# On the origin of IBV focus in West-Coastal Bantu

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### IBV focus position in some West-Coastal Bantu languages

#### Arguments and adjuncts are focused in IBV

- (1) o-káár nké ká-wó-kon? 1SM-woman what 1SM-PST-plant 'WHAT did the woman plant?' [Mbuun B87] (Bostoen et al. 2012:1)
- (2) o-ø-se ve ka-vat-idi?
  1AUG-5SM-father where 1SM-cultivate-PERF
  'WHERE did the father cultivate? [Kisikongo H16a] (De Kind 2014:13)
- (3) N-3ĭm m£ e-tús
  9-money 1sg.prn 1sg.sm-put.out

  'IFOC put out the money.' [Nsong B85d] (Muluwa et al. 2014:10)

The phenomenon: IBV focus position and alternation of class 1 subject marking

### Object-verb order and alternation of class 1 subject marking

subject and non-subject focus in IBV triggers class 1 subject marking allomorphy

- (4) a. mpfúm ná ká-wó-ból?
  1.president who 1sm-pst-hit
  'Whom did the president hit?' [SOV object focus]
  b. mpfúm ná á-wó-ból?
  1.president who 1sm-pst-hit
  'Who hit the president?' [OSV subject focus]
- (5) O-yandi ma-lavu ka-van-idi kwa mu-ana.

  1AUG-1.PRN 6-alcohol 1SM-give-PERF 17.CONN 1-child

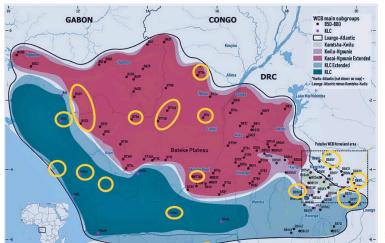
  'He gave the child ALCOHOL. [SOV object focus, o- in SVO]

  [Kisikongo H16a] (De Kind 2014:27)

[Mbuun B87] (Bostoen and et al. 2012:24)

#### The IBV focus in West-Coastal Bantu

Figure: WCB languages with IBV focus (cf. Bostoen et al. 2015, 2021; Pacchiarotti et al. 2019; Mboukou 1976; Mouandza 2001; Hadermann 1996; De Kind 2014; Muluwa et al. 2014; Raharimanantsoa 2012; Linton 2013)



How are the two phenomena related?

#### Research questions

On the origin of IBV focus position and class  $1\ \mathrm{subject}\ \mathrm{marking}\ \mathrm{alternation}$ 

IBV focus position	Where does it come from?  Does it have the origin in other constructions?  Why focus needs to be in IBV, given that postverbal focus site can be available?		
subject marking alternation	1) What is the exact function of this alternation, does it directly encode focus?  2) Why is it restricted to class 1 subjects?  Do they occur elsewhere (in other forms)?		

⇒How are the word order change and morphological device related?

Previous analysis and puzzles left

- Grégoire 1993: fronting of a focused object is an areal feature;
- Hadermann 1996: "infinitive+conjugated verb" occurs in many zone
   B and H languages which accept SOV word order;
- Bostoen et al. 2011, 2012: subject is focused in situ and is made less topical by fronting the object; the ká- may originate ultimately as an identificational copula (Güldemann 1996) that has grammaticalised as a verbal marker of object focus;
- De Kind 2014: SOV focus construction originates from a biclausal cleft construction; the variation in cleft constructions forms a continuum from a bi-clausal inverted pseudo-cleft to a monoclausal SOV focus order; the hypothesis needs further corroboration by tonal data (tone case and tone on relative verbs);

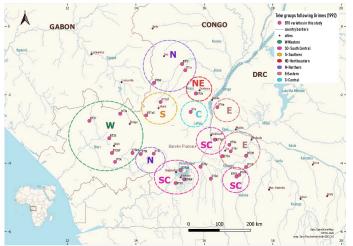
Aims of the talk

#### Aims of the talk

- To provide new data from Teke on the IBV focus position and subject marking alternation;
- I follow De Kind (2014)'s hypothesis that the IBV focus construction
  has its origin in a cleft sentence; I will show some more segmental
  and tonal evidence and propose a grammaticalisation path;
- To highlight some related questions that are needed for comparative study on the IBV focus strategy in West-Coastal Bantu languages;

The Teke-Kukuya language

Figure: Teke B70 varieties (cf. Grimes 1992; Pacchiarotti et al. 2019)



Kukuya B77a: SVO; no subject inversion; no object marking; Paulian 1975;

Fieldwork in Lékana and Brazzaville in 2019 and 2021, Republic of Congo





Basic properties of the IBV focus position in Kukuya

#### Arguments and adjuncts get focused in IBV

object/adverb focus triggers SOV or SOXV order; subject focus triggers OSV;

(6) a. Mvá kí-má ká-siib-i? 1.dog 7-what 1SM.PST-catch-PST

'What did the dog catch?'

[SOV object focus]

b. (Who gave the children the oranges?)

Mwáana ma-láara bí-búrú bíí-wî.

1.child 6-orange 8-parent 8SM.PST-give.PST

'The child was given the oranges by the PARENTS.'

[OOSV subject focus]

c. Taará lóoso munkí ká-dzí? 1.father 5.rice when 1SM.PST-eat.PST

'When did father eat the rice?'

[SOXV adjunct focus]

 IBV focus is usually accompanied by fronting of other non-focal elements to the preverbal domain

Basic properties of the IBV focus position in Kukuya

#### Focus not restricted to IBV

both SVO and SOV can be felicitous answers to an object question; wh-words usually cannot occur postverbally;

(7) a. Ndé á-ték-i baa-ntaba. 1.PRN 1SM.PST-sell-PST 2-goat

'He sold some goats.'

answer to: "What did father sell yesterday?" [object focus] ✓

"What did father do yesterday?" [VP focus] ✓

b. \*Ndé á-ték-i **ki-ma**?

1.PRN 1SM.PST-sell-PST 7-what

Int: 'What did she/he sell?'

[\*SV-*wh*]

[SVO]

Basic properties of the IBV focus position in Kukuya

#### IBV as dedicated focus position

When there are more than one preverbal elements, only the one in IBV can and must be focal.

(8) a. \*Mbuurú **kí-má tswáatswáa** ká-dzí?

1.person 7-what fast 1SM.PST-eat.PST

Int: 'What did the person eat quickly?'

b. Mbuurú **bu-ka ku nzó** ká-dzí.

1.person 14-cassava 17.LOC 9.house 1SM.PST-eat.PST

'The person ate the cassava AT HOME.'

answer to: "What did the person eat at home" [object focus] X

"Where did the person eat the cassava?" [adjunct focus] 🗸

Basic properties of the IBV focus position in Kukuya

### Predicate(-centered) focus with IBV position

SOV word order can be used to express VP focus and verb focus

(9) a. (What did father do in the morning?)

Ndé mí-fémé ká-dwí.

1.PRN 4-pig 1SM.PST-kill.PST

'He sold some goats.'

[SOV VP focus]

b. (What did mother do to the goats?)

Ngúku báa-ntaba ká-dwí.

1.mother 2-goat 1SM.PST-kill.PST

'Mother KILLED the goats.'

[SOV verb focus]

 SOV word order with object in IBV does not necessarily express object focus, but also VP and verb focus

Basic properties of the IBV focus position in Kukuya

#### Interpretational properties on IBV focus

IBV focus can have an identificational interpretation; while focus in the canonical position mainly expresses new information (assertive) focus;

- (10) (What did father eat?)
  - a. (There were many dishes and in fact father ate only some fish, and you may suspect him to have eaten something else.)

Taará **báa-ntsúí** ká-dzí.

1.father 2-fish 1SM.PST-eat.PST

'Father ate some FISH.'

[SOV identificational]

b. (There were some fish and the father ate it all, and you just wanted to know what father ate.)

Taará á-dzí **baa-ntsúi**.

1.father 1sm.pst-eat.pst 2-fish

'Father ate some FISH.'

[SVO assertive]

Basic properties of the IBV focus position in Kukuya

#### Interpretational properties on IBV focus

Contrastively focused element is more likely to be placed in IBV position

(Do you like to eat chicken or duck?) (11)

> Me kí-wál-í kâ-n-dzií kí-dzá 1sg.prn 7-duck Prs-1sg.sm-like inf-eat

'I like to eat duck.'

[**√**SOV; # SVO]

(12)(There were bags of beans and rice, when you returned home you found that the chicken were full and only the beans were reduced. When someone asked if father had fed the chicken with **rice**, you corrected:)

baa-ntsúú **má-désú** ká-búnum-i. 1.father 2-chicken 6-bean 1sm.pst-feed-pst

'Father fed the chicken the BEANS. (not the rice)'

SOOV object focus

Basic properties of the IBV focus position in Kukuya

### Interpretational properties on IBV focus

The word for "person" has generic reading in SOV; IBV predicate doubling expresses verb focus;

```
(13) a. Ngo mbuurú ká-dzí.
1.tiger 1.person 1SM.PST-eat.PST
'The tiger ate a PERSON (not an animal).' [SOV, generic reading]
```

- b. Ngo á-dzí **mbuurú**.

  1.tiger 1sm.Pst-eat.Pst 1.person

  'The tiger ate someone/the person/a person.' [SVO]
- (14) (Did mother prepare and eat the cassava?)

Ndé bu-ká **kí-téléké** ká-télek-i. 1.PRN 14-cassava INF-prepare 1SM.PST-prepare-PST

'She only PREPARED the cassava.'

[Predicate doubling]

## Subject marking alternation in Teke-Kukuya

Subject marking alternation for all [+PERSON] subjects

### Alternation of class 1 subject marking recent past

ka- nonsubject IBV focus and negative, a- elsewhere

a. Taará **á**-béer-i mwáana? (15)1.father 1sm.pst-beat-pst 1.child 'Father beat the child.'

[SVO]

b. Taará ná **á**-béer-i? 1 father 1.who 1SM.PST-beat-PST 'Who beat father?'

[OSV subject focus]

c. Taará ná ká-béer-i? 1.father 1.who 1SM.PST-beat-PST 'Who did father beat?

[SOV object focus]

d. Taará ka-ká-béer-i mwáana ni. 1.father NEG-1SM.PST-beat-PST 1.child

'Eather did not heat the child' [negative]

Bantu9, 7 June 2022

## Subject marking alternation in Teke-Kukuya

### Alternation of [+PARTICIPANT] subject marking *near future*

HL tone in nonsubject IBV focus and negation; L tone elsewhere;

- (16) a. Bhií ya we lía **lii**-dzwá ntaba.

  1PL.PRN with 2sg.PRN FUT 1PL.FUT-kill.Pst 1.goat

  'We and you will kill a goat.' [SVO L]
  - b. Bhií ya we lía ntaba **líi**-dzwá. 1PL.PRN with 2SG.PRN FUT 1.goat 1PL.FUT-kill.PST 'We and you will kill a GOAT.'

[SOV HL]

c. Bhií ya we lía ka-líi-dzwá ntaba ni. 1PL.PRN with 2SG.PRN FUT NEG-1PL.FUT-kill.PST 1.goat NEG 'We and you will not kill a goat.' [negative  ${\bf HL}$ ]

### Subject marking alternation in Teke-Kukuya

Subject marking alternation for all [+PERSON] subjects

Class 1	recent past	remote past	future	
SVO and (O)SV	á	â	â	
SOV and S(O)XV	ká	kâ	kâ	
negative	ká	kâ	kâ	

Table: The allomorphy of Class 1 subject markers in Kukuya

1PL $/2$ PL	remote past	future
SVO and (O)SV	lii	lii
SOV and S(O)XV negative	líi líi	líi líi

Table: The tone pattern of  $1\mathrm{PL}/2\mathrm{PL}$  subject markers in Kukuya

#### Interim summary on Kukuya IBV focus construction

- IBV focus position available for arguments (object, subject, infinitive) and adjuncts;
- focus in IBV often accompanied by the fronting of other non-focal vP-internal elements to the preverbal domain, leaving the verb in the rightmost position;
- Focus can project: SOV word order can express object focus, VP focus and verb focus;
- IBV is not the only focus strategy/position; more used in identificational focus
- segmental a-/ka- alternation for class 1 subject marking; H tone insertion for [+PARTICIPANT] subject marker in IBV focus and negative constructions;

#### **Hypothesis**

**Hypothesis** 

IBV focus construction has its origin in the (basic) cleft construction (De Kind 2014)

#### Syntactic status of the IBV focus construction

IBV focus construction is mono-clausal, not LD+cleft

- No copula (in affirmative sentences)
- IBV focused element is predominantly preceded by other topical elements (grammatical subject, topicalised objects...)
  - (17) **Ngúku lóoso munkí** ká-dzí? 1.mother 5.rice when 1SM.PST-eat.PST 'When did mother eat the rice?'
- Focus projection: SOV can express VP focus

More on the IBV focus construction

#### IBV focus construction is mono-clausal

 Prosodic phrasing: the IBV focused element is always phrased together with the verb; vowel coalescence and H tone plateauing;

```
(18) Me má-lí á-m-fúum-i.

/me málámfúumi/

1SG.PRN 6-oil PST-1SG.SM-eat.PST

'I bought some OIL.' [ma-li "oil"]
```

(19) Ndé má-**láálá ká**-fúum-i. 1.PRN 6-orange 1SM.PST-buy-PST 'She/He bought the ORANGES.'

[ma-láala "orange"]

More on the IBV focus construction

#### Copula can also appear!

a preceding copula is optionally used when negating the IBV focused element

- (20) Ngwangúlu ka-kí-li **mvá** á-dzí ni.
  1.gecko NEG-7SM-COP 1.dog 1SM.PST-eat.PST NEG

  'The gecko was not eaten by the DOG.'/'The DOG did not eat the gecko.'

  [O NEG-COP SV, subject focus]
- (21) Taará ka(-kí-li) **ntáli** ká-sí me ni.
  1.father NEG-7SM-COP 9.bed 1SM.PST-make.PST 1SG.PRN NEG
  'Father did not buy a BED.'

[S NEG-COP OV, object focus]

Connection with cleft construction

### Decomposing the IBV focus construction

(22) a. Taará á-wî baa-ndzulí ma-désu.
1.father 1sm.pst-give.pst 2-cat 6-bean

'Father gave beans to the cats.' [SVOO]

b. Taará [má-désú]<sub>[FOC]</sub> ká-wí báa-nzulí.

1.father 6-bean 1SM.PST-give.PST 2-cat

'Father gave the RICE to the cats.' [SOVO]

word order

- prefix tone on the focused NP
- subject marking alternation
- verb-final tone

Connection with cleft construction

#### Prefix tone on the focused NP

Focused element in IBV always takes a H tone prefix

(23) (Did the woman give the fish to the DOGS?)

```
Mu-kái baa-ntsúi [báa-ndzuli]<sub>[FOC]</sub> ká-wî.
1-woman 2-fish 2-cat 1SM.PST-give.PST
```

'The woman gave the fish to the CATS.'

(IBV focus)

 pre-verbal focused objects are very rarely found with the augment in modern Kisikongo (De Kind 2014: 100)

Connection with cleft construction

#### Prefix tone on the focused NP

H tone prefix also occurs on the predicative NP in a (pseudo-)cleft construction;

- (24) Kǐ-n-dzií me ki-nywâ [má-dzá maa-mfé]<sub>[PREDICATIVE]</sub>.
  7REL-1SG.SM-please 1SG.PRN INF-drink 6-water 6-cold
  'What I like to drink is COLD WATER.' (pseudo-cleft)
- H tone on the prefix of the focused NP comes from the H tone on the prefix of a predicative NP

Connection with cleft construction

### Subject marking in relative constructions (cleft)

 $\emph{a-}$  in class 1 subject relatives;  $\emph{ka-}$  for non-subject relatives with class 1 pronominal subject

- (26) Ndé wu-(á)-banám-i á-tok-í ndziimi.

  1.PRN 1REL-1SM.PST-wake.suddenly-PST 1SM.PST-sweat-PST much

  'She/He who waked up suddenly sweated a lot.'

  [subject relative]
- (27) Ki-sáli ki-ká-lil-í ndé ka-kí-li tsítse ni.
  7-reason 7REL-1SM.PST-cry-PST 1.PRN NEG-7SM.PST-COP clear NEG
  'The reason why she/he cried was not clear.' [nonsubject relative]
- same class 1 subject marking ka in inversion/relative and IBV object focus in Kisikongo (De Kind 2014:102)

Connection with cleft construction

### Subject marking in relative constructions (cleft)

H tone insertion for [+PARTICIPANT] subject marking in relative clauses;

- (28) li-meé li-líi-li líi-tí bhií bví
  5-stone 5REL-1PL.RPST-COP 1PL.RPST-launch.PST 1PL.PRN 9.falling

  'the stone that we had thrown away' [nonsubject relative, lii- in SVO]
- H tone as the grammatical tone for the subject marker in a relative construction; also applied to class 1 subject markers;
- subject marking for class 1 and [+PARTICIPANT] subjects in IBV and relative constructions corresponds to each other;

Connection with cleft construction

#### Verb-final H tone in IBV focus

no V-final H tone in canonical SVO; V-final H tone in IBV non-subject focus;

```
(29) a. Taará á-wî baa-ndzulí ma-désu.

1.father 1SM.PST-give.PST 2-cat 6-bean

'Father gave beans to the cats.' [SVOO]
```

b. Taará [lóoso]<sub>[FoC]</sub> ká-w**í** báa-nzulí. 1.father 5.rice 1SM.PST-give.PST 2-cat 'Father gave the RICE to the cats.'

[SOVO object focus]

(30) (Where did father buy the wine?)

Ndé [ku dzándú] $_{[FOC]}$  ká-fúúm-í má-lí. 1.PRN 17.LOC 5.market 1SM.PST-buy-PST 6-wine

'He bought the wine AT THE MARKET.'

[SXVO adjunct focus]

Connection with cleft construction

#### Verb-final H tone in non-subject relatives

no V-final H tone in subject relatives; V-final H tone in non-subject relatives;

```
(31) a. mu-kái wǔ-fúum-i mi-féme
1-woman 1REL-buy-PST 4-pigs
'the woman who bought the pigs' (subject relative)
b. mi-féme mi-kí-fúúm-í mú-kái
4-pigs 4REL-7SM.PST-buy-PST 1-woman
'the pigs that the woman bought' (non-subject relative)
```

- a /H/ grammatical tone occurs between the verb and the subject in nonsubject relatives and in IBV; a trace of a postverbal relative marker or pronoun? (Haya JE22, Nzadi B865, Giphende L11)
- grammatical tone on the verb are the same in relative and IBV focus constructions

Grammaticalisation path

#### Basic cleft

$$(\operatorname{COP}) + NP_{i[\operatorname{FOC}]} + \operatorname{REL}_i - \operatorname{SM}_j - V + \operatorname{SUBJ}_j$$

- (32) (Kí-li) báa-ntaba ba-kí-fúúm-í mú-kái.
  7SM.PST-COP 2-goat 2REL-7SM.PST-buy-PST 1-woman
  'It was the GOATS that the woman bought.' [cleft, focus on object]
- lexical postverbal subjects can only have default class 7 agreement in NSRC

#### No matrix OVS inversion

relative marker deletion:  $*NP_{[FOC]} + SM_j - V + SUBJ_j$ 

- (33) \*Báa-ntaba **ká**-fúúm-í mú-kái.
  - 2-goat 2REL-1SM.PST-buy-PST 1-woman
  - Int: 'It was the GOATS that the woman bought.' [\*OVS]
  - subject inversion is allowed in Kisikongo (De Kind 2014)

Grammaticalisation path

#### Intermediate OSV construction:a reduced cleft, bi-clausal

subject fronting (possibly triggered by the deletion of relative marker)

(34) **Bá**a-ntaba mu-kái **ká**-fúum-i. 2-goat 1-woman 1SM.PST-buy-PST

'The GOATS were (what) the woman bought.'

[OSV] [object focus ✓] [VP focus ✗]

- (35) Ngâŋwa taará **ká**-fúúm-í báa-ntaba? 9.truth 1.father 1SM.PST-buy-PST 2-goat 'Is it truth that father bought some goats?'
- still a cleft-like construction; only focus on object;
- ka- does not directly encode focus on the object but has the origin in a class 1 subject marker allomorph in NSRC;
- for many WCB languages, the reduced cleft OSV is the only means of preverbal focus (e.g. Teke-Iyaa B73; Nzadi B865); marginal in Kukuya;

Grammaticalisation path

#### SOV mono-clausal construction

topic fronting and reanalysis

(36) Mu-kái **bá**a-ntaba **ká**-fúum-i. 1-woman 2-goat 1SM.PST-buy-PST 'The woman bought the goats.'

[SOV]

[object focus ✓] [VP focus ✓]

- preverbal object becomes clause-internal
- focus can project (express VP focus)
- further grammaticalised towards pragmatical neutralisation

(COP)  ${\stackrel{\circ}{O}}$  REL-V  ${\stackrel{\circ}{S}} {\stackrel{\circ}{\longrightarrow}} {\stackrel{\circ}{O}}$  V

Remaining questions on the origin of IBV focus

#### Which research questions can be answered?

	✓1) It comes from a basic cleft		
IBV focus position	construction and has been grammaticalised.		
IBV locus position	? 2) Why focus needs to be in IBV, given that		
	postverbal focus site can be available?		
	$\checkmark$ 1) The subject marking alternation originates from		
subject marking alternation	subject marking allomorphy in relatives.		
	✓2) It is attested in all [+person] subjects in Teke, but why?		

- In OSV—→SVO, why subject fronting happens?
- Why there is no subject inversion OVS construction in matrix clause?
- Why a-/ka- alternation only occurs with class 1 subjects?

### Remaining questions and further research

#### Further research questions

- What should be the syntactic structure of the IBV focus construction? Is there a high or low FocP? Is IBV a structural effect or a surface requirement?
- How can SOV word order express focus on the verb?
- When the IBV position is occupied, why do the other vP-internal elements tend to move to the preverbal domain?
- How to account for the subject agreement asymmetry of preverbal and postverbal lexical subjects?

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# Agreement asymmetries of pre- and postverbal subjects

Class 1 subject marking asymmetry

### How to account for the variation on subject agreement?

subject agreement with preverbal/postverbal pronominal/lexical Class 1 subjects

```
(37)
      a. mi-féme mi-ká-fúúm-í
                                       ndé
                 4REL-1SM.PST-buy-PST 1.PRN
         'the pigs that she/he bought'
                                         [NSRC, postverbal pronominal subject]
      b. mi-féme mi-kí-fúúm-í
                                       mú-kái
         4-pig 4REL-7SM.PST-buy-PST 1-woman
         'the pigs that the woman bought'
                                              [NSRC, postverbal lexical subject]
```

- Mí-féme mu-kái ká-fúum-i. 4-pig 1-woman 1sm.pst-buy-pst '(It was) PIGS that the woman bought.'
  - [OSV, preverbal lexical subject]
- d. Mu-kái mí-fémé ká-fúum-i. 1-woman 4-pig 1SM.PST-buy-PST 'The woman bought the PIGS'

[SOV, preverbal lexical subject]

# Agreement asymmetries of pre- and postverbal subjects

Class 1 subject marking asymmetry

### Subject marking of Class 1 subjects in relatives and IBV focus

recent past tense

	extracted element		subject type and position <sup>a</sup>					
sm form	subject	non-subject	pronominal lexical		pronominal		cical	_
	subject non-subject		preverbal	postverbal	preverbal	postverbal	a	
á-	/	Х	1	_b	/	-		
ká-	X	✓	1	✓	/	×		
kí-	×	✓	×	✓	<b>x</b>	✓		

The values under "subject types and position" are only applicable in the presence of a true value under "extracted element";

<sup>b</sup> "-" means this condition never happens, in this case the subject in a subject relative is never postverbal;

# Comparison on Mbuun, Kisikongo and Kukuya

#### Micro-variation

	Mbuun	Kisikongo	Kukuya
object marking	1	1	×
subject inversion	×	1	X
augment	×	✓	×
use of dedicated focus particle	1	1	×
SOV focus projection	×	1	1
SVO object focus	×	×	1
focused adjunct in IBV and ka	×	/	1
multiple fronting of topical vP-internal elements	×	×	1
anti-agreement affect	×	/	1
preverbal subject in NSRC	×	/	Х
agreement with postverbal lexical subject in NSRC	×	1	X
ka- in SVO class 1 SM	/	×	Х