

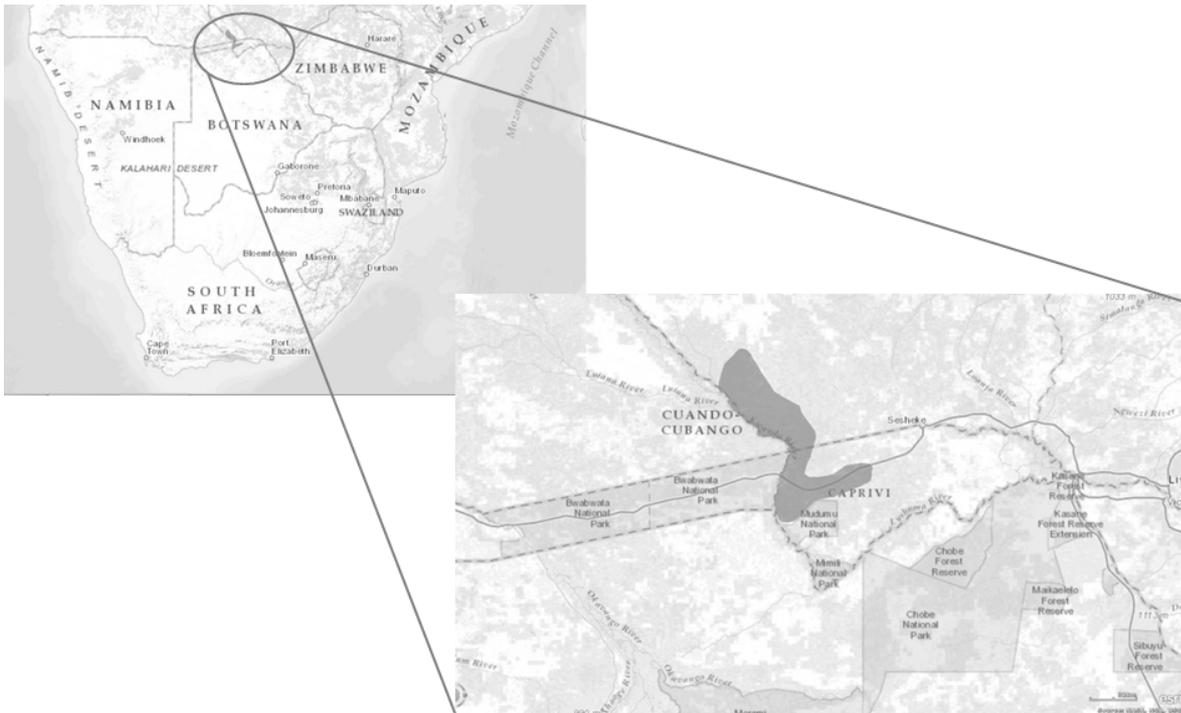


The fronted-infinitive construction in Fwe

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1. Introduction



Fwe (Bantu, K402)

- spoken on the border of Zambia (Western province) and Namibia (Zambezi region, former Caprivi strip)
- 10.000 - 20.000 speakers (Lewis et al. 2015, Sakuhuka et al. 2011)
- Bantu Botatwe: closely related to Shanjo, Totela, Subiya, more distantly to Tonga, Ila, Lenje (Bostoen 2009, de Luna 2010)

The fronted-infinitive construction (FIC) in Fwe:

Advance verb construction (Meeussen 1967: 121), fronted-infinitive construction (De Kind et al. 2015, Güldemann 2003), verb doubling (cf. Morimoto this morning):

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| (1) kù-hàr-à | ndí-'hàr-à |
| INF-rake-FV | SC _{1SG} -rake-FV |
| infinitive verb | inflected verb with high-toned subject concord |
| 'I am raking.' | |

2. Formal properties of the FIC

The infinitive verb always directly precedes the inflected verb:

- (2) **kù-βútúk-à** **ndí-βútúk-à**
INF-run-FV SC_{1SG}-run-FV
'I'm running.'

- (3) ***ndiβutuka kuβutuka**

Prefixes only occur on the inflected verb:

- (4) *object concord*
kù-tw-ír-à **ndí-mù-tw-ír-à**
INF-pound-APPL-FV SC_{1SG}-OC₁-pound-APPL-FV
'I'm pounding for someone.'

- (5) *past imperfective prefix*
kù-óngòz-à **kà-ndí-òngòz-à**
INF-shout-FV PST.IPFV-SC_{1SG}-shout-FV
'I was shouting.'

- (6) *distal*
kù-sèβèz-à **kà-ndí-kà-sèβèz-à**
INF-work-FV PST.IPFV-SC_{1SG}-DIST-work-FV
'I was working there.'

Suffixes occur on both verbs:

- (7) *causative suffix -is-*
kù-r-ís-à **á-r-ís-à** **ò-mù-cècè**
INF-eat-CAUS-FV SC₁-eat-CAUS-FV AUG₁-NP₁-child
'She is feeding the child.'

- (8) *stative suffix -ite*
kù-zík-ìtè **ndí-kì-zìk-ìtè**
INF-hide-STAT SC_{1SG}-REFL-hide-STAT
'I am hidden.'

- (9) *repetitive reduplication*
kù-tòndà-tòndà **ndí-tòndà-tòndà**
INF-watch-REP SC_{1SG}-watch-REP
'I am looking around.'

Different tenses are possible:

(10) *present tense*

kù-yàshìmìs-à **ndí-yàshìmìs-à**
INF-sneeze-FV SC_{1SG}-sneeze-FV
'I am sneezing.'

(11) *past tense*

kù-kékèr-à **kà-ndí-kékèr-à**
INF-plough-FV PST.IPFV-plough-FV
'I was ploughing.'

(12) *near future*

shunu a-βa-nce **ku-zan-a** **βa-zan-e**
today AUG₂-NP₂-child INF-play-FV SC₂-play-SBJV
'Today, the children will be playing.'

(13) *remote future*

zyônà **ku-nyw-a** **na-tu-nyw-e**
tomorrow INF-drink-FV FUT-SC_{1PL}-drink-SBJV
'Tomorrow we will be drinking.'

Negation not possible:

(14) **kù-hònd-à** **ndí-hònd-à**
INF-cook-FV SC_{1SG}-cook-FV
'I am cooking.'

(15) **tà-ndi-hònd-ì**
NEG-SC_{1SG}-cook-NEG
'I do not cook.'

(16) ***kuhonda tandihondi**

3. Functions of the FIC

1. Focus on the verb
2. Obligatory if the verb is the only element in the sentence (only in the northern variety of Fwe)
3. Progressive aspect

Function #1: focus on the verb

(17) *contrastive focus:*

zyônà **kw-ààzyá** **cì** **nà-nd-à-tënd-a**
yesterday SC₁₇-have.not DEM₇ PST-SC_{1SG}-PST-do-FV
'Yesterday, I did nothing.'

shùnù kù-sèβèz-à ndí-sèβèz-â
 today INF-work-FV SC_{1SG}-work-FV
 ‘Today, I’m working.’

(18) *information focus*

question: **zì-njí nò-tênd-ì shùnù**
 COP₈-what SC_{2SG}.PST-do-PST today
 ‘What did you do today?’

answer: **kù-kékèr-à kà-ndí-kèkér-à**
 INF-plough-FV PST.IPFV-SC_{1SG}-plough-FV
 ‘I was ploughing.’

Focus on the verb, not on the entire VP

(19) *focus on the verb and the object*

answer to the question: ‘What did you do today?’

ndì-wá 'ry-ángù kà-ndí-kèkér-à
 COP₅-field CON₅-POSS_{1SG} PST.IPFV-SC_{1SG}-plough-FV
 ‘I was ploughing my field.’

(20) *thetic focus*

The speaker is explaining to the hearer what happens during the night, while she is asleep.

ndì-sáβúré βá-nàkù-shàk-à kù-mí-fùnd-ìs-àng-à
 COP₅-machete SC₂.REL-HAB-want-FV INF-OC_{2PL}-cut-CAUS-HAB-FV
 ‘He keeps wanting to cut you with a machete.’

Focus marking also on non-progressive verbs:

(21) *A child is brought to the clinic with a broken leg. The doctor asks what happened.*

ò-mw-âncè kù-gw-à nâ-gw-ì
 AUG₁-NP₁-child INF-fall-FV SC₁.PST-fall-PST
 ‘The child has fallen.’

(22) *answer to the question: ‘What were you doing in those times?’*

kù-zyímb-à kà-ndí-zyímb-à
 INF-sing-FV PST.IPFV-SC_{1SG}-sing-FV
 ‘I used to be a singer.’

Function #2 (only in northern variety of Fwe): FIC is obligatory when the verb is the only element in the sentence

- (23) a) **kù-shèk-à ndí-'shék-à**
 INF-laugh-FV SC_{1SG}-laugh-FV
 ‘I laugh, am laughing.’
- b) ***ndi-shék-à**

- (24) a) **ndì-yénd-à** **mù-mù-têmwà**
 SC_{1SG}-walk-FV NP₁₈-NP₃-forest
 ‘I walk in the forest.’
- b) **kù-yènda-à** **ndí-yênd-à**
 INF-walk-FV SC_{1SG}-walk-FV
 ‘I am walking.’
- c) ***ndì-yênd-à**

Function #3: progressive aspect:

- (25) **kù-nyw-á** **kà-βà-nyw-â** **è-n-súndá** **yò-nshê**
 INF-drink-FV PST.IPFV-SC₂-drink-FV AUG₉-NP₉-week CON₉-all
 ‘They’ve been drinking the whole week.’
- (26) **kù-g|ònt-à** **á-g|ònt-à** **à-m-ênjì**
 INF-drip-FV SC₆-drip-FV SC₆-NP₆-water
 ‘Water is dripping.’
- (27) **ò-mù-nwé** **'w-ángù** **kù-rèng-à** **ú-rèng-à**
 AUG₃-NP₃-finger CON₃-POSS_{1SG} INF-hurt-FV SC₃-hurt-FV
 ‘My finger is hurting.’

Not a canonical progressive: progressives are typically not stative (Comrie 1976), but verbs in the FIC can use the stative inflection:

- (28) **kù-réré** **ndí-réré**
 INF-sleep.STAT SC_{1SG}-sleep.STAT
 ‘I am asleep.’
- (29) **kù-zík-itè** **ndí-kì-zík-îtè**
 INF-hide-STAT SC_{1SG}-REFL-hide-STAT
 ‘I am hidden.’

FIC can be used for actions with a very long duration:

- (30) **òzyú mw-âncè** **kù-kúr-à** **á-'kúr-à**
 DEM₁ NP₁-child INF-grow-FV SC₁-grow-FV
 ‘The child is growing.’
- (31) **kù-pòt-à** **á-kà-pòt-à** **βà-kwâkwè** **mwà-nàmibìà**
 INF-visit-FV SC₁-DIST-visit-FV NP₂-relative NP₁₈-Namibia
 ‘She’s visiting her relatives in Namibia.’

The progressive use of the FIC contrasts with a more canonical progressive with -kwesi, only used for actions that are actually ongoing at the time of speaking:

- (32) è-fónì yò-zyúmwi ì-kwèsì ì-rír-à
 AUG₉-phone CON₉-someone SC₉-PROG SC₉-cry-FV
 ‘Someone’s phone is ringing.’
- (33) à-kwèsì à-tòmbwêr-à
 SC₁-PROG SC₁-weed-FV
 ‘She’s busy weeding.’

-kwesi is only used for actions with a fairly short duration:

- (34) à-kwèsì à-sìngàβ-á mà-fùtá
 SC₁-PROG SC₁-apply-FV NP₆-oil
 ‘She is putting oil on her skin.’
- (35) βà-kwèsì βà-fwéβ-à mù-tòmbwè
 SC₂-PROG SC₂-smoke-FV NP₃-cigarette
 ‘He is smoking a cigarette.’

FIC can combine with -kwesi progressive to mark both focus and progressive:

- (36) *Someone is walking with a container full of water on her head. The container is leaking, but she doesn’t notice.*
- è-cì-pùpè c-ákò kù-zywízy-à cí-kwèsì cì-zywízy-à
 AUG₇-NP₇-container CON₇-POSS_{2SG} INF-leak-FV SC₇-PROG SC₇-leak-FV
 ‘Your container is leaking.’

4. Origin of the FIC

The fronted-infinitive is a cleft construction:

- (37) mbù-sùnsò ndí-ry-à
 [copulative + noun] [relative clause]
 COP₁₄-relish SC_{1SG}.REL-eat-FV
 ‘It’s relish that I eat.’
- (38) kù-ry-á 'ndí-ry-à
 [copulative + noun] [relative clause]
 COP₁₅-eat-FV SC_{1SG}.REL-eat-FV
 ‘It’s eating that I eat > I’m eating.’

Relative clause verb takes a high tone on the subject concord:

- (39) ndí-βàr-á è-m-búkà
 SC_{1SG}-read-FV AUG₉-NP₉-book
 ‘I read a book.’

- (40) **è-m-búkà** **èyò ndí-βár-à** **njì-ndôtù**
 AUG₉-NP₉-book DEM₉ SC_{1SG}.REL-read-FV COP₉-good
 ‘The book that I read is good.’

The inflected verb in the FIC also takes a high tone on the subject concord:

- (41) **kù-βàr-à** **ndí-βár-à**
 INF-read-FV SC_{1SG}.REL-read-FV
 ‘I am reading.’

Nouns have two sets of copulative prefixes:

- (42) *indefinite, e.g. class 14* **mbù-**
mbù-sùnsò
 COP₁₄-relish
 ‘It’s relish.’

- (43) *definite, e.g. class 14* **mbó-βù-**
mbó-βù-sùnsò
 COP₁₄-NP₁₄-relish
 ‘It’s the relish.’

The FIC can also use two different copulative prefixes:

- (44) “*indefinite*” **kù-**
kù-kòw-à **ndí-ków-à**
 COP₁₅-blink-FV SC_{1SG}.REL-blink-FV
 ‘I’m blinking.’
- (45) “*definite*” **kó-kù-**
kó-kù-màn-à **ndí-mán-à**
 COP₁₅-INF-finish-FV SC_{1SG}.REL-finish-FV
 ‘I’ve just finished.’

Copulative prefix never takes an augment:

- (46) **(ò-)βù-sùnsò**
 AUG₁₄-NP₁₄-relish
 ‘relish’
- (47) **mbù-sùnsò**
 COP₁₄-relish
 ‘It’s relish.’
- (48) ***ò-mbù-sùnsò**

Infinitive in FIC also never takes an augment:

(49) **ndì-pàtéh-itè** **(ò-)kù-nywá** **è-tiyì**
 SC_{1SG}-be.busy-STAT (AUG-)INF-drink AUG₉-tea
 ‘I’m busy drinking tea.’

(50) **kù-nyw-á** **'ndí-nyw-à**
 INF-drink-FV SC_{1SG}-drink-FV
 ‘I am drinking.’

(51) ***ò-kù-nyw-á** **'ndí-nyw-à**

FIC is incompatible with another cleft construction:

(52) **mù-mù-témwà** **ndí-kì-zìk-ìte**
 COP₁₈-NP₃-forest SC_{1SG}-REFL-hide-STAT
 ‘It’s in the forest that I’m hidden.’

(53) ***mù-mù-témwà** **kù-zìk-ìtè** **ndí-kì-zìk-ìtè**

5. Summary

- The FIC in Fwe is a cleft construction.
- The FIC marks focus on the verb or progressive aspect; the latter use probably developed out of the former (cf. Güldemann 2003).
- The focus function of the FIC explains certain restrictions on its progressive use, such as the incompatibility with another cleft construction or with negation.

GLOSSES

APPL	applicative	FUT	future	PST	past
AUG	augment	FV	final vowel	REFL	reflexive
CAUS	causative	INF	infinitive	REL	relative
CON	connective	IPFV	imperfective	REP	repetitive
COP	copulative	NP	noun class prefix	SBJV	subjunctive
DEM	demonstrative	OC	object concord	SC	subject concord
DIST	distal	PROG	progressive	STAT	stative

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