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# Chapter 9

## The expression of information structure in Cicopi

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This chapter describes the information structure in Cicopi, discussing and illustrating the information-structural function of verbal inflection, word order, three types of cleft constructions, two types of predicate doubling, and the choice of referent expression. Cicopi has three different forms to mark the present tense: conjoint, disjoint/habitual, and progressive; and the perfective is marked by *-ile/-ite* or *to-*. The conditions under which these are used seems to depend not just on constituent-finality and aspect, but also on focus and maybe evidentiality. There is no dedicated focus position in Cicopi and the three clefts, as well as subject inversion, are used to express various types of focus.

### 1 Introduction

This chapter gives a general overview of the expression of information structure in Cicopi. Cicopi is a Bantu language codified as S61 in the Guthrie (1948) classification, updated by Maho (2009), with ISO code [cce]. It is spoken predominantly in South Mozambique, in the provinces of Gaza and Inhambane, by approximately 336,020 people (INE 2017). According to Ngunga & Faquir (2011), this language has 6 variants: Cindonje, Cilenge, Citonga, Cicopi, Cilambwe and Cikhambani. Cicopi was the variant used in this research because it is the reference variant (see Ngunga & Faquir 2011). Data were collected during the month of July 2019 in Chidenguele, Mozambique, with two male speakers and one female speaker aged 24–42, and were supplemented with data that were checked



with these and other native speakers. The data were entered into an Online Language Database accessible via Dative, and transcribed according to the orthography (Ngunga & Faquir 2011), with added tone marking and indication of vowel lengthening. We have done our best to mark surface tone, including downstep, but we are not certain of all tone marking (especially on the examples from the Frog Story), and further study is necessary to verify the tones and intonation and analyse the tone system.

Copi is a little-studied language. Among the studies carried out, the following stand out: Dos Santos (1941) with *Gramática da língua chope*; Bailey (1976) on the phonology and morphotonology; Nhantumbo (2009) describing morphophonological processes resulting from marking the past in Copi; Nhantumbo (2014) describing the verb in present and future; Nhantumbo (2019a) on the phonology and morphology of the verb; and Nhantumbo (2019b) describing negation marking in Cicopi.

In this chapter, the aim is to provide an overview of how information structure in Cicopi is expressed. We do this by describing the context-dependent interpretation of a number of linguistic strategies in Cicopi, i.e. from form to function. We start with verbal inflection in Cicopi, to show the use and interpretation of different verb forms (Section 2), followed by the word order (Section 3), discussing the basic word order in Cicopi, the absence of a dedicated focus position in the sentence, and subject inversion constructions. We then continue to present the form and function of three types of cleft constructions (Section 4), and predicate doubling (Section 5). We close with remarks on referent expression (Section 6).

## 2 Verbal inflection

Earlier work (Bailey 1976, Nhantumbo 2014, 2019a) primarily described the formal aspects (the morphology, tonology and morphophonology) of verbal inflection. In this section, we survey not just the form but investigate the use and meaning of the conjugations in more detail.

In some tense/aspect conjugations, Cicopi has more than one verb form. There are three forms in the present tense (Section 2.1), and two forms in the perfective (Section 2.2), whose distribution seems to be influenced or even determined by information structure (but see the discussion below for the influence of aspect and evidentiality, too, in the present tense). Their forms are given in Table 1. Two of the forms in the present tense resemble the so-called conjoint/disjoint alternation as found in other southern and eastern Bantu languages (see van der Wal & Hyman 2017 for an overview). This alternation is characterised by the two verb

forms typically sharing the same tense/aspect semantics, but showing a difference in their distribution (conjoint cannot appear clause-finally whereas disjoint can) and a difference in information structure (the conjoint form being followed by focused information, and the disjoint not). The progressive form (which Bailey 1976 calls “continuous”) constitutes its own category, but interacts with the other two forms in applying to the present situation (Nhantumbo 2005). The two perfective forms do not seem to vary in aspect. We discuss some information-structural differences below, but further research is needed to establish the exact form-meaning mappings.

Table 1: Overview of tenses with possible influence of information structure in Cicopi

	affirmative	translation	negative
present cj	SM-VB-a	I cook/am cooking	SM-ka-VB-i
present dj/habitual	SM-a-VB-a		
present progressive	SM-o-VB-a	I am cooking	SM-ka-VB-i (+tone)
perfective	SM-VB-ile/-ite/-e	I (have) cooked	
TO	SM-to-VB-a	I (have) cooked	SM-yá-VB-a

We discuss the form, distribution, and interpretation of the present and perfective conjugations in turn.

## 2.1 Present tense

The present tense conjoint and disjoint verb form in Cicopi belong to the same conjugation, as they share one negative form (see Table 1), and they can occur in question-answer pairs, with the question in (1) containing the unmarked conjoint present form, and the answer the disjoint form marked by *a-*.

- (1) Q: Ina matutu:ma cicolwa:ni?<sup>1</sup> [conjoint]  
 ina mu-a-tutum-a ci-kolwa-ni  
 Q 2PL.SM-DJ-run-FV 7-school-loc  
 ‘Do you run at school?’

<sup>1</sup>No tone marking.

- A: Hatútû:ma. [disjoint]  
 hi-a-tutum-a  
 1PL.SM-DJ-run-FV  
 ‘We (do) run.’
- A’: Hígó:nda mabhu:ku. [conjoint]  
 hi-gond-a ma-bhuku  
 1PL.SM-read-FV 6-book  
 ‘We read books.’

The present tense forms differ in their distribution: As defining for the conjoint/disjoint alternation (van der Wal 2017), the conjoint form cannot appear in sentence-final position of a main clause, as shown in (2a) and (3b). Instead, the disjoint form must be used, as in (2b), or the conjoint form must appear in non-final position as in (2c). The progressive can also appear in sentence-final position, as shown in (3a).

- (2) a. \*Dikanéká hidiwo:na. [conjoint]  
 di-kaneka hi-di-won-a  
 5-mug 1PL.SM-5OM-see-FV  
 int. ‘The mug, we see it.’
- b. Dikanéká hadiwo:na. [disjoint]  
 di-kaneka hi-a-di-won-a  
 5-mug 1PL.SM-DJ-5OM-see-FV  
 ‘The mug, we see it.’
- c. Hiwóná dikanê:ka. [conjoint]  
 hi-won-a di-kaneka  
 1PL.SM-see-FV 5-mug  
 ‘We see a/the mug.’
- (3) (What are you doing?)
- a. Hótútû:ma. [progressive]  
 hi-o-tutum-a  
 1PL.SM-PROG-run-FV  
 ‘We are running.’
- b. \*Hítútû:ma. [conjoint]  
 hi-tutum-a  
 1PL.SM-run-FV  
 int. ‘We are running. / We run.’

Interestingly, the conjoint form is accepted in final position as a yes/no question, as in (4). This is a use that has not been described in other languages, and at the moment it is not yet well understood.

- (4) (A dog with rabies is coming towards us)  
 Hítútû:ma? [conjoint]  
 hi-tutum-a  
 1PL.SM-run-FV  
 ‘Do we run? / Should we run?’

There are indications in the penultimate lengthening that the conjoint and the progressive forms are phrased together with the following constituent(s). Based on analyses for other eastern and southern Bantu languages (e.g. Zerbian 2006 for Northern Sotho; Zeller et al. 2017, Halpert 2017 for Zulu; Devos 2008 for Makwe among others), we hypothesise that penultimate lengthening indicates the right boundary of a phonological phrase. The conjoint and progressive forms do not show lengthening on the verb (only on the object), whereas the disjoint form shows lengthening on both verb and object, as illustrated in (5). However, there seems to be variation, and dedicated investigation is needed to show the interaction between syntax, prosodic phrasing, and information structure.

- (5) a. (What are you drawing?/#Are you doing what I told you?)  
 Hireká mâ:ti. [conjoint]  
 hi-rek-a mati  
 1PL.SM-draw-FV 6.water  
 ‘We are drawing water.’
- b. (Are you doing what I said to do?/You don’t draw water.)  
 A:thú hárê:ka (mâ:ti). [disjoint]  
 athu hi-a-rek-a mati  
 1PL.PRO 1PL.SM-DJ-draw-FV 6.water  
 ‘We (do) draw (water).’  
 ‘We *are* drawing (water).’
- c. (What are you doing now?)  
 A:thú ho:rê:ká mâ:ti. [progressive]  
 athu hi-o-rek-a mati  
 1PL.PRO 1PL.SM-PROG-draw-FV 6.water  
 ‘We are drawing water.’

When a postverbal element is in focus, the conjoint or progressive form has to be used; for example an inherently focused content question word (6) or an object modified by the exhaustive focus-sensitive particle ‘only’ (7). The disjoint form is not accepted here (with or without penultimate length), as indicated for both examples.

- (6) a. Muthúma ca:ni? [conjoint]  
 mu-thum-a cani  
 2PL.SM-do-FV what  
 ‘What are you (pl) doing?’
- b. \*Mathúma ca:ni? [disjoint]  
 mu-a-thum-a cani  
 2PL.SM-DJ-do-FV what  
 int. ‘What are you (pl) doing?’
- c. Mothúma ca:ni? [progressive]  
 mu-o-thum-a cani  
 2PL.SM-PROG-do-FV what  
 ‘What are you (pl) doing?’
- (7) Hi-xav-a / \*h-a-xav-a / h-o-xav-a ma-fá:ka dwé.  
 1PL.SM-buy-FV / 1PL.SM-DJ-buy-FV / 1PL.SM-PROG-buy-FV 6-maize only  
 ‘We buy/are buying only maize.’

Nevertheless, while focus occurs with a conjoint form, the inverse is not true: post-conjoint constituents can be unfocussable items such as parts of idioms, as in (8), and cognate objects, as in (9). Cognate objects and parts of idioms cannot be focused, because they cannot generate any alternatives in the idiomatic interpretation (see van der Wal 2016, 2021) – what else would one be dreaming if not a dream?

- (8) Nila:vwá / nala:vwá / nola:vwá ngu pápí:lu.  
 ni-lav-w-a / ni-a-lav-w-a /  
 1SG.SM-want-PASS-FV / 1SG.SM-DJ-want-PASS-FV /  
 ni-o-lav-w-a ngu papilu  
 1SG.SM-PROG-want-PASS-FV PREP 9.letter  
 literal: ‘I am wanted by the letter.’  
 idiomatic: ‘I need to go to the toilet.’

(9) (Context: A child is asleep and making movements.)

- a. Álórá mlo:ro. [conjoint]  
 a-lor-a m-loro  
 1SM-dream-FV 3-dream  
 ‘S/he is dreaming a dream.’
- b. Ól<sup>l</sup>ó:rá mlo:ro. [progressive]  
 a-o-lor-a m-loro  
 1SM-PROG-dream-FV 3-dream  
 ‘S/he is dreaming a dream.’

Thus, the conjoint form in Cicopi does not express (exclusive) focus on a postverbal element. This can also be seen in the possibility to modify an object by *hambi* ‘even’ (10), which is incompatible with an inherently exclusive meaning, as ‘even’ means that all other more likely items have also been washed, not excluding any alternatives.

- (10) Jhoáná ázilé ákuwúlá hambí ni máláso:ro [conjoint]  
 Joana a-z-ile a-kuwul-a hambí ni ma-lasoro  
 1.Joana 1SM-LIM-PFV 1SM-wash-FV even and 6-sheet  
 ‘Joana washed even the sheets.’

The disjoint form has been called the habitual form (Nhantumbo 2005), as it expresses actions that are regularly performed. The progressive form, on the other hand, refers to an ongoing action. The difference between these two verb forms in their aspectual interpretation is illustrated in (11).

- (11) a. Hárê:k-á mâ:ti. [disjoint]  
 hi-a-rek-a mati  
 1PL.SM-DJ-draw-FV 6.water  
 ‘We draw water (habitually, not at this moment).’
- b. Horê:k-á mâ:ti. [progressive]  
 hi-o-rek-a mati  
 1PL.SM-PROG-draw-FV 6.water  
 ‘We are drawing water (right now).’

This does not mean that the disjoint form is obligatorily used for habituals, as can be seen in (12), which uses the conjoint form in a habitual meaning/context, because the postverbal element is in focus.

- (12) (Habitually, does she eat rice or shima?)  
 E:né ngu cíhê:ne ádyá mpû:nga. [conjoint]  
 ene ngu ci-hene a-dy-a mpunga  
 1.PRO PREP 7-habit 1SM-eat-FV 3.rice  
 ‘S/he habitually eats rice.’

As mentioned, the progressive is used for actions that are ongoing, as illustrated again in (13), but the other two forms are acceptable as well for ongoing actions. The only difference indicated by our speakers was that *osinya* (progressive) is used when you’re seeing it now, and *yasinya* (disjoint) when you’re informing someone else.

- (13) María yásî:nyá / ósî:nyá / ásînya ko:nku.  
 Maria a-a-siny-a / a-o-siny-a / a-siny-a konku  
 1.Maria 1SM-DJ-dance-FV / 1SM-PROG-dance-FV / 1SM-dance-FV now  
 ‘Maria is dancing now.’

Nevertheless, focus again trumps aspect, because if the postverbal object is focused, the conjoint form is preferred even if the action is carried out at the time of speaking, as in (14).

- (14) (While someone is up in the tree: Are you picking these oranges for Helena or for Ana?)  
 Madímwa yá nihaphé:lá/#nóhaphé:lá A:na.  
 ma-dimwa ya ni-haph-el-a / ni-o-haph-el-a  
 6-orange 6.DEM.PROX 1SG.SM-pick-APPL-FV / 1SG.SM-PROG-pick-APPL-FV  
 Ana  
 1.Ana  
 ‘These oranges, I’m picking (them) for Ana.’

While the exact difference in use and interpretation between the three present tense forms requires more in-depth investigation, the contexts sketched by the speakers for the disjoint and the progressive form indicate not just an aspectual difference but suggest a difference in evidentiality too, as can be seen in the contexts for the two forms in (15–17). The disjoint form seems to indicate that the speaker had direct visual evidence; the evidential interpretation of the conjoint and progressive forms are not clear yet.

- (15) a. Káphínda mǒ:vha. [disjoint]  
 ku-a-phind-a movha  
 17SM-DJ-pass-FV 3.car  
 ‘A car is passing by.’ (You see it.)

- b. Kóph'índa mǝ:vha. [progressive]  
 ku-o-phind-a movha  
 17SM-PROG-pass-FV 3.car  
 'A car is passing by.' (Someone else tells/ask you.)
- (16) a. (Context: I see someone hitting the bulls and want to inform others that are inside.)  
 Tápé(:)kwá tího:mú. [disjoint]  
 ti-a-pek-w-a ti-homu  
 10SM-DJ-hit-PASS-FV 10-bull  
 'The bulls are (being) beaten.'
- b. (Why do the bulls have these marks? – The sentence is not accepted out of the blue.)  
 Tópé(:)kwá tího:mú. [progressive]  
 ti-o-pek-w-a ti-homu  
 10SM-PROG-hit-PASS-FV 10-bull  
 'The bulls are (being) beaten.'
- (17) a. (Context: A friend passed by your field and tells you s/he has seen birds eating the maize.)  
 Sinya:na sâ:dyá mafa:ka. [disjoint]  
 si-nyana si-a-dy-a ma-faka  
 8-bird 8SM-DJ-eat-FV 6-maize  
 '(The) birds are eating (the) maize.'
- b. (generic)  
 Tikhu:mba tídyá khô:ndze. [conjoint]  
 ti-khumba ti-dy-a khondze  
 10-pig 10SM-eat-FV grass  
 'Pigs eat grass.'

Further and more targeted research is required to establish the precise factors determining the use of each verb form in the present tense, but aspect (habitual vs. progressive), focus (postverbal or predicate-centred), and evidentiality all seem to play a role.

## 2.2 Perfective

As mentioned, Cicopi has two forms in the perfective conjugation. The first is created with the suffix *-ile/-ite* and the second with the prefix *to-*. As shown in

Table 1 above, the two conjugations share the same negation, suggesting that their main difference is not in tense/aspect semantics.<sup>2</sup> Both encode that the event has been finished (Nhantumbo 2009). The suffixes *-ile* and *-ite* are not different morphemes, but allomorphs of the same morpheme. The allomorph *-ite* is used with stems ending in *-l* or *-t* (Nhantumbo 2014), as in (18) and (19), and with monoconsonantal verb stems (e.g. *-w-* ‘fall’ and *-dy-* ‘eat’). We refer to Nhantumbo (2019a) for further argumentation on the allomorphy.

- (18) Maria abháté dipápi:lo.  
 Maria a-bhal-ile dipapilo  
 1.Maria 1SM-write-PFV 5-letter  
 ‘Maria wrote a letter.’
- (19) Mwanâ:na adukê:te dibhúlú:ku.  
 mw-anana a-duket-ile di-bhuluku  
 1-child 1SM-try-PFV 5-trousers  
 ‘The child tried on the trousers.’

We discuss the forms *-ile/-ite* and the form *to-* in this chapter, as we see some information-structural differences between them. The *to-* form is felicitous in expressing state-of-affairs focus, i.e. supplying or contrasting the lexical value of the verb, as indicated in (20a), (22), and (23), but it is not felicitous in verum contexts, i.e. emphatic focus on the truth value, as shown in (20b) and (24a). The perfective shows the opposite behaviour and is felicitously used to express verum, as seen in (21) and (24b).

- (20) Átô:dya.  
 a-to-dy-a  
 1SM-TO-eat-FV  
 ‘S/he ate (it).’
- a. answer to ‘What happened with the food on the table?’ [SoA focus]  
 b. # correction of ‘She didn’t eat.’ [verum]
- (21) (She didn’t eat.)  
 (i:m) Ádyî:te. [verum]  
 ii a-dy-ile  
 yes 1SM-eat-PFV  
 ‘(Yes) S/he ate.’ / ‘S/he *did* eat.’

<sup>2</sup>We note, though, that both forms are accepted with inchoative verbs, but there seems to be a restriction on stative verbs, e.g. for *-ziva* ‘know’ the *to-* form is not accepted while the *-ile* form is. We thank a reviewer for asking about these predicates, but have to leave this for future research.

- (22) Vátótútû:má kûmbe vátôsâmbê:la? [SoA focus]  
 va-to-tutum-a kumbe va-to-sambel-a  
 2SM-TO-run-FV or 2SM-TO-swim-FV  
 ‘Did they run or did they swim?’
- (23) (Did Paulo wash the beans?) [SoA focus]  
 Ihî:mhim, Paulu aákuwúlá feijáu, átô:bhî:ká dwé.  
 ihmhim Paulo a-a-kuwul-a feijao a-to-bhik-a dwe  
 no 1.Paulo 1SM-NEG-wash-FV 9.bean 1SM-TO-cook-FV only  
 ‘No, Paulo didn’t wash the beans, he only cooked (them).’
- (24) (Paulo didn’t cook the beans.) You’re lying, ... [verum]
- a. # Páúlú átôbî:ká feijáu  
 Paulo a-to-bhik-a feijao  
 1.Paulo 1SM-TO-cook-FV 9.bean  
 ‘Paulo cooked (the) beans.’  
 #‘Paulo did cook (the) beans.’
- b. Páúlú abhîkî:le feijáu.  
 Paulo a-bhik-ile feijao  
 1.Paulo 1SM-cook-PFV 9.bean  
 ‘Paulo cooked (the) beans.’  
 ‘Paulo did cook (the) beans.’

Either form is acceptable with a postverbal focus on the object, as illustrated for content question words in (25) and for answers to object questions in (26). With VP focus either form is acceptable too, as shown in (27).

- (25) a. Mutómahá câ:ni?  
 mu-to-mah-a cani  
 2PL.SM-TO-do-FV what  
 ‘What did you do?’
- b. A:nu mumahilé câ:ni?  
 anu mu-mah-ile cani  
 2PL.PRO 2PL.SM-do-PFV what  
 ‘What did you do?’

- (26) a. (What did you drink?)  
Nitóselá sérvhe:jha.  
ni-to-sel-a            servvejha  
1SG.SM-TO-drink-FV beer  
'I drank beer.'
- b. (Who did grandma give the mangoes?)  
Áningilé titiyá Lu:rdi.  
a-ning-ile    titiya Lurdi  
1SM-give-PFV 1.aunt 1.Lurdes  
'She gave (them to) aunt Lurdes.'
- (27) (What did you do?)
- a. Hikaláhatshi:lé hibhulá ní na:wé.  
hi-khalahatsi-ile    hi-bhul-a    ni    ni-awe  
1PL.SM-sit.down-PFV 1PL.SM-talk-FV with with-2SG.PRO  
'We sat and talked with you.'
- b. Hitókhaláhátshi hibhulá ní na:we.  
hi-to-khalahatshi    hi-bhul-a    ni    ni-awe  
1PL.SM-TO-sit.down 1PL.SM-talk-FV with with-2SG.PRO  
'We sat and talked with you.'

In summary, information structure influences the choice of verbal conjugations in Cicopi, at least in the perfective and the present, although the exact determining factors remain to be investigated.

### 3 Word order

As a “basic word order”,<sup>3</sup> Cicopi uses (S)VO order in the context of VP focus. When the subject is highly active, it is preferably expressed by just the subject marker; a full NP subject is present when (re)activating the subject referent. This word order is illustrated in example (28) from the Frog story, where the boy is introduced in the first sentence, and the next line comments on this boy, adding the information that he has a frog and a dog.

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<sup>3</sup>See Kerr et al. (2023) for discussion on the extent to which grammatical roles like subject and object are useful in describing word order in Bantu languages.

- (28) (Context: There was a boy who was fond of animals.)  
 Se m'fána wúwa, átifúyá díkhélé ni yi:mbwá.  
 se m'-fana wuwa a-ti-fuy-a di-khele ni yi-mbwa  
 so 1-boy 1.DEM.PROX 1SM-IPFV-raise-FV 5-frog and 9-dog  
 'So this boy raised a frog and a dog.'

In this section, we further discuss the information-structural functions found in the preverbal domain (Sections 3.1 and 3.2), the lack of a dedicated focus position in the sentence (Section 3.3), subject inversion constructions and their interpretation (Section 3.4), and the right periphery (Section 3.5).

### 3.1 No preverbal focus (?)

In terms of word order and the influence that information structure has on it, there seems to be a split topic-V-nontopic in Cicopi, but there is no dedicated focus position. Focused constituents occur in the postverbal domain (see Sections 3.3 and 3.4) and, as is familiar from other Bantu languages (see for example van der Wal (2025 [this volume])), focus is not allowed in the preverbal domain. This shown for question words in (29) and answers in (30), both focused subjects.

- (29) \* Mání afí:lé?  
 mani a-f-ile  
 who 1SM-die-PFV  
 'Who died?'
- (30) (Who is cooking rice?)  
 # Luisa abhika mpu:nga.<sup>4</sup>  
 Luisa a-bhik-a mpunga  
 1.Luisa 1SM-cook-FV 3.rice  
 'Luisa is cooking rice.'

Based on this generalisation, we would expect that a constituent modified by the exhaustive focus particle 'only' is also rejected. While it is true that preverbal non-subjects can never be modified by *dwe* 'only' (31), it does seem acceptable for preverbal subjects – compare (31–34), with the relevant constituent marked in boldface. Further research is needed here, as we also noted a preference in (34) for the exhaustive particle to apply to the predicate rather than to the subject.

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<sup>4</sup>This example lacks tone marking.

- (31) **Mpu:nga** (\*dwé) Luiza óbhĩ:ka.  
 mpunga dwe Luisa a-o-bhik-a  
 3.rice only 1.Luisa 1SM-PROG-cook-FV  
 ‘(\*only) The rice, Luisa is cooking (it).’
- (32) Kupíndilé tixaka tá tĩ:ngí tá síha:ri, kámbé **pho:ngó dwé** yíwĩ:te.  
 ku-pind-ile ti-xaka t-a t-ingi t-a si-hari kambe  
 17SM-pass-PFV 10-kind 10-CONN 10-many 10-CONN 8-animal but  
**phongo dwe** yi-w-ile  
 9.goat only 9SM-fall-PFV  
 ‘There passed many types of animals, but only a/the goat fell.’
- (33) **Páulu dwé** átsu:tí sóntô:ni.  
 Paulo dwe a-tsul-ile sonto-ni  
 1.Paulo only 1SM-leave-PFV church-LOC  
 ‘Only Paulo went to church.’
- (34) # **Mimvhúnja dwé** yíbê:te.  
 mi-mvhunja dwe yi-bel-ile  
 4-rabbit only 4SM-enter-PFV  
 ?‘Only the rabbits entered.’  
 ‘The rabbits just entered (and didn’t do anything else).’

### 3.2 Preverbal topics

We do typically find topics in the preverbal domain. Although active familiar topics are naturally expressed pronominally, for example by the object marker B’s answer in (35), topics may also be full NPs in the left periphery, as in (36), where the action ‘to break a coconut’ is presented in the question, and occurs in the left periphery in the answer.

- (35) (Context: QUIS map task, with speaker A explaining the route to speaker B.)
- A: Ni-mán-á dí-kávhâ:lu.  
 1SG.SM-find-FV 5-horse  
 ‘I find a horse.’
- B: Ní-dí-wô:n-i.  
 1SG.SM-5OM-see-PFV  
 ‘I have seen it.’

- (36) (How can I break a coconut?)

**Kufá:ya ka dikho:kho**, kuni mamahelo mambí:dí.

ku-faya k-a di-khokho ku=ni ma-mahelo ma-mbidi

15-break 15-CONN 5-coconuts 17SM=with 6-way 6-two

‘There are two ways to break coconuts.’

Contrastive topics are expressed by an NP in the left periphery, requiring an object marker if the preposed constituent is a human object. The contrast may be explicit, mentioning both of the contrasting referents, as in (37) and (38), or implicit, as in (39).

- (37) (What did grandma give the girls?)

**Áningilé Lídià mafá:ka, Rozí:tá ní Laurí:nya áváníngá máphê:ra.**

a-ning-ile Lidia ma-faka Rozita ni Laurinya a-va-ning-a

1SM-give-PFV 1.Lidia 6-maize 1.Rozita and 1.Laurinha 1SM-2OM-give-FV

ma-phera

6-pear

‘She gave Lidia maize; to Rosita and Laurinha she gave pears.’

- (38) (Four of my siblings are girls.)

**Vavámbî:dí vóbhilivî:la**

va-va-mbidi va-o-bhilivil-a

2-?CONN-two 2SM-PROG-be.light-FV

‘Two are light-skinned’

ní **vavámbî:dí** vántí:má vo:kô:ma.

ni va-va-mbidi va-ntima va-a-ku-koma

and 2-?CONN-two 2-black 2-CONN-15-be.short

‘and two (are) black and short.’

- (39) (Was it the house and the yard that s/he swept?)

**Nyumbá:ni** ayáhiyê:la.

nyumba-ini a-ya-hiyel-a

9.house-LOC 1SM-NEG-sweep-FV

‘S/he didn’t sweep the house.’

A topic may also be indicated by the locative preposition *ka*, which is used when a subset of the initial topic referent is then selected in the comment, as illustrated in (40) and (41).

- (40) (Are these people wearing hats? +QUIS picture of two women without hats and two men with hats.)

**Ka** vá:thu váva, avá vákúni sígo:ko majä:ha.

ka va-thu vava ava va=ku=ni si-goko ma-jaha  
 LOC 2-people 2.DEM.MED 2.PRO 2SM=REL=with 8-hat COP.6-man

‘Of/between these people, the ones that have hats are the men.’

- (41) **Ká** kó:ká ní fâ:nta, utósélá kô:ka dwé?

ka koka ni fanta u-to-sel-a koka dwe

LOC coke and fanta 2SG.SM-TO-drink-FV coke only

‘Between coke and fanta, did you drink only coke?’

When the topic shifts to a different referent, the new topic is also expressed as an NP in the preverbal domain, as in (42) from the Frog story, where, after a number of lines about the frogs, the boy is reactivated as the topic and subject and is marked by the distal demonstrative *wule* (penultimate lengthening is not transcribed in this example).

- (42) (Moving on, they saw many more frogs, in addition to the two they had seen. Those big ones who saw them turned out to be the parents of the other frogs. So, the big ones that they were seeing were jumping.)

Sê, **m’pfána wúlé** átsakí:lé já ángé adí díkhéle dá:kwé di angatídilá:va.

se m’-fana wu-le a-tsak-ile ja a-nge a-di  
 so 1-boy 1-DEM.DIST 1SM-be.happy-PFV so 1SM-say AUG-5.DEM

di-khele di-akwe di a-nga-ti-di-lav-a

5.COP-frog 5-POSS.1 5.DEM 1SM-REL-IPFV-5OM-want-FV

‘So, that boy was happy, so he said: this is his frog that he was looking for.’

Shift topics may be marked by a pronoun *-ona*, as in (43). In combination with *ni* ‘and’, it expresses that there is another referent apart from the topic referent for which the predicate also holds: *ni yona* ‘and him/her too’, as in (44). Both examples are from a recounting of the Frog story.

- (43) (The boy stood there in pain.)

Sê bhonyáni **yó:ná** yítsú:té.

se bhonyani y-ona yi-tsul-ile

and 9.mouse 9-PRO 9SM-leave-PFV

‘As for the mouse, it is gone.’

- (44) (He turned the table over to see if by chance it would be there under the table and saw that it wasn't.)

Sê, yí:mbwá ni yó:ná, yapfététéla makó:tá to khé:né, mákotákotá yáwá ingáwá cídíhúmé:té kúyá há:yi.

se yi-mbwa ni yi-ona yi-a-pf-etetel-a ma-kota to.khene  
 then 9-dog and 9-PRO 9SM-PRS-hear-STAT.APPL-FV 6-cry COMP  
 ma-kota~kota y-awa ingawa ci-di-hum-ete ku-ya hayi  
 6-cry~RED 6.DEM could 7SM-DEP-leave-PFV 15-go where

'Then the dog too is hearing the cry to see where the cry comes from.'

In shifting from one to the next event, Cicopi also uses tail-head linking, whereby an event mentioned in (the final part of) one sentence is repeated at the start of the next sentence. This is illustrated in (45) from the Frog story, where the action of scratching the nose is first repeated in the next sentence before moving the story forward.

- (45) I bhónyá:ní yíku múlé:yá yíngámúnyára thó:mbvú.

i bhonyani yi=ku mu-leya yi-nga-mu-nyar-a thombvu  
 COP 9.mouse 9SM=REL 18-DEM.DIST 9SM-REL-1OM-scratch-FV 9.nose

'It was a bush mouse that is there that scratched him on the nose.'

Já yídímúrányilé thó:mbvú, e:ne atósá:lá acítín'o:té thó:mbvú yilé inkú:pfá kúpá:ndá.

ja yi-di-mu-rany-il-e thombvu ene a-to-sal-a  
 so 9SM-DEP-1OM-scratch-PFV 9.nose 1.PRO 1SM-TO-stay-FV  
 a-ci-ti-n'ol-ile thombvu yi-le in-ku-pfa kupanda  
 1SM-CON-IPFV-touch-PFV 9.nose 9-DEM.MED LINK-15-feel 15.pain

'After scratching him on the nose, he stood there touching his nose in so much pain he felt.'

There can also be multiple topics in the left periphery, be they arguments or scene-setting adverbs, as illustrated in (46) and (47). The object *m'pawu* 'cassava' in (46) can be seen as a secondary topic here (as defined by Dalrymple & Nikolaeva 2011), meaning that "the utterance is construed to be about the relation that holds between it and the primary topic" (Nikolaeva 2001: 2).

- (46) (What did mother do with the cassava?)

Má:mí, m'pá:wú, axávísí:lé ayáwũ:dya.

Mami m'pawu a-xavis-ile a-ya-wu-dy-a  
 1.mother 3-cassava 1SM-sell-PFV 1SM-NEG-3OM-eat-FV

'Mother, the cassava, she sold (it), she didn't eat (it).'

- (47) (Context: When in Gaza, someone comments: you do not have mangos here. A person who knows the area better replies.)  
 Mámá:ngá, Chidéngué:lé, ka Gá:za mâ:ngi.  
 ma-manga Chidenguele ka Gaza ma-ngi  
 6-mango Chidenguele LOC Gaza COP.6-many  
 ‘Mangos, in Chidenguele in Gaza, there are many.’

As subjects are typical topics, and canonically appear preverbally, it can be difficult to see in which (structural) position they are. The pronominal subject *e:ne* ‘s/he’ in (48), repeated from (12) above, is in a left-peripheral position, separated from the verb by the PP ‘by habit’.

- (48) E:né ngu cíhê:ne ádyá mpû:nga.  
 ene ngu ci-hene a-dy-a mpunga  
 1.PRO PREP 7-habit 1SM-eat-FV 3.rice  
 ‘S/he habitually eats rice.’

However, the preverbal subject can also be an indefinite, as in (49), which cannot be left-dislocated and hence provides evidence for a non-topical subject position as well. A systematic study of the prosodic properties of subjects (and other constituents) in the preverbal domain may well shine light on the syntactic status and marking of the different positions.

- (49) I:nthu áréthémúkí:lé â:wa.  
 n-thu a-rethemuk-ile a-w-a  
 1-person 1SM-slip-PFV 1SM-fall-FV  
 ‘Someone slipped and fell.’

The left periphery also hosts scene-setting topics, such as the adverbial phrases *ahá ká bhasíkêni* ‘at the bicycle’ in (50), and in (51) the phrases *ití ní wúsíkú dímwání dítsíkú* ‘one day at night’ and *inkama angadipfluxela* ‘the time that he visited him’. Each topic in these examples is indicated by square brackets.

- (50) [Ahá ká bhasíkê:ni], nákwélé:lá ngu cíne:ne.  
 [aha ka bhasikeni] n-a-kwel-el-a ngu cinene  
 16.DEM.PROX LOC 5.bicycle 1SM-PRS-go.up-APPL-FV PREP 7.right  
 ‘From the bicycle here I go up to the right.’

- (51) [Ití ní wúsi:kú dímwányáni dítsí:kú], [ínkámá angádípfúxê:lá], díkhê:lé  
 dítingádi kô:ná múlé:yá ndáni ka díbhójhé:lá.  
 [i-ti ni wusiku di-mwanyani di-tshiku] [in-kama  
 COP-PST and night 5-other 5-day 9-time  
 a-nga-di-pfuxel-a] di-khele di-ti-nga-di kona mu-leya  
 1SM-REL-5OM-visit-FV 5-frog 5SM-IPFV-NEG-be 17.PRO 18-DEM.DIST  
 ndani ka di-bhojhela  
 inside LOC 5-bottle  
 ‘One day at night, visiting him, the frog was not inside the bottle.’

As further illustration of topics, the following example (52) shows a scene-setting topic (*cibhabha ca mina* ‘to my left’), and in the reaction a contrastive topic (*ani* ‘me’, as opposed to you), with the two contrastive topics indicated in boldface. The exchange also shows a contrastive focus with *tihomu* ‘bulls’ being contrasted to *timbwa* ‘dogs’, in italics in the example.

- (52) (Context: QUIS map task, where speaker A explains the route to speaker B.)
- A: **Cibhabha ca mî:ná** nimaná *tî:mbwa tîrâ:ru*.  
 ci-bhabha ci-a mina ni-man-a *ti-mbwa ti-raru*  
 7-left 7-CONN 1SG.PRO 1SG.SM-find-FV 10-dog 10-three  
 ‘To my left, I find three dogs.’
- B: **A:ni** niwóná *tîhô:mu tî-râ:ru*.  
 ani ni-won-a *ti-homu ti-raru*  
 1SG.PRO 1SG.SM-see-FV 10-bull 10-three  
 ‘As for me, I see three bulls.’

In summary, Cicopi does not seem to allow preverbal foci (but ‘only’ remains unclear) and prefers preverbal topics. There are multiple positions in the left periphery to which subjects and non-subjects can move, one of which is a non-topical subject position. In the next section, we turn our attention to the postverbal domain.

### 3.3 No dedicated focus position

As focused constituents cannot appear in the preverbal domain, they must appear postverbally, or in a cleft (see Section 4). This is again shown for the correction in (53), where the focused object simply appears in a postverbal position.

(53) (Context: QUIS picture of a girl pulling a chair.)

- A: Mwanáná ándíndá mé:za?  
 mw-anana a-ndind-a meza  
 1-child 1SM-pull-FV 3.table  
 ‘Is the child pulling a/the table?’
- B: Ihî:mhím, (mwaná:ná) ándíndá **cítu:lu**.  
 ihmhim mw-anana a-ndind-a ci-tulu  
 no 1-child 1SM-pull-FV 7.chair  
 ‘No, the child is pulling a/the chair.’

While focus is restricted to the postverbal domain in a non-clefted sentence, there is no dedicated position for focus in Cicopi. Within the postverbal domain, there is no requirement for the focused element to appear adjacent to the verb (as in various other zone S languages, e.g. Buell 2009 for Zulu) nor phrase-finally (like in Kirundi, see Nshemezimana & van der Wal 2025 [this volume]). We show this for the Theme and Recipient arguments in a ditransitive: either position can host a question word, as shown in (54) and (55), either can form the answer to a content question, as in (56) and (57).

(54) Recipient question

- a. Vánáníngá másenórá ma:ní?  
 va-na-ning-a ma-senora mani  
 2SM-FUT-give-FV 6-carrot who  
 ‘Who will they give carrots?’
- b. Hinán<sup>1</sup>íngá ma:ní díkáne:ka?  
 hi-na-ning-a mani di-kaneka  
 1PL.SM-FUT-give-FV who 5-mug  
 ‘Who will we give the mug to?’

(55) Theme question

- a. Vánáníngá ndiyâ:wé câ:ni?  
 va-na-ning-a ndiya-awe cani  
 2SM-FUT-give-FV 1.sister-POSS.1 what  
 ‘What will they give his sister?’
- b. Váná(mú)n<sup>1</sup>íngá cá:ní ndiyâ:wé?  
 va-na-mu-ning-a cani ndiya-awe  
 2SM-FUT-1OM-give-FV what 1.sister-POSS.1  
 ‘What will they give his sister?’

- (56) (Who will they give carrots?)  
 Vána(\*mu)nî:ngá (másenó:rá) Gô:mex.  
 va-na-mu-ning-a ma-senora Gomes  
 2SM-FUT-1OM-give-FV 6-carrots 1.Gomes  
 ‘They will give Gomes carrots.’
- (57) (Will you cook rice for the visitors?)  
 Ninábhikélá vapfumba mba:ba.  
 ni-ná-bhik-el-a va-pfumba mbaba  
 1SG.SM-FUT-cook-APPL-FV 2-visitors 3.shima  
 ‘I will cook shima for the visitors.’

Interrogative adverbs can also appear in either position, as illustrated for *njani* ‘how’ and *hayi* ‘where’ in (58) and (59), respectively.

- (58) a. Álúngisile **nja:ní** mo:vha?  
 a-lungis-ile njani movha  
 1SM-repair-PFV how 3.car  
 ‘How did s/he repair the car?’  
 b. Álúngisile mo:vha **nja:ní**?
- (59) a. Urumété **ha:yi** mípâ:wu?  
 u-rum-el-ile hayi mi-pawu  
 2SG.SM-send-APPL-PFV where 4-cassava  
 ‘Where did you send the cassava?’  
 b. Urumété mípâ:wu **ha:yi**?

In the same way, phrases modified by the exhaustive focus particle *dwe* ‘only’ can also appear in either position, as in (60) and (61).<sup>5</sup> The prosodic break in (60a) and (61b) could be indicative of a requirement that the focus be final in some constituent, but further research into prosodic phrasing (and its relation with syntactic phrasing) is necessary to confirm this.

<sup>5</sup>The logical possibilities are judged as follows, with bold indicating the focus (as diagnosed by contrast in a following clause):

Theme <i>dwe</i> Recipient	Theme <i>dwe</i> <b>Recipient</b>
*Theme Recipient <i>dwe</i>	Theme <b>Recipient</b> <i>dwe</i>
Recipient <b>Theme</b> <i>dwe</i>	*Recipient Theme <i>dwe</i>
Recipient <i>dwe</i> <b>Theme</b>	<b>Recipient</b> <i>dwe</i> Theme

- (60) a. **Theme** only, Recipient  
 Vánáningá mábho:mú dwé, tshándza:na – vánambímún<sup>1</sup>íngá cíkê:ta.  
 va-na-ning-a ma-bhomu dwe tshandzana  
 2SM-FUT-give-FV 6-lemons only 1.niece  
 va-na-mbi-mu-ning-a ci-keta  
 2SM-FUT-NEG-1OM-give-FV 7-pineapple  
 ‘They will give only lemons to the niece, they will not give her  
 pineapple.’
- b. Recipient **Theme** only  
 Vánáningá tshándzá:na mábho:mu dwé – vánambímún<sup>1</sup>íngá cíkê:ta.  
 va-na-ning-a tshandzana ma-bhomu dwe  
 2SM-FUT-give-FV 1.niece 6-lemons only  
 va-na-mbi-mu-ning-a ci-keta  
 2SM-FUT-NEG-1OM-give-FV 7-pineapple  
 ‘They will give only lemons to the niece, they will not give her  
 pineapple.’
- (61) a. Theme **Recipient** only  
 Vánáningá mábho:mú tshándza:na dwé – vánamb<sup>1</sup>íningá ndíyâ:we.  
 va-na-ning-a ma-bhomu tshandzana dwe va-na-mbi-ning-a  
 2SM-FUT-give-FV 6-lemon 1.niece only 2SM-FUT-NEG-give-FV  
 ndiya-awe  
 1.sister-POSS.1  
 ‘They will give lemons to the niece only, they will not give to her  
 sister.’
- b. **Recipient** only, Theme  
 Vánáningá tshándzá:na dwé, mábho:mu – vánamb<sup>1</sup>íningá ndíyâ:we.  
 va-na-ning-a tshandzana dwe ma-bhomu va-na-mbi-ning-a  
 2SM-FUT-give-FV 1.niece only 6-lemon 2SM-FUT-NEG-give-FV  
 ndiya-awe  
 1.sister-POSS.1  
 ‘They will give lemons to the niece only, they will not give to her  
 sister.’

In fact, Cicopi allows multiple content question words in the postverbal domain, as illustrated in (62).

- (62) Vhalerio áxávheté cá:ní mâ:ni?  
 Vhalerio a-xavh-el-ile cani mani  
 1.Valerio 1SM-buy-APPL-PFV what who  
 ‘Who did Valerio buy what?’

For non-arguments, such multiple questions are also possible, and the word order is flexible, as shown in (63) and (64).

- (63) a. Álúngisilé câ:ni nja:ní?  
 a-lungis-ile cani njani  
 1SM-repair-PFV what how  
 ‘How did s/he repair what?’  
 b. Álúngisilá nja:ní câ:ni?  
 a-lungis-ile njani cani  
 1SM-repair-PFV how what  
 ‘How did s/he repair what?’
- (64) a. Pédrú ámáné c<sup>1</sup>:á:ní aha:yí?  
 Pedro a-man-e cani ahayi  
 1.Pedro 1SM-find-PFV what where  
 ‘What did Pedro find where?’  
 b. Pédrú ámáné ha:yí ca:ni?  
 Pedro a-man-e hayi cani  
 1.Pedro 1SM-find-PFV where what  
 ‘What did Pedro find where?’

Note, however, that multiple focus seems to be possible only for question words and not for other focus constituents, as only one postverbal constituent can be modified by *dwe* ‘only’, as seen in the ungrammaticality of example (65).

- (65) \* Nigöndísilé vanána dwé cíco:pi dwé.  
 ni-gond-is-ile va-nana dwe ci-copi dwe  
 1SG.SM-read-CAUS-PFV 2-child only 7-copi only  
 int. ‘I taught only (the) children only Cicopi.’

Therefore, while focus appears in the postverbal domain in Cicopi, there is no dedicated focus position for objects or adverbs. We now turn to postverbal subjects, which work slightly differently.

### 3.4 Subject inversion

The postverbal domain also hosts the logical subject in subject inversion constructions. These are constructions in which the logical subject appears postverbally and a possible topic appears in a preverbal position (see Marten & van der Wal 2014 for an overview of subject inversion constructions in Bantu). Cicopi has two such constructions: Agreeing Inversion and Default Agreement Inversion (DAI), discussed in more detail below. Other possible inversion constructions are not accepted in Cicopi, such as Locative Inversion and Patient Inversion, in which respectively a locative or theme constituent appears preverbally and determines subject marking on the verb. Their unacceptability is shown in (66) for Locative Inversion,<sup>6</sup> and in (67) for Patient Inversion.

- (66) \* Ntini mulé múbéte Joau.  
in-t-ini mu-le mu-bet-e Joao  
3-home-LOC 18-DEM.MED 18SM-enter-PFV 1.Joao  
‘In that home/compound entered João.’
- (67) (Context: QUIS picture of a girl pulling a chair.)  
Cítúlú cí cindí:nda mwáná:ná.  
ci-tulu ci ci-ndind-a mw-anana  
7-chair 7.DEM.PROX 7SM-pull-FV 1-child  
? ‘The chair is pulling the child.’  
\* ‘The child is pulling the chair.’

In Agreeing Inversion, the subject marker on the verb agrees in noun class with the postverbal logical subject, as illustrated in (68) where the postverbal *mafaka* ‘maize’ determines the subject marker in noun class 6.

- (68) Mapháyî:lwe mafáká thém̄bwe:ni?  
ma-phay-il-w-e ma-faka themw-ini  
6SM-SOW-APPL-PASS-PFV 6-maize field-LOC  
‘Was maize sown in the field?’

Agreeing Inversion can be used in a corrective context, as in (69), and without necessary exclusion of alternatives (given that the additive *ni* ‘and/also’ can be used).

<sup>6</sup>Locative Inversion is unacceptable with or without applicative morphology

- (69) (*Mbvhuta yidya senora?* ‘Does the sheep eat carrot?’)  
 Ihî:mhím hinga mbvhú:tá dwé yidyâ:ku, yí:dyá ní fu:tu.  
 ihmhim hinga mbvhuta dwe yi-dy-a=ku yi-dy-a ni  
 no COP.NEG 9.sheep only 9SM-eat-FV=REL 9SM-eat-FV and  
 futu  
 9.tortoise  
 ‘No, it’s not only the sheep; the tortoise also eats.’

It is unclear at this point which form of the verb is acceptable in Agreeing Inversion (see Section 2 on conjoint and disjoint verb forms), and which types of predicates can occur. Further research, for example on the scope of the postverbal subject relative to negation, is needed to establish the underlying structure of Agreeing Inversion in Cicopi, as well as its precise interpretation and use.

The second subject inversion construction, Default Agreement Inversion (DAI), is possible in Cicopi with unaccusative (70), unergative (73), passive, and transitive (71) predicates. The subject marker in this construction is insensitive to the person/number/gender features of the subject, remaining a default class 17, and the postverbal subject can be a question word or an answer, as illustrated in the following examples. The interpretation is discussed below.

- (70) a. Kúwî:té ma:ní? [VSO]  
 ku-w-ile mani  
 17SM-fall-PFV who  
 ‘Who fell?’
- b. Kúwî:te Marí:ya.  
 ku-w-ile Mariya  
 17SM-fall-PFV 1.Maria  
 ‘It was Maria who fell.’
- (71) (Context: QUIS picture of a girl pulling a chair.)
- a. Kúndíndá ma:ni cítu:lu? [VSO]  
 ku-ndind-a mwani ci-tulu  
 17SM-pull-FV who 7-chair  
 ‘Who is pulling the chair?’
- b. Kúndíndá mwán<sup>1</sup>:á.ná cítu:lu. [VSO]  
 ku-ndind-a mw-anana ci-tulu  
 17SM-pull-FV 1-child 7-chair  
 ‘A child is pulling the chair.’  
 (also OK as answer to ‘Is a dog pulling the chair?’)

DAI can have a thetic interpretation (“out of the blue”, see van der Wal et al. 2025 [this volume] and Sasse 1996, 2006), or narrow subject focus. The thetic use is illustrated in (72) and (73) with an existential/presentational or announcing function.

(72) (Frog story)

Ká:sí kúvéni híngá n'dó:ngá wówó:má wúkú hálé.

kasi kuveni hinga n'-donga w-a-woma wu-ku hale

but [adv] COP.NEG 3-tree 3-CONN-dry 3SM=REL 16.DEM.MED

‘But, after all, it isn’t a dry tree that is there.’

**Kútíní cíhá:rí címwé:cô** vácídhánâká ku ínyá:râ, cíhá:rí cí cíngáyáé:má.

ku-ti=ni ci-hari ci-mweco va-ci-dhan-ak-a=ku i-nyara

17SM-IPFV=with 7-animal 7SM-one 2SM-7OM-call-DUR-FV=REL 9-buffalo

ci-hari ci ci-nga-ya-em-a

7SM-animal 7.DEM.PROX 7SM-REL-go-stand-FV

‘There was an animal called a buffalo that was standing.’

(73) Kúná ndzú:mâ.

ku-n-a ndzuma

17SM-rain-FV 9.rain

‘It’s raining.’

The interpretation with narrow focus on the postverbal subject is illustrated in (74) and (75) with the exhaustive particle *dwe* ‘only’.

(74) Kúhókile mwaná:ná dwe.

ku-hok-ile mw-anana dwe

17SM-arrive-PFV 1-child only

‘Only the child arrived.’

(75) Kútútumilé Gó:mes dwé.

ku-tutum-ile Gomes dwe

17SM-run-PFV 1.Gomes only

‘Only Gomes ran.’

With a transitive verb, narrow subject focus is the only interpretation that is allowed for DAI, regardless of the word order: both VOS and VSO are acceptable but only with subject focus, as indicated in the contexts for (76) and (77); see also in (71b) above.<sup>7</sup> This is in line with what Carstens & Mletshe (2015) found for Xhosa VSO transitive expletive constructions.

<sup>7</sup>Note, though, that there is a pause between O and S in the VOS order. As mentioned, more research is needed to understand the role of prosody.

- (76) (Context 1, subject focus: I can see that someone is filling the water containers and ask: who is drawing water?  
 #Context 2, object focus: What is Nelsa drawing?)  
 Kúr<sup>1</sup>éká mâ:tí Nê:l̩sa. [VOS]  
 ku-rek-a mati Nelsa  
 17SM-draw-FV 6.water 1.Nelsa  
 ‘Nelsa is drawing water.’
- (77) (Who is cooking rice? / #What is Luisa cooking?)  
 Kubhiká Lúizá mpû:nga. [VSO]  
 ku-bhik-a Luiza mpunga  
 17SM-cook-FV 1.Luisa 3.rice  
 ‘Luisa cooked rice.’

Note that this postverbal focus in VSO is not necessarily exhaustive, as modification of the subject by the inclusive particle *hambi* ‘even’ is possible in example (78), suggesting that there are others who also ate shima (see also van der Wal et al. 2025 [this volume] for diagnostics):

- (78) Kúdyî:té **hámbí** Rózá:río mba:ba. [VSO]  
 ku-dy-ile hambí Rosario mbaba  
 17SM-eat-PFV even 1.Rosario 3.shima  
 ‘Even Rosario ate shima.’

Questions in transitive DAI require the question word to be placed adjacent to the verb, as in (79), in contrast to object question words in SVOO order, as shown in Section 3.3 above, examples (54–57). This is of course with the exception of multiple questions, where both question words occur postverbally but not necessarily verb-adjacent, as in (80).

- (79) a. Kúndíndá **ma:ni** cítu:lu? [VSO]  
 ku-ndind-a mani ci-tulu  
 17SM-pull-FV who 7-chair  
 ‘Who is pulling the chair?’
- b. \*Kubhiká mpû:nga **mâ:ni**? [\*VOS]  
 ku-bhik-a mpunga mani  
 17SM-cook-FV 3.rice who  
 ‘Who is cooking rice?’



focused. The possibilities for conjoint and disjoint verb forms and their interpretations in subject inversion remain for further research.

### 3.5 Right periphery

It is not always clear whether the postverbal logical subject is part of an inversion construction or a right-dislocated constituent. Example (82) may look like an Agreeing Inversion construction, but the context indicates that the postverbal subject is not presented as new information (because it is given in the question) but should be analysed as a right-dislocated constituent. The same is true for (83), from the Frog story, where the frog is part of the core of the story, but has not been mentioned for a while. The speaker, having referred to the frog first as ‘the animal he was looking for’ and then specifying in the right periphery as ‘his frog’.

- (82) (Why do the bulls have these marks?)

Tópé:kwá tího:mú.

ti-o-pek-w-a                      ti-homu

10SM-PROG-hit-pass-FV 10-bulls

‘They are (being) beaten, the bulls.’

- (83) (When the boy passed, he went to climb that tree because he saw that where he had been looking, where the mouse was, it was not the place he was looking for.)

Ayamáná cíhári ci angátícílá:vá ca díkhelé dá:kwé.

a-ya-man-a              ci-hari              ci                      a-nga-ti-ci-lav-a

1SM-NEG-find-FV 7-animal 7.DEM.PROX 1SM-REL-IPFV-7OM-want-FV

ci-a              di-khele di-akwe

7-CONN 5-frog              5-POSS.1

‘He did not find the animal he was looking for, his frog.’

A clear afterthought interpretation of a right-peripheral constituent is also seen in (84): the narrator of the Frog story assumes that the hearer knows who/what was hitting the boy, but adds the information that this was the owl, in case it was not clear. Then, in the second part, *mámé wúlé* ‘the boy’ is right-dislocated too, and also modified by a distal demonstrative.

- (84) (That owl got tired of hearing his noise, went out and hit him.)  
 Cídímúpékílé ngu típá:pá, **cíkhóvhá cílé**, ató:wá háhá:tsí **mámé wú:lé**.  
 ci-di-mu-pek-ile ngu ti-papa ci-khovha ci-le  
 7SM-DEP-1OM-hit-PFV PREP 10-wing 7-owl 7SM-DEM.MED  
 a-to-w-a ha-hatsi mame wu-le  
 1SM-PST-fall-FV 16-down 1.boy 1SM-DEM.MED  
 ‘When he hit him with its wings, the/that owl, he fell to the ground,  
 the/that boy.’

A prosodic break may also indicate right dislocation, as in (85) and (86) for subject and objects.

- (85) Átô:bhika, Páulu, feijáu.  
 a-to-bhik-a Paulu feijau  
 1SM-TO-cook-FV 1.Paulo 10.bean  
 ‘He cooks (them) well, Paulo, the beans.’
- (86) (Description of definiteness pictures Bloom Ström. A man goes to the market. He sees a pineapple.)  
 Digwíta díwóná miko:mbva, diyâyidhu:ndha (, **miko:mbva**).  
 di-gwit-a di-won-a mi-kombva di-ya-yi-dhundh-a mi-kombva  
 5SM-finish-FV 5SM-see-FV 4-banana 5SM-NEG-4OM-like-FV 4.banana  
 ‘He looks at some bananas. He didn’t like them (the bananas).’

Object marking seems to be optional for right-peripheral constituents, as shown in the comparison between (87a) with object marker and (87b) without. Note also the lengthening on *hayi* ‘where’ in (87a) but not (87b), likely indicative of the right edge of a prosodic phrase. These properties can be interpreted as the object being dislocated in (87a) but not (87b).

- (87) a. Míixavilé ha:yí **fóni ilé?**  
 mu-yi-xav-ile hayi foni ile  
 2PL.SM-9OM-buy-PFV where 9.phone 9.DEM.MED  
 ‘Where did you buy that phone?’
- b. Muxavilé hayí **fóni ilé?**  
 mu-xav-ile hayi foni ile  
 2PL.SM-buy-PFV where 9.phone 9.DEM.MED  
 ‘Where did you buy that phone?’

The optional object marking contrasts with left-dislocated constituents, which seems to require object marking when human, as shown in (88a); compared with right-peripheral location of the same constituent in (88b), with optional object marking.

- (88) a. **Vaná:ná**, ngóndî:sí á\*(vá)ningíle mápâ:xta.  
 va-nana n-gondisi a-va-ning-ile ma-paxta  
 2-child 1-teacher 1SM-2OM-give-PFV 6-bag  
 ‘The children, the teacher gave them bags.’
- b. Ngóndî:si á(vá)ningíle hambí ní mápâ:xta **vanâ:na**.  
 n-gondisi a-va-ning-ile hambí ní ma-paxta va-nana  
 1-teacher 1SM-2OM-give-PFV even and 6-bag 2-child  
 ‘The teacher gave even bags to the children.’

Object marking would be a potential further diagnostic to determine the status of constituents inside or outside the core clause, but object marking in Cicopi is still poorly understood (see Section 6).

To summarise this section on word order, the preverbal domain in Cicopi is restricted to non-focal constituents, and the postverbal domain contains non-topical constituents. Topics are preferably expressed in initial position, and focus constituents can appear in any postverbal position, although there may be a preference for the immediate-after-verb position. The right periphery contains backgrounded constituents such as afterthoughts. This is summarised in Figure 1.

topic	subject	V	non-topic	non-topic/non-focus
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Figure 1: Template for Cicopi word order

## 4 Cleft

Cleft constructions consist of a relative clause expressing the given/presupposed information, and a clefted focus constituent. Before we introduce the cleft constructions in Cicopi, we first provide information on the marking of cleft constructions, specifically the copulas and relative marking. The clefted constituent is marked by a preceding copula, and the copula can appear in three forms: segmentally as *ngu* or *i*, or suprasegmentally as a high tone. The copula *ngu* is illustrated in (89); the high tone copula can be seen in comparing (90a–90b). Example (90a) is a cleft, with a high tone on *mpú:nga* and compatible with modification

by *dwe* ‘only’ (see further below), whereas in (90b) *mpu:nga* ‘rice’ is a low-toned left-dislocated topic, which hence cannot be modified by ‘only’. We gloss the high tone as COP, together with the gloss of the first segmental morpheme.

- (89) Ngú ha:yí údímâ:ku?  
 ngu hayi u-dim-a=ku  
 COP where 2SG.SM-farm-FV=REL  
 ‘Where do you dig/farm?’ / ‘Where are you digging?’
- (90) a. Mpú:nga (dwé) Luiza abhikâ:ku.  
 mpunga dwe Luisa a-bhik-a=ku  
 COP.3.rice only 1.Luisa 1SM-cook-FV=REL  
 ‘It’s (only) the rice Luisa is cooking.’
- b. Mpu:nga (\*dwé) Luíza óbhĩ:ka.  
 mpunga dwe Luisa a-o-bhik-a  
 3.rice only 1.Luisa 1SM-PROG-cook-FV  
 ‘The rice, Luisa is cooking (it).’

Relativisation is marked in (91) for the present tense by the enclitic =*ku*, and in other tenses as a prefix *nga-*, illustrated for an object relative clause in (92).

- (91) (*I ncani yiku ka dipanela?* ‘What is in the pot?’)  
 Í féjaú yíkú ka dípáne:la  
 i fejau yi=ku ka di-panela  
 COP 9.bean 9SM=REL LOC 5-pot  
 ‘It’s beans that are in the pot.’
- (92) Vanáná (vá) ningavawo:na wáwí:te.  
 va-nana va ni-nga-va-von-a va-w-ile  
 2-child 2.DEM.PROX 1SG.SM-REL-2OM-see-FV 2SM-fall-PFV  
 ‘The(se) children that I saw fell.’

As in many languages, cleft constructions in Cicopi are used to focus constituents, and Cicopi has three related constructions to do that: the basic cleft, the pseudocleft, and the reverse pseudocleft (which may be analysed better as a NP + basic cleft). We discuss these in turn.

#### 4.1 Basic cleft

The basic cleft in Cicopi is marked by a copula *i* or *ngu* preceding the clefted constituent, and a relative clause following it, as we can see in (91) above and (93), where the relative is marked by the enclitic =*ku*.

- (93) (*Kudya mani senora?* Who is eating a/the carrot? + drawing of a sheep and a tortoise eating a carrot.)  
 Í mbvhû:tá ní fu:tu sídyâ:ku séno:ra.  
 i mbvhuta ni futu si-dy-a=ku senora  
 COP 9.sheep and 9.tortoise 8SM-eat-FV=REL 5.carrot  
 ‘It is the sheep and the tortoise that are eating a/the carrot.’

Basic clefts can naturally be used for interrogatives, clefting the inherently focused question word, as in (94) and (95).

- (94) Í nc<sup>1</sup>ání Teré:za angatíyo:ka?  
 i cani Tereza a-nga-ti-yok-a  
 COP what 1.Teresa 1SM-REL-IPFV-bake-FV  
 ‘What was Teresa baking?’
- (95) Í m<sup>1</sup>ání ándíndâ:ku cítu:lu?  
 i mani a-ndind-a=ku ci-tulu  
 COP who 1SM-pull-FV=REL 7-chair  
 ‘Who is pulling the chair?’

As already mentioned in Section 3.1, the question word by itself is ungrammatical in preverbal position, i.e. without the copula. Answers to content questions may also appear in a cleft, as shown in (96A2), although they do not need to, as shown in (96A1).

- (96) (What was Teresa baking?)
- A1: Téréza átíy<sup>1</sup>óká díbhoólu.  
 Tereza a-ti-yok-a di-bholu  
 1.Teresa 1SM-IPFV-bake-FV 5-cake  
 ‘Teresa was baking a/the cake.’
- A2: I díbholú angatíy<sup>1</sup>óká Téréza.  
 i díbholu a-nga-ti-yok-a Tereza  
 COP 5-cake 1SM-REL-IPFV-bake-FV 1.Teresa  
 ‘It was a/the cake that Teresa was baking.’

Similarly, in answering the question in (97), we also have two possibilities: the basic cleft as in A1 or the DAI as in A2.

- (97) Q: 'Who is pulling the chair?'  
 A1: Í mwán<sup>1</sup>á:ná ándíndâ:ku. [cleft]  
 i mw-anana a-ndind-a=ku  
 COP 1-child 1SM-pull-FV=REL  
 'It's the child who is pulling.'  
 A2: Kúndíndá mwán<sup>1</sup>á:ná cítu:lu. [VSO]  
 ku-ndind-a mw-anana ci-tulu  
 17SM-pull-FV 1-child 7-chair  
 'A child is pulling the chair.'

Clefts are not only used for eliciting and providing new information, but also to express a contrast, as in the correction from the QUIS map task illustrated in (98).

- (98) A: (I have walked and I find a bicycle.)  
 B: Hingá bhasíké:ní, í m<sup>1</sup>ó:vha níwónâ:ku.  
 hinga bhasikeni, i movha ni-won-a=ku  
 COP.NEG 9.bicycle COP 5.car 1SG.SM-see-FV=REL  
 'It's not a bicycle, it's a car that I see.'

The focus on the clefted constituent comes out as exhaustive when the expression *dwe* (only) is used. Note that *dwe* can be separated from the clefted constituent but still modify it, as in the answer in (99), where *dwe* appears in final position, but is interpreted with the clefted subject *Gomes*.

- (99) Q: Í m<sup>1</sup>ání angatutu:ma?  
 i mani a-nga-tutum-a  
 COP who 1SM-REL-run-FV  
 'Who ran?'  
 A: Í Go:mes angatutu:ma dwé.  
 i Gomes a-nga-tutum-a dwe  
 COP 1.Gomes 1SM-REL-run-FV only  
 'It was only Gomes that ran.'

The exhaustive interpretation seems to be an implied part of the interpretation of the basic cleft, as visible in the answer to an incomplete question. The fact that the answer in (100) contains *ihimhim* 'no', rather than *iim* 'yes', shows that the cleft in the question can be interpreted as exhaustive: the cleft question in (100)

asks, ‘Is [the sheep]<sub>EXH</sub> eating a carrot?’ and the negation applies to the exhaustivity: it is true that the sheep is eating the carrot, but it is not *only* the sheep (also the tortoise). However, an answer with ‘yes’ was also given to a similarly “incomplete” question, as in (101), showing that exhaustivity is not inherent to the basic cleft.

(100) (Context: a drawing with a tortoise and sheep eating a carrot.)

Q: I mbvhu:tá yídyáku sénó:rá?

i mbvhuta yi-dy-a=ku senora  
COP 9.sheep 9SM-eat-FV=REL 5.carrot

‘Is it the sheep that is eating a/the carrot?’

A: Ihî:nhím, í mbvhû:ta ní fu:tu, hingá mbvhú:tá dwé yídyâ:ku séno:ra.

ihimhim i mbvhuta ni futu hinga mbvhuta dwe  
no COP 9.sheep and 9.tortoise COP.NEG 9.sheep only  
yi-dy-a=ku senora  
9SM-eat-FV=REL 5.carrot

‘No, it is the sheep and tortoise, it’s not only the sheep that eats a/the carrot.’

(101) (Context: a photo of a woman selling tomatoes and onions.)

Q: Síma:tí axávisá:kú wansika:ti?

si-mati a-xav-is-a=ku wansikati  
COP.8-tomato 1SM-buy-CAUS-FV=REL 1.woman

‘Is it tomatoes the woman is selling?’

A: Iim/Ihî:nhím sím<sup>1</sup>:á:tí ní tíny<sup>1</sup>:á:lá áxávisâ:kú wánsíka:ti.

Iim/ ihimhim si-mati ni ti-nyala a-xav-is-a=ku  
yes/ no COP.8-tomato and 10-onion 1SM-buy-CAUS-FV=REL  
wansikati

1.woman

‘Yes/no, it’s tomatoes and onions that the woman is selling.’

The answer in (102) suggests that the cleft conveys an exhaustive focus: just by using the cleft, the “overcomplete” statement in the question can be corrected to exclude the cat mentioned in the question in (102).

(102) (Context: QUIS picture of Maria with a rabbit.)

Q: Í mvh<sup>1</sup>ú:njá ni cíwô:ngá ákúnású Marî:ya?<sup>9</sup>  
 i mvhunja ni ci-wonga a-ku=na=su Mariya  
 COP 5.rabbit and 7-cat 1SM-REL=with=8OM 1.Mary  
 ‘It is a rabbit and a cat that Mary has?’

A: Ihî:mhím, i mvhu:njá akuna:cú, akáná cíwó:ngá.  
 ihmhim i mvhunja a-ku=na=cu a-ka=na ci-wonga  
 no COP 9.rabbit 1SM-REL=with=7OM 1SM-NEG=with 7.cat  
 ‘No, it is a rabbit that she has. She doesn’t have a cat.’

The fact that inclusive *hambi* ‘even’ is not acceptable in a cleft (103) illustrates the same point: if she has fed the goats even rice, as the least likely in a range of other foodstuffs that she also gave, then rice is not the exhaustive referent for which the predicate is true.

(103) \* Í hambí mpû:nga Laurínyá átiningile típhô:ngo.  
 i hambí mpunga Laurinya a-ti-ning-ile ti-phongo  
 COP even 3.rice 1.Laurinha 1SM-10OM-give-PFV 10-goat  
 int. ‘It’s even rice that Laurinha gave to the goats.’

We have conflicting evidence for the universal quantifier *sotshe* ‘all’. In principle, ‘all’ cannot exclude any alternatives and is therefore incompatible with exclusive focus. The unacceptability of (104) therefore suggests that the cleft has an exclusive interpretation; but the acceptability of (105) suggests differently. The explanation for this acceptability might be found in the context for examples like (105) and (106): the universal quantifier is opposed to the alternative of ‘some’ (i.e. ‘not all’), thereby excluding at least that alternative. This opposition makes it compatible with an exclusive reading.

(104) \* I so:tshe siketa ningaxa:va.<sup>10</sup>  
 i si-otshe si-keta ni-nga-xav-a  
 COP 8-all 8-pineapple 1SM-REL-buy-FV  
 int. ‘It’s all the pineapples that I bought.’

<sup>9</sup>The enclitic object marker is used in relative clauses and with SM=na=cl ‘be with’; in other environments we find a prefixal object marker.

<sup>10</sup>This example lacks tone marking.

- (105) (Context: There's a pest and someone wants to know which animals will die if they don't fumigate.)  
 Sihãri sô:tshé sínô:fa.  
 si-hari si-otshe si-na-o-f-a  
 COP.8-animal 8-all 8SM-FUT-REL-die-FV  
 'It's all the animals that will die.'
- (106) (Did the cat really break every single thing?)  
 Í s'ó:tshé ciwo:ngá cingáfa:ya.  
 I si-otshe ci-wonga ci-nga-fay-a  
 COP 8-all 7-cat 7SM-REL-break-FV  
 'It's everything that the cat broke.'

A “mention some” question can also be used to test exhaustivity (see the BaSIS methodology, van der Wal 2021). Such a question has multiple good answers; for the question in (107) there are typically various places in which spring onions can be bought, and this means that the answer to such a question cannot contain an exhaustive focus strategy (as it would not be true that the mentioned place is the only place where onions can be bought). The question here can be felicitously answered by the SVO sentence in (107b), but for the cleft in (107a) it was indicated that this means it would be the only place you can get them (which is not true and therefore infelicitous).

- (107) (Where can I buy spring onions?)
- a. # Í bazá:rá ungóxává:kú cíbhi:la.  
 i bazara u-nga-ku-xav-a=ku ci-bhila  
 COP market 2SG.SM-POT-15-buy-FV=REL 7-spring.onion  
 'It's on the market that you can buy spring onion.'
- b. Ungáxává bazâ:ra.  
 u-nga-xav-a bazara  
 2SG.SM-POT-buy-FV market  
 'You can buy (them) on the market.'

Given these data suggesting the exclusive or exhaustive interpretation of the basic cleft, it is surprising that the basic cleft is accepted with cognate objects (108) and parts of idioms (109), retaining the idiomatic interpretation; as mentioned, cognate objects and parts of idioms are “unfocusable” as they cannot generate any alternatives in the idiomatic interpretation (see van der Wal 2016, 2022). Note also that these arethetic contexts, which may be of influence on their unexpected acceptance.

- (108) (Where did you get this idea?)  
 Ml'ó:ró ningalo:ra.  
 m-loro ni-nga-lor-a  
 COP.3-dream 1SG.SM-REL-dream-FV  
 'It's a dream that I dreamt.'
- (109) (What happened with him/her?)  
 Díbh'á:vhú ángákha:va.  
 di-bhavhu a-nga-khav-a  
 COP.5-bucket 1SM-REL/PFV-kick-FV  
 'It's a bucket that s/he kicked.'  
 'S/He passed away.'

Finally, as Cicopi does not have a restriction against multiple foci, the focus on a clefted constituent can be combined with focus elsewhere in the clause, as illustrated in (110). In (110a) the exhaustive marker *dwé* gives exhaustive focus to the object *tikaneta* 'pens', which means that only pens were given to the children by the teacher, whereas in (110b) the focus is on *vanana* 'children', which means that only children were given pens (which presupposes that in addition to children other people such as school staff and others could have received the pens). *Dwe* in these cases modifies the constituent immediately to its left.

- (110) a. (Context: Someone sees pens and pencils with the children and asks: Who gave those things to the children?)  
 I n'gondísi angánínga tikané:ta dwé, vána:na.  
 i n'gondisi a-nga-ning-a ti-kaneta dwé, va-nana  
 COP 1.teacher 1SM-REL-give-FV 10-pen only 2-child  
 'It was the teacher that gave only pens to children.'
- b. (Context: Someone sees the children and the adults with pens and ask: Who gave pens to them?)  
 I n'gondísi angáníngá tikané:ta, vána:na dwé.  
 i n'gondisi a-nga-ning-a ti-kaneta va-nana dwé  
 COP 1.teacher 1SM-REL-give-FV 10-pen 2-child only  
 'It was the teacher that gave pens to the children only.'

Multiple questions with a cleft are also accepted; the subject or object can be clefted while the other interrogative remains postverbal.

- (111) a. Í nc<sup>!</sup>á:ni angawo:mbá ma:ni?  
 i cani a-nga-womb-a mani  
 COP what 1SM-REL-say-FV who  
 ‘Who said what?’, lit. ‘It’s what that who said?’
- b. Í m!áni angawo:mbá ca:ni?  
 i mani a-nga-womb-a cani  
 COP who 1SM-REL-say-FV what  
 ‘Who said what?’, lit. ‘It’s who that said what?’

In summary, the clefted constituent shows some properties of an exclusive or even exhaustive focus interpretation, but its use seems to be broader than that, given the felicity inthetic contexts with idioms and cognate objects.

#### 4.2 Pseudocleft

In a pseudocleft, the copula joins a free relative and a noun phrase. So, we find first the relative clause (on its left), then the copula and a noun phrase or pronoun (on its right), as we can see in (112).

- (112) (What did they see?)  
 Ací vângáciwó:na i cíwó:nga.  
 a-ci va-nga-ci-won-a i ci-wonga  
 AUG-7.DEM.PROX 2SM-REL-7OM-see-FV COP 7-cat  
 ‘What they saw is a cat.’

The free relative clause in the pseudocleft is headed by the demonstrative pronoun. This proximate demonstrative pronoun is joined to the augment *a-* at the beginning to form *awu* in (113) and *aci* in (117). The free relative clause describes an entity, and that entity is then identified by the focus (which is the referent of the NP or pronoun). To illustrate: the relative clause *awu ningatimulosa* ‘the one I was greeting’ in (113) presupposes that there is someone greeting someone else, and the second part identifies exactly who was being greeted: *Marta*. The context questions also indicate that the postcopular NP forms the focus, not the precopular part.

- (113) (Who were you greeting? / #Who is Marta?)  
 Awú ningatímúló:sá í Ma:rtá.  
 a-wu ni-nga-ti-mu-los-a i Marta  
 AUG-1.DEM.PROX 1SG.SM-REL-IPFV-greet-FV COP 1.Marta  
 ‘The one I was greeting is Marta.’

Nevertheless, the presupposition of existence is not necessarily present, considering that the answer to a pseudocleft question can be the empty set, as seen in the felicitous answer to the question in (114).

- (114) Q: Awú atsimbítisáku mo:vhá í má:ní?  
a-wu a-tsizimbitis-a=ku mo:vha i ma:ni  
AUG-1.DEM 1SM-drive-FV=REL 3.car COP who  
'Who is driving/can drive a/the car?', lit. The one driving the car is who?
- A1: Hingá:nthu.  
hinga nthu.  
COP.NEG 1.person  
'Nobody.'
- A2: Awú atsimbítisáku mo:vhá hingá:nthu.  
a-wu a-tsizimbitis-a=ku mo:vha hinga nthu  
AUG-1.DEM 1SM-drive-FV=REL 3.car COP.NEG 1.person  
'Who can drive a/the car is nobody.'<sup>11</sup>

Pseudoclefts can be used to ask and answer questions. In the answer to a content question, the free relative repeats the given information and then the predicative NP brings the focus answer, as we can see in (115).

- (115) Q: Àwú atsimbítisákú mo:vhá i má:ní?  
a-wu a-tsizimbitis-a=ku movha i mani  
AUG-1.DEM.PROX 1SM-drive-FV=REL 3.car COP who  
'Who is driving the car?'
- A: Àwú atsimbítisákú mo:vhá i Sá:ra.  
a-wu a-tsizimbitis-a=ku movha i Sara  
AUG-1.DEM.PROX 1SM-drive-FV=REL 3.car COP 1.Sara  
'The one who's driving the car is Sara.'

The focus interpretation is also visible in (116), where the pseudocleft structure results in ungrammaticality when applying the 'even' test which is marked by *hambi* in Cicopi – this, in fact, suggests an exclusive reading. In (117), the example

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<sup>11</sup>The meaning can be 'who is driving the car', but a reviewer points out that if a car is driven, it is (in the pre-self-driving era) driven by someone. The interpretation of this sentence can thus only be in a situation of finding out who has a driving licence, translated as 'who can drive a car'.

also shows the unacceptability of parts of an idiomatic expression, in this case ‘the bucket’. Although the sentence is grammatical, it does not retain its idiomatic meaning, because alternatives are generated on the level of the object {a stone, a ball, a bucket} and not the whole idiom (pass away).

- (116) \* Awu angádyá ciké:ta i hambí Arli:ndu.  
a-wu a-nga-dy-a ci-keta i hambí Arlindu  
AUG-1.DEM.PROX 1SM-REL-eat-FV 7-pineapple COP even 1.Arlindu  
int. ‘The one who ate pineapple was even Arlindo.’
- (117) Ací angákhá:vá i díbhá:vhu.  
a-ci a-nga-khav-a i di-bhavhu  
AUG-DEM.PROX 1SM-REL-kick-FV COP 5-bucket  
‘What s/he kicked is a bucket.’  
\* ‘S/He passed away’

Pseudoclefts are naturally used in answers to alternative questions, identifying the referent, as illustrated in (118) and (119), as well as in selective answers such as (120), again identifying a subset.

- (118) (Who cut the banana, the big boy or the small boy?)  
Awú angawílá nkô:mbvá m’fá:ná wándo:to.  
a-wu a-nga-wil-a nkombva m’-fana w-a ndoto  
AUG-1.DEM.PROX 1SM-REL-cut-FV 9.banana COP.1-boy 1-CONN small  
‘The one who cut the banana is the small boy.’
- (119) (Who has a parrot, Thomas or Samuel? + QUIS picture of Samuel with a parrot.)  
Aw’ ákúni cinyáná:na í S<sup>1</sup>ámué:le.  
a-wu a=ku=ni ci-nyanana i Samuel  
AUG-1.DEM.PROX 1SM-REL=with 7-parrot COP 1.Samuel  
‘The one who has a parrot is Samuel.’
- (120) (Do these people wear hats? +QUIS picture of two women without hats and two men with hats. )  
Ka váthu vá:va, avá vákúni sígo:ko májã:há.  
ka va-thu vava a-va va=ku=ni si-goko ma-jaha  
LOC 2-people 2.DEM.PROX AUG-2.PRO 2SM=REL=with 8-hats COP.6-man  
‘Of/between these people, the ones that have hats are the men.’

As in other languages, the pseudocleft in Cicopi is thus typically used for identifying a referent, although it remains to be seen if this is an exhaustive identification.

### 4.3 Reverse pseudocleft/left-peripheral NP + cleft

In principle, the two parts of the copular construction in a pseudocleft can be reversed, referred to as a reverse pseudocleft, e.g. ‘the men are the ones that have hats’. However, in this construction in Cicopi, the demonstrative in the relative clause is no longer marked with the augment, as shown in (121), where we see *wu* rather than *awu*. In fact, it can be an independent pronoun, as illustrated by *yona* in (122). We give two translations, foreshadowing the alternative analysis discussed later.

- (121) (Context: We were talking about school and I mentioned Marta, but you don’t know Marta. So, you ask: ‘Who is Marta?’)

Ma:rta, i wú angárépwé:la cikólwá:ni.

Marta i wu a-nga-repwel-a ci-kolwa-ni

1.Marta COP 1.DEM.PROX 1SM-REL.PST-fail-FV 7-school-LOC

‘Marta is the one who failed at school.’ / ‘Marta, it is her who failed at school.’

- (122) (Having climbed onto that trunk, his dog also climbed, showing him by scent that the animal we are looking for may be there. Then he sniffed.)

Yí:mbwá, ngu yóna yifémbá:kú ngu makô:ta yá yó:na.

yi-mbwa ngu yi-ona yi-femb-a=ku ngu ma-kota y-a y-ona

9-dog COP 9-PRO 9SM-sniff-FV=REL PREP 6-nose 6-CONN 9-PRO

‘The dog is what sniffs with its snout.’

As in other Bantu languages (see Nshemezimana & van der Wal (2025 [this volume]), Asiimwe & van der Wal (2025 [this volume]), Lusekelo et al. (2025 [this volume]), Kanampiu & van der Wal (2025 [this volume])), this apparent “reverse pseudocleft” may be better analysed as a left-dislocated NP followed by a basic cleft. In this analysis, the clefted constituent is the demonstrative or personal pronoun, referring to the same referent as the initial NP. We suggest that the precopular NP functions as the topic – this would be compatible with the following prosodic break in (121) and (122) above. The clefted pronoun (*wu/yona*) then forms the focus.

This suggests that the referent to which the initial NP and the demonstrative refer must be topical information and be in focus at the same time. This is shown

in (123), where the girls are mentioned in the question and can hence be taken up as a (contrastive) topic, but since they are selected to the exclusion of the boys, they are in focus too. The topic function is expressed by the NP and the focus by the demonstrative in the cleft.

- (123) (Did the boys and girls wash their hands?)  
**Mahóra:na** ngu **wó:na** mangasa:mba mandza:na, majá:há mayásá:mbá.  
 ma-horana ngu w-ona ma-nga-samb-a ma-ndza-ini ma-jaha  
 6-girl COP 6-PRO 6SM-REL-wash-FV 6-hand-LOC 6-boy  
 ma-ya-samb-a  
 6SM-NEG-wash-FV  
 ‘It was the girls who washed the hands, the boys didn’t.’  
 ‘(as for) The girls, it’s them who washed hands, the boys didn’t.’

Idiomatic expressions do not retain their idiomatic reading in this construction, as seen in (124) – this is expected because neither topic nor focus can involve idiomatic expressions.

- (124) Dibhá:vhú, i ci éné angákhá:va.  
 di-bhávhú i ci ene a-nga-khav-a  
 5-bucket COP 7.DEM.PROX 1.PRO 1SM-REL-kick-FV  
 ‘The bucket, it’s what s/he kicked.’  
 \* ‘Passing away is what s/he did.’

The fact that the initial NP cannot be a question word, as shown in (125), also suggests that this is not just a reverse pseudocleft. Nevertheless, the initial NP can be modified by *dwe* ‘only’, as in (126). Considering the pause after *Tereza* *dwe* ‘only Teresa’, we propose that this can be analysed as a fragment answer, followed by a basic cleft, as indicated in the translations.

- (125) \* Ma:ni i wú híngámuwó:na?  
 mani i wu hi-nga-mu-won-a  
 who COP 1.DEM.PROX 1SM.PL-REL-1OM-see-FV  
 int. ‘Who is it / Who is the one that we saw?’
- (126) (We expect to receive Pedro, Paulo, Teresa and others. Did they come?)  
 Tereza *dwe*, i wu angá:ta ntí:ni.  
 Tereza *dwe* i wu a-nga-t-a n-t-ini  
 1.Teresa only COP 1.DEM.PROX 1SM-REL-come-FV 3-home-LOC  
 ‘It was only Teresa who came home.’  
 ‘Only Teresa. It’s her who came home.’

In summary, there is some evidence to show that what may at first sight look like a reverse pseudocleft, actually combines an initial NP, which functions as a topic or a fragment answer, with a basic cleft in which a demonstrative pronoun (coreferent with the NP) is in focus. This may be a strategy to express both the topical and the focal function of a referent, but divided the two over the NP and clefted pronoun.

## 5 Predicate doubling

In a predicate doubling construction, the same predicate occurs twice: once in a finite and once in a non-finite form. Out of the three types of predicate doubling that Güldemann & Fiedler (2022) describe, Cicopi has two predicate doubling constructions: topic doubling and in-situ doubling (discussed below). It does not allow cleft doubling, as shown in (127), where an infinitive forms the clefted constituent.

- (127) \* I kúsé:ka hisékâ:ku.  
i ku-sek-a hi-sek-a=ku  
COP 15-laugh 1PL.SM-laugh-FV=REL  
lit. 'It's laughing that we laugh.'

In topic doubling, the infinitive precedes the inflected form of the same verb, as in (128) for the verb *-bhika* 'cook'.

- (128) (Context: A mother went out to work and when she returns, she can see that the children are weak. She asks the help 'Are you cooking for these children?')  
Kubhí:ka hábhí:ka.  
ku-bhika hi-a-bhik-a  
15-cook 1PL.SM-DJ-cook-FV  
'We do cook (but they don't eat).'

Topic doubling typically implies a contrast with an alternative predicate (e.g. cooking versus eating), and this contrast can be made explicit, as illustrated in (129). Example (130) shows the same contrast with a transitive predicate, where both verb and object are preposed.

- (129) (Context: You meet someone on the street and you don't even greet – s/he asks whether you're annoyed.)  
 Niyákwâ:ta max kuja:ha nijáhi:le.  
 ni-ya-kwat-a                      max ku-jaha    ni-jah-ile                      'I'm not angry,  
 1SG.SM-NEG-be.angry-FV but 15-hurry 1SG.SM-hurry-PFV  
 but I am in a hurry.'

- (130) (Context: You were left at home with tasks of washing (clothes) and cooking beans. When mum comes home and sees you sitting, she is annoyed: 'You didn't do anything, you're just sitting here watching television!')  
 Niyákuwû:la ká:mbe [kubhika tifeijáu] nibhíkî:le.  
 ni-ya-kuwul-a                      kambe ku-bhika ti-feijau ni-bhik-ile  
 1SG.SM-NEG-wash-FV but 15-cook 10-bean 1SG.SM-cook-PFV  
 'I didn't wash, but I *did* cook the beans.'

The object can also follow the inflected verb, but the interpretation will not be the same, as shown in (131). This example can be an answer to 'what did you cook?' (object focus) or to confirm that s/he really cooked as recommended. In contrast, when the whole verb phrase (infinitive plus object) precedes the inflected form, as in (130), object focus is not a possible interpretation.

- (131) Kubhi:ka nibhíkile tifeijau.  
 ku-bhika ni-bhik-ile                      ti-feijau  
 15-cook 1SG.SM-cook-PFV 10-bean  
 'I cooked (the) beans.'

Apart from the implied or explicit contrast, the interpretation may be one of verum (emphatic focus on the truth), as illustrated in (132) and (133).

- (132) (Context: Someone gave a task and wants to confirm that it is done, saying 'You are not doing what I said'.)  
 Kuthu:ma háthû:ma!  
 ku-thuma hi-a-thum-a  
 15-work 1PL.SM-DJ-work-FV  
 'We are actually doing it.'
- (133) (You are not eating the cake that I bought. It'll go bad.)  
 Ku:dya há:dyá.  
 ku-dya hi-a-dy-a  
 15-eat 1PL.SM-DJ-eat-FV  
 'We *are* eating (it).'

Topic doubling can in the right context also have a depreciative meaning, as illustrated in (134) and (135), or an intensive reading, as in (136).

- (134) (Context: You're talking with your friends and someone else is further away; he comes towards you and you change the topic of conversation and he asks why you're laughing at him, but you say no, we're just happy.)  
 Kuse:ka hasê:ka.  
 ku-seka hi-a-sek-a  
 15-laugh 1PL.SM-DJ-laugh-FV  
 'We're just laughing.'
- (135) (Context: There are people with a bad body odour and someone appears asking what is going on with these ones.)  
 Kusá:mbá vásá:mbá.  
 ku-samba va-a-samb-a  
 15-bathe 2SM-DJ-bathe-FV  
 'They do take a bath (but they don't get clean).'
- (136) (Context: Mary is getting fat and her aunt is surprised with her. What is happening with Mary?)  
 Ku:dya wâ:dya.  
 ku-dya w-a-dy-a  
 15-eat 1SM-DJ-eat-FV  
 'She is eating too much.'

The second type of predicate doubling is called in-situ doubling. It features the infinitive in a postverbal position. The verb form of the inflected verb in the present tense can be each of the conjoint, disjoint, or progressive form (see Section 2), as shown in (137) – we do not know if this corresponds to a difference in meaning or use.

- (137) (Why are you laughing?)  
 Hi-/ha-/ho-seka kúsê:ka.  
 hi-/hi-a-/                      hi-o-sek-a                      ku-seka  
 1PL.SM-/1PL.SM-DJ-/ 1PL.SM-PROG-laugh-FV 15-laugh  
 'We are just laughing.'

For in-situ doubling, there are two main interpretations. The first is an intensive reading, as illustrated in (138) and (139). Note that (138) also illustrates the possibility of a post-infinitival object in in-situ doubling.

- (138) (Context: They hit the child more than a normal spanking.)  
 Vapékile kúpê:ka (mwanâ:na).  
 va-pek-ile ku-peka mw-anana  
 2SM-hit-PFV 15-hit 1-child  
 ‘They really hit the child.’
- (139) (Context: They walked a longer distance than usual, perhaps as far as Xai-Xai from Chidenguele.)  
 Vátsimbíté kútsimbî:la.  
 va-tsimbil-ile ku-tsimbila  
 2SM-walk-PFV 15-walk  
 ‘They really walked!’

The second interpretation is again the depreciative, as we can see in (140).

- (140) Híthé:te kuthê:la (mâ:ti).  
 Hi-thel-ile ku-thela mati  
 1PL.SM-water-PFV 15-water 6.water  
 ‘We watered (the crops) (even if they don’t bear fruit).’

We summarise what we know about predicate doubling in Cicopi in Table 2.

Table 2: Predicate doubling options in Cicopi

	form	Interpretation
topic doubling	INF (O) V-fin INF V-fin O	verum, depreciative, intensive object focus, confirmation
in-situ doubling	V-fin INF (O)	intensive, depreciative

The precise uses of topic doubling and in-situ doubling in Cicopi, as well as the possibilities with regard to the position of arguments (subject, object), and what these tell us about the underlying syntactic and semantic structure, remain for further research.

## 6 Referent expression

Whether referents are more active or less active in the hearer’s (and speaker’s) mind has an influence on the way they are referred to (Chafe 1987). Highly active

referents need less material for successful reference (Ariel 1990, Gundel et al. 1993), and it is therefore unsurprising that in Cicopi such active referents can be referred to by a mere subject marker when they function as subjects, as illustrated earlier in this chapter and again in (141), where we indicate a “null subject” by the empty set symbol.

- (141) (The boy and the dog were still looking for the frog and they found bees on their way and started to run.)

Se, vácípindí:le a:hu, yímbwá yíngâdí yicótútú:ma, Ø yitsú:la.

se va-ci-pind-ile ahu yi-mbwa yi-nga-di  
 so 2SM-PASS-PFV 16.DEM.MED 9-dog 9SM-still-be

yi-ci-o-tutum-a yi-tsul-a  
 9SM-CON-PROG-run-FV 9SM-leave-FV

‘After that, the dog kept running, and left.’

Ø Yitsú:té yiyátumbé:lá, akáyíwô:ne.

yi-tsul-ile yi-ya-tumbel-a a-ka-yi-won-i  
 9SM-leave-PFV 9SM-go-hide-FV 1SM-NEG-9OM-see-NEG

‘He went to hide, he doesn’t see him.’

The active object can equally be expressed pronominally, by object marking on the verb, as in (142) from the QUIS map task: speaker A activates the concept ‘butterfly’, and speaker B then refers to it by an object marker *di-*.

- (142) A: Nákwélélá ngú ciné:né; nímána dipháphálátá:ni.

n-a-kwel-el-a ngu cinene; ni-man-a di-phaphalatani  
 1SM-PRS-go.up-APPL-FV PREP 7.right 1SG.SM-find-FV 5-butterfly

‘I go to the right, I find a butterfly.’

B: Nídímá:ne, nidímá:ne.

ni-di-man-e ni-di-man-e  
 1SG.SM-5OM-find-PFV 1SG.SM-5OM-find-PFV

‘I have found it.’

Out of context, it seems that the object marker can only function as a pronoun. Example (143a) shows that the object marker on the verb and the coreferent NP cannot be in the same domain – the object marker is only allowed when the coreferent NP is extraposed, as in (143b). This was tested with question words, since we know for sure that those cannot be dislocated, and therefore the object-marked object preceding the question word (e.g. *ndiyawe* ‘his sister’) must also be in situ in the same domain. The same is illustrated in (144), where the object

marker *ma-* cannot be present if the coreferent object *mamanga* ‘mangos’ is in the same domain.

- (143) a. \* Vánámún<sup>1</sup>ingá ndíyâ:wé câ:ni?  
 va-na-mu-ning-a ndiya-awe cani  
 2SM-FUT-1OM-give-FV 1.sister-POSS.1 what  
 ‘What will they give his sister?’
- b. Vánámún<sup>1</sup>ingá cá:ní ndíyâ:wé?  
 va-na-mu-ning-a cani ndiya-awe  
 2SM-FUT-1OM-give-FV what 1.sister-POSS.1  
 ‘What will they give his sister?’
- (144) U(\*ma)xaveté máma:nga mâ:ni?  
 u-ma-xav-el-ile ma-manga mani  
 2SG.SM-6OM-buy-APPL-PFV 6-mangos who  
 ‘Who did you buy mangoes for?’

However, we do find examples of the cooccurrence of an object and an object marker, in contexts where the object referent is active. In examples (145) and (146), the verb shows penultimate lengthening, so the object seems to be phrased separately from the verb, but there is no pause to indicate dislocation. We leave further analysis of Cicopi object marking for future research, but refer to Sikuku & Diercks’s (2021) findings for Lubukusu, where doubling is accepted in verum and mirative contexts when the object is given.

- (145) A: Nikwélé:lá nimáná nyú:mbá yóbhíivi:la.  
 ni-kwelel-a ni-man-a nyumba yi-a-ku-bhilivila  
 1SG.SM-climb-FV 1SG.SM-find-FV 9.house 9-CONN-15-be.red  
 ‘I go up and find a red house.’
- B: Nayíwó:na nyú:mba, má:ji áni já níyíwóná háhá:tshí.  
 ni-a-yi-won-a nyumba, maji ani ja  
 1SG.SM-DJ-9OM-see-FV 9.house but 1SG.PRO now  
 ni-yi-won-a ha-hatsi  
 1SG.SM-9OM-see-FV 16-down  
 ‘I see (it) the house, but below.’
- (146) (Could it be that Pedro found the phone?)  
 Pédrú áyím<sup>1</sup>ání fò:ní sála:ni.  
 Pedro a-yi-man-e foni sala-ini  
 1.Pedro 1SM-9OM-find-PFV 9.phone 5.room-LOC  
 ‘Pedro found the phone in the room.’

Note that it is also perfectly acceptable to completely drop the object without any object marking, as illustrated in (147) and (148).

(147) Niwoné mu:ti. [...] Ntó(yí)da:ya.  
ni-won-e        moti        ni-to-yi-day-a  
1SG.SM-see-PFV 9.gazella 1SG.SM-TO-9OM-kill-FV  
'I saw a gazella. I killed (it).'

(148) (Did you eat (the) bread?)  
I:ná, nídyí:té.  
ina ni-dy-ile  
yes 1SG.SM-eat-PFV  
'Yes, I ate (it).'

We saw in Sections 3.2 and 3.5 that mentally active referents may be expressed by a noun phrase in the left or right periphery, and in this section we have seen that they may also be expressed by a subject or object marker on the verb, or (at least in the case of objects) be omitted completely. Further research is needed to establish what determines whether an object is expressed by an object marker or dropped altogether.

## 7 Conclusion

As we said in the introduction, the aim of this chapter is to give a general overview of the expression of information structure in Cicopi, and we have provided a first description and illustration of the information-structural functions of verbal inflection, word order, three types of clefts, predicate doubling, and referent expression. We can summarise the chapter as follows.

First, Cicopi has three forms in the present tense (conjoint, which is marked by zero morpheme; disjoint/habitual, marked by *a-*; and progressive, marked by *o-*). The precise conditions under which these are used require further investigation, but it seems to depend on a complex interaction between constituent-finality, focus, aspect, and perhaps evidentiality. The conjoint/disjoint alternation in any case seems to be determined more by constituency than by focus directly. In the perfective, there are two forms, *-ile/-ite* and *to-*. The *to-* form is felicitous in expressing state-of-affairs focus (contrasting the lexical value of the verb), but is not felicitous in a verum context. The perfective *-ile/-ite* shows the opposite behaviour and is felicitously used to express verum. The alternating verb forms in Cicopi are thus restricted by a less straightforward set of conditions than is

known from other languages (see e.g. the parametric variation described by van der Wal 2017); especially the potential link with evidentiality is remarkable.

Second, as in many other Bantu languages, the preverbal domain is restricted to non-focal constituents and prefers preverbal topics, and the postverbal domain contains non-topical and focal constituents. There may be an immediate-after-verb preference for focus, but Cicopi shows no restriction to a specific focus position, and focused constituents can appear in any postverbal position. Moreover, Cicopi allows multiple question words postverbally. The relatively complex set of factors determining the use of the conjoint and disjoint verb forms may have a correlation with the lack of a focus position in Cicopi: we can imagine that the (direct or indirect) relation between verb form and focus is not as clear as in a language with a fixed focus position (such as Zulu or Makhuwa, for example), and that therefore other factors (aspect, evidentiality) are more prominent than for other languages.

Third, the basic cleft shows some properties of an exclusive focus interpretation, but its uses seem to be broader, also being accepted inthetic environments, with cognate objects and parts of idioms. Pseudoclefts are also used to express focus, and what at first sight looks like a reverse pseudocleft was shown to be analysable as an initial NP functioning as a topic or a fragment answer, followed by a clefted (demonstrative) pronoun, similar to the construction in Kirundi, Rukiga, Kĩitharaka, and Kinyakyusa (see the other chapters in van der Wal 2025). Further investigation is needed to establish the precise interpretations and the underlying structure of these cleft constructions.

Fourth, Cicopi has two predicate doubling constructions: topic doubling and in-situ doubling. The topic doubling shows an interpretation of verum and can also have a depreciative and intensive meaning (as also found in Kirundi, Rukiga, and Kĩitharaka), but further research is necessary to determine the precise uses of each predicate doubling construction, as well as the possibilities with regard to the position of arguments.

Finally, we have seen that active referents in Cicopi, in line with universal tendencies (Gundel 1988, Gundel et al. 1993), may be expressed by a noun phrase in the left or right periphery, particularly when indicating a shift topic, and may also be expressed just by a subject or object marker on the verb, or be omitted completely.

We hope that this chapter forms the beginning of many further discoveries about Cicopi and how it structures its information between speaker and addressee.

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## Abbreviations and symbols

Numbers refer to noun classes unless followed by SG/PL, in which case the number (1 or 2) refers to first or second person. The orthography for Cicopi has been followed, including the following conventions: b [β], bh [b], d [ɗ], dh [d], v [v], vh [v], c [c], ch [c<sup>h</sup>], j [ʒ], x [ʃ]. Tone marking indicates surface tone including intonation (to the best of our ability, and likely incorrect in places); high tones are marked by an acute accent; low tones remain unmarked, falling tones are marked by a circumflex accent. An apostrophe (as in *m'fana*) indicates a syllabic nasal. Vowel length is indicated by /:/ and vowel nasalisation is indicated by m in the coda, as in *ihimhim* [ihĩ:hi̯].

*	ungrammatical	FV	final vowel
#	infelicitous in the given context	LIM	limit ('end up V-ing')
!	downstep	LINK	linker (unsure)
!	downstep	MED	medial
*(X)	the presence of X is obligatory and cannot grammatically be omitted	OM	object marker
*(X)	the presence of X would make the sentence ungrammatical	PREP	preposition
(X)	the presence of X is optional	Q	question
AUG	augment	QUIS	Questionnaire on Information Structure (Skopeteas et al. 2006)
CJ	conjunct	POT	potential
CL	class marker	PRO	pronoun
CON	consecutive	RED	reduplication
CONN	connective	SM	subject marker
DAI	Default Agreement Inversion	STAT	stative
DEP	dependent conjugation	TO	<i>to-</i> morpheme in perfective conjugation
DJ	disjoint		

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