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Tunen syntax and information structure

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Citation

Kerr, E. J. (2024, September 4). *Tunen syntax and information structure*. LOT dissertation series. LOT, Amsterdam. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/4054916>

Version: Publisher's Version

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Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/4054916>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

CHAPTER 5

The expression of information structure in Tunen

5.1 Introduction

Having seen a general grammatical overview of Tunen in the previous chapter, this chapter investigates the expression of information structure (IS) in particular. The chapter focuses on the question as to whether and how IS notions are expressed in Tunen, providing a descriptive overview of IS expression in Tunen that will be built upon in the subsequent chapters.¹

The chapter is structured as follows. Section §5.2 presents evidence for S-Aux-O-V-X as the canonical word order and shows the different information-structural contexts in which this word order can appear. Section §5.3 discusses departures from this canonical word order, including the VO word order patterns discussed in Mous (1997, 2003). Section §5.4 looks at how clefts and the marker *á* are used for focus expression, section §5.5 covers left-peripheral topic expression and contrastive topics, section §5.6 considers how expression of the agent can be avoided using the *-átɔ* participle and *bá-* functional passive constructions, section §5.7 considers how referent expression varies over discourse, section §5.8 compares Tunen

¹This chapter has been accepted for publication as Kerr (to appear), as below. The version in this thesis has minor modifications for the purpose of coherence with the other chapters in this thesis.

Kerr, Elisabeth J. (to appear). The expression of information structure in Tunen. In: Van der Wal, Jenneke (ed.) *The expression of information structure in Bantu*. Berlin: Language Science Press.

to other Bantu languages, and section §5.9 concludes. The terminology used for IS is explained in Chapter 2 and Van der Wal et al. (to appear), which also provide an introduction to the conceptual background of information structure and the methodology used in the BaSIS project.

5.2 Canonical word order S-Aux-O-V-X

5.2.1 S-Aux-O-V-X as the canonical word order

As seen in Chapter 4 and to be discussed in more depth in Chapter 6, Tunen is widely known to have SOV as its canonical word order (Dugast 1971; Bearth 2003; Mous 2003), specifically the subtype S-Aux-O-V-X, where Aux refers to an auxiliary element (in Tunen, the TAM complex) and X to other elements, such as locative adjuncts. This word order is highly unusual for a Bantu language, where SVO is the expected word order (Bearth 2003). Moreover, S-Aux-O-V-X is unusual in Niger-Congo and is also rare cross-linguistically, found in some languages of West and Central Africa (see e.g. Dryer and Gensler 2005; Gensler and Güldemann 2003; Güldemann 2008). S-Aux-O-V(-X) surface word order (at least in some TAM contexts) is reported for example for Mande languages (Claudi 1993; Creissels 2005; Nikitina 2011; Sande et al. 2019), Kru languages (Gensler 1994; Sande et al. 2019), and the Senufo branch of Gur (Gensler 1994), with only Tunen and its close neighbours Nyokon (Guthrie no. A45) and nearby Ewondo/Eton (A72) as Benue-Congo languages reported to show (a degree of) OV word order (Mous 2005; Kerr 2024).

One question is the extent to which a language's basic word order varies dependent on information structure. In this vein, it has been claimed that the word order of some Bantu languages is better captured by making reference to discourse roles than using grammatical role-oriented labels like 'SVO' (see e.g. Morimoto 2000, 2006; Good 2010; Yoneda 2011; Kerr et al. 2023). This means that a more appropriate characterisation of a language's word order may be in terms of discourse roles like topic and focus. In this section I show that Tunen's word order is largely influenced by grammatical role (i.e., subject vs objecthood; see Kerr et al. 2023 for more discussion on the nature of grammatical role-oriented versus discourse role-oriented word order in Bantu). I show that S-Aux-O-V-X is a pragmatically neutral word order in Tunen that is compatible with various information-structural interpretations. Tunen therefore contrasts with the other Bantu languages in Van der Wal (to appear), which show SVO canonical word order that is conditioned more strongly by information-structural considerations than by grammatical role.

5.2.1.1 Thetics

One typical diagnostic for a language's canonical word order is the word order found inthetic sentences. Thetics are defined as being all-new and thus differ from categorical sentences which show a topic-comment distinction (Sasse 1987, 1996; Lambrecht 1994; Chapter 2 section §2.2). In Tunen, S-Aux-O-V-X word order is used for thetics, as illustrated in (161)-(163) below.

- (161) Context: You are at the riverside outside the village and see an elephant, which very rarely occurs, so run to tell the others.

mɛ nɔ misəku siəkin!

/mɛ nɔ misəku siəkinə/

SM.1SG PST1 3.elephant see.DUR

'Je viens de voir un éléphant !'

'I just saw an elephant!'

[PM 316]

- (162) Context: Your friend asks what happened at church.

mɔtát a ná imbónu yɛ fəkinə né Yəsəs ɔ Yerusalem nɔŋɔnak.

/mɔ-táta a ná ɛ-mbónu yɛ fəkinə né Yəsəsu ɔ

1-pastor SM.1 PST2 9-news ASSOC.9 5.entrance 5.ASSOC Jesus PREP

Yerusalemə nɔŋɔnɔ-aka/

Jerusalem tell-DUR

'Le pasteur a raconté des nouvelles de l'entrée de Jésus à Jerusalem.'

'The pastor told the news of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem.' [DM 166]

- (163) Context: Imagine someone came in the room right now during our field session, and you are explaining to someone else later what happened.

tɔ ndɔ bá u miímó yi isukúlú, mutʃəŋə a nɔ nda bəsú kasɔn!

/tɔ ^Hndɔ bá ɔ miímó yɛ ɛ-sukúlú mɔ-tʃəŋə a nɔ

SM.1PL PRS be PREP 3.room ASSOC.7 7-school 1-criminal SM.1 PST1

nda bəsúə kasɔna/

PROX PRN.1PL attack

Nous étions dans la salle de classe, un bandit est venu nous agresser !'

'We were in the classroom, a criminal came in to attack us!' [EE+EB 1847]

The consistent S-Aux-O-V(-X) word order across different types of thetics shows that this word order is compatible with an all-new context where no element is topical or in focus. One point of complexity here, however, is that conversational participants can be argued to be always retrievable topics via world knowledge (see e.g.

Givón 1983; Erteschik-Shir 2007 for relevant discussion). However, examples like (162) with third-person subjects provide evidence that non-topical subjects can also be in the initial position, and example (163) further shows that OV order is found even when the object is the first person. In any case, regardless of the position of the subject, the word order for Tunen thetics is markedly different from the other Bantu languages in Van der Wal (to appear) in that the object precedes the verb in Tunen (SOV). Versions with VO order were judged as ungrammatical (164).

- (164) **tó ndo bá u miímé yi isukúlú, mutǽǽǽ a nó nda kasɔn bəəsɔ !*
 /tɔ ^Hndo bá ɔ miímé ye ɛ-sukúlú mɔ-tǽǽǽ a nó
 SM.1PL PRS be PREP 3.room ASSOC.7 7-school 1-criminal SM.1 PST1
 nda **kasɔna bəəsú**/
 PROX attack PRN.1PL
 Intd.: ‘Nous étions dans la salle de classe, un bandit est venu nous agresser!’
 Intd.: ‘We were in the classroom, a criminal came in to attack us!’
 [EE+EB 2239]

Note also that while subject inversion constructions have been reported as a means of detopicalising subjects in a thetic context in Bantu languages (Marten and van der Wal 2014; Chapter 2 section §2.4) and indeed are found to express thetics in all other languages in Van der Wal (to appear) except Teke-Kukuya, such inversion constructions are completely ungrammatical in Tunen (regardless of the position of temporal and locative adjuncts), as shown in (165) and (166).²

- (165) *{naáneko} a ka nyɔkɔ {naáneko} kíngə.
 /{naáneko} a ka nyɔ-aka {naáneko} kíngə/
 yesterday SM.1 PST3 work-DUR yesterday 1.chief
 Intd.: ‘Le chef a travaillé hier.’
 Intd.: ‘The chief worked yesterday.’
 [JO 2629-30]
- (166) *bé ká fámáka bɛfɔɔ naáneko ɔ ɛtɔbɔtɔbɔ.
 /bé ka fámá-aka bɛ-fɔɔ naáneko ɔ ɛ-tɔbɔtɔbɔ/
 SM.8 PST3 arrive-DUR 8-cow yesterday PREP 7-field
 Intd.: ‘Les vaches sont apparues dans le champ hier.’
 Intd.: ‘The cows appeared in the field yesterday.’
 [JO 2608]

²See the Abbreviations list at the beginning of this thesis for explanation of the *(X) and {X} notation within linguistic examples.

This unavailability of subject inversion matches other languages in the area such as Basaá (Guthrie no. A43), which is shown by Hamlaoui and Makasso (2015) to not allow inversion constructions (see also Hamlaoui 2022). The unavailability inversion constructions in Tunen means that the canonical word order S-Aux-O-V-X is the only means of expressing theticity in Tunen.

5.2.1.2 VP focus

Word order when the entire verb phrase is in focus (VP focus) is a second criterion that can be invoked to determine a language's canonical word order. In Tunen, VP focus questions can felicitously be answered with S-Aux-O-V-X word order patterns (167), providing further evidence for S-Aux-O-V-X as the canonical word order.³

- (167) Context: 'What did Maria do?'
 Malía a ná biláliə fɔ́kíə ɔmbambala na makat.
 /Malía a ná bɛ-láliə fɔ́kíə ɔ-mbambala na ma-kátá/
 1.Maria SM.1 PST2 8-varnish anoint.DUR 3-wall with 6-hand
 'Maria a [oint le vernis sur le mur avec la main]_{FOC}.'
 'Maria [applied the varnish to the wall by hand]_{FOC}' [JO 2516]

Now we have seen evidence from thetics and VP focus for S-Aux-O-V-X as the canonical word order, we can investigate the other information-structural contexts in which it occurs.

5.2.2 S-Aux-O-V-X for object focus

S-Aux-O-V-X word order is compatible with term focus on the theme object, as seen in the answers to the object question in (168) below, illustrated for two different consultants.

- (168) Context: 'What is the man holding?' (+ hand-drawn picture stimulus)
 a. mɔ́ndɔ a ná kalótɔ ití.
 /mɔ́-ndɔ a ná kalótɔ ití/
 1-person SM.1 PST2 7.carrot hold
 'L'homme tient [une carotte]_{FOC}.'
 'The man is holding [a carrot]_{FOC}' [JO 1107]

³Here and throughout, the scope of focus is indicated in the translation lines by square brackets with subscript FOC for 'focus'.

- b. mɔndo a ná kalóto itíó ɔ mɔkat.
 /mɔ-ndo a ná kalóto itíó ɔ mɔ-kátá/
 1-person SM.1 PST2 7.carrot hold PREP 3-hand
 ‘L’homme tient [une carotte]_{FOC} à la main.’
 ‘The man is holding [a carrot]_{FOC} in his hand.’ [PM 1264]

Both SVOX and SVXO orders were judged as ungrammatical (169a, 169b).

(169) Context: ‘What is the man holding?’ (+ hand-drawn picture stimulus)

- a. *a ná itíó kalóto ɔ mɔkata.
 /a ná itíó kalóto ɔ mɔ-kátá/
 SM.1 PST2 hold 7.carrot PREP 3-hand
 Intd.: ‘Il tient [une carotte]_{FOC} à la main.’
 Intd.: ‘He is holding [a carrot]_{FOC} in his hand.’ [JO 1626]
- b. *a ná itíó ɔ mɔkata kalóto.
 /a ná itíó ɔ mɔ-kátá kalóto/
 SM.1 PST2 hold PREP 3-hand 7.carrot
 Intd.: ‘Il tient [une carotte]_{FOC} à la main.’
 Intd.: He is holding [a carrot]_{FOC} in his hand.’ [JO 1625]

These examples provide evidence for two things. Firstly, when taken together with what we have seen for other discourse contexts, we see that S-Aux-O-V-X is a pragmatically neutral word order in Tunen: it is possible for an all-newthetic context, VP focus, and narrow information focus on the theme object. Secondly, the examples show that information focus does not need to be morphosyntactically marked in Tunen, at least for theme objects, as the object in (168) is left in-situ without any special marking.

The Q-A pairs seen above show that S-Aux-O-V-X word order is found for information focus on the theme object. This word order is not possible in a different focus context where the object is marked by the focus-sensitive particles *ata* ‘even’ (170a) or *ímaná* ‘only’ (171a). In such exclusive and exhaustive focus cases, the object must be ex-situ, typically fronted (170b) or clefted (171b), and marginally postposed (170c).⁴

⁴Note that the preference for fronted over postposed differs from the previous description in Mous (1997), who only reports the postposed strategy.

- (170) a. *a ná néáká mɔŋɛ́ŋ, a ná **ata beŋgwete** neak.
 /a ná néá-aka mɔŋɛ́ŋa a ná **ata be-ŋgwete** néá-aka/
 SM.1 PST2 eat-DUR much SM.1 PST2 even 8-potato eat-DUR
 Intd.: 'Il a beaucoup mangé, il a même mangé [des patates]_{FOC}.'
 Intd.: 'He ate a lot, he even ate [potatoes]_{FOC}.' [PM (+DM) 2265]
- b. a ná néáká mɔŋɛ́ŋ, **ata beŋgwete** a ná neak.
 /a ná néá-aka mɔŋɛ́ŋa **ata be-ŋgwete** a ná néá-aka/
 SM.1 PST2 eat-DUR much even 8-potato SM.1 PST2 eat-DUR
 'Il a beaucoup mangé, il a même mangé [des patates]_{FOC}.'
 'He ate a lot, he even ate [potatoes]_{FOC}.' [PM (+DM) 2264]
- c. ?a ná néáká mɔŋɛ́ŋ, aná néáká **ata beŋgwete**.
 /a ná néá-aka mɔŋɛ́ŋa a ná néá-aka **ata be-ŋgwete**/
 SM.1 PST2 eat-DUR much SM.1 PST2 eat-DUR even 8-potato
 Intd.: 'Il a beaucoup mangé, il a même mangé [des patates]_{FOC}.'
 Intd.: 'He ate a lot, he even ate [potatoes]_{FOC}.' [PM (+DM) 2263]
- (171) a. *a ná mɔná **ómaná imító** túmbi.
 /a ná mɔ-ná **ómaná ɛ-mító** túmbiə/
 SM.1 PST2 1-child only 9-calabash return
 Intd.: 'C'est seulement [la calabasse]_{FOC} qu'elle a donné à l'enfant.'
 Intd.: 'She only gave [the calabash]_{FOC} to the child.' [JO 1593]
- b. **ómaná imító** á a ná mɔná túmbi.
 /**ómaná ɛ-mító** á a ná mɔ-ná túmbiə/
 only 9-calabash COP SM.1 PST2 1-child return
 'C'est seulement [la calabasse]_{FOC} qu'elle a donné à l'enfant.'
 'She only gave [the calabash]_{FOC} to the child.' [JO 1592]

Note also that there is a distinction between questions and declaratives, with questions formed *ex-situ* rather than in the S-Aux-O-V-X order. This is illustrated in (172) below, where *yaté* 'what' is fronted in the question, while the answer is provided with the canonical S-Aux-O-V-X order.⁵

⁵As will be seen in Chapter 7, the numeral modifier of the object appears in a discontinuous position after the verb, despite also falling within the scope of focus. I will come back to the interpretation of such discontinuous modifiers in section §5.3.2.

- (172) Q. **yaté** ɔ ndó sin?
 /yaté ɔ ^Hndɔ sinə/
 what SM.2SG PRS see
 ‘Qu’est-ce que tu vois?’
 ‘What do you see?’ [EO 396]
- A. mé ndɔ **tunoní** sinə tólál.
 /mɛ ^Hndɔ tɔ-**noní** sinə tó-lálól/
 SM.1SG PRS 13-bird see 13-three
 ‘Je vois [trois oiseaux]_{FOC}.’
 ‘I see [three birds]_{FOC}.’ [EO 397]

Example (173a) shows that an in-situ object question is not possible.⁶

- (173) a. *ɔ ndɔ **yaté** taléáka nɛɔféne eé?
 /ɔ ^Hndɔ **yaté** taléá-aka nɛɔféne eé/
 SM.2SG PRS what cook-DUR today Q
 Intd.: ‘Qu’est-ce que tu vas cuisiner aujourd’hui?’
 Intd.: ‘What will you cook today?’ [JO 1600]
- b. **yaté** ɔ ndɔ taléáka nɛɔféne eé?
 /yaté ɔ ^Hndɔ taléá-aka nɛɔféne eé/
 what SM.2SG PRS cook-DUR today Q
 ‘Qu’est-ce que tu vas cuisiner aujourd’hui?’
 ‘What will you cook today?’ [JO 1601]

We therefore see that S-Aux-O-V-X is compatible with information focus on the object in declarative sentences, while exclusive and exhaustive focus on the object — as evidenced by association with the focus-sensitive particles *ata* ‘even’ and *jamaná* ‘only’ — require an ex-situ word order, and foci in questions are ex-situ. Section §5.4 will discuss the use of reverse pseudoclefts as a means of expressing more contrastive term focus on the object. I turn now to testing for other discourse contexts in which the canonical word order S-Aux-O-V-X can be used.

⁶An exception to the ban on in-situ object questions is an echo question context, in which case the object question word can be left in-situ, as discussed in Chapter 4 section §4.5.8.

5.2.3 No S-Aux-O-V-X for subject focus

In contrast to focussed declarative objects, focussed declarative subjects cannot be left in-situ and must be focussed via a cleft (174); the *á* COP cannot be omitted.⁷

- (174) Context: ‘Which politician died?’
 #(*á*) Piɛlə á ná wə.
 /á Piɛlə á ná wə/
 COP 1.Pierre SM.1.REL PST2 die
 ‘C’est [Pierre]_{FOC} qui est mort.’
 ‘[Pierre]_{FOC} died.’ [EO 271]

In other words, the canonical S-Aux-O-V-X word order cannot be used to express subject focus, even in a non-contrastive information focus context. This matches subject/non-subject focus asymmetries reported in other language families, where subject focus is obligatorily marked while non-subject focus may be expressed using the canonical word order (see e.g. Fiedler et al. 2010 for an overview).

For subject foci associated with the focus-sensitive particles *ata* ‘even’ and *ómaná* ‘only’, evidence for the subject being ex-situ is given by the obligatory presence of the copula *á*, which will be discussed further in section §5.4.

- (175) a. *ata* *(*á*) Bitə a ná beŋgete neak.
 /ata á Bitə a ná be-ŋgete néá-aka/
 even COP 1.Peter SM.1 PST2 8-potato eat-DUR
 ‘Même [Peter]_{FOC} a mangé des patates.’
 ‘Even [Peter]_{FOC} ate potatoes.’ [PM 2260]
- b. Context: You are a school teacher marking the exams for a class, and are shocked by how badly the students did.
ómaná Emánúwɛle na Natanayéle á bá ná tómbá ɔ nekɔsɔna !
 /ómaná Emánúɛle na Natanayéle á bá ná tómba ɔ
 only 1.Emmanuel and 1.Nathaniel COP SM.2 PST2 pass PREP
 ne-kɔsɔna/
 5-exam
 ‘Seulement [Emmanuel et Nathaniel]_{FOC} ont réussi à l’examen !’
 ‘Only [Emmanuel and Nathaniel]_{FOC} passed the exam!’ [JO 527]

⁷The infelicity judgement of example (174) without the *á* COP also holds when the subject marker is expressed in the non-relative form (with a low tone).

For subject questions, it is harder to tell whether the canonical word order is used, as fronting of the subject question word results in the same linear order S-Aux-O-V-X and is therefore string-vacuous. As will be discussed further in section §5.4, there is some evidence that subject questions are formed as clefts, as suggested for example by the relative form (visible from the high tone) of the subject marker in example (176) below.

- (176) *éyáné á* lea na hioso ?
 /*éyáné á* léá na hε-óso/
 who SM.1.REL be with 19-spoon
 ‘Qui a une cuillère ?’
 ‘Who has a spoon?’ [EO 1433]

We will come back to the expression of subject focus via clefting in section §5.4. Note that the inability for subjects to be focussed in a non-clefted construction illustrates that Tunen does not have a dedicated focus position in which different grammatical roles can be focussed, unlike the languages in Van der Wal (to appear) which have an immediate before verb (IBV; Teke-Kukuya Li to appear *a*, *b*), immediate after verb (IAV; e.g. Makhuwa; Van der Wal to appear and Rukiga; Asiiimwe and van der Wal to appear) and sentence-final focus position (Kirundi; Nshemezimana and van der Wal to appear) in which subjects and non-subjects alike may be focussed. This difference in availability of focus positions is discussed further in Kerr et al. (2023) (cf. Chapter 2 section §2.4.2).

5.2.4 S-Aux-O-V-X for non-argument focus

Non-arguments in Tunen pattern with objects in being able to be focussed in-situ in the canonical S-Aux-O-V-X order (177). They may also be focussed via a cleft, and time adverbials are generally more flexible in their position than other adverbials/adjuncts. Like with what we saw above for objects, non-argument questions are generally formed by fronting/clefting rather than having the question word in the canonical position (177Q1), although the in-situ options are accepted more so than for objects (177Q2).

Note that example (177A) also shows that a given object (here, an object already mentioned in the question) may be preverbal, providing further evidence for S-Aux-O-V-X as a pragmatically neutral word order, as the object position can be filled by focussed or given objects alike.

- (177) Q1. **hóniá** á [↓]ná yáyéá miímə lúmákə eé?
 /hóniá á ^Lná yáyéá miímə lúmá-aka eé/
 where SM.1.REL PST3.REL PRN.POSS.1.3 3.house build-DUR Q
 ‘Où est-qu’il a construit sa maison ?’
 ‘Where did he build his house?’ [JO 1115]
- Q2. a ka yáyéá miímə lúmákə **hóni(á)** eé?
 /a ka yáyéá miímə lúmá-aka **hóniá** eé/
 SM.1 PST3 PRN.POSS.1.3 3.house build-DUR where Q
 ‘Où est-qu’il a construit sa maison ?’
 ‘Where did he build his house?’ [JO 1118]
- A. a ka yáyéá miímə lúmákə ɔ **iNdiki**.
 /a ka yáyéá miímə lúmá-aka ɔ **iNdiki**/
 SM.1 PST3 PRN.POSS.1.3 3.house build-DUR PREP Ndiki
 ‘Il a construit sa maison [à Ndiki]_{FOC}.’
 ‘He built his house [in Ndiki]_{FOC}.’ [JO 1121]

Like we saw above for objects, non-arguments modified by the focus-sensitive particle *ómaná* ‘only’ are commonly fronted (178a). However, it is also possible to have what appears to be the S-Aux-O-V-X word order with the X element modified by *ómaná* ‘only’, although note that this is linearly equivalent to an alternative analysis in which the focussed phrase is postposed (178b).

- (178) Context: Someone incorrectly says you have been to both Yaoundé and Kribi.
- a. bɔɔ, **ómaná** ɔ **Yəhəndə** á mé ná ká hul.
 /bɔɔ **ómaná** ɔ **Yəhəndə** á mé ná ka húló/
 no only PREP Yaounde COP SM.1SG.REL PST2 AND return
 ‘Non, ce n’est que à [Yaoundé]_{FOC} que je suis parti(e).’
 ‘No, I only went to [Yaoundé]_{FOC}.’, ‘No, it’s only to [Yaoundé]_{FOC} that I went.’ [JO 1607]
- b. bɔɔ, mɛ ná [↓]ká hulə **ómaná** ɔ **Yəhəndə**.
 /bɔɔ mɛ ná ka húló **ómaná** ɔ **Yəhəndə**/
 no SM.1SG PST2 AND return only PREP Yaounde
 ‘Non, ce n’est que à [Yaoundé]_{FOC} que je suis parti(e).’
 ‘No, I only went to [Yaoundé]_{FOC}.’ [JO 1608]

In section §5.4.3 below, we will see that non-arguments also pattern with objects with respect to cleft formation and fragment answers.

5.2.5 S-Aux-O-V-X for predicate-centred focus

Finally, the canonical word order S-Aux-O-V-X can be used for predicate-centred focus (PCF), as seen already for VP focus in (167) above and as further illustrated below for truth focus (179) and state-of-affairs (verb) focus (180), (181).

- (179) Context: ‘Do you see the sheep?’ (truth focus)
 mé nd(ɔ) endómbá sin.
 /mɛ ʰndɔ ɛ-ndómbá sinə/
 SM.1SG PRS 4-sheep see
 ‘Je vois les moutons.’
 ‘I see the sheep.’ [EO 695]
- (180) Context: ‘What did he do with the beans and the plantains?’ (SoA focus)
 Context: ‘What happened?’ (thetic)
 a ka makɔndʒɛ néáka. a ná bilikó lu.
 /a ka ma-kɔndʒɛ néá-aka a ná bɛ-likó luə/
 SM.1 PST3 6-plantain eat-DUR SM.1 PST2 8-bean sell
 ‘Il a [mangé]_{FOC} les plantains. Il a [vendu]_{FOC} les haricots.’
 ‘He [ate]_{FOC} the plantains. He [sold]_{FOC} the beans.’ [JO 908]
- (181) Context: Johannes dislikes the taste of cassava so normally cooks it but does not eat it. This time, he buys it, he cooks it, and he even eats it (which is surprising). (SoA focus)
 Yohánese a ná esasɔma néáká séɛb.
 /Yohánese a ná ɛ-sasɔma néá-aka séɛbɛ/
 1.Johannes SM.1 PST2 7-cassava eat-DUR even
 ‘Johannes a même [mangé]_{FOC} du manioc.’
 ‘Johannes even [ate]_{FOC} the cassava.’ [PM 2282]

We see in (181) that the canonical word order can be used for PCF for exclusive focus as well as information focus, as the exclusive focus-sensitive particle *séɛbe* ‘only’ may modify the predicate. Note here that the exclusive focus-sensitive particle *ata* ‘even’ seen previously is only found for term focus and cannot be used in a PCF construction (183),⁸ with *séɛbe* (literally translatable as ‘self’) used instead.

⁸Although a possible example of *ata* ‘even’ with PCF was found in the following example from a story, where *ata* modifies a clause after a left-dislocated topic (182).

Unlike with *ata*, *sébe* follows the focussed constituent and does not require it to be ex-situ.

- (183) a. *Yóhánese a ná esasoma **ata néáká**.
 /Yóhánese a ná ε-sasoma ata néá-aka/
 1.Johannes SM.1 PST2 7-cassava even eat-DUR
 Intd.: 'Johannes a même [mangé]_{FOC} du manioc.'
 Intd.: 'Johannes even [ate]_{FOC} the cassava.' [PM 2284]
- b. ***ata néáká** Yóhánese a ná esasoma.
 /ata néá-aka Yóhánese a ná ε-sasoma/
 even eat-DUR 1.Johannes SM.1 PST2 7-cassava
 Intd.: 'Johannes a même [mangé]_{FOC} du manioc.'
 Intd.: 'Johannes even [ate]_{FOC} the cassava.' [PM 2285]

Note also that, unlike the other Bantu languages in Van der Wal (to appear), Tunen does not have a predicate doubling construction for the expression of PCF (i.e., a construction in which an infinitival/nominal form of the verb appears together with a finite verb form; see e.g. Güldemann 2015 and references therein).

So far then, we have seen that S-Aux-O-V-X is the pragmatically neutral word order in Tunen, and therefore can be taken as the canonical word order. This canonical word order is found for thetics, VP focus, information focus on the theme object, non-argument focus, and predicate-centred focus (PCF). It is not possible to use S-Aux-O-V-X word order for focus on the subject, which must instead be expressed by a cleft. More contrastive term focus is generally expressed ex-situ, as shown by association with the focus-sensitive particles *ata* 'even' and *ómaná* 'only' (while more contrastive PCF can be left in-situ).

- (182) Context: Moral concluding the story *The lying shepherd*.
 « mɔkandʒakandʒa ata á ndɔ hɔ taka a báka bá lé wéeya ɔkén. »
 /mɔ-kandʒakandʒa ata a ʰndɔ hɔ taka a bá-aka bá lé wéeya
 1-liar even SM.1 PRS talk truth SM.1 be-DUR SM.2 NEG PRN.EMPH.1
 ɔ-kéna/
 INF-believe
 '« Un menteur, même quand il dit la vérité, on ne le croit pas. »'
 "Even if a liar is telling the truth, nobody believes them." [JO 2039]

5.2.6 S-Aux-O-V-X in double object constructions

Having seen that the canonical word order for Tunen transitives is S-Aux-O-V-X, let us now consider ditransitives. Here, the O slot of S-Aux-O-V-X can be filled by multiple objects, specifically in S-O_{GOAL}-O_{THEME}-V order, as previously noted by Mous (1997, 2003). I show in this section that this S-O_{GOAL}-O_{THEME}-V order is consistent across different information-structural contexts, meaning that the order of objects is not conditioned by information structure. In other words, when both objects are preverbal, the goal (i.e., recipient/beneficiary) object always precedes the theme object (184a, 185A). The reverse order S-O_{THEME}-O_{GOAL}-V is not grammatical (184b).

(184) Context: ‘Who is the woman giving a gourd to?’ (+ photo from BaSIS stimuli)

- a. a nó ɔsókó hɛtété indi.
 /a nó ɔsókó hɛ-tété índiá/
 SM.1 PST1 1.other 1g-gourd give
 ‘Elle donne une gourde à [l’autre]_{FOC}.’
 ‘She gives a gourd to [the other (woman)]_{FOC}.’ [PM 1541]
- b. *a nó hɛtété ɔsókó indi.
 /a nó hɛ-tété ɔsókó índiá/
 SM.1 PST1 1g-gourd 1.other give
 Intd.: ‘Elle donne une gourde à [l’autre]_{FOC}.’
 Intd.: ‘She gives a gourd to [the other (woman)]_{FOC}.’ [PM 1542]

- (185) Q. yaté (á) muəndú á ndɔ mɔná túmbi ?
 /yaté á mɔ-əndú a ^Hndɔ mɔ-ná túmbiə/
 what COP 1-woman SM.1 PRS 1-child return
 ‘Qu’est-ce que la femme remet à l’enfant ?’
 ‘What is the woman returning to the child?’ [JO 1588]
- A. muəndú á ndɔ mɔná imítá túmbi.
 /mɔ-əndú a ^Hndɔ mɔ-ná ɛ-mítá túmbiə/
 1-woman SM.1 PRS 1-child 9-calabash return
 ‘La femme remet [le calabasse]_{FOC} à l’enfant.’
 ‘The woman returns [the calabash]_{FOC} to the child.’ [JO 1587]

As seen in Chapter 4 section §4.3, the same O_{GOAL}-O_{THEME} order is also found in questions (186) and imperatives (187).

- (186) *éyáné á ná himúsimuísí híǝfǝ indi?*
éyáné á ná he-muísimuísi he-ǝfǝ índiá?
 who SM.1.REL PST2 19-cat 19-fish give
 ‘Qui a donné du poisson au chat ?’
 ‘Who gave fish to the cat?’ [EO 278]

- (187) *índiá mǝná imit !*
/índiá mǝ-ná e-mítá/
 give 1-child 9-calabash
 ‘Donne la calabasse à l'enfant !’
 ‘Give the calabash to the child!’ [JO 1594]

These data provide evidence for the S-O_{GOAL}-O_{THEME}-V-X as the canonical word order in Tunen, meaning that the ‘O’ of S-Aux-O-V-X covers both the theme and the goal (i.e., recipient/beneficiary) object (to be seen further in Chapter 6 section §6.2.5). Note that this is in contrast to certain West African languages described as having S-Aux-O-V-X basic word order that only permit a single preverbal object (Gensler and Güldemann 2003; Creissels 2005; see Chapter 6 for further discussion).

Note also that this canonical order is not the only word order found for double object constructions. Firstly, (185Q) above and (189Q) below show that an exsitu strategy is standard for questioning an object. Additionally, recipient objects marked by the focus-sensitive particle *ómaná* ‘only’ must be moved out of their canonical position, typically to the left (188a) but sometimes also to the right (188b), with the canonical word order not possible (188c).⁹

- (188) a. *ómaná á mǝná á ndǝ imítá túmbi.*
ómaná á mǝ-ná a ^Hndǝ e-mítá túmbiǝ
 only COP/PREP 1-child SM.1 PRS 9-calabash return
 ‘C’est seulement [à l’enfant]_{FOC} qu’elle a donné la calabasse.’
 ‘She only gave a calabash [to the child]_{FOC}.’ [JO 1590]
- b. *a nó hetété indi ómaná á Ilisabet.*
/a nó he-tété índiá ómaná á Ilisabetε/
 SM.1 PST1 19-gourd give only COP/PREP 1.Elisabeth
 ‘C’est uniquement [à Elisabeth]_{FOC} qu’elle a donné la gourde.’
 ‘She only gave a gourd [to Elisabeth]_{FOC}: (and nobody else) [PM 1559]

⁹I gloss *á* as COP/PREP here due to uncertainty as to how many *ás* are present underlyingly and the nature of *á* as a preposition; see the end of this section for further discussion.

- c. *muəndú á ndɔ́ ʒmaná á mɔ́ná imíté túmbiə.
 /mɔ́-əndú a ^Hndɔ́ ʒmaná á mɔ́-ná ε-míté túmbiə/
 1-woman SM.1 PRS only COP/PREP 1-child 9-calabash return
 Intd.: ‘C’est seulement [à l’enfant]_{FOC} que la femme a donné la cale-
 basse.’
 Intd.: ‘The woman only gave a calabash [to the child]_{FOC}.’ [JO 1591]

This pattern matches what we saw already for theme objects in (171) above. These data taken together support a general observation that exhaustively-focussed elements in Tunen must be *ex-situ*, while information focus (for non-subjects) is typically unmarked and left *in-situ* in the S-Aux-O-V-X word order.

As is common cross-linguistically (see e.g. Malchukov et al. 2010), in addition to the double object construction, an alternative ditransitive construction is available in which the recipient object is introduced by a preposition. In this case, the word order is S-O_{THEME}-V-Prep-O_{GOAL}, with the goal object an oblique in the postverbal position (S-Aux-O-V-X). The examples below illustrate this construction in a new information focus context (189A) and in an imperative (190).

- (189) Q. Context: BaSIS photo stimulus of woman giving another woman a gourd.
 ɔwané á múəndú á ndɔ́ imíté túmbi ?
 /ɔ-ané á mɔ́-əndú á ^Hndɔ́ ε-míté túmbiə/
 PREP-who COP 1-woman SM.1.REL PRS 9-calabash return
 ‘À qui la femme remet la calabasse ?’
 ‘Who is the woman returning the calabash to?’ [JO 1583]
- A. muəndú á ndɔ́ imíté túmbiə ɔ́ mɔ́n.
 /mɔ́-əndú a ^Hndɔ́ ε-míté túmbiə ɔ́ mɔ́-ná/
 1-woman SM.1 PRS 9-calabash return PREP 1-child
 ‘La femme remet la calabasse [à l’enfant]_{FOC}.’
 ‘The woman returns the calabsh [to the child]_{FOC}.’ [JO 1586]
- (190) índiá imíté á mɔ́ná !
 /indíá ε-míté a mɔ́-ná/
 give 9-calabash PREP 1-child
 ‘Donne la calabasse à l’enfant !’
 ‘Give the calabash to the child!’ [JO 1595]

Initial analysis suggests that S-O_{THEME}-V-Prep-O_{GOAL} is a lower-frequency pattern than S-O_{THEME}-O_{GOAL}-V, although both strategies are found across speakers.

The preposition used in the prepositional variant is generally the general preposition \mathfrak{a} , but sometimes surfaces as *á* or *a*. Whether *á* is underlying low or high-toned and whether it is an allomorph, separate preposition (cf. the *á* preposition found in nearby Bantoid languages), or a borrowing from French *à* ‘to, at’ is a topic for further research. In any case, its status as a preposition means that these constructions can be understood as instances of the canonical S-Aux-O-V-X word order, where X here is a prepositional phrase. The generalisation is therefore that prepositional objects are postverbal, while non-prepositional objects are preverbal (with fixed O_{GOAL} - O_{THEME} order).

5.2.7 Section summary

This section presented evidence that S-Aux-O-V-X is a pragmatically neutral word order compatible with different information-structural contexts, and so should be taken as the canonical word order in Tunen. The order of objects in double object constructions is determined by grammatical role rather than IS, with S- O_{GOAL} - O_{THEME} -V word order or a prepositional construction S- O_{THEME} -V-Prep- O_{GOAL} . While the S-Aux-O-V-X order is compatible with thetics, information focus on an object, non-argument focus, and predicate-centred focus, subjects cannot be focussed in-situ, and content questions are formed ex-situ. It was noted that subject inversion of the type found in Eastern and Southern Bantu languages is ungrammatical in Tunen and predicate doubling constructions are likewise not found. This unavailability of inversion constructions matches what was found for the Cameroonian Bantu language Basaá (Guthrie no. A43) by Hamlaoui and Makasso (2015), which they argue to be a feature of Northwestern Bantu more generally. The pragmatically neutral preverbal position of the object in Tunen is a further peculiarity compared to most other Bantu languages (Bearth 2003; Mous 1997, 2003). The neighbouring Cameroonian Bantu language Nyokon (A45) also has OV patterns, although only in a subset of TAM contexts; Ewondo (A72, Cameroon) and Tikar (Bantoid, Cameroon) also have partial OV patterns, but Tunen is the only known language with robust S-Aux-O-V-X basic word order, as discussed further in Mous (1997, 2005, 2014); Kerr (2024); Chapter 6. Finally, we saw that foci modified by the focus-sensitive particles *ata* ‘even’ or *ómaná* ‘only’ cannot be expressed in-situ, showing that the preverbal object position is specific to information focus, and we saw that questions are generally formed ex-situ rather than using the S-Aux-O-V-X word order (with in-situ question formation most accepted for non-argument focus).

5.3 Non-canonical word order

Having seen that S-Aux-O-V-X is the canonical word order in Tunen, we can look at the use of alternative word orders in different information-structural contexts. This section considers VO orders found, both with and without the *á* marker, as well as argument fronting and discontinuous noun phrases.

5.3.1 VO order

Some Niger-Congo languages in Central and West Africa are known to have alternations between OV and VO word order, including Tunen's close neighbour, Nyokon (Bantu A45; Mous 2005). This raises the question as to whether VO is found alongside OV in Tunen. In Chapter 6 and Kerr (2024) I show that Tunen OV is consistent across tense/aspect contexts, corroborating earlier work by Mous (1997, 2005). This means that there is no tense/aspect-conditioned OV/VO alternation in Tunen as reported for Nyokon and for other Niger-Congo languages, such as those of the Kwa branch (Heine 1976; Creissels 2005, 2018; Sande et al. 2019).

While OV is thus consistent across tenses in Tunen, Mous (1997, 2003) has argued that Tunen does have a VO strategy, which is used for contrastive focus on the theme object and formed with a marker *á* preceding the object (termed a “contrast” marker by Mous 2003, although intended specifically for contrastive focus; Mous p.c.). Mous (1997) also notes that VO is found for objects modified by the focus-sensitive particle *ha* ‘only’. This relates to the data reported above of rightwardly-postposed contrastive objects, which I argue to be ex-situ cases rather than in-situ (and with fronting a more common strategy). Such a description of OV vs VO variation dependent on IS has been picked up in summaries of Tunen word order, such as Downing and Marten (2019:273-4).

The alternation in position of the object dependent on contrastiveness has been discussed by Güldemann (2007) as an example of a more general pattern of preverbal objects in Benue-Congo being extrafocal while postverbal objects are more contrastive. Under such an account, the prediction is therefore that OV order in Tunen is found with extrafocal objects, existing in alternation with a VO pattern used for contrastive foci.

In this section I discuss the *VáO* construction presented by Mous (1997). While the *VáO* construction is found in my field data, it is infrequent and was only seen in elicitation contexts. I show that this construction shows evidence of becoming monoclausal, but argue against *á* as a general contrast or focus marker, instead treating it as the identificational/specificational copula as part of a biclausal cleft construction (cf. Chapter 4 section §4.5.3). Next, I argue that objects modified by

‘only’ must be ex-situ, which can result in VO order on the surface but should not be taken as a basic VO order of the kind found in some West African languages. Finally, I show that some VO constructions are possible without *á*, although these are rare in the data and the extent to which such patterns depend on IS rather than independent factors such as prosodic weight or predicate type needs further testing.

5.3.1.1 *VáO*

In Mous’ (1997; 2003) analysis of Tunen syntax, he identifies an SVO construction in Tunen where the postverbal object is preceded by what he calls a “contrast marker”, *á*, marking contrastive focus, as illustrated in (191) below from Mous’ own elicitation data.¹⁰

- (191) *mé-ndò ní á bóniàk.*
 SM.1SG-PRS eat CONTR 14.yam
 ‘What I eat is yams.’ (Mous 2003:304, adapted)

A key question is whether this *á* marker is best treated as a contrast marker (CONTR), focus marker (FOC), or copula (COP). If *á* were a general focus marker, we may expect it to be able to appear on focussed objects in other positions. However, it is not possible to have *á* precede the object in the canonical preverbal position (192), despite S-Aux-O-V-X being compatible with information focus on the object (as we saw in (168) above).

- (192) Context: ‘What did the woman give to the other woman?’ (+ BaSIS photo stimulus)
*a nó ɔsókó (*á) hɛtɛtɛ indíə.*
 /a nó ɔsókó á hɛ-tɛtɛ índíə/
 SM.1 PST1 1.other COP 19-gourd give
 Intd.: ‘Elle a donné à l’autre [une gourde]_{FOC}.’
 Intd.: ‘She gave the woman [a gourd]_{FOC}.’ [PM 1541, 1549]

We should therefore not take *á* to be a general focus marker. This observation matches the data from exhaustive focus marked by the focus-sensitive particle *ó-maná* ‘only’, which requires that the object is moved from its base position (171), (188). These data therefore are compatible with Mous’ (1997; 2003) analysis of *á* as a contrastive focus marker, but not as a general focus marker.

¹⁰Glosses for the subject marker, tense marker, and noun have been adapted for consistency with the rest of the examples in this thesis; the CONTR gloss and data line are left unchanged.

One key difference in my data compared to Mous' (2003) presentation is that SVáO was a low frequency strategy in my corpus. In Isaac's (2007) study of 6 of the longer Tunen texts transcribed in Dugast (1975), he also reports that there were no clear examples of this construction (Isaac 2007:61). Furthermore, the construction was even judged ungrammatical in the following elicitation session, regardless of the position of the object with respect to the postverbal adjunct (193).

- (193) Context: 'What is the man holding?'
 *a ná itíó {ɔ məkata} á kalótɔ {ɔ məkata}.
 /a ná itíó {ɔ mə-kátá} á kalótɔ {ɔ mə-kátá}/
 SM.1 PST2 hold PREP 3-hand COP 7.carrot PREP 3-hand
 Intd.: 'Ce qu'il tient à la main c'est [une carotte]_{FOC}.'
 Intd.: 'He is holding [a carrot]_{FOC} in his hand.' [JO 1627-8]

Instead, the focussed object can be left in-situ unmarked by *á* (S-Aux-O-V-X), the typical expression of information focus, or be focussed via a reverse pseudocleft with *á*, as used for contrastive and exhaustive focus (see section §5.4). The SVáO word order is therefore a less frequent pattern than it may seem from Mous' description. We will see in section §5.4 that a reverse pseudocleft of the form OáSVX is a more common strategy for contrastive focus than the pseudocleft type here; recall as well from (170) above that fronting was preferred to postposing when an object is modified by a focus-sensitive particle. In my natural speech recordings, the VáO construction did not appear.

In earlier presentation of this work, I argued that the SVáO construction is a pseudocleft, on the basis of evidence of constructions with *á* showing properties of relative clauses and therefore a biclausal cleft structure (to be seen for other cleft types in section §5.4). However, remotely elicited data explicitly testing this hypothesis for this low-frequency SVáO construction found that this construction does not allow relative tense morphology or the relative form of the subject marker, thus providing evidence for monoclausality rather than biclausality. The dataset in (194) illustrate this point.¹¹

- (194) a. **nelala á babá á [↓]ná híánána ɔwón.**
 /ne-lala á babá á ^Lná híánána ɔ-ónɔ/
 5-spider COP 1.father SM.1.REL PST3.REL must INF-kill
 'C'est [l'araignée]_{FOC} que papa devait tuer.'
 'It's [the spider]_{FOC} that dad had to kill.' [PM 70.61]

¹¹For these remotely-elicited data, the form ID in square brackets refers to the session number followed by the example number in this session.

- b. babá a ka húánána ɔ-ónɔ á nɛ-lala.
 /babá a ka húánána ɔ-ónɔ á nɛ-lala/
 1.father SM.1 PST3 must INF-kill CONTR 5-spider
 ‘Ce que papa devait tuer n’est que [l’araignée]_{FOC}.’
 ‘Dad had to kill (only) the [spider]_{FOC}.’ [PM 70.57]
- c. *babá á ↓na húánána ɔ-ónɔ á nɛ-lal.
 /babá a ^Lna húánána ɔ-ónɔ á nɛ-lala/
 1.father SM.1.REL PST3.REL must INF-kill COP 5-spider
 Intd.: ‘Ce que papa devait tuer n’est que [l’araignée]_{FOC}.’
 Intd.: ‘Dad had to kill (only) [the spider]_{FOC}.’ [PM 70.62]

Here in (194a) we see a reverse pseudocleft construction, in which the focussed object *nelala* ‘spider’ is followed by the *á* copula and then a reduced relative (see (225)). As we will see in section §5.4, the reduced relative environment is evidenced by the H tone on the class 1 subject marker *a*—which is *a* in non-dependent clause contexts (Chapter 4 Table 4.10)—in addition to the dependent clause form of the third-degree past tense marker ↓*ná* (which is *ka* in main clause contexts; Dugast 1971; Mous 2003; Chapter 4 section §4.4.5). We therefore expect to see these indicators in the relative subject marker and TAM contexts for the SVáO construction, if it is a pseudocleft (i.e., the inverse of the reverse pseudocleft construction, where a reduced relative is followed by a copula and focussed object). However, when the SVáO construction is used, the subject marker and tense marker are in the main clause form (194b) and cannot be in the dependent clause form (194c). These data therefore suggest that the SVáO construction is not a biclausal pseudocleft and instead is grammaticalising into a monoclausal construction marking contrastive focus. Note also that the translations indicate that the SVáO construction gives a sense of exhaustivity. A similar idea of contrast was provided by another speaker, and so I gloss the *á* in the SVáO construction as CONTR for contrast (following Mous 1997, 2003), while *á* is elsewhere glossed as COP for copula.¹²

In summary then, we see that the VáO strategy discussed by Mous (1997, 2003) exists, with elicitation data providing evidence that it is at least in the process of becoming monoclausal and not simply a pseudocleft, as evidenced by the lack of relative SM and TAM forms. However, it is a low-frequency pattern that was not always judged as grammatical by consultants (193) and did not appear in the natural speech data at all, with a reverse pseudocleft a much more common construction for expression of contrastive focus on the object.

¹²In follow-up discussion of these examples, JO confirmed that both (194a) and (194b) can be felicitously continued with , *tátá á mǎʒelé* ‘, not the lizard’, supporting this idea of exhaustivity.

5.3.1.2 VO without *á*

While OV order is by far the most common word order pattern in Tunen, a few instances in my own and Dugast's (1971; 1975) data show VO order, with no *á* marker and no indication of biclausality. These instances are rare; VO was generally judged ungrammatical in elicitation, with only a few cases in which it was accepted. When checking a set of 10 natural speech texts containing approximately 400 utterances, only 4 potential VO constructions were found, but all of these can be excluded from being actual instances of VO syntax. 1 can be excluded due to being a case of secondary predication rather than a true DP object (195), 1 can be excluded due to being a case of hesitation (196), and 1 shows switching from Tunen to French (197).

- (195) Context: EO and PM are discussing the funeral of a local figure called Papa Daniel.

bá se .. mukót ... mba a ka híána munen.

/bá séá .. mɔ-kóto ... mba a ka híána mɔ-nəni/

SM.2 say .. 1-Bamileke ... but SM.1 PST3 become 1-Nen

'On dit que c'est un Bamileke, mais il est devenu un Munen.'

'They say he's a Bamileke, but he became a Munen.'

[EO 1037]

- (196) Context: PM is giving EO instructions for the QUIS map task.

PM: 'There is an intersection with three roads. On the first road'

mé ndɔ sinə ... menyama ɛ-káhɔ.

/mɛ ʰndɔ sinə ... mɛ-nyama ɛ-kahɔ/

SM.1SG PRS see ... 9-animal 9-beef

'Je vois ... une vache.'

'I see ... a cow.'

[EO 664]

- (197) PM: 'I myself saw the first vehicle he bought, it was Inyas who drove (it) -'

EO: 'I (also) saw (it).'

- a ka tiləkə « Dieu haït les méchants ».

/a ka tilə-aka Dieu haït les méchants/

SM.1 PST3 write-DUR God.FR hates.FR the.FR wicked_people.FR

' Il avait écrit « Dieu haït les méchants ».'

' He wrote "God hates the wicked"'

[PM 1047]

The final example, given in (198), illustrates the occasional ambiguity in classifying a construction as VO. Here, the objet *tʰándʒɛ* 'leaves' can be either taken to

be the complement of the verb in the first clause or a fronted topic in the second clause (with zero expression of the object in the first clause due to givenness, for which see section §5.3.3 and section §5.7). Although originally transcribed as VO, when asking JO remotely in follow-up work, she interpreted the object as a fronted topic, meaning that this utterance would also be OV.

- (198) Context: JO is explaining how to make the dish *kok* [*hekɔke* leaves boiled with smoked fish and ground peanuts].

Me ka ákán(a) (ɔ) embóm, me ná hekɔke kéták, me ná nda híáná ɔ ombél,
me ná **tábónáka** tóándzɛ tóbíá me ombokok. [...]

/me ka ákáná ɔ ɛ-embóma me ná he-kɔke kétáka
SM.1SG PST3 leave PREP 7-bush SM.1SG PST2 19-kok gather-DUR
me ná nda híáná ɔ ɔ-ombéla me ná **tábóná-aka**
SM.1SG PST2 VEN enter PREP 3-house SM.1SG PST2 arrange
tɔ-ándzɛ tɔ-bíá me **ombokoko**/
13-leaf 13-bad SM.1SG throw.REP

“Je suis partie en brousse, j’ai cueilli le *kok*, je suis revenue à la maison, j’ai arrangé les mauvaises feuilles, je les ai jété, [...]”

“I went to the bush, I gathered *kok*, I returned home, I arranged the bad leaves, I threw them out, [...]” [JO 1339]

However, VO constructions do sometimes show up, given that some examples are found in the Dugast texts. Mous (2003) notes that objects in such VO constructions are prosodically phrased with the verb, as evidenced by H tone spread. This is illustrated in (199), where I have added an underlying representation line and adapted the glosses to show that the H tone of *kemá* ‘tap’ spreads rightwards onto the underlyingly L-toned class 6 prefix *ma-*.¹³

- (199) à-ná kèməká m^wólúk.

/a-ná kemá-aka ma-lukə/
SM.1-PST2 tap-DUR 6-palm.wine

‘He tapped palm wine!’ (Dugast 1971:58, Mous 2003:304, adapted)

At this stage, it is not clear whether there is a generalisation accounting for when these VO examples can appear and the extent to which this depends on IS.

¹³While such examples appear in Dugast’s work, JO considered this sentence ungrammatical when asked in follow-up work.

Multiple other factors could play a role, including prosodic weight, predicates requiring extraposition, and postverbal modifier placement. Prosodic weight alone would not account for example (199) above, and we saw already in (162) above that prosodically heavy preverbal objects are possible. However, prosodic weight is a factor that could explain the discontinuous relative clauses modifying objects that we will see in section §5.3.2 below and in Chapter 7.

A second context in which VO order is found without *á* is with objects modified by certain modifiers, most commonly numerals. As will be seen in Chapter 7, the default order (i.e., the most common order, found across different information-structural contexts) for such objects is S-O-V-Mod, i.e., a discontinuous noun phrase. However, the object can also appear adjacent to the modifier, leading to the VO order S-V-O-Mod. The order S-O-Mod-V is dispreferred. For example, in the sub-DP focus context in (200) below in which the focus falls on the numeral modifier of the theme object, V-O-Num was allowed (200a) as well as the discontinuous order O-V-Num (200b), while the preverbal order S-O-Num-V was considered marginal (despite SOV being generally allowed and numerals always following the noun they modify (Dugast 1971; Mous 2003; Kerr 2020; Chapters 4-6). The availability of S-V-O-Num for narrow focus on the numeral is illustrated for another consultant in (201).

(200) Context: 'How many people do you see?' (+ picture)

- a. *mé ndɔ sinə bɛndɔ báfandɛ.*
 /mɛ ^hndɔ sinə bɛndɔ báfandɛ/
 SM.1SG PRS see 2.person 2-two
 'J'en vois [deux]_{FOC}.'
 'I see [two]_{FOC} people.' [JO 541]
- b. *mé ndɔ bɛndɔ sinə báfandɛ.* [JO 542]
- c. *?mé ndɔ bɛndɔ báfandɛ sinə.* [JO 543]

(201) Context: 'How many animals did he kill?'

- a *ná ɔnɔkɔ mɛnyama ímoti.*
 /a ná ɔnɔkɔ mɛnyama é-mɔté
 SM.1 PST2 kill 3-animal 3-one
 'Il en a tué [un]_{FOC} (seul).'
 'He killed [one]_{FOC} animal.' [EO 1416]

The S-V-O-Num pattern was also provided for contexts other than narrow focus on the modifier, for example with term focus on the entire object (202) and as an

answer to a polar question (truth focus) (203b). While this VO order was judged grammatical, it is worthwhile noting that the discontinuous S-O-V-Num order was the first response (203a).

- (202) Context: Max Planck scope image 1/77 + ex-situ object question ‘yaté *śndɔ sin*?’ (‘What do you see?’)

mé ndɔ sinə bɔléá bɔmóte. bó báka na tunoní tuəŋ.

/mɛ ^Hndɔ sinə bɔ-léá bɔ-móte bó bá-aka na tɔ-noní tɔ-əŋí/
SM.1SG PRS see 14-tree 14-one 14 be-DUR with 13-bird 13-many

‘Je vois [un arbre]_{FOC}. Il a beaucoup d’oiseaux.’

‘I see [a tree]_{FOC}. It has many birds.’

[JO 1151]

- (203) Context: ‘Do you see two birds?’ (+ hand-drawn picture stimulus)

a. ée, mé ndɔ tunoní sinə tɔfandɛ.

/éɛ mɛ ^Hndɔ tɔ-noní sinə tɔ-fandé/
yes SM.1SG PRS 13-bird see 13-two

‘Oui, je vois deux oiseaux.’

‘Yes, I see two birds.’

[EO 1408]

b. ée, mé ndɔ sinə tunoní tɔfandɛ.

/éɛ mɛ ^Hndɔ sinə tɔ-noní tɔ-fandé /
yes SM.1SG PRS see 13-bird 13-two

‘Oui, je vois deux oiseaux.’

‘Yes, I see two birds.’

[EO 1409]

In general, V-O-Num examples are less common than a discontinuous order in which the object is preverbal while its modifier is postverbal, which I will discuss more in section §5.3.2 below. I suggest that the S-V-O-Num order is related to the postverbal position being the preferred position for certain quantifiers like numerals, together with the desire to preserve the contiguity of the noun phrase constituent, rather than being related to the information-structural status of the noun and/or modifier. The following example shows that the universal quantifier *-kimə* ‘all’ can also appear in this slot when in focus.

- (204) Context: Someone mistakenly says that not all the children did their homework (knowing that some are more studious than others).

bóɔ, bá ná masóma kiak bákim.

/bóɔ bá ná ma-sóma kea-aka bá-kimə/
no SM.2 PST2 6-homework do-DUR 2-all

'Non, c'est [tous]_{FOC} qui ont fait les devoirs.'

'No, [all]_{FOC} of them did the homework.'

[EE+EB 1824]

We therefore see that this VO order may be explained by the appearance of a quantifier element, rather than being conditioned by information-structural considerations. section §5.3.2 will cover such discontinuous nominals in further detail, reflecting the finding from Chapter 7 that the discontinuous modifier placement is, somewhat surprisingly, the pragmatically neutral word order.

A final context where VO is found without *á* is with focus-sensitive particles, as in the example below from Mous (1997) and as already seen in section §5.2 for objects modified by *ata* 'even' and *ómaná* 'only'.^{14,15}

(205) mɛna nya ha m^wənif.
SM.1SG.PST2 drink only 6.water

'I drank only water.'

Mous (1997:125)

This VO order arises due to exhaustively focussed objects needing to move from the canonical position. Recall from section §5.2 that while such movement to the right is possible, movement to the left is a more common strategy. The availability of VO order here is expressed by Mous as needing to "mak[e] a statement about the relation of a particular object against other possible objects" (Mous 1997:127); he claims that the relation is not one of focus or new information but of contrast. I follow Chapter 2 and the other authors in Van der Wal (to appear) in calling such objects focussed objects of a more contrastive type than information focus (see e.g. Bianchi et al. 2015; Cruschina 2021). This requirement to be ex-situ extends across all contrastively focussed terms and is not specific to objects.

Finally, it is worth noting that in elicitation contexts, most speakers reject VO examples; VO examples are therefore quite low-frequency in my corpus. These constructions could therefore be better investigated through a larger-scale corpus study with more natural speech examples and controlling for independent factors such as prosodic weight. Given the prevalence of VO orders in Benue-Congo and the variation between OV and VO in other languages with OV word order, the lack of VO in Tunen is particularly interesting from a comparative and historical perspective.

¹⁴Glosses have been standardised; the transcription line is unaltered.

¹⁵This example was checked with JO; she accepts it, but rejects it if the focus-sensitive particle is omitted.

5.3.2 Discontinuity

As noted by Mous (1997, 2003), modifiers of theme objects — including numerals, quantifiers, and relative clauses — may appear in Tunen in a discontinuous position, separated from the object by the verb, resulting in the discontinuous S-O-V-Mod order. Crosslinguistically, discontinuity is a low frequency word order strategy that relates directly to IS: discontinuous noun phrases are used for focus on the modifier (see e.g. Louagie and Verstraete 2016), with a common pattern involving scrambling to a left-peripheral topic or focus phrase (Fanselow and Ćavar 2002). In Bantu, discontinuous noun phrases are very rare (Van de Velde 2022:909). In Tunen, however, discontinuous modifiers are found frequently, the modifier and object do not move to the left periphery, and they do not require narrow focus on the modifier. Instead, this word order appears to be pragmatically neutral: as I show in Chapter 7, it is possible with narrow focus on the postverbal modifier, with focus on the whole object, or even to introduce new discourse referents (as already observed in Isaac 2007). Note that this analysis of discontinuity as a pragmatically neutral order runs against the analysis of Mous (1997:133), who argues that discontinuous modifiers have “contrastive force” in Tunen, likening them to postverbal objects preceded by *á* or a focus-sensitive particle ‘only’.¹⁶

Chapter 7 also reports that relative clauses modifying objects may be discontinuous from the object noun, appearing after the verb. I suggest that the variability in attachment of the relative clause may be related to independent factors such as prosodic weight and processing ease. As I am not aware of any influence of IS on this variation, I leave the topic aside for now (cf. Chapters 6-7).

5.3.3 Fronting

As noted in Mous (1997), another means in which Tunen word order may vary for information-structural reasons is by fronting a constituent, i.e., placing it at the beginning of the sentence. This will be discussed as a type of topic expression strategy in section §5.5. In focus contexts, most apparently fronted constituents are in fact clefted, although some examples are found without a copula or relative marking, as in (206) below. Recall as well that we saw in section §5.2 above that questions are formed by fronting or clefting.

¹⁶To be precise, Mous identifies the discontinuous position as the standard position for Tunen numerals and argues that numerals are inherently contrastive in that they are “selective” (Mous 1997).

(206) Context: ‘How many children do you see?’

məná ɔmɔtɛ mé ndɔ sin.

/mɔ-ná ɔ-mɔtɛ mɛ ^Hndɔ sinə/

1-child 1-one SM.1SG PRS see

‘Je vois [un]_{FOC} seul enfant.’

‘I see [one]_{FOC} child.’

[DM 147]

In some cases, a focussed object may appear to be simply fronted, but further analysis shows evidence of an underlying cleft structure — specifically a reverse pseudocleft — which may be obscured by vowel elision or be ambiguous due to the noun class and tense marker. An example is in the object focus example in (207) below, where the H tone on the subject marker shows a dependent clause environment, with the copula *á* analysable as elided due to vowel elision (see section §5.4 on clefts for more detail).

(207) Context: ‘What is the man holding in his hand?’

kalótɔ á ná itíá ɔ məkət.

/kalótɔ á-á ná itíá ɔ mɔ-kata/

g.carrot COP-SM.1.REL PST2 hold PREP 3-hand

‘C’est [une carotte]_{FOC} qu’il tient à la main.’

‘He is holding [a carrot]_{FOC} in his hand.’

[JO 1630]

Such *ex-situ* focus constructions will be covered in more detail in section §5.4 below. Fronted topic phrases are covered in more detail in section §5.5 on topic expression.

While contrast at the sub-DP level (i.e., on a modifier of the noun) does not require any special marking and can be left in-situ, it can also be expressed by fronting. Example (208) shows unmarked contrast between adjectival modifiers, while (209) shows that contrastive focus at the sub-DP level can alternatively be expressed by fronting the modifier together with the non-contrasted noun. Such fronting is optional, as the noun phrase can be left in the canonical position, an instance of the canonical S-Aux-O-V-X word order (209b), or be discontinuous (209c).

- (208) ɔ iNdikiə **nioní neté[↓]té** ne-bɔkɔyiilə té, **nioní neɲéɲa** ɔ ninúmbá (té).
 /ɔ iNdikiə **ne-oní ne-té[↓]téá** ne-bɔkɔyiilə té **ne-oní**
 PREP Ndiki 5-market 5-small 5-Wednesday every, 5-market
ne-ɲéɲa ɔ ne-númbá (té)/
 5-big PREP 5-Saturday (every)
 ‘À Ndiki il y a un petit marché chaque mercredi et un grand marché (chaque) samedi.’
 ‘In Ndiki, there is a small market every Wednesday and a large market every Saturday.’ [PM 193]

- (209) a. bóɔ, **imító meɲéɲa** me ná índiá ɔ hełóbat, tátá ɔ méte[↓]té.
 /bóɔ **ε-mító meɲéɲa** me ná índiá ɔ he-lóbátɔ
 no 9-calabash 9.big SM.1SG PST2 give PREP 19-child
 tátá ɔ méte[↓]téá/
 NEG.COP PREP 9.small
 ‘Non, c’est la [grande]_{FOC} calabasse que j’ai donnée à l’enfant, pas la petite.’
 ‘No, I gave the [big]_{FOC} calabash to the child, not the small one.’ [EE+EB 1832]
- b. bóɔ, me ná **imító meɲéɲ** indíə ɔ hełóbátɔ, (tátá ɔ mé[↓]tété).
 /bóɔ me ná **ε-mító meɲéɲa** indíə ɔ he-lóbátɔ
 no SM.1SG PST2 9-calabash 9.big give PREP 19-child
 tátá ɔ méte_Ltéá/
 NEG.COP PREP 9.small
 ‘Non, j’ai donné la [grande]_{FOC} calabasse à l’enfant, (pas la petite).’
 ‘No, I gave the [big]_{FOC} calabash to the child, (not the small one).’ [EE+EB 1834]
- c. bóɔ, me ná **imító** indíə **meɲéɲ** ɔ hełóbátɔ, (tátá ɔ mé[↓]tété).
 /bóɔ me ná **ε-mító** indíə **meɲéɲa** ɔ he-lóbátɔ
 no SM.1SG PST2 9-calabash give 9.big PREP 19-child
 tátá ɔ méte[↓]téá/
 NEG.COP PREP 9.small
 ‘Non, j’ai donné la [grande]_{FOC} calabasse à l’enfant, (pas la petite).’
 ‘No, I gave the [big]_{FOC} calabash to the child, (not the small one).’ [EE+EB 1833]

Note here that the adjective cannot be fronted without the noun; the noun must be pied-piped. This means that term focus on the sub-DP level is marked in the same way as term focus scoping over the entire DP (cf. Chapter 2 Fig. 2.3).

5.3.4 The right periphery

As is common crosslinguistically, the right periphery is used for afterthoughts or repairs, as in the natural speech example in (210) below, where an alternative noun is added as a suggestion for the subject.

- (210) Context: PM and EO perform the QUIS map task, where PM must give EO directions using a map with various objects drawn on it.

hɛkɔlɛ hɛ ka báká hání u busí káase himondokóloŋ.

/hɛ-kɔlɛ hɛ ka bá-aka hání ɔ busíá káase
19-squirrel SM.19 AND be-DUR DEM.DIST.LOC PREP front maybe

hɛ-mondokóloŋ/

19-mole

‘Là-bas il y a un écureuil, ou peut-être une taupe.’

‘There’s a squirrel there, or maybe a mole.’

[PM 707]

Further investigation of fronting and the right periphery could be done on the basis of a larger text corpus; in my field data, neither strategy was very commonly found. Instead of fronting, focus is typically expressed by the canonical word order (for non-subjects; section §5.2, 5.3) or else by clefting (section §5.4 below).

5.3.5 Section summary

Although S-AUX-O-V-X is the canonical word order, we saw in this section that other word order patterns are found in Tunen. Objects may appear postverbally in certain contexts, often with a modifier or relative (although discontinuous structures are more common). In contrast to the presentation in Mous (1997, 2003), I argued that postverbal objects preceded by the marker *á* are uncommon, although they show evidence for monoclausality. Aside from clefts, fronting is another possible strategy for focus expression, although this strategy is less commonly used for foci. Fronting for topics will be covered further in section §5.5. Some modifiers are frequently discontinuous in Tunen; this is a pragmatically neutral word order pattern rather than a particular strategy for focussing the modifier, unlike what is found for other languages with (apparent) discontinuity in the nominal domain, and unusu-

ally for a Bantu language. Finally, the right periphery can be used for afterthoughts, as is common crosslinguistically.

5.4 Clefts and the marker *á*

We have seen already that Tunen can use clefts to express focus, which is a common strategy for question formation and found also with declaratives. This section discusses these cleft constructions and their interpretation. As clefts are composed of a copula, focussed NP, and a relative clause component (Harris and Campbell 1995), I begin by describing the form of copular clauses in Tunen, before looking into clefts specifically.

5.4.1 Copular clauses in Tunen

As discussed in Chapter 4 section §4.5.3, a common typology of copular clauses is to split them into four types: *identificational*, *predicational*, *specificational*, and *equative* copular clauses (see e.g. Higgins 1979; Mikkelsen 2011; Heycock 2012). In this section I show that Tunen does not differentiate between identificational and specificational copular clauses, and shows no evidence for equative copular clauses as a distinct class, and so the typology can be simplified as *predicational vs identificational/specificational* copular clauses.¹⁷

Firstly, consider predicational copular clauses, where a property is assigned to a referent. Predicational copular clauses in Tunen are formed with the copula *lea* ‘be’ or copula verb *bá(ka)* ‘be’ – which are generally interchangeable (Dugast 1971:347-50); Chapter 4 section §4.5.3 – as illustrated in (211) and (212) below for a non-locative (211) and locative use respectively.

(211) Context: ‘Is the water clean for drinking?’

bóɔ, má lé bá mas.

/bóɔ má lé bá ma-εε/

no SM.6 NEG be 6-good

‘Non, ce n’est pas pure.’

‘No, it isn’t potable.’ ‘No, it isn’t clean.’

[JO 612]

¹⁷I refer to the second type as ‘identificational/specificational’ in order to remain agnostic as to whether the identificational or the specificational copular clause is the most basic or general type.

- (212) Context: ‘Where are you?’

mε le ɔ nioní.

/mε lea ɔ ne-oní/

SM.1SG be PREP 5-market

‘Je suis au marché.’

‘I am at the market.’

[PM 102]

Identificational copular clauses, on the other hand, are marked by *á* COP in Tunen. Example (213) below shows the use of *á* as the copula in a clause which identifies a referent.

- (213) wéeyε mɔndo wéeyε ɔwá tó
- ¹
- ná siəkinə, á mutíkə wa bɔnɔɔ bɔ iNdiki-níméki(ə).

/wéeyε mɔ-ndo wéeyε ɔwá tó ¹ná siəkinə á mɔ-tíkə

DEM.1 1-person DEM.1 REL.1 SM.1PL PST3.REL see.DUR COP 1-mayor

wa bɔ-nɔɔ bɔ iNdikinímekiə/

ASSOC.1 14-country ASSOC.14 Ndikiniméki

‘Cet homme là que nous avons vu (hier), c’est le maire du Ndikiniméki.’

‘That man there that we saw (yesterday) is the mayor of Ndikiniméki.’

[PM 780]

Specificational copular clauses are defined as having the structure *A is B*, where *A* is typically non-referential and *B* is referential, and *A* is definite (Heycock 2012). These are also marked by *á* COP in Tunen (214).

- (214) mɔná ɔwá á léá na εmanyá tómbálánátɔ á Patiáns.

/mɔ-ná ɔwá á léá na ε-manyá tómbálánátɔ á

1-child REL.1 SM.1.REL be with 7-knowledge be_more.PTCP COP

Patiánse/

1.Patience

‘L’enfant qui est le plus intelligent, c’est Patience.’

‘The smartest child is Patience.’

[JO 854]

The final type of copular clause proposed in the literature on copular clauses is equatives, where *A* is said to be identical to *B* (e.g. “The morning star is the evening star” in English). Whether or not equatives are truly a distinct class is subject to some debate (see e.g. Heycock 2012). When eliciting such examples in Tunen, consultants either rephrased the construction by using lexical verb (e.g. “A gives B”) or

used a specificational copula with *á* COP. The only possible example of a true equative is in the story below, which can either be analysed as a fragment or an instance of *á* COP (if the personal pronoun *miaŋj́á* ‘me’ is taken to include *á*; cf. citealpdugast1971grammaire). There is therefore no convincing evidence to identify a separate equatives subclass of copulars in Tunen.

- (215) Context: A shepherd lied/cried wolf that there was a panther. His concerned neighbours ran over..
 bá [↓]ná ka fam, a ná sanéá ɔ tuɔn, aséá : « miaŋj́á meko ! ».
 /bá [↓]ná ka fáma a ná sanéá ɔ tu-ɔnɔ
 SM.2 PST3.DEP AND arrive SM.1 PST2 burst.out PREP 13-laughter
 a-séá miaŋj́á me-ko/
 SM.1-say PRN.EMPH.ISG 9-panther
 ‘Quand ils sont arrivés, il a éclaté de rire, il a dit, « c’est moi la panthère ! »’
 ‘When they arrived, he burst out laughing and said ‘I’m the panther!’”
 [JO 2033]

In summary, Tunen forms identificational/specificational clauses differently from predicational clauses, as shown in Table 5.2 below: predicational copulars use the copula verbs *lea* and *bá(ka)* ‘to be’, while identificational and specificational clauses use *á*.

Copular clause type	Copula element
Predicational	- <i>lea</i> / - <i>bá(ka)</i> ‘to be’
Identificational/specificational	<i>á</i>

Table 5.2: Copular clauses in Tunen

The predicational copula *lea* and *bá(ka)* take a subject marker and are negated by a negative marker (as seen in (211)). In contrast to these copula forms, the identificational/specificational copula *á* is invariant¹⁸ and has a negative form *tátá*, which is glossed as COP.NEG (216).

¹⁸There is some indication of a human/non-human distinction with a *ó* variant used for non-personified non-human animates and inanimates; see Chapter 4 section §4.5.3.

- (216) (bóɔ) bɛfandɛ kɔndá bɛlálɔ tátá bɛlɛndálɔ.
 /(bóɔ) bɛ-fandɛ kɔndá bɛ-lálɔ tátá bɛ-lɛndálɔ/
 (no) 8-two add 8-three COP.NEG 8-six
 ‘Non, deux plus trois ne font pas six.’
 ‘No, two plus three doesn’t equal six.’ [PM 784]

Now we have seen that *á* COP is used for identificational/specificational copulars in Tunen, we can consider clefts, which I show contain *á* as a copular component, matching the common crosslinguistic pattern of identificational/specificational copular elements in clefts.

5.4.2 Relativisation

The next component of a cleft is a relative clause. Relative clauses are identified in Tunen by (i) a relativiser of form ɔXá , where the shape of X depends on the noun class of the head noun, (ii) H-tone on normally L-toned subject markers, and (iii) dependent-clause tense marking, as visible in the third-degree past tense (PST₃) and in negative clauses. For example, the object relative example in (217) below shows the main clause third-degree past tense marker *ka* followed by the dependent third-degree past tense marker $\downarrow ná$ in the relative clause, as well as high tone on the class 1 subject marker *á* in the relative clause, contrasting with the low-toned main clause first person singular subject marker *mɛ*.

- (217) mɛ ka ámɛ yáyéá íbɛŋɔlɔkɛ yé búsíá síákinɛ ɔyéá á $\downarrow ná$ ɔnd, [...]
 /mɛ ka ámɛ yáyéá ɛ-bɛŋɔlɔkɛ yé búsíá
 SM.1.SG PST3 PRN.1.SG PRN.POSS.1.7 7-car ASSOC.7 14.front
 síákinɛ ɔyéá á $\downarrow ná$ ɔndɔ/
 see.DUR REL.7 SM.1.REL PST3.REL buy
 ‘Moi j’avais vu le premier véhicule qu’il a acheté, [...]’
 ‘I myself saw the first vehicle he bought,’ [...] [PM 1045]

In Tunen clefts, relatives are reduced in the sense of lacking the ɔXá relativiser. While there is no overt relativiser and while non-human noun classes and many TAM contexts have identical marking to main clauses, marking of a relative clause can still be seen by H-tone on underlyingly L-toned subject markers and the use of dependent TAM markers in third-degree past tense and negative contexts. For example, the following example provides evidence for there being a reduced relative in a Tunen cleft, as the third-degree past tense marker must be the dependent

clause form \downarrow *ná* instead of the main clause affirmative form *ka*. This provides evidence for a relative clause environment despite the lack of an overt relativiser.

- (218) \acute{o} $\gamma\acute{o}\nu\acute{\iota}\acute{o}$ $\acute{\iota}k\acute{u}\acute{\iota}\acute{l}\acute{\iota}$ \acute{a} $\epsilon\mu\acute{o}\acute{a}$ $\gamma\acute{e}$ $\{\downarrow n\acute{a}|\ast ka\}$ $b\acute{o}m\acute{o}k\acute{o}$ $m\acute{o}\eta\epsilon\eta\eta\alpha$ $e\acute{e}$?
 $/\acute{o}$ $\gamma\acute{o}\nu\acute{\iota}\acute{o}$ $\epsilon\text{-}k\acute{u}\acute{\iota}\acute{l}\acute{\iota}$ \acute{a} $\epsilon\text{-}\mu\acute{o}\acute{a}$ $\gamma\acute{e}$ $\{^L n\acute{a}|\ast ka\}$ $b\acute{o}m\acute{o}\text{-}aka$
 PREP which 7-time COP 7-dog SM.7 $\{PST3.REL|\ast PST3\}$ bark-DUR
 $m\acute{o}\eta\epsilon\eta\eta\alpha$ $e\acute{e}$ /
 much Q
 ‘A quel moment le chien a-t-il beaucoup aboyé?’
 ‘When did the dog bark a lot?’ [PM, 1255-6]

As non-human noun classes have H-toned subject markers in both dependent and main clauses, and as there is only a visible difference in tense marking in affirmatives in the third-degree past tense, many examples of clefts with \acute{a} are in fact ambiguous between the biclausal or monoclausal analysis. There is likely a change in progress between the biclausal and monoclausal structures, as discussed for different languages in Harris and Campbell (1995). As the Tunen \acute{a} marker is likely in the process of grammaticalising to being a focus marker in a monoclausal construction, the most accurate gloss is debatable. While the presence of \acute{a} may be obscured due to vowel elision, my consultants indicated that there was a \acute{a} underlying even if it was elided on the surface, and therefore I maintain the copular analysis of \acute{a} in the glossing in this chapter and gloss it as COP. I turn now to the different cleft constructions found in Tunen.

5.4.3 Clefts

Clefts are obligatory in Tunen for subject focus (which cannot be focussed in-situ) and are used across all grammatical roles for exhaustive focus. In this section we will see that there are two main forms of cleft in Tunen, a basic cleft (used for subject focus) and a reverse pseudocleft (used for non-subject focus). I argued in section §5.3.1 above that the *VáO* construction that resembles a pseudocleft instead shows monoclausal properties, and therefore do not include it here.

5.4.3.1 Basic cleft

Human animate subjects must be focused with a basic cleft construction, as shown in the schematisation in (219) below.¹⁹

¹⁹At this point, it is unclear whether the primary conditioning factor for the use of a basic cleft is subjecthood or humanness, given that most examples in the data of subjects are either human or

(219) **Basic cleft:** \acute{a} + NP_{FOC} + reduced relative

Example (220) below shows the use of the basic cleft to express subject focus. The identificational/specificational copula \acute{a} is used, followed by the focussed noun phrase *Píél* ‘Pierre’ and then a reduced relative. The reduced relative clause environment is recognisable due to the high tone on the class 1 subject marker \acute{a} , which is low in main clause environments. Clefting the subject is obligatory in this context; leaving the subject in situ is not felicitous (though would be grammatical in athetic context)²⁰ (220b).

(220) Context: ‘Who shut the door?’

a. \acute{a} Píél \acute{a} ná níki kwiyí.

/á Píéle á ná nε-kí kwiyíə/

COP 1.Pierre SM.1.REL PST2 5-door shut

‘C’est [Pierre]_{FOC} qui a fermé la porte.’‘[Pierre]_{FOC} shut the door.’

[EO 273]

b. #Píél a ná níki kwiyí.

/Píéle a ná nε-kí kwiyíə/

1.Pierre SM.1 PST2 5-door shut

Intd.: ‘[Pierre]_{FOC} a fermé la porte.’Intd.: ‘[Pierre]_{FOC} shut the door.’

[EO 277]

Note that fragment answers also require the \acute{a} for subject focus (221), suggesting that they are elided from an underlying cleft structure.

(221) Context: ‘Which politician died?’

*(\acute{a}) Píelə (á ná wə). \acute{a} Píelə á ná wə.

COP Pierre SM.1.REL PST2 die

‘C’était [Pierre]_{FOC} (qui est mort).’‘It was [Pierre]_{FOC} (who died).’

[EO 270-1]

personified animals. The discussion in this chapter should therefore be taken to apply to the prototypical human subject, with the potential role of animacy on cleft structure a question for further research.

²⁰The original fieldnotes for this form kept the H tone on the class 1 subject marker; based on other examples, I report the judgement with the subject marker appearing as in athetic context.

As we will see for other arguments below, focussed XPs in clefts are typically said to have an exhaustive interpretation. This is illustrated for subject focus below with the continuation ‘not another’ in (222) and the confirmation from the speakers of (223) that nobody else could have eaten the rice.²¹

- (222) *mianɔ́á á me ná níki kwiyí, tátá mɔ́nómunó.*
 /mianɔ́á á mé ná ne-ki kwiyí, tátá
 PRN.EMPH.1SG COP SM.1SG.REL PST2 5-door shut NEG.COP
 mɔ́-nómunó/
 1-another
 ‘C’est [moi]_{FOC} qui a fermé la porte, ce n’est pas un autre.’
 ‘It was [me]_{FOC} who shut the door, not someone else.’ [EO 274]

- (223) *á Samuélé a ná ɔ́lésa neak.*
 /á Samuélé á ná ɔ́-lésa néá-aka/
 COP 1.Samuel SM.1.REL PST2 3-rice eat-DUR
 ‘C’est [Samuel]_{FOC} qui a mangé du riz.’ (pas quelqu’un d’autre)
 ‘[Samuel]_{FOC} ate rice.’ (it wasn’t somebody else) [EE + EB 1661]

That being said, the question arises as to how non-exhaustive focus is expressed for subjects in Tunen. One piece of data suggesting that clefted subjects are not necessarily exhaustive is (224), where the marker *á* appears after the exclusive particle *ata* ‘even’ modifying Nancy, in a context where Mary also has a bottle of water.

- (224) Context: ‘Does Maria have a bottle of water?’ (+ BaSIS photo stimulus)
*éé Maliá a báka na mɔ́ndíngə wó mánif, ata *(á) Nansí {tóna} abáka {tóna}*
na mɔ́ndíngə wó mánif.
 /éé Maliá a bá-aka na mu-ndíngə wó ma-nífə atá á
 yes 1.Maria SM.1 be-DUR with 3-bottle ASSOC.3 6-water even FOC
 Nansí tóna a-bá-aka tóna na mu-ndíngə wó ma-nífə/
 1.Nancy also SM.1-be-DUR also with 3-bottle ASSOC.3 6-water
 ‘Oui, Maria a une bouteille d’eau, Nancy a une bouteille d’eau aussi.’
 ‘Yes, Maria has a bottle of water, Nancy also has a bottle of water.’ [JO 2347]

²¹Note that the subject marker in (223) and in a few other examples in this chapter is low-toned, while we would expect a high tone in a relative clause environment. Such low tones could either be indication of the development from a biclausal to a monoclausal structure, or be related to a methodological issue of repeating transcriptions word-for-word, in which case consultants may have simply used the low-toned citation form of the subject marker when repeating the utterance, despite pronouncing it as a high in this context in fluent speech.

It therefore seems that exhaustivity is compatible with a cleft structure and is often understood pragmatically, but strictly speaking the basic cleft is not exhaustive, as it can be used in non-exhaustive contexts such as (224).

5.4.3.2 Reverse pseudo-clefts

Non-subjects can be focused with a reverse pseudo-cleft construction, which takes the form schematised in (225).

- (225) **Reverse pseudo-cleft**
 NP_{FOC} + *á* + reduced relative

This is illustrated below for information focus (226), (227) and corrective focus (228) on the theme object.

- (226) Context: 'What is the man holding in his hand?'
kalɔɔ á mɔndo a ná itíá ɔ mɔkata
 /kalɔɔ á mɔ-ndɔ a ná itíá ɔ mɔ-kata/
 9.carrot COP 1-person hold SM.1 PST2 PREP 3-hand
 'C'est [une carotte]_{FOC} que l'homme tient dans sa main.'
 'The man is holding [a carrot]_{FOC} in his hand.', '[A carrot]_{FOC} is what the man is holding.'
 [JO 1624]

- (227) Context: 'What will you cook today?'
mɔkɔndʒɛ na mɛkɔnéfé á mé ndɔ taleak.
 /mɔkɔndʒɛ na mɛkɔnéfé á mé ^Hndɔ talea-aka/
 6.plantain with 6.pork COP SM.1SG.REL PRS cook-DUR
 'C'est [des plantains et du porc]_{FOC} que je vais cuisiner (aujourd'hui).'
 'I will cook [plantains and pork]_{FOC} today.', 'Plantains and pork are what I will cook today.'
 [PM 1512 (+ JO 1602)]

- (228) *bóɔ, məkɔndʒe na məkɔnéfɛ á mé ndɔ taleaka neɔfɛn.*
 /bɔɔ məkɔndʒe na məkɔnéfɛ á mɛ ^Hndɔ talea-aka neɔfɛn/
 no 6.plantain with 6.pork COP SM.1SG PRS cook-DUR today
 ‘Non, c’est [les plantains et le porc]_{FOC} que je vais préparer aujourd’hui.’ (pas
 d’autres choses)
 ‘No, I will cook [plantains and pork]_{FOC} today.’ ‘No, plantains and pork are
 what I will cook today.’ (and nothing else) [PM 1516]

As the translation of (228) indicates, using a cleft construction suggests an exhaustive interpretation of the nominal, and is therefore more contrastive than the in-situ focus strategy. At this point, we may ask whether the same pattern is found as for subject clefts above, where compatibility with *ata* ‘even’ indicates that the cleft is not inherently exhaustive. We find that human objects modified by *ata* ‘even’ can appear in a cleft, although of a basic cleft structure (229a), while non-human objects modified by *ata* do not take *á* (229b), possibly due to difference in animacy.

- (229) a. *ata *(á) Natanyéle mɛ ná siəkin.*
 /ata á Natanyéle mɛ ná siəkinə/
 even COP 1.Nathaniel SM.1SG PST2 see.APPL
 ‘I even saw [Nathaniel]_{FOC}.’ [PM 2276]
- b. *ata (*á) βɛtafɛna Lídia a ná sɔák.*
 /ata (*á) βɛ-tafɛna Lídia a ná sɔá-aka/
 even COP 8-shoe 1.Lydia SM.1 PST2 wash-DUR
 ‘Lydia a lavé même [des chaussures]_{FOC}.’
 ‘Lydia even washed [the shoes]_{FOC}.’ [PM 2268]

Again then, it seems that the cleft constructions are not inherently exhaustive, although consultants generally interpret them as exhaustive and they are compatible with the exhaustive focus-sensitive particle *ómaná* ‘only’, as seen already in (171), (188).

Reverse pseudo-clefts are not possible for subject focus, showing a subject/non-subject asymmetry (although recall the point made in fn18-19 above about animacy or humanness as a potential alternative factor):

- (230) Context: 'Who shut the door?'

*Píél á á ná níki kwiyí.

/Piɛlə á á ná nɛ-kí kwiyí/
 Pierre COP SM.1.REL PST2 5-door shut

Intd.: 'C'est [Pierre]_{FOC} qui a fermé la porte.'

Intd.: 'It was Pierre who shut the door.'

[EO 276]

However, a reverse pseudocleft rather was found for sub-DP focus on the modifier of a subject (231).

- (231) Q. bɛndɔ bá[↓]néá á [↓]bá ná binək?

/bɛndɔ bá-néá á bá ná binə-aka/
 2.person 2-how.many COP SM.2 PST2 dance-DUR

'Combien de personnes ont dansé?'

'How many people danced?'

[PM 1211]

- A. bɛndɔ báláló á bá ná binək.

/bɛndɔ bá-láló á bá ná binə-aka/
 2.person 2-three COP SM.2 PST2 dance-DUR

'[Trois]_{FOC} personnes ont dansé.'

'[Three]_{FOC} people danced.'

[PM 1214]

Non-arguments pattern with objects in being found without *á* preceding the focused XP in fragments, with the full version in the form of a reverse pseudocleft (232) (see also (234)).

- (232) Context: 'Because he went to die in his home village, they went there to get the body;'

nɛɔféne á bá ná nda faman.

/nɛɔféne á bá ná nda famana/
 today COP SM.2 PST2 PROX arrive.APPL

'C'est [aujourd'hui]_{FOC} qu'on est arrivé avec.'

'It's [today]_{FOC} that they arrived with it.'

[PM 1012]

Non-subject fragments are found without *á* (233), (234), thus differing from subject fragments. The focussed noun phrase cannot be preceded by *á* (233b), contrasting with what we saw for subject fragments. The marker *á* also cannot follow the focussed XP (233c). This suggests that the *á* is the copula part of what in non-elided form is a cleft (rather than acting as a grammaticalised focus marker).

- (233) Context: ‘What is the man holding?’
- a. kalót.
/kalótɔ/
g.carrot
‘[Une carotte]_{FOC}.’
‘[A carrot]_{FOC}.’ [PM 1266]
- b. *á kalót.
/á kalótɔ/
COP g.carrot
Intd.: ‘Une carotte.’
Intd.: ‘A carrot.’ [PM 1267]
- c. *kalót á.
/kalótɔ á/
g.carrot COP
Intd.: ‘[Une carotte]_{FOC}.’
Intd.: ‘[A carrot]_{FOC}.’ [PM 1268]

- (234) Context: ‘Where are the beans?’
ɔ hisíni núúmə (á bilikó bé léá)
/ɔ he-síni núúmə (á be-liko bé léá)/
PREP 19-casserole inside COP 8-bean SM.8 be
‘C’est [dans la cassérole]_{FOC} qu’il y a des haricots.’
‘The beans are [in the pot]_{FOC} (and nowhere else).’ [PM 477]

Again, the translation of example (234) suggests that reverse pseudoclefted non-arguments are typically interpreted as exhaustive.

Finally, in corrective focus contexts, which are argued to be more contrastive types of foci (see e.g. Cruschina 2021; Chapter 2), ex-situ clefting can be used, as seen already in (222) and as further illustrated in (235).

- (235) Context: Someone says incorrectly that you speak Tunen.
bɔɔ, fɛlɛndʒɛ á mé nd(ɔ) ók.
/bɔɔ, fɛlɛndʒɛ á mé ^Hndɔ ókɔ/
no French COP SM.1SG.REL PRS understand
‘Non, c’est [le français]_{FOC} que je comprends.’
‘No, it’s [French]_{FOC} that I understand.’ [PM 93, 94]

We therefore see that clefts can be used for more contrastive focus contexts than information focus, but the canonical word order is still possible for the expression of corrective/contrastive non-subject focus.

Alternatives can be marked explicitly by means of the particle *ɔbanɔ* ‘rather’ and/or by directly naming the incorrect argument.

- (236) *bɔɔ, tátá mɔndɔ ɔwá ɛŋɔŋɔ á ná wə, á Acteur {ɔban} a ná wə {ɔban}.*
 /bɔɔ tátá mɔ-ndɔ ɔwá ɛ-ŋɔŋɔ á ná wə á
 no NEG.COP 1-person REL.1 7-politics SM.1.REL PST2 die COP
 Acteur {ɔbanɔ} á ná wə {ɔbanɔ}/
 1.Acteur rather SM.1.REL PST2 die rather
 ‘Non, ce n’est pas le politicien qui est mort, c’est plutôt Acteur.’
 ‘No, it wasn’t a politician who died, it was actually Acteur.’ [EE+GE+PB 2716]

- (237) *mé ndɔ Fɛlɛndʒ(ɛ) ók, mba tátá *(á) Túnən.*
 /mɛ ^Hndɔ fɛlɛndʒɛ ók, mba tátá *(á) tunəni/
 SM.1SG PRS French understand, but NEG.COP *(FOC) Tunen
 ‘Je comprends le français, mais pas le tunen.’
 ‘I understand French, but not Tunen.’ [PM 92]

- (238) Context: ‘Lots of animals passed on the bridge.’
bɔɔ, tátá menyama, á yé ná tɔmbak, (mba) bibəŋuluəkə.
 /bɔɔ tata menyama á yé na tɔmba-aka mba
 no NEG.COP animal COP SM.7.REL PST2 pass-DUR but
 bɛ-bəŋuluəkə/
 8-vehicle
 ‘Non, ce n’est pas des animaux qui sont passés, ce sont des véhicules.’
 ‘No, it wasn’t animals that passed, it was vehicles.’ [PM 1579]

5.4.4 Section summary

In summary, there are two types of cleft construction available for focus expression in Tunen, the basic cleft (*á* NP Rel) and the reverse pseudocleft (NP *á* Rel). Both constructions show indications of biclausality through the presence of a focussed phrase, a copula, and a reduced relative clause, the latter being identifiable through relative clause subject marker and TAM forms. These cleft constructions

are used for more contrastive foci types and are generally interpreted as exhaustive, but appear to not be inherently exhaustive, as they are compatible with the exclusive focus marker *ata* ‘even’. Interestingly, no pseudocleft strategy was found, with the *VáO* construction shown in section 3.1.1 above to have monoclausal properties, likely due to grammaticalisation from an earlier biclausal cleft construction. Complexities related to identification of clefts are the ambiguity of many subject marker and TAM contexts with respect to main clause versus relative clause marking and the regular vowel elision rule in Tunen, which may lead to elision of the *á* copula.

5.5 Left-peripheral topics (\emptyset , ɔ , *aba/áká*)

As is common crosslinguistically (see e.g. Gundel 1988), Tunen topical constituents can appear in a left-peripheral position. In these cases, there are three strategies for topic expression: (i) zero-marking (i.e., fronting the topic without morphological marking), (ii) marking by the preposition ɔ , and (iii) marking by *aba/áká*, which elsewhere function as the conditional marker ‘if’. This section will go through each strategy in turn. Note that while left-peripheral topics is one common strategy for expressing topics, topics may also be left in-situ and do not need to be fronted. These in-situ topics do not appear with any topic marking.

5.5.1 Zero-marking

A topical constituent can be fronted without any marking, as shown in (239) and (240) below for an aboutness topic.

- (239) **kíŋgə**, a ka nyɔkɔ naánekoɔ.
 /kíŋgə a ka nyɔ-aka naánekoɔ/
 1.chief SM.1 PST3 work-DUR yesterday
 ‘Le chef, il a travaillé hier.’
 ‘The chief, he worked yesterday.’ [JO 2625]

- (240) **Nɔ́a**, yé ndɔ kea ɔwá á ndɔ náá.
 /Nɔ́a yé ^Hndɔ kéá ɔwá a ^Hndɔ náá/
 Noah SM.7 PRES do REL.1 SM.1 PRS be_sick
 ‘Quant à Noah, il semble qu’il est malade.’
 ‘As for Noah, it seems that he is sick.’ [JO 1306]

When objects are topicalised and prosodically separated from the main clause by a pause, resumption in the main clause is not required, as shown by the lack of object indexation in (241). The ability for zero indexation of objects will be covered in more detail in section §5.7 below.

- (241) **miimə**, mɔndɔ á ↓ná katák.
 /miimə mɔ-ndɔ á ^Lná katá-aka/
 3.house 1-person SM.1.REL PST3.REL destroy-DUR
 ‘La maison, c’est quelqu’un qui l’a détruite.’
 ‘The house, it’s somebody who destroyed it.’ [EB+JO 2692]

It is often unclear as to whether a topical subject is fronted or left in-situ, as the canonical position of subjects is sentence-initial (S-Aux-O-V-X), which is linearly equivalent to the position they appear in if fronted to a left-peripheral position. For example, in (242) below, the referent of peanuts is a topic in that it is visibly present and has been previously mentioned in the discourse, and serves as the topic to which the comment of having cooled applies, but the word order is the same as what we saw for thetics in (162) above.

- (242) Context: JO has shown how to dry peanuts in order to prepare the *kok* dish.
tɔmbaŋa tú nú huhək.
 /tɔ-mbaŋa tó ná huhə-aka/
 13-peanut SM.13 PST2 cool-DUR
 ‘Les arachides se sont refroidies.’
 ‘The peanuts have cooled.’ [JO 1358]

When studying the Dugast (1975) texts, it can be seen that topical subjects are frequently transcribed as ending with a glottal stop ʔ, which reflects a prosodic break and therefore can be taken as evidence for a left-dislocated topic (as pointed out in Isaac 2007:59). An example is given in (243) below (I have adapted glosses for consistency). The Dugast data differ systematically from my own field data in not having subject indexation of non-dislocated topics, i.e., in lacking a subject marker when the topic is not dislocated.²²

²² As no recordings are available for Dugast’s data, dislocation is only evidenced by her ʔ notation, and commas, when they are used. Isaac (2007) considers the lack of subject marker to be evidence for a non-dislocated topic, but this argument is used somewhat circularly in the absence of any indication of prosody in Dugast’s transcriptions. As all my consultants consistently use subject markers

- (243) **wəbúə mon òwá ba na-ba ba ndò-hikiəʔ, à nə-wə**
 PRN.POSS.2.1 1.child REL.1 SM.2 PST2-be SM.2 PRS-like SM.1 PST2-die
 ton.
 also
 ‘et leur enfant, celui qu’ils aimaient, mourut aussi.’
 ‘Their child that they liked, he died also.’
 (Dugast 1975:394-395; Isaac 2007:165)

Turning now to obliques, while the neutral word order in Tunen is S-Aux-O-V-X, where X stands for other elements, including time adverbials and prepositional phrases, such items can also be fronted when they function as scene-setting topics, where the topical constituent is thus not an argument of the verb (Lambrecht 1994). This is often found for time adverbials in natural speech. Compare the elicited example with S-Aux-O-V-X order in (244) below and the natural speech example with a fronted time adverbial in (245).

- (244) **mé ndɔ Biólə sin isiŋak.**
 /mɛ ^Hndɔ Biéle sinə **eséájáka**/
 SM.1SG PRS 1.Pierre see now
 ‘Je vois Pierre maintenant.’
 ‘I see Pierre now.’ [EO 1412]
- (245) Context: Instructional video where JO is demonstrating how to cook the dish *kok* [*hɛkɔkɛ* leaves boiled with smoked fish and ground peanuts].
eséájáka mé hɛkɔkɛ sɔ́áka.
 /**eséájáka** mɛ =^H hɛ-kɔkɛ sɔ́á-aka/
 now SM.1SG PROC 1g-kok wash-DUR
 ‘Maintenant, je lave le *kok*.’
 ‘Now, I wash the *kok*.’ [JO 1343]

The following examples show fronted time adverbials or PPs indicating a switch between events (246) and to set the scene at the beginning of a story (247).

regardless of whether the topic is dislocated, there appears to have been a syntactic change in the time since Dugast with regards to the relation of clause-external topics and subject indexation. I will come back to this in Chapter 8 section §8.4.2 in the context of drawing up an analysis of Tunen subjects.

- (246) Context: ‘The hawk waited and waited and waited, but he didn’t see the cockroach, and his child died.’

hilóbi hé ná wéeya iti, **isiṅáka** ɔndʒelé a n(á) ákan ase : [...]
 /hɛ-lóbi hé ná wéeya itíá **eséáṅáka** ɔ-ndʒelé a ná
 19-anger SM.19 PST2 PRN.EMPH.1 hold now 3-lizard SM.1 PST2
 akána a-séá [...]/
 leave SM.1-say [...]

‘Il s’est mis en colère, maintenant le lézard est parti, il dit : [...]’
 ‘He became enraged, and now the lizard came by, and said: [...]’ [JO 2063]

- (247) Context: Start of the story *The Chicken and the Partridge*.

ɔ **híté[↓]yí** hiɔŋɔ, məhuə má sa bá mas.
 /ɔ **híté[↓]yí** hɛ-ɔŋɔ ma-huə ma sa bá ma-ese/
 PREP DEM.DISC.EMPH.19 19-year 6-harvest SM.6 NEG be 6-good

‘Cette année, la récolte n’était pas bonne.’

‘This year, the harvest wasn’t good.’ [JO 1744]

Example (247) is zero-marking in the sense of having no additional morphological/phonological marking compared to the form in the canonical word order, although it shares the property of being introduced by the preposition ɔ as the examples to be discussed in the next subsection.

5.5.2 ɔ

Fronted topics are often marked by the general preposition ɔ PREP (Chapter 4 section §4.3.10). The following example comes from a dialogue task based on asking each other questions about their preferences. EO first fronts the time adverbial *isiṅáka* ‘now’ to shift the topic from the previous question and then introduces the topic of food by using the preposition ɔ (248).

For the next example (249), the speaker said the ɔ preposition was good in the discourse context in which the food has already been mentioned and that omitting it would mean that it has not been mentioned, suggesting that the preposition marks an aboutness topic.

- (248) isinjáka, ɔ belábónéá ɔné, áká mesea mé aɣj́á éléákén, yaté ebáka ɔ aɣj́á hikəki, makɔndʒe alé(á) kón ?

/eséanj́aka, ɔ be-lábónéá ɔ-né áká me-séá mé
 now PREP 8-food INF-eat if SM.1SG-say SM.1SG.COND
 aɣj́á éléákéna yaté e-bá-aka ɔ aɣj́á hikəkiə
 PRN.2SG invite what SM.7-be-DUR SM.2SG PRN.2SG like
 ma-kɔndʒe aléá kóni/
 6-plantain or rather rice

'Maintenant, à propos de la nourriture, si je veux t'inviter, qu'est-ce que tu aimerais, les plantains ou bien le riz ?'

'Now, with regards to food, if I were to invite you round, what would you like, plantains or rice?' [EO 966]

- (249) Context: 'Why did they cook this food here?'

#(ɔ) béε(βε) belábónéá béεβε, bá ná taléáká elóáyé eɣganda ye Béseka.

/#(ɔ) béε(βε) be-lábónéá béεβε bá ná taléá-aka elóáyé
 PREP DEM.PROX.8 8-food DEM.PROX.8 SM.2 PST2 cook-DUR for
 e-ɣganda ye béseka/
 9-holiday ASSOC.9 Easter

'(Quant à cette nourriture-ci,) ils l'ont préparée pour la fête de Pâques.'

'(As for this food here,) they cooked it for Easter.' [PM 508]

5.5.3 *aba/áká*

A limited number of examples had *ábá* or *áká* as a marker preceding a left-peripheral aboutness/shift topic, which function elsewhere as the conditional marker 'if' and the related temporal marker 'when' (Dugast 1971:211-2).²³ In the elicited example below, JO first gave the answer with *ábá*, and then rejected the same sentence with *ɔ* in place of *ábá*.

- (250) {*ábá*|*ɔ} eɣganda ye buwá, yé sá bá yes.

/ {*ábá*|*ɔ} e-ɣganda ye bu-wó ye sá bá ye-ese/
 {if|*PREP} 9-celebration ASSOC.9 14-death SM.9 NEG be 9-good

'Quant à la fête de deuil, elle n'était pas bonne.'

'As for the funeral, it was not good.' [JO 1648-9]

²³Note also *ébe* 'si, dans le cas où' ['if, in the case where'], which Dugast (1971:213) lists as an alternative for *aba* (although she does not discuss whether it can be used in the same topic-marking function).

Directly after the above elicitation in the same session, JO first accepted the following sentence with *ɔ* alone and then suggested it with *ábá* preceding *ɔ*, thus combining the two strategies (251). At this point, the data are insufficient to be able to account for why both variants were accepted for (251) but not for (250).

- (251) {*ɔ|ábá*} béεβε belabéné bá ná taléáká elóáyé εηγanda ye básek.
 /{*ɔ|ábá*} béεβε bε-labénéá bá ná taléá-aka elóáyé
 PREP DEM.PROX.8 8-food SM.2 PST2 cook-DUR for
 ε-ηγanda ye Báseka/
 9-celebration ASSOC.9 Easter
 ‘Quant à cette nourriture, on l’a préparée pour la fête de Pâques.’ / ‘Si c’est
 pour cette nourriture, on l’a préparé pour la fête de Pâques.’
 ‘As for this food, they cooked it for Easter.’ [JO 1650-1]

The use of a conditional marker for topics was also found in natural dialogue by other speakers. In the first example below, the marker *áká*, another form for ‘if’ (Dugast 1971:212),²⁴ is first used before the speaker restarts using the prepositional strategy. In the second example, the speaker uses *ábá* ‘if’ with a prosodic break before the nominal (resulting in lowering of the final H tone via the utterance-final tone reduction; Chapter 4 section §4.2.7).

- (252) Context: EE describes how the harvests differed between crops cultivated by women and crops cultivated by men.
Ák(á) elóáyé ɔ ... ɔ ... ɔtómákεna ɔ bε ... belɔηtέ bé balémendó, bé sá áyé wúu(wu) ɔyáá háá;
 /áká elóáyé ɔ ɔ ɔ-tómá-aka-εna ɔ bε bε-lɔηtέ
 if for PREP PREP INF-pass-DUR-REP PREP 8 8-production
 bé ba-lémendó bé sá áyé wúuwu ɔyáá
 ASSOC.8 2-man SM.8 NEG PRN.1 DEM.PROX.? ?
 háaha/
 DEM.PROX.LOC
 ‘Si on parle des... des... des cultures des hommes, il n’y a pas eu de la production cette fois-ci.’
 ‘If it’s for... for... as for the... the mens’ crops, there wasn’t the production this time round.’ [EE 1700]

²⁴Dugast (1971:212, 318) transcribes what appears to be the same marker as *éke*, translated as ‘si, quand’ [‘if, when’].

- (253) Context: PB and PM are discussing how they were impacted by the heavy rains that morning.

ába, ɔwáme yé ná ká sóalátáken.

/ábá ɔ-áme yé ná ka sóalátákɛna/

if PREP-PRN.1 SM.7 PST2 AND whip.DUR.REP

‘C’est moi que ça a fouetté.’

‘It’s me who got whipped by it.’

[PM 1784]

Compare these topical examples to the conditional example in (254) below, where *ába* marks the conditional protasis.

- (254) **ába** Yohánase a ná esasoma néák, á ndɔ náák.

/ábá Yohánese a ná ɛ-sasoma néá-aka a ^Hndɔ náá-aka/

if 1.Johannes SM.1 PST2 7-cassava eat-DUR SM.1 PRS be_sick-DUR

‘Si Johannes va manger du manioc, il va tomber malade.’

‘If Johannes eats cassava, he will get sick.’

[PM 2288]

This use of the same strategy to mark conditionals and topics has been found in many signed and spoken languages (Haiman 1978; Traugott 1985; Janzen 1999, i.a.) with Haiman (1978) arguing that there is an inherent link between conditionality and topicality. Traugott (1985:292) notes that markers of givenness are one of five sources of conditional markers crosslinguistically, with examples including Sanskrit *yád* ‘topic, conditional’ and Indonesian *kalua* ‘if, as for’. This analysis would suggest that the topic marker use in Tunen predates the use as a conditional marker. I leave this for further research and retain the gloss ‘if’ in this chapter without committing to ‘if’ as the basic or original meaning.

5.5.4 Multiple topics

Multiple topic expressions can appear in the left periphery. We already saw in (248) that a frame-setting time adverbial can co-occur with a nominal topic. Another type of multiple topic expression is illustrated in the natural speech example from (255) below.

- (255) *á mǒŋgolo maté¹té, ɔ máama mǎsúó mǒŋgolo má háaha ɔ bɔŋɔŋɔ, ɔmá abáka tɔ siákinə háaha (ɔ) uwəsú bɔnɔŋɔ bɔ Kəməlún, ɛbáka ɔ maáta hikəkiə?*

/á ma-óŋgolo ma-té¹téá ɔ máama mǎsúó
 PREP 6-mango 6-small PREP DEM.PROX.6 PRN.POSS.1PL.6
ma-óŋgolo má háaha ɔ bɔ-ŋɔŋɔ, ɔmá a-bá-aka
 6-mango ASSOC.6 here PREP 14-country REL.6 SM.1-be-DUR
tɔ siákinə háaha ɔ uwəsú bɔ-nɔŋɔ bɔ
 SM.1PL see here PREP PRN.POSS.1PL.14 14.country ASSOC.14
kəməlúnə ɛ-bá-aka ɔ maáta hikəkiə/
 Cameroon SM.7-be-DUR SM.2SG PRN.OBJ.6 like

‘Les petites mangues, nos petites mangues-ci du pays ici au Cameroun, tu les aimes ?’

‘As for small mangoes, the small mangoes we get here in Cameroon, do you like them?’ [PM 950]

Here, we see multiple nominal topic expressions stacked in the clausal left periphery. Matching the pattern found in other languages (see e.g. Paul and Whitman 2017; Van der Wal et al. to appear; Van der Wal to appear), the first topic phrase (small mangoes) is a superset of the second phrase (the small mangoes we get here in Cameroon), showing a progressive narrowing down of the topic to which the comment relates.

5.5.5 Contrastive topics

Unlike other Bantu languages like Rukiga (Asiimwe and van der Wal to appear), contrastive topics generally have no special marking in Tunen, neither for subjects nor objects. While the second topic may be optionally fronted, as indicated by the comma notation in (256), we see in (257) and (258) that no marking is required, with the same S-Aux-O-V(-X) canonical word order used as in an all-newthetic context.

- (256) mé ndɔ manya ɔwá Matéŋe a ka hiəfulə fanak, mba(,) Sēsilia(,) mē lé ndɔ many.

/mε ^Hndɔ manya ɔwá Matéŋe a ka hε-əfulə fana-aka mba
SM.1SG PRS know REL.1 Martin SM.1 PST3 19-book read-DUR but

Sēsilia mē lε ^Hndɔ manya/
Cecile SM.1SG NEG PRS know

'Je sais que Martin a lu le livre, mais quant à Cecile, je ne sais pas.'

'I know that Martin has read the book, but I don't know about Cecile.'

[JO 907]

- (257) Context: You are a teacher explaining to the parents of the students Emanuel and David how each child did in their exams.

Emánúélé a ná tómbá, Tówiti a ná kɔ.

/1.Emanuélé a ná tómbá 1.Tówiti a ná kɔa/
Emmanuel SM.1 PST2 pass David SM.1 PST2 fail

'Emmanuel a réussi, David a échoué.'

'Emmanuel passed, David failed.'

[JO 533]

- (258) 'What did the woman hold? What did the man hold?' (+ QUIS picture stimulus)

'What happened?' (+ QUIS picture stimulus)

mɔndɔ a ná hióɔ itíó. muəndú a ná ɔmbána itíó.

/mɔ-ndɔ a ná hε-óɔ itíó mɔ-əndú a ná ɔ-mbána itíó/
1-person SM.1 PST2 19-spoon hold 1-woman SM.1 PST2 3-knife hold

'L'homme tient une cuillère. La femme tient un couteau.'

'The man held a spoon. The woman held a knife.'

[JO 629]

These data can be taken to evidence the lack of morphosyntactic marking sensitive to a feature [+contrast] that covers both topic and focus (cf. Chapter 2 section 2.2.5).

5.6 Functional passives (verbal participle *-átɔ*; *bá-* impersonals)

Passives are a common cross-linguistic strategy used to restructure the information in a way that demotes the agent. While many Bantu languages have a passive morpheme cognate with Proto-Bantu **-u/ibu* (Stappers 1967; Schadeberg 2003a:78-79;

Guérais to appear), Tunen does not have any verbal marker of the passive, a property it shares with other North-Western Bantu languages (see also Li to appear *a*, *b* for the lack of a passive morpheme in Teke-Kukuya [B77]). Sentences that may be passivised in other languages are often given as active sentences in Tunen. In active sentences, the agent must be expressed as the syntactic subject. However, if the speaker does not want to express the agent or the agent is unknown, there are two options which perform as functional equivalents of a passive construction: (i) the use of the verbal participle *-átɔ* in combination with the copular verb, and (ii) an impersonal construction with the class 2 subject marker *bá-*.

5.6.1 Verbal participles *-átɔ*

A copular construction with a verbal participle marked by the ending *-átɔ* can be used in order to avoid expressing the agent. The *-átɔ* form is analysed by Dugast (1971:362) as a verbal adjective and by Mous (2003) as an adverb used as the complement of a copula to describe a resultant state, quality, or capacity. In my data, I gloss *-átɔ* as PTCP for ‘participle’, as discussed in Chapter 4 section §4.4.3. The participle follows either the *ɛ* or *bá* copula (Dugast 1971:362), as illustrated in (259).

- (259) a. *hinyí hé ɛ sómbátɔ.*
 /*hɛ-nyí hé léá sómba-átɔ*/
 19-firewood SM.19 be cut-PTCP
 ‘Le bois de chauffage est coupé.’
 ‘The firewood is cut.’ [EE+EB 1671]
- b. *bote báka titákáto.*
 /*bɔ-tɛ bá-aka titá-aka-átɔ*/
 14-savannah be-DUR burn-DUR-PTCP
 ‘La savanne est brûlée.’
 ‘The savannah is burned.’ (Dugast 1971:362, adapted)

An agent cannot be expressed using the comitative marker *na* ‘with’ in this construction, in contrast to other Bantu languages that allow agent expression with *na* in passives, such as Rukiga (Asiimwe and van der Wal to appear), Makhuwa (Van der Wal to appear) and Swahili and Shona (Fleisch 2005). When a *na*-phrase was added to (259a), it was interpreted as a discontinuous continuation of the theme object rather than as the agent (260).

- (260) #hinyí hé lé sómbátɔ na Susan.
 hɛ-nyí hɛ lé sómba-átɔ na Susána
 19-firewood SM.19 be cut-PTCP with 1.Susan
 Intd.: 'Le bois de chauffage était coupé par Susanne.'
 'Le bois de chauffage et Susanne étaient coupés.'
 Intd.: 'The firewood was cut by Susanne.'
 'The firewood and Susanne were cut.' [EE+EB 1673]

- (261) Context: 'What wounded the hunter?'
 *a lé tanákátɔ na mɔndɔ.
 /a lé tanáká-átɔ na mɔ-ndɔ/
 SM.1 be wound.DUR-PTCP with 1-person
 Intd.: 'Il était blessé par l'homme.'
 Intd.: He was wounded by a man.' [JO 1615]

The participle *-átɔ* construction is therefore used when the agent is not expressed, and so constitutes a functional equivalent to the passive.

5.6.2 Impersonal *bá-*

If the agent is not known, an impersonal construction can also be used (Mous 2008). This construction is formed with the class 2 subject marker *bá*, which does not agree with any referent in the discourse. Such *bá*-impersonals are found in many other Bantu languages and are commonly referred to in the Bantu literature as *ba*-passives (see e.g. Fleisch 2005, Asiimwe and van der Wal to appear, Li to appear *a*; and Taylor 1999, the latter of whom shows *bá*-passives in the neighbouring Bantu language Nomaande (A46)).

- (262) Context: QUIS picture stimulus. EK asks the Tunen question "yaté yé ná bétómbáká eé?" ("What happened?")
 bá ná mɔná lúmé na mɔk əlim.
 /bá ná mɔ-ná lúmé na mɔkɔ əlimə/
 SM.2 PST2 1-child throw with 3.stone behind
 'On a lancé une pierre à l'enfant par derrière.'
 'Someone threw a stone at the child from behind.' [EO 439]

- (263) Context: EO is reporting a conversation he had with PM on the phone, telling PM that he is standing in front of the shop where car oil is sold so that PM can find him. ‘I’m here, where they sell crude oil,’
 ... ɔhá bá ndɔ moló má má tɔ́á sɛm.
 /[...] ɔhá bá ^Hndɔ moló má ma-tɔ́á sɛma/
 ... REL.LOC SM.2 PRS 6.oil ASSOC.6 6-car sell
 ‘...où on vend les carburants pour les voitures.’
 ‘...where they sell oil for cars.’ [EO 1029]

- (264) bá ná hinyí sɔmb.
 /bá ná hɛ-nyi sómba/
 SM.2 PST2 19-firewood cut
 ‘On a coupé le bois de chauffage.’
 ‘The firewood has been cut.’ [EE+EB 1672]

As with the participle construction, expression of the agent with *na* ‘with’ is not allowed in the *bá-* construction in Tunen (again a point of crosslinguistic variation; Fleisch 2005).

- (265) *bá ná hinyí sɔmb na Susan.
 /bá ná hɛ-nyi sómba na Susána/
 SM.2 PST2 19-firewood cut with 1.Susan
 Intd.: ‘Le bois du chauffage était coupé par Susanne.’
 Intd.: ‘The firewood was cut by Susanne.’ [EE+EB 1674]

We therefore see that Tunen has two constructions that can be used for the demotion of the agent: the *-átɔ* participle form and the *bá-* impersonal construction. Bantu languages are known to vary as to whether and how the agent is expressed in a passive construction (Fleisch 2005). In Tunen, agent expression is not possible.

5.6.3 The middle prefix *bé-*

Finally, note that Tunen has a prefix *bé-* which Dugast (1971) treats as a passive and reflexive marker. Mous (2008) gives a detailed discussion of this marker, arguing that it is in fact a middle prefix, suggesting an etymology of a first person plural pronoun and noting a cognate form in other A40/A60 languages of Cameroon. In Chapter 6, I will analyse it as the spell-out of a Voice head within the clausal spine.

This middle prefix shows some functional overlap with the *bá*- impersonal construction, as seen in (266) below.²⁵

- (266) a. a-ná b^é-tórjona meko.
 SM.1-PST2 MID-transform 9.leopard
 ‘He transformed into a leopard.’
- b. bá-ná mondo tórjóná meko
 SM.2-PST2 1.man transform 9.leopard
 ‘They transformed the man into a leopard. (Mous 2008:310, adapted)

The overlap between these construction is to be expected considering the cross-linguistic overlap in middle/neutro-passives and passives (Guérois to appear). The interested reader can find more detail about the specific contexts of use of the *bé*-prefix in Mous (2008).

5.7 Referent expression in discourse

This section will show how the form of nominals in Tunen varies dependent on its information-structural status in the discourse. Referent expression across languages varies dependent on givenness/activation status, i.e., the cognitive notion of how accessible the referent is at a particular point of discourse, as affected by factors such as recency of mention and number of intervening referent expressions (Gundel et al. 1993; Ariel 2001; Chapter 2 section §2.2). As discussed in Chapter 2, the general pattern is that more accessible referents are referred to with less linguistic encoding. As noted in previous work by Isaac (2007), Tunen follows this general pattern, with full noun phrases (DPs) typically used to introduce new discourse referents, after which less material is used. The full scale of options for referent expression in discourse in Tunen is shown in (267) below, ordered from least to most linguistic encoding.

(267) Tunen referent expression hierarchy

Zero/null > verbal marker > modifier only > non-emphatic pronoun > emphatic pronoun > demonstrative > full DP > compound DP > modified DP

²⁵Note that the *bé*- prefix is transcribed as *bé*- in Mous’s (2003) orthography (cf. Chapter 4 section §4.2 on orthographical differences between sources).

The following extract from a story shows how after a subject is referred to with a compound DP (*muití émbóma* ‘owner of the field’), it can then be referred to using the verbal subject marker only, that is the same noun class (class 1 SM *a-*).

- (268) a. **muit(i) émbóma a ná wéeya halén.**
 /mɔ-iti^H=ε-**mbóma a ná wéeya haléna/**
 1-owner ASSOC=7-field SM.1 PST2 PRN.1 catch
 ‘Le propriétaire du champ l’a arrêté.’
 ‘The owner of the field caught her.’ [JO 1765]
- b. **a ná wéeya ákanána ɔ wáayé ɔmbél.**
 /a ná wéeya ákánána ɔ wáayé ɔmbéla/
 SM.1 PST2 PRN.1 leave.APPL PREP PRN.POSS.1.3 3.house
 ‘Il l’a amené dans sa maison.’
 ‘He took her into his house.’ [JO 1766]

While subjects are always expressed by a verbal subject marker (SM) in Tunen, objects can be zero-expressed, i.e., dropped. Unlike most Bantu languages, Tunen does not have any object marker (OM) slot on the verb (Chapter 4 section §4.4.2), so there is no available object marker strategy. Again, this is a property common to North-Western Bantu languages that sets Tunen apart from Eastern and Southern Bantu languages (Polak 1986, Van der Wal 2022:69-70) and shows overlap with Grassfields Bantu (Bantoid) languages.

Object expression in Tunen varies dependent on givenness. When an object is first mentioned, a full/compound/modified DP is used. When the object is given (i.e., retrievable from the discourse context), it is often null, as in the example below where the object *bεɔnɔ* ‘eggs’ is first introduced with a DP and then dropped in the next clause, as indicated by ‘∅’.²⁶

- (269) a **bεɔnɔ neakak, béndɔ bá neak.**
 /a **bε-ɔnɔ neaka-aka ba-ndɔ bá ∅ néá-aka/**
 SM.1 8-egg make-DUR 2-person SM.2 8.OBJ eat-DUR
 ‘Elle pond des œufs; les hommes les mangent.’
 ‘She lays eggs; people eat them.’ [JO 1769]

²⁶The ability for objects to be unexpressed in Tunen raises questions about the transitivity of verbs like *néá* ‘eat’ in Tunen. An alternative analysis would be to say that these verbs have homophonous intransitive forms, in which case the object would not properly be considered to be “dropped” as it is not required in the verb’s lexical entry. In this chapter, I use “zero expression” and “dropped” to mean

Dropping given objects like this is very common. An example is provided in the dialogue below, where speaker PM introduces the referent *ibuɲuluəkə* ‘car’ and speaker EO uses zero-expression (270). The example set in (271) from a monologue instructional video shows the same zero-expression of an object when it is given, with the full DP being used at the end again (271e), where the need for re-activation can be considered in terms of both linguistic and temporal distance from the last explicit mention (the latter indicated by the timestamp next to each example). Note that the highly-accessible first-person singular subject is consistently referred to with a subject marker, which is the minimal means to express Tunen subjects.

(270) Context: PM and EO perform the QUIS map task (PM describes the route marked on a map to EO).

- a. məkátá wó bénóme wúbúsíá **ibuɲuluəkə** yé nda báká háha ɔ matá.
 /mɔ-kátá wó bénóme wó busíá ɛ-buɲuluəkə yé nda
 3-hand ASSOC.3 8.right ASSOC.3 front 7-car SM.7 VEN
 bá-aka háaha ɔ matá/
 be-DUR DEM.PROX.LOC PREP bottom
 ‘Il y a un véhicule en bas au premier embranchement à droite.’
 ‘There’s a car at the bottom of the first road on the right.’ [PM 671]
- b. éé, mé ndɔ sin.
 /éé mɛ ^Hndɔ Ø sinə/
 yes SM.1SG PRS OBJ.7 see
 ‘Oui, je le vois.’
 ‘Yes, I see it.’ [EO 672]

(271) Context: JO demonstrates how to prepare the dish *kɔk* [*hekɔke* leaves boiled with smoked fish and ground peanuts].

- a. eséájáka mé hekɔke sájáka
 /eséájáka mɛ =^H hɛ-kɔke sá-aka/
 now SM.1SG PROC 19-kok wash-DUR
 ‘Maintenant, je lave le kok.’
 ‘Now, I wash the kok.’ [JO 1343]; 00:00:38

that there is no object expression with a predicate that in non-given contexts takes an object.

- b. μέ ηεκəκε σάακα
 /mε =^H ηε-κəκε σάά-aka/
 SM.1SG PROC 19-kok wash-DUR
 'Je lave le kok.'
 'I wash the kok.' [JO 1344]; 00:00:58
- c. με ná ηάά ɔ ɔσɔα
 /mε ná ηάά ɔ ɔ-σάά/
 SM.1SG PST2 finish PREP INF-wash
 'J'ai fini de laver.'
 'I've finished washing (it).' [JO 1345]; 00:01:34
- d. μέ əmbə́kínə ɔ moló
 /mε =^H əmbə́kínə ɔ moló/
 SM.1SG PROC throw.REP PREP 6.oil
 'Je (le) lance dans l'huile.'
 'I'm throwing (it) into the oil.' [JO 1346]; 00:01:38
- e. με ná ηεκəκε əmbínə ɔ moló
 /mε ná ηε-κəκε əmbínə ɔ moló/
 SM.1SG PST2 19-kok throw PREP 6.oil
 'J'ai lancé le kok dans l'huile.'
 'I've thrown the kok into the oil.' [JO 1347]; 00:03:19

While this strategy of zero-expression of given objects is common, it is not possible when the verb has an applicative extension, in which case overt expression of the object (by DP or pronoun) is syntactically required. Example (272) below shows that it is not grammatical to have an unexpressed recipient object with an applicativised verb form.

- (272) yaté Malía á ná {láá|*léná} eé?
 /yaté Malía á ná {láá|*léná} eé/
 what 1.Maria SM.1 PST2 {say|say.APPL} Q
 Intd.: 'Qu'est-ce que Maria a dit ?'
 Intd.: 'What did Maria say?' [JO 2448-9]

The consequence of the applicative's valency requirement means that pronominal expression is fairly frequent for recipient objects in the corpus, as the standard way of reporting speech in a story uses an applicative form of the verb 'say' (followed by the complementiser formed from -séá 'say'), which requires either a pronoun or lexical DP subject.

- (273) ɔndʒelé a ná wéeya léna ase : ...
 /ɔ-ndʒelé a ná wéeya léna a-séá [...]/
 3-lizard SM.1 PST2 PRN.1 say.APPL SM.1-say [...]
 ‘Le lézard lui a dit : [...]’
 ‘The lizard told him: [...]’ [JO 2068]
- (274) Yésusu a ná bəəbu léna a séá : [...]
 /Yésusu a ná bəəbu léna a-séá [...] /
 1.Jesus SM.1 PST2 PRN.2 say.APPL SM.1-say [...]
 ‘Jésus leur a dit : [...]’
 ‘Jesus said to them: [...]’ (Luke 9.52; CABTAL 2019:159)

This finding is significant as it challenges the previous classifications of Tunen’s pronominal system, in which different pronominal forms are analysed as varying in degree of a loosely-defined notion of ‘emphasis’ (Dugast 1971:128-30, Isaac 2007:49-51; Chapter 4 section §4.3.8). The possible confound of the applicative verb form on pronoun use is a topic worth more detailed investigation, in order to better understand the extent to which pronoun form and frequency reflects referent accessibility rather than confounding factors such as valency requirements of the verb.

In summary then, Tunen referent expression follows crosslinguistic tendencies to use less material to refer to given/accessible referents (Gundel et al. 1993; Ariel 2001), with full noun phrases used to introduce discourse referents (Isaac 2007). Compared to other Bantu languages, Tunen is typical in its use of verbal subject markers without a lexical DP for given subjects, but unusual in lacking object markers and therefore having frequent zero-reference for objects. Pronouns can be used and are often found to meet valency requirements when the verb has an applicative extension, suggesting a confound that could be investigated further. For our current purposes, we see that Tunen referent expression follows crosslinguistic tendencies to use more linguistic material to encode less accessible discourse referents.

5.8 Comparison to other Bantu languages

Before concluding, I will reflect briefly on how Tunen compares to other Bantu languages in its expression of IS, as a first reflection on how the empirical findings seen in this chapter relate to the central research question of this thesis (to be further discussed in Chapter 8).

We have seen in this chapter that Tunen is unusual for a Bantu language in the following respects: (i) grammatical roles are more important for word order

than discourse roles; (ii) S-Aux-O-V-X (and not SVO) is the canonical word order; (iii) there is no morphological passive, (iv) there is no dedicated focus position, and (v) no object marking is permissible to refer to given objects. Furthermore, (vi) no inversion constructions are found, and (vii) there is no predicate doubling (unlike other Bantu languages in Van der Wal to appear; see also Güldemann and Fiedler 2022). These properties have been suggested before as areal features related to Tunen's position in the Northwest of the Bantu-speaking area. For example, Hamlaoui and Makasso (2015) report the same lack of inversion constructions and object marking for Basaá, another Cameroonian Bantu language of the A40 group, and Güldemann (2008) has proposed O-V-X as an areal syntactic property of the Macro-Sudan Belt (a proposed linguistic area in which Tunen is spoken), as I will come back to in the next chapter (section §6.8). Finally, in our own work on the BaSIS project we have shown that Tunen has no dedicated focus position and have argued that grammatical roles are less important than information-structural roles for determining Tunen's word order, which we have suggested is linked to its position in the Northwest (Kerr et al. 2023). We note that this reliance on grammatical role differs from the Cameroonian/Nigerian Bantoid language Naki studied by Good (2010), which was argued to show evidence for IS as the principal determiner of word order, and is also distinct from Teke-Kukuya and other languages in the Northwestern Bantu area, which Li (to appear *a, b*) shows has innovated a dedicated focus position (see also De Kind 2014 on Kisikongo (H16a), Bostoen and Mundeke 2012 on Mbuun (B87), and Koni Muluwa and Bostoen 2014 on Nsong (B85d)). This highlights the fact that there is variation in Northwestern Bantu and Bantoid languages in the expression of IS, meaning that detailed studies of individual languages are required.

This is not to say however that Tunen has no similarities with other Bantu languages in its expression of IS. Like other Bantu languages in Van der Wal (to appear), and as matches crosslinguistic patterns for focus marking, different cleft strategies are available to express focus (see e.g. Fiedler et al. 2010; Féry and Ishihara 2016b), in which case there is typically an exhaustivity reading. Information focus can be left unmarked (for non-subjects). Also like the other Bantu languages and the crosslinguistically common pattern (Gundel 1988), topics can be left-peripheral, in which case they may be marked or unmarked. We also see overlap between Tunen and the zone B77 Bantu language Teke-Kukuya described in Li (to appear *a, b*), which similarly lacks a morphological passive and has no inversion constructions. Finally, subject markers are the minimal means of subject expression.

Further areas for research on the expression of IS in Tunen would be to conduct a more detailed corpus-based approach to frequencies of different word-order patterns, taking into account other potential factors such as prosodic weight; a

prosodic analysis of potential correlates of IS; a more detailed investigation of the use of conditional marking for introducing topics; and a more detailed study of fine-grained distinctions in referent expression, such as the use between basic and 'emphatic' pronouns. A more detailed comparative study of languages of the Northwest as compared to Eastern and Southern Bantu languages would also be valuable, as well as a comparison of Northwestern Bantu and the Southern Bantoid languages of the Grassfields Bantu group.

5.9 Summary

This chapter has shown that Tunen's canonical word order is S-Aux-O-V-X, which is compatible with various different information-structural contexts. Alternatives to the S-Aux-O-V-X word order are possible for the expression of information-structural notions, with clefting a common strategy for expressing focus, and fronting a means of marking topics, which may additionally be marked by the preposition *ɔ* or the marker *ábá/aka* 'if'. Finally, a short comparison between Tunen and other Bantu languages in terms of the expression of IS was provided; I will reflect on this comparative picture in more detail and the consequences for formal models of Tunen syntax in Chapter 8, after first discussing Tunen's OV word order and discontinuous noun phrase construction in the next chapters.

