Kĩĩtharaka initial focus: revisiting the cleft analysis

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The issue

(1) (Who went to the farm?)
I Kîmáthi ûthííre mûndaaní.

ni	Kîmathi	û-thi-ire	mû-nda-ni
FOC	Kîmathi	1RM-go-PFV	3-farm-LOC

'It is Kîmathi who went to the farm'

Two analyses:

1. Biclausal cleft (Harford 1997)
   '[it is Kîmathi] [who went]'

2. Monoclausal focus construction (Abels & Muriungi 2008)
   'KIMATHI went'

Test with new data:
1. Copula
2. Relative marking
3. Interpretation

Copula or focus marker

(2) (Who went to the farm?)
I Kîmáthi ûthííre mûndaaní.
ni   Kîmathi   û-thi-ire   mû-nda-ni
FOC   Kîmathi   1RM-go-PFV   3-farm-LOC
'It is Kîmathi who went to the farm'

(3) (What does Jane do for a living?)
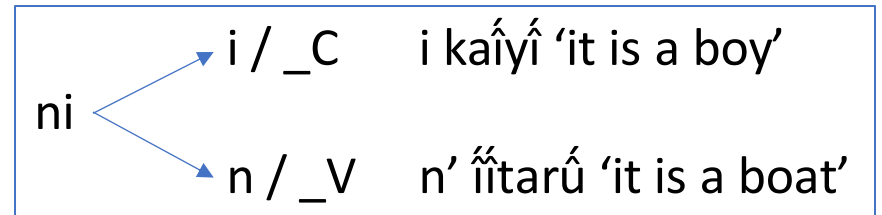Jane   **i**   mwarimû.
1.Jane   COP   1-teacher
'Jane is a teacher.'   [predicational]

(4) (Who is the chef?)
Chebu **i**   mw-ekûrû ûyû.
chef   COP   1-woman   1.DEM.PROX
'The chef is this woman.'   [specificational]

ni ⟶ i / _C   i káɋyá 'it is a boy'
   ⟶ n / _V   n' ítarú 'it is a boat'

Copula or focus marker

As a copula, ni is
- Sensitive to negation
- Sensitive to tense

(5) Ng'-oóndu **tí**   m̀-bűri.
     9-sheep   **NEG.COP** 9-goat
     'A sheep is not a goat.'
     (idiomatic meaning: 'You're not in the situation you think you are in')

(6) Téné mű̋nó m̀-biti   na   ka-yű̋gű̋ **ba-a-rí̋**   a-cooré.
     long   INT   9-hyena and 12-hare **2SM-PST-be** 2-friends
     'A long time ago, hyena and hare were friends.'

If *ni* in the initial focus construction is a copula, we predict the same sensitivity.

Copula or focus marker

- Initial focus construction: sensitive to negation

(7) Arî **ti** twaarî túunká (tûthaambiirie thaani).
    arî ti   tû-aarî tû-unka   tû-thaambi-ir-i-e   thaani.
    no NEG 13-girls 13-only   13-wash-PFV-IC-FV 9.plates
    'No, it is not girls only (that washed the plates).'

Copula or focus marker

- Initial focus construction: not sensitive to tense[%]

(8) (Did John wash the trousers?)

a. *Ci-a-rɍ́   cááťí   a-a-bɷ́ɷ́r-íré.
    10SM-PST-be 10.shirt 1SM-PST-wash-PFV
    int. 'It was the shirts he washed.'

b. Í   cááťí   á-bɷ́ɷ́r-iré.
    FOC   10.shirts 1SM-wash-PFV
    'It's the shirts he washed.'

[%] There is variation between speakers and between subject and object clefts

Interim summary

	FocP	cleft	Kîîtharaka
used in predication	no	yes	yes
change for tense	no	yes	no
change for negation	no	yes	yes
marker used in fragment	yes	only when elided cleft	only oblig as answer to cleft question
marker used for any focus in any position	not necessarily	no	no

Relative marking 1

- Class 1 subject marker *a-* (non-rel) vs *û-* (relative)
- This is optional in both relative clauses and initial focus construction

(9)   Aariûngá na antû na árágûri, agîcûaga muntû **û**mûragûrira kîronda kîbua.   relative clause
a-a-ri-ûnga   na   a-ntû   na   a-ragûri,
1SM-PST-go-round   with   2-person   and   2-medicine.man

a-kî-cu-ag-a   [mu-ntû **û**-mû-ragûr-îr-a]   kî-ronda   kî-bua
1SM-DEP-find-HAB-FV 1-person **1RM**-1OM-heal-APPL-FV 9-wound   9-be.good
'She went around people and medicine-men looking for someone who could heal her wound.'

(10)   Kûrî na [mwaáná **á**kû́bútîra].
kû-rî   na   mw-ana   **a**-kû-butîr-a
17SM-be   with   1-child   **1SM**-PRS-swim-FV
'There is a child who is swimming.'

Relative marking 1

(11) Í Kî́maathi (**û**rágwiire).

    ni   Kimathi   **û**-ra-gw-ire

    FOC 1.Kimathi   **1RM**-YPST-fall-PFV

    'It's Kimathi (who fell).'

(12) Amûûria "i ngukûûria mwarî, n'ûû **a**gûpéere rûûtha rwa gûtaa rûûyî?"

    a-mû-ûri-a   ni   n-kû-kû-ûri-a   mû-arî

    1SM-1OM-ask-FV   FOC 1SG.SM-PRS-2SG.OM-ask-FV 1-girl,

    ni-û   **a-kû-pa-îre**   **rûûtha**   rû-a   kû-taa   rû-ûyî?

    FOC-1.who **1SM**-PRS-give-PFV   11.permission 11-CONN 15-fetch 11-water?

    'He asked her, "let me ask you girl, who gave you permission to fetch water?"'

Relative marking 2

- Relative pronoun

(13) a.   Gî-túmá [**kîrá** mbîgwiiré] í gîkûrî kînéné mûnó.
      kî-tuma **kî-ra** m-îgw-ire   ni   gî-kû-rî   kî-nene mûno
      7-noise 7-REL 1SG.SM-hear-PFV FOC 7SM-PRS-be 7-big   INT
      'The noise [that I heard] was very loud.'

(< distal demonstrative)

    b.   gî-túmá gî́-kî/   gî-ku/   **kî-rá**
       7-noise 7-DEM.PROX/ 7-DEM.MED/ 7-DEM.DIST
       'this/that/that yonder noise'

Relative marking 2

- Initial focus construction: relative pronoun only when emphatic

(14)   Í mûrigitání (ûrá) áriiríé.
         ni   mû-rigitani (û-ra) a-ari-ire
         FOC   1-nurse   (1-RM) 1SM-talk-PFV
         'It's the nurse who spoke.'

- Relative: relative pronoun gives definiteness effect (A&M)

(15)   mûntû (űrá) aűmbá kûúnga
         mû-ntû   û-ra   a-ûmb-a   kû-unga
         1-person 1-RM   1SM-be.able-FV   15-cultivate
         'a/the person who can cultivate'

Relative marking 3

Abels & Muriungi (2008:689)
One major disclaimer is in order here. Kîîtharaka is a tone language, but we do not understand the grammar of tone sufficiently to be able to say **if and how tone interacts with the focus-related phenomena** studied in this paper. In fact, following the orthographic style of the Kîîtharaka bible, we do not indicate tone in our examples at all.

(16) a.   mbůri îgaacíará   [relative]
          n-bûri î-ka-ciar-a
          9.goat 9SM-FUT-give.birth-FV.REL
          'a goat that will give birth'

    b.   Mbůri îgáaciára.   [non-relative]
          n-bûri i-ka-ciar-a
          9.goat 9SM-FUT-give.birth-FV
          'A/the goat will give birth.'

    c.   Í m̀bůri îgaacíará.   [initial focus constr.]
          ni   n-bûri i-ka-ciar-a
          FOC 9.goat 9SM-FUT-give.birth-FV.REL
          'It's a goat that will give birth.'

Interim summary

	FocP	cleft	Kĩĩtharaka
used in predication	no	yes	yes
change for tense	no	yes	no
change for negation	no	yes	yes
marker used in fragment	yes	only when elided cleft	only oblig as answer to cleft question
marker used for any focus in any position	not necessarily	no	no
relative subject	no	yes	optional
relative pronoun	no	yes/as in relative	yes/optional
relative tone	no	yes	yes

Interpretation

- Scope of negation tested with universal quantifier

- all > neg
  example: **all** mosquitoes did **not** die
  = for all mosquitoes it is not the case that they died = all are alive

- neg > all
  example: **not all** mosquitoes died
  = it is not the case that all mosquitoes died = some are dead, some alive

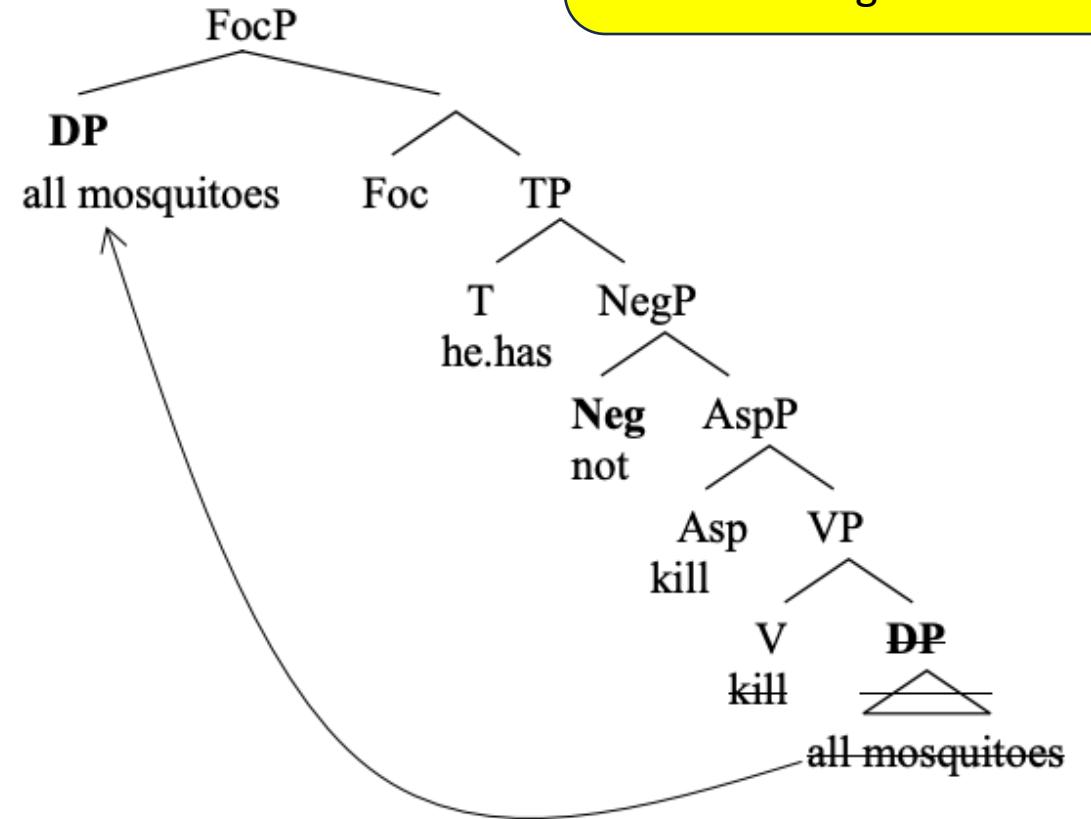- Semantic scope reflects syntactic scope/c-command

Interpretation

biclausal cleft

prediction:
all > neg
= no mosquitoes died

CP
CP   DP_rel
TP   he has not killed
pro_k
COP_i PredP
DP
Pred   t_k
all mosquitoes   t_i
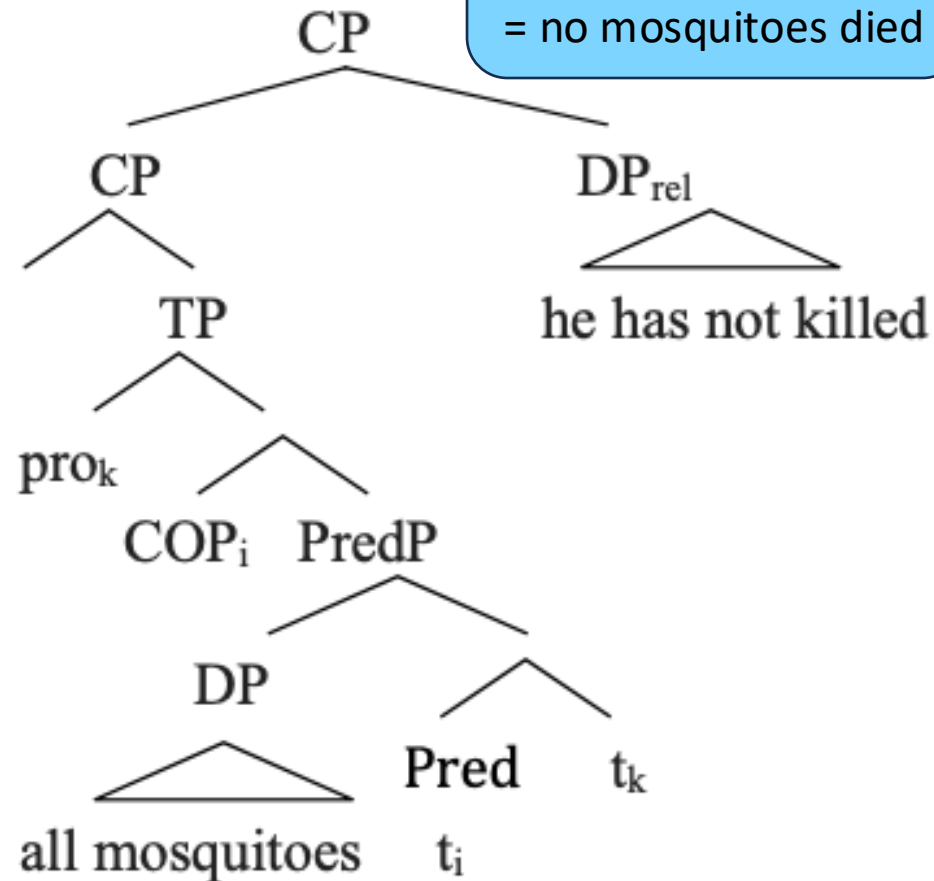
monoclausal focus

prediction:
neg > all / all > neg
= ambiguous

FocP
DP
all mosquitoes   Foc   TP
T   NegP
he.has
Neg   AspP
not
Asp   VP
kill
V   DP
kill   all mosquitoes

Interpretation

(18) a. Í rwaagî̱ rúunthé atírá̱ûragá.@

ni   rû-agi   rû-onthe   a-ti-ra-ûrag-a
COP 11-mosquito   11-all   1SM-NEG-YPST-kill-FV

'It's all the mosquitoes that he didn't kill.' all>neg, *neg>all

b. Atírá̱ûrága rwaagî̱ rúunthé.

a-ti-ra-ûrag-a   rû-agi   ru-onthe
1SM-NEG-YPST-kill-FV 11-mosquito 11-all

'He hasn't killed all the mosquitoes.' neg>all, *all>neg

☑ prediction:
all > neg
= no mosquitoes died

@ A felicitous context here would be 'did he kill all the flies?', as a contrast set is necessary for the use of a preverbal focus –
see Kanampiu & Van der Wal (to appear).

Summary

	FocP	cleft	Kîîtharaka
used in predication	not necessarily	yes	yes
change for tense	no	yes	no
change for negation	no	yes	yes
marker used in fragment	yes	only when elided cleft	only oblig as answer to cleft question
marker used for any focus in any position	not necessarily	no	no
relative SM	no	yes	optional
relative pronoun	no	yes/as in relative	yes/optional
relative tone	no	yes	yes
reconstruction in negation	yes	no	no
reconstruction in binding	yes	no	no
exhaustive meaning	not necessarily	yes	yes
use in thetics	possible	no	yes?

Proposal: reduced cleft
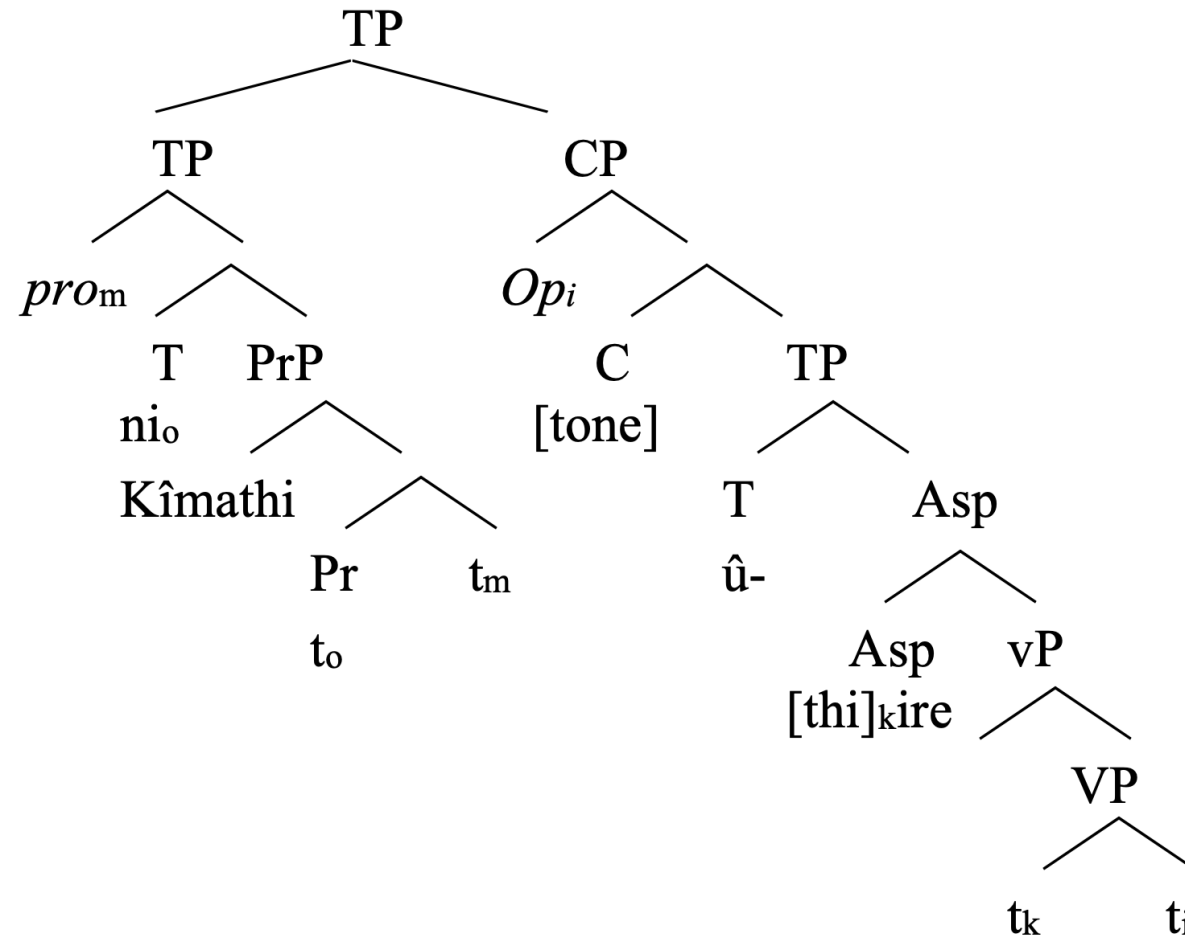
Predictions:
- relative clause cannot be used as DP
- possibly same properties as in other operator movement
- reduced left periphery CP
- tense in predication?

Conclusion/discussion

- The construction is clearly undergoing change…

- …but not as far as Abels & Muriungi say.

- Further formal implementation of the reduced cleft proposal and details in paper-in-progress

- Always mark your tones!

- Separation of the preverbal *ni-* and initial *ni*; less elegant but necessary?

Thank you!

References

- Abels, Klaus & Peter Muriungi. 2008. The focus marker in Kîîtharaka: Syntax and semantics. *Lingua* 118(5). 687–731.

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- Harford, Carolyn. 1997. Empty operator raising in Kitharaka. *Studies in African Linguistics* 26(2). 111–130.

- Lafkioui, Mena B., Ernest Nshemezimana & Koen Bostoen. 2016. Cleft constructions and focus in Kirundi. *Africana Linguistica* 22: 71–106.

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- Zentz, Jason. 2016. The biclausal status of Shona clefts. Paper presented at the 90th Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Society of America (LSA 90), Washington, DC, retrieved via https://jasonzentz.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/zentz2016-lsa90handout.pdf.

Possible renewal of the cleft construction
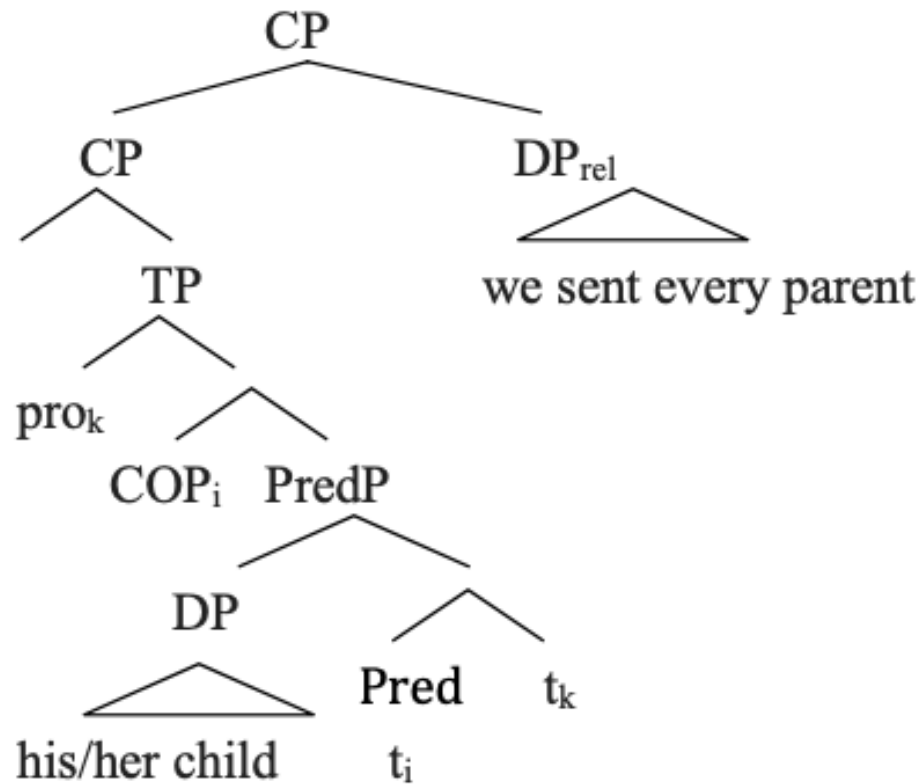
(8) (Did John wash the trousers?)

   a.   *Ci-a-rɪ́   cááti   a-a-bʉ́ʉ́r-íré.
        10SM-PST-be 10.shirt 1SM-PST-wash-PFV
        int. 'It was the shirts he washed.'

   c.   Ci-a-rɪ́   cááti   **i-rá**   a-a-bʉ́ʉ́r-íré.
        10SM-PST-be 10.shirt 10-REL 1SM-PST-wash-PFV
        'It was the shirts that/what he washed.

   d.   Arî, ci-a-rɪ́   cááti.
        no   10SM-PST-be 10.shirt
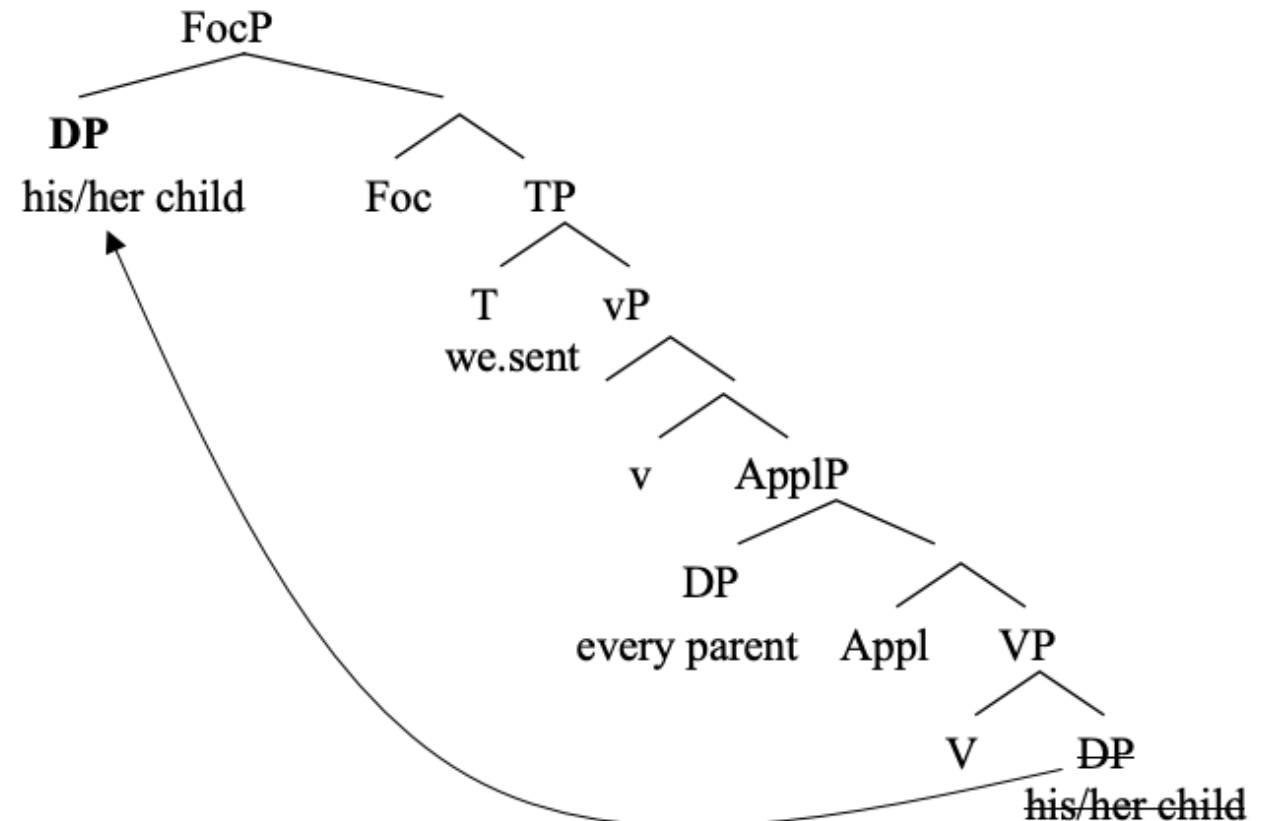   'No, it was shirts.'

Binding 1

biclausal cleft

prediction:
non-distributive
= one particular child

monoclausal focus

prediction:
+ distributive
= their own child

Binding 1

(19) a. I kaána gaake tûrátűmánííre w' ûûrá mûciári.

ni   ka-ana   ka-ake   tû-ra-tûm-an-i-ire   w-a   û-ra   mû-ciari

FOC 12-child 12-POSS.1   1PL.SM-YPST-send-RECIP-IC-PFV 1-CONN 1-DEM.DIST 1-parent

'It's his/her$_{j/*i}$ child that we sent to [each parent]$_i$.'

b. Í tûrátűmánííre wa űra mûciárí káaná gáake.

ni   tû-ra-tûm-an-i-ire   w-a   û-ra   mû-ciari ka-ana   ka-ake

FOC 1PL.SM-YPST-send-RECIP-IC-PFV 1-CONN 1-DEM.DIST 1-parent 12-child 12-POSS.1

'We sent [every parent]$_i$ his/her$_{i/j}$ child.'

☑ prediction:
non-distributive
= one particular child

Binding 2
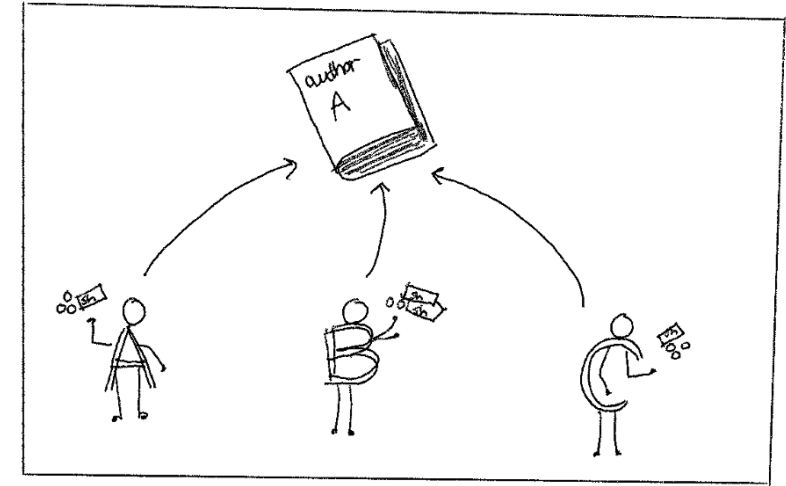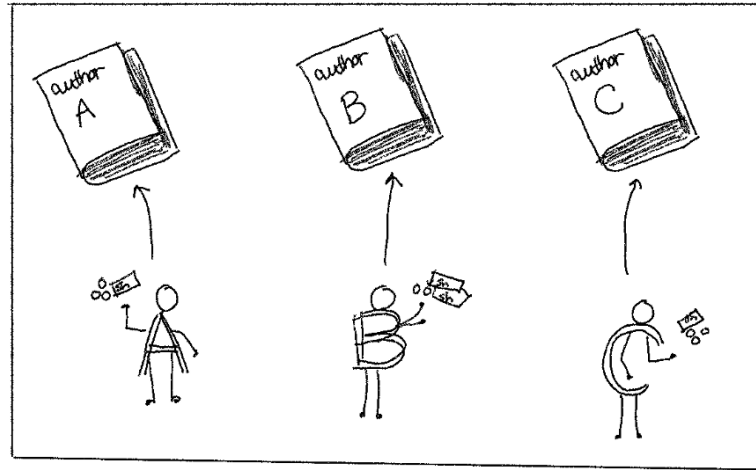
(20) Kî́rá mwaandî́ki n'ágû́ragá îbúkú rîaaké.
kîra mû-andîk-i ni a-gûr-ag-a î-buku rî-ake
every 1-write-NMLZ FOC 1SM-buy-HAB-FV 5-book 5-POSS.1
'Every writer$_i$ buys his/her$_{i/j}$ book.'

(21) N'îbúku rîaaké kî́rá mwaandî́kí ágû́ragá.
ni î-buku rî-ake kîra mû-andîk-i a-gûr-ag-a
FOC 5-book 5-POSS.1 every 1-WRITE-NMLZ 1SM-buy-HAB-FV
'It's his/her$_j$ book that every writer$_{i/*j}$ buys.'

Fragment answer

Ni optional in fragment answers and likely the result of ellipsis in cleft.

(22) a. Apééré ꜝűű méémbé?   [SVO]
          a-per-ire   ûû   ma-embe
          1SM-give-PFV who 6-mangos
          'Who did she give mangos?'

   b. Í Kanywá (ápeere).
       ni   Kanywa   a-per-ire
       FOC   1.Kanywa 1SM-give-PFV
       'It is Kanywa (that she gave).'

   c. Kanywá.
       'Kanywa.'

Fragment answer

Cleft question needs *ni* in the (fragment) answer.

(23) a. N'űû ûyûűgú ápéeré meembe?   [cleft]
      ni   ûû   ûyûûgu   a-per-ire   ma-embe
      FOC who 1.grandmother 1SM-give-PFV 6-mango
      'Who did grandma give mangos?'

    b. Í Kanywá (ápeere).
      ni   Kanywa   a-per-ire
      FOC 1.Kanywa 1SM-give-PFV
      'It is Kanywa (that she gave).'

    c. #Kanywá.
      'Kanywa.'

Ni not for postverbal focus

(24) a. María agûrírée mbí?
          Maria   a-gûr-ire   mbi
          1.Maria   1SM-buy-PFV what
          'What did Maria buy?'

   b. María agûríre (*n') îbúkú.
       Maria   a-gûr-ire   ni   î-buku
       1.Maria 1SM-buy-PFV FOC 5-book
       'Maria bought a book.'

(A&M 2008: 695, tones added & glosses adapted)

Relative marking

	relative marking on V
general present	-
present perfective	segmental difference
present progressive	(absence ni)
future	tonal difference
hodiernal past	tonal difference
hesternal past	(absence ni)
remote past	(absence ni)

Relative marking 3

(25) a.   gîkómbé Maríá áúniré   [relative]
        kî-kombe   Maria   a-un-ire
        7-cup   1.Maria   1SM-break-PFV
        'some cup that Maria broke'

    b.   (What did she break?)
        Maríá aúníre gîkómbé.   [non-relative]
        Maria   a-un-ire   kî-kombe
        1.Maria 1SM-break-PFV 7-cup
        'Maria broke a/the cup.'

    c.   (What did she break?)
        I gîkómbé Máríá áúniré.   [focus constr.]
        ni   kî-kombe Maria   a-un-ire
        FOC 7-cup   1.Maria 1SM-break-PFV
        'It's a/the cup that Maria broke.' (adapted from A&M 2008: 726, 727)

Exhaustive interpretation

(26) (It's alleged that the Swahili teacher was absent this morning.)

Arî́ t'wa gî́choíri n'wá matháábu.

arî	ti	w-a	gî-choiri	ni	w-a	ma-thaabu
no	NEG.COP	1-CONN	7-Kiswahili	FOC	1-CONN	6-mathematics

'No, it is not (the one) of Kiswahili but of mathematics.'

(27) (Did the teacher give the children books and pens?)

I tûrámu túunká mwarímû apéeré twaána.

ni	tû-ramu	tu-onka	mû-arimû	a-pa-îre	tû-aana
FOC	13-pens	13-only	1-teacher	1SM-give-PFV	13-children

'It is pens only that the teacher gave to the children.'

Thetic clefts

(28)   (Why did you move this table?)

Í mwaathʉ́ waayá óogó
ni   mw-aathû û-a-y-a   oogo
FOC 3-sun   3SM-PST-come-FV 16.DEM.MED
'It's (because of) the sun that comes there.'

(29)   Why are you so happy?

N'ĩ́ĩdîth ákínyiré.
ni   Idith   a-kiny-ire
FOC 1.Edith 1SM-arrive-PFV
'It's Edith who arrived.' / 'It's that Edith arrived.'