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Bantu Syntax & Information Structure

Two analyses of East-Bantu reverse pseudoclefts

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East-Bantu reverse pseudo-clefts

(1) Kinyakyusa

I-j-a-m-bwiga jo iji n-gu-loond-a.
AUG-9-CONN-9-ginger 9.COP 9.DEM.PROX 1SG.SM-PRS-want-FV
'With ginger is what I want.'

(2) Kĩĩtharaka

Mû-biira n' uu Karîmi a-riing-iré.
3-ball COP 3.PRO 1.Karimi 1SM-kick-PFV
'A ball is what Karimi kicked.'

NP	COP	PRO	(S)	V
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(3) Rukiga (JE14)

Muhógo ni-yó Paméla a-ryá-téeka.
9.cassava COP-9.PRO 1.Pamela 1SM-FUT-cook
'It's cassava that Pamela will cook.'

- East-Bantu languages, (Kĩĩtharaka (Kenya E54), Kirundi (Burundi, JD62), Rukiga (Uganda JE14), Kinyakyusa (Tanzania M31), Makhuwa (P31) show a linear order ‘**NP copula pronoun (S) V**’.
- This linear order hides **two possible underlying structures** (see table below), and each language shows ambiguity.

	NP	cop	pro	(S) V	Examples
(a)	(NP)	=	free relative		‘Elena is (the one) who we like’
(b)	(NP)	it is	PRO _{FOC}	relative	‘Elena, it is HER that we like’

The purpose of this presentation

- Offer a brief overview of distribution of the two underlying structures and formal properties of each one.
- Determine the information-structural function of the precopular and the postcopular parts of both underlying structures.
- Try to distinguish them and show the ambiguities for each language

Structure A: reverse pseudocleft

Structure A : NP + COP + [PRO + (S) V]^{FR}

- Attested in eastern Bantu languages (see illustrations in Kĩĩtharaka (1) and Kirundi (2)), except Rukiga and Cicopi.
- It is a **reverse pseudo-cleft** in which the postcopular part is a **free relative (FR)** introduced by a demonstrative or a precessive (e.g. in Kirundi) pronoun that functions as a **relative marker (RM)** in some languages (e.g. Kĩĩtharaka).

(4) (Who is Karimi in your class?)

Karîmi ni [ûra a-rum-ire mû-arimû]^{FR}

1.Karimi COP 1.RM 1SM-insult-PFV 1-teacher

'Karimi is the one who insulted the teacher.'

[Kĩĩtharaka]

(5) (Who is Jean?)

Jean ni [u-wo/-wó tu-zoo-gi-an-a^H]^{FR}

1.Jean COP AUG-1.PRO 1PL.SM-FUT-go-ASS-FV.REL

'Jean is the one (that we just talked about) we will go with.'

[Kirundi]

- In Makhuwa the prefix on the relative verb is often invisible/unclear/merged with the copula, as illustrated in (6):

(6) (Picture of 3 different animals. Between these animals, which one flies?)

Mwaánúni tímváva.

mwaanuni ti [o-n-vav-a]^{FR}
1.bird COP 1-PRS-fly-FV.REL

[Makhuwa]

'The bird is the one that flies.'

- Syntactically, structure A results from a direct reverse of the pseudo-cleft as shown below:

(7) a. Pseudo-cleft : [u-wo/u-wó tu-zoo-gi-an-a^H]^{FR} ni Jean
 AUG-1.PRO 1PL.SM-FUT-go-ASS-FV.REL COP Jean
 'The one (that we just talked about) we will go with is Jean.'

b. DRP-cleft : Jean ni [u-wo/u-wó tu-zoo-gi-an-a^H]^{FR}
 1.Jean COP AUG-1PRO 1PL.SM-FUT-go-ASS-FV.REL
 'Jean is the one (that we just talked about) we will go with.' [Kirundi]

(8)a. Pseudo-cleft : [ûrá û-kû-thaambia thaáni]^{FR} i Rob.
 1.RM 1SM-PRS-wash 10.dishes COP 1.Rob
 'The one who is washing the dishes is Rob.'

b. DRP-cleft : Rob n' [ûrá û-kû-thaambia thaáni]^{FR}
 1.Rob COP 1.RM 1SM-PRS-wash 10.dishes
 'Rob is the one who is washing the dishes.' [Kĩĩtharaka]

- In Kirundi, two forms of reverse of pseudo-cleft are attested, the one already shown in (2) (with a free relative) and the other one with a relative clause (RC) which is introduced by a **substitutive pronoun**, as in (13).

(9) (Who is Jean?)

Jean ni [u-wo/-wó tu-zoo-gi-an-a^H]^{FR}

1.Jean COP AUG-1.PRO 1PL.SM-FUT-go-ASS-FV.REL

'Jean is the one (that we just talked about) we will go with.'

[Kirundi]

(10) (Who ate my bread?)

Pita ni wé [a-a-wu-rí-ye^H]^{RC}

Peter COP 1.PRO 1SM-N.PST-3OM-eat-PFV.REL

'Peter, it's him who ate it.' / 'Peter is the one who ate it.'

- A direct reverse pseudocleft is not allowed in some eastern Bantu languages (e.g. Rukiga, comparing the pseudocleft in (11a) with the attempt in (11b)):

(11) a. Pseudo-cleft: [E-kí Bíiru y-aa-y-ozy-á]^{FR} ni sókisi.
 AUG-7REL.PRO 1.Bill 1SM-N.PST-wash.CAUS-FV COP 10.socks
 ‘What Bill washed is socks.’ [Rukiga]

b. *DRP-cleft: *Sókisi n' [e-kí/e-zí Bíiru y-aay-ózy-a.]
 10.socks COP AUG-7/10REL.PRO 1.Bill 1SM-PST-wash.CAUS-FV

c. Sokisi ni-zo Biiru y-aay-ozy-a.
10.socks COP-10.PRO 1.Bill 1SM-PST-wash.CAUS-FV
'SOCKS Bill washed.' / 'Socks is what Bill washed.'

- Instead, an independent pronoun -o has to be used > we come back to this!

In Makhuwa, the construction can also be used without an initial NP, and in such use it typically refers to earlier statements (discourse deixis), or to a manner, and as a sort of conclusion (20).

- (12) Tíkiwaanale vá.
 ti eʔ-ki-waan-ale va
 COP 9ʔ-1SG.OM-bring-PFV.REL 16.DEM.PROX
 ‘That's why I came here.’ / ‘That's what brought me here.’

- In terms of **interpretation**, in Kinyakyusa, focus can be either on the precopular or on the postcopular part, depending on the context :

(13) a. Context 1: I'm talking about Bahati, but the name doesn't ring a bell for you; at that point she enters the store that we are in. And I say:

[Bahati]^{TOP} jo [uju i-ku-ingil-a]^{FOC}
 1.Bahati 1.IDCOP 1.DEM.PROX 1SM-PRS-enter-FV
 'Bahati is THE ONE WHO ENTERS.'

b. Context 2: Someone enters the store that we are in, and you ask, 'Who is the one that enters?'

[Bahati]^{FOC} jo [uju i-ku-ingil-a.]
 1.Bahati 1.IDCOP 1.DEM.PROX 1SM-PRS-enter-FV
 'BAHATI is the one who enters.'

- In Makhuwa, focus in the reverse pseudo-cleft is on the precopular part with an exclusive interpretational reading (alternatives are excluded):

(14) (Picture of 3 different animals. Between these animals, which one flies?)

Mwaánúni tímváva.

[mwaanuni]	^{FOC}	ti	o-n-vav-a	
1.bird		COP	1-PRS-fly-FV.REL	[Makhuwa]

'THE BIRD is the one that flies.' (others alternatives are excluded)

- Kĩĩtharaka has both demonstrative and independent pronoun BUT crucially with a different interpretation:
 - with the demonstrative as in a, the focus must be on the postcopular part, so it is a simple copular construction
 - with the independent pronoun as in b, the focus must be on the precopular part (what people have called a reverse pseudocleft)

(15) a. *context 1: Is Joy doing the dishes?

*context 2: Who is washing the dishes?

context 3: I am looking for Rob, who is working in a kitchen full of people. I ask 'Who is Rob?'

Rob n'-[ûra û-kû-thaambia thaani]

1.Rob COP-1.RM 1RM-PRS-wash 10.dishes

'Rob is the one who is washing the dishes.'

b. context 2: Who is washing the dishes?

context 3: *I am looking for Rob, who is working in a kitchen full of people. I ask 'Who is Rob?'

Rob n'-[we û-kû-thaambi-a thaáni]

1.Rob COP-1.PRO 1RM-PRS-wash-FV 10.dishes

'Rob is the one washing the dishes.'

'Rob. it's him washing the dishes.'

- In Kirundi too, pragmatic interpretation of the reverse pseudocleft varies according to the given form and context. Two cases are identified :
 - (i) structure with topic on the initial NP and focus on the postcopular part (17).
 - (ii) structure with focus on the initial NP (and its co-referential pronoun), with the presupposition reading on the postcopular segment, such as in correction context (18).

We talked about your travel and you told me you're travelling with someone.

(16) Context: A bit later in the conversation, you mention Jean. I ask:

‘Which Jean are you talking about?’

[Jean]^{TOP} ni [u-uwo tu-zoo-gi-an-a^H]^{FOC}
 1.Jean COP AUG-1.PRO 1PL.SM-FUT-go-ASS-FV.REL

‘Jean is that one (that we just talked about) we will go with.’

Kirundi

(17) Context: A: ‘Bukuru looks a lot like his father.’

B: Oya, Butoyi ni wé basa cane.

Oya [Butoyi]^{FOC} ni [wé]^{FOC} ba-sa-a^h caane
 no 1.Butoyi COP 1.pro 2sm-look.like-fv.rel a.lot

‘No, Butoyi, he's the one who looks a lot like him.’

- So it seems like we have 2 substructures:
 - copular construction: NP_{TOP} COP [FR]_{FOC}
 - 'reverse pseudocleft': NP_{FOC} COP [FR]_{BKGR}
- (How) does this second construction work, as a focus construction?

Structure B: NP + basic cleft

- The initial NP in the reverse pseudocleft must be identifiable and cannot be questioned, as proved by the following ungrammatical constructions:

(18) *Pani tilepale va?

pani ti o-lep-ale va
1.who COP 1-write-PFV.REL 16.PRO [Makhuwa]

Int. 'Who has written here?'

Lit. 'Who is the one who has written here?'

(19) *Nde ari u-wo tuzoojaana?

ndé ari u-wo mu-zoo-gi-an-a^H
who 1.COP AUG-1.PRO 2PL.SM-FUT-go-ASS-FV.REL

Int. 'Who will travel with you?'

[Kirundi]

Lit. 'Who is the one you will travel with?'

- Kinyakyusa shows some particularity: the initial NP can be questioned (6), but not object (7) or adverb (8):

(20) Jwaani jo uju ati atulongosye?

ju-ani jo uju a-ti a-tu-longosy-e

1-who 1.COP 1.PRO 1SM-say 1SM-1PL.OM-lead-SBJV

'Who is it that will lead us?' (lit. 'Who is the one that says he should lead us?')

(21) *Fiki fyo ifi uliire?

fi-ki fi-o ifi u-li-ile

8-what 8.COP 8.PRO 2SG.SM-eat-PFV

Int. 'What have you eaten?' (lit. 'What is what you've eaten?')

(22) *Ndiri lo uru aakubuja?

ndiri lo ulu a=a-ku-buj-a

when 11.COP 11.PRO FUT=1SM-PRS-return-FV

Int. 'When is it that she will return?' (lit. 'When is when she will return?')

Structure B: NP + it is + PRO + (S) + V

Kinyakyusa

- (23) a. A-ba-ana aba bo [aba ba-hiij-ire i-sooda].
AUG-2-child 2.DEM.PROX 2.COP 2.DEM.PROX 2SM-steal-PFV AUG-9.soda
'These children are (the ones) who stole the soda.'

•Alternative parsing:

- b. A-ba-ana aba, bo aba [ba-hiij-ire i-sooda].
AUG-2-child 2.DEM.PROX 2.COP 2.DEM.PROX 2SM-steal-PFV AUG-9.soda
'These children, it is them who stole the soda.'

Prosodic break

- (24) A-m-iisi aga, go aga tu-ku-piij-ir-a
AUG-6-water 6.DEM.PROX 6.COP 6.DEM.PROX 1PL.SM-PRS-COOK-APPL-FV

'This water, it's this that we cook with.'

[Kinyakyusa]

- (25) (There is an egg, where did it come from? Pointing at chicken.)

N-gûkû î-nú, n' y-ó î-ra-siár-ire.
9-chicken 9-DEM.MED COP 9-PRO 9SM-YPST-give.birth-PFV

'That chicken is which gave birth.'

'That chicken, it's *her* who gave birth.'

[Kĩĩtharaka]

- (26) (Having climbed onto that trunk, his dog also climbed, showing him by scent that the animal we are looking for may be there. Then he sniffed.)

Yĩmbwá, ngu yónà yifémbá:kú ngu makô:ta yá yó:nà.

yi-mbwa ngu y-ona yi-femb-a=ku ngu ma-kota y-a y-ona
9-dog COP 9-PRO 9SM-sniff-FV=REL P 6-nose 6-CONN 9-PRO

'The dog is what sniffs with its snout.'

[Cicopi]

Use of topic marker

- (27) (There is an argument as to whether it is sheep or cows that Juma grazed.)

Entaama zó nizó yaaríisa.

e-n-taama z-o ni-z-o a-a-ri-is-a
AUG-10-sheep 10-CM COP-10-REL.PRO 1SM-N.PST-eat-CAUS-FV

'He has (only) grazed the sheep.'

'As for the sheep, it's them that he grazed.'

[Rukiga]

Intervening elements

(28) A-mí-ízi e-n-te ni-gwó zá-á-nywa.

AUG-6-water AUG-10-cow COP-6.PRO 10SM-N.PST-drink

'It is water that the cows have drunk.'

[Rukiga]

(29) (One day, she went to a river, a very calm pool. If you listened you couldn't hear anything talking.)

Áugá î'ndiî' ágá nû'ûmba n'óó ngaatééthekeré.

a-ug-a îndî a-ga nûûmba ni o n-ka-teth-îk-îr-a

1SG.SM-say-FV now 16-DEM.PROX maybe FOC 16.PRO 1SG.SM-FUT-help-ABLE-APPL-FV

'She said, "Probably, this is where I will get help."'

[Kîîtharaka]

Fragment answer?

- (30) (We expect to receive Pedro, Paulo, Teresa and others. Did they come?)

Tereza dwé, i wu angá:tà ntí:ni.

Tereza dwe i wu a=nga-t-a n-t-ini
1.Teresa only COP 1.DEM.PROX 1SM=REL-come-FV 3-home-LOC

'It was only Teresa who came home'

'Only Teresa. It's her who came home.' [Cicopi]

- (31) (Which mats did Jovia weave?)

Emigufu (niyo Jovia arukire).

e-mi-gufu ni-yo Jovia a-ruk-ire
AUG-4-short COP-4.PRO 1.Jovia 1SM-weave-PFV

'The short ones (it's them that she weaved).' [Rukiga]

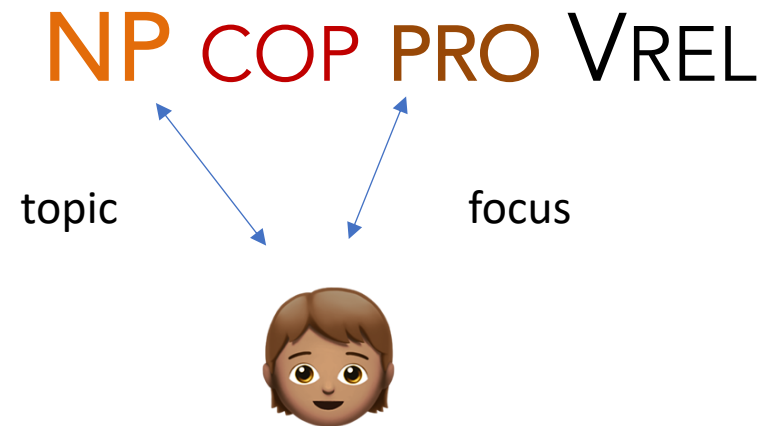
Initial NP

- fragment answer

- topic

+ basic cleft

cop+pro rel-V



Conclusion

- We find the same construction various eastern Bantu languages
 - with an initial NP, a copula, a pronominal element, and a (relative) verb
 - that as far as we know has not received much attention
- We have evidence that this surface construction can be analysed as two different underlying structures if the initial NP is focused:
 1. a reverse pseudocleft
 2. an initial NP followed by a basic cleft
- In the second structure,
 - the initial NP can be either a topic or a fragment answer,
 - and the clefted pronominal element is coreferent with the NP
- Possibly, this structure allows a referent to be marked as topic and focus at the same time.

Further research

- In Makhuwa, there seems to be a distribution where (interrogative, demonstrative) pronouns occur in a basic cleft and NPs in this reverse pseudocleft construction. How strict is this? What would explain this? Is this tendency present in other lgs?
- How does the inventory of pronominal elements influence the structure and interpretation of this construction?
- What is the syntax underlying constructions A and B?

Thank you!

- We also thank the speakers we worked with, and the audiences at the Grote Taaldag, WOCAL 10, SAIAL, and LAEA.