

VERB DOUBLING VS. THE CONJOINT/DISJOINT ALTERNATION

Yukiko Morimoto

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University of Helsinki

INTRODUCTION

A subset of Bantu languages (e.g., languages of zones A, B, E, H & K) displays **verb doubling** – [infinitive verb + identical finite verb] with or without a focus marker (e.g., de Kind et. al 2015).

Another subset of Bantu languages (e.g., languages of zones J, M, N, P & S) displays the **conjoint/disjoint alternation**, widely studied in recent Bantu research (van der Wal & Hyman 2016 and references cited therein).



These seemingly unrelated grammatical forms appearing in different Bantu zones are, in fact, interrelated on the information-structural basis.

- Verb doubling and the conjoint/disjoint alternation are both used to express ‘predicate-centered focus’.
- Verb doubling and the conjoint/disjoint alternation are largely (though not always) in complementary distribution.
- In languages where the two systems are NOT complementary, there seems to be a clear division of labor in terms of their discourse functions.



OVERVIEW OF TALK

1. Theoretical preliminaries: predicate-centered focus
2. Verb doubling
3. Conjoint/disjoint alternation
4. Kikuyu *nĩ* marking: conjoint/disjoint system?
5. Summary & further questions



1 PREDICATE-CENTERED FOCUS (GÜLDEMANN 2009)

Predicate-centered focus

II. Operator

I. State-of-affairs

Ia. Polarity

Iib. TAM

Predicate-centered focus refers to focus on the non-nominal, predicative element of the clause (Güldemann 2009), and can be categorized into two types: state-of-affairs focus and operator focus.



- I. **State-of-affairs focus**: narrow focus on the lexical content of the predicate

Q: What did the princess do with the frog?

A: She KISSED him.

- II. **Operator focus**: focus on sentence operators such as TAM and polarity.

- a. **TAM focus**: narrow scope over the finite element of the predication

Q: Is the princess kissing the frog (right now)?

A: She HAS kissed him.



b. **Polarity focus:** narrow scope over the truth-value of the utterance

Q: I cannot believe the princess kissed the slippery frog.

A: Yes, she DID kiss him.



- Operator focus has been discussed for a number of African languages by Hyman and Watters (1984: 233) in terms of ‘auxiliary focus’, which they define as “the interaction between focus and the semantic features of tense, aspect, mood, and polarity”.
- Polarity focus in particular has also been referred to as ‘verum focus’ (e.g. Höhle 1992).
- Predicate-centered focus is differentiated crucially from so-called predicate focus, which can have wide (VP) focus.



The central idea:

- Predicate-centered focus is the primary discourse function expressed by verb doubling.
- Predicate-centered focus is expressed by manipulating the conjoint & disjoint morphology:
 - conjoint form: term focus
 - disjoint form: operator focus
- Languages seem to differ as to which form is used to express state-of-affairs focus.



2 VERB DOUBLING ACROSS BANTU

KIKUYU (E51)

- The most robust means of marking predicate-centered focus in Kikuyu is the use of *nĩ*, glossed as a focus marker and originally an identificational copula.
- The canonical sentence without *nĩ* is used only with non-subject term focus, and is not available when there is predicate-centered focus.



(1) Object focus

mutumía a-raa-re-ír-é mbóso.

1.woman 1-PST-eat-PERF-FV 6.bean

‘The woman ate (the) **BEANS**.’

(2) Polarity focus

mutumía **nĩ** a-raa-re-ír-é mbóso.

1.womanFOC 1-PST-eat-PERF-FV 6.bean

‘The woman **DID** eat the beans.’

(3) Subject focus (a) orthetic (b)

nĩ mutumía **ũ**-raa-re-ír-é mbóso.

FOC 1.woman 1REL-PST-eat-PERF-FV 6.bean

(a) ‘The **WOMAN** ate the beans.’

(b) ‘The woman ate the beans.’



Among the forms expressing predicate-centered focus in Kikuyu is verb doubling:

[*nĩ* + non-finite verb + finite verb]

- In the **perfective**, the construction expresses contrastive/selective **state-of-affairs focus**:

(4) {The woman hit Peter.}

a. *nĩ kũ-mu-igat-á a-mu-igát-ír-e.*
FOC INF-1OM-chase-FV 1-1OM-chase-PFV-FV
'She CHASED him (away).'

b. #*nĩ amuigátíre.* [Not contrastive]



(5) Selective state-of-affairs focus
{Kamau loves his car. Yesterday he took care
of it. Did he wash or fix it?}

a. *Nĩ gũ-thodék-a a-ra-mé-thodék-ir-e.*
FOC INF-fix-FV 1.SM-PST-9.OM-fix-PFV-FV
'He FIXED it.'

b. *#nĩ araméthodékire.* [not selective]



- In the **imperfective**, the same construction can also place focus on the aspect—i.e., on the progressivity in (6).

(6) Fafa wanyú **nǐ** **gū-kin-yá**
1.father your FOC INF-arrive-FV
a-rá-kin-ya reu.
1-PROG-arrive-FV now
'Your father is arriving now (just as we speak).'



The verb doubling construction is also used for a progressive sentence outside predicate-centered focus context:

(7)a. mwaná nĩ kũreyá áráreyá
1.child FOC INF:eat:FV 1:PROG:eat:FV
músé:re?
rice
'Is the child eating rice?'

b. nĩ kũ-reya a-rá-reyá mbó:so.
FOC INF-eat:FV 1-PROG-eat:FV 6.bean
'He/she is eating beans.'



- (8) andũ ñĩ kũ-ruta
2.people FOC INF-work.FV
ma-ra-ruta wĩra omothe,
2SM-PROG-work.FV work today,
ti rĩsiũ
NEG tomorrow
‘People are working TODAY, not tomorrow.’



VERB DOUBLING IN OTHER ZONE E LANGUAGES

- (9) Kîîtharaka (Abels & Muriungi 2008: 704)
- a. *i-kû-gûra* *Maria* *a-gur-ire* *nyondo*.
FOC-INF-buy 1.PN 1SM-buy-PERF 9.hammer
'Maria BOUGHT the hammer.' (she did not borrow it.) **State-of-affairs focus**
- b. *i-ku-noga* *Maria* *a-rî* *mû-nog-u*.
FOC-INF-tire 1.PN 1-be 1-tired-ADJ
'Maria is really tired.' (she is not kidding!) **Truth-value focus**



(10) Kuria (Landman & Ranero 2015: 6)

{Did they really eat fruits?}

e, n-oko-ria ama-ako

yes FOC-14-eat 6-fruit

ba-a-rey-e.

2-PST-eat.PERF-FV

‘Yes, they DID eat fruits.’ **Truth-value focus**

Outside zone E languages, verb doubling constructions are apparently widely attested in West Bantu languages of Guthrie’s zones B and H (Hadermann 1996).



(11) Civili (West Kikongo variety; Ndouli 2012: 5)

{n-cétù ù-á-búl-à piele}

1-woman 1-PERF-beat-FV Pierre

‘Did the woman beat Peter?’

ko kú-tél-à n-cétù ù-à-ń-tél-à.

no 15-call-FV 1-woman 1-PERF-1OM-call-FV

‘No, the woman called him.’



(12) Kisolongo (south) (de Kind et al. 2015):

a. Yántu nwána benwánánga?

ya-ntu Ø-nwan-a be-Ø-nwan-ang-a

2-person 15-fight-FV 2-PRS-fight-IPFV-FV

‘Are the people fighting?’

b. Pé, kebenwánánga ko, kína bekínánga.

pe ke-be-Ø-nwan-ang-a ko

no NEG-2-PRS-fight-IPFV-FV NEG

Ø-kin-a be-Ø-kin-ang-a

15-dance-FV 2-PRS-dance-IPFV-FV

‘No, they’re not fighting, they’re dancing.’



Similar constructions with verb doubling have also been reported in:

- Southern-Cameroon language Tuki (A 601, Biola 1995)
- South-Western Bantu language Mbukushu (K333, Güldemann 2003: 336) and Fwe (K402, Gunnink 2014).



Across the Kikongo varieties, the same construction is used to express progressivity outside focus context without a progressive morpheme (de Kind et. al 2013, 2014; Güldemann et. al 2014, 2015).

(13)

- a. Kimbeko (H16, De Kind et. al 2013)
Ø-sónik-a káka ba-sónik-éni.
INF-read-FV only 2-write-PFV
'We only WROTE.' SoA focus (PFV)
- b. Cizali
I-búlu Ø-zawúl-a ci-zawul-a.
7-cattle 15-run-FV 7-run-FV
'The cattle are running.' progressive (IMPFV)



SUMMARY:

Table 1: Types of PCF expressed by verb doubling

	Perfective	Imperfective
State-of affairs	Kikuyu (4)-(5) Kitharaka (9a) Cilvili (11) Kimbeko (13a)	Kisolongo (12)
Polarity	Kuria (10)	Kitharaka (9b)
TAM Progressive	—	Kikuyu (6)-(8) Cizali (13b)



Zone	Source	Language
Grassfields	Ndamsah (2012)	Limbum
Zone A	Biloa (1995)	Tuki (A601)
Zone B	Hadermann (1996)	Punu (B43), Nzebi (B52)
Zone H	Hadermann (1996)	Manyanga (H16b), Yombe (H16c), Ntandu (H16g), Kaamba (H17b), Yaka (H33), Suundi (H13b), Mbundu (H21), Tsotso (H33), Holu (H33)
	De Kind et al (2013, 2015)	Beko (east), Zali (west), Woyo (west), Vili (west), Kakongo (west), Ndibu (central), Manyanga (central), Fiote (central), Suundi (north), Sikongo (south), Solongo (south), Zombo (south), Tsotso (south)



Zone	Source	Language
Zone E	Morimoto (2016)	Kikuyu (E51)
	Güldemann (2003)	Gusii (E42), Kuria (E43)
	Abels and M. (2008)	Tharaka (E54)
Zone K	Güldemann (2003)	Mbukushu (K333)
	Gunnink (2014)	Fwe (K402)

Table 2: Verb doubling languages



3 CONJOINT/DISJOINT ALTERNATION

- The conjoint/disjoint alternation is an alternation between verb forms that are formally distinguishable, that are associated with an information-structural difference in the interpretation of the verb and/or following element and of which one form is not allowed in sentence-final position (van der Wal 2016).
- The CJ/DJ alternation shares the following set of recurrent properties across the relevant languages:



Table 3: Recurrent properties of the CJ/DJ opposition
(cf. Güldemann 2003: 328)

	Formally marked verb form (DJ)	Formally unmarked verb form (CJ)
a.	Verb can be clause-final	Verb can never be clause-final
b.	Postverbal material out-of-focus	Postverbal material in-focus
c.	Emphasis on positive truth value	Emphasis on postverbal constituent
d.	In polar questions and answers	In constituent question and answers
e.	Only in asserted main clause	Formal counterpart in non-asserted clause
f.	w/o formal negative counterpart	Formal negative counterpart
	predicate-centered focus	Term focus



1. There is a finality restriction.
2. The verb allowed in the final position is the formally more marked one.
3. Predicate-centered focus is associated with the final verb form; term focus is associated with the other form.
4. This alternation is restricted to a subset of tenses.
5. This restriction mostly applies to main clauses.

(van der Wal & Hyman 2016: 4)



(14) Makhuwa (P31, van der Wal 2011: 1735)

CJ *Nthíyáná* *o-c-aalé* *nramá.*
1.woman 1SM-eat-PERF.CJ 3.rice
'The woman ate RICE.'

DJ *Nthíyáná* *o-hoó-cá* *(nráma).*
1.woman 1SM-PERF.DJ-eat 3.rice
'The woman ate (rice).'



TABLE 4: CJ/DJ LANGUAGES (MARTEN & VAN DER WAL 2014)

Zones	Languages
G23	Samba
J20 J60	Haya Kirundi, Kinyarwanda, Ha
K21	Lozi
M40	Bemba
N13	Matengo
P10 P20 P30	Ndengeleko, Kimatumbi Makonde, Makwe Makhuwa, Cuwabo
S20 S30 S40 S50 S60	Venda Tswana, Sotho Xhosa, Zulu, Swati, Ndebele Tshwa, Tsonga/Chamgana, Ronga Chope



Languages seem to differ in what type of predicate-centered focus is expressed by the CJ/DJ form.

Kinyarwanda (Ngoboka et al. 2016, exs (49)-(51))

- (15) Truth-value focus DJ
- A. *{I don't think John worked yesterday.}*
- B. *Yarákoze.*
a-á-ra-kór-ye
1SM-REM-DJ-work-PFV
'He *did* work.'



- (16) TAM focus DJ
A: {'Did John work yesterday, or will he work tomorrow?'}
B: *Yarákoze.*
a-á-ra-kór-ye
1SM-REM-DJ-work-PFV
'He *worked.*'
- (17) State-of-affairs focus DJ
A: 'Did John work or did he sleep?'
B: *Yarákoze.*
a-á-ra-kór-ye
1SM-REM-DJ-work-PFV
'He *worked.*'



Matengo (Yoneda 2016)

Truth-value focus

DJ

(18) {Did you read this book?}

n-a-som-iti.

1SG.SM-PST-read-PF

‘(Yes,) I did read (it).’

(19) {Did Maria cook? Didn’t Maria forget to cook?}

María *ju-a-telek-iti,* *ngaapa*

1.Maria 1.SM-PST-cook-PF NEG.PST

ju-a-jegw-iti

1.SM-PST-forget-PF

‘Maria did cook, she didn’t forget.’



State-of-affairs focus CJ w/ light verb *tenda*

(20) *María* *ju-í-tend-aje*
1.Maria 1SG.SM-FUT-do-CJF
kú-kalang-a, *ngaa kú-tutu-a.*
INF-fry-BF NEG INF-boil-BF
‘Maria will FRY (it), not boil (it).’

(21) *n-tend-a* *kú-som-a* *péna*
1SG.SM-do-CJF INF-read-BF only
(*ngaa kú-handik-a*).
(NEG INF-write- BF)
‘I am only READING (not writing).’



Makhuwa (van der Wal 2009: 233)

- (22) State-of-affairs focus DJ
nki-ń-rúpa nkaláwá-ni
NEG.1sg-PRS:DJ-sleep 18.boat-LOC
ki-náá-lówá nkaláwáni
1sg-PRS.DJ-fish there
'I don't sleep on the boat, I fish there.'



Zulu (Doke 1992: 809-810) **DJ = truth-value focus**

(23) **CJ** **ngi-dla** **isi-nkwa**
1S-eat.PRS 7-bread
'I eat bread.'

term focus?

DJ **ngi-ya-si-dla** **isi-nkwa**
1S-DJ-7-eat.PRS 7-bread
'I DO eat bread.'

(24) **CJ** **ngi-funa** **uku-hamba**
1S-want.PRS INF-walk
'I want to go.'

DJ **ngi-ya-funa** **uku-hamba** **kodwa ...**
1sg-DJ-want.PRS INF-walk but
'I do want to go, but ...'



Xhosa (Jokweni 1995: 94)

(25) **DJ: Truth-value focus**

bá-ya-fudúuka ngowésihláánu.

2-DJ-emigrate Friday

‘They do emigrate on Friday.’

(26) **DJ: State-of-affairs focus**

ba-yá-zaam’ ukú-lim’ úmbóóna.

2-DJ-try 15-cultivate maize

‘They TRY to cultivate maize.’



SUMMARY

- The conjoint/disjoint alternation relates (directly or indirectly) to predicate-centered focus.
- The disjoint form is robustly associated with operator focus.
- Languages seem to differ as to which form is used to express state-of-affairs focus: cf. CJ form with the light verb *tenda* ‘do’ in Matengo.
- Verb doubling and the CJ/DJ system share the information structural properties.



4 KIKUYU ÑĪ MARKING: CJ/DJ SYSTEM?

The earlier examples in (1) and (2) show the contrast between the unmarked verb vs. the *ñĪ*-marked verb, which is analogous to the CJ form vs. the DJ form:

(1) Object focus: the verb is unmarked

mutumía a-raa-re-ír-é mbóso.

1.woman 1-PST-eat-PERF-FV 6.bean

‘The woman ate (the) **BEANS**.’

(2) Polarity focus: the verb is marked by *ñĪ*

mutumía ñĪ a-raa-re-ír-é mbóso.

1.woman FOC 1-PST-eat-PERF-FV 6.bean

‘The woman **DID** eat the beans.’



- (27) Non-contrastive state-of-affairs focus
{Kamau loves his car. Yesterday he took care of it. What exactly did he do with the car?}
nĩ a-ra-mé-thodék-ir-e.
FOC 1.SM-PST-9-fix-PFV-FV
'He fixed it.' vs. selective focus in (5)
- (28) TAM focus (perfect)
{*nĩ kũreya ararea mboso kana nĩ asireire?*}
{Is she (still) eating the beans or has she already eaten them?}
nĩ a-si-re-ir-e.
FOC 1.SM-6-eat-PFV-FV
'She's already eaten them.'



➤ The clause-finality restriction:

(29) The unmarked verb cannot be clause-final.

a. *mwaná á-rá-re-ir-é mbó:so.*
1.child 1.SM-PST-eat-PFV-FV 6.bean
'The child ate the beans.'

b. **mwaná á-rá-reíre.*
1.child 1.SM-PST-eat-PFV-FV
Intended: 'The child ate.'



(30) The *nĩ* marked verb can be clause-final.

a. *Mwaná nĩ á-rá-re-ir-é mbó:so.*
1.child FOC 1.SM-PST-eat-PFV-FV 6.bean
'The child did eat the beans.'

b. *mwaná nĩ á-rá-re-ir-é.*
1.child FOC 1.SM-PST-eat-PFV-FV
'The child did eat.'



TABLE 5:

Division of labor in kikuyu PCF structures

Structure	Imperfective	Perfective	Perfect
Verb doubling	TAM FOC Progressive	Contrastive SoA focus	x
nĩ + verb ("disjoint?")	Polarity focus	Polarity focus Non-contrastive SoA focus	TAM focus

∅ + verb ("conjoint?") → term focus?



For term focus, there also seems to be a division of labor between the [unmarked verb + term] (“conjoint”) vs. cleft or cleft-like structure (Morimoto 2016).

Table 6: cleft/cleft-like structure vs. the “conjoint”

	Cleft/cleft-like	Unmarked V + NP
SUBJ	± wh	--
OBJ	+ wh	-wh
LOC	+ wh	-wh
TEMP	+ wh	-wh
MAN	+ wh	± wh
INSTR	--	± wh



5 SUMMARY & QUESTIONS

- Verb doubling and the CJ/DJ alternation are complementary, and can be related through the common discourse function of predicate-centered focus. There's a division of labor where there is no complementarity in a single language.
- What other phenomena might also be relevant to these systems (or any one of them)?

Inversion??



- Inversion is a syntacticized means of organizing topical and focal (or non-topical) elements in an utterance/in discourse.
- Clefts/cleft-like structures serve a similar function.

(31) **Otjiherero:** formal locative inversion

M-òn-djúwó mw-á hìtí é-rùngà.

18-9-house 18SM-PST enter 5-thief

‘Into the house entered a/the thief.’

(Marten 2006)

(32) **Kenyan Swahili:** inverted pseudo-cleft

Nyumba ndi-po mwizi a-li-ngi-a.

9.house COP-RM16 1.thief 1-PST-enter-FV

‘The house is where the thief entered.’



(33) **Kikuyu:** inverted pseudo-cleft

Nyũmba-ine nĩ-kwo mũisi

9.house-LOC COP-where 1.thief

a-ra-iger-ire

1SM-PST-enter-PFV

‘Into the house is where the thief entered.’



Kenyan Swahili displays verb doubling for the progressive reading:

- (34) a. Ni Kwenda a-na-enda.
COP INF.go 3S-PRS-go
'She's leaving.'
- b. Ni ku-kula na-kula (< ni-na-kula)
COP INF-eat 1S.SM:PRS-eat
'I'm eating.'

- (35) {The woman hit Peter}
??Ni ku-m-fukuz-a
COP INF-3S.OM-chase-FV
a-li-m-fukuz-a
3S-PST-3S.OM-chase-FV
'(No) She CHASED him.' (cf. (4) for Kikuyu)



(36) VS order in **Swahili** (unaccusative)

a. Wa-li-fika wa-toto wa-wili.
2.SM-PST-arrive 2- child 2-two

‘There arrived two children.’ (Marten 2010)

b. Pa-li-fika watoto wawili
16-PST-arrive 2.child 2-two

‘There arrived two children.’

(37)a. Nyanya wa-na-shona (unergative)
1.grandmother 1-PRS-weave

‘The grandmother is weaving.’

b. *Pa-na-shona Nyanya
16-PRS-weave 1.grandmother

Intended: ‘There weaves the grandmother.’



- Verb doubling vs. the conjoint/disjoint alternation
- Cleft/cleft-like structures and/or inversion/VS order

Languages divide up their grammatical space in different ways to code various types of discourse elements (predicate-centered focus, topic, non-topical element, focus, notion of contrast ...).



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