

# The Position of the Object in Tunen

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## 1 Introduction

Tunen<sup>1</sup> has features that are remarkable for a Bantu language. It has a fully operating vowel harmony system (Stewart & Van Leynseele 1979, Mous 1986) which is at least in part an innovation (De Blois 1981). It shows relics of consonantal harmony in the feature fortis/lenis (Van Leynseele & Stewart 1980).<sup>2</sup> In addition to these phonological features, Tunen has a syntax that is atypical for Bantu: an object noun phrase can occur in front of the verb.<sup>3</sup>

Among the Benue Kwa languages with signs of OV order, Tunen is particularly interesting. Whereas some Bantu and Border Bantu languages may have the object before the verb in a limited number of tenses only (e.g. before negative verb forms), Tunen has OV order for all tenses. Under specific conditions the object does occur after the verb, yielding VO order. The aim of this article is to describe these properties.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tunen (Bantu A 44) is spoken in Cameroun around Ndikinimeki where savannah and forest meet close to the so-called Grassfields area. The language is described in detail by Idellette Dugast who devoted her life to the study of the Banen and published her findings in a two volume ethnographic study: a grammar, a lexicon and a collection of stories. This study relies on her work and also on my 1984 fieldwork. Data collected from Honore Boyoleba Bilahen in Paris, Antwerp and Leiden (1984-86) are indicated by HB or by HB/Jk if collected by Juliette Kuperus in Leiden. Data collected from Emmanuel Bakou in Ndikinimeki, Cameroun are indicated by EB. I thank the two above mentioned BanEn as well as Jean Owaken for sharing their language with me. I also thank Frits Kortlandt and Chris Collins for comments and suggestions.

<sup>2</sup> But Janssens (1993: pp. 88-92) has shown that at least part of these seemingly double reflexes of Proto-Bantu consonants can be explained by conditions on sound changes and that there is no need to fall back on a fortis/lenis distinction prior to Bantu.

<sup>3</sup> It is not the only Bantu or Benue Kwa language with OV order. Gregoire (1993) presents several Bantu languages with signs of OV order. Tunen OV order is probably an innovation as well. Claudi (1993: 102) proposes a path for how it might have come about.

<sup>4</sup> The term *OV order* refers to surface word order only and not to a typological category.

## 2 Word order within the noun phrase

In the noun phrase Tunen displays both head initial and head final properties. Modifiers such as adjectives, associatives, numerals, quantifiers and relatives follow the head noun and agree with it in noun class, so that the general order is Head Modifier. However, demonstratives and possessives precede the head noun.<sup>5</sup>

- (1) a. wɪmɪ mɪ mɔtɔɔ mɔtɔ  
 I my child I small I one  
 POSS N ADJ NUM  
 my one small child (1B)
- b. wɔ mɪkɪm wɛs m  
 I this I teacher I of  
 DEM N ASSOC  
 that teacher of Somo (1B)
- c. mɔmɪ tɛ ɔwɪ ɪndok nɪ  
 I child every I who I LRS lie  
 N O REL  
 every child who lies (1B)

Other modifiers that precede the noun are the question words *whose*, *which*, *where* and *how many*. The numeral *one* changes its meaning, to *another* or *some* when it is placed in front of the noun. What all these pre-nominal modifiers have in common is that they select from a given set, i.e. they evoke a paradigmatic relationship.

There is language internal evidence that the Noun Modifier is the older order, since possessives follow the noun in lexicalised contractions involving words for relatives or friends:

- (2) a. mɪkɪmɪ mɪ mɪw  
 my in Iw in Iw my  
 b. ɔɪwɪwɛ wɪm  
 my friend fr end my  
 c. bɪwɪm bɪwɪwɛ lɪwɪmɪ  
 my family (for a woman) mine my (Dugast 1971: p. 137)

## 3 The position of the object: before versus after the verb

Within Bantu VO is the normal order while OV is the deviant order. In Tunen the most common order is OV, as in (3) where the subject marker and the tense/aspect/mood clitic form a word which is followed by the object and finally the verb. It is also possible for the verb to precede the object (4).

<sup>5</sup>Demonstratives preceding the head noun is common among Bantu languages, but in Tunen it is the only option available. Both demonstratives and possessives always have the appropriate noun class concord and there is no sign of limited agreement with pre-nominal modifiers, as we sometimes find in other Bantu languages.

- (3) Mena mwəniŋ nyɪ  
1S PAST water drink  
I drank water (EB)

- (4) Mena nya ha mwəniŋ  
1S PAST drink only water  
I drank only water (EB)

(v) order can be observed for all tenses<sup>6</sup>

- |     |   |            |                                 |        |     |       |                  |
|-----|---|------------|---------------------------------|--------|-----|-------|------------------|
| (5) | a | Bɪŋo       | bekana                          | talak  | o   | ɔkɔ   | future           |
|     |   | 2 FUI      | 8 baskets                       | put    | LOC | chair |                  |
|     | b | Bɪna       | ekana                           | tala   | o   | ɔkɔ   | past             |
|     |   | 2 PASI     | 8 baskets                       | put    | LOC | chair |                  |
|     | c | Baka       | bekana                          | talak  | o   | ɔkɔ   | far past         |
|     |   | 2 FAR PAST | 8 baskets                       | put    | LOC | chair |                  |
|     | d | Bɪ         | bekana                          | talaka | o   | ɔkɔ   | subjunctive      |
|     |   | 2 SJV      | 8 baskets                       | put    | LOC | chair |                  |
|     | e | Abaka me   | ekana                           | tal    | o   | ɔkɔ   | compound tense   |
|     |   | 2 CPD      | 8 baskets                       | put    | LOC | chair |                  |
|     | f | Bilendo    | bekana                          | tal    | o   | ɔkɔ   | negative present |
|     |   | 2 NEG PRES | 8 baskets                       | put    | LOC | chair |                  |
|     | g | Bɪni       | bekana                          | tal    | o   | ɔkɔ   | negative past    |
|     |   | 2 NEG PAST | 8 baskets                       | put    | LOC | chair |                  |
|     | h | Bisonjo    | bekana                          | tal    | o   | ɔkɔ   | negative future  |
|     |   | 2 NEG FUT  | 8 baskets                       | put    | LOC | chair |                  |
|     |   |            | I have put baskets on the chair |        |     |       | (EB)             |

<sup>6</sup>We are only concerned here with post verbal verbs pre verbal position. Sentence initial position is equally possible for all noun phrases—objects (i) locative phrases—complement or adjunct—(ii) and temporal adjuncts (iii). Also, question words typically focused elements occur sentence initially. (iv) The numbers in the glosses refer to noun classes: thus 2 is class 2 plural of 1 containing human beings.

- (i) ɔndɔb monanɪnɪ mənɪ sɔkɪn  
sheep white 1S PAST see  
A white sheep I saw (EB)
- (ii) a ɔmɛvɛ mənɪ kɪsɪnɪ nɛmɪ  
there 1S PAST cassava plant  
There I planted cassava (LB)
- b ɔ nɪchɪnɪ ɔkɪnɪ ɛ nɪnɪ nɪnɪ  
LOC Duals 1 PAST go without me  
S/he went to Duala with out me (EB)
- c ɔ nɛkɪ nɪnɪ nɛnɪ tal  
LOC fire 1 PAST pot put  
On the fire he put the pot (FB)
- (iii) ɪ ɪɪɪɪ ɔndɪkɪkɪ ɪɪɪɪ nɪnɪ ɛ  
tomorrow 2S PRES go or today Q  
Do you live tomorrow or today? (FB)
- (iv) ɪ ɪɪɪɪ ɔndɪkɪkɪ ɪɪɪɪ nɪnɪ ɛ  
What are you eating? (LB)

If there are two objects the recipient object (usually human or animate) precedes the goal object and both precede the verb

- (6) Meŋo ŋo nime twɔɔbi  
 1S FUT you house build (VLS)  
 I'll build a house for you (EB)
- (7) Ana mɛŋo mone indi cf \*Ana mone mɛŋo indi  
 1 PAST me money give 1 PAST money me give  
 S/he gave me money (EB)
- (8) Ana bebu mɛno in fi  
 1 PAST them me give  
 S/he gave them to me  
 ≠ S/he gave it to them (EB)

In imperative sentences the object follows the verb and if there are two objects the recipient precedes the goal object

- (9) Indɔ mɛŋo mɛ t cf \*In fi mɛ t mɛn  
 give me hoc give hoc me  
 Give me the hoc (EB)

OV is also observed in relative and subordinate clauses

- (10) Wo mɛnd [owɛ mɛ fɛm mɛn fɛtɛ nɛm fɛ]  
 that man REL 1 PAST money ask yesterday  
 The man who asked [ɛm for money yesterday  
 an indɛstɛ m fɛm tɛn wɛm  
 he returned today again to me 1 PAST  
 returned again today to [ask] me (EB)
- (11) Mɛn lo bu [mɛn (owɛ) o ŋɔ mɛn nɛ mɛ mɛwɔɔk u dɛ]  
 1S PRES ask when REL 2S FUT me money of wine give  
 I ask when you'll give me the money for the wine (EB)

### 3.1 The meaning of VO versus OV

There are differences in meaning between pre-verbal and post-verbal position. Unfortunately the two orders cannot be contrasted directly with each other. For example in ordinary declarative contexts while OV order is well formed the corresponding VO order is not

- (12) Ana nɛm indi cf Ana indi nɛm  
 1 PAST money give 1 PAST give money  
 S/he gave money (EB)

In order to appear after the verb the object in this sentence must be preceded by a particle such as *a* expressing contrastive emphasis

- (13) Ana indi a mone  
 1 PAST give ART money  
 S/he gave MONEY (EB)

In general VO order is possible only when making a statement about the relation of a particular object against other possible objects. This occurs after the emphatic marker *a* and adverbial particles such as *ha* only *aman* just and *ata* even

- (14) Mendo ni a boniak cf Mendo boniaka ne  
 1S PRES eat EMPH yams 1S PRES yams eat  
 What I eat is yams I am eating yams (EB)
- (15) Mena nya ha mwənif  
 1S PAST drink only water  
 I drank only water (EB)
- (16) Mena niak aman ongol  
 1S PAST eat just skin  
 I ate just skin (EB)
- (17) Alendo ne iti ningol nemote  
 1S NEC PRES eat even 5 mango 5 one  
 I haven't eaten even one mango (EB)

The position after the verb does not express focus or new information but contrast. Objects that occur before the verb can be either new or given information. That the post verbal object is indeed contrastive can be shown by means of question/answer sequences. In (18a) wine is contrasted to book and is thus in post verbal position. In (18b) wine has normal focus but no contrast and so occurs in pre verbal position.

- (18) a Q Did you put the BOOK on the table?  
 A Bo meni tila i mwoluk  
 no 1S PAST put PRT wine  
 No I put the WINE (on the table) (EB)
- b Q What did you put on the table?  
 A Mena mwoluku tal  
 1S PAST wine put  
 I put wine (or the table) (EB)

In addition to being pre verbal in neutral elicited sentences as in (3) the object is also preverbal in yes/no questions (where the object is given information) and in negative statements.

- (19) a Ondo kisili ni e  
 1S PRES cassava eat Q  
 Are you eating cassava? (EB)
- b Bo melendo kisili ne  
 no 1S NEC PRS cassava eat  
 No I don't eat cassava (EB)

The object can be placed after the verb for contrast (as distinct from focus) and only if preceded by a relating particle. The most general of these particles is *a*. We now try to establish the function of *a* in order to determine how much of the contrastive meaning is contributed by the particle and how much is determined by the post verbal position.

### 3.2 The contrastive particle *a*

The presence of *a* indicates that the following noun phrase is precisely and crucially the relevant one to the exclusion of other possible candidates. It is not limited to objects nor is it limited to post-verbal position. In particular it is used to introduce sentence initial clefted NPs.

- (20) A musku i nɔn  
 1ST elephant 1ST kill  
 It is the elephant who has killed (him) (Dugast 1971 p. 142)
- (21) a kin ilɛ motkɛ mbwɔn i  
 chief 1ST guard justice  
 The chief is the surveillance of justice (1971)
- b A<sup>1</sup> kin ilɛ motkɛ mbwɔn i  
 1ST chief 1ST guard justice  
 It is the chief who is the guard of justice (1971)

Compared to the neutral possessive in (22a) when *i* is used, as in (22b) the noun is bien déterminé bien désigné un enfant connu de l'interlocuteur comme étant l'enfant de la personne qui parle (Dugast 1971 p. 339):

- (22) a wumɛ mɔn b wumɛ i nɛɛ cɛm<sup>1</sup> i mɔn  
 child mv child 1ST mv child 1ST mv  
 my child my child my child

The particle *i* is used for elaboration on emphatic pronouns (23) and for introducing characters in stories (24):

- (23) Wumɛ i mɔmɛ mɛ<sup>1</sup>ndusɛ cɛbɛn  
 1ST 1ST turtle 1STERS want 1ST marry  
 I the turtle want to marry (Dugast 1971 p. 142)
- (24) Nɛvɛ mɔmɛ i Mukɛ i n  
 10SS 3S name 1ST  
 Her name is Mukilung. (Dugast 1971 p. 57)

In accordance with its selecting function, a series of noun phrases with *i* is used for exhaustive lists of definite entities:

- (25) Mɛvɛmɛ mɔmɛ nɔkɔtɛkɛ i hɛsɛ i mɔmɛ i mɛɛɛ  
 animals all 1ST meet 1ST antelope 1ST turtle 1ST leopard  
 i musku i mɛwɛɛ i mɛɛɛ  
 1ST elephant 1ST lion 1ST hedgehog  
 All the animals meet the antelope the turtle the leopard  
 the elephant the lion the hedgehog (Dugast 1971 p. 142)

The particle *a* indicates that the following (pro)noun is a well determined unique and crucial referent. When objects are placed after the verb, that position indicates that the object has to be excluded in a  
 "[The noun is well established and identified: a child known to the hearer as the child of the person who is speaking.] (eds)

paradigmatic relation that is the relation of the object against other possible objects is relevant. The nature of this relation is expressed by a preceding particle with the particle *a* indicating the most general of such relationships namely that of singling out the following object to the exclusion of others.

Pronouns following *a* must be from the emphatic set.<sup>8</sup>

- (26) a Ana mone indi a wam  
 I PAST money give PRT me EMPH  
 S/he gave money to me (HB)
- b \*Ana mone indi i miano  
 I PAST money give PRT me (HB)

Object pronouns in pre verbal position may be from the normal or the emphatic set but they can never co occur with the contrastive particle *a*.

- (27) a Ana miano mone indi  
 I PAST me money give  
 S/he gave me money (HB)
- b \*Ana i wam mone indi  
 I PAST PRT me EMPH money give (HB)
- (28) a Jean ma io mwoluk indi  
 I PAST you 6 wine give  
 Jean gave you wine (EB)
- b Jean ma mwoluk indri a iw  
 I PAST 6 wine give PRT you EMPH  
 Jean gave wine to you (EB)

#### 4 Locatives and other post verbal complements with *o*

##### 4.1 Locative NPs

Locative complements always follow the verb.<sup>9</sup> (29) is incomplete without the locative phrase and thus the locative noun phrase is a complement to the locative object.

- (29) Ani hɔmɔ tɔli o nekɔ  
 I PAST pot put LOC fire  
 She put the pot on the fire (EB)

Locative phrases tend to have an initial particle *o* but inherently locative nouns such as *ɛɛɛl* 'riverside' can do without *o* cf (30a) versus (30b).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The emphatic pronouns are similar to the possessive pronoun see (2) above and different from the normal independent pronouns.

<sup>9</sup> In addition we have to state that sentential complements and prepositional phrases with the infinitive purpose preposition *na* occur after the verb.

Mɛɛɛɛ ɔmɔɔ lumakɔ ni nu k  
 I PAST dogs hit with stones  
 He hit the dogs with stones (EB)

<sup>10</sup> <sub>INT</sub> ventive ALL allative

- (30) a A n i'nda h i m e s e l  
 1 PAST VENT arrive riverside  
 He arrived at the riverside (Dugast 1975 p. 65)
- b A n i'k i h i a n o' n i u y  
 1 PAST ALL arrive LOC river  
 He arrived at the river (Dugast 1975 p. 65)

In general locative phrases follow the verb regardless of whether they are a complement of the verb or not. The particle *an* can render in NI locative and adverbial as in (31) where the presence of locative makes branch a locative modifier of *see*. Such locative expressions are in some way related to the event: the exact nature of the relation is not specified and so is consistent with a number of interpretations.

- (31) a M e n d o s i n o w a m i m s k i  
 1S PRES see LOC my branch  
 I see (sitting) on my branch (HIB 18)
- b M e n d o s i n i o w m o k i s  
 1S PRES see LOC this branch  
 I see through this branch (HIB 18)

#### 4.2 Oblique NPs

As seen above, the function of *o* is wider than just locative. It indicates oblique case, or the third noun phrase. Like French dative *à l'un*, *o* is often used for recipient objects placed after the verb.

- (32) M b i m u i n d i o v e n o u m e n u m  
 but 1S give LOC 3 one 3 animal  
 And that one I give to another animal (Dugast 1975 p. 115)

Pronouns following *o* have to be from the emphatic set and are always post verbal (as is the case with the emphatic particle *i*). (33) shows the correlation between word order and pronominal form. (34) and (35) establish that the *o* phrase is restricted to post verbal position.

- (33) W o m o n d [ o w i m i m o n e p u t i j e a n n u k e d i ]  
 that man REF 1 PAST money ask TRF yesterday  
 The man who asked Jean for money yesterday
- a m i m i n o p u t m f e n  
 1 PAST me ask today
- b m a m f e n p u t i o w a m  
 1 PAST today ask LOC me FEM F  
 asked me today
- (34) a M e n d o b i t [ m a' n e' i' h o m o n e m i m w l u k i n d i e w i m ]  
 1S TRFS ask when 2S FEM money of wine give LOC me FEM F  
 I ask when you'll give me the money for the wine
- b \*M e n d o b i t [ m i n i o w a m o n o m e m e m i m w l u k i n d i ]  
 1S PRES ask when to me FEM F 2S FEM money of wine give



- (35) a Mendo bit [ ma'ne o'ŋo mone indi ma mwəluk o wam ]  
 1S PRLS ask when 2S FUT money give of wine LOC me EMPH  
 I ask when you'll give me the money for the wine
- b \*Mendo bat [ mane o wam oŋo mone indi ma mwəluk ]  
 1S PRES ask when to me EMPH 2S FUT money give of wine

### 4.3 Infinitival complements

Like locatives and oblique NPs infinitival complements are after the verb

- (36) A nabal o lel  
 1 begin INF rain  
 It starts to rain (Dugast 1975 p. 63)

The infinitive is a noun with the nominal prefix *o* homophonous to the locative/oblique case particle *o*. Nouns denoting the patient precede the infinitive and are themselves preceded by *o*. Thus the particle *o* marks the beginning of the infinitival phrase

- (37) a Oso [oNFP o kɔm w ambin hita ]  
 2S can LOC 4 stones INF throw far  
 You can throw far (with) stones (EB)
- b A ɔa hɔa [oNFP o kɔm (u)ɔalɔm ɔmɔwɔm ɔmɔwɔm]  
 1 PAST achieve LOC 6 languages diversify 6 all  
 He managed to diversify all the languages (Dugast 1975 p. 439)

In subject position infinitival phrases trigger class 3 subject agreement

- (38) [oNFP O muu o kɔm wɔlɔ kɔm wɔlɔ]  
 LOC house INF demolish 3 COP 3 bad  
 Demolishing the house is bad (EB)

There is no distinction between a locative particle *o* and the homophonous infinitival noun prefix. Infinitives have the locative particle *o* precliticised. Noun phrases with this ('locative') *o* particle require the same agreement as non verbal nouns in class 3 and have a similar prefix *om* for certain roots *mi* for others<sup>11</sup>

- (39) a n domba plural endomba sheep class 3/4  
 b mɔ kasi plural mekasa branch class 3/4

The particle *o* may be repeated in front of every noun phrase in the infinitival phrase as in (40) where both the goal *you* and the object *wine* are preceded by *o*. But this is not imperative as shown by (41a) where neither the goal nor the object are preceded by *o*. Variations in word order within the infinitival phrase are recorded. The object may be post verbal (41b). If the goal is post verbal it is introduced by *o* followed by an emphatic pronoun (41c d).

<sup>11</sup>In (39a) for *m* the vowel has undergone vowel harmony and the nasal has assimilated for place with the following coronal

- (40) Ani humini [INFI o waw o mw sluk o windi ]  
 I PAST must LOC you EMPH INF give wine INF give  
 S/he must give you wine (EB)
- (41) Ani humini  
 I PAST must  
 S/he must
- a [INFI o waw mw sluk o windi minv pulil ]  
 LOC you EMPH wine INF give minv tomorrow  
 b [INFI o waw ogwindi mw sluk minv pulil ]  
 LOC you EMPH INF give wine minv tomorrow  
 c [INFI o mw sluk o windi minv o waw pulil ]  
 LOC wine INF give minv LOC you EMPH tomorrow  
 d [INFI o mw sluk minv ogwindi o waw pulil ]  
 LOC wine minv INF give LOC you EMPH tomorrow  
 give you a lot of wine tomorrow (EB)

However a noun preceding the infinitive is always linked to it as a complement of the verb whereas a noun following the infinitive is an adjunct compare (42a) to (42b). In the former field is the object of cultivation in the latter it is a circumstantial place.

- (42) a Bini lumin [INFI o nyi ctapki o nyi ]  
 I PAST agree LOC field INF work  
 They agreed to cultivate the field (EB)
- b Bina lumin [INFI o nyi ctapki ]  
 I PAST agree INF work field  
 They agreed to work at the field (EB)

Within infinitival complements every noun phrase may be preceded by a locative *o* the infinitive itself the theme complement of the infinitive which precedes it as well as adjuncts to the infinitive<sup>12</sup>. Word order within the NP (of which the infinitive is an exemplar) does not parallel word order in the VP. As seen above in (29) locatives cannot precede the verb. However locatives may precede the infinitive.

- (43) Bwamwamv bi kibi lk [INFI nyoni o nyoni ]  
 intellectuals 2 NEG BE COI market INF negotiate  
 Intellectuals are not market negotiators  
 lit. Intellectuals are not negotiators at the market  
 (Dugast 1971 p. 353)

<sup>12</sup> These infinitival complements have a similar construction in Ngunu where the element corresponding to Tuncu is *ci* (i) Within the infinitive phrase. The [I adjunct INF V] order is possible in Ngunu otherwise Ngunu has no OV order. Inasmuch as infinitives are nominal this shows that order within NP is not a reflection of order in VP.

- (44) a Bi baa [INFI g n n ] (813)  
 2 I AM go finish  
 They will finish
- b [I] ci edim [INFI g l dnm bihu ci ci ] (814)  
 further 9 went g 8 y mny b his g hives  
 The leopard went to collect his vipers (R. Hansen 1990 p. 13)

#### 4.4 *o* in nominal sentences

The particle *o* like *a* may also be used in nominal sentences. In such sentences *a* introduces one and only one noun phrase. (44) *O* can be followed by two noun phrases as in (45) where the pronouns are from the independent series and not attributive.

- (44) A    wow<sup>1</sup>  
       IRT    IND DEM  
       Here it is<sup>1</sup> (Dugast 1971 p. 341)

- (45) a    O    muet<sup>1</sup> wow  
       IRT    3 IND    IND DEM  
       I'ven this one (Dugast 1971 p. 341)

- b    O    wime<sup>1</sup> wow  
       IRT    mine    IND DEM  
       This one is mine (Dugast 1971 p. 343)

#### 4.5 Summary: object positioning

We can state that objects precede the verb in Tunen. Two objects may occur in the order [Recipient Goal]. Objects occur after the verb if preceded by *i* or other contrastive particles (e.g. *ha* only, *aman* just and *iti* even). Locatives and other phrases with a locative particle *o* must follow the verb and infinitives are complements of this locative particle.

### 5 Discontinuous objects or double objects

So far we have tried to understand when an object occurs before and when it occurs after the verb. But in fact part of the object may occur before the verb while the remaining part of the object noun phrase is placed after the verb. In this section we look at such constructions.

- (46) Tense Aspect Mood [Noun] Verb [Modifier]

We investigate the function and meaning of placing modifiers after the verb and ask whether the post-verbal modifier is still part of the object NP or whether it constitutes a separate NP. As will emerge, post-verbal modifiers acquire the same kind of contrastive force as post-verbal NPs do. This further suggests that the post-verbal position is, in general, the locus of contrastive force in Tunen.

#### 5.1 Discontinuous noun modifier sequences

If there are two pre-verbal object NPs, a post-verbal modifier can only refer to the last of two pre-verbal objects. Accordingly, in (47) the post-verbal numeral is construed with *medicine* and not with *dog*.

- (47) Mbi nye ebiko ni    emra nebra    lumwa    netate  
       but thus lizard IAS dog medicine hit    one  
       Thus the lizard hit the dog with magic (Dugast 1975 p. 63)

Not only the modifier of an object noun but also the modifier of a subject can occur post verbally.

- (48) A mwose<sup>1</sup> ni tombi mlinu  
 1ST PRES 6 days 1ST PASS 6 five  
 Five days passed (Dugast 1975 p. 403)

Any post nominal modifier of a pre verbal object may occur after the verb. However, modifiers that always precede the noun, such as possessives and demonstratives, can occur neither after the verb nor in pre verbal position by themselves while the head noun follows the verb.

With some modifiers there is a difference in meaning relating to the position of the modifier. Placement of a modifier in post verbal position can indicate contrastive focus on the modifiers, as was the case with the post verbal object noun, see (14-17) above. When a modifier such as *big* is post verbal it has contrastive focus.

- (49) Mena miti a mwamiti mchi mneni habibiti  
 1ST PRES 9 calabash 3 of 6 water give 3 big LOC 1D child  
 I gave the BR water calabash to the child (EB)

In (50) the modifiers *small* and *one* occur post verbally, preceded by the general (locative) preposition. From the context of the story it is clear that the fact that the branch is small is in contrast to all preceding things cut from the tree.

- (50) Naye hichi ni ukw m kisi celi m u u u u  
 thus antelope 1ST LITER 3 branch cut LOC 3 little 3 one  
 Thus the antelope then cut a SMALL branch (Dugast 1975 p. 17)

In (51) the adjective, when it follows the verb, can have a wider scope than the noun with which it agrees in noun class. Under the wide scope reading the adjective functions as a sentence modifier.

- (51) Mendo mokisi sini monen  
 1ST PRES 3 branch see 3 big  
 I see that the branch is big (narrow scope modifier)  
 I see the branch too much (wide scope modifier) (EBR)

In (52) the phrase *and/with chickens* in post verbal position expresses that the sheep and the chickens are at the same place, the constituent *and/with chickens* expresses the way in which the sheep are seen. (The same sentence with *and/with chickens* before the verb would be neutral in this respect.)

- (52) Mena endombi sokim ni mu k c nyom  
 1ST PRES sheep see and chickens LOC market  
 I saw sheep together with chickens at the market (EB)

In (53) *of the chief* after the verb was not accepted, presumably because *belonging to the chief* is implausible, is a way of seeing the sheep

- (53) a Mənə ɪmɔdɪmɔr wu munəm səkə  
 1S PAST sheep of chief see  
 I saw the sheep of the chief (EB)
- b \*Mənə ɪmɔdɪmɔr səkə wu munəm  
 1S PAST sheep see of chief (EB)

This contrasts with true NP-adjectives, which may occur post-verbally, such as *ma mwəluk* in (54). In subordinate clauses, it is not possible to front the object-NP along with the adjunct, nor can the adjunct front by itself, (55)

- (54) a Mendo bat [ mɪ'ne o'ŋo mɔŋo mone indi mɪ mwəluk ]  
 1S PRES ask when 2S FUT me money give of wine (EB)
- b Mendo bat [ mɪ'ne o'ŋo mɔŋo indi mone ma mwəluk ]  
 1S PRES ask when 2S FUT me give money of wine (LB)
- I ask when you ll give me the money for the wine
- (55) a \*Mendo bat [ mɪne mone mɪ mwəluk oŋo mɔŋo indi ]  
 1S PRES ask when money of wine 2S FUT me give (EB)
- b \*Mendo bat [ mənə mɪ mwəluk oŋo mɔŋo mone indi ]  
 1S PRES ask when of wine 2S FUT me money give (EB)

More often than not numeral modifiers occur after the verb. The post-verbal position for a modifier of a pre-verbal nominal object has properties that we have already noted before: contrast or adverbial function. The fact that numerals are usually post-verbal is due to their selecting property and is ultimately related to the contrast function. The reasoning is as follows: a numeral is usually an attributive modifier indicating that the noun is conceptualised in distinctive units and that a certain number of these units are selected. In this respect, numerals contrast with adjectives which simply express a property of the noun they modify. As for the adverbial properties of post-verbal modifiers, these are paralleled by the observation that a noun phrase becomes an adjunct when placed after the verb and preceded by the particle *o* (§4.1).

Recall that relative clauses usually occur in the post-verbal position (See (1c) and (10) above). This is presumably because of memory restrictions: if the relative clause were pre-verbal, the verb would come too late in the sentence and too far away from the subject and tense markers.

## 5.2 Secondary object constructions

The question arises whether the post-verbal modifier is part of the object. It agrees in noun class with the pre-verbal head noun, but semantically it seems to be somewhat loose from the noun it agrees with. Conceivably the post-verbal modifier is an independent noun phrase, something like a secondary (embedded) object to the head noun phrase. In order to test this hypothesis, we now examine secondary object constructions.

In sentences with a secondary object, the noun phrase of the referent (labeled REF below) precedes the noun phrase of its attribute (ATT) and both follow the verb.

- (56) a Anison ba [ mukoli ] [ ikut ]  
 1S PAST cut rope piece  
                                     REF      ATT  
 S/he cut the rope into pieces (118)
- b Ani h'etevv hendin indis [(a) mis'ku] [ m'skut ]  
 1 PAST 19 that 19 rope give (it) elephant hand  
   REF      ATT  
 He handed that rope to the elephant  
 lit. He gave that rope to the elephant in its hand  
 (Dugast 1975 p. 65)
- c Minu si bu'mni tohins ukv [ w'et ] [ mok't ] e  
 turtle not 14 my 14 debt leave IND POSSESS hand O  
   REF      ATT  
 Doesn't the turtle leave my debt to you  
 lit. Doesn't the turtle leave my debt to you in your hand  
 (Dugast 1971 p. 340)

Independent possessive pronouns are used as first object of a string with a secondary object following it. This construction is used in particular for possessives in locative objects of applicative verbs.

- (57) A mindim [ w'me ] [ l'ote ]  
 I enter ATT IND POSSESS cave  
   REF      ATT  
 He/I enter into my cave (Dugast 1971 p. 339)  
 lit. he/I enter into mine the cave

In general juxtaposed NPs at the end of a sentence are interpreted as being in an equational relation. This holds not only of verbal objects, as can be seen from (58), where turtle (a prepositional object) and friend are equated with each other.

- (58) Yiki tu bik ni [ muu ] [ umuls' moti ] e  
 is it we be 1SG with turtle friend one O  
   REF      ATT  
 Isn't there only one friend like the turtle (Dugast 1975 p. 323)

Secondary object constructions are formed by juxtaposing two NPs sentence finally. On the basis of this criterion, post-verbal modifiers— independent or not—do not constitute secondary objects because they are not in an equational relation with their pre-verbal head noun.

## 6 Conclusion

We conclude that post-verbal constituents and pre-nominal modifiers (demonstratives, possessives, etc., see §2) have something in common. Both evoke a paradigmatic relationship, i.e. a comparison against or

contrast with other possibilities in that position. Otherwise, the neutral position of the object is pre verbal yielding (head final) OV order, and the neutral (attributive) position for modifiers is post-nominal yielding (head-initial) N modifier order

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