Verb fronting in Bantu in typological perspective

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1 Fronting as a syntactic encoding device of information structure

+ basic assumption that morphosyntactic default structures normally encode categorical statements (in the sense of Sasse 1987) with a topical subject and assertive focus on the predicate (and possible non-subject participants)
> encoding of marked information structure by syntactic manipulation of default regarding:
(a) word order = linear syntax: preposing (fronting) or postposing from a default position
(b) constituent complexity = hierarchical syntax: adding syntactic layers to simple monoclausal default sentence
> syntactic differences need not imply any derivation from a deep to a surface structure ("movement" etc.), rather comparison of a marked and an unmarked surface structure

+ at least three different types of syntactic preposing
- extraclausal preposing ~ "left dislocation"/"topicalization" in English
(1)   The dog, he BOUGHT (it).

- extraclausal preposing ~ "clefting" in English
(2)   It's the DOG he bought.

- intraclausal preposing in German
(3)   Den Hund hat er gekauft
       the:ACC dog:ACC has he bought
       (two distinct intonations:) He bought the DOG./He BOUGHT the dog.

2   Clause bisection and predicate-centered focus

2.1 Verb focus preposing (= verb doublet as focus)

+ "predicate cleft" used without commitment to the cross-linguistically unrealistic narrow definitional requirements of the biclausal English cleft type (pace, e.g., Aboh 2006: 28)

> "cleft" used instead in the literal (?original) sense: sentence with a syntactic "CLEAVage/ split" between (a) an exposed (normally focused) noun-like term constituent (without a necessary argument relation to the finite clause predicate) and (b) another clause-like (but possibly assertively reduced) constituent which includes the finite predicate

+ slightly different types of predicate clefts can be used in all major predicate-centered focus types

(4) Cleft for SoA focus (as in a.), truth value focus (as in b.), and TAM focus (as in c.) (cf. object focus in d.) in Aja (Kwa, Niger-Congo)

    a.   óò,   ɖà   (yí) é   ɖà

          no   cook   FOC 3S cook

          {The woman ate the beans.} No, she COOKED them.

    b.   óò,   nyɔ́   (yí) é   nyɔv́ì

          no,   be.beautiful FOC 3S   be.beautiful

          {She is not beautiful.} No, she IS beautiful.

    c.   TA operator focus

          óò,   xó-ì   (yí)   á   xó-ì

          no,   hit-3S.OBJ FOC   3S.FUT hit-3S.OBJ

          {The woman has hit Peter.} No, she WILL hit him.

    d.   āyú (yí)   é   ɖù

          bean FOC   3S eat

          She ate BEANS. (Fiedler 2010)

+ predicate cleft used exclusively for SoA focus

(5) Cleft for SoA focus (as in a., cf. object focus in b.) in Emai (Edoid, Niger-Congo)

    a.   úkhùmí   (lí)   òhí   khú'   ólí   éwè

        chase:VN   FOC   PN   chase   DEF   goat

        [lit.:] It was chasing that Ohi did to the goat. [Ohi CHASED the goat]

    b.   ópìà   lí   ó   ré'   hían   óì

        cutlass   FOC   3S   use   cut   it

        It is a CUTLASS he used to cut it. (Morimoto 2010 < Schaefer and E. 2009: 356, 385)

+ structural parallel of preposed term constituent and preposed verb doublet mirrors pragmatic parallel: both are exposed foci against the following extrafocal predicates
> long research tradition on African and Caribbean languages (Manfredi 1993)

2.2 Verb topic preposing (= verb doublet as topic)

+ some languages with two superficially similar cleft-like constructions

(6) Cleft-like preposing for focus in Akan (Kwa, Niger-Congo)

    a.   **me**   **na**   me   *ba-a*   ha   nɛra

        1S   FOC   1S   come-PST   here   yesterday

        I it was who came here yesterday; I (FOCUS) came here yesterday (Boadi 1974: 5-6)

    b.   **me**   **deɛ**   me   *ba-a*   ha   nɛra   [with rising intonation]

        1S   ?   1S   come-PST   here   yesterday

        I (?) came here yesterday (Boadi 1974: 6)

    c.   **ba**   **deɛ**   me   *ba-a*   ha   nɛra   [with rising intonation]

        come ?   1S   come-PST   here   yesterday

        I CAME here yesterday (Boadi 1974: 6)

!!! *deɛ* is actually a **TOPIC** marker (cf. Marfo and Bodomo 2005, Ameka 2010)

+ other verb-doubling where preposed doublet is clearly a topic (cf. also Aboh 2006)

(7) Preposed verb doublet for truth value focus in Amharic (Semitic, Afroasiatic)

    əšši   **lä-madammät'-u**   ənkw   *l-adamt'-əh*

    allright   for-listen:VN-DEF   ?   PROX-1S:listen:IPFV-2M.S.OBJ

    {But listen to me Tiruneh.} [lit.:] All right, as for listening, I am listening.

    [Allright, I DO listen to you] (Wetter 2010 < Kapeliuk 1988: 68)

(8) Preposed verb doublet for truth value focus in Hausa

gyaaraa, wàllaahì *yaa* *gyaarà* mootà-r
fix:VN "By God!" 3M.S.PFV fix car-DEF.F
[lit.:] fixing, well he's fixed the car. [he really DID fix the car] (Jaggar 2001: 542)

+ complex underlying structure: SoA expression is topicalized while assertion of operator is suspended to the following predicate - paraphrase:

'As for *verb*ing, (I assert that) X *verb*'
> conventionalized reanalysis as predicate-centered focus **'X DOES *verb*'**

+ predicate-centered focus only as a specialized sub-reading of a wider topicalization construction: other information-structural interpretation of verb (phrase) preposing, as soon as post-topical material is more complex than the topic (see §2.4 below)

(9) Preposed verb phrase without predicate-centered focus in Hausa

a. **sayaar dà mootoocii dai**, *munàa* *sayar* dà mootoocii irìi-irìi
sell:VN with car.P TOP 1P.IPFV sell with car.P different
As for selling cars, we sell ALL KINDS of cars. (Jaggar 2001: 542)

b. **gyaaraa**, *sâ* *yi* wà mootà-r̃ gòobe
fix:VN 3P.POT do IOBJ car-DEF.F tomorrow
fixing, they'll probably do it to the car TOMORROW. (Jaggar 2001: 542)

2.3 "Dummy verb constructions" as non-doubling counterparts of preposing

+ dummy verb with verb (phrase) preposing parallel to preposed verb doubling

(10) Focus preposing for SoA focus (as in a., cf. object focus in b.) in Tamashek (Berber, Afroasiatic)

a. wæddéɣ **əššəɣəl à** *i-tájj*, **èḍəs à** *i-tájj*
not work DEM 3M.S-do:IPFV1 sleep:VN DEM 3M.S-do:IPFV1
[He doesn't WORK, he SLEEPS.] (Prokhorov 2010 < Heath 2005: 643)

b. **nàkk à** *i-wæt*
1S DEM 3M.S-hit:PFV
It is ME he hit. (Prokhorov 2010c < Heath 2005: 646)

(11) Topic preposing for truth value focus in English

I told John to wash the car and **wash the car** he *did*. (Aboh 2006: 46)

+ language-internal variation of preposing + dummy verb and its pragmatics is entirely parallel to the two different doubling patterns in §2.1 vs. §2.2
> prosody in German disambiguates two predicate-centered focus types in segmentally identical form with intraclausal preposing (cf. (3) above)

(12) Focus preposing for SoA focus (as in a.) vs. topic preposing for truth value focus (as in b.) in German

a. **[lEs-En]**_{FOCUS}   [*tut*   er]_{TOPIC}

read-INF   does he

he READS ("READING he does") cf. §2.1

b. **[lEs-en]**_{TOPIC}   [*tUt* er]_{FOCUS}

read-INF   does he

he DOES read ("as for reading, he DOES (it)")2 cf. §2.2

+ same pragmatic reading irrespective of doubling vs. dummy verb (cf. (13)a. vs. b.) - different pragmatic reading with similar dummy verb structure (cf. (13)b. vs. (13)c.)

(13) Preposed topic doubling for operator focus (as in a.), preposed topic with dummy verb (as in b.) for operator focus, and preposed focus with dummy verb for wide VP focus (as in c., cf. dependent verb form!!!) in Hausa

a. **sàyé-n**   **àbinci**   **kòo**,   *zá*   *sù* *sàyaa*

buy:VN-GEN   food   moreover   FUT 3P buy

b. **sàyé-n**   **àbinci**   **kòo**,   *zá*   *sù* *yi*

buy:VN-GEN   food   moreover   FUT 3P do

[lit.:] Buying food moreover, they will buy/do. [they WILL buy ...] (Jaggar 2001: 542)

c. **sàyé-n**   **àbinci**   **nèe**,   *sukà*   *yi*

buy:VN-GEN   food   FOC   3P.IPFV.DEP   do

They BOUGHT FOOD. (Green 2007: 60)

2.4 Parallel functions, similar surfaces but different strategies

2.4.1 Traditional approach to predicate-centered focus by means of verb preposing

+ recurrently with little differentiation between above "focusing" and "topicalization" types

(a) Boadi (1974): preposed verb is basically focus - differences through special focus marker

(b) APiCS (as currently representative survey): no crucial distinction - "verb doubling and focus" (feature 105) subsumes focus preposing as in (14), topic preposing as in (15), and yet other verb doubling strategies under the feature value "**predicate cleft construction**, where the verb is **moved outside** the matrix clause, leaving a copy within the matrix clause"

(14) Focus preposing for truth value focus in Jamaican (English-based Creole)

> **a**   **swell** *it* *swel,* luk   da
> FOC   swell   3S   swell   look   there
> It really swelled up, look there. (Joseph Farquharson in APiCS)

(15) Topic preposing for truth value focus in Afrikaans (Dutch-based Creoloid)

> **sUkkel** *sal*   *hy sUkkel*   [bell-type intonation on first *sukkel*]
> struggle   shall   he   struggle
> He will jolly well struggle! (Hans den Besten in APiCS)

(c) Aboh (2006): recognition of different types but down-playing their differences … verb focusing in Kwa is comparable to VP-fronting under focus or topic in other languages; the only difference being that not all languages display a doublet of the fronted category inside the clause. (Aboh 2006: 27)

> indeed "comparable"

> explanation/motivation, however, inadequate in two important respects:

- verb doubling is a secondary, non-explanatory factor:

- language-internal distinction: cf. (13) in Hausa

- crosslinguistic parallels in spite of different structures: cf. (6) in Akan vs. (12) in German

- deep structural and functional distinction between verb focus preposing and verb topic preposing - see §2.4.3

2.4.2 Similarities of verb focus preposing (I) and verb topic preposing (II)

(a) (partial) structural bisection and dissociation of SoA host and OP(erator) host

- SoA expression preposed
- operator host left in-situ (can also express SoA in doubling variant)

(I)   [Preposed predicate]$^{\text{SoA}}$ (PIVOT)   [Less asserted reduced predicate]$^{\text{OP}+\text{(SoA)}}$

(II)   [Preposed predicate]$^{\text{SoA}}$ (PIVOT)   [Asserted main clause predicate]$^{\text{OP}+\text{(SoA)}}$

(b) preposed SoA expression treated morphosyntactically like a nominal (nominalized or at least non-finite status of preposed doublet recurrent)

> exploitation of constructions typical for nominal constituents - "grammatical analogy" (!!!difference to term preposing: verb as SoA expression is resumed in-situ if no available operator host without SoA expression, aka a dummy verb)

(c) in spite of different mechanisms, function of entire construction is **broadly speaking** in the wider domain of predicate-centered focus

2.4.3 Differences of verb focus preposing (I) and verb topic preposing (II)

(a) different topic-focus distribution > distinct pragmatic status of preposed predicate:

(I)   [Preposed predicate]$^{\text{FOCUS}}$ (PIVOT)   [Less asserted reduced predicate]$^{\text{TOPIC}}$

(II)   [Preposed predicate]$^{\text{TOPIC}}$ (PIVOT)   [Asserted main clause predicate]$^{\text{FOCUS}}$

(b) inflectional variability/syntactic status of finite verb is:

- in (I) possibly reduced/deranked (cf. (13)c. in Hausa)
- in (II) not reduced/deranked

(c) information structure of entire construction depends crucially:

- in (I) on complexity of initial noun-like constituent: cf. (13)c. in Hausa
- in (II) on complexity of final clause-like constituent: cf. (9)a. in Hausa

(d) different assertions determine different subtypes of predicate-centered focus:

- in (I) asserted focus usually on the SoA
- in (II) asserted focus usually on the operator host property (mostly truth value)

> predict historically that each starts out in its respective sub-domain (SoA vs. operator) and may only later extend from original to other predicate-centered focus types (as in Aja)

> (I) not in operator focus only and (II) not in SoA focus only but the inverse yes

3 A wider typology of dissociating SoA and operator expression

\+ SoA-operator dissociation also attested in non-preposing constructions:

(a) default syntax with in-situ doubling: finite verb form in construction with non-finite doublet

(16) In-situ verb doublet for SoA focus in Kabiye (Gur, Niger-Congo)

> *ma-nɪ́-ʊ*   kabiyɛ kɪ   nɪ́-ʊ   ma-a yɔɔd-ʊ kʊ́
> 1S-understand-IPFV   Kabiye ADJZ   understand-H.S4 1S-NEG speak-IPFV it
> I only UNDERSTAND Kabiye. I don't speak it. (Collins and Essizewa 2007: 192)

(b) default syntax with in-situ dummy verb: generic verb as host of predicate inflection in construction with content verb as non-finite or less finite dependent form (cf. also English *do*-support as non-preposing counterpart of (12) in German)

4   Fronting constructions in Bantu languages

\+ the following marked syntactic structures for the expression of predicate-centered focus are attested in the Bantu languages looked at here

1. Verb focus preposing (cleft-like)
2. Verb topic preposing
3. Intraclausal preposing
4. Intraclausal postposing

\+ they show the following characteristics

- in all cases, we are dealing with a double occurrence of a verbal form:

(i) as non-finite form, either marked by the infinitive prefix *ku-* or by a locative morpheme

(ii) a finite verb form carrying all inflectional information – this can be the same semantic verb or a semantically bleached verb

- in most cases, the non-finite verb takes sentence-initial (or medial) position, i.e. we are dealing with a fronting construction

- the first two structures are syntactically more complex than the last two: they display a bisected hierarchical structure, sometimes biclausal, separating the preposed non-finite verb from the rest of the clause (§2 above)

- the last two structures are monoclausal – here, word order changes are triggered by the information-structural profile of the languages studied, i.e. depending of the default focus position of a language

> in languages with intraclausal preposing, the default focus position is preverbal (cf. Hadermann 1996: 158), whereas in languages with intraclausal postponing the focus position is postverbal

+ although preposing may occur in all tense and aspect forms, there is a strong correlation to the encoding of progressive (cf. Güldemann 2003)

3.1 Verb focus preposing

[Preposed predicate] ^{SoA} (PIVOT) [Less asserted reduced predicate] $^{OP+(SoA)}$

+ can be characterized as cleft-like construction, consisting of a main (focus/identificational) clause and an out-of-focus clause showing features of dependent morphology (cf. Güldemann 1996 for Savannah Bantu)

(FOC)+INF.V		FIN.V
focus clause		out-of-focus clause
optional focus marker		with dependent morphology

+ prototypical case: **Limbun (Grassfield Bantu)**
- the structure is parallel to term focus, i.e. the focus marker *á* occurs before the fronted element and the out-of-focus clause shows dependent morphology (relative marker, relative pronoun)

Focus preposing for term (cleft) and SoA focus in Limbun

(17a) á   Nfɔ̀   tʃé   é   tʃē   būmī   kā?
       FOC   PN   REL   REL.PR   PROG   sleep   NEG
       It is not Nfor who is sleeping. (Ndamsah 2012: 1, ex. 3a)

(17b) á   būmì   tʃé   Nfɔ̀   tʃē   būmī   kā?
       FOC   sleep REL   PN   PROG   sleep   NEG
       It is sleep that Nfor is not sleeping. (Ndamsah 2012: 1, ex. 3b)

+ in **Tuki (A61)** verb focus preposing is also used for SoA focus, marked by a focus marker following the fronted element
- focus marker shows noun class agreement with the focused element (*odzu* for class 1, *owu* for adverbs and infinitives)
- odzu also functions as relative marker (Biloa 1997: 37)

(18a) O-suwa   owu   Puta   a-mu-suwa   tsono   raa
       INF-wash   FOC   PN   1-PST1-wash   clothes   her
       Puta washed her clothes. (Biloa 1997: 110)

cf.

(18b) i-mu   manya ama Puta   a-namba-m
       it-be   food   that   PN   1-cook-IPFV
       It is food that Puta cooks. (Biloa 1997: 37)

(18c) Dima odzu Puta   a-nu-bana-m
       PN   FOC   PN   1-FUT1-marry-IPFV
       It is Dima that Puta will marry. (Biloa 1997: 53)

(18d) nambari   owu   Puta   Ø-enda-m n(a) adongo
       tomorrow   FOC   PN   1-go-IPFV to   village
       it is tomorrow that Puta goes to the village. (Biloa 1997: 53)

+ **Kikuyu (E51)** represents another case for a bisected structure: the fronted infinitive predicate is marked by the focus marker *ne*, the dependent morphology should be visible in the form of the pronominal clitic (main clause *a-* vs. dependent *u-*), but this feature seems to get lost in Kikuyu (only rarely observed in data on term focus by Morimoto 2013, field notes)

- focus marker *ne* is obligatory with intransitive verbs or when no nominal object is given, thus when only the predicate can be in (assertive) focus (cf. 19-A)

- preposing then is an additional device for enforcing the lexical content of the verb in case of contrastive SoA focus (Morimoto 2013b: 9)

(19)   Selective SoA focus

      A. Audu é-dete   garí y-aké. irá   **ne a-ra-mé-tugát-ire**.
           PN[1]   1.?love car ?-POSS yesterday FOC 1-PST-9-care-PFV
           Audu loves his car. Yesterday he took care of it.

      B. ne   gu-thabía   a-ra-mé-thabi-rié   kana
           FOC   INF-wash   1-PST-9-wash-?PFV   or
           ne   gu-thodéka   a-ra-mé-thodék-ire
           FOC   INF-fix   1-PST-9-fix-PFV
           Did he wash or fix it?

      A. ne   gu-thodék-a   a-ra-mé-thodék-ire.
           FOC   INF-fix   1-PST-9-fix-PFV
           He FIXed it. (Morimoto 2013b: 9)

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[1] NB: glossing by the authors following Mugane 1997: 119-121, -ir- indicates completive → PFV?, a-STEM-ire remote past completive; -a as indicative, in Morimoto 2013: 2-3 (January)

- when a nominal object is overtly given, it occurs in canonical postverbal position

(20) A. ne   ko-ruta   a-rut-ire   wi:ra   kana
         FOC   INF-do   1-do-PFV   work   or

         ne   gu-koma   a-kom-ire?
         FOC   INF-sleep   1-sleep-PFV

         Did he work or did he sleep?

    B. ne   ko-ruta   a-rut-ire   wi:ra.
         FOC   INF-do   1-do-PFV   work

         He WORKed. (Morimoto 2013b: 10)

- an overtly expressed nominal topic can either take the canonical position between fronted infinitive and finite verb, or takes the initial extra-clausal topic position, thus leading to a subtype of verb focus preposing, namely medial focus preposing (21-B)

(21) A. Abdul   ne   a-thek-irɛ?
         PN   FOC   1-laugh-PFV

         Did Abdul laugh?

    B. Afa.   Abdul ne   ko-rera   a-rer-irɛ.
         no   PN   FOC   INF-cry   1-cry-PFV

         No. Abdul CRIED. (Schwarz 2003: 95 (116), in Morimoto 2013a)

(22) nĩ   kũ-nyua   Kamau   a-nyu-ire   njohi   nyingĩ.
     FOC   INF-drink PN   1-drink-PFV   9.beer   9.lot

     Kamau DRANK a lot of beer. (Mugane 1997: 148 (22), in Morimoto 2013a)

+ predicate-centered focus interpretation is only one reading of this preposing construction: other contexts are temporal and causal adverbial clauses (cf. Lefebvre & Brousseau 2002: 503 for Fɔn), or factive clauses as in **Lingala** (23) and **Kituba** (24)
- here, the factive clause is introduced by an "emphatic particle" (=focus marker?)

(23) Nde   ***(ko-)yíba/*a-yíb-aka** óyo yé   a-yíb-aka   to-ling-í   té.
     EMPH   INF-steal/1-steal-HAB   this ?CONN   1-steal-HAB   1P-like-PERF   not.

     It's the fact that he steals that we don't like. (lit. It is his stealing that we don't like.) [We don't like his STEALING] (Mufwene 1986: 80)

(24) Si   ***(ku-)yíba** yáyi ya   yandi ké yib-áka   béto   zóla vé.
     EMPH   INF-steal   this CONN   3S   be steal-HAB 1P   like not

     It's [the fact that he] steals that we do not like. [We don't like his STEALING] (Mufwene 1986: 80)

3.2   Verb topic preposing

[Preposed predicate] ^{TOPIC}   **(PIVOT)**   **[Asserted main clause predicate]** ^{FOCUS}

(TOP)+INF.V	**|**	**FIN.V**
topic expression		main clause
optional topic marker		main clause morphology

- characterized as bisected construction, with the fronted predicate representing the topic and the rest of the clause the main assertion

+ few examples so far: Lingala - fronted verb is not marked, whereas the finite clause shows a focus marker (here called 'emphatic')

(25)   **Ko-yíba   /Ø-Yíba   /*A-yíb-aka**   ndé   to-ling-í   té.
        INF-steal   /ISTEM   /1-steal-HAB   EMPH   1P-like-PERF   not.
        Stealing we don't like. (Mufwene 1986: 80)

3.3   Intraclausal preposing

+ intraclausal preposing differs from the two structures presented so far, as the preposed verb occupies a position within the clause, here preverbal position
- the structure is SOV, in contrast to the canonical SVO order in Bantu
- apart from that word order change, no further marking can be observed
- in the data at hand, intraclausal preposing is only attested with doubling structures

+ Hadermann (1996) explains the verb preposing structure in Suundi (H13b) and related languages as focus structure, whereby the nominalized verb takes the grammaticalized preverbal focus position, as attested also for term focus
"Cependant, Grégoire (1993) a montré que l'antéposition de l'objet n'est pas exceptionnelle en zones B, C, H et K, c'est-à-dire au Nord-Ouest du domaine bantou. L'apparition de l'ordre SOV est, selon elle, liée à « l'expression de la focalisation portant sur l'objet du verbe transitif » (…) ou à « l'emploi d'une forme composée de la conjugaison, … » (…)" (Hadermann 1996: 158f.) '

(26)   ngó   kà-hó:nd-ídì
        leopard   3S-kill-PST
        il a tué le LÉOPARD (Hadermann 1996: 159)

+ the structure in Suundi (H13b) is presumably focus preposing:

(27) a. ndyèká-tá:ngà
          1S:FUT-read
          je vais lire.

      b. kù-tá:ngà ndyèká-tá:ngà.
          INF-read 1S:FUT-read
          je vais LIRE.
          (Hadermann 1996: 161 < Güldemann 2003)

- fronting of object allowed in Suundi, either before infinitive or even before subject /
for disambiguation, the object is resumed by a demonstrative in canonical position →
gives further evidence that the fronted infinitive in the intraclausal construction in fact
occupies the default focus position

(28) a. bùkù   ndyèká-tá:ngà
          book   1S:FUT-read
          je vais lire le LIVRE

      b. mwà:nà   bùkú   kù-tá:ngà   kèká-tá:ngá   dyò
          child   book   INF-read   1:FUT-read   DEM

      c. bùkú   mwà:nà   kù-tá:ngà   kèká-tá:ngá   dyò
          book   child   INF-read   1:FUT-read   DEM
          l'enfant va LIRE le livre
          l'enfant va lire le livre

+ no object preposing possible with the construction in (b) in Nzebi (B52) –
interpretation not clear

(29) a. bà-kà:sɔ́   bá-nˈá:,   péndɔ́   bâ:-vádà
          2-woman   2-DEM   groundnut   2-cultivate
          (ces femmes, elles cultivent l'arachide)
          These women, they cultivate groundnuts.

      b. bà-kà:sɔ́   bá-nˈá:,   vádɔ́   bâ:-vádà   péndà
          2-woman   2-DEM   INF-cultivate   2-cultivate   groundnut
          ces femmes, elles sont en train de cultiver l'arachide
          These women, they are cultivating groundnuts.
          (Marchal-Nasse 1988-89 < Haderman 1996: 163)

3.4   In-situ doubling

+ intraclausal postposing looks like the mirror image of preposing structures

- it also involves doubling of the verb form, but here the nominalized verb is postposed to the postverbal default focus position (cf. Limbun)

- apart from the additional verb form, there is no word order change observable; sometimes, a focus marker occurs → also called: in-situ verb doubling

- function is focusing on the semantic content of the verb

- mainly attested in Cameroon in our data

+ in **Limbun (Grassfield Bantu, Nkambe)**, the in-situ doubling strategy is parallel to the in-situ term focus marking in the canonical postverbal focus position (17); both term and infinitive verb are additionally marked by focus marker *á*

- function: expression of contrastive SoA focus

(30a)   Nfɔ̀   tʃē   yē   á   byē:

       PN   PROG eat   FOC   food

       It is food that Nfor is eating. (Ndamsah 2012: 5, ex. 11b)

- the non-finite in-situ verb occurs in citation form (Ndamsah, p.c.),

(30b)   Nfɔ̀   tʃē   būmī   á   búmí

       PN   PROG sleep   FOC   sleeping

       It is sleeping that Nfor is sleeping, not … (Ndamsah 2012: 5, ex. 11a)

+ **Ŋyɛmbɔɔn (Grassfield Bantu, Bamileke)**

- "repetition conveys new or nonpresupposed information" (Njoya 2007: 66), maybe it has rather contrastive value as stated elsewhere

(31)   a.   mʉŋ   jǔ   máángwəle wɔ̀ɔ̀n   jǔ

           1S   buy.PST   mango   this   buy.PST

           I bought this mango (I didn't steal it or pick it) (Njoya 2007: 63)

      b.   a   ně   mpfɛ́   mekǔ   pfɛ̌

           3S   PST1   eat   beans   eat

           He ate beans (he didn't throw it.) (Njoya 2007: 63)

- object is in canonical position, doublet follows

- form of doublet not clear: "the repeated forms of the verb may undergo some morphological modifications, i.e. one of the repeated forms may contain either a suffix or a prefix (a homorganic nasal)." (Njoya 2007: 66)

"This nasal is usually associated to past tenses in the Ŋyɛmbɔɔn language and marks aspect at times (such as perfective, habitual…)" (Njoya 2007: 89)

(32a) Tane la te pfɛ́ mǎndɔ́ ˈ mɛ́ pfɛ́ wɔ́, a la mite mite
       PN PST3 NEG eat cassava that eat NEG 3S PST3 swallow swallow
       Tane did not eat cassava, he swallowed it. (Njoya 2007: 63)

cf. subject focus – truth value focus?

(32b) mbʉà ťɔn mɔ̀ɔn vɔ̂ sw̋ɛ sw̋ɛ. Muɔ́ muɔ̂ té wó wɔ́.
      home man DEM COP empty empty child child NEG there NEG
      This man's house is quite empty. Even a child is not there. (Njoya 2007: 62f.)

+ **Makaa** (A83) also shows in-situ doubling with doubled verb
"In addition, a verb can be repeated as in (17) as a means of emphasizing both on the action undergone by somebody and on his unpleasant behavior towards the speaker." Njoya 2007: 57)
- repetition conveys new or nonpresupposed information (Njoya 2007: 66)
- the forms of the repeated verb appear together and it is the second form which usually undergoes modifications which consist of containing an extension morpheme which generally **denotes that the action continues**." (Njoya 2007: 66)
→ enforcing the progressive reading

(33) Mə ámə lás nə nɛ́   nzhi á ŋgə ngul ngul-íg
      1S PST2 talk to 3S.OBJ but 3S PROG drink drink-PRST
      I talk to him but he kept drinking over and over.

+ in-situ doubling with dummy verb for truth value focus is attested in Ndendeule, but it gets SoA focus reading in Matengo

+ the **Matengo (N13)** SoA reading arises from two grammatical restrictions:
(i) the dummy verb occurs in the conjoint verb form, denoting that what is following is in focus
(ii) the infinitive takes the default postverbal focus position
- this structure cannot get truth value focus reading – rather, the disjoint verb would occur in a normal SVO clause

(34)   Maria   ju-a-tend-aje   kú-teleka
        PN   1-PST-do-CJ   INF-cook
        {What did Maria do?} Maria cooked. (lit.: Maria did cooking) (Yoneda 2009
        (22), in Morimoto 2012)

+ **in Ndendeule (N12)**, the postverbal position is also the focus position (see 35c for object focus), i.e. SoA focus reading would be expected

- nevertheless the context of (a) and (b) points to truth value focus

→ this construction is in Ndendeule possibly more generalized as PCF encoding device

(35)   a.   bi-tenda   ku-memena?
             3P:PRS-do   INF-eat
             Do people <u>really eat</u> them!? (Güldemann f.n. < Güldemann 2003)

        b.   mwe   *n'-tenda*   ku-pëta
             you:P   2P-do   INF-pass
             You STILL/DO go through. [although you are not expected to]

        c.   ti-lëma   malombi
             1P:PRS-cultivate   maize.
             We cultivate MAIZE. (Güldemann field notes < Güldemann 2010)

5   Summary

+ from the four mentioned structures only three could really be observed:

1. Verb focus preposing (cleft-like)
2. (Verb topic preposing)
3. Intraclausal preposing
4. In-situ doubling - ?intraclausal postposing

+ regarding the function, there seems to be a clear differentiation:

- verb focus preposing in the Bantu languages studied expresses exclusively SoA focus, but in some Creole languages (Jamaican Creole, Krio) truth value focus
- verb topic preposing is very restricted in use – maybe truth value
- intraclausal focus preposing and postposing is preferred for the expression of SoA focus, as both structures exploit the default focus position of the respective language
- in Ndendeule, where the truth value focus reading is attested, this structure might have changed to a more general PCF focusing device

Language	Language group	Region	Function
Verb focus preposing			
Kikuyu	E51	Kenia	contrastive SoA PROG
Tuki	A601	Cameroon	SoA
Limbun	Grassfield	Cameroon	SoA
Lingala	C36	DR Congo	factive
Kituba	Kongo based Creole	DR Congo	factive
Verb topic preposing			
Lingala	C36	Congo	?
Intraclausal focus preposing			
Suundi	H13b	Congo	SoA
Nzebi	B52	Gabon	SoA
Lingala	C36	DR Congo	not PCF
In-situ doubling (Intraclausal focus postposing)			
Limbun	Grassfield	Cameroon	SoA
Ŋyɛmbɔɔn	Grassfield	Cameroon	contrastive SoA
Makaa	A83	Cameroon	?SoA
Ndendeule	N12	Tanzania	truth value
Matengo	N13	Tanzania	SoA

Abbreviations

Glosses:

Arabic numerals indicate a noun class or, when immediately followed by a gloss for gender and/or number, a person category.

AUX	Auxiliary	NEG	Negative
CJ	Conjoint	OBJ	(Direct) object
COP	Copula	P	Plural
DEF	Definite	PERF	Perfect
DEM	Demonstrative	PFV	Perfective
DEP	Dependent	PN	Proper name
EMPH	Emphatic	POSS	Possessive
F	Feminine	POT	Potential
FOC	(Generic) focus	PR	Pronoun
FUT	Future	PROG	Progressive
FV	(Default) final vowel	PROX	Proximate
GEN	Genitive	PRS	Present
HAB	Habitual	PRST	Persistive
INF	Infinitive	PST	Past
IOBJ	Indirect object	REL	Relative
IPFV	Imperfective	S	Singular
LOC	Locative	TOP	Topic
M	Masculine	VN	Verbal noun

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