Word order and information structure in Makhuwa-Enahara

Wal, G.J. van der

4. The pre- and postverbal domains

Henderson (2006:288) notes that many scholars have observed

> that postverbal or VP-internal material in Bantu languages receives a new information or focus interpretation (Givon 1972, Bokamba 1976, 1979, Bresnan and Mchombo 1987, Machobane 1995, Demuth and Mmusi 1997). On the other hand, preverbal elements such as subjects tend to be interpreted as old information and function as topics.

This is reminiscent of Gundel's (1988:229) more general Given Before New Principle: "state what is given before what is new in relation to it". In the same article, Gundel notices that there is a correlation between the use of morphological topic markers and SOV order. She suggests that in SOV languages the topic marker serves to mark the boundary between the topic and the comment of a sentence, and that this function is served by the verb in SVO languages. This results in a split between the preverbal domain and the rest of the sentence, which again can be divided into the verb and the postverbal elements. The Bantu languages are predominantly SVO, and Gundel's reasoning fits with Henderson's observation on the interpretation of the pre- and postverbal elements as topic and comment.

Both in these citations and in this thesis, the terms "preverbal" and "postverbal" refer to the linear order of elements in a sentence, not directly to hierarchies. The sketched interaction between the linear order and the information structure turns out to be relevant in Makhuwa as well. This chapter examines the properties of the pre- and postverbal elements, and draws conclusions about their syntactic positions and interpretations. These facts are then accounted for by the configurational interface model explained in chapter 3, which combines minimalist syntax and an interface rule that ensures the right interpretation and word order.

4.1 Position of the verb

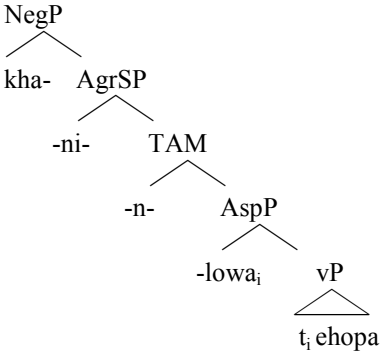
In order to define "preverbal" or "postverbal" syntactically, the position of the verb in the syntactic structure must be known first. Following Myers (1990), Julien (2002), Kinyalolo (2003), and Buell (2005) I assume that the verb starts out as a lexical base and incorporates the derivational and inflectional *suf*fixes by head movement.[29] It terminates in a position lower than T. The inflectional *pre*fixes on the verb represent functional heads spelt out in their base positions. The root and prefixes form one word by morphological, or (at least) phonological merger. As an example, the tree structure of (522) is given in (523): the verb stem *-lowa* 'to fish' has moved from within the vP to

[29] See chapter 2 section 4.3 for more information on the derivational extensions.

AspP (but not higher). The prefixes for negation (*kha-*), subject agreement (*-ni-*) and tense (*-n-*) are in their own projections, above AspP.

(527) kha-ni-ń-lówa ehópa
NEG-1PL-PRES-fish.DJ 9.fish
'we don't catch fish'

(528)

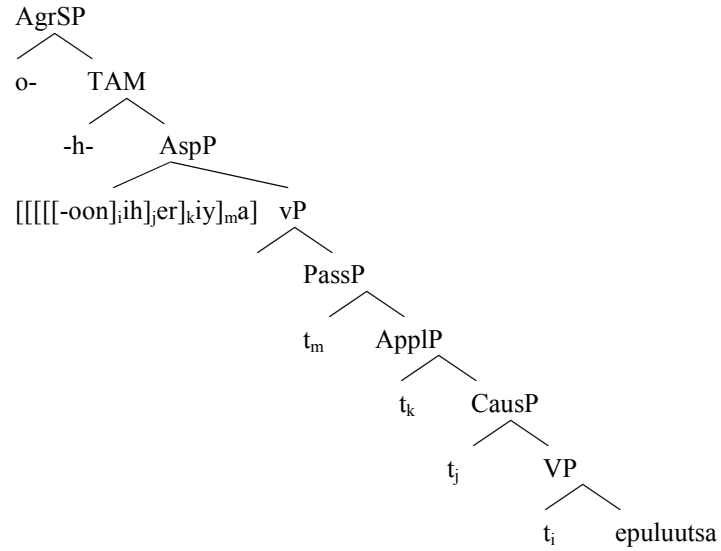


One argument for the position of the verb stem between v and T is in the order of prefix and suffix merger. In Kayne's (1994) antisymmetry framework, moved heads adjoin to the left and hence the extensions are suffixes. The verb with extensions in (529) could have the syntactic structure as in (530): the verb stem *-tumih-* 'to sell', which already contains a causative extension, head-moves to the applicative projection where it adjoins to the left and becomes a complex head with the suffix *-er-*. This combination (*-tumiher-*) moves to add the passive suffix *-iy-* and the last suffix to be added is the final vowel *-a*. There is no reason to assume that a moved head will first incorporate morphemes to its right (the extensions) and then to its left (the agreement and TAM markers). The fact that inflectional morphemes surface as prefixes strongly suggests that these are not incorporated into the verb, and thus that the verb has not head-moved further in the inflectional domain.[30]

(529) nlópwáná o-h-oón-íh-er-íyá epuluútsá
1.man 1-PERF.DJ-see-CAUS-APPL-PASS-FV 9.blouse
'the man was shown the blouse'

[30] Some conjugations also take a special inflectional suffix, the final suffix *-ale* or *-e*. The interaction between the inflectional prefixes and suffixes is a challenge in this account. However, this is a longstanding and complicated issue in Bantu morphosyntax, which needs far more attention than can be given in this thesis. See for more information Contini-Morava (1989), Buell (2005) and Nurse (2008).

(530)



Second, the order of the prefixes matches the order of the corresponding syntactic heads (531). If the inflectional prefixes were also incorporated, like the suffixes, one would expect them to surface in the opposite order. In other languages where there is evidence that the verb does move to T, such as French, the inflectional morphemes indeed appear in the reverse order of the Makhuwa inflectional prefixes: as suffixes on the verb in (532). This also suggests that the Makhuwa prefixes are still in their original position.

Makhuwa
(531) kha-mw-aa-tsúwéla
NEG-2PL-IMPF-know.DJ
'you didn't know'

French
(532) nous aim-er-i-ons
1PL.PRO love-IRR-PAST-1PL
'we would love'

These data suggest that the verb stem does not move to T, but still it must be outside of the verb phrase. A hint that the verb is higher than VP can be found in the impossibility of placing a manner adverb between the (preverbal) subject and the verb. If these are the lowest adverbs (Cinque 1999), adjoined to VP, the verb should indeed be moved higher than V. Examples (533) and (534) show that other types of adverbs such

as *khweelí* ‘really’ and *owáání* ‘at home’, are allowed in between the subject and the verb, but as is illustrated in (535) a manner adverb such as *tsiítsó* ‘like that’ is not.

(533) ólé khweelí o-ḿ-phwány’ etsíítsí (H9.10)
1.DEM.III certainly 1.PERF.DJ-1-meet 1.owl
‘he really found the owl’

(534) íi | ámwáńn’ áká owáání a-h-i´vva (H3.63)
ii 2.husband 2.POSS.1SG 17.home 2-PERF.DJ-kill
‘oh, my husband has murdered (someone) at home!’

(535) * ntthu úlé tsiítsó o-h-eéttá
1.person 1.DEM.III like.that 1-PERF.DJ-walk
int. ‘that man walked like that’

Thus the verb is analysed as a complex of prefixes spelt out in their base positions in the inflectional domain, and the verb stem has head-moved in the first part of the derivation and ends up in a projection just above the verb phrase.

4.2 The preverbal domain

Now that the analysis with respect to the position of the verb has been made explicit, the elements in the domain preceding the verb can be examined. In this section it is first shown that a preverbal element cannot have a focus function in Makhuwa. After investigating the possibilities and impossibilities of various subjects, objects and adjuncts, it is found that there can be three types of preverbal elements, which differ in their syntactic and interpretational properties.

4.2.1 No preverbal focus

In many Bantu languages there is an absolute constraint against preverbal focal elements (Morimoto 2000, Zerbian 2006, Sabel and Zeller 2006, among many others). This is also the case in Makhuwa. *Wh*-elements, which are inherently focused, may not appear in preverbal position (536)-(537), nor may elements modified by the focus sensitive particle “only” (538)-(539), which are also assumed to be in focus. This holds for both subjects and objects.

(536) a. * pani o-naa-wa?
1.who 1-PRES.DJ-come
int. ‘who comes?’

b. * paní o-n-aápéya nramá?
1.who 1-PRES.CJ-cook 3.rice
int. 'who cooks the rice?'

(537) * eshééní o-náá-wéha?
9.what 2SG-PRES.DJ-look
int. 'what do you see?'

(538) * ekanétá y-oóríipa paáhi yoo-mór-éla vathí
9.pen 9-black only 9.PERF.DJ-fall-APPL 16-down
int. 'only the black pen fell down'

(539) * Coakí paáhí kaahí-ḿ-weha
1.Joaquim only 1SG.PAST.PERF.DJ-1-look
int. 'I saw only Joaquim'

Furthermore, the element in preverbal position cannot be the answer to a *wh*-question. For example, an object may occur preverbally as the answer to a yes/no question, as in (540a), but a preverbal object is infelicitous when it is in focus in the context of the question in (540b). In the same way, a subject question, as in (541a), cannot be answered by a sentence with the subject in its canonical preverbal position (541b).

(540) a. wé o-náá-khúúr' ephaáwu?
2SG.PRO 2SG-PRES.DJ-chew 9.bread
'are you eating bread?'

ephaáwú | ki-náá-khúura
9.bread 1SG-PRES.DJ-chew
'(the) bread, I am eating it'

b. o-n-khúúr' esheeni?
2SG-PRES.CJ-chew 9.what
'what are you eating?'

ephaáwú | ki-náá-khúura
9.bread 1SG-PRES.DJ-chew
'(the) bread, I am eating it'

(541) a. ti paní o-mor-alé?
COP 1.who 1-fall-PERF.REL
'who (is the one who) fell?'

b. # nlópwáná ólé oo-móra
1.man 1.DEM.III 1.PERF.DJ-fall
'that man fell'

Instead, a focused subject must occur in a cleft or copular construction (pseudocleft). The correct answer to the question in (541a) above, for example, is the pseudo-cleft in (541c) below. Subject *wh*-questions are also restricted to copular constructions and clefts, as in (542a), (543a), and (542b), respectively. The answers occur in the same constructions, as shown in (542c) and (543b).[31] This also holds for subjects modified by the focus particle "only" (544): these are impossible in any other position. The syntactic structure and information structure of these focus examples are discussed in chapter 5. For now it is important to know that focused elements must not occur in the preverbal domain.

(541) c. o-mor-alé nlopwán' óole
1-fall-PERF.REL 1.man.PL 1.DEM.III
'the one who fell was that man'

(542) a. o-tthik-ale errańcá ti paní?
1-throw-PERF.REL 10.oranges COP 1.who

b. ti paní o-tthik-ale errańca?
COP 1.who 1-throw-PERF.REL 10.oranges
'who has thrown oranges?'

c. namarokoló o-tthik-alé
1.hare.PL 1.throw.PERF.REL
'it was Hare who threw (them)'

(543) a. o-wa-alé ti paní?
1-come-PERF.REL COP 1.who
'who came?', lit: 'the one who came was who?'

[31] One other copular construction exists, in which the subject is placed before the copula, and a free relative or participle after it, as in i. See also chapter 5, section 5.4.2, and the conclusion.

i. namárókolo t' ítthík-ale
1.hare COP 1.throw-PERF
'Hare was the one who threw'

b. o-wa-alé t' uúle
1-come-PERF.REL COP 1.DEM.III
'*he* came', lit: 'the one who came was that one'

(544) o-wa-alé tí Manínya paáhi
1-come-PERF.REL COP 1.Maninha only
'only Maninha came', lit: 'the one who came was only Maninha'

4.2.2 Preverbal subjects

The preverbal subject cannot have a focus function in the sentence and is likely to have a topic function, just as claimed by Henderson (2006) and Gundel (1988). However, not all preverbal subjects display the same syntactic and interpretational characteristics. This section discusses the possibilities and preferences for properties of preverbal subjects in terms of quantification, definiteness and context in order to determine the syntactic position or positions of preverbal subjects. Although the Makhuwa data suggest (at least) two different positions for preverbal subjects (one non-dislocated A position and one dislocated A-bar position) this analysis cannot conclusively be proven. The discussion on the syntactic positions of preverbal subjects is continued in section 4.2.5, where combinations of a preverbal subject with other preverbal elements are examined.

Rizzi (1986b) and Baker (1996) observe that NPs modified by strong quantifiers cannot be dislocated. Zeller (2008) and Zerbian (2006) show for Zulu and Northern Sotho that these quantifiers can in fact occur in subject position, and they conclude that strongly quantified preverbal DPs are indeed not dislocated in these languages, and that there must be a preverbal A position for the subject in these languages. Universally quantified DPs are allowed in the preverbal domain in Makhuwa as well. In (545) the subject is modified by the quantifier *-otééne* 'all' and in (546) and (547) by the quantifier *kata* 'every'. This suggests that the strongly quantified subject in Makhuwa is not dislocated when it occurs preverbally.

(545) anámwán' ootééné aa-váh-íy' ekanéta
2.children 2.all 2.PERF.DJ-give-PASS 9.pen
'all the children were given a pen'

(546) kata ma´llímú o-náá-sómíha
every 1.teacher 1-PRES.DJ-teach
'every teacher teaches'

(547) kata ńtthú o-ná-mwáasamúrya
every 1.person 1-PRES.DJ-sneeze
'everyone sneezes'

However, an object with the universal quantifier "all" is also grammatical in the preverbal domain, as shown in (548). The few examples I have that contain a preverbal object modified by "every" vary in grammaticality, but are not judged completely ungrammatical, as illustrated in (549) and (550).[32] Since preverbal objects in Makhuwa are always left-dislocated, these data show that strongly quantified DPs can in fact occur dislocated in an A-bar position. Hence, the fact that a strongly quantified subject can occur preverbally does not provide strong evidence regarding the dislocated or non-dislocated position of the subject. The preverbal subject could still be in an A position, but it cannot be demonstrated on the basis of these data.

(548) etthú ts-áu ts-ootééné o-r-eék-é wá-kúsh-ek-e (H4.102)
10.things 10-POSS.2SG 10-all 2SG-go-DUR-OPT 2SG.SUBS-carry-DUR-OPT
'all your things, go and take them!'

(549) kata fiílíme o-h-oóna
every 9.film 1-PERF.DJ-see
'every film he watched (it)'

(550) ?? kútá ekanttíyéró | nki-paríhé`ll-e
every 9.oil.lamp NEG.1SG-light-PERF.DJ
'every lamp, I didn't light it'

Other properties related to dislocation are definiteness and specificity. Elements that are indefinite and non-specific cannot be dislocated, in various languages (Rizzi (1986b), Cinque (1990) and Baker (1996, 2003)). If an indefinite and non-specific noun is allowed in preverbal position, there must be a preverbal A position for this non-dislocated subject. It is difficult to determine the definiteness of a noun in Makhuwa. Like most Bantu languages, Makhuwa does not have a definite or indefinite article, and it lacks the augment which is sometimes analysed as a determiner, for example in the Nguni languages and Luganda (Katamba 2003, Hyman and Katamba 1993). Definiteness in Makhuwa is thus only discernible in context, unless a noun (phrase) is inherently specified for definiteness (one could think of the use of a demonstrative or possessive, which make a noun definite, or a weak quantifier which makes it indefinite). In (551) the context is given in which the subject of the last sentence ("others") is interpreted as indefinite and non-specific. In (551) the indefinite does not have a partitive reading, which would have made the noun specific. This partitive reading is the interpretation of the sentence in (552), where the subject is modified by a possessive. Another example of a preverbal indefinite subject is given in (553). This sentence was triggered in a set of pictures from the Questionnaire on Information Structure, where the

[32] The difference in grammaticality may (in part) be due to the use of the affirmative or negative conjugation of the verb. More data are needed to elucidate this issue.

first picture shows a chair, and the second a falling chair and a hand. The second picture was described with the indefinite *ńtthú* 'person' in preverbal position. The fact that an indefinite and non-specific subject is grammatical in preverbal position again suggests that the subject can be non-dislocated and occupy an A position.

(551) yaa-rí atthw' ińcéène
2.PAST-be 2.people 2.many
'there were many people'

m-motsá khú-hóol-él-áká wiírá yincérér-iy-é ntsúrúkhu
1-one NARR-front-APPL-DUR COMP 2.augment-PASS-OPT 3.money
'one went forward (to say) that they should have an increase in salary'

akínákú yaahí-ń-tthar-el-éla
2.others 2.PAST.PERF.DJ-1-follow-APPL-APPL
'(some) others followed him'

(552) vánó akínákw' aáya yaahí-ń-tthar-átsa
16.DEM.II 2.others 2.POSS.2 2.PAST.PERF.DJ-1-follow-PLUR
'then (some of the) others followed him'

(553) ńtthú o-m-váh' ésookó ekhatéra
1.person 1-PRES.CJ-give 9.push 9.chair
'someone/a person pushed the chair'

Although the examples in (551) and (553) are certainly grammatical, a remark must be made. It is very unusual for a preverbal subject to have these properties. More often, an indefinite non-specific preverbal subject is ungrammatical (554)-(555), interpreted as generic (556), or made specific by adding a relative clause (557). An indefinite, non-specific subject can grammatically be encoded in a split construction, as in (558), which consists of two clauses (the second of which is relative).

(554) * ńtthú kha-wa-ále
1.person NEG.1-come-PERF.DJ
int. 'someone didn't come'/ 'noone came'

(555) * ńtthú o-hoó-wa
1.person 1-PERF.DJ-come
int. 'someone came'

(556) ńtthú kha-ń-cá eníka (y' oó-hí-tharakul-iya)
1.person NEG.1-PRES-eat.DJ 9.banana (9.CONN 15-NEG-peel-PASS)
'a human being does not eat (unpeeled) bananas'

(557) ntthu aa-lípélel-íyá kha-wa-ále
1.person 1.IMPF-wait-PASS.REL NEG.1-come-PERF.DJ
'a certain awaited person did not come'

(558) o-háá-v' o-hi-ń-c' éníka
1-stay-LOC 1-NEG-PRES-eat.REL 9.banana
'someone doesn't eat bananas',
lit. 'there is (someone) who doesn't eat bananas'

Subjects modified by weak quantifiers (such as "few") are interpreted as indefinites and behave as such (Diesing 1992). In Makhuwa, they are sub-optimal in preverbal position (559), although not ungrammatical. The informants prefer to use a cleft, pseudocleft or VS word order instead.

(559) ?? epaáwú vakhaání yoo-khúúr-íya
9.bread few 9.PERF.DJ-chew-PASS
'little bread was eaten'

In summary, although the preverbal subject typically avoids being indefinite, non-specific and/or quantified, the fact that these properties are sometimes allowed in preverbal position suggests that there is at least one preverbal subject position that hosts non-dislocated elements. This should be a high A position, such as specFinP. Other preverbal positions are discussed in the next sections, and the possibilities for the subject become clearer in combination with other preverbal elements, as discussed in 4.2.5. The fact that the preverbal subject prefers to be referential, in whichever position it may be, is explained by the interface rule in section 4.4.2.

4.2.3 Dislocated preverbal objects

The canonical position of the object is postverbal, but it frequently happens that an object occurs before the verb. In section 4.2.1 it is shown that the preverbal object cannot have the focus function in the sentence, just like the preverbal subject cannot be focal. It has been shown that there is probably a high A position for the subject, in which it is not dislocated. The preverbal A position is not available for the preverbal object, which is always dislocated.

In languages that allow so-called subject-object reversal, objects can move to the canonical subject position and determine the agreement marker on the verb (Ndayiragije 1999). The logical subject remains postverbal and the resulting word order is OVS, as in (560), where the subject marker *bi-* agrees with the logical object *ibitabo 'books'*: both are in noun class 8. Although the object determines "subject agreement" on the verb, it is still the logical object, as also indicated in the translation. There is no passive morphology on the verb which would allow the theme/object to be promoted to subject. However, in Makhuwa the subject marker never agrees with the preverbal object

in OVS order (561), but always with the logical subject (*Yuúra*, class 1, in (561)). Therefore, I conclude that the preverbal object cannot move to the canonical subject position and is always dislocated: it has an indirect syntactic relation to the verb.

Kirundi (Ndayiragije 1999)
(560) ibitabo bi-á-som-ye Yohani
8.books 8-PAST-read-PERF 1.John
'JOHN read the books'
lit. 'books read John'

Makhuwa
(561) eshímá elá | o-hoó-cá Yuúra
9.shima 9.DEM.I 1-PERF.DJ-eat 1.Yura
'this shima, Yura ate it'

The dislocated position of the preverbal object in Makhuwa is also supported by its syntactic and interpretational properties. A property that often cooccurs with dislocation of the object in Bantu languages is object marking. The dislocated object is then marked on the verb by an object marker, which takes the argument function of the object in the sentence and allows the verb to undergo A-bar movement and have an indirect relation to the verb. For example, in a language like Chichewa (Bresnan and Mchombo 1987, see also Riedel to appear), object marking is used as an indication of dislocation of the object. Unfortunately, object marking cannot be used as a diagnostic of dislocation in Makhuwa. All and only objects in class 1 and 2, or persons, are marked on the verb, regardless of the constituency, animacy or definiteness. There are no object markers for other noun classes. The distribution of the object marker in Makhuwa is discussed in chapter 2, section 2.4.4. Nevertheless, several other facts do illustrate the dislocated status of the preverbal object in Makhuwa.

First of all, indefinite objects are ungrammatical in preverbal position (562). Even when the context is created in which normally a preverbal object is allowed or preferred, like in (563), an indefinite object may not appear preverbally. The indefinite interpretation of the object in (562) and (563) can be deduced from the use of verbs of creation, such as "to write" and "to produce", and from the use of the future tense.

(562) * moócé mwalákhú o-náá-rélá kata nihúku
6.eggs 1.chicken 1-PRES.DJ-lay every 5.day
int. 'eggs a chicken lays (them) every day'

(563) a. wé khu-ń-róo-lépa eliívúru?
2SG.PRO NEG.2SG-PRES.DJ-go-write 9.book
'aren't you going to write a book?'

b. * eliívúru | ki-n-ró-lepa
9.book 1SG-PRES.CJ-go-write
int. 'a book, I'll write (it)'

Second, objects modified by a weak quantifier, which function like indefinites, may not appear in the preverbal domain. The weakly quantified object "little work" is ungrammatical preverbally in (564).

(564) * ntékó vakhaání | aahí-vára
3.work few 1.PAST.PERF.DJ-grab
int. 'little work he did'

Third, a pause after the preverbal object is often preferred, and in OSV order it seems to be necessary. Omitting the pause in (565), indicated by |, would make the example ungrammatical.

(565) ekaláw' éelé | Nsácí o-h-eéttíha
9.boat 9.DEM.III 1.Musaci 1-PERF.DJ-drive
'that boat, Musaci steers it'

Finally, the preference for a definite preverbal object can be seen in the use of demonstratives, which always bring about a definite reading. In 11 stories, 31 sentences were found where the object was preposed. In 14 of these 31 sentences, the object was marked by a demonstrative, as in (566). 12 other instances were frontings of only two elements, each within the same story: the objects *etsíítsi* 'owl' and *eshímá*, as in (567) and (568). Both of these are discourse-old and definite. The preference for definite and discourse-old objects in preverbal position is also seen in the correction in (569): the example is already judged better with a pause and is even better with the demonstrative *áale*.

(566) naphúlú ula o-nú-´m-vará khú-ń-hela nkaráfá-ni (K3.2)
1.frog 1.DEM.I 1-PERF.PERS-1-grab NARR-1-put 18.jar-LOC
'this frog, he caught it and put it in a jar'

(567) waa-hímyá wiíra eshímá y-oóríipa m-pacér-ék-e óca (H12.38)
3.IMPF-say COMP 9.shima 9-dark 2PL-begin-DUR-OPT 15.eat
'it said that you should start eating dark shima'

(568) etsíítsi koo-várá ni koo-khúura! (H9.24)
9.owl 1SG.PERF.DJ-grab and 1SG.PERF.DJ-chew
'the owl, I caught it and I ate it!'

(569) a. ?? maníyá | orívísú oo-páǹka
6.bracelets 1.goldsmith 1.PERF.DJ-make

b. maníy' áale | orívísú oo-páǹka
6.bracelets 6.DEM.III 1.goldsmith 1.PERF.DJ-make
'those bracelets the goldsmith made'

These are all properties that are typical for dislocated objects. However, crosslinguistically there is not just one type of dislocated element. Benincà and Poletto (2004) show that there is a difference in preverbal elements between a left-dislocated topic and a hanging topic. The tests used to differentiate between them are not applicable in Makhuwa, since there is no clear prepositional phrase (like in Italian in (570a)), no case marking, and there are no unambiguous pronominal resumptive clitics (such as Italian *ne* in (570)). Because of this, and because the difference often disappears in the case of subjects and objects, I do not distinguish between these two types of preverbal elements, and unite them under "left-dislocation". One case in which it *is* clear that the preverbal element is left-dislocated (and not a hanging topic), is in embedded sentences: a hanging topic always occurs before the complementiser, and a left-dislocated topic follows it. In (571) the object must be left-dislocated, since *ntsíná náwé* 'his name' follows the complementiser *wiírá* (see also (567)).

Italian (Badan 2007:32,34)

(570) a. di Mario, non (ne) parla più nessuno
of Mario not of.him talks anymore nobody
'about Mario, nobody talks anymore'

b. Mario, non *(ne) parla più nessuno
Mario, not of.him talks anymore nobody
'Mario, nobody talks about him anymore'

Makhuwa

(571) moo-hímyá wiírá | ntsíná n-áwé | kha-mwi-ń-tsúwela
2PL.PERF.DJ-say COMP 5.name 5-POSS.1 NEG-2PL-PRES-know.DJ
'you said that his name, you don't know (it)'

There are two uses that are characteristic of left-dislocated elements in Makhuwa. As was already visible in the examples above, left-dislocation of the object happens primarily when the object is *highly accessible*, as in (572). In the story from which (572) is taken, several times there has been a prohibition on planting thorn bushes and on marrying a woman who lies, and near the end the protagonist makes this remark, where those thorn bushes and that particular woman are mentioned in a preposed position.

(572) mi´wwá íye koh-aálá
4.thorns 4.DEM 1SG.PERF.DJ-plant

nthíyán' óole ko-ń-thélá (H3.86)
1.woman 1.DEM 1SG.PERF.DJ-1-marry
'those thorn bushes I planted, that woman I married'

Left-dislocated elements are also used when there is a *shift of topic*. In Makhuwa-Enahara a topic shift is often also marked by a doubled demonstrative on the new topic, possibly because the two demonstratives indicate a (re)activation of the referent (see chapter 2, section 2.3.5). In (573) it is the subject that is (probably) left-dislocated. The example describes a situation in which a man finds the woman he was looking for (i.e., a lying woman). This woman is the topic of the next sentence in the story –the topic shifts from him to her–, and *nthíyáná* 'woman' is preceded and followed by a demonstrative (*ole* / *ule*). This marking and the pause between subject and verb suggest the dislocated status of the subject in this example.

(573) o-ḿ-phwánya nthíyáná m-motsá (H3.31)
1.PERF.DJ-1-meet 1.woman 1-one
'he met a woman'

ólé nthíyán' uule | kh-oóthá aa-páh' ólumweńku
1.DEM.III 1.woman 1.DEM.III NEG.1.IMPF-lie.DJ 1.IMPF.CJ-burn 14.world
'this woman didn't just lie, she set the world on fire!' (H3.32)

So far, two types of preverbal elements have been presented: the non-dislocated subject, and the left-dislocated object, for which a highly accessible interpretation was illustrated, as well as the use in topic shift. There is a third kind of preverbal element, which has different syntactic properties yet.

4.2.4 Scene-setting elements

The third type of preverbal elements are the scene-setting or frame-setting elements. These set the scene or frame for the rest of the sentence. They are more loosely connected to the sentence, since they do not have an argument function in the sentence at all: there is no corresponding gap or resumptive element in the sentence, in contrast to left-dislocated elements. Left-dislocated elements originate within the verb phrase and are then moved to a peripheral position, leaving behind a pronoun (the object marker) or a gap. Scene-setting elements do not start out low in the syntactic structure, and Badan (2007) argues that they are base-generated in the left periphery in Italian and Chinese. Scene-setting elements thus only have a semantic relation to the core sentence. Examples of scene-setting elements in Makhuwa are temporal (574) and locative (575) adverbs and adverbial phrases.

(574) mahíkw'éen' aala vá | ki-n-khálá ni miteko ts-áka
6.days INT 6.DEM.I 16.PRO 1SG-PRES.CJ-stay with 4.work 4-POSS.1SG
'these days I have my work' (H4.20)

(575) wafééshta-ni ű́wo athíyána ah-oóttá nsíro?
16.party-LOC 17.DEM.II 2.women 2.PERF.DJ-smear 3.nsiro
'at the party, did the women wear nsiro?'

Not only adverbial words and clauses can have these properties: DPs that are only semantically related to an argument in the sentence, but not syntactically, can also function as scene-setting topics, as in (576)[33] and (577). Combinations of adverbs, DPs, and/or insertions of dependent phrases are also possible, as in (578) and (579).

(576) manttúví o-m-phéélá othuma ekiílú kaví?
1.peanuts 2SG-PRES.CJ-want 15.buy 10.kilo 10.how.much
'how many kilos of peanuts do you want to buy?'

(577) ntsáná ehóp' éelá | n-iir-alé nhutsí
yesterday 9.fish 9.DEM.I 1PL-do-PERF.CJ 3.sauce
'yesterday, this fish, we made sauce (with it)'

(578) ekhálái ekhálái olúmwénkú o-ná-rí mwáli
long.ago RED 14.world 14-SIT-be 1.virgin

aa-rí ntthu mmotsá n' aámwáár' áwé (H5.1)
1.PAST-be 1.person 1-one and 2.wife 2.POSS.1
'a long time ago, when the world was unspoilt, there was a man and his wife'

(579) masi seertú | nróttó áyá | nuu-thowa-thówá moóró olé |
but certainly after.tomorrow POSS.2RES-finish-RED 3.fire 3.DEM.III

ólé oo-khúmá (H14.25)
1.DEM.III 1.PERF.DJ-exit
'but sure enough, two days later, when the fire had stopped, he came out'

In summary, there are (at least) three kinds of preverbal elements, which differ primarily in their syntactic properties. The non-dislocated subject has a direct relation to the verb: it fulfills an argument role in the sentence. The left-dislocated object has an indirect relation to the verb: it is in an A-bar position, and a variable or pronoun now functions as the argument in the sentence. The scene-setting elements do not have a syntactic relation to the verb, but are only semantically related. This characterisation is

[33] This could also be analysed as a discontinuous or split NP.

comparable to Morimoto's (2000) and Aissen's (1992) distinction between the internal topic (my A position) and several external topics (the dislocated and scene-setting elements).

4.2.5 Relative order of preverbal elements

It was suggested that there is more than one preverbal position for the subject. The position in which indefinite preverbal subjects occur is a non-dislocated A position, but more accessible subjects may possibly also be left-dislocated or base-generated in the left periphery. The position of the subject can become visible in combination with an adverb or left-dislocated object, if they intervenes between the subject and the verb.[34] When nothing intervenes between the preverbal subject and the verb, it is hard to tell in which position the subject is. This implies that in the majority of cases, the position of the preverbal subject is unknown. The subjects in (580)-(583) can be in the position closest to the verb, non-dislocated, but they might also be dislocated. In (580) and (581) an adverb precedes the subject, and in (582) and (583) the order is OSV (see also (569) above).

(580) ekhálái ekhalaí | enámá ts-aání-lávúla (H9.1)
9.long.ago RED 10.animals 10-PAST.HAB-speak
'a long time ago, animals used to talk'

(581) mpaání | nlópwáná o-ni-ń-thíkílá malaú
18.inside 1.man 1-PRES.CJ-1-cut 1.melon
'inside the man cuts a melon'

(582) élá ekhatérá elá | Alí o-m-vah-alé Coána
9.DEM.I 9.chair 9.DEM.I 1.Ali 1-1-give-PERF.CJ 1.Joana
'this chair, Ali gave it to Joana'

(583) numwáár' uulá | ńtthú o-ni-ń-théla |
1.virgin 1.DEM.I 1.person 1-PRES-1-marry.REL

a-kush-ék-é ettánká nlokó iya-íya (H5.21)
1-carry-DUR-OPT 10.basket 10.ten 10.DEM.I-RED
'this girl, the one who wants to marry her should take these ten baskets'

Sentences in which a high adverbial phrase intervenes between the preverbal subject and the verb suggest a possible dislocated or base-generated position in the left periphery. For example, in (584), the subject *ólé nlópwán' oolé* 'that man' is separated

[34] Unfortunately, my database does not contain an example of an indefinite subject in S adv V order. The ungrammaticality of such an example would provide additional evidence for a preverbal non-dislocated subject position.

from the verb by the intervener *wahalalyááwé* 'when he stayed'. Locative adverbs are often allowed to occur between the subject and the verb, but manner adverbs are always ungrammatical (588). The same word order S-adv-V is observed in (585)-(587). The subjects in these examples are definite, and the verb is often preceded by a pause. These are indications that the subjects in these examples are in a different position than the preverbal indefinite subjects, which were analysed as non-dislocated.

(584) ólé nlópwán' oolé wa-hal-aly-ááwé |
1.DEM.III 1.man 1.DEM.III 16-stay-PERF.REL-POSS.1

oh-i´vv' épúri (H3.51)
1.PERF.DJ-kill 9.goat
'that man, when he stayed behind, (he) killed a goat'

(585) ólé khweelí o-´m-phwány' etsíítsí (H9.10)
1.DEM.III certainly 1.PERF.DJ-1-meet 1.owl
'he really found the owl'

(586) íi | ámwáńn' áká owáání a-h-i´vva (H3.63)
ii 2.husband 2.POSS.1SG 17.home 2-PERF.DJ-kill
'oh, my husband has murdered (someone) at home!'

(587) namárókoló | ekhálái ekhalaí | aarí mpatthaní a nsátóro (H7.2)
1.hare long.ago RED 1.PAST-be 1.friend 1.CONN 1.administrator
'(the) Hare, a long time ago, (he) was the friend of the administrator'

(588) * ntthu úlé vakhaani vákháání o-h-eétta
1.person 1.DEM.III slowly RED 1-PERF.DJ-walk
int. 'that man walked slowly'

When the object intervenes between the subject and the verb, in SOV order, both S and O are dislocated or base-generated preverbally. The SOV sentences in my database were unclear with respect to grammaticality and use, as in (589)-(590), but Stucky (1985) describes this word order as grammatical for Makhuwa-Imithupi and provides the example in (591). In this example, she explains, Sepete is the topic of conversation and the report is that he cut down the tree as expected. In my analysis, the subject can be dislocated in SOV order, with a null pronoun (pro) in the A position, or it can be base-generated as a scene-setting element sentence-initially.

(589) * nańtéko ekólé aahí-rári
1.worker 9.coconut 1.PAST.PERF.DJ-grate
int. 'the worker grated (the) coconut'

(590) namárókoló | eraráńca iyá | o-núú-ttottel-átsa
1.hare 10.oranges 10.DEM.I 1-PERF.PERS-pick-PLUR
'Hare, these oranges, he picked (them)'

Makhuwa-Imithupi (Stucky 1985:58)
(591) híń-Sepété ńkhác' úlé á-hó-túpúla
HON-Sepete 3.cashew.tree 3.DEM.III 1-PERF.DJ-cut.down
'Sepete did cut down the cashew nut tree (as we expected him to)'

Remarkably, the SOV does occur in Makhuwa-Enahara stories, but only with a first or second person subject, as in (592) and (593). First and second person, the participants in the discourse, are always identifiable and always expressed pronominally. In the majority of cases such a subject is just encoded by a subject marker on the verb (and a null pronoun in the non-dislocated subject position). If a free pronoun for first or second person enters the derivation, it must thus always be merged in an A-bar position, left-dislocated or base-generated, which may precede the dislocated object. The question remains why these personal pronouns occur before the object more easily than full subjects, and whether their high accessibility as discourse participants plays a role.

(592) mí etsíítsí | ki-náá-várá | ki-náá-khúura (H9.6)
1SG.PRO 9.owl 1SG-PRES.DJ 1SG.PRES.DJ-chew
'me, the Owl, I will catch it and I will eat it'

(593) mí eshímá y-oóríipa nki-ń-ca (H12.12)
1SG.PRO 9.shima 9-dark NEG.1SG-PRES-eat.DJ
'dark shima, I don't eat it'

A related phenomenon, which I mention just to give a more complete overview, is the occurrence of two elements both of which seem to be the subject of the sentence, as in (594) and (595). Since the second element is a possessive in the data I have, the construction could be analysed as a case of possessor raising. However, the examples are also reminiscent of the so-called double subject construction, as known from Japanese and Korean (Yoon 2007). The construction can be analysed as a scene-setting topic (the first element, or in general the possessor) followed by the syntactic subject of the sentence. In any analysis it is unclear why the subject marking on the verb in (594) and (595) differs: it agrees with the "second" subject *etthw' ááwé* 'her thing' in (594) and with the "first" subject *enám' éele* 'that animal' in (595).

(594) Maríámú etthw' ááwé y-aa-rí w-aa-khottá alópwána (H2.38)
1.Mariamu 9.thing 9.POSS.1 9-PAST-be 15-2-deny 2.men
'Mariamu her thing was to refuse men'

(595) enám' éele manyáńk' aáya | e-rina-ts' éékwaattyó (K3.51)
9.animal 9.DEM.III 6.horns 6.POSS.2 9-have-PLUR 9.hook
'that animal his horns have a hook'

In general the syntax determines the order of the preverbal arguments: the dislocated elements precede the non-dislocated subject. But how is the ordering of base-generated elements, like adjuncts? Adverbial phrases typically occur first in a sentence, but are also allowed in between a left-dislocated element and the verb. In (596) the adverbial adjunct *ohíyú* 'in the evening' follows the left-dislocated object *ekanttyééro* 'lamp'.

(596) ekanttyééro ohíyú | o-náá-parihélá (mpáání mw-a-riipá)
9.oil.lamp 14.evening 2SG-PRES.DJ-light 18.inside 18-SIT-be.dark
'the lamp at night/in the evening you light it (when it is dark inside)'

If both positions are possible for the adverb, what determines the order of the adjunct and the dislocated argument? Does IS play a role? The precise differences in position and interpretation between the alternate orders are still unclear, but I discuss some examples here. In (597) the adjunct *eléló* 'today' follows the subject *míyáánó* 'I', and the dislocated pronominal subject seems to have a more emphatic or contrastive reading. This is reinforced by the use of the longer form of the pronoun, *míyáánó,* instead of *mí*.

(597) íí naáta | míyáánó eléló | ki-n-róo-c' ettúura (H11.23)
ai no 1.SG.PRO today 1SG-PRES.CJ-go-eat 9.ashes
'oh no, I will eat ashes today'

In (598b) the adverbial phrase *ekhálái ekhalaí* 'long ago' follows the subject (*namárókoló* 'Hare'), but in (599) it precedes the subject (*enámá* 'animals'). Each of these sentences is the beginning of an animal story. They seem to have the same context, but (598b) is preceded by another sentence, which introduces the theme of the story (598a). The subject 'Hare' has thus already been mentioned in the discourse, which may be the reason it precedes the adverb. However, these are just suggestions on the basis of a few examples, and a more detailed study of adverbs in context is necessary to be able to determine the influences on the relative position of adverbs.

(598) a. (I want to tell a story today about…)
…tsi-pac-enry-ááyá hatá namárókoló
10-begin-PERF.REL-POSS.2 even 1.Hare

a-khal-áká wapuwá-ni […] (H7.1)
1.SIT-stay-DUR 16.compound-LOC
'…how even Hare was domesticated.'

b. namárókoló | ekhálái ekhalaí | aa-rí mpatthaní a nsátóro
1.Hare long.ago RED 1.PAST-be 1.friend 1.CONN 1.admin
'a long, long time ago Hare was friends with the administrator' (H7.2)

(599) ekhálái ekhalaí | enámá ts-aání-lávúla (H9.1)
long.ago RED 10.animals 10-PAST.HAB-speak
'a long, long time ago the animals used to speak'

Another example of the ordering of more than two preverbal elements is given in (600). The preverbal domain contains two scene-setting elements, which both precede the subject.

(600) ekhálái | élá elápw' éela | akúnyá kha-yaa-tsúwél-íya (H15.1)
long.ago 9.DEM.I 9.country 9.DEM.I 2.whites NEG-2.IMPF-know-PASS.DJ
'long ago the Portuguese were not known in this country'

Coming back to Chafe's (1976) definition of topic, cited in chapter 3, "the topic sets a spatial, temporal or individual framework within which the main predication holds". In this sense all preverbal elements would qualify as having a topic function. Informally, the information structure of the various topics in the preverbal domain can be thought of as a funnel: the broad frame is set, which is narrowed down by the next element, within which an even smaller element can be identified, on which the rest of the sentence comments. In (600), the temporal frame is first established ('*long ago*'), which is narrowed down to a situation in which both time and space are given ('long ago *in this country*'), after which a human referent is identified, which ultimately restricts the predicate to hold for this multifactorial situation/topic ('*the whites* long ago in this country'). A similar example is (579), repeated below as (601), where the adverbial clause "when the fire had stopped" holds in the temporal scene "two days later", and the main clause "he came out" holds in the situation "two days later when the fire had stopped".

(601) masi seertú | nróttó áyá | nuu-thowa-thówá moóró olé |
but certainly after.tomorrow POSS.2 RES-finish-RED 3.fire 3.DEM.III

ólé oo-khúmá (H14.25)
1.DEM.III 1.PERF.DJ-exit
'but sure enough, two days later, when the fire had stopped, he came out'

4.2.6 Conclusion

In this section it has been suggested that there are three types of preverbal elements. First, usually sentence-initially, there are the scene-setting elements. These can be DPs and adverbs. The scene-setting elements are not syntactically dependent on the core sentence,

since they are not part of the theta-grid of the verb, and they are analysed as base-generated in their preverbal position. Second are the left-dislocated elements, which are related to an argument function in the sentence, but occur in a preverbal A-bar position. These are often highly accessible and can be used to indicate a topic shift. Preverbal objects are always dislocated, and subjects can probably also appear left-dislocated. The third type is the non-dislocated subject, which is always closest to the verb. The relative order of these elements within the preverbal domain seems to be determined by syntax rather than IS, but IS does play a substantial role in determining whether these elements must appear in the preverbal domain at all. The data discussed in this section are accounted for in a model in section 4.4.

In the next section the elements in the postverbal domain are examined. Both the object and the subject can occur after the verb, and they can even co-occur postverbally.

4.3 The postverbal domain

In the postverbal domain a distinction must be made between the postverbal domain following a disjoint verb form and the postverbal domain following a conjoint verb form. The formal differences between these verb forms are described in chapter 2, section 2.6.5. Chapter 5 provides more information on the interpretation of the elements following a CJ form, as well as a more detailed analysis of the differences between the two verb forms. In this section the interpretations and positions of the elements in the post-DJ domain are discussed and compared to data from some other Bantu languages.

4.3.1 Canonical order: SVO

In a canonical transitive sentence, the subject precedes the verb, and the object follows it. Together, the verb and the object function as a comment to the preverbal topic. Gundel (1988) notes that every sentence needs to have a comment, but not all sentences need to have a narrow focus. This is related to the CJ/DJ distinction in Makhuwa. The CJ verb form is used in sentences that have an object referring to a referent with a narrow focus or exclusive interpretation (see chapter 5). When the DJ form is used, no such reading is present. This description of the use of the DJ form is in the form of an "elsewhere" condition. This matches well with the intuition of my informants, who find it difficult to characterize the typical use of an SVO sentence with a DJ verb form. They indicate that when the DJ verb form is used "it is not an answer, you just say it, you are giving information". Stucky (1985:56) also says that the disjoint form "is simply used to indicate that the action took place". In short: the DJ verb form and the postverbal elements form the comment of the sentence, without containing an exclusive focus. This is the reading illustrated in (602). These sentences are from the story in which the protagonist wants to marry a lying woman and make friends with the cops. They further develop the story, and the whole predicate is presented as equally important. The

predicate *omphwányá pulíisa* 'met a policeman' is the comment to the topic *ositátí* 'in town' (and the null-subject 'he').

(602) ositátí o-ḿ-phwányá pulíisa
17.city 1.PERF.DJ-1-meet 1.police

oo-páńk-áná opátthání | n' uúle (H3.40,41)
1.PERF.DJ-make-ASSO 14.friendship with 1.DEM.III
'in town he met a policeman, he became friends with him'

The objects in the double object construction in (603a) are also part of the comment, but they are not narrowly focused. One of the informants explained that this sentence is used to simply make a statement, and not to answer the question in (603b), to which the correct answer is (603c).

(603) a. a-h-aá-váhá eyoócá alákhu[35]
1-PERF.DJ-2-give 9.food 2.chickens
'he gave the chickens food'

b. iir-al' éshéeni úlé elélo?
1.do-PERF.CJ 9.what 1.DEM.III today
'what did he do today?'

c. aa-vah-alé eyooca alákhu
1.2-give-PERF.CJ 9.food 2.chickens
'he gave the chickens food'

Examples (604) and (605) are another illustration of the ungrammaticality of focal elements in the domain following a DJ verb. In answers to object questions, and in sentences where the object is modified by the exclusive focus particle "only", the DJ form may not be used. The use of the DJ verb form is discussed and illustrated further in chapter 5; the conclusion here is that in a canonical SVO sentence with a DJ verb form, the postverbal domain is part of the comment, but it may not contain focused elements.

(604) a. mw-aa-low-álé esheeni?
2PL-PAST-fish-PERF.CJ 9.what
'what have you caught?'

b. kaa-low-ál' éphwetsá
1SG.PAST-fish-PERF.CJ 9.octopus
'I've caught (an) octopus'

[35] The subject marker is expected to be *o-* in this example. It is unknown why it appears as *a-*.

c. * kaahí-lówa ephwétsa
1SG.PAST.PERF.DJ-fish 9.octopus
int. 'I've caught (an) octopus'

(605) a. ki-n-thúm' étomati paáhi
1SG-PRES.CJ-buy 10.tomatoes only
'I buy only tomatoes'

b. * ki-náá-thúma etomátí paáhi
1SG-PRES.DJ-buy 10.tomatoes only
int. 'I buy only tomatoes'

4.3.2 Inverted order: VS

In some contexts the subject can occur postverbally. One of the environments in which the subject can follow a disjoint verb form is in quotative inversion, as shown in (606), where the subject *Salimo* follows the verb *ookóhá*. This type of inversion is familiar cross-linguistically.

(606) esheeni y-iiraney-alê? oo-kóhá Saálíímu
9.what.PL 9-happen-PERF.REL 1.PERF.DJ-ask 1.Salimo
' "what happened?" asked Salimo'

The VS word order can also be used in an independent sentence. All three types of mono-argumental verbs can occur in this construction: in stories examples of unaccusative (607), unergative (608), and passive verbs (609) are easily found. More information on transitive verbs, which are also allowed in this construction, is provided later in this section. In all of these examples, the subject marker on the verb agrees with the postverbal subject, as in (607), where both the subject marker *ni-* and the subject *nláikha* 'angel' are in class 5.

(607) válé ni-hoó-wá nláikha (H4.78)
16.DEM.III 5-PERF.DJ-come 5.angel
'now there came an angel'

(608) nihúkú ni-motsa ohíyú waa-nú-mwáárýá mweéri (K4.1)
5.day 5-one 14.night 3.PAST-PERS-shine 3.moon
'one night the moon was shining'

(609) noo-vár-íyá numḿmé ni-motsá (K2.58)
5.PERF.DJ-grab-PASS 5.toad 5-one
'one toad was caught'

In several other southern Bantu languages (Van der Spuy 1993, Buell 2008 for Nguni/Zulu, Bresnan and Mchombo 1987 for Chichewa, Kosch 1988 and Zerbian 2006 for Northern Sotho) the subject has an afterthought-reading when it occurs postverbally and controls agreement on the verb, and it is analysed as right-dislocated. In (610) the subject *mo:nna* 'man' is in class 1 and the subject marker on the verb agrees with it. The lengthening of the penultimate syllable on the verb indicates that the subject is right-dislocated, and the translation reflects the afterthought reading. Right-dislocation is not used often in Makhuwa, but it is one of the possible analyses of a VS order with subject agreement. In Makhuwa, right-dislocation is not indicated by lengthening of the penultimate syllable of the verb, as is the case in Northern Sotho, but quite often there is a pause between verb and subject, and the subject is modified by a demonstrative, as in (611) and (612). The right-dislocated element has an afterthought interpretation in that case.

Northern Sotho (Zerbian 2006:127)

(610) ó-a-só:ma mo:-nna
1-PRES.DJ-work 1-man
'he is working, the man'

Makhuwa

(611) álé aa-pácérá w-ií-hímya-ká-tsá akúnyá ale (H15.18)
2.DEM.III 2.PERF.DJ-begin 15-REFL-say-DUR-PLUR 2.white 2.DEM
'they began to identify themselves, those Portuguese'

(612) aa-vír-átsá y-eett-áka |
2.PERF.DJ-pass-PLUR 2-walk-DUR

mwanámwáné oolé ni mwálápw' aáw' óole (K3.25)
1.child 1.DEM.III and 1.dog 1.POSS.1 1.DEM.III
'they passed walking, that child and that dog of his'

However, the afterthought reading is not the only interpretation the postverbal subject can have in Makhuwa. Especially when verb and subject are pronounced as one intonational unit the subject tends to receive a different interpretation, and there is evidence that it is not dislocated in such cases. First, the postverbal subject can be indefinite and non-specific, as in (613) and (614): properties that are impossible for right-dislocated elements. Furthermore, it can be modified by a weak quantifier, which is also not allowed in right-dislocation since it behaves as an indefinite (615). And finally there is no a pause between the verb and this kind of subject.

(613) o-hoó-khwá ńtthu
1-PERF.DJ-die 1.person
'someone died'

(614) a-hoó-wá (aléttó) a-kínáku
2-PERF.DJ-come (2.guests) 2-other
'there came others/other guests'

(615) aa-vírá maátsí vakhaáni
6.PERF.DJ-pass 6.water few
'a little water has passed'

Instead of the afterthought reading, the VS construction in Makhuwa as in (613)-(615) has a thetic interpretation. There is no topic expression in the sentence, so the whole sentence has a comment function. The pragmatic topic is the "here and now" (see chapter 3 on theticity). Makwe is another example of a language that uses the DJ form to express a thetic sentence (616). The thetic interpretation can be deduced from the use at the beginning of stories (as in (608) above), and its use "out-of-the-blue", as in (617). This sentence can be used when there has not been running water for a while (a common situation on Ilha de Moçambique), and now it has returned. Example (505) also illustrates a VS order which can be uttered without textual context.

Makwe (Devos 2004:316)
(616) aníúuma nakádíímu
1.PRES.PERF.come.out 1.giant
'and so, Nakadimu leaves'

Makhuwa
(617) a-náá-khúmá maátsi ńno
6-PRES.DJ-exit 6.water 17.DEM.I
'water is running here!'

(618) e-náá-rúpá epúla
9-PRES.DJ-rain 9.rain
'it is raining!'

The VS construction is used mostly to express the type of thetic sentence Lambrecht (1994) refers to as "event central". The other type of thetic sentence is "entity central". In the former an event or situation is presented and in the latter an entity or individual. The VS construction can be used for both, but the second type can also be expressed by a split construction (Sasse 1996), so called because it is split up into two clauses. The presented entity appears in a first clause, and the predicate in a second, which is relative. The split construction, illustrated in (619) and (620), is used in stories just like the VS construction to encode theticity. The presented entity follows a form of the verb *-haavo* 'to be somewhere' and controls the subject agreement on that verb.

(619) y-aá-háa-vo enám' é-motsá e-n-aátsím-íyá ncóco (K1.78)
9-PAST-stay-LOC 9.animal 9-one 9-PRES-call-PASS.REL gazelle
'there was one animal which is called gazelle'

(620) tsi-háá-vo étthú tsi-hi-ń-réerá o-ń-hímeéryá nthíyána
10-stay-LOC 10.things 10-NEG-PRES-be.good.REL 15-1-tell 1.woman
'there are things that are not good to tell a woman' (H4.109)

In summary, it has been demonstrated that the subject marker agrees with the postverbal subject in the VS construction in Makhuwa. The subject can be right-dislocated, but otherwise the VS order has a thetic interpretation.

The thetic function is expressed by a VS order in other Bantu languages too, but there are crucial differences. In general, two different types of VS constructions can be distinguished for these other languages, which both differ from the VS construction as found in Makhuwa in formal and interpretational aspects. The first type of construction expressing theticity uses a VS order where the subject marker on the verb does not agree with the postverbal subject. Instead, there is locative agreement on the verb. This is the case in locative inversion, where the subject marker on the verb agrees with a preposed locative noun. In the Chichewa example in (621) the locative *mchitsîme* 'in the well' is moved to a preverbal position and the subject marker is in the same class as the locative (class 18). A different example of a thetic VS order with locative agreement is the expletive construction. In Sesotho the agreement on the verb is in class 17 in a thetic VS construction, but the preverbal locative noun is optional. In (622) the locative noun is absent. The locative agreement on the verb could be viewed as default agreement (Buell 2007b). See also Demuth (1990) and Van der Wal (2008).

Chichewa (Bresnan and Kanerva 1989:16)
(621) m-chitsîme mwa-a-gwera mbûzi
18-well 18-PERF-fall 9.goat
'into the well has fallen a goat'

Sesotho (Demuth 1990:245)
(622) hó-lisá ba-shányána
17-herd 2-boys
'there are boys herding'

The second VS construction that is used to express theticity is found in Matengo. The difference with the locative inversion or expletive construction just discussed is the agreement on the verb. In Matengo the verb still agrees with the postverbal subject, just like in Makhuwa. The difference with Makhuwa is in the interpretation, which in Matengo can be thetic (as in context a) or have a narrow focus

on the subject (as in context b). In Makhuwa the VS order is only appropriate in context a, not b.

Matengo (Yoneda 2008)
(623) ju-híkití Marî:a
1-arrive.PERF 1.Maria
'Maria has come'
– as an answer to a. 'what happened?'
b. 'who has come?'

The constructions that have locative agreement are often ambiguous between a thetic reading and an interpretation with subject focus. The thetic reading was illustrated above, and the subject focus can be seen when the subject is questioned or otherwise associated with focus. Inherently focused subject *wh*-elements may occur in VS order in Northern Sotho (624), and subjects modified by the focus particle "only" are also allowed in postverbal position (625). In the Kirundi example in (626), which uses class 16 as the explective subject agreement, the postverbal subject *abâna* 'children' is interpreted as focal, as indicated by the exclusive (and contrastive) translation.

Northern Sotho (Zerbian 2006:70)
(624) go-fihla mang?
17-arrive who
'who is arriving?'

(625) go-binne basadi fela
17-dance.PAST 2.women only
'only women danced'

Kirundi (Ndayiragije 1999:400)
(626) ha-á-nyôye amatá abâna
16-PAST.CJ-drink.PERF milk children
'children (not parents) drank milk'

An important formal characteristic of the thetic VS constructions just discussed is that they all use the CJ verb form in languages like Sotho, Zulu, and Kirundi. The verb in (624), repeated below as (627a) is only allowed in its CJ form. The DJ form, which is used in Northern Sotho right-dislocation (628), is ungrammatical when the subject is a *wh*-word, as illustrated in (627b,c). Even in Makwe, where a thetic sentence uses a DJ verb form, a focused postverbal subject only occurs with a CJ form.

Northern Sotho

(627) a. CJ go-fihla mang?
17-arrive who
'who is arriving?' (Zerbian 2006:70)

b. DJ * go-a-fihla mang
17-PRES.DJ-arrive who (Zerbian, personal communication)

c. DJ * o-a-fihla mang
1-PRES.DJ-arrive who

(628) ó-a-só:ma mo:-nna
1-PRES.DJ-work 1-man
'he is working, the man' (Zerbian 2006:127)

Makwe (Devos 2004:315)

(629) alilé náani| alile wáawe
1.eat.PRES.PERF 1.who 1.eat.PRES.PERF 9.father
'who has eaten? father has eaten'

The formal and interpretational properties of the VS constructions in the other Bantu languages discussed are quite different from the properties of the Makhuwa VS thetic construction. Firstly, Makhuwa uses the DJ verb form; secondly, there is no expletive marker or locative agreement; and thirdly, the postverbal subject cannot have a focus interpretation.[36] Why Makhuwa does not use the CJ verb form in inverted subject constructions is discussed in chapter 5; the other two properties are exemplified in the next paragraphs.

Makhuwa cannot use locative subject agreement in VS constructions, although agreement with a locative subject is possible in some cases, as shown in (630). However, the subject marker on the verb cannot agree with a preposed locative adjunct (631c), or a subjectivised locative argument of a passive verb (632c). The subject marker still agrees with the postverbal logical subject: *aléttó* 'guests' in (631b) and *ephepélé* 'fly' in (632b).

(630) mpáání mú n-núú-nanar-átsa
18.inside 18.DEM.I 18-PERF.PERS-mess.up-PLUR
'inside here it is all messy'

(631) a. aléttó a-náá-phíyá wakisírwa
2.guests 2-PRES.DJ-arrive 16.island
'the guests arrive on the island'

[36] See Van der Wal (2008) for a comparison of VS constructions (except for the Matengo one).

b. wakisírwá a-náá-phíyá alétto
16.island 2-PRES.DJ-arrive 2.guests
'on the island arrive guests'

c. * wakisírwá wa-náá-phíyá alétto
16.island 16-PRES.DJ-arrive 2.guests
int. 'on the island arrive guests'

(632) a. ki-núú-hélá ephepélé mpoótíli-ni
1SG-PERF.PERS-put 9.fly 18.jar-LOC
'I put the fly in the jar'

b. ephepélé e-núú-hél-íyá mpoótíli-ni
9.fly 9-PERF.PERS-put-PASS 18.jar-LOC
'the fly was put in the jar'

c. * mpoótílí-ní n-núú-hél-íyá ephepéle
18.jar-LOC 18-PERF.PERS-put-PASS 9.fly
int. 'in the jar was put a fly'

One might expect to find expletive agreement in a thetic split construction, but the subject marker agrees with the subject even in these constructions in Makhuwa, as shown in (633).

(633) ts-aá-háa-vo enámá tsi-kínákú (K3.72)
10-IMPF-stay-LOC 10.animals 10-other
'there were other animals'

One construction in which the subject agreement could be called default is the experiencer construction. There are two verbs, *ovola* 'to torment' and *otsivela* 'to please', which occur in the experiencer construction in my database. In this construction the logical subject appears after the verb, which takes *o-* as a subject agreement prefix. This prefix is used for the classes 1,3,14,15 and 17, but if the construction is anything like inversion constructions known from other Bantu languages, it is most probably a class 17 agreement prefix. The experiencer is encoded as the object of the verb and marked by an object marker on the verb in (634) and (635). What is also special about this construction is the fact that the verb is not inflected. In the examples there is neither a TAM marker between the subject marker (*o-*) and the object marker (*-ki-* or *-ń-*), nor a special inflectional final suffix (e.g., *-ale*). Therefore, the construction could alternatively be analysed as an infinitive.

(634) a. o-kí-tsívélá enkísi
?-1SG-please 9.squid
'I like squid'

b. o-ń-tsívélá enkísi
?-1-please 9.squid
'he likes squid'

(635) o-kí-vóla etála
?-1SG-torment 9.hunger
'I am hungry'

The use of the verb *ovola* 'to torment' is not limited to this construction, but it can also be found in a canonical sentence. The example in (636) shows that it can be preceded by the logical subject *etala* 'hunger'. The subject marker agrees with the preverbal subject and the verb occurs in the present tense DJ conjugation. More specific research is needed to fully understand the properties and use of this construction, but it is clear that apart from this construction, the subject marker on the verb always agrees with the logical subject, regardless whether the subject precedes or follows it.

(636) etálá e-ná́-m-volá ntsúwá n-ná-ḿ-pahá (H4.72)
9.hunger 9-PRES.DJ-1-torment 5.sun 5-PRES.DJ-1-burn
'hunger torments him, the sun burns him'

The postverbal subject in Makhuwa cannot be in focus. This is evident in the ungrammaticality of a *wh*-subject in postverbal position, as in (637), and in the impossibility of the postverbal subject to be modified by the focus particle "only" (638).

(637) * aahi-phiya pani?
1.PAST.PERF.DJ-arrive 1.who
int. 'who arrived?'

(638) * oo-vár-íya latáráw' uúlé paáhi
1.PERF.DJ-grab-PASS 1.thief 1.DEM.III only
int. 'only that thief was caught'

Furthermore, the postverbal subject cannot be the answer to a subject question, which is a pseudocleft in (639a). As mentioned in section 4.2.1, subject questions can only be answered by using a cleft or pseudocleft (639c).

(639) a. y-aape-iy-alé esheení?
9-cook-PASS-PERF.REL 9.what.PL
'what was cooked?' lit. 'the thing that was cooked is what?'

b. # yoo-ruw-iya eshima
9.PERF.DJ-stir-PASS 9.shima
int. 'shima was cooked'

c. e-ruw-iy-alé eshimá
9-stir-PASS-PERF.REL 9.shima.PL
'what was cooked is shima'

In summary, the VS construction in Makhuwa is unlike subject inversion in the other Bantu languages mentioned here, as 1) the subject agreement is with the logical subject, 2) the subject cannot have a focus reading, and 3) the DJ verb form is used. Specific to Makhuwa is what might look like a "transitive expletive" construction with VOS word order. Whereas in languages like Chewa and Sotho the VS construction is limited to intransitive verbs (Demuth and Mmusi 1997), in Makhuwa transitive verbs are also allowed. The VOS order is not used often, and, just like the VS order, it can also be pronounced with a pause before the subject (640). With this obligatory pause the subject is interpreted as an afterthought, which indicates that it is right-dislocated.

(640) kha-ḿ-vára ntékó | nlópwán' óle
NEG.1-PRES-grab.DJ 3.work 1.man 1.DEM.III
'he doesn't work, that man'

Without the pause, it has the same thetic interpretation as the VS construction. Stucky (1985) notes that the VOS order in Makhuwa-Imithupi is judged the most "neutral", in requiring no prior discourse (a thetic environment). When asked for a context for the VOS sentence in (641), my informants gave the typical thetic out-of-the-blue context: "You suddenly see that one frog is catching a fly, and you inform the other people; you say: 'hey look!'". Other, more frequently used VS constructions have a pronominal object, like the 1SG object expressed as an object marker *-ki-* in (642). However, the abbreviation VOS I only use to refer to sentences with a non-pronominal, full object.

(641) oo-várá ephepélé naphúl' úule
1.PERF.DJ-grab 9.fly 1.frog 1.DEM.III
'that frog caught a fly'

(642) a. e-núú-kí-mórá ekanéta
9-PERF.PERS-1SG-fall 9.pen
'I dropped my pen'

b. o-náá-ki-weréyá nthána
3-PRES.DJ-1SG-hurt 3.back
'my back hurts (me)'

The subject in VOS order has the same properties as the subject in the VS construction: first, it cannot be a question word (643); second, it cannot be modified by "only" (644); third, it can be indefinite and non-specific (645); and fourth, there is no pause between V(O) and S. The VOS examples below can be compared to the VS examples in (637), (638), and (613), respectively.

(643) * o-náá-wóóva áráǹttáatsi páni?[37,38]
1-PRES.DJ-fear 2.spiders 1.who
int. 'who is afraid of spiders?'

(644) a. * aa-váh-íya ekanétá anámwáne paáhi
2.PERF.DJ-give-PASS 10.pens 2.children only
int. 'only the children were given pens'

b. aa-váh-íya ekanétá anámwáne
2.PERF.DJ-give-PASS 10.pens 2.children
'the children were given pens'

(645) opatsárí aahí-thúm' ekútté ńtthu
17.market 1.PAST.PERF.DJ-buy 10.beans 1.person
'someone bought beans at the market'

To summarise, the subject occurs postverbally in Makhuwa if it has neither a topic function, nor a focus function. Intransitive as well as transitive verbs may be used, resulting in a VS or VOS order with a thetic interpretation.

---

[37] The object is expected to be marked on the verb, since it is in class 2. Nevertheless, the ungrammaticality is not due to the lack of OM. The reason for the absence of OM is unclear; this noun might be one of the words that are in different noun classes for different informants.

[38] The sentence can only be grammatical with a clear pause before the question word, and in the context of someone having already said the first part of the sentence (*onááwóóva árá`ntáatsi* 'he is afraid of spiders'). The question is then interpreted rhetorically, as an attempt to catch somebody lying: "you say someone is afraid of spiders: well, who might this be, huh?". I suspect that in this case the question word is on its own, syntactically unrelated to the predicate, as in ii.

ii. onááwóóva árá`nttáatsi | pánî?

4.3.3 Position of the postverbal subject

Subject in high position and verb cluster remnant-moved

Having described the properties of the postverbal subject, the question that arises is which position the Makhuwa postverbal subject is in. The answer to this question helps to identify the structure behind the linear word order and to understand the (merge and move) operations needed to derive this word order. There are different analyses concerning the structural position of a postverbal subject. The most important difference between these analyses is in the position of the subject: inside or outside of the vP[39]

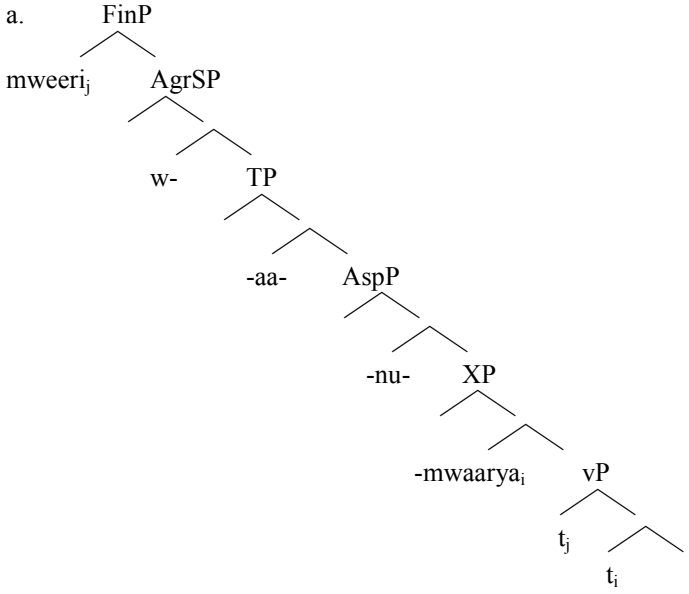
In the locative inversion and the expletive construction, as illustrated for Chewa and Sotho above, the position of the subject has been analysed as *in situ* inside the vP (Demuth 1990, Demuth and Harford 1999, Carstens 2005, see also Belletti 2001, Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou 2001). Such an analysis is consistent with the absence of verbal agreement with the logical subject in these constructions. If movement to the preverbal subject position is linked to subject agreement in these languages, there is no possibility for the logical subject to move out of the VP if the subject marker does not agree with it. Since in this analysis there is still an element in the c-command domain of the verb, it explains why the verb can appear in the conjoint form in these languages. The analysis also accounts for the availability of a focal reading of the subject. This is further explained in chapter 5, but one could think of Diesing's (1992) Mapping Hypothesis which proposes that material within the VP is in the nuclear scope of assertion (i.e., it is not the topic).

For Makhuwa, I propose that the postverbal subject is in a high A position (in contrast to the previous analysis in Van der Wal 2008). In order to still obtain the VS order, there is remnant movement of the whole verbal complex around the subject. This derivation of the VS construction in (608), repeated in (646), is represented in (647). First the subject *mweéri* 'moon' moves from specvP to a high A position (647a). Where exactly in the left periphery the preverbal subject resides is not important for my analysis, but it could be in FinP, as Julien (2002:196) proposes. After moving the subject, the remnant (AgrSP) is moved to a position higher than the subject (now indicated by XP, (647b)), resulting in a VS order. There are several arguments in favour of this analysis, and the apparent problems can be solved, as is shown below.

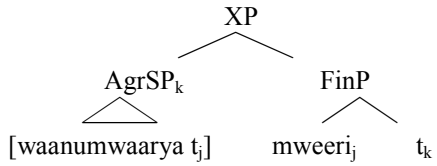
(646) waa-nú-mwáárya mweéri (K4.1)
3.PAST-PERS-shine 3.moon
'the moon was shining'

[39] Analyses that assume a high or low focus projection (Ndayiragije 1999, Aboh 2007b) are not considered here, since the subject is not interpreted as (exclusive) focus in a thetic sentence.

(647) a.



b.



The first and most obvious argument is the subject agreement on the verb. As shown above, the subject marker on the verb agrees with the logical subject in SV or VS order. Subject agreement has often been claimed to be impossible without movement of the agreeing element to the specifier of the agreeing projection in Bantu languages (Carstens 2005; Buell 2005; Baker 2003, 2008). Subject agreement can then be used as a diagnostic to determine the syntactic position of the subject: if the logical subject controls the agreement on the verb, it has moved to a high A position (be this specAgrSP, specFinP or another position).

Second, the proposed structure matches the interpretation of the subject. The postverbal subject cannot be focal in Makhuwa (see (637)-(639)), but it cannot be topical either. Lambrecht (1994, 2000) takes thetic sentences to be "topicless", because of their need to be paradigmatically distinguishable from categorical statements. He takes a topic-comment articulation as the unmarked state of affairs, where the subject is usually the topic. In a thetic sentence, however, both the subject and the predicate are presented as the comment. In order to avoid the default reading of the subject as the topic of the

sentence (as in a categorical sentence) the subject must be "detopicalised". The prototypical function of the preverbal subject is topic, so the easiest strategy to avoid that reading is to appear postverbally. Placing the verb before the subject has exactly this effect: the subject is not topical (and not focal either).

Third, if the whole remnant moves around the subject, the prediction is that this chunk can contain the verb, but also both the verb and the object. As shown by the VOS examples in (641)-(645), this prediction is borne out. Moreover, the proposed analysis seems to be the only one that can correctly predict the VOS thetic sentence. There is no easy way to derive the VOS order in an alternative analysis with the subject in situ, like the analysis proposed for the locative inversion constructions. There are two potential serious problems for the VOS order in this alternative analysis. First, there is no clear position for the object between the in-situ subject (in specvP) and the verb just above vP. Second, one must account for the subject agreement on the verb, which will first encounter the object as a goal, not the subject. The remnant movement analysis proposed here for Makhuwa accounts for the VOS order much more naturally.

Finally, the alternative analysis cannot explain wht a focused subject cannot remain in situ, following a CJ verb form. In the analysis proposed here it is logical that the verb cannot take a CJ form in a VS construction. The subject has already undergone Agree and moved up and is thus not c-commanded by the verb anymore. In chapter 5 it is further explained that the verb can only take a CJ form when there is an element in its c-command domain and that the exclusive interpretation of the element following the CJ verb form is incompatible with the thetic reading the VS construction has.

To sum up, an analysis in which the subject has moved up and the verbal remnant has moved around it explains the properties of thetic VS sentences in Makhuwa. The agreement with the subject, the non-focal and non-topical interpretation of the subject, the possibility of a VOS thetic sentence, and the disjoint form of the verb are all accounted for in the proposed analysis.

Apparent counterarguments to high S and remnant moved V

As a possible counterargument to the remnant movement analysis, one could point out that the postverbal subject can be indefinite and non-specific. Therefore, it is expected to not be topical and remain inside the VP. However, the subject agreement on the verb is still with the logical subject, which is suggestive of subject movement. Furthermore, as also shown in section 4.3.4, the interpretation and grammaticality of the postverbal subject (or any element, for that matter) is dependent on its position relative to other elements, rather than its absolute position in the derivation. Hence, not the position of the subject in the VP, but its position before or after the verb is relevant for its interpretation.

A second question for this analysis is where the remnant verbal complex moves to (indicated by the XP in (647)). In a carthographic analysis it is important to know which interpretation is associated with the target projection to which a phrase moves: is it topic? Focus? Force? None of these would be correct in the VS order, because the

verbal complex does not move to get a certain interpretation for itself, but for the subject to avoid a topical interpretation. This "altruistic" movement "cannot be caused by an attraction of a head that bears information structure features - unless one is willing to assume that negative specifications can serve this purpose as well" (Fanselow 2003:211). In an interface analysis, however, the absolute hierarchical position or projection of a constituent is of no importance: the subject gets the right interpretation as long as the verb is merged higher than the subject and linearly precedes it (see section 4.4.2). In Slioussar's (2007) model the verb could occur in a second specifier of the projection that contains the subject.

A third apparent counterargument concerns the scope of negation. The postverbal subject is in the scope of a negative verb form, as can be seen in (648), (649) and (650). The negative verb has scope over the quantified subject, and the readings are "not all" and "not every". Therefore, the negation in the verb should c-command the subject.

(648) kha-tsi-khum-álé enámá ts-ootéene
NEG-10-exit-PERF.DJ 10.animals 10-all
'not all animals came out'

(649) válé kha-ń-théreneya kata ńtthú
16.DEM.III NEG.1-PRES-slip.DJ every 1.person
'not everyone slips there' (only children do)

(650) kha-tsi-shukúl-álé nthánka ekaláwá ts-ootéene
NEG-10-lower-PERF.DJ 5.sail 10.boat 10-all
'not all boats have unrolled their sail' (there is one who hasn't unrolled)

This is also necessary if the subject is a negative polarity item (NPI): it should be c-commanded by negation in order to be licensed. Makhuwa-Enahara has borrowed from Portuguese *nem* the particle *ne* 'not even', which can be combined with *ńtthu* 'person' or *étthu* 'thing' to form a NPI. The examples in (651) show that the NPI *n' éétthu* 'anything' is ungrammatical with an affirmative verb (whether CJ or DJ), and needs a negative verb to be grammatical. The NPI *né ńtthu* 'anyone' can occur as the subject in a VS construction (652), which means that the negative verb must c-command the postverbal subject.

(651) a. nki-weh-álé n' éétthu
NEG.1SG-look-PERF.DJ not.even 9.thing
'I don't see anything (at all)'

b. * ki-m-phéélá n' eetthú
1SG-PRES.CJ-want not.even 9.thing
int. 'I don't want anything'

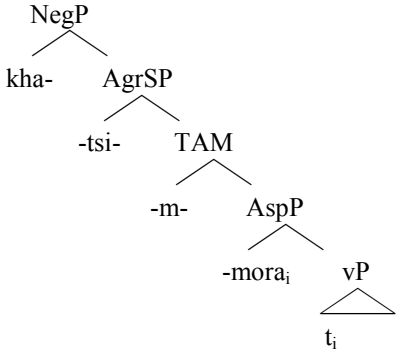
c. * ki-náá-phéélá n' éétthu
1SG-PRES.DJ-want not.even 9.thing
int. 'I don't want anything'

(652) khaa-phiy-álé né ńtthu
NEG.1.PAST-arrive-PERF.DJ not.even 1.person
'nobody arrived' / 'not a single person arrived'

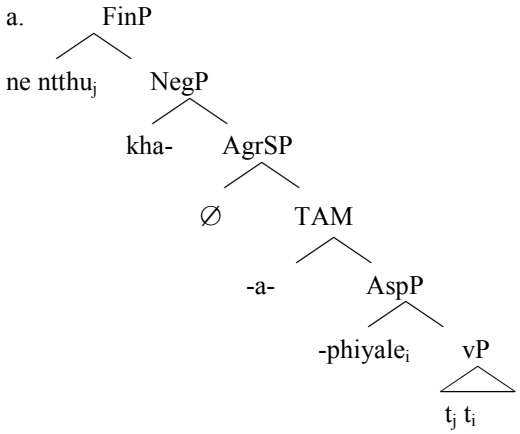
If the whole verbal remnant is moved to a position higher than the subject, as in the analysis proposed, it appears as if the subject is not c-commanded by negation. In the structure of the affirmative sentence in (647) above, the highest node of the remnant is AgrSP, and after movement this maximal projection c-commands the subject. However, if the highest projection of this cluster is NegP, the subject can still be licensed by negation. In a negative sentence the position of the negative prefix on the verb suggests that NegP is the highest node of the verbal cluster: it is the first of all inflectional markers in Makhuwa, and it even precedes the subject marker, as can be seen in (653) and (654). The preverbal subject, which naturally precedes the negation marker on the verb, is thus in a higher position than the specifier of the subject agreement marker anyway. In (655) the subject is in the specifier of a projection which is labeled FinP, but it may also be in some other high A position. In this configuration it is possible to move NegP (and the rest of the remnant part dominated by it), as shown in (655b).

(653) kha-tsi-ḿ-móra
NEG-10-PRES-fall.DJ
'they didn't fall'

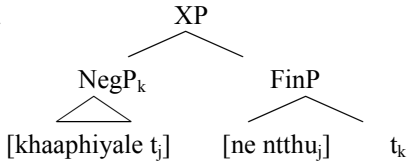
(654)



(655) a.



b.



Even if a negative element does not itself c-command the NPI because it is slightly embedded in a larger constituent (the head of NegP in this example), we find other cases in which non-direct c-command seems possible. This is the case in (656), for example, where "no" is embedded inside a PP, but still licenses the NPI "any".

(Leston Buell, p.c.)
(656) At no point did she make any pancakes.

As described in the inventory of conjugations in Makhuwa (chapter 2, section 2.5), some negative conjugations are marked by the pre-initial negative prefix *kha-* and others have the post-initial negative prefix *-hi-*. If the prefixes indeed correspond to functional projections, there are two projections for negation: one preceding the subject agreement and one following it. In the conjunctions that make use of the second projection (*-hi-*), NegP is not the highest node of the verbal cluster, and it would not c-command the subject after remnant movement. However, in VS constructions only the disjoint conjugations, which use the highest NegP (*kha-*) are used. Therefore, NegP is always the highest node of the negative verbal cluster which is moved around the subject, and the potential problem with the negative prefix *-hi-* does not appear.

In conclusion, the counterarguments are not as problematic as they seem, and the proposed analysis of the VS construction in Makhuwa, with a high subject and remnant movement, provides an explanation for the subject agreement with the logical

subject, the non-focal and non-topical interpretation of the subject, the use of the DJ verb form, and the grammaticality of a VOS thetic sentence.

Predictions

If the analysis presented above is on the right track, the prediction is that VSO word order is impossible, because with remnant movement the whole projection and everything it contains is moved. It is impossible to move just the verb, leaving the object in the VP. VSO order is not used frequently, and indeed it is only possible if the object is right-dislocated. The result is a VS thetic sentence with a dislocated O following, which is observable in the properties of subject and object in VSO order.

One of the indications that the object is dislocated in this order is the fact that a pause is judged necessary before the object, as in (657).

(657) yaahí-thúma anámwáné | eníká iye
2.PAST.PERF.DJ-buy 2.children 10.bananas 10.DEM.III
'the children bought (them), those bananas'

A second indication is found in the definiteness of the object. Indefinite objects are considered degraded, as exemplified in (658), where the object is modified by a weak quantifier. When a demonstrative is used, which makes the object definite, the VSO order is judged much more suitable, as shown in (659). The informant explained that this could be said in a situation where there are many frogs in different colours and one fly. Suddenly you see that the blue frog caught the fly; the fly is added as an afterthought.

(658) ?? oo-thíkíla Watsírí mithálí vakhaáni
1.PERF.DJ-cut 1.Watsiri 4.trees few
int. 'Watsiri cut few trees'

(659) oo-várá oópípil' oólé | ephepéle (ele)
1.PERF.DJ-grab 1.blue 1.DEM.III 9.fly 9.DEM.III
'that blue one caught (it), that fly'

Finally, the object cannot be in focus. A VSO sentence is ungrammatical if the object is modified by the focus particle "only" (660). All of these properties confirm the dislocated status of the object in VSO order.

(660) * oo-lówá Hamísí | ehópá paáhi
1.PERF.DJ-fish 1.Hamisi 9.fish only
int. 'Hamisi caught only fish'

The subject in VSO order has the same properties as in a VS construction: it cannot be in exclusive focus (661), and it is within the scope of negation (662). The order VSO is therefore best analysed as a thetic VS construction with a dislocated object.

(661) * yaahi-thuma athiyana paahi ekuwo iye
2.PAST.PERF.DJ-buy 2.women only 10.clothes 10.DEM.III
int. 'only women bought those clothes

(662) kha-wel-álé akápáseer' ootéene nkaláwá-ni
NEG-enter-PERF.DJ 2.Cabaceirans 2.all 18.boat-LOC
'not all the people from Cabaceira entered the boat'

So far, we have seen the VS and VOS orders in thetic sentences, and the possibility of having a VS order with a right-dislocated object (VS,O). The same VS order can occur with a left-dislocated object (O, VS), although this order does not occur frequently either, and I have only a few elicited sentences. In these sentences the properties of subject and object appear to be the same as in VSO order: a pause is used to separate the object from the sentence; the subject cannot be focal (663), (664); and the subject is in the scope of negation (665). The exact configuration of this word order is still unclear, but the theoretical implications could be problematic: how would the object be dislocated? If it is dislocated before the remnant movement, it is unclear to which position it would move, but dislocation after the remnant movement would imply movement from a constituent that has already moved – an island. Slioussar (2007), whose model I use, does not assume freezing of moved constituents, which would allow dislocation after movement, and explain the OVS order with a dislocated object. Another possibility is that the object in OVS order is simply base generated. More data are needed in order to form a conclusion on the syntactic structure of the OVS order.

(663) * eshímá elá | o-hoó-cá páni?
9.shima 9.DEM.I 1-PERF.DJ-eat 1.who
int. 'this shima, who ate it?'

(664) * ekaláw' éelé | o-h-eéttíha Nsácí paáhi
9.boat 9.DEM.III 1-PERF.DJ-drive 1.Musaci only
int. 'only Musaci steered this boat'

(665) ntthavi khaa-vura anakhavok' ooteene
5.net NEG.2.IMPF-pull 2.fishermen 2.all
'the net, not all fishermen pulled'

4.3.4 Conclusion

The interpretation of the elements in the domain following a DJ verb form is neither topical nor focal. This is true for both subjects and objects. Although right-dislocation rarely occurs in Makhuwa-Enahara, the postverbal subject can be dislocated, provided it has the suitable semantic and pragmatic properties and is preceded by a pause. Otherwise, the sentence is interpreted as thetic. The analysis proposed for these VS and VOS constructions is one in which the subject occupies a high position and in which there is remnant movement of the verbal complex around the subject. It was shown that the apparent difficulties in this analysis, related to the interpretation of the subject, the position of the remnant constituent and the scope of negation, do not apply or can be solved.

4.4 A model for the pre- and postverbal domains

This section attempts to account for the syntactic and interpretational properties of the elements in the pre- and postverbal domain just discussed. The models proposed in chapter 3 are applied and exemplified for the pre- and postverbal elements.

4.4.1 Carthographic model

In the carthographic approach, as explained in chapter 3, there are different projections for topics in the CP domain and one for focus. The different preverbal elements in Makhuwa, which can function as topics, could correspond to these different projections. However, as mentioned, there are several problems with this approach. One of the major problems lies in the reason for moving to a certain projection. Elements move in order to check a feature and get the right interpretation in the right position. Movement for negative or altruistic reasons is something that cannot be explained by this model. In the thetic VS construction discussed in the previous section, for example, the verb does not have a topical or focal feature or interpretation, but it only moves so that the subject receives a detopicalised interpretation.

In fact, it is not even the other element *by itself* (e.g., the subject in VS order) that gets an interpretation, it is rather the combination of the two elements that is interpreted. Neither the absolute position, nor the movement to that position yields a certain interpretation, but rather the position and status *relative* to the other elements. This is exacly what the principle mentioned at the beginning of this chapter says: state what is given before what is new *in relation to it* (Gundel 1988:220). This is what needs to be encoded in the grammar.

4.4.2 Interface model

The configurational model proposed by Slioussar (2007), as outlined in chapter 3, does precisely that: it encodes the status of the elements in the sentence in relation to each other. Not the pragmatic functions topic and focus, but the properties of relative accessibility and salience are grammatically encoded in this configurational model. The

relative order of elements in terms of accessibility and salience is checked at the interface by means of an interface rule. One of the interface rules proposed for Makhuwa is the one in (666). Although the rule is about both accessibility and salience, I refer to it as the "accessibility rule".

(666) *Accessibility rule*
Only the referents corresponding to the elements higher than the verb are interpreted as more accessible and less salient than the verb (and the referents corresponding to the elements lower than the verb).

This rule accounts for the position of the elements in the preverbal or postverbal domain: preverbally one finds the elements that refer to highly accessible and not very salient referents, relative to the verb, and postverbal are those elements that refer to referents that are equally accessible and salient, or less accessible and/or more salient than the verb. The rule states that *only* the elements in the preverbal domain are more accessible and less salient, which implies that elements in the postverbal domain may not (also) be more accessible and less salient than the verb.

The accessibility rule predicts the right interpretation for many word orders in Makhuwa. To start with the canonical SVO order, the preverbal subject is indeed more accessible and less salient than the verb, which in turn is more accessible and less salient than the object –in most cases. If the object is more accessible but also more salient than the verb, it stays in postverbal position, as the rule predicts. For example, the last phrase in (667) is a VO sequence in which the object (the goat) is very accessible: it has been mentioned in the preceding phrases and is modified by a demonstrative. Still, the object is just as salient as the verb, since the whole action of burying the goat is the comment of that sentence; there is no special attention to the burying (as opposed to eating it, for example).

(667) o-h-i´vvá epúrí
1-PERF.DJ-kill 9.goat

oo-mwárísh-el-átsá ephómé wa-nkhórá ni mpiróthi
1.PERF.DJ-pour-APPL-PLUR 9.blood 16-3.door and 18.veranda

oo-thípá nkwaártú oo-thípél' epúr' íile (H3.52,53)
1.PERF.DJ-dig 18.room 1.PERF.DJ-bury 9.goat 9.DEM.III
'he killed a goat, spilled the blood on the door and the veranda, dug (a hole) in the room, and buried the goat'

When the verb *is* in fact more salient than the object, the object is not allowed to stay lower than the verb and should be left-dislocated. Because the verb is the most salient element in the examples of "verb focus", the verb must be sentence-final. For (668) the stimulus for the informant was "I *fish* on the boat (I don't sleep there)".

Directly translating this stimulus into Makhuwa was problematic, but reversing the order of the contrasting clauses made the combination grammatical. The first clause then contains the negative verb, and the contrasted salient verb is sentence-final. For (669) the stimulus was "are you killing the goat or have you killed it?", and again the informants ensure that the (most salient) verbs are sentence-final by left-dislocation of the object. The verb is more salient than the object, and hence the object cannot follow the verb, in accordance with the accessibility rule.

(668) nki-ń-rúpa nkaláwá-ni ki-náá-lówá (nkaláwáni)
NEG.1SG-PRES.DJ-sleep 18.boat-LOC 1SG-PRES.DJ-fish
'I don't sleep on the boat, I fish (there)'

(669) epúr' íiyo n-náá-hítá áú moo-híta?
9.goat 9.DEM.II 2PL-PRES.DJ-kill or 2PL.PERF.DJ-kill
'that goat, are you killing it or have you killed it?'

Preverbal subjects and objects may neither be more salient than the verb, nor less accessible. Preverbal *wh*-elements are thus ungrammatical in the preverbal domain, since they are very low in accessibility by definition (670). An element that answers a *wh*-question is also ungrammatical preverbally (671), since an answer is naturally very high in salience. This was illustrated in section 4.2.1 and is repeated here.

(670) a. * pani o-naa-wa?
1.who 1-PRES.DJ-come
int. 'who comes?'

b. * eshééní o-náá-wéha?
9.what 2SG-PRES.DJ-look
int. 'what do you see?'

(671) a. ti paní o-mor-alé?
COP 1.who 1-fall-PERF
'who (is the one who) fell?'

b. # nlópwáná ólé oo-móra
1.man 1.DEM.III 1.PERF.DJ-fall
'that man fell'

As demonstrated in section 4.2.3, preverbal (dislocated) objects may not be indefinite, and they have a preference for occurring with a demonstrative. This points to the high accessibility of preverbal objects, in line with the accessibility rule. The same holds for left-dislocated subjects, but the non-dislocated subjects can be indefinite and

can even be non-specific, as exemplified in (551), repeated here as (672). Do these preverbal subjects obey the interface rule? In examples like (672), the verb in the last sentence is intuitively more salient than the subject, which is consistent with the accessibility rule. The preverbal indefinite subject is probably also more accessible than the verb, because the context of the example facilitates accomodation of the subject: when it is known that there are many people, and one is mentioned, it is very easy (or even necessary) to imagine that there are other people, as well.

(672) yaa-rí atthw' ińcééne
2.PAST-be 2.people 2.many
'there were many people'

m-motsá khú-hóol-él-áká wiírá yincérér-iy-é ntsúrúkhu
1-one NARR-front-APPL-DUR COMP 2.augment-PASS-OPT 3.money
'one went forward (to say) that they should have an increase in salary'

akínákú yaahí-ń-tthar-el-éla
2.others 2.PAST.PERF.DJ-1-follow-APPL-APPL
'(some) others followed him'

The ungrammaticality of the other examples with indefinite non-specific subjects provides a further argument for the more accessible status of the preverbal subject. The indefinite subject is either interpreted as generic (674) or modified by a relative clause (675): both are strategies to make the subject more accessible. Preverbal subjects are thus relatively more accessible and less salient than the verb, even if they are quite low in accessibility.

(673) * ńtthú o-hoó-wa
1.person 1-PERF.DJ-come
int. 'someone came'

(674) ńtthú kha-ń-cá eníka (y' oóhítharakuliya)
1.person NEG.1-PRES-eat 9.banana (9.CONN 15-NEG-peel-PASS)
'a human being does not eat (unpeeled) bananas'

(675) ntthu aa-lípélel-íyá kha-wa-ále
1.person 1.IMPF-wait-PASS NEG.1-come-PERF
'a certain awaited person did not come'

When the subject is either less accessible and more salient than the verb, or equally accessible and salient it indeed occurs after the verb, in VS or VOS order. These word orders have a thetic interpretation, in which everything is interpreted as the comment (the subject is neither topical nor focal). The only thing that matters for the

accessibility rule is that the subject is not higher than the verb. This effect is obtained by remnant movement of the verb around the subject. The same effect is also visible in the split construction (Sasse 1996) mentioned in section 4.3.2. The fact that the subject in these constructions is not more accessible and less salient than the verb has led some to claim that in a thetic construction there is "presentational focus" on the subject. I find this term is confusing, since the detopicalised status of the postverbal subject in Makhuwa has nothing to do with an exclusive focus reading.

There is one case left to account for, which is right-dislocation (RD). As mentioned before, RD is not used very often in Makhuwa-Enahara, but it is grammatical. In the few data and judgements of RD I have in my database, the RD elements are mostly interpreted as afterthoughts. For example in the question in (676a) the object *moóce* 'eggs' is left-dislocated, and in the answer it can either be left out completely, or be mentioned afterwards (676b). In (677) it is clear from the first sentence that the name of the fisherman is the topic in that part of the story. In the next sentence it is mentioned that the Portuguese (referred to by the demonstrative *álé*) wrote it down. The sentence intonation clearly finishes after the verb *ahańtíkha* 'they wrote', there is a pause, and then *ntsíná nne* 'that name' is added. Being very low in salience and high in accessibility, the rule predicts that these elements occur preverbally. I believe that afterthoughts like this one do not participate in the IS of that sentence but are added after the sentence has been pronounced and hence form a phrase on their own (at least in terms of intonation and IS).

(676) a. moócé o-hel-alé wa-tsulu w-a nrúpá
6.eggs 2SG-put-PERF.CJ 16-top 16-CONN 3.bag

áú o-hell-é mwi-nrúpá-ni?
or 2SG-put-PERF.CJ 18-3.bag-LOC
'the eggs, did you put them on top of the bag, or inside the bag?'

b. ki-hel-alé mwi-nrúpá-ni (moóce)
1SG-put-PERF.CJ 18-3.bag-LOC 6.eggs
'I put them inside (, the eggs)'

(677) Muúsá Alí Mpíikhi naa-rí ntsiná n-a
Musa Ali Mbiki 5.PAST-be 5.name 5-CONN

ólá nakhávóko ola
1.DEM.I 1.fisherman 1.DEM.I
'Musa Ali Mbiki was the name of that fisherman'

álé a-h-ańtíkha | <u>ntsíná nne</u> (H15.27,28)
2.DEM.III 1-PERF.DJ-write.Arabic 5.name 5.DEM.III
'they wrote it down, that name'

Less clear are the intonation and interpretation in examples like (678b). The question in this example was said to be grammatical in the context of the remark in (678a), which indicates that "the child" is at least accessible, and probably not very salient. The accesibility rule predicts that the subject would occur before the verb, unless it is right-dislocated ("outside" of the sentence). More data and judgements are needed to form a conclusion on RD. If all cases of RD are afterthoughts, they can be analysed as separate phrases. Otherwise, RD elements are a potential counterexample, since they are highly accessible and not salient, but do appear in the postverbal domain.

(678) a. mwaáná o-náá-phóta / o-náá-phótá mwaána
1.child 1-PRES.DJ-suck 1-PRES.DJ-suck 1.child
'the child is sucking (on something)'

b. o-m-phót' ésheeni mwaána?
1-PRES.CJ-suck 9.what 1.child
'what does the child suck on?'
'what does she suck on, the child?'

In summary, the accessibility rule as proposed in (666) can account for the information structure in the canonical word order in Makhuwa, in inverted subject constructions and with preposed objects. The position of indefinite subjects and the ungrammaticality of preverbal focus have also been explained.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter it has been established that the preverbal domain may not host focal elements but only elements that can be said to have a topical function. Three syntactically different types of elements can occur preverbally: scene-setting elements, left-dislocated objects (and subjects) and non-dislocated preverbal subjects. In the domain following a DJ verb form, focal elements are not allowed either, but the DJ form and the elements following it are interpreted as the comment of the sentence. When the subject appears postverbally it may be right-dislocated, but it usually appears non-dislocated in a VS construction with a thetic interpretation. Given the agreement between the subject marker and the postverbal subject, the absence of a focal reading and the possibility of a transitive VOS thetic sentence, I argue that the subject is in a high A position and that in order to obtain the VS order the remnant containing the VP moves around the subject.

While a cartographic account faces problems explaining these properties, an interface model can account for them using an interface rule referring to relative accessibility and salience. This ensures the right relative order and interpretation. In canonical SVO order as well as in inverted VS order the rule was shown to make the right predictions with respect to word order, scope and IS. Remaining challenges are the

relative order of the preverbal elements with respect to their syntactic status and the possible influence of IS, and the interpretation and syntactic analysis of right-dislocation.

This chapter only discusses the postverbal domain after a DJ verb form. In the following chapter the domain after the CJ form is treated and more information is provided on the CJ/DJ alternation.