Expressing focus and topic in Siyase (Avatime)

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The study of Focus and Topic is a main concern of recent linguistic research focusing on the structural configuration of the extrasentential hierarchy and on the relation between syntax and discourse-related categories.

This paper examines how topic and focus information are realized within a sentence and how they affect sentence forms i.e. what morpho-syntactic processes are involved in deriving constructions associated with topic and focus in Siyase (Avatime), a Ghana-Togo Mountain (GTM) language (Ring 1995) spoken in Ghana. Ameka (1992 : 1 cited in Dakubu 2005) pointed out that the languages currently grouped together as (New) Kwa commonly employ fronting as a syntactic device for focus and additionally often mark a focused argument with a morpheme that is regarded as functionally a focus marker. The paper verifies this assertion among other things.