Dissertation:  
Predicate-centered focus in Sara-Bagirmi.  
Verbal iteration and semantic evaluative categories  
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Preface

In many Sara-Bagirmi languages, verbal iteration is a very productive strategy
- it occurs in different constructions and shows several functions

In the following, I will
- present examples from Sara-Bagirmi languages (BAGIRMI, KENGA, MBAY, SAR)
- analyze the semantic concepts behind the structural means of verbal iteration, and
- draw conclusions about their formal and functional specifics

Verbal iteration in Sara-Bagirmi
- occurs in different construction types and
- shows a strict correlation between form and function
1 Theoretical background

1.1 Information structure

Information structure (IS) is the structuring of linguistic information, typically in order to optimize information transfer within discourse (Chafe 1976, Krifka 2007).

Focus is the most important or salient information (Dik 1997).

Predicate-centered focus (PCF) (Güldemann 2009) subsumes
- focus on the lexical meaning of the verb (SoA focus)
- focus on the tense, aspect or mood operators (TAM focus) and
- focus on the truth value of the utterance (Polarity focus).

1.2 The group of Sara-Bagirmi languages

1.2.1 Genetic affiliation

Nilo-Saharan > Central Sudanic > West > Bongo-Bagirmi > Sara-Bagirmi

![Figure 1: Languages of Sara-Bagirmi (Lewis et al. 2013, Boyeldieu 2006)]
1.2.2 Typological information
- predominantly agglutinative languages with synthetic features
- all languages have S(ubject)V(erb)O(bject) word order
- all languages are tone languages with three level tones (high: á, middle: a, low: à)

Information structure is expressed by morpho-syntactic means
- IS marked terms usually occur in sentence-initial position
- this position can be used for focal and topical elements as well
- its concrete interpretation is disambiguated by the usage of different markers
- the markers always have scope over the preceding elements
- PCF types are often realized by “verbal iteration”

2 Verbal iteration in Sara-Bagirmi
Verbal iteration is used as a cover term for all constructions analyzed here
- where two lexically identical verb forms co-occur in one sentence,
- where one of these verb forms is finite and the other one non-finite

In Sara-Bagirmi, verbal iteration is embedded in different structures:
- split structures (= structures with preposing) and
- in-situ doubling strategies (= structures without preposing)

According to Güldemann (2010), the preposing structures can be differentiated in:
1. “verb focus preposing” (VFP) with the structure \([V_{INF}]_{FOC} [V_{FIN}]_{BG}\) and
2. “verb topic preposing” (VTP) with the structure \([V_{INF}]_{BG} [V_{FIN}]_{FOC}\)

In-situ doubling structures can be analyzed in analogy to the split structures, because they show the same functional split as preposing structures:
1. “non-finite focus doubling” (NFD) with the structure \([V_{FIN}]_{BG} [V_{INF}]_{FOC}\) and
2. “non-finite topic doubling” (NTD) with the structure \([V_{FIN}]_{FOC} [V_{INF}]_{BG}\)

Verbal iteration in Sara-Bagirmi is used for realizing PCF and other semantic concepts
→ The following data will illustrate the functional spectrum of verbal iteration

\[\text{--------------------------------------}\]

1 In the literature for some languages all tones are marked (á, a, and à). For consistency reason (with Sara-Bagirmi languages), I will abstain here to the explicit marking of middle tones.
2.1 Verbal preposing strategies in Sara-Bagirmi

2.1.1 Preposing structures in MBAY

The structure $[V_{INF} \, la] \, [V_{FIN} \, yé]$

MBAY uses preposing, as seen in (1), and in-situ doubling (as in section 2.2.2):

(1a) ... nà ndusə la ndusə yé.
   but INF.be_worm_eaten G.FOC be_worm_eaten BG
   [CONJ V_{INF} la]_{FOC} [V_{FIN} yé]_{BG}
   \{Your wood is bad. – No, the wood is fine; it’s just that it’s WORM-EATEN.\} (Keegan 1997: 148)

(1b) ... nà tɔɔ la tɔɔ yé.
   but INF.be_broken G.FOC be_broken BG
   [CONJ V_{INF} la]_{FOC} [V_{FIN} yé]_{BG}
   \{No, I did put water in the pot; it’s just that it’s BROKEN.\} (Keegan 1997: 148)

The examples in (1) are structured as follows:
- the first part contains the non-finite verb, marked by generic focus marker $la$
- the second part entails the finite verb, which is marked by background marker $yé$
- while the preposed part indicates focus, the second part provides the background

The structure $[V_{INF} \, la]_{FOC} [V_{FIN} \, yé]_{BG}$ corresponds to “verb focus preposing”
- the formal properties suggest an interpretation as SoA focus, because structures with a preposed focalized verb often refer to SoA focus (c.f. Güldemann 2010)
- the translation and the context confirm this analysis as (contrastive) SoA focus

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2 The glossing in this example contradicts the analysis in the literature. Keegan (1997: 147f.) describes the first element as finite and the second one as non-finite. Compared to the marking strategies for term focus in MBAY, it is more likely that verb focus follows the same structure.

3 Term focus in MBAY is expressed by a similar structure, where the focused element is in sentence-initial position, followed by $la$:

(i) Súu la ndà ngon-ǹ yé.
   PN G.FOC hit child-POSS.3S.MSR BG
   It was SUU, who hit his child. (Keegan 1997: 158).

4 Many examples presented here can be interpreted as realizing theticity as well. Even if this function is often realized by constructions that are used for PCF (c.f. Güldemann 2013), the thetic function will not be discussed in this talk.
The structure \([V_{\text{INF}}]\ [\tilde{n} V_{\text{FIN}} \text{dá}]\)

Beyond the structure presented in (1), MBAY has another preposing structure:

(2a) Tèjə n-tèn dá yikə n yikə dá.

\[
\begin{array}{llllllllll}
\text{honey} & \text{DEM} & \text{BG} & \text{INF.be_sweet} & \text{that} & \text{be_sweet} & \text{BG} \\
\text{[SBJ} & \text{dá}_{\text{TOP}} & \text{[V_{\text{INF}}]_{\text{FOC}}} & \text{[n} & \text{V_{\text{FIN}}} & \text{dá}]_{\text{BG}} \\
\end{array}
\]

This honey is very sweet. (Keegan 1997: 151)

(2b) Mótò dá màjə n màjə dá.

\[
\begin{array}{llllllllll}
\text{motorcycle} & \text{BG} & \text{INF.be_good} & \text{that} & \text{be_good} & \text{BG} \\
\text{[SBJ} & \text{dá}_{\text{TOP}} & \text{[V_{\text{INF}}]_{\text{FOC}}} & \text{[n} & \text{V_{\text{FIN}}} & \text{dá}]_{\text{BG}} \\
\end{array}
\]

This motorcycle is terrific! (Keegan 1997: 151)

(2) starts with an aboutness topic (marked by \(dá\)), followed by the non-finite verb, the complementizer \(\tilde{n}\), the finite verb and the marker \(dá\)

The structure \([V_{\text{INF}}]_{\text{FOC}} [\tilde{n} \ldots V_{\text{FIN}} \text{dá}]_{\text{BG}}\) can be analyzed as “verb focus preposing”:
- the preposed verb is not morphologically marked, but it must be interpreted as focus
- the background part includes the finite verb and starts with \(\tilde{n}\) and ends with \(dá\)

Due to the lacking context, the structure in (2) might be interpreted
- as expressing SoA focus:
  {How is the honey, very bitter?} (No,) it is very SWEET.
  {How is the motorcycle, boring?} (No,) it is TERRIFIC.
- or polarity focus (even if this interpretation is not very likely):
  {?{I can’t believe that the honey is (so) very sweet.} It IS very sweet.
  {?{I can’t believe that the motorcycle is terrific.} It IS terrific.

The translation indicates rather an intensification of the predicate:
{All honey is sweet, but) this honey is very sweet.
{All motorcycles are good, but) this motorcycle is terrific.

\[5\] Keegan (1997: 119ff.) classified \(\tilde{n}\) as a complementizer for introducing relative clauses (i). I argue that \(\tilde{n} + \text{dá}\) indicates focus (ii), while \(\tilde{n} + \text{nò}\) is restricted to relative structures (iii):

(i) M-o-o ngon \(\tilde{n}\) bògə biyə lò-í nò.

1S-see child that 3S.steal goat POSS-2S BG

I saw the child who stole your goat. (Keegan 1997: 146)

(ii) […]_{\text{FOC}} [n \ldots \text{dá}]_{\text{BG}}

(iii) [NP] [n \ldots nò]_{\text{REL}}.
Even if the structure in (2) suggests – similar to (1) – an interpretation as SoA focus, the translation refers more to a **qualitative intensification**

This intensification refers to an **increase of the (inherent) verbal property** → here, the sweetness/goodness is **more than normal** or **more than expected**

While the verbs in (2) are stative verbs, (3) shows the structure with active verbs:

(3a) **ɓɔgɔ̀ ń ̀d à ɓɔgɔ̀ dà.**
    INF.steal that IPFV 3S.steal BG
    [VINF]FOC [ři TAM VFIN dà]BG
    He really steals a lot. (Keegan 1997: 151)

(3b) **Ngon ń-ǹ-èn dà ƙ-ày kàsɔ̀ ń à .addButton y dà.**
    child DEM BG INF-drink alcohol that IPFV 3S.drink BG
    [SBJ dà]TOP [VINF OBJ]FOC [ři TAM VFIN dà]BG
    This boy really drinks a lot. (Keegan 1997: 151)

The structure in (3) differs from the one in (2) in – at least – two points:

1. The preposed part in (3b) includes the **object**, which follows the non-finite form, and is not repeated with the finite form
2. (3) entails the **imperfective marker á**
   - this marker doesn’t occur with stative verbs, as seen in the examples in (2)
   - but with active verbs, as seen in (3), it is obligatory

The structure might be used

- for marking **SoA focus** (even if this is not very likely):
  ?{Does he really drink a lot or steal a lot?} He really STEALS a lot.
  ?{Does he really drink a lot or steal a lot?} He really DRINKS a lot.

- or for expressing **polarity focus**:
  {I can’t believe that he steals so much.} He REALLY steals a lot.
  {I can’t believe that he drinks so much.} He REALLY drinks a lot.

- or for indicating **intensification** as well:

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6 Bond/Anderson (i.p.: 9f.) describe “intensification” as expressing “property proclivity”. They analyze (2a) as referring to a scale of sweetness, on which the structure points to a high level.

7 Keegan (1997: 70f.) classifies á as habitual marker. It doesn’t occur with “adjectival verbs”. The combination of these verbs and the marker expresses inchoative reading (Keegan 1997: 75). Because the function of this marker is not restricted to the habitualis, I gloss it as imperfective.
with **event frequency**: {He doesn’t steal once} he really steals A LOT.
with **object quantity**: {He doesn’t drink one beer} he really drinks A LOT.

Bond/Anderson (i.p.: 8f.) describe the structure in (3) as indicating “event frequency” - this is illustrated on a scale from low to high frequency, on which the structure refers to a relative high level of event frequency

This analysis is not sufficient, because the structure in (3) is not restricted to frequency → it is used to indicate a **high frequency** or a **high quantity** or **polarity focus**

### 2.1.3 Preposing structures in SAR

**The structure** \[
{i \; \text{V} \; \text{INF} \; \left[ \text{n} \; \text{V} \; \text{FIN} \right]}
\]

Verbal iteration occurs in SAR in preposing structures only:

(4)  \[i \; \text{k-ôû} \; \text{n} \; \text{lâbə} \; \text{ôû}.\]

\[
\begin{array}{llll}
\text{ID} & \text{INF-be_dead} & \text{that} & \text{PN} \\
\text{n} & \text{SBJ} & \text{3S.be_dead} \\
\text{ì \; V\text{INF}_{FOC}} & \text{n} & \text{V\text{FIN}_{BG}}
\end{array}
\]

C’est de mort, qu’est mort Labe (il est bien mort). (Palayer 1989: 274)

(4) starts with the identificational \(i\) and the non-finite verb
- followed by the complementizer \(n\), the subject and the finite verb

The structure \(\left[ \text{V} \; \text{INF}_{FOC} \; \text{n} \; \ldots \; \text{V} \; \text{FIN}_{BG} \right]\) can be characterized as “**verb focus preposing**” - the first part is focused (marked by \(i\)), while the second part provides the background

(4) expresses PCF, but without context it might be interpreted as **SoA focus**:

{How is Labe, sick or healthy?} Labe is DEAD.

- or as **polarity focus**:

{I can’t believe that he is dead.} He is REALLY dead./It is true, that he is dead.

- or as **intensification** (but not very likely):

?{Labe had died yesterday, and now} he is TOTALLY dead.

Based on the structural properties, one can argue that (4) indicates SoA focus, but the translation refers to polarity focus as well
The structure \([V_{\text{INF}}][V_{\text{FIN}}]\)

The next example shows another preposing structure:

\[(5) \quad \text{ɓògə́ láɓə́ bògə́ ngáy.}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{INF.steal} \\
\text{PN} \\
\text{3S.steal} \\
\text{much}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{l}
[V_{\text{INF}}]_{\text{BG}} \\
[SBJ] \\
[V_{\text{FIN}}] \\
[ADV]_{\text{FOC}}
\end{array}
\]

Pour ce qui est de voler, Labe vole beaucoup. (Palayer 1989: 274)

(As for stealing, Labe steals a lot. – PJ)

The example in (5) contains the non-finite verb, the subject, the finite verb and an adverbial (without any morphological marking)

The structure \([V_{\text{INF}}]_{\text{BG}} [V_{\text{FIN}}]_{\text{FOC}}\) can be analyzed as “verb topic preposing”:
- the first part provides background information, and the second part is in focus

Verb topic preposing is – in terms of information structure – organized as follows:
- the preposed (non-finite) element is defocalized (= background part),
- the assertive value is born by the finite verb form (= focus part),
- as the focus lies on the predicate (default interpretation), must be on the operator

\(\Rightarrow\) VTP refers usually not to SoA focus, but to operator focus (c.f. Güldemann 2010)

The structure in (5) differs from the preceding examples
- in so far as the function is expressed by iteration and (additional) lexical material

Functionally, the structure could be used
- for marking SoA focus (but it is not very likely):
  \(?\{\text{Does Labe drink a lot or doe he steal a lot?}\} \text{Labe/He STEALS a lot.}\)
- for expressing polarity focus:
  \{I can’t believe that Labe is a thief.\} (As for stealing,) Labe/He (REALLY) steals a lot./ It is true, that Labe/he steals a lot.
- for indicating intensification (by additional lexis):
  \{Labe is very dishonest.\} (As for stealing,) Labe/he steals A LOT.

Based on the structural properties, one can argue that (5) indicates polarity focus, but the translation refers to intensification as well
2.1.3 Preposing structures in KENGA

In KENGA, there are preposing structures as seen in (6) and in-situ doubling structures (see section 2.2.3):

(6) **Kúrsú e kúrs kèè, ...**

cultiver 2S:FUT cultiver FOC

\[ V_{\text{INF}} \] \[ V_{\text{AUX}} \]  \[ V_{\text{FIN}} \]  \[ kèè \] _FOC_

Tu as beaucoup labouré (lit. labourer, tu laboures longtemps), {(mais) celui qui a de l’argent, il se lève et vient au moment de la récolte (lit. dans la saison de pluie) avec son peu d’argent et t’achètera tout le mil.} (Neukom 2010: 261)

(You have much cultivated (lit. as for cultivating, you will do it for a long time), {but} he who has money, comes at harvest (lit. in the season of rain) with his money and buy you any of the mil.} – PJ

(6) consists of the non-finite verb, the auxiliary, the finite verb and the marker *kèè*.

The structure \[ V_{\text{INF}} \] \[ V_{\text{AUX}} \]  \[ V_{\text{FIN}} \]  \[ kèè \] _FOC_ can be classified as “verb topic preposing”:
- the first part provides the background (without morphological marking),
- the second part is in focus, marked by focus marker *kèè*

In the given context, the structure in (6) can be interpreted as

- marking **polarity focus**:
  {I know, there is no goodness in the world.} You HAVE much cultivated, ...

- or **intensification**:
  {I know, there is no goodness in the world.} You have MUCH cultivated, ...

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8 Marker *kèè* emphasizes the element it follows. In general, it is used to express polarity focus (i), but it occurs with term focus as well (ii):

(i) **Naañ sé ní-jèèl kèè, è k-ŋɔ.**

3S BG 1S-savoir FOC 3:FUT INF-trouver

Je suis sûr qu’il passera (à l’examen). (Neukom 2010: 175)

(I’m sure he will pass (an exam). – PJ)

(ii) **Nèm nèm kic bó kèè ...**

personne DUPL aussi FOC FOC

Personne {ne (te) demande de payer quelque chose}. (Neukom 2010: 262)

(Nobody {wants you to pay for anything}. – PJ).
2.1.4 Summary

According to Güldemann (2010: 8), preposing strategies can be differentiated into two structures with different interpretations:

I Verb focus preposing (VFP)

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

If the preposed verb form is focal, the main clause contains a less asserted verb form
→ the construction highlights the lexical meaning of the verb, it marks SoA focus

II Verb topic preposing (VTP)

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

If the preposed verb form is topical, the main clause contains an asserted verb form
- it is used in the sense of ‘As for verbing, (I assert that) X verb’ or ‘X DOES verb’
→ the construction highlights the operator, it is used to mark operator focus

The data from Sara-Bagirmi has shown, that some structures mark “intensification”
→ The concept of intensification refers to the inherent properties of the verb\(^9\) and can be subdivided in – at least – two parts:

1. Structures with static verbs
   - highlight the (inherent) quality of the verb, e.g. sweetness, goodness, tallness, …
   - c.f. “property proclivity” (PP) of Bond/Anderson (i.p.)

2. Structures with active verbs
   - highlight the high frequency, e.g. to drink OFTEN or
   - highlights the high quantity, e.g. to drink VERY MUCH
   - c.f. “event frequency” (EF) of Bond/Anderson (i.p.)

I argue, that the functional classification of Bond/Anderson (B/A) correlates with the inherent verb semantics (VS), as seen in table 1:\(^{10}\):

\(^9\) My classification is based on Vendler (1957), who subdivided verbs in activities [+ dynamic, + durative, -telic], states [-dynamic, + durative, -telic], achievements [-dynamic, -durative, + telic], and accomplishments [+ dynamic, -durative, + telic].
The data from Sara-Bagirmi show that the construction types (CT) correlate with the primary function as analyzed by Güldemann (2010):

**Verb topic preposing** (examples (5) and (6)) is strongly restricted to operator focus
- all examples here refer to polarity focus and/or intensification
- the interpretation as indicating SoA focus is excluded

**Verb focus preposing** shows language-internal differences:
Mbay has two structures with verb focus preposing, but no verb topic preposing
- this mismatch triggers a functional split:
  → *VFP I* (example (1)) refers to **SoA focus**
  VFP II (example (2) and (3)) can be analyzed as an additional structure
  - it is developed for disambiguating operator focus from SoA focus
  → *VFP II* expresses not SoA focus, but **polarity focus** and/or **intensification**

SAR has verb focus preposing and verb topic preposing, but there is no clear difference:
  → *VTP* is used to express **polarity focus**
  → the interpretation of *VFP* is unclear, it refers to SoA focus and/or to polarity focus
  - for a sufficient analysis further research (with more examples) is needed

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10 The examples in brackets refer to my classification in analogy to Bond/Anderson (i.p.).
2.2 In-situ doubling strategies in Sara-Bagirmi

2.2.1 In-situ doubling in BAGIRMI

In BAGIRMI, verbal iteration occurs as in-situ doubling only:

(7) Boukar táɗ djùm téŋ táɗà.
P{N} PFV.do gruel millet INF.do

{SBJ [V\textunderscore FIN OBJ]}_{BG} [V\textunderscore INF\textunderscore FOCUS}

{Did Boukar cook millet gruel or did he eat it?} Boukar COOKED millet gruel. (Jacob 2010: 129)

In (7), the subject is followed by the finite verb and the object, the non-finite verb follows immediately (without any morphological marking).

The structure [V\textunderscore FIN (OBJ)]_{BG} [V\textunderscore INF\textunderscore FOCUS} can be analyzed as “non-finite focus doubling”
- the finite verb occurs in canonical position, the main clause provides the background
- the non-finite verb appears sentence-finally and indicates focus

Functionally, this structure is restricted to mark SoA focus\textsuperscript{11} with respect to the given context, (7) refers to selective SoA focus

The in-situ doubling allows variation in valency and TAM, it occurs e.g.
- with intransitive verbs and progressive marker for selective SoA focus (8a),
- with intransitive verbs and future marker for corrective SoA focus (8b) and
- with transitive verbs and progressive marker for corrective SoA focus (8c):

(8a) Djé dj-ĉt-kùn kùnù.
\text{3P PROG-take INF-take}

{SBJ [V\textunderscore FIN]}_{BG} [V\textunderscore INF\textunderscore FOCUS}

{Are the boys carrying or pushing the log?} They are CARRYING. (Jacob f.n.)

\textsuperscript{11} In-situ doubling occurs not with other PCF types, e.g. polarity focus (i) or TAM focus (ii):

(i) Èé, djé dj-fog-inya.
\text{no 3P PROG-3S}

{They didn’t steal it, did they?} No, they DID steal it. (Jacob f.n.)

(ii) Dj-ĉt tôl-inya.
\text{3P PROG kill-3S}

{Are they still killing the dog or has it been killed already?} They are still killing. (Jacob f.n.)
(8b) É’è, páджär ná, Boukar ká-táɗf táɗá.
no tomorrow BG PN FUT-do INF.do
{Will Boukar eat millet gruel tomorrow?} No, Boukar will COOK (it) tomorrow. (Jacob f.n.)

(8c) É’è, n’djaniki kaso ná, Boukar ét-ndugo kro ndugo.
no today market BG PN PROG-buy donkey INF.buy
{Is Boukar selling a donkey at the market today?} No, Boukar is BUYING a donkey at the marked today. (Jacob f.n.)

2.2.2 In-situ doubling in MBAY

In MBAY, in-situ doubling occurs in combination with complement clauses or particles - these different combinations influence the particular function\(^\text{12}\)

The structure [VFIN] [VINF kó …]

The first example shows the combination with kó kijá:

(9) Āy kàsɔ̀ k-āy ká kijá.
3S.drink alcohol INF.drink again
[VFIN OBJ]FOC [VINF kó kijá]BG
He began drinking again. (Keegan 1997: 148)

(9) starts with the finite verb and the object, - followed by the non-finite verb and the adverbial element kó kijá\(^\text{13}\)
- here, kó can be analyzed as complementizer

The structure [VFIN (OBJ)]FOC [VINF]BG corresponds to “non-finite topic doubling” - the first verb is finite and occurs in its canonical position – it is used to indicate focus - the second verb is non-finite – it provides (with the complement) the background

\(^{12}\) Unfortunately, I haven’t found in-situ doubling without additional material.

\(^{13}\) The combination kó kijá consists of the complementizer kó and the verb kijá ‘be new’:

(i) ɓee kó kijá nò
house that be_new BG
that new house (Keegan 1997: 143).
The example in (9) could be interpreted as
- marking inchoative: He BEGAN drinking again.
- or indicating iterative\textsuperscript{14} and/or repetitive\textsuperscript{15}: He began drinking AGAIN.

The next example can be analyzed parallel to example (9)
- it shows the combination with a complement clause:

(10) 

\text{Ngjor dá áta k-áta k màjà sà àì.} 

eggplant BG be_bitter INF-be_bitter that be_good eat NEG 

\[ \text{SUB [v_{FIN}]_{TOP} [v_{INF} k v_{FIN} v_{INF} NEG]} \] 

The structure shows a combination of the iteration and the complement
- the iteration or the occurrence of a (verbal) noun is required by the complement
\[ \Rightarrow \text{The verbal iteration is needed as a host for the complement clause} \]

The structure can be analyzed in the same way as (9):
- the finite verb is used to indicate focus,
- the non-finite verb and the following complement provides the background

Based on the given context, (10) is used to express \textit{qualitative intensification}

The same structure as in (10) can be used with dynamic verbs as well:

(11) 

\text{Ngon sà màngò sà k lòo-tiì-á kàm-á too-á ngày.} 

child eat mango INF.eat that tomorrow stomach-3S hurt-3S much 

\[ \text{SUB [v_{FIN} OBJ]_{FOC} [v_{INF} k ADV SBJ v_{FIN} ADV]} \] 

The child ate so much mango that the next day his stomach hurt a lot.

(Keegan 1997: 150)

Here, the “non-finite topic doubling” is used to mark \textit{quantitative intensification}

\textsuperscript{14} Bond/Anderson (i.p.: 7ff.) describe this structure as marking “event iteration”.

\textsuperscript{15} The translation ‘began ... again’ comes – in my opinion – from kó kijà only.
The structure \([V_{\text{FIN}}] \ [\text{ta}] \ [V_{\text{INF}}]\)

In-situ doubling can be supplemented by the restrictive particle \(\text{ta}\):

(12) \(\text{Mbùr lò-á màjò \text{ta màjò.}}\)

\(\text{boule POSS-3S be_good only INF.be_good}\)

\([\text{SBJ }]_{\text{TOP}} \ [V_{\text{FIN}}]_{\text{FOC}} \ [\text{ta}] \ [V_{\text{INF}}]_{\text{BG}}\)

Her ‘boule’ is very good. (Keegan 1997: 147)

The particle \(\text{ta}\) ‘only’ always occurs \textbf{in between the verbal iteration}
- the inclusion of \(\text{ta}\) is required for expressing the restriction (even with nouns)\textsuperscript{16}

Based on the context, (12) is used to express \textbf{qualitative intensification}

In-situ doubling with particle \(\text{ta}\) is also possible with dynamic verbs:

(13a) \(\text{Ày kàsò \text{ta k-äy.}}\)

\(3\text{S.drink alcohol only INF.drink}\)

\([V_{\text{FIN}}]_{\text{OBJ}} \ [\text{ta}] \ [V_{\text{INF}}]_{\text{BG}}\)

(S/he) does nothing but drink. (Keegan 1997: 147)

(13b) \(\text{Ndìi èdò \text{ta k-èdò.}}\)

\(\text{rain 3S.precipitate only INF.precipitate}\)

\([\text{SBJ} \ V_{\text{FIN}}]_{\text{FOC}} \ [\text{ta}]_{\text{BG}} \ [V_{\text{INF}}]_{\text{BG}}\)

It does nothing but rain. (Keegan 1997: 147)

Bond/Anderson (i.p.: 25f.) classify this structure as “exclusive situation focus”, but
- this interpretation is misleading, because the exclusivity or the restriction is triggered
by the lexis only\textsuperscript{17}

\(\Rightarrow\) The structure marks \textbf{intensification}: (S/he) DRINKS A LOT./It RAINS A LOT.

\textsuperscript{16} The restrictive particle \(\text{ta}\) occurs also with (doubled) nouns for indicating restrictive focus:

(i) \(\text{Sùù i \ nan-òò \text{ta nan-òò}}\)

\(\text{PN ID uncle-POSS.1S only uncle-POSS.1S}\)

\(\text{nà i bòö-òò àí.}\)

\(3\text{S ID father-POSS.1S NEG}\)

Suu is only my uncle, he’s not my father. (Keegan 1997: 147)

\textsuperscript{17} The examples with the restrictive particle don’t refer to exclusive/restrictive focus in the
traditional sense. The translation ‘he does nothing but drink’ implies that someone drinks a lot,
but it doesn’t imply a restriction to the event of drinking. One can imagine, that he does other
things beyond the drinking, like eating, sleeping, speaking, going to the bathroom, ...
2.2.3 In-situ doubling in KENGÀ

In-situ doubling in KENGÀ is used for more than one function:

(14) Jéé mëttîñ sé, naađé màla àâr k-àâr nààba, ...

gens certain BG 3P même 3:craindre INF-craindre travail

{Le travail, tu dois le chercher. Si tu as trouvé le travail, tu auras beaucoup de travail.} Certains ne veulent pas (lit. craignent) travailler eux-mêmes, {sinon, ici en ville, il y a beaucoup de travail.} (Neukom 2010: 264)

{(You have to look for work. If you find the work, there will be a lot of work.) Some people don’t want to (lit. fear the) work, {but, here in the city, there is a lot of work.} – PJ)

The structure starts with the topicalized subject and the pronoun (marked by màla\(^{18}\)) - the next elements are the finite verb, the non-finite verb and the object

This structure \([V_{\text{FIN}}]_{\text{FOC}} [V_{\text{INF}} (\text{OBJ})]_{\text{BG}}\) can be analyzed as “non-finite topic doubling” - the finite verb is used to indicate focus, the non-finite verb provides the background

In contrast to the structures in BAGIRM and MBAY - here both verb forms always occur adjacent to each other

(14) is a construction, which can be interpreted as
- marking SoA focus: Some people FEAR the work, ...
- or as expressing polarity focus: Some people REALLY fear the work, ...

\(^{18}\) Neukom (2010) describes màla as emphatic element. It functions as scalar particle ‘even’ and occurs in combination with focus marker bó (i), or without information-structural marking (ii).

Due to the different function, the examples are glossed differently:

(i) \text{Maàm kic maàm màla bó nì-túg kàl-ùm.}\n\text{Moi, je lave aussi mes habits moi-même.} (Neukom 2010: 89)

(I do even my laundry myself. – PJ)

(ii) \text{Naaí màla ñ-gààrge gén déè.}\n\text{Tu es autonome (lit. tu es le chef pour la tête toi-même).} (Neukom 2010: 262)

(You are autonomous (lit. You are your own boss on your own head). – PJ)
The next example contains a transitive active verb with a pronominalized object:

(15) ... naaî ááy-gà sê, tɔɔl-i tɔɔlɔ.

2S 2:boire-PERF BG 3:tuer-2S tuer

{Et si quelqu’un – si tu n’as pas mangé et) tu en bois, cela te tue.}

(15) is followed by the non-finite verb Due to the given context, the construction can express

- **SoA focus**: If you drink it, it will KILL you {not cure you}.
- or **polarity focus**: If you drink it, it WILL kill you {for sure}.

The in-situ doubling structure marks intensification as well:

(16) Kaaga kɔ-cɔcɔ-fĩ cɔɔcɔ.

bois 1P-tailler-3S tailler

Le bois, on le taille (longtemps). (Neukom 2010: 132)

(We are treating the wood (several times/a long time). – PJ)

In (16), the object is fronted, followed by the finite verb and the non-finite verb

The translation implies an intensive action, which can refer

- to a regular treatment (with repetitions): for highlighting a **high frequency**
- to the fact, that the action lasts for some time: for highlighting the **continuity**

The structure is used for marking **progressive** (17a) and **inchoative** (17b) as well:

(17a) M-ɔs k-ɔsɔ.

1S-manger INF-manger

{Que fais-tu?} Je mange. (Vandame 1968: 37)

{{What do you do?} I’m eating. – PJ}
Il se met à manger. (Neukom 2010: 132) (He starts to eat. – PJ)

(17) entails the same verbs without any lexical material (for functional specification),
- but they differ – as seen in the translation – in function

Furthermore, the structure can refer to ***simultaneity***:

(18) Naán ing k-ing tàà dóób ki.

{Que faisait-il quand tu es arrivé?} Il était assis devant la porte.

(Neukom 2010: 131)

{(What was he doing when you arrived?) He was sitting outside the door. – PJ)

The structure highlights the co-occurrence of two events at the same time:

{At the moment you arrived,} he was sitting outside the door.

The last example shows a periphrastic structure with an additional verb:

(19) J-liñ ká-j-dó-k-ó k-dók sé, ...

Nous étions sur le chemin de retour (lit. nous nous sommes levés et nous sommes en train de monter, c’est-à-dire de rentrer vers le village) {quand nous avons vu des lumières.} (Neukom 2010: 266)

(We were on the way back (lit. we stand up and were going up, for returning to the village) {when we saw the lights.} – PJ)

(19) starts with a verb of motion, followed by the verbal complex

The structure can be used

- to express ***simultaneity*** (with sentential scope):

  At the same time we were on the way back {, we saw the lights.}

- or to indicate ***sequentiality*** (clause-internally):

  First, we stand up and then, we are going up, ...
2.2.4 Summary

In-situ doubling strategies show the same dichotomy as the preposing structures:

I Non-finite focus doubling (NFD)

[Less asserted reduced predicate]^TOPIC (PIVOT) [Predicate]^FOCUS

If the non-finite verb form is focal, the main clause contains a less asserted verb form
→ the construction highlights the lexical meaning of the verb, it marks SoA focus

II Non-finite topic doubling (NTD)

[Asserted main clause predicate]^FOCUS (PIVOT) [Predicate]^TOPIC

If the non-finite verb form is topical, the main clause contains an asserted verb form
- it is used in the sense of ‘As for verb ing, (I assert that) X verb’ or ‘X DOES verb’
→ the construction highlights the operator, it is used to mark operator focus

In-situ doubling structures show the same functional spectrum as preposing structures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>CT</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>VS</th>
<th>B/A</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Do</td>
<td>NFD</td>
<td>[Vfin OBJ]BG [Vinf]FOC</td>
<td>ACT</td>
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<td>SoA (Selection)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8a</td>
<td>Take</td>
<td>NFD</td>
<td>[Vfin]BG [Vinf]FOC</td>
<td>ACT</td>
<td></td>
<td>SoA (Selection)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8b</td>
<td>Do</td>
<td>NFD</td>
<td>[Vfin]BG [Vinf]FOC</td>
<td>ACT</td>
<td></td>
<td>SoA (Correction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8c</td>
<td>Buy</td>
<td>NFD</td>
<td>[Vfin OBJ]BG [Vinf]FOC</td>
<td>ACT</td>
<td></td>
<td>SoA (Correction)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr</th>
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<th>CT</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>VS</th>
<th>B/A</th>
<th>Function</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Drink</td>
<td>NTD I</td>
<td>[Vfin OBJ]FOC [Vinf ADV]BG</td>
<td>ACT</td>
<td></td>
<td>Inchoative/Iterative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Be bitter</td>
<td>NTD I</td>
<td>[Vfin]FOC [Vinf COMP]BG</td>
<td>STA</td>
<td>PP</td>
<td>INT (quality)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Eat</td>
<td>NTD I</td>
<td>[Vfin OBJ]FOC [Vinf COMP]BG</td>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>(EF)</td>
<td>INT (quantity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Be good</td>
<td>NTD II</td>
<td>[Vfin]FOC [ta] [Vinf]BG</td>
<td>STA</td>
<td>ESF</td>
<td>INT (quality)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13a</td>
<td>Drink</td>
<td>NTD II</td>
<td>[Vfin OBJ]FOC [ta] [Vinf]BG</td>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>ESF</td>
<td>INT (quantity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13b</td>
<td>Precipitate</td>
<td>NTD II</td>
<td>[Vfin]FOC [ta] [Vinf]BG</td>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>ESF</td>
<td>INT (quantity)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr</th>
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<th>VS</th>
<th>B/A</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>NTD</td>
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<td>STA</td>
<td>(PP)</td>
<td>POL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>NTD</td>
<td>[Vfin]FOC [Vinf]BG</td>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>(EF)</td>
<td>POL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Treat</td>
<td>NTD</td>
<td>[Vfin]FOC [Vinf]BG</td>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>(EF)</td>
<td>INT (frequency)/Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17a</td>
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<td>NTD</td>
<td>[Vfin]FOC [Vinf]BG</td>
<td>ACT</td>
<td></td>
<td>Progressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17b</td>
<td>Eat</td>
<td>NTD</td>
<td>[Vfin]FOC [Vinf]BG</td>
<td>ACT</td>
<td></td>
<td>Inchoative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Stay</td>
<td>NTD</td>
<td>[Vfin]FOC [Vinf OBL]BG</td>
<td>ACT</td>
<td></td>
<td>Simultaneity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Go up</td>
<td>NTD</td>
<td>[Vfin]FOC [Vinf]BG</td>
<td>ACT</td>
<td></td>
<td>Simultaneity/Sequentiality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: In-situ doubling structures in BAGIRMI, MBAY and KENGA
Table 2 shows a **correlation between form and function:**
- NFD (examples (7) and (8)) is used for marking SoA focus only
- NTD excludes an interpretation as SoA focus, but it indicates several other functions

There are **language-internal differences** concerning the distribution:
- BAGIRMI has only non-finite focus doubling,
- MBAY and KENGA only non-finite topic doubling
- in MBAY, the structures are predominantly used for marking intensification
- KENGA presents a wide range of functions

In contrast to most preposing structures,
- in-situ doubling structures avoid morphological marking, e.g. focus/topic marker

### 3 Semantic evaluation

Verbal iteration in Sara-Bagirmi is used for realizing several functions
- the presented structures show a **functional split:**

1. The **non-finite verb form is focal** and the main clause topical
   - **VFP:** \([\text{Preposed predicate}]_{\text{FOCUS}} \rightarrow [\text{Less asserted reduced predicate}]_{\text{TOPIC}}\)
   - **NFD:** \([\text{Less asserted reduced predicate}]_{\text{TOPIC}} \rightarrow [\text{Predicate}]_{\text{FOCUS}}\)
   - the construction is predominantly used for **expressing SoA**:

   ![Figure 2: Functional spectrum of VFP/NFD structures in Sara-Bagirmi](image)

2. The non-finite verb form is topical and **the main clause is focal**
   - **VTP:** \([\text{Preposed predicate}]_{\text{TOPIC}} \rightarrow [\text{Asserted main clause predicate}]_{\text{FOCUS}}\)
   - **NTD:** \([\text{Asserted main clause predicate}]_{\text{FOCUS}} \rightarrow [\text{Predicate}]_{\text{TOPIC}}\)
→ the construction refers not to SoA focus, but to polarity focus, intensification or TAM-based functions:

![Diagram showing the functional spectrum of VTP/NTD structures in Sara-Bagirmi]

VTP/NTD structures are used to express:

1. **Polarity focus** (or truth value focus): He REALLY drinks alcohol.

2. **Intensification**
   2.1 The reference to a (unusually) high quality: The eggplant is VERY bitter.
   - occurs in constructions with stative verbs
   - comparable to the scale of “property proclivity” (Bond/Anderson i.p.)

   2.2 The reference to a (unusually) high quantity: He drinks VERY much.
   - occurs in constructions with active verbs
   - comparable to the scale of “event frequency” (Bond/Anderson i.p.)

   2.3 The reference to a (unusually) high frequency: He steals VERY often.
   - occurs in constructions with active verbs
   - comparable with the scale of “event frequency” (Bond/Anderson i.p.)

3. **TAM-based functions**
   3.1 Focuses the beginning of an event (Inchoative): He STARTS eating.
   3.2 Focuses the duration of an event (Continuative): He is eating (for a long time).
   3.3 Points out that the event is ongoing (Progressive): He is eating (just now).
   3.4 Points out that two (or more) events happen at the same time (Simultaneity):
      We were on the way back, when we saw the lights.
   3.5 Points out that two (or more) events happen successively (Sequentiality):
      We stand up and (then) we are going up, …
The functional spectrum of verbal iteration involves pragmatic and semantic issues\(^{19}\).

The structural differences always correlate with the function:
- while VFP/NFD constructions are predominantly used for expressing SoA focus,
- VTP/NTD constructions mark **polarity focus**, **TAM focus** or **intensification**

All examples with VTP/NTD structures show
- that the **predicate of the main clause is asserted**
- this has to be interpreted as **focus on a sentential operator**
- either as **polarity focus**, as **TAM focus** or as something like **intensification**

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\(^{19}\) Güldemann (2003) attested for several Bantu languages, that the semantic concept of progressive, intensification and polarity focus is expressed by the same formal means.
### Abbreviations

| ACT | Activity        | NFD | Non-finite focus doubling |
| ADV | Adverbial       | NP  | Noun phrase               |
| AUX | Auxiliary       | NTD | Non-finite topic doubling |
| B/A | Classification of Bond/Anderson | OBJ | Object |
| BG  | Background      | OBL | Oblique                   |
| COMP| Complement clause | P   | Plural                    |
| CONJ| Conjunction     | PCF | Predicate-centered focus  |
| CONN| Connective      | PERF| Perfect                   |
| CT  | Construction type | PFV | Perfective                |
| DEM | Demonstrative   | PN  | Proper name               |
| DUPL| Reduplication   | POL | Polarity (focus)          |
| EF  | Event frequency | POSS| Possessive                |
| EI  | Event iteration | PP  | Property proclivity       |
| EMPH| Emphatic        | PROG| Progressive               |
| ESF | Exclusive situation focus | REL | Relative                  |
| EXCL| Exclamative     | S   | Singular                  |
| FIN | Finite          | SBJ | Subject                   |
| FOC | Focus           | SoA | State of affairs (focus)  |
| FUT | Future          | STA | State                     |
| G   | Generic         | SUB | Subordination             |
| ID  | Identificational| TAM | Tempus/Aspect/Mood        |
| INF | Infinitive/Non-finite | TOP | Topic(al)                |
| IPFV| Imperfective    | V   | Verb(al)                  |
| IS  | Information structure | VENT| Ventive                   |
| INT | Intensification | VFT | Verb focus preposing      |
| LOC | Locative        | VS  | Verbal semantic           |
| MSR | Mandatory subject reference | VTP | Verb topic preposing      |
| NEG | Negative        |     |                           |
References


—. 2013. The relation between predicate operator focus and theticity in Bantu. Paper presented to the workshop “Information structure in Bantu” on project B7 (CRC 632 Information structure), Berlin.


