Preposed verb doubling and predicate-centered focus
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1 Theoretical and empirical preliminaries

1.1 Different predicate-centered focus types

- predicate is the host of two major functions relating to focus:
  (a) instantiates an illocutionary act which relates to different operators
  (b) identifies/selects a state of affairs

> multiple import for information structure - precise terminology must distinguish:
  (a) verb/predicate operator focus - includes most importantly “verum”—truth value focus
  (b) state-of-affairs (SoA) focus - often but not necessarily verb (lexeme)

Operator

State of affairs (SoA)
(What did the princess do with the frog?)

Truth value (= polarity)
(I cannot imagine that the princess kissed the slippery frog.)

TAM
(Is the princess kissing the frog (right now)?)

(1)a. She KISSED him.  b. Yes, she DID kiss him.  c. She HAS kissed him.

Figure 1: Basic subclassification of predicate-centered focus

+ avoid term “predicate focus” - multiply ambiguous:
  - used for “wide” verb phrase focus (Lambrecht 1994)
  - does not distinguish different subtypes of predicate-centered focus

1.2 Highly variable formal encoding (not exhaustive)

Default clause structure (cross-linguistically recurrent! - parallel to in-situ term focus)

(2) Default clause structure for truth value focus in Hausa (Chadic, Afroasiatic)

sun sacè jàka? fi, sun sacè 3P.PFV steal bag-DEF:F yes 3P.PFV steal

Did they steal the bag? Yes, they did. (Fiedler 2010c)

Prosody

(3) Intonation for SoA focus in English

He REPAIRED the bicycle, he hasn't PAINTED it yet.

(4) Prosodic phrasing for SoA focus (as in b.) in Xhosa (Bantu S41, Niger-Congo)

a. [bá-zaku-liima nge-záándla] 3P-FUT-plough INST-hands
   They are going to plough BY HAND.

b. [bá-zaku-liima] [nge-záándla] 3P-FUT-plough INST-hands
   They are going to PLOUGH by hand. (Jokweni 1995: 65)

Verb morphology

(5) Morphological reduplication for SoA focus in Mombo (Dogon)

áy, émé sè-á-své:
no milk REDUPL-1S-buy.PFV
(Did you take (the) milk ...?) No, I BOUGHT (the) milk! (Prokhorov 2010b)

(6) Bound verb gram for predicate-centered focus in Bemba (Bantu M42, Niger-Congo)

bá-mó bahá-lya insoka 3P-some 3P-PF-eat:PRS snake

Some people actually EAT [possibly also: DO eat] snakes. (Sharman 1956: 50)

(7) Free verb inflection for SoA focus in Koyraboro Senni (Songhay)

čin no nga (a) tee ya mma jiirbi
what TF 2S IPFV 3S.OBJ do 1S PF.IPFV sleep

What are you doing? I'm SLEEPING. (Prokhorov 2010a < Heath 1999: 206)

Focus marker without fixed morphological host

(8) Floating subject clitic for SoA focus (as in a.; cf. object focus in b. and adverb focus in c.) in Sandawe (isolate)

a. (nám | bámé-ne-sá) á?á nám t’imé-sá
   PN sweep-Q-3F.S no PN cook-3F.S
   (Did Nam SWEEP?) No, Nam COOKED. (Morimoto 2010b < Eaton 2002: 277)

b. kôngó-sá ?í:wè
   PN-3F.S meet
   She met KOONGOO. (Morimoto 2010b < Eaton 2002: 75)

c. *t’i:sá t’imè
   today-3F.S cook
   She cooked TODAY. (Morimoto 2010b < Eaton 2002: 75)
Syntactically complex construction

(10) Dummy verb construction for truth value focus in English

He DID repair the bicycle.

(11) Final verb doublet + focus marker for SoA focus in Mad’i (Moru-Madi, Central Sudanic)

\( 3p_{\text{is}} \text{galám}mù \text{di} \text{èstu} \)

PN find pen this find PF

Opi FOUND this pen. (i.e. he didn’t BUY it) (Blackings and Fabb 2003: 596)

(12) Cleft-like structure for SoA focus (as in a., cf. object focus in b.) in Ama (Nyimang)\(^1\)

a. \( \text{ládá bá ně ìndù kà lát } \)

walk.INF EMPH GF 3S.DET ? walk.IPFV

She is WALKING.

b. \( \text{àlfúl bá ně in òàl } \)

bean EMPH GF 3S eat.PFV

It was THE BEANS that she ate. (Fiedler 2010b)

> following discussion primarily concerned with bisected structures involving preposed (“fronted”) verb doubling as in (12)a.: verb is used in-situ in an inflectionally canonical form but is simultaneously exposed in a clause-initial position in a less finite doublet

Does verb doubling with preposing on the surface represent a unitary type?

1.3 Preposing 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 or postposing from a default position

(b) constituent complexity = hierarchical syntax: adding syntactic layers to simple monoclusal 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

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\(^1\) The general focus marker \( nɛ \) is derived from an identificational/copulative predicator but no longer employs original aspect and number distinctions.
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+ predicate cleft used exclusively for SoA focus

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

a. ūkhùmí (li) ōhí khí’ ōlí ëwè
  chase:VN GF PN chase the goat
  [lit.:] It was chasing that Ohi did to the goat. [Ohi CHASED the goat]

b. ūnhà likè sì ngá nhan ăn
  cutlass GF he use cut it
  It is a CUTLASS he used to cut it. (Morimoto 2010a < Schaefer and E. 2009: 356, 385)

+ non-cleft preposed doublet: [Infinitive Finite.form] in Western Bantu (zones B+H)

(18) Intraclausal preposed verb doublet for SoA focus (as in a./b., cf. c. for object focus) in Suundi (Bantu H13b, Niger-Congo)

  INF-read 1S:FUT-read 3Sy
  l’enfant va LIRE le livre
  [Hadermann 1996: 162]

b. kù-tá:ngà ndyèká-tá:ngà (ndyèkátá:ngà = je vais lire)
  INF-read 1S:FUT-read  je vais LIRE
  (Hadermann 1996: 161)

c. ngó kà-hó:nd-ídì
  INF-read 3S-kill-PST
  il a tué le LÉOPARD
  (Hadermann 1996: 159)

+ structural parallel of preposed term constituent and preposed verb doublet mirrors pragmatic parallel: both are exposed foci against the following extrafocal predicates

> long tradition of research mainly 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

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

a. me na me ba-a ha nnra
  1S TF 1S come-PST here yesterday
  I it was who came here yesterday; I (FOCUS) came here yesterday (Boadi 1974: 5-6)

b. me deec me ba-a ha nnra [with rising intonation]
  1S ? 1S come-PST here yesterday
  I (?) came here yesterday (Boadi 1974: 6)

c. ba deec me ba-a ha nnra [with rising intonation]
  1S ? 1S come-PST here yesterday
  I CAME here yesterday (Boadi 1974: 6)

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

2.3 “Dummy verb constructions” as non-doubling counterparts of preposing

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

(23) Focus preposing for SoA focus (as in a., cf. object focus in b.) in Tamashke (Berber, Afroasiatic) - cf. §2.1

a. waeddey aššayal à i-tdíj, ēdas à i-tdíj
  not work DEM 3M.S-do:IPFV1 sleep:VN DEM 3M.S-do:IPFV1
  [He doesn’t WORK, he SLEEPS.] (Prokhorov 2010c < Heath 2005: 643)

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

(24) Topic preposing for truth value focus in English - cf. §2.2

I told John to wash the car and wash the car he did. (Aboh 2006: 46)
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+ 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. (15) above)

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

a. \(\text{[Es-En]}^{\text{FOCUS}} \ [\text{tut} \ \text{er}]^{\text{TOPIC}}\)
   \begin{align*}
   \text{read-INF} & \quad \text{does he} \\
   \text{he} & \quad \text{READS (="READING he does")} \\
   \end{align*}
   cf. §2.1

b. \(\text{[Es-en]}^{\text{FOCUS}} \ [\text{tUt} \ \text{er}]^{\text{TOPIC}}\)
   \begin{align*}
   \text{read-INF} & \quad \text{does he} \\
   \text{he} & \quad \text{DOES read (="as for reading, he DOES (it)")} \\
   \end{align*}
   cf. §2.2

> same pragmatic reading irrespective of doubling vs. dummy verb (cf. (26a). vs. b.) - different pragmatic reading with similar dummy verb structure (cf. (26)b. vs. (26)c.)

(26) 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. \(\text{sàyé-} \ \text{ànbi n köo, zd sì sàyyaaz}\)
   \begin{align*}
   \text{buy:VN-GEN} & \quad \text{food moreover FUT 3P buy} \\
   \text{They} & \quad \text{BOUGHT FOOD. (Green 2007: 60)} \\
   \end{align*}

b. \(\text{sàyé-} \ \text{ànbi n köo, zd sì yì}\)
   \begin{align*}
   \text{buy:VN-GEN} & \quad \text{food moreover FUT 3P do} \\
   \text{[lit.: Buying food moreover, they will buy/do. (they WILL buy ...]} & \quad \text{(Jaggar 2001: 542)} \\
   \end{align*}

(c) Aboh (2006): recognition of different types but down-playing their differences

> indeed “comparable” - see §2.4.2

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

- verb doubling is a secondary, non-explanatory factor:
  - language-internal distinction: cf. (26) in Hausa
  - crosslinguistic parallels in spite of different structures: cf. (19) in Akan vs. (25) in German
- deep structural and functional distinction between verb focus preposing and verb topic preposing - see §2.4.3

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 (27), topic preposing as in (28), 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”

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)

(II) \(\text{[Preposed predicate]}^{\text{SoA}} \ (\text{PIVOT}) \ [\text{Less asserted reduced predicate]}^{\text{OP+}}\) (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] **FOCUS** (PIVOT) [Less asserted reduced predicate] **TOPIC**

(II) [Preposed predicate] **TOPIC** (PIVOT) [Asserted main clause predicate] **FOCUS**

(b) inflectional variability/syntactic status of finite verb is:
- in (I) possibly reduced/deranked (cf. (26)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. (26)c. in Hausa
- in (II) on complexity of final clause-like constituent: cf. (22)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 - Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus type</th>
<th>(I) Focus preposing</th>
<th>(II) Topic preposing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operator focus only</td>
<td>???</td>
<td>Akan (19)c., Amharic (20), Hausa (21)/(26)a. + b., English (24), German (25)b., Afrikaans (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SoA focus only</td>
<td>Ama (12)a., Emai (17)a., Suundi (18)a.+b., Tamashek (23)a., German (25)a.</td>
<td>???</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>Aja (16), Jamaican (27)</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: The two types of verb preposing across predicate-centered focus

2.5 A typology of verb preposing in predicate-centered focus

+ all logically possible structural-pragmatic patterns attested

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntax</th>
<th>Preposing with verb doublet</th>
<th>Preposing with dummy verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracausal</td>
<td>Ama (12)a. etc.</td>
<td>Hausa (26)a. etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Different syntactic-pragmatic types of verb preposing in predicate-centered focus

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 (cf. also (11) for Mad'i verb doubling)

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

ma-ni-u  kabiye  ki  ni-u  ma-a yaa-u  kô
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 (10) for English do-support as non-preposing counterpart of (25) in German)

(30) Periphrastic present with ‘do’ for truth-value focus (as in a., cf. object focus in b.) in Ndendeule (Bantu N12, Niger-Congo)³

a. mwe  n’-tenda  ku-pêta
you:P 2P-do  INF-pass
You STILL/DO go through. [although you are not expected to]

b. tî-lêma  malombi
1P:PRS-cultivate maize.
We cultivate MAIZE. (Güldemann field notes)

(c) default syntax with doubling morphology = verb reduplication: cf. (5) in Mombo

(d) default syntax with non-doubling morphology = focus verb gram: cf. (6) in Bemba

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntax</th>
<th>Doubling</th>
<th>Dummy verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-situ</td>
<td>Kabiye (29) etc.</td>
<td>Ndendeule (30) etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Morphology | Mombo (5) | Bemba (6) |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doubling</th>
<th>Dummy verb</th>
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<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrap.</td>
<td>Ama (12)a. etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrac.</td>
<td>Suundi (18)a.+b.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-situ</td>
<td>Kabiye (29) etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: A wider typology of SoA-operator dissociation in predicate-centered focus

4 I follow Lébikaza (1999: 399, 445) in analysing the suffix -U as the class-1 concord for human singular nouns, as opposed to Collins and Essizewa (2007) who gloss it as INFinitative. This analysis and other facts would suggest that the entire structure kí-VERB.STEM-U could have grammaticalized from a subject-oriented secondary predicate.

5 Cf. Güldemann (2003) for proposing that auxiliary periphrases inherently focus on operators rather than participants (aka terms).

...