

What we found is (not just) a focus construction

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1. Introduction

In the [BaSIS project](#) (Bantu Syntax and Information Structure), we aim to discover how Bantu languages express information structure, and how/whether this is related to case licensing. With a team of PhD students and collaborators at African universities and Leiden University, we apply a specially developed [methodology](#) to gather relevant data.

One of the ten languages in the project is Kĩĩtharaka (Gurthrie code E54), spoken in the centre of Kenya by about 180,000 people. Like other Bantu languages, it has noun classes and extensive verb morphology:

- (1) Kĩ-ronda gĩkĩ gi-ake gĩ-k-oor-u-a...
7-wound 7.DEM.PROX 7-POSS 7SM-FUT-heal-PASS-FV
'This wound of hers will be healed...'

In Kĩĩtharaka, two of the ways to express focus are the pseudocleft and the *n'we* construction:

- (2) (What exactly did Karĩmi kick?)
[Kĩ-rá Karĩmi á-ríng-iré] í mũ-bírá.
7-DEM.DIST Karimi 1SM-kick-PFV COP 3-ball
'What Karĩmi kicked is a ball.'

- (3) (What exactly did Karĩmi kick?)
Mũ-biira n'-uu Karĩmi a-riing-iré.
3-ball COP-PRO 1.Karimi 1SM-kick-PFV
'A ball is what Karimi kicked.'

Patrick scrutinised the exact focus interpretation of these two constructions, but when we got to the syntactic structure, they turned out to be only two in a whole mine field of constructions:

NP ni NP Jane ni teacher copular clause
--

FR ni NP who teaches ni Jane pseudocleft NP ni FR Jane ni who teaches reverse pseudocleft
--

FR ni-pro NP who teaches ni Jane reverse n'we construction NP ni-pro REL Jane ni who teaches n'we construction

Our aim today is to map the minefield and find the syntactic structure underlying each of these constructions, with the future aim to understand how the focus interpretation maps onto or follows from that structure. We treat them in turn:

- Copular clauses, pseudoclefts, and reverse pseudoclefts
- N’we construction
- Inverse n’we construction

2. Copular clauses

Different types of copular clauses are distinguished, between two (predicational and equative) and four (adding specificational and identificational). We concentrate here on distinguishing the predicational reading, in which a non-verbal constituent functions as the predicate, like mwarimû ‘teacher’ in (4), from the specificational reading, in which the first NP introduces a variable and the second NP provides a value for the variable (Mikkelsen 2011). In simple words, predicational tells us what the subject is, and specificational tells us who the subject is.

In Kĩtharaka, both types of copular clause contain *ni*, the reflex of the reconstructed proto-Bantu copula *ni. However, it will occur as *n-* preceding a vowel-initial word and as *i-* preceding a consonant.

(4) (What does Jane do for a living?)

Jane i mwarimû.

1.Jane COP 1-teacher

‘Jane is a teacher.’

[predicational]

(5) (Who is the chef?)

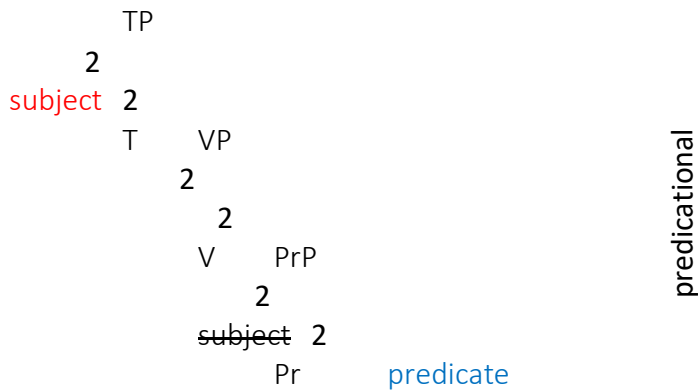
Chebu i mw-ekûrû ûyû.

chef COP 1-woman 1.DEM.PROX

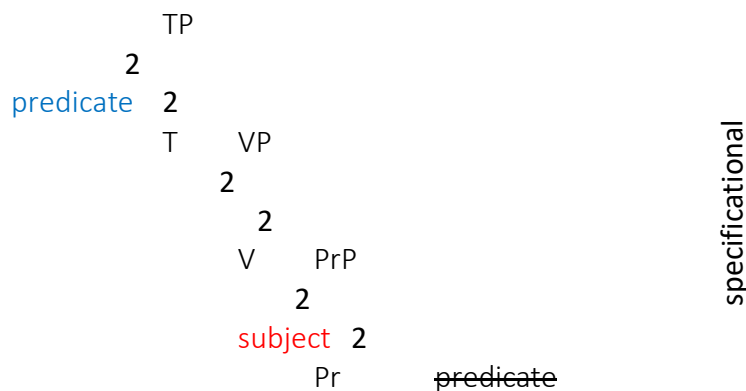
‘The chef is this woman.’

[specificational]

We follow Bowers (1993) (cf. Baker 2003, Adger & Ramchand 2003) in positing a Pr(ed) head as the syntactic and semantic pivot between the subject and predicate in non-verbal predication. The complement of Pr functions as the predicate and the XP in specPredP is the subject. When the subject raises to specTP, the result is a predicational copular clause. Specificational copular clauses are derived by “predicate inversion” (Heggie 1988, Moro 1997, Heycock 1994, Mikkelsen 2005, among others), whereby the predicate moves to specTP.



Theresa is a linguist/smart/in Cambridge



The linguist is Theresa.

In Kĩĩtharaka, this analysis is easily applicable. Subject agreement -evidence of movement to specTP- is not visible on the copula *ni*. *Ni* is invariant, not taking any TAM morphology or agreement. However, *ni* is restricted to the present tense; in past tenses, the prefixes for subject marking and past tense are attached to the verb *-rĩ* 'to be'. Since both parts of a copular clause tend to refer to the same (type of) referent, they are usually in the same noun class. This means that in most canonical cases we still cannot determine whether agreement (if any is visible) is determined by the precopular or postcopular NP. In constructed situations, however, we can see that the initial NP determines subject agreement.

(6) (In an animal folktale.)

a. Mũ-tũuri w-eétũ a-a-rĩ m-bũri.
 1-neighbour 1-POSS.1PL 1SM-PST-be 9-goat
 'Our neighbour was a goat.'

b. M-bũri ã-ra y-aa-rĩ mũ-tũuri w-eétũ.
 9-goat 9-DEM.DIST 9SM-PST-be 1-neighbour 1-POSS.1PL
 'That goat was our neighbour.'

In Kĩĩtharaka simple copular clauses, the initial phrase forms the topic, and the focus is always on the postcopular phrase (underlined), as visible in the provided contexts:

(7) (I've been referred to room B10 to find Aron. There are five people in the room. Who is Aron?)

a. Aron n' ûyû.
 1.Aron COP 1.dem.prox
 'Aron is this (one).'

b. #ûyû n'Aron.

(8) (The university theatre club puts on a performance of the nativity every year. Who is Joseph this year?)

Josef n' Onesmus mw-anka ûyû.
 1.Joseph COP 1.Onesmus 3-year 3.DEM.PROX
 'Onesmus is Joseph this year.'

We conclude that Kĩtharaka copular clauses can be accounted for by a PrP structure and inversion, and that the focus falls on the postcopular NP (in line with general postverbal focus).

3. (Reverse) Pseudoclefts

Pseudoclefts take the form [free relative] ni [NP]:

(9) [**Kĩ-rá** Karîmi á-rííng-iré] í mû-bíírá.
 7-DEM.DIST Karimi 1SM-kick-PFV COP 3-ball
 'What Karîmi kicked is a ball.'

(10) [**Ba-rá** ba-p-éer-w-é tû-rámu] i tw-áána tu-unka.
 2-DEM.DIST 2-give-PFV-PASS-FV 13-pens COP 13-children 13-only
 'Those that were given pens are the children only.'

The free relative is introduced by a distal demonstrative ending in -ra, taking the noun class of what it refers to. This demonstrative functions as a relative clause marker in general, as seen in (11) and (12). Since proximal and medial demonstratives are still able to function as relative clause markers too, we gloss the form in -ra as a demonstrative and not a relative pronoun.

(11) N-thígiirí [í-rá n-da-nénké-ére ú-kî]
 10-black.ants 10-DEM.DIST 1SG.SM-YPST-give-PFV 14-honey
 i ci-aakén-íre mûnó.
 COP 10SM-become.happy-PFV INT
 'The black ants that I gave honey are very happy.'

(12) Gî-túmá [kî-rá mb-îgw-iiré], í-gî-kû-rî kî-néné mûnó.
 7-noise 7-DEM.DIST 1SG.SM-hear-PFV FOC-7SM-PRS-be 7-big INT
 'The noise that I heard was very loud.'

These relative clauses function as independent DPs, as can be seen in their use as a subject or object:

(13) (Mû-ntu) [Û-ra gw-ît-iré] a-káa-y-a.
 1-person 1-DEM.DIST 2SG.SM-call-PFV 1SM-FUT-come-FV
 'The one you called will come'

(14) I-mb-endeete (kî-ntu) [kî-ra mb-on-ire].
 FOC-1SG.SM-like 7-thing 7-DEM.DIST 1SG.SM-see-PFV
 'I like the thing that/what I saw.'

When the postcopular XP is adjectival, it is easily recognisable as a predicational pseudocleft, but nominal predicates can be ambiguous:

Predicational (AP)

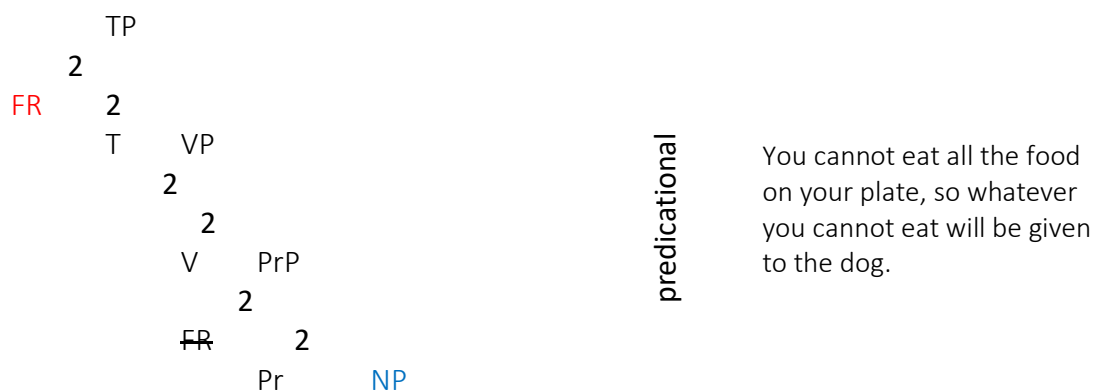
(15) [Kîra kî-m-bay-ith-iir-í-e] i kî-thûûku mûno.
 7-DEM.DIST 7SM-1SG.OM-become.ill-CAUS-PFV-IC-PFV COP 7-bad INT
 'What made me ill is very dangerous.'

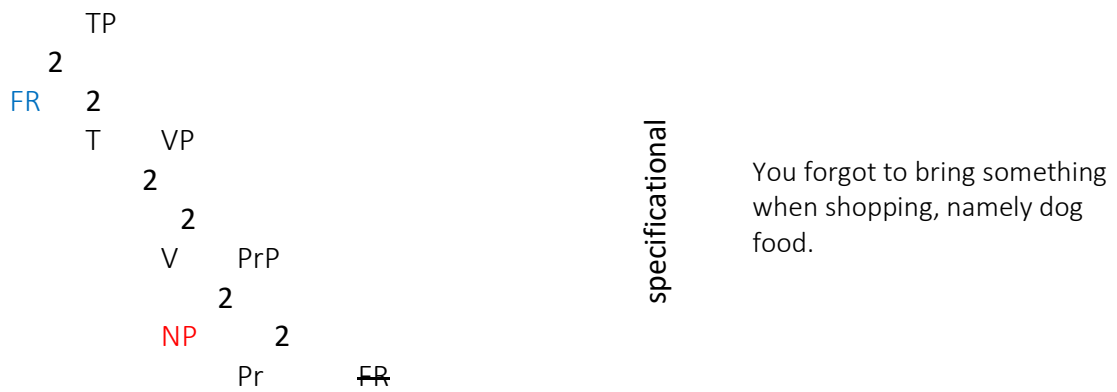
Predicational/specificational?

(16) [Ûra ndoona] i mwarimû.
 û-ra n-ra-on-a ni mû-arimû
 1-DEM.DIST 1SG.SM-YPST-see-FV COP 1.teacher
 'Who/the one I have seen is a/the teacher.'

To remedy this difficulty in distinguishing the two readings, we apply Higgins' (1979) ambiguous sentence 'what John doesn't eat is dog food', to tease apart the two readings for each surface structure. On the predicational reading, whatever John leaves on his plate can be eaten by the dog (it 'becomes' dog food'), whereas on the identificational reading, John does not eat food labelled as 'dog food' (the stuff in tins).

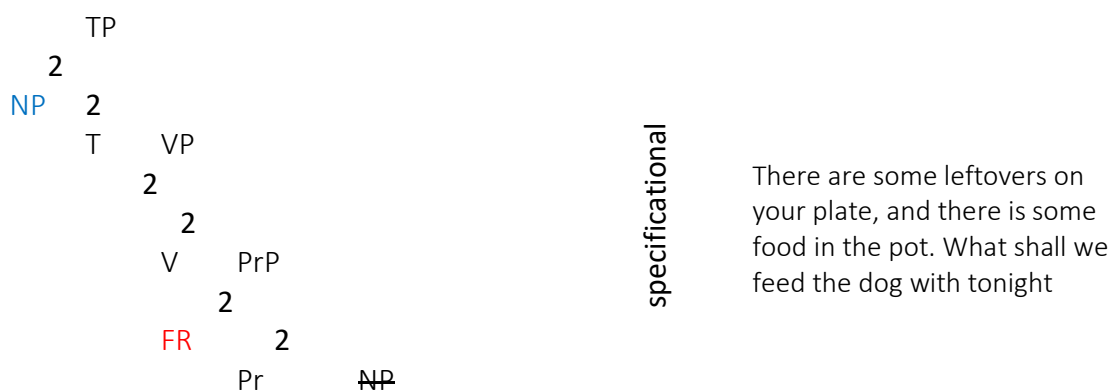
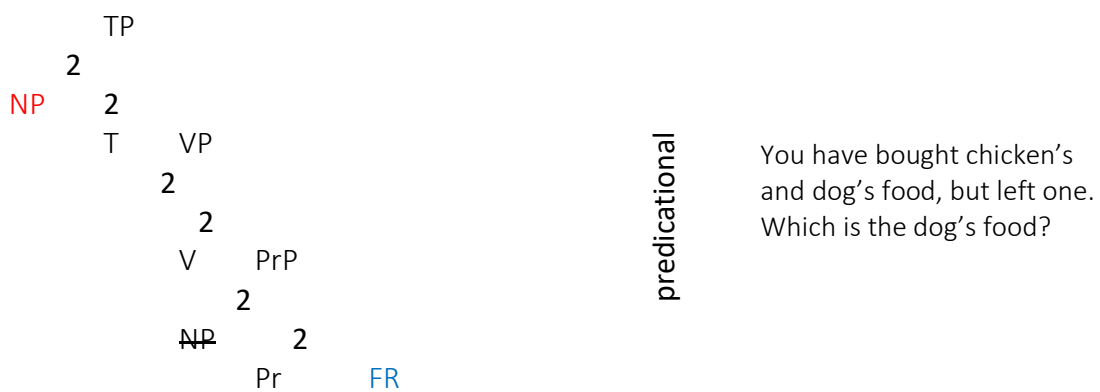
(17) [Kî-ra w-a-tigaria] n' [irio bi-a kûrû].
 7-DEM.DIST 2SG.SM-PST-leave COP 8.food 8-CONN 15.dog
 'What you left is food for the dog.'





So the PrP analysis seems to work well for pseudoclefts too! But now we have two underlying structures AND different inversions... Do the other two options exist too? Yes – these are the reverse pseudoclefts.

- (18) [Irio bi-a kurû] i [bi-rá w-a-tigaría].
 8.food 8-CONN 15.dog COP 8-DEM.DIST 2SG.SM-PST-leave
 'The food for the dog is what you left.'



If these have the same structure as copular clauses, they are expected to also feature the same focus, which is borne out: the postcopular constituent is always focused, whether this is the free relative or the noun.

- (19) (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.DEM.DIST 1RM-PRS-wash 10.dishes
 'Rob is the one who is washing the dishes.'

- (20) (Someone thinks erroneously that Joy is doing the dishes.)
 [ûra _____ û-kû-thaambia thaani] i Rob.
 1.DEM.DIST 1RM-PRS-wash 10.dishes COP 1.Rob
 'The one who is washing the dishes is Rob.'

We conclude the following for pseudoclefts and reverse pseudoclefts:

- FR behaves exactly like a noun
- FR and NP can be subject or predicate
- Either one can move to specTP, resulting in predicational and specificational readings
 - NP = NP
 - FR = NP
 - NP = FR
- Focus is always on the postcopular phrase – postverbal default interpretation
- Accounted for in PrP analysis plus inversion

4. (Reverse) N'we construction

In the so-called *n'we* construction (suggestions for a better name are welcome!), an independent pronoun enters into the picture, which is in the same noun class as the referent to which the precopular constituent refers.

- (21) (There is a dispute over what Kawîra saw.)
 Múúró n'úú Kawîra óóníre.
 muu-ro ni-u-o Kawîra a-on-ire
 3-river COP-3-PRO 1.Kawîra 1SM-see-PFV
 'A river is what Kawîra saw.'

- (22) (Which books by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o would you recommend?)
The River Between i-rî-o rî-ega.
 The River Between COP-5-PRO 5-good
 'The River Between is the best book.' (ibuku 'book' is in class 5)

- (23) (You might think that it was Peter who talked, but...)
 nDáníerí n'-wé á-ár-iir-i-é.
 1.Daniel COP-1.PRO 1SM-talk-PFV-IC-FV
 'Daniel (is the one who) talked.'

The pronoun following the copula is the independent pronoun, as also used after the preposition *na* 'with', which also appears as part of the combination *-rî na* 'to be with' = 'to have'.

- (24) Tó m n'-á-rá-ín-íre na=wé.
 1.Tom FOC-1SM-YPST-sing-PFV with=1.PRO
 'Tom sang with him/her.'

(25) (Does the man have four melons?)

Arí, i ma-thátû a-rî na=mó.
no COP 6-three 1SM-be with=6.PRO

'No, he has three', lit. 'it is three that he is with them' (referring to melons, class 6)

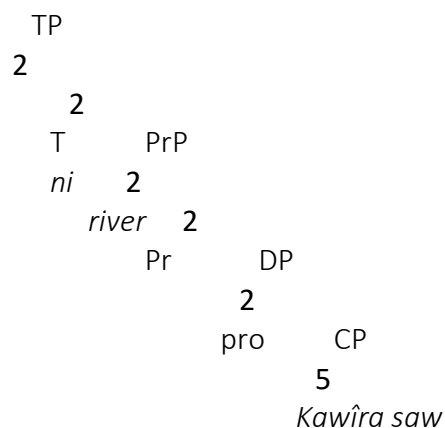
The postcopular part of this pseudocleft does not have the demonstrative relative marker in *-ra*, and in fact cannot appear with it:

(26) Pátrík n'-wé (*û-ra) a-ga-tóóngór-í-á.
1.Patrick COP-1.PRO 1-DEM.DIST 1RM-FUT-lead-IC-FV
'Patrick is (the one) who will chair us.'

4.1. Is it a copular clause?

Considering that this construction also consists of an NP, *ni*, and a relative clause, we might think it is a variant of the reverse pseudocleft, and hence analysable as a copular clause involving PrP.

Múú-ró n'-úú Kawîra óón-íre.
3-river COP-3-PRO 1.Kawîra 1SM.see-PFV
'The river is it, which/that Kawîra saw'
'The river is what Kawîra saw'



We consider 5 properties of the *n'we* construction to test this hypothesis.

1: Optional relative marking

Apart from the demonstrative in *-ra*, there is not much relative marking in Kĩtharaka. Only in class 1 can the subject marker on the verb show 'anti-agreement' *û-*, but the normal subject marker for class 1 *a-* is equally acceptable. There is variability, with speakers accepting either form.

(27) a. Pátrík n'-wé á-ga-tóóngór-í-á.
1.Patrick COP-1.PRO 1SM-FUT-lead-IC-FV
'Patrick is the one to chair us.'

- b. Pátrík n'wé û-ga-tóóngór-í-á.
 1.Patrick COP-1.PRO 1RM-FUT-lead-IC-FV
 'Patrick is the one to chair us.'

2: Relative clause cannot be omitted

The relative clause following the pronoun must be present.

- (28) a. **The River Between* i-rîo.
 ?'The River Between is it.'
- b. *The River Between* i-rîo rî-ega.
 The River Between COP-5-PRO 5-good
 'The River Between is the best book.'

3: Pro-relative cannot be inverted

The copular analysis suggests that there are two types of free relatives: one with the demonstrative *-ra* and one with the independent pronoun. The two are not the same, though, considering that the latter can never occur as the precopular XP:

- (29) a. [kî-ra û-kw-ona] i [ky-o û-ga-p-ew-a]
 7-DEM.DIST 2SG.SM-PRS-see COP 7-PRO 2SG.SM-FUT-give-PASS-FV
 'What you see is what you get.'
- b. *[kyo ûkwona] i [kyo ûgapewa]
 7-PRO 2SG.SM-PRS-see COP 7-PRO 2SG.SM-FUT-give-PASS-FV
- c. *[kyo ûkwona] i [kîra ûgapewa]
 7-PRO 2SG.SM-PRS-see COP 7-DEM.DIST 2SG.SM-FUT-give-PASS-FV

- (30) [Ûra / *We û-kû-thaambia thaani] i Rob.
 1-DEM.DIST / 1.PRO 1RM-PRS-wash 10.dishes COP 1.Rob
 'The one/he who washes dishes is Rob'

4: Past tense does not replace ni

Another prediction for this analysis is that in the past tense, *ni* will simply be replaced by *-a-rî* 'PST-be'. This is not the case; instead, *ni* and the verb 'to be' come apart in the *n'we* construction:

- (31) Téné múno ò-biti na ka-yúgú ba-a-rí a-cooré.
 long very 9-hyena and 12-hare 2SM-PST-be 2-friends
 'A long time ago, hyena and hare were friends.'
- (32) a. Ny-oombá ni-y-ó î-rá-bí-íre (y-óónka).
 9-house COP-9-PRO 9SM-YPST-burn-PFV 9-only
 '(Only) the house is what has burnt.'

- b. *Ny-oombá **y-aa-rî-yó** î-rá-bí-íre (yóónka).
 9-house COP-9-PRO 9SM-YPST-burn-PFV 9-only
 int. '(Only) the house was what has burnt.'

(In a play, when someone asked 'Was the goat your grandmother?')

- (33) Mû-tûûri w-eetû **n'-we** **w-aa-rî** m-bûri.
 1-neighbour 1-POSS.1PL COP-1.PRO 1RM-PST-be 9-goat
 'Our *neighbour* was the goat.'

5: Focus is on the referent of the initial NP and the pro

Finally, focus is expected to fall on the post-copular constituent, which is true in some sense. In the n'we construction, the referent of the initial NP (and the pronoun, as they refer to the same entity!) is in exhaustive focus, as seen in the contexts.

- (34) (Where is a good place to go on a holiday?)
 Mombasa i kw-éégá gw-á kû-riûnga
 9.Mombasa COP 17-good 17-CONN 15-visit/tour
 'Mombasa is a good place to visit/tour'
- (35) (Interpretation: there are no other places that are good)
Nanyukî i-kû kw-éégá
 9.Nanyuki COP-17.PRO 17-good
 'Nanyuki is the place that is good'
- (36) (Is Joy doing the dishes?)
Rob n'-we [û-kû-thaambi-a thaáni]
 1.Rob COP-1.PRO 1RM-PRS-wash-FV 10.dishes
 'Rob (is the one who) is washing the dishes'

We conclude that this analysis does not fit the data.

4.2. Is it a cleft?

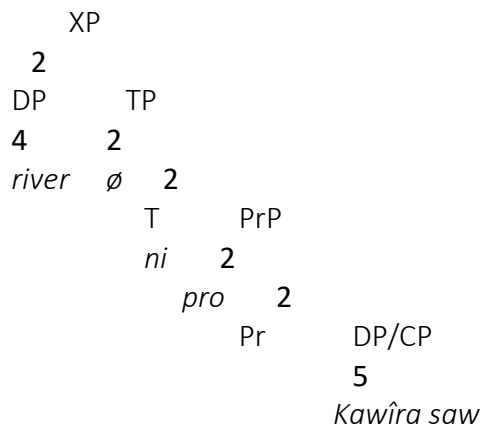
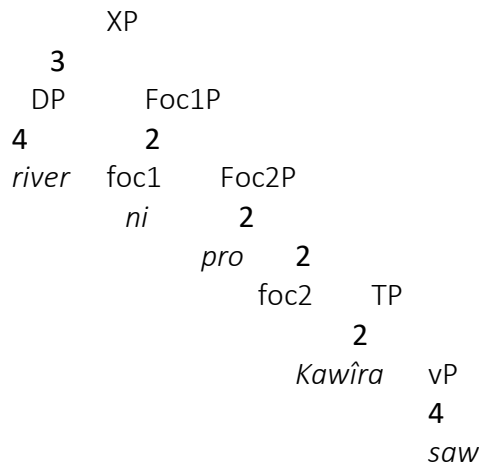
Another analysis takes the initial NP to be outside of the clause, left-dislocated, followed by an "it-cleft", as indicated in the translation, to be compared to the cleft in (37).

- Múú-ró n'-úú Kawîra óón-íre.
 3-river COP-3-PRO 1.Kawîra 1SM.see-pfv
 'The river, it is THAT that Kawîra saw.'

- (37) Í mû-gaáté Áshá a-gû-kaand-a.
 COP 3-bread 1.Asha 1SM-PRS-bake-FV
 'It's bread that Asha is baking.'

There are two flavours of cleft analysis here, one underlyingly still involving nominal predication but now between pro and the relative clause (structure here based on Hartmann 2016), and one involving cartographic Focus heads (Abels and Muriungi 2008). The purpose

today is not to decide between these two (though observations either way are welcome of course!).



While it is somewhat counterintuitive to say that the focus is carried by the pronoun and not the initial NP, the structural features do seem to fit. We mention three (and note that the properties mentioned earlier also fit this analysis).

1: Optional relative marking

Relative marking is to be expected if the structure involves a relative clause, and the fact that it is optional and almost disappeared would indicate the grammaticalisation into a monoclausal construction.

2: Relative clause cannot be omitted

3: Pro-relative cannot be inverted

4: Past tense does not replace ni

5: Focus is on the referent of the initial NP and the pro

6: Prosody of left-dislocation

This analysis predicts that the initial NP is rather loosely connected to the rest of the sentence. Indeed, a prosodic break, if present, occurs after the initial NP.

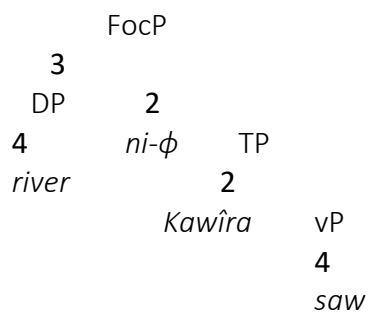
- (38) (How did the doctor sign this, given that he doesn't have a pen?)
(Whose pen did the doctor borrow?)
Ka-rámú gá-akwá, i-k-ó n-dagitárí a-ra-roomb-íre.
12-pen 12-1SG.POSS COP-12-PRO 9-doctor 1SM-YPST-borrow-PFV
'My pen is what the doctor borrowed.' / 'My pen, it is *that* that the doctor borrowed.'
- (39) (There is an egg, where did it come from? Pointing at chicken.)
N-gúkû î-nú, n-îy-ó î-ra-siár-ire.
9-chicken 9-DEM.MED FOC-9-PRO 9SM-YPST-give.birth-PFV
'That chicken is which gave birth.' / 'That chicken, it's *her* who gave birth.'

7: Optionality (left-dislocated) NP

- (40) I-ky-o gî-tem-ag-a n-gúkû î-kurur-a.
COP-7-PRO 7SM-make-HAB-FV 9-chicken 9SM-crow-FV
'That's why Chicken crows.'
'It is that that makes Chicken crow.'

4.3. Is it a single FocP?

Considering the signs of grammaticalisation, and the counterintuitive focus reading of the first NP, we may wonder whether the n'we construction has developed further and is now a simple focus projection, with Foc triggering ϕ agreement and being spelled out as ni:



The still-possible relative marking and the optionality and prosody of the initial DP make this less likely – but who knows what might happen in the future!

We conclude that the best fitting analysis for the n'we construction is a cleft + left-dislocation.

4.4. Reverse n'we construction

This title 'reverse n'we' may turn out to be misleading. We seen the -ra reappearing as the introducer of the free relative, while the pronoun is present after the copula. In the right context, either interpretation as predicational or specificational is accepted, just as in the copular clauses and pseudoclefts:

- (41) Kî-ra w-a-tigaria i-ky-o irio bi-a kûrû.
 7-DEM.DIST 2SG.SM-PST-leave FOC-7-PRO 8.food 8-CONN 15.dog
 'What you left is food for the dog.'

Predicational:

The dog won't be given any other food but what you have left over.

Specificational:

Your friend pranked you and put normal food and dog food on your plate, and they look almost the same. You eat, but leave part of the food on your plate. Afterwards, your friend tells you there was dog food on your plate, and you say: 'Oh my! Did I just eat the dog food?!'

No, ...

However, like in the n'we construction, the referent of the initial NP (and the pronoun, as they refer to the same entity!) is in exhaustive focus.

- (42) (Is Mûtugi the one with the funny nose?)
 Û-ra á-rí na m-eetho má-tuúne n'-we Mûtúgí.
 1-DEM.DIST 1SM-be with 6-eye 6-red COP-1.PRO 1.Mûtugi
 'Who has brown eyes is the one / Mûtugi.'

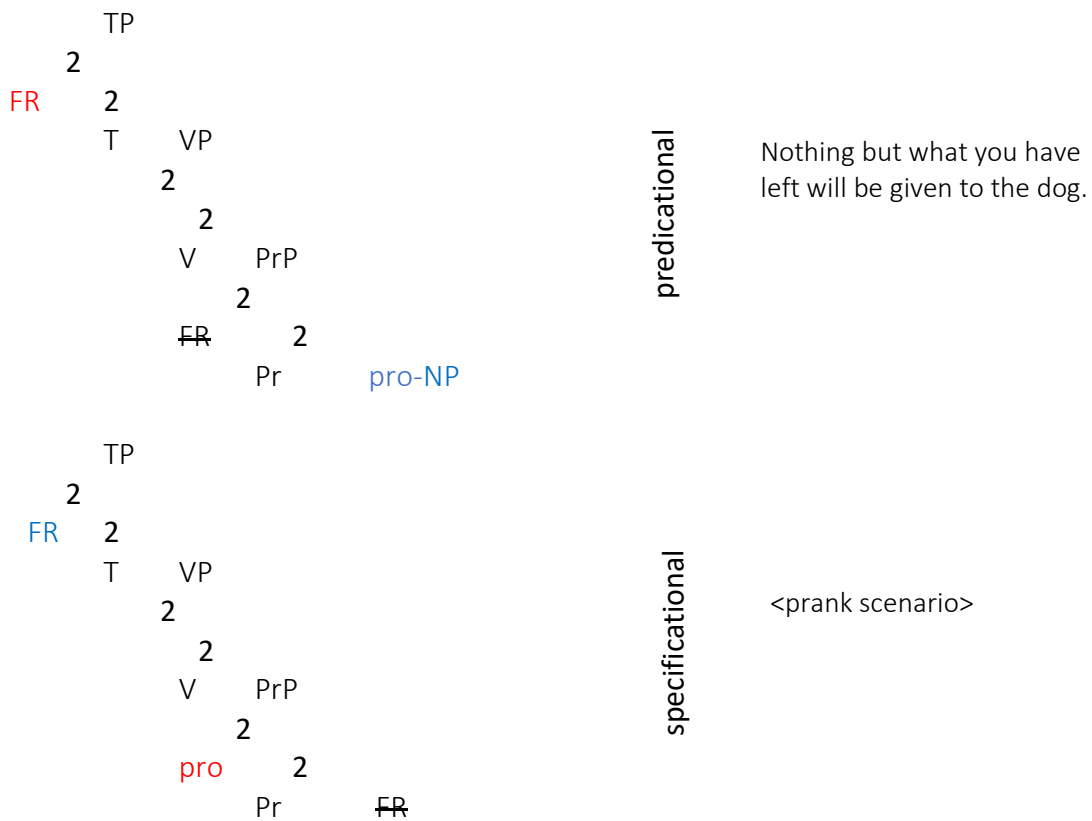
- (43) (Are you Rob?)/(Is Rob the one baking bread?)
 [Û-ra û-kû-thaambi-a thaáni] n'-we Rob.
 1-DEM.DIST 1RM-PRS-wash-FV 10.dishes COP-1.PRO 1.Rob
 'The one washing dishes is Rob.'

Interestingly, the final NP can be omitted:

- (44) (Who exactly is Kimathi? They all look unfamiliar.)
 Û-ra á-rí na m-eetho má-tuúne (,) n'-we.
 1-DEM.DIST 1SM-be with 6-eye 6-red COP-1.PRO
 No break: 'Who has brown eyes is the one.'
 Break: 'The one with brown eyes, it's him.' -> left-dislocated FR

- (45) Kî-ra w-a-tigaria i-ky-o.
 7-DEM.DIST 2SG.SM-PST-leave COP-7-PRO
 'Whatever you have left is okay; we will use it...'

This suggests a PrP structure, where PrP links the free relative and the pronoun, with the final NP being right-dislocated. However, that results in the unexpected structure where a pronoun is the predicate...



4.5. Copular constructions and pronouns

If this is a possible structure, and if FRs are just another type of NP, then we can replace the FR by an NP too, with the order NP ni-pro (NP). The contexts indicate that these function as identificational clauses. The focus in these constructions is still on the initial NP.

(47) (I've been referred to room B10 to find Aron. There are five people in the room. Who is Aron?)

- a. Ūyû n'-we Aron
 1.DEM.PROX COP-1.PRO 1.Aron
 'This (one) is Aron.'

b. #Aron n'we ūyû

(48) (There are two people, A and B, and your friend thinks that Aron is A, but you point at person B and say 'Aron is the one that is this one')

Aron n'we ūyû. > identificational

The final NP can be omitted, and the initial NP can only be the (inverted) predicate, not the subject.

(49) (Who is the donkey in this play?)

6. Next steps in the research

- How does the precise focus interpretation map onto/follow from these structures?

Form	'only'	'even'	incomplete correction	universal quantifiers	non-specific indefinites	mention-some context	'some'
Pseudo	✓	x	'no'	x (subsets)	x	x	x
N'we	✓	x	'no'	x (subsets)	x	x	✓

- What about secondary predicates ('consider Kĩmathi smart/a teacher')?
- What about the NP ni pro sequences?
- Is ni a focus particle throughout (with zero copula), as Abels & Muriungi 2008 propose?
- What about negation? Predict cleft to negate V and PrP to negate copula
- Crosslinguistic tendencies – cop/pro in Kinande (Schneider-Zioga & Mutaka 2015), Nyakyusa (Persohn 2017)

7. Extra

Contrast with English focus possibilities:

(51) A: Who was the culprit? (John or Bill?)

- B': JOHN was the culprit. [predicational]
- B'': The culprit was JOHN. [specificational]
(Heycock and Kroch, 2002, 148)

(52) A: What was John? (Was John the culprit or the victim?)

- B': John was the CULPRIT. [predicational]
- B'':*The CULPRIT was John. [specificational]
(Heycock and Kroch, 2002, 149)

Use of pronoun in wh question clefts:

(53)

a. Í ñbí írĩ mbooroní íno?

ni m-bi î-rî m-booro-ni î-no?
COP 9-what 9SM-be 9-bag-LOC 9-DEM.PROX
'What is in this bag?'

b. (You have a strong suspicion there is something in the bag.)

Í ñbíyoó írĩ mbooroní íno?

ni m-bi-**yo** î-rî m-booro-ni î-no
COP 9-what-9.PRO 9SM-be 9-bag-LOC 9-DEM.PROX
'What exactly is in this bag?'

(54) (Two boys are quarelling.)

n' úûwéé (w)árííngire úyû ûngí?

ni úû-**we** a-riing-ire úyû ú-**ngi**

COP 1.who-1.PRO 1SM-hit-PFV 1.DEM.MED 1-other

'Who (is the one who) hit the other?'

Participant pronoun takes -rî or ni depending on predication/specification:

(55)

a. Gwegû ú-rî îthe w-a tw-aána.
2SG.PRO 2SG.SM-be 1.father 1-CONN 13-children
'You are the father of the children.'

b. îthe w-a tw-aána i gwegû.
1.father 1-CONN 13-children COP 2SG.PRO
'The father of the children is you.'

Abbreviations

Numbers refer to noun classes unless followed by sg/pl, in which case they refer to persons. Surface high tones are (sometimes unreliably) marked; low tones remain unmarked.

APPL	applicative	LOC	locative
CAUS	causative	MED	medial
CONN	connective ('of')	OM	object marker
COP	copula	PFV	perfective
DEM	demonstrative	PRO	independent pronoun
DIST	distal	PROX	proximate
FOC	focus marker	PRS	present
FR	free relative	PST	pst
FUT	future	RM	relative marker
FV	final vowel	SM	subject marker
IC	immediate causative	YPST	yesterday past

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