔ̄ paaride da faki t̄iŋa kasima.
 it produce.df yam new fut reach.df earth quickly

'¹But even if it does come up, ²when it wants to produce, ³the new yam will reach the earth [the bottom of the mound] quickly (and be prevented from growing).'

1.4. Complements of verbs of cognition. Almost all verbs of cognition may have propositions as complements. However, a *ka*-marked proposition expressing a possible world can serve as the complement of only a very few verbs of cognition such as *mi* 'not know', *yen* 'see', and *bibi* 'ask'.

In (18) below, the speaker uses a combination of the verb *mi* 'not know' with a *ka*-marked complement to express her uncertainty as to the realization of the complement, i.e. as to whether she will get home by tomorrow.

- (18) N MI n KA da kori sari soro.
 1sg not know.ep 1sg if fut go home.df by tomorrow

'I don't know whether I'll get home by tomorrow.'

2. *Ka-di* Complexes

The combination of *ka* with the focal particle *di* as *ka-di* 'if with focus' presents an interesting situation. At the most basic level, this combination serves to mark a conditional framework like those which we have already examined. Example (19), which occurs in the context of a sermon, illustrates such a conditional framework.

- (19) ¹f̄en ti Pennato KA-DI, ²teetena n̄ mi
 2sg.em 1pl Savior if-foc help.df.with opt 1sg

'¹If it's our *Savior* that you are, ²help me.'

This combination of *ka* and *di* may also mark options in *Waama*. When it marks options, *ka* takes on a restrictive function, that is, it restricts the options to those mentioned in the clause. There are no other options besides these. The focal particle *di* serves to mark new or contrastive information, i.e. information that is not recoverable from the preceding linguistic context. The *ka-di*-marked structure says nothing whatsoever about the relative likelihood of each of the options; we know only that they are both possible options.

Options within questions are not marked with *ka*, and will be treated in §2.4. Depending on whether they occur in main clauses or subordinate clauses, options are expressed slightly differently. We shall examine both cases in turn.

2.1. *Ka-di* complexes in main clauses. In order for two items to function as options in main clauses, *ya* ‘or’ must be inserted between the items and *ka-di* ‘if with focus’ must be placed immediately after the second item. Example (20) below illustrates the expression of options within the subject of an *irrealis* (future) main clause. The completeness of this main clause would be expressed in English by sentence final intonation on the word ‘market’.

(20) *Mɛn* *YA* *n* *nɛ* *KA-DI* *da* *taka* *kate*.
 1sg.em or 1sg mother if-foc fut go.df market

‘My mother or I will go to market.’

In (21), the options occur in the locative slot of an imperative verb.

(21) *Taka* *kate* *YA* *wɛndaaribu* *KA-DI!*
 go.df market or church if-foc

‘Go to market or to church!’

Interestingly, *ka-di* may also express options in a *realis* context, such as this perfective structure:

(22) ¹*Sa* *n* *tɛn* *kpaari* *yeya* ²*ti* *den* *tàn* *dii-di* *wɔ̃ɔ* *tootu*
 when I yet stay.perf houses we past hab eat.perf-foc
yam pounded

YA *caabu* *KA-DI*, ³*yunjo* *maa*, *ti* *du* *caabu* *yon-*
di.
 or porridge if-foc today but we eat.ingr porridge only-foc

‘¹When I was still at home, ²we ate either pounded yam or porridge, ³but today we eat only porridge.’

2.2. *Ka-di* complexes in subordinate clauses. Options occur not only in main clauses, as in the preceding examples, but also in subordinate and embedded clauses. When they do, the surface forms are slightly different from those in main clauses. In (19) above, there is only one option expressed in the conditional clause. However, that conditional clause can be expanded to express one or more options to the original condition. This is done by adding another option marked with *ka-di* and inserting *ya* ‘or’ between the two options. In (23) below, the complex of options occurs in the conditional (or subordinate) clause, and is an expansion of the *ka* clause of (19).

(23) *1fen ti Pennato (KA-DI) YA ti Yombite KA-DI,*
 2sg.em 1pl Savior if-foc or 1l Lord if-foc

2teetena n mi
 help.df-with opt 1sg

‘¹if you are our Savior or our Lord, ²help me’

It should be noted that the *ka-di* affixed to the first option within a subordinate clause (and always shown inside parentheses in these examples) is deletable. The speaker may leave it out for the sake of style and brevity without changing the meaning, but it remains the underlying structure. If we compare this with the surface structure of options in main clauses treated in the preceding section (20,21), we see that the first option in a main clause does *not* have an underlying *ka-di* attached to it. Thus we may say that it is this first deletable *ka-di* which turns the main clause into a subordinate. In English the incompleteness of a subordinate clause like that in (11) would be expressed by a non-final intonation on the word ‘Lord’, indicating that something must follow.

Example (24) below occurs in a sermon and is another example of the expression of options within a subordinate clause. It serves to illustrate two points. Firstly, the complex of options (consisting of clauses 4 and 5) is the embedded clausal object of the verb *won* ‘hear’ (which is itself in the subordinate clause 3 beginning with *wende nɔɔre* ‘the day when’). Secondly, the options are between situations, and the situations themselves are described by clauses (4 and 5 respectively).

(24) *1Dà maa i yiriba kutire-di 2bà den tàn ta debiri Yeesu*
 it and be people many-foc 3pl past hab rel
 follow.prog Jesus

³*wende* *nɔɔre* *bà* *ta* *da* *won* *sa* ⁴*ò* *yujuntun* *tiju*
 day when 3pl rel fut hear.df that 3sg enter.ingr.al village

(KA-DI) YA ⁵*ò* *miɲiti* *parade* *mii* KA-DI.
 if-foc or 3sg pass.ingr place in if-foc

‘¹And there was a crowd of people ²who used to follow Jesus ³when they heard that ⁴he was entering a village or ⁵he was passing a place.’

2.3. *Ka-di* complexes as complements. Options with a deletable *ka-di* after the first item occur in other types of subordinate clauses as well. In (25) we find the complex of options as the embedded object of the verb *neki* ‘want’ in an ordinary conditional *ka* clause (which is, of course, a subordinate clause). Note that here, the conditional clause already has its own *ka* expressing a possible world. This *ka* is over and above the *ka*’s of the *ka-di* option markers. Note also that the whole conditional clause (1) precedes the main clause (2) and thus sets up a situational framework for that main clause.

(25) ¹*O* *KA* *neki* *caabu* (KA-DI) YA *wɔ̃ɔtootu* KA-DI, ²*o*
 2sg if want.stat porridge if-foc or fufu if-foc 2sg
bibi *pe* *woroo*.
 ask.df woman this

‘¹If you want either porridge or fufu, ²ask this woman.’

A complex of options with a deletable *ka-di* on the first item may occur within the context of a conditional *ka* clause which is the complement of a verb of cognition like *mi* ‘not know’, *bibi* ‘ask’, or *yen* ‘see’ (cf. §1.4).

In (26) below, each option is not only marked by a *ka-di* at the end of the clause expressing the option, but there is also another *ka* immediately following the subject *ò* ‘he’ of each clause. Like the corresponding *ka* in the sentence initial conditionals of (25), the *ka*’s in (26) also express possible worlds. However, in (26) these possible worlds are not situational frameworks.

(26) (context) A doctor has just been asked whether a patient will live or die. He says,

¹*N* *mi* ²*ò* *KA* *da* *fɔ̃ɔki* *KA-DI* ³*YA* *ò*
 1sg not know.ep 3sg if fut be healed.df if-foc or 3sg

KA da kpi KA-DI.
if fut die.df if-foc

‘I don't know ²if he will be healed ³or if he will die.’

2.4. Expression of options in questions. The *ka-di* marker is missing from options expressed within questions. This may seem strange at first sight, but it makes sense for the following reason. Polar (yes/no) questions in Waama are marked with the particle *ni*, while content questions are marked with a different particle, *nu*. Questions including options are also marked with the same content question marker, i.e. *nu*.

In a clause which is a content question, all the information in the clause except the question word is given information and so a content question is a question within a restricted framework. In a very similar way, we have found that when *ka-di* marks options, the *ka* restricts the discussion to the options stated and no other options are being considered. Thus *ka* also marks a restricted framework, and it seems that *ka* and *nu* are both restrictive in roughly the same sense. *Nu* also has the semantic component of “question”, so once a question with options has been marked with *nu* (with its built-in component of restrictiveness), there is no further need to redundantly mark restrictiveness with a *ka*.

Example (27) illustrates the structure of an ordinary content question and a possible answer to it. The question requires that the answer specify a certain day; it may not simply consist of ‘yes’ or ‘no’. Note the focal particle *di* which marks the new information being requested (‘which day’).

(27) Q: ¹*Daasire-di o ta da taka Kotonu*
NU?
which day-foc 2sg rel fut go.df Cotonou interrog

A: ²*N da taka Kotonu kate daare-di.*
1sg fut go.df Cotonou market day-foc

Q: ‘¹Which day are you going to Cotonou?’

A: ‘²I am going to Cotonou on market day.’

Example (28) below illustrates the expression of options within a question. By comparing it with (27), we can see the similarity between the structure of content questions and that of questions expressing options. Restrictiveness in the English translation of the content question in (28) is correctly marked by a rising intonation on ‘market’ and a falling intonation on ‘church’.

- (28) *O da taka kate YA wendaaribu-di NU?*
 2sg fut go.df market or church-foc interrog

‘Are you going to market or to church?’

2.5. *Ka-dan* complexes. Exceptions to negatives and universal quantifiers are formed in *Waama* by placing *ka-dan* ‘if with negative focus’ after the exceptional element. This marker is similar to *ka-di* in two ways: it is restrictive (restricting the exceptions to those mentioned), and it marks contrastive information which is not recoverable from the preceding context.

In example (29), taken from a sermon, *ka-dan* marks clause 6, *Weṅuro Bika den yēema* ‘the blood of God’s Son’, as an exception to all the other types of blood mentioned in the sentence. It is exceptional in that it is the only type of blood that *does* have power.

- (29) ¹*Dà tori-di ti deru yuṅo,* ²*ti ñ tòn wa,* ³*Kòòka*
 that for-foc 1pl sing.prog today 1pl seq hab say.ep
 chicken

yēema paana wenun, ⁴*saaku yēema paana wenun*
 blood not have.ep power sheep blood not have.ep power

⁵*nako yēema paana wenun,* ⁶*Weṅuro Bika den yēema KA-DAN.*
 bull blood not have.ep power God’s Son his blood if-neg foc

‘¹For that reason we sing today and ²we say, “³Chicken blood doesn’t have power, ⁴sheep blood doesn’t have power, ⁵bull blood doesn’t have power - ⁶only the blood of God’s Son.”’

Example (30) shows how *ka-dan* marks an exception, ‘man’ to the universal quantifier ‘all’: man is the only animal stronger than the elephant.

- (30) ¹*Mamaabu so-di yaki tòosu su maasi*
 elephant conquer.perf-foc animals other prn all

²*yirisaaro yon KA-DAN.*
 man only if-neg-foc

‘¹The elephant is stronger than all the other animals ²except man.’

3. Conclusion

In this paper I have demonstrated that the particle *ka* in Waama may occur in a number of different structures, but nearly always with an underlying conditional function. In all but one case it serves to set up possible worlds. The only exception to this rule is the case where *ka* introduces an adverbial time clause whose truth is inferrable either from the preceding linguistic context or from the body of knowledge common to Waama people.

Appendix

Key to abbreviations used in word-by-word glosses

al	allative	
cont	continuity marker	(i)
df	dependent form of verb	
em	emphatic	
ep	extra-paradigmatic verb	
foc	focal particle	
fut	future tense	
hab	habitual	
ingr	ingressive aspect	
interrog	interrogative marker	(<i>nu, ta</i>)
neg	negative	
opt	optative particle	(<i>ñ</i>)
perf	perfective aspect	
prn	pronoun	
prog	progressive aspect	
rel	relative particle	(<i>ta</i>)
seq	sequential marker	(<i>ñ</i>)
stat	stative aspect	
lsg	first person singular	
1pl	first person plural	
2sg	second person singular	
2pl	second person plural	
3sg	third person singular	
3pl	third person plural	

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