

# Pre-verbal focus in Kisikongo (H16a, Bantu)

Jasper De Kind<sup>1</sup>

*Kongoking Research Group, Ghent University*

## 1 Introduction

The present paper aims at describing different pre-verbal focus strategies in Kisikongo (H16a), spoken in the vicinity of Mbanza Kongo, northern Angola. This western Bantu language is part of the Kikongo Language Cluster (KLC), stretching from southern Gabon to northern Angola, including Cabinda and parts of Congo-Brazzaville and Congo-Kinshasa. Kikongo exhibits a clause-internal pre-verbal argument focus position, which has rarely been reported in Bantu languages, except in Mbuun (B87) (Bostoen and Mundeke 2012) and Nsong (B85d) (Koni Muluwa and Bostoen, this volume), both spoken in the neighboring Kwilu region of the DRC. The more extensively studied eastern and southern Bantu languages generally have a post-verbal argument focus position (cf. Watters 1979, Morimoto 2000, Creissels 2004, Güldemann 2007, Buell 2009, van der Wal 2009, among others). In addition to this mono-clausal argument focus strategy, Kisikongo also relies on different bi-clausal constructions to focus arguments, i.e. cleft-constructions.

The Kisikongo data presented in this paper originate from different sources: two Kisikongo grammars (Bentley 1887, Ndonga Mfuwa 1995), elicitation with a native Kisikongo speaker living in Belgium (Manuel André, born in 1974 in Buku Zau, near Mbanza Kongo, Angola), a digital corpus consisting of three religious texts by the Jehova's Witnesses (JW's Onkanda, JW's Tusansu, JW's Fimpanga), an oral corpus of civil war testimonies collected in Mbanza Kongo by Inge Brinkman (Ghent University) in 2003 and also transcribed by her, and an oral corpus on culinary recipes collected by Birgit Ricquier (RMCA) with native Kisikongo speakers in Antwerp.

In Section 2, I describe the clause-internal pre-verbal focus position of non-subject arguments in Kisikongo, both functionally and syntactically. I concentrate on non-subject arguments because they trigger SOV order, while

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subjects do not. In Section 3, different types of cleft-constructions are presented with special attention to their structural characteristics, mainly variations in word order by lack of sufficient tone data. Preliminary conclusions are presented in Section 4.

## 2 Mono-clausal pre-verbal focus

### 2.1 IBV as focus position

Kisikongo exhibits a pre-verbal focus position, which can be considered the ‘immediately before the verb’ (IBV) position, as opposed to the ‘immediately after the verb’ (IAV) focus position found in eastern and southern Bantu languages. I use the term IBV to distinguish from the clause-initial position used for topics, where subjects commonly occur. This SOV word order, which is linked with object focus, is illustrated in (1).

- (1) KISIKONGO<sup>2</sup> (Ndonga Mfuwa 1995: 93-96)
- Ósè nàni kánètè?**  
 o-∅-se<sup>3</sup> [nani]<sup>FOC</sup> ka-nat-idi  
 AUG<sub>1</sub>-NP<sub>5</sub>-father who SC<sub>1</sub>-carry-PRF  
 ‘WHOM did father carry?’
- Ósè mwànà kánètè**  
 o-∅-se [mu-ana]<sup>FOC</sup> ka-nat-idi  
 AUG<sub>1</sub>-NP<sub>5</sub>-father NP<sub>1</sub>-child SC<sub>1</sub>-carry-PRF  
 ‘Father carried A CHILD.’

Adverbs and auxiliaries can come inbetween the focused constituent and the main verb. In (2), the focused object is followed by the adverb *kaka*, ‘only’.

<sup>2</sup> The following abbreviations are used: APPL = applicative, AUG<sub>x</sub> = augment of class x, CONN<sub>x</sub> = connective, COP = copula, DEM<sub>x</sub> = demonstrative pronoun of class x, EXPL = expletive, FV = final vowel, FOC = focus, IPFV = imperfective, LOC = locative, NP<sub>x</sub> = nominal prefix of class x, NTR = neuter, OC<sub>x</sub> = object concord of class x, PART = particle, PASS = passive, PP<sub>x</sub> = pronominal prefix of class x, POSS<sub>x</sub> = possessive of class x, PRF = perfect, PRN<sub>x</sub> = pronoun of class x, PST = past, REL<sub>x</sub> = relative pronoun of class x, SC<sub>x</sub> = subject concord of class x, INTR = intransitive.

<sup>3</sup> The noun *se*, ‘father’, has a zero noun prefix, which is otherwise typical of class 5, but it does trigger agreement in class 1, as evidenced by the augment and the subject concord on the verb. Such semantically motivated animate concord is common in Bantu (cf. Maho 1999: 122-126). The Kikongo nouns *nkongo*, ‘hunter’, and *nzambi*, ‘God’, which formally belong to class 9, behave in the same way (cf. examples *infra*).

(2) KISIKONGO (JW's Onkanda 2013: 61)

**Kansi, nkanikinu mosi kaka kabavana.**

kansi [N-kanikinu mosi]<sup>FOC</sup> kaka ka-ba-van-a

but NP<sub>9</sub>-threat one only SC<sub>1</sub>-OC<sub>2</sub>-give-FV

‘However, there was one restriction.’

Literally: ‘But, only ONE THREAT did he give them.’

In (3), the pre-posed object *onkangwandi*, ‘his people’ precedes both the auxiliary verb and the infinitive (cf. also section 2.2.1).

(3) KISIKONGO (Fieldwork JDK Brussels 2014)

**Oyándi onkangwandi kelénd’o sádísa.**

o-yandi o-N-kangu andi ke<sup>4</sup>-lend-a

AUG<sub>1</sub>-PRN<sub>1</sub> AUG<sub>3</sub>-NP<sub>3</sub>-people POSS<sub>1</sub> SC<sub>1</sub>-can-FV

o-sadis-a

AUG<sub>15</sub>-help-FV

‘He can help his people.’

SOV in Kisikongo can be considered to be a mono-clausal focus construction, since the object is clause-internal. This is firstly indicated by the fact that the subject can precede it, and more importantly, by the fact that it does not trigger the use of a resumptive pronoun after the verb. As shown in (4), clause-external objects are referred to by such a resumptive pronoun. The objects *o mambu mama*, ‘these problems’ and *olualu o lumbu*, ‘this area’ are left-dislocated here and constitute the topics of the three sentences. Within the main clause, they are co-referenced by the pronouns **mo** (class 6) and **lo** (class 11). Examples (b) and (c) include a so-called ‘fronted-infinitive construction’ (FIC), which is incompatible with pre-verbal focused objects (De Kind, Dom et al. forthcoming).

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<sup>4</sup> In accordance with Ndonga Mfuwa (1995: 129, 132, 206), we analyse here the subject markers **ke-**, **be-** and **me-** as free allomorphs of respectively **ka-** (class 1), **ba-** (class 2) and **ma-** (class 6). An alternative analysis, which needs more research, would be to consider these prefixes as a contraction of **ka-/ba-/ma-** with a vocalic TAM marker, such as the present marker **-i-** found in several western Kikongo varieties (cf. Dom 2013).

(4) KISIKONGO (Fieldnotes IB 2003)

a. **O mambu mama twasisilua mo.**

o-ma-ambu mama  
 AUG<sub>6</sub>-NP<sub>6</sub>-matter DEM<sub>6</sub>  
 [tu-a-sis-il-u-a]<sup>FOC</sup> mo  
 SC<sub>1pl</sub>-PST-leave-APPL-PASS-FV PRN<sub>6</sub>  
 ‘These problems that they left us’

Literally: ‘These problems, they LEFT them to us’

b. **O mambu mama tanga tutanganga mo.**

o-ma-ambu mama [tang-a]<sup>FOC</sup> tu-tang-a  
 AUG<sub>6</sub>-NP<sub>6</sub>-matter DEM<sub>6</sub> read-FV SC<sub>1pl</sub>-read-FV  
 mo  
 PRN<sub>6</sub>

‘These problems, we WILL handle them.’

c. **Olualuolumbu langidila tulangidilanga lo.**

o-lwalu o-lu-mbu  
 AUG<sub>11</sub>-DEM<sub>11</sub> AUG<sub>11</sub>-NP<sub>11</sub>-enclosure  
 [langidil-a]<sup>FOC</sup> tu-langidil-ang-a lo  
 protect-FV SC<sub>1pl</sub>-protect-IPFV-FV PRN<sub>11</sub>

‘We are protecting our area’

Literally: ‘This enclosure, we are PROTECTING it.’

### 2.1.1 Object focus

Although it has been shown for several languages that an alternation in focus strategies exists between so-called ‘information focus’ (or assertive focus), in which the focused constituent conveys new information, and ‘contrastive’ or ‘identificational focus’, in which alternatives to the focused constituent are excluded (cf. Kiss 1998), this distinction does not seem to be made formally in Kisikongo. In this regard, the IBV position can be considered a general focus position in Kisikongo, since both ‘information’ and ‘contrastive focus’ are expressed IBV. For object focus, this results in an (S)OV order. Information focus on the object is illustrated in (5), in which the subject is only referred to anaphorically because it constitutes given information, resulting in an OV order. Example (1) illustrates information focus on the object in which the lexical subject is repeated, resulting in an SOV order.

- (5) KISIKONGO (JW's Onkanda 2013: 210)  
**Nki bavavanga atantu a Mose? Moyo andi bavavanga.**  
 [nki]<sup>FOC</sup> ba-vav-ang-a a-tantu a mose  
 what SC<sub>2</sub>-seek-IPFV-FV NP<sub>2</sub>-enemy CONN Moses  
 [mu-oyo andi]<sup>FOC</sup> ba-vav-ang-a  
 NP<sub>3</sub>-soul POSS<sub>1</sub> SC<sub>2</sub>-seek-IPFV-FV  
 'WHAT were Moses' enemies seeking? They were seeking (to take) HIS LIFE.'

Contrastive focus on the object can also be conveyed through SOV order, as in (6).

- (6) KISIKONGO (JW's Onkanda 2013: 129)  
**Muna vova vo menga ma Abele mekunkazila, o Nzambi moyo andi kayika. Kaini moyo Abele kavonda,**  
 muna vov-a vo ma-eng-a ma abele  
 DEM<sub>18</sub> speak-FV that NP<sub>6</sub>-blood CONN<sub>6</sub> Abel  
 me-ku-n-kaz-il-a o-N-zambi [mu-oyo  
 SC<sub>6</sub>-EXPL-OC<sub>1</sub>-yell-APPL-FV AUG<sub>1</sub>-NP<sub>9</sub>-God NP<sub>3</sub>-soul  
 andi]<sup>FOC</sup> ka-yik-a kaini [mu-oyo abele]<sup>FOC</sup>  
 POSS<sub>1</sub> SC<sub>1</sub>-referring.to-FV Cain NP<sub>3</sub>-soul Abel  
 ka-vond-a  
 SC<sub>1</sub>-kill-FV  
 'When God spoke of Abel's blood [that was crying out to him], he was speaking of Abel's life. Cain had taken Abel's life'  
 Literally: 'In saying that the blood of Abel was crying at him, God was referring to his SOUL. Cain had killed Abel's SOUL.'

Bentley (1887: 708, 716, 718) already observed this pre-verbal focus position in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. He associates the examples given in (7), (8) and (9) with the notion of 'emphasis'.

- (7) 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY KISIKONGO (Bentley 1887: 708)  
**E nzo abiza katungidi.**  
 [e-N-zo abiza]<sup>FOC</sup> ka-tung-idi  
 AUG<sub>9</sub>-NP<sub>9</sub>-house nice SC<sub>1</sub>-build-PRF  
 'He built A NICE HOUSE.'

- (8) 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY KISIKONGO (Bentley 1887: 716)

**Nzo zau betanganga.**

[N-zo z-au]<sup>FOC</sup> be-tang-ang-a

NP<sub>10</sub>-house PP<sub>10</sub>-POSS<sub>2</sub> SC<sub>2</sub>-read-IPFV-PRF

‘They are building THEIR HOUSES.’

- (9) 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY KISIKONGO (Bentley 1887: 716)

**Yinzu bevanganga.**

[yi-nzu]<sup>FOC</sup> be-vang-ang-a

NP<sub>8</sub>-pot SC<sub>2</sub>-make-IPFV-PRF

‘They are making POTS.’

He further observes that “[t]he object when in its normal position (*i.e.* following the verb) is always preceded by the article [augment] in affirmative, but never in negative clauses. When the object of a verb in an *affirmative* clause is brought to the head of the sentence, it is not preceded by the article [augment]” (Bentley 1887: 718, italics in original). This suggests that the OV order and the use of the augment involve some kind of pragmatic conditioning. The pre-posed object in (10), the example which follows Bentley’s observation, indeed misses the augment. However, such is not the case in (7).

- (10) 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY KISIKONGO (Bentley 1887: 718)

**Nlele ame ntekanga.**

[N-lele ame]<sup>FOC</sup> N-tek-ang-a

NP<sub>3</sub>-cloth POSS<sub>1sg</sub> SC<sub>1sg</sub>-sell-IPFV-FV

‘I am selling MY CLOTH.’

In the contemporary Kikongo texts I consulted, pre-verbal objects are very rarely found with the augment, thus confirming Bentley’s claim. This is also in line with Ndonga Mfuwa’s observation that absence of the augment may indicate focus on its constituent: “*l’absence de l’augment devant le nominal sujet ou objet indique parfois la focalisation de celui-ci*” (Ndonga Mfuwa 1995: 176). Ndonga Mfuwa (1995: 177) illustrates this with the examples in (11) and (12) below, showing that the same alternation exists with subject focus. In the first example, the subject is not focused and bears an augment. The augmentless example in (12) is an instance of subject focus, and is translated by means of a cleft-construction in French (copied in English), indicating its focus interpretation. Moreover, the verb bears a high tone subject concord, which is characteristic of relative clauses, at least in Ndonga Mfuwa’s (1995) data.

- (11) KISIKONGO (Ndonga Mfuwa 1995: 177)

**Énzò yìvîdî.**

e-N-zo yi-vi-idi  
 AUG<sub>9</sub>-NP<sub>9</sub>-house SC<sub>9</sub>-burn-PRF  
 ‘The house burnt down.’  
 ‘La maison est brûlée.’

- (12) KISIKONGO (Ndonga Mfuwa 1995: 177)

**Nzò yívîdî.**

[N-zo]<sup>FOC</sup> yi-vi-idi  
 NP<sub>9</sub>-house SC<sub>9</sub>-burn-PRF  
 ‘It’s a HOUSE that burnt down.’  
 ‘C’est une maison qui est brûlée.’

### 2.1.2 Adjunct focus

Adjuncts are focused in exactly the same way as objects, i.e. in IBV position. For information focus, this is illustrated in example (13).

- (13) KISIKONGO (Ndonga Mfuwa 1995: 94-97)

**Ósè vè káavàtîdî?**

o-ø-se [ve]<sup>FOC</sup> ka-vat-idi  
 AUG<sub>1</sub>-NP<sub>5</sub>-father where SC<sub>1</sub>-cultivate-PRF  
 ‘WHERE did the father cultivate?’

**Ósè vâ n’dimbâ káavàtîdî.**

o-ø-se [va N-dimba]<sup>FOC</sup> ka-vat-idi  
 AUG<sub>1</sub>-NP<sub>5</sub>-father NP<sub>16</sub> NP<sub>3</sub>-valley SC<sub>1</sub>-cultivate-PRF  
 ‘The father cultivated IN A VALLEY.’

The example in (14) illustrates contrastive focus on the adjunct. The exclusive reading is strengthened here by the focus marker *kwandi*. This locative possessive pronoun of class 17 (*ku-andi*) is used as a focus marker throughout the KLC.

(14) KISIKONGO (JW's Tusansu 2013: 23)

**Ozevo, o Yosefe wabakula vo mu luzolo lwa Nzambi kwandi kayendela kuna Engipito.**

ozevo o-Yosefe wa-bakul-a vo [mu  
 so AUG<sub>1</sub>-Joseph SC<sub>1</sub>-understand-FV that LOC<sub>18</sub>  
 lu-zola lwa N-zambi]<sup>FOC</sup> kwandi  
 NP<sub>11</sub>-will CONN<sub>11</sub> NP<sub>9</sub>-God LOC.POSS<sub>17</sub>  
 ka-end-il-a kuna Engipito  
 SC<sub>1</sub>-go-APPL-FV DEM<sub>17</sub> Egypt

‘So Joseph can see that it is God who has sent him down to Egypt, and for a good reason.’

Literally: ‘So Joseph understands that THROUGH THE WILL OF GOD [really] he went to Egypt.’

The pre-verbal focus position for adjuncts was also noticed by Bentley (1887: 713), for which he again evokes the term ‘emphasis’: “Adverbs of manner compounded with a locative preposition are placed at the head of the sentence, and require the applied form in the verb ; such is also the case when an adverbial clause, introduced by a locative, takes the emphatic position at the head of the sentence” (Bentley 1887: 713). The examples provided by Bentley (1887) are given in (15) and (16).

Although no ‘emphatic’ function is attributed to the example in (15), it does probably have a focusing function too. The adjunct *ku makaxi*, ‘in anger’, does not just occupy the clause-initial position, or a left-dislocated clause-external position, since the verb takes a dedicated inversion/relative SC1 **ka-** (cf. *infra*). From Bentley’s literal translation, such a left-dislocation analysis could be argued for because the locative is repeated here [**in** an angry mood, he is doing it **in**]. The resumptive pronoun **kio**, however, belongs to class 7 and refers to ‘it’ in the English translation.

(15) 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY KISIKONGO (Bentley 1887: 713)

**Ku makasi kevangilanga kio.**

ku ma-kasi ke-vang-il-ang-a kio  
 LOC<sub>17</sub> NP<sub>6</sub>-anger SC<sub>1</sub>-do-APPL-IPFV-FV PRN<sub>7</sub>

‘He is doing it IN AN ANGRY MOOD.’

[Literal translation by Bentley]: ‘In an angry mood he is doing it in.’

Similarly, **mo** in example (16) probably refers to class 6 (since gender 5/6 also includes a series of objects), rather than class 18. Otherwise, the object would not be expressed, which would not be in line with the English translation provided by Bentley.



- (16) 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY KISIKONGO (Bentley 1887: 713)  
**Muna nzo andi twawudila mo.**  
 [muna N-zo andi]<sup>FOC</sup> tu-a-wul-il-a  
 DEM<sub>18</sub> NP<sub>9</sub>-house POSS<sub>1</sub> SC<sub>1pl</sub>-PST-break-APPL-FV  
 mo  
 PRN<sub>6</sub>  
 ‘IN HIS HOUSE we broke them.’

Other examples of pre-verbal adjuncts given by Bentley are shown in (17) and (18). It is interesting to note that the temporal adverb *ezono*, ‘yesterday’, does not trigger an applicative on the verb, while (formal) locative adverbs as in (15), (16) and (18) do.

- (17) 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY KISIKONGO (Bentley 1887: 713)  
**Ezono twaluaka.**  
 [e-zono]<sup>FOC</sup> tu-a-lwak-a  
 NP<sub>5</sub>-yesterday SC<sub>1pl</sub>-PST-arrive-FV  
 ‘We arrived YESTERDAY.’

- (18) 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY KISIKONGO (Bentley 1887: 713)  
**Muna nzo eto bakotele.**  
 [muna N-zo eto]<sup>FOC</sup> ba-kot-il-idi  
 DEM<sub>18</sub> NP<sub>9</sub>-house POSS<sub>1pl</sub> SC<sub>2</sub>-enter-APPL-FV  
 ‘They entered INTO OUR HOUSE.’

### 2.1.3 Focus on VP

The focusing of the entire verbal phrase may also involve an SOV or SXV order, as illustrated in (19) to (22). On the one hand, it is not surprising that VP focus is expressed by an SOV/SXV order, given the analogy with object and adjunct focus. It is interesting, though, that focus on the verbal phrase or verbal predicate is considered “the universally unmarked type of focus structure” (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997: 206), which might be an indication of canonical word order (cf. Mithun 1987: 281, Dryer 2007: 76). The examples listed below are instances of ‘marked’ or ‘explicit’ VP focus, i.e. the VP is explicitly inquired in the context. In these cases, SOV is strongly preferred. In cases of ‘unmarked’ VP focus, i.e. the ‘topic-comment’ structure, however, also SVO is allowed, which is common for Bantu languages (cf. example (29) *infra*). On-going statistical research on the distribution of the SOV/SXV order in Kisikongo aims

at clarifying to what extent this order is becoming more frequent compared to the canonical Bantu SVO order.

- (19) KISIKONGO (Fieldwork BR Antwerp 2014)  
**Yándi zólele zayá [si euh] vó kúna Mbanzá Kóngo madyóko tulambánga**  
yandi Ø-zol-idi zay-a vo [kuna N-banza  
PRN<sub>1</sub> SC<sub>1</sub>-want-PRF know-FV if DEM<sub>17</sub> NP<sub>9</sub>-city  
kongo ma-dyoko tu-lamb-ang-a]<sup>FOC</sup>  
Kongo NP<sub>6</sub>-cassave SC<sub>1pl</sub>-cook-IPFV-FV  
‘She wants to know if we PREPARE CASSAVA IN MBANZA KONGO.’
- (20) KISIKONGO (JW’s Tusansu 2013: 67)  
**Ku vita bekwendanga.**  
[ku Ø-vita be-kwend-ang-a]<sup>FOC</sup>  
NP<sub>17</sub> NP<sub>9</sub>-war SC<sub>2</sub>-go-IPFV-FV  
[Do you know who these men are and what they are doing?] ‘They ARE GOING OUT TO BATTLE.’
- (21) KISIKONGO (JW’s Tusansu 2013: 67)  
**Diambu diambi kikilu bavangidi.**  
[di-ambu dia N-bi kikilu ba-vang-idi]<sup>FOC</sup>  
NP<sub>5</sub>-matter CONN<sub>5</sub> NP<sub>9</sub>-evil truly SC<sub>2</sub>-do-PRF  
[Do you know why?] ‘They DID SOMETHING VERY BAD.’
- (22) KISIKONGO (JW’s Tusansu 2013: 98)  
**Nga ozeye ekuma Yesu kavangilanga masivi mama mawonso? Wantu kazolanga.**  
Nga o-zay-idi ekuma yesu  
PART SC<sub>2sg</sub>-know-PRF why Jesus  
ka-vang-il-ang-a ma-sivi mama ma-onso  
SC<sub>1</sub>-do-APPL-IPFV-FV NP<sub>6</sub>-miracle DEM<sub>6</sub> NP<sub>6</sub>-all  
[wa-ntu ka-zol-ang-a]<sup>FOC</sup>  
NP<sub>2</sub>-man SC<sub>1</sub>-love-IPFV-FV  
‘Do you know why Jesus does all these miracles? [Because] he LOVES PEOPLE.’

## 2.2 Syntactic properties of SOV

In the following section, I shortly describe some syntactic properties of this SOV order, and treat its behaviour in multiple verb constructions, double object constructions, ‘heavy’ object constructions and subordinate clauses.

### 2.2.1 Multiple verb constructions

When a pre-verbal object is the complement of an infinite verb, it does not immediately precede the infinitive, but is expressed before the conjugated or auxiliary verb. This has been illustrated in (3) and also in (23) and (24).

(23) KISIKONGO (Fieldwork JDK Brussels 2014)

**Oyáandi mankhóndo kezoláng’ o dya.**

o yandi ma-Nkondo<sup>5</sup> ke-zol-ang-a  
AUG<sub>1</sub>PRN<sub>1</sub> NP<sub>6</sub>-banana SC<sub>1</sub>-love-IPFV-FV  
o-dy-a  
AUG<sub>15</sub>-eat-FV  
‘He likes eating bananas.’

(24) KISIKONGO (JW’s Tusansu 2013: 24)

**“Nu alangi, nsi eto nwizidi langa.”**

nu a-langi N-si eto nu-iz-idi lang-a  
COP NP<sub>2</sub>-spy NP<sub>9</sub>-land POSS<sub>1pl</sub> SC<sub>2pl</sub>-come-PRF spy-FV  
‘You are spies, you have come to spy our land.’

In this respect, pre-verbal constituents in Kisikongo behave differently from pre-verbal constituents in Nen (Bantu, A44). Nen is one of the few other Bantu languages known to have pre-verbal objects (cf. Mous, this volume). In this language, the pre-posed constituent is put, however, between the auxiliary and the infinitive (Mous 2005), as illustrated in (25).

(25) NEN (Mous 2005: 420)

ò-só ò-miðk wómbìn hàtà  
2SG-can LOC-stones INF:throw far  
‘You can throw far (with) stones.’

### 2.2.2 Double object constructions

In double object constructions having two objects with two different semantic roles, i.e. most commonly patient and recipient, two options exist. First, the

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<sup>5</sup> All examples are transcribed according to what is heard in the recordings. Aspiration of the voiceless consonant when preceded by a non-syllabic nasal (cf. Kerremans 1980) is not realized systematically by my language consultant, which is why some variation regarding this sound change can be found in the examples presented in this paper.

recipient can be expressed pre-verbally, as in (26), while the patient is expressed post-verbally.

- (26) KISIKONGO (Fieldwork JDK Brussels 2014)  
**(Oyándí), mwana kavéne malávu.**  
 o-yandi mu-ana ka-van-idi ma-lavu  
 AUG<sub>1</sub>-PRN<sub>1</sub> NP<sub>1</sub>-child SC<sub>1</sub>-give-PRF NP<sub>6</sub>-alcohol  
 ‘He gave the child alcohol.’

Second, the patient can be expressed pre-verbally, while the recipient is then expressed post-verbally, introduced by a locative connective of class 17. This is illustrated in (27).

- (27) KISIKONGO (Fieldwork JDK Brussels 2014)  
**(Oyándí), malávu kavéne kwa mwána.**  
 o-yandi ma-lavu ka-van-idi kwa  
 AUG<sub>1</sub>-PRN<sub>1</sub> NP<sub>6</sub>-alcohol SC<sub>1</sub>-give-PRF CONN<sub>17</sub>  
 mu-ana  
 NP<sub>1</sub>-child  
 ‘He gave the child alcohol.’

It is ungrammatical, however, to express both objects pre-verbally, as attempted in (28). This is in contrast to the SVO order, in which it is perfectly grammatical to have both recipient and patient post-verbally. In this case, the recipient precedes the patient, as in (29).

- (28) \*(oyandi) mwana malavu kavene  
 Intd.: ‘He gave the child alcohol.’

- (29) KISIKONGO (JW’s Tusansu 2013: 6)  
**Yave wa Nzambi ovutula Abele o moyo.**  
 yave wa N-zambi o-vutul-a abele  
 Jehovah CONN<sub>1</sub> NP<sub>9</sub>-God SC<sub>1</sub>-return-FV Abel  
 o-mu-oyo  
 AUG<sub>3</sub>-NP<sub>3</sub>-life  
 ‘Jehovah God will give back life to Abel.’

### 2.2.3 ‘Heavy’ objects

When the object consists of several constituents having the same semantic role, also two options exist. First, the ‘heavy’ object can be split, leaving one part pre-verbally and the second part post-verbally, as in (30).

- (30) KISIKONGO (Fieldwork JDK Brussels 2014)  
**Onkongó nkáyi zóle kavóndele ye ngo mosi.**  
 o-N-kongo N-kayi zole ka-vond-idi ye  
 AUG<sub>1</sub>-NP<sub>9</sub>-hunter NP<sub>9</sub>-gazelle two SC<sub>1</sub>-kill-PRF and  
 N-go mosi  
 NP<sub>9</sub>-leopard one  
 ‘The hunter killed two gazelles and one leopard.’

It is also possible to express the entire ‘heavy’ object pre-verbally:

- (31) KISIKONGO (Fieldwork JDK Brussels 2014)  
**Onkongó nkayi zolé ye ngo mosí kavondéle.**  
 o-N-kongo N-kayi zole ye N-go mosi  
 AUG<sub>1</sub>-NP<sub>9</sub>-hunter NP<sub>9</sub>-gazelle two and NP<sub>9</sub>-leopard one  
 ka-vond-idi  
 SC<sub>1</sub>-kill-PRF  
 ‘The hunter killed two gazelles and one leopard.’

Not all types of ‘heavy’ objects can be expressed pre-verbally. Such is the case for objects having a goal constituent, as in (32). The object *mbeelee muna zengel’e mbizi*, ‘a knife to cut meat with’, is obligatory split into *mbeelee*, ‘knife’ which is expressed pre-verbally, and the goal construction, which is expressed post-verbally.

- (32) KISIKONGO (Fieldwork JDK Brussels 2014)  
**Mbééle kasúmbidi muna zéngel’e mbizi.**  
 N-beelee ka-sumb-idi muna zeng-il-a  
 NP<sub>9</sub>-knife SC<sub>1</sub>-buy-PRF DEM<sub>18</sub> cut-APPL-FV  
 e-N-bizi  
 AUG<sub>9</sub>-NP<sub>9</sub>-meat  
 ‘He bought a knife to cut meat with.’

- (33) \*Mbééle muna zéngel’e mbizi kasúmbidi  
 Intd.: ‘He bought a knife to cut meat with.’

#### 2.2.4 Subordinate clauses

Pre-verbal objects are not restricted to main clauses. They can appear in ‘because’ clauses as in (34), or in instances of indirect speech, as in (35) and (36).

(34) KISIKONGO (Fieldwork JDK Brussels 2014)

**O mwáána otíinini ekumá o se dyándi muntu kavónde.**

o-mu-ana            o-tiin-idi            ekuma            o-Ø-se  
 AUG<sub>1</sub>-NP<sub>1</sub>-child    SC<sub>1</sub>-flee-PRF        because        AUG<sub>1</sub>-NP<sub>5</sub>-father  
 di-andi            mu-ntu            ka-vond-idi  
 PP<sub>5</sub>-POSS<sub>1</sub>    NP<sub>1</sub>-person    SC<sub>1</sub>-kill-PRF

‘The child fled because his father killed someone.’

(35) KISIKONGO (Fieldwork JDK Brussels 2014)

**O mwána vóvele kanda katángidi.**

o-mu-ana            Ø-vov-idi            Ø-kanda            ka-tang-idi  
 AUG<sub>1</sub>-NP<sub>1</sub>-child    SC<sub>1</sub>-speak-PRF    NP<sub>3</sub>-book        SC<sub>1</sub>-read-PRF

‘The child said he read the book.’

(36) KISIKONGO (Fieldwork JDK Brussels 2014)

**Yangúngyivúla vo mwaána kekwándánga.**

i-a-ku-ngyivul-a            vo            mu-ana  
 SC<sub>1sg</sub>-PST-OC<sub>2sg</sub>-ask-FV        if            NP<sub>1</sub>-child  
 ke-kwand-ang-a  
 SC<sub>1</sub>-beat-IPFV-FV

‘I asked you if he beat his child.’

Similar to example (32), in a goal clause the object behaves differently and should occur post-verbally:

(37) KISIKONGO (Fieldwork JDK Brussels 2014)

**Oyándi nkhósi kavónde muna ván ó luzitu**

o-yandi            N-kosi            ka-vond-idi            muna            van-a  
 AUG<sub>1</sub>-PRN<sub>1</sub>            NP<sub>9</sub>-lion            SC<sub>1</sub>-kill-PRF            DEM<sub>18</sub>            give-FV  
 o-lu-zitu  
 AUG<sub>11</sub>-NP<sub>11</sub>-respect

‘He killed a lion to gain respect.’

### 3 Bi-clausal pre-verbal focus

In this section, I document bi-clausal focus constructions in Kisikongo. Cleft-constructions are cross-linguistically known to express focus on the clefted constituent (Harris and Campbell 1995, Lambrecht 2001, Van der Wal and Maniacky forthcoming). The use of clefts is also a common focus strategy in Kisikongo. I adhere here to the definition of Harris & Campbell (1995: 153): “The cleft (a) consists of a superordinate clause (S<sub>1</sub>) and a subordinate clause (S<sub>2</sub>), (b) the former containing a copula, and (c) the latter having the structure of a relative clause.”

Three main features characterize the cleft: the bi-clausal structure, the presence of the copula, and a relative-like clause. Before illustrating the different cleft-constructions in Kisikongo, it is necessary to discuss the copula and the relative-like clause.

#### 3.1 The copula

The copula in Kisikongo takes the form of **i**, as described by Bentley (1887: 282):

“**I**, *emphatic demonstrative verbal particle* serving in the place of the verb “to be” in all its forms, and is equivalent to : this or that *or* these or those *in particular* is, are, *or* were, &c. **Eyayi i yame**, it is mine ; **I dinkwa kala wowo**, it is very likely ; **I zau jina**, those were they ; **Yandi i mfumu**, he is king.”

It can thus function both as an equative copula outside clefts and an identificational copula in cleft-constructions. Its use in non-cleft constructions is illustrated in (38).

(38) KISIKONGO (JW’s Fimpanga 2013: 109)

**O nsíku i nlongiéto.**

o-N-siku            i        N-longi        eto  
 AUG<sub>3</sub>-NP<sub>3</sub>-law    COP NP<sub>1</sub>-tutor    POSS<sub>1pl</sub>

‘The law is our tutor.’

The copula **i** seems to be quite invariable in form, although Bentley (1887: 282) suggests otherwise (cf. citation *supra*, “in all its forms”). However, some variation in the form of the copula has been attested, but these alternations

probably belong to another paradigm. As such, **tu** has been attested for the 1<sup>st</sup> plural (39), **nu** for the 2<sup>nd</sup> plural (24) and **u** for the 2<sup>nd</sup> singular (40).

(39) KISIKONGO (JW's Tusansu 2013: 41)

**Yeto awonso tu wan'au.**

yeto a-onso tu wa-ana au  
 PRN<sub>1pl</sub> CONN-all COP NP<sub>2</sub>-child POSS<sub>2</sub>  
 'We are all their children.'

(40) KISIKONGO (JDK fieldwork Brussels 2014)

**Ongéye ú nkundiáme.**

o-ngeye u N-kundi ame  
 AUG<sub>1</sub>-PRN<sub>2sg</sub> COP NP<sub>1</sub>-friend POSS<sub>1sg</sub>  
 'You are my friend.'

Nevertheless, in cleft-constructions only the copula **i** has been attested. Examples (40) and (41) clearly receive a different reading. The latter is as a cleft-construction used to focus the subject, while the former is not.

(41) KISIKONGO (JDK fieldwork Brussels 2014)

**Ongéye yí nkundiáme.**

o-ngeye yi N-kundi ame  
 AUG<sub>1</sub>-PRN<sub>2sg</sub> COP NP<sub>1</sub>-friend POSS<sub>1sg</sub>  
 'It is you who is my friend'

It is important to note that the copula is optional in equative sentences, where the juxtaposition of subject and nominal predicate suffices to convey the equative meaning, as may be seen from (42) and (43).

(42) KISIKONGO (Ndonga Mfuwa 1995: 110)

**óNsimbà ndóki.**

o-Nsimba N-loki  
 AUG<sub>1</sub>-Nsimba NP<sub>9</sub>-sorcerer  
 'Nsimba is a sorcerer.'

(43) KISIKONGO (JW's Tusansu 2013: 6)

**O Kaini muntu ambi**

o-Kaini mu-ntu a N-bi  
 AUG<sub>1</sub>-Cain NP<sub>1</sub>-person CONN NP<sub>9</sub>-evil  
 'Cain is a bad person.'



### 3.2 The relative clause

The second constituent of a cleft-construction is the relative-like clause. I concentrate here on indirect relatives, such as object relatives, as they are part of cleft-constructions focusing non-subject arguments. Kisikongo exhibits variation along different parameters with regard to relative clauses: the agreement on the verb, the presence of the relativizer and the position of the subject.

The first variable, already noted by Bentley (1887), is that the relative verb can agree with both the logical subject and the logical object. In case of the former, a dedicated SC for class 1 **ka-** (or **ke-**, cf. footnote 3), is used, which contrasts with the SC in non-relative clauses. For the other classes and speech participants, there is no formal difference between relative and non-relative SC, as is also illustrated in (45). Interestingly, this same SC alternation holds for mono-clausal SOV focus order as opposed to the canonical SVO order.

(44) 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY KISIKONGO (Bentley 1887: 707)

**E nzo ketungidi yandi jividi.**

e-N-zo                      ke-tung-idi              yandi

AUG<sub>10</sub>-NP<sub>10</sub>-house      SC<sub>1</sub>-build-PRF      PRN<sub>1</sub>

zi-vi-idi

SC<sub>10</sub>-burn-PRF

‘The houses which he built are burnt.’

(45) 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY KISIKONGO (Bentley 1887: 707)

**E nzo jitungidi yandi jividi.**

e-N-zo                      zi-tung-idi              yandi

AUG<sub>10</sub>-NP<sub>10</sub>-house      SC<sub>10</sub>-build-PRF      PRN<sub>1</sub>

zi-vi-idi

SC<sub>10</sub>-burn-PRF

‘The houses which he built are burnt.’

Although in present-day Kisikongo concordance with the logical subject seems to be more frequent, the same alternation has been attested in the contemporary Kisikongo texts I considered, as may be seen from (46) vs. (47).

- (46) KISIKONGO (JW's Tusansu 2013: 10)  
**E vangwa yantete kavang'o Nzambi [...]**  
 e-Ø-vangwa ya-ntete ka-vang-a  
 AUG<sub>8</sub>-NP<sub>8</sub>-creation CONN<sub>8</sub>-first SC<sub>1</sub>-make-FV  
 o-N-zambi  
 AUG<sub>1</sub>-NP<sub>9</sub>-God  
 'The first things God made [...]'
- (47) KISIKONGO (Fieldnotes IB 2003)  
**Esalu kiasadidi satana, kabakidi ndandu ko.**  
 e-ø-salu ki-a-sal-idi satana ka-bak-idi  
 AUG<sub>7</sub>-NP<sub>7</sub>-work SC<sub>7</sub>-PST-do-PRF Satan SC<sub>1</sub>-procure-PRF  
 N-landu ko  
 NP<sub>10</sub>-result NEG  
 'The work that Satan does, does not bring blessings.'  
 Literally: 'The work that Satan does, he does not bring [good] results'

A second variable is the presence of the relativizer, which in Kisikongo takes the form of a demonstrative pronoun. The previous examples all lack a relativizer, but it is perfectly grammatical to have one, as is illustrated in (48), (49) and (50):

- (48) KISIKONGO (JDK fieldwork Brussels 2014)  
**Nkombó ndioyó ó ngo kabakídi, wónga wayíngi kákedí.**  
 N-kombo ndioyo o-N-go ka-bak-idi  
 NP<sub>9</sub>-goat REL<sub>1</sub> AUG<sub>1</sub>-NP<sub>9</sub>-leopard SC<sub>1</sub>-catch-PRF  
 u-onga wa-ingi ka-kal-idi  
 NP<sub>14</sub>-fear CONN<sub>14</sub>-much SC<sub>1</sub>-to.be-PRF  
 'The goat that the leopard caught, is very frightened.'
- (49) KISIKONGO (JW's Tusansu 2013: 41)  
**O Mose ovangidi una kavova o Nzambi.**  
 o-mose o-vang-idi una ka-vov-a  
 AUG<sub>1</sub>-Moses SC<sub>1</sub>-do-PRF REL<sub>14</sub> SC<sub>1</sub>-speak-FV  
 o-N-zambi  
 AUG<sub>1</sub>-NP<sub>9</sub>-God  
 'Moses does what God says.'

- (50) KISIKONGO (JDK fieldwork Brussels 2014)  
**Engáandu yoyo nkhangó kavondéle, yámbi yákedí.**  
 e-N-gandu yoyo N-kongo ka-vond-idi  
 AUG<sub>9</sub>-NP<sub>9</sub>-crocodile REL<sub>9</sub> NP<sub>9</sub>-hunter SC<sub>1</sub>-kill-PRF  
 ya-N-bi i-a-kal-idi  
 CONN<sub>9</sub>-NP<sub>9</sub>-evil SC<sub>9</sub>-PST-to.be-PRF  
 ‘The crocodile that the hunter killed, was very dangerous.’

Also in 19<sup>th</sup> century Kisikongo, this same alternation has been attested, although this is not explicitly mentioned by Bentley (1887):

- (51) 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY KISIKONGO (Bentley 1887: 706)  
**Unsamunwini o mambu mana kavovele Mfiâu.**  
 u-N-samunwin-idi o-ma-ambu mana ka-vov-idi  
 SC<sub>1</sub>-OC<sub>1sg</sub>-report-PRF AUG<sub>6</sub>-NP<sub>6</sub>-matter REL<sub>6</sub> SC<sub>1</sub>-speak-PRF  
 mfiâu  
 Mfiâu  
 ‘He told me the things which Mfiâu had said.’

- (52) 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY KISIKONGO (Bentley 1887: 707)  
**Mankondo mambwaki tusumbidi ezono.**  
 ma-nkondo ma-mbwaki tu-sumb-idi e-zono  
 NP<sub>6</sub>-plantain NP<sub>6</sub>-red SC<sub>1pl</sub>-buy-PRF NP<sub>5</sub>-yesterday  
 ‘The red plantain which we bought yesterday.’

A third variable is the position of the subject. Four possibilities can be distinguished. First, the subject can follow the object and precede the verb, resulting in a surface OSV order. This is illustrated in (53), and also in the previous examples (48) and (50).

- (53) KISIKONGO (JDK fieldwork Brussels 2014)  
**O nkúng’o wána báwiidí otoméne zéékana.**  
 o-N-kunga o-wa-ana ba-a-w-idi  
 AUG<sub>3</sub>-NP<sub>3</sub>-song AUG<sub>2</sub>-NP<sub>2</sub>-child SC<sub>2</sub>-PST-hear-PRF  
 o-tom-idi zay-ikan-a  
 SC<sub>3</sub>-to.be.well-PRF know-NTR-FV  
 ‘The song that the children heard is well known’

Second, the subject can also appear post-verbally, resulting in a surface OVS order. This is illustrated in the previous examples (44), (45), (47), (46), (49) and (51), and in (54) and (55) below. The latter is interesting in that it combines a

non-subject (locative) relative with a pre-verbal focus position: the entire relative clause *kuna nsi kuna kawutuka Zwaki*, ‘from the country where Zwaki was born’ precedes the main verb *katuka*, ‘he came from’. This example also includes a subject relative, *ona watunga e nzo eyi*, ‘who built this house’. Subject relatives are not considered in this paper, but it is interesting to note that the SC is **u-** and not **ka-**, which is thus only used for indirect relatives. The demonstrative **ona**, used as relativizer, is different from the earlier mentioned **ndioyo**, although belonging to the same class 1. **Ona** is a distal demonstrative, referring to someone distant from the speaker, while **ndioyo** belongs to the paradigm which Bentley (1887: 587) calls ‘emphatic demonstratives’. **Yoyo** and **vava** in examples (50) above and (56) and (57) below belong to the same paradigm.

(54) 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY KISIKONGO (Bentley 1887: 708)

**E fulu kivaikanga o maza kisolokele.**

e-∅-fulu	ki-vaik-ang-a	o-ma-aza
AUG <sub>7</sub> -NP <sub>7</sub> -place	SC <sub>7</sub> -flow-IPFV-FV	AUG <sub>6</sub> -NP <sub>6</sub> -water
ki-sol-uk-idi		
SC <sub>7</sub> -find-INTR-PRF		

‘The place where *or* from which the water comes out is found.’

(55) 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY KISIKONGO (Bentley 1887: 708)

**O muntu ona watunga e nzo eyi, kuna nxi kuna kawutuka Zwaki katuka.**

o-mu-ntu	ona	u-a-tung-a	e-N-zo
AUG <sub>1</sub> -NP <sub>1</sub> -person	REL <sub>1</sub>	SC <sub>1</sub> -PST-build-FV	AUG <sub>9</sub> -NP <sub>9</sub> -house
eyi kuna	N-si	[kuna	ka-wut-uk-a
DEM <sub>9</sub> DEM <sub>17</sub>	NP <sub>9</sub> -country	REL <sub>17</sub>	SC <sub>1</sub> -bear-INTR-FV
zwaki] <sup>FOC</sup>	ka-tuk-a		
Zwaki	SC <sub>1</sub> -come.from-FV		

‘The man, who built this house, came FROM THE COUNTRY WHERE ZWAKI WAS BORN.’

A third possible position of the subject in non-subject relative phrases is clause-initially. This is illustrated in examples (56) and (57). Both examples consist of temporal relative clauses, in which the locative demonstrative of class 16 *vava* functions as relativizer.

- (56) KISIKONGO (Fieldnotes IB 2003)  
**Noé vava katunga e nzaza [...]**  
 noé vava ka-tung-a e-N-zaza  
 Noah REL<sub>16</sub> SC<sub>1</sub>-build-FV AUG<sub>9</sub>-NP<sub>9</sub>-ship  
 ‘Noah, when building the arc [...]
- (57) KISIKONGO (JW’s Tusansu 2013: 31)  
**O Mose vava kavutuka kuna Engipito [...]**  
 O-Mose vava ka-vutuk-a kuna Engipito  
 AUG<sub>1</sub>-Moses REL<sub>16</sub> SC<sub>1</sub>-return-FV DEM<sub>17</sub> Egypt  
 ‘When Moses returned to Egypt [...]

It should be further investigated by which factors the alternation between OVS and OSV is conditioned. The SOV as indirect relative order can possibly be explained by a process of left-dislocation of the subject, in order to mark the subject as the topic of the entire sentence. This relates to the fourth option in expressing the subject in indirect relatives: if the context is clear, the subject (conveying old information) can simply be referred to anaphorically, i.e. by means of the SC on the verb. This is seen in example (52) above, and in examples (58) and (60) below. In the original text, example (60) immediately follows example (47), where the subject is already mentioned. This example also illustrates the optionality of the copula, which is left out here.

- (58) 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY KISIKONGO (Bentley 1887: 708)  
**E mbele ina nsumbidi ezono ivididi.**  
 e-N-bele ina N-sumb-idi e-zono  
 AUG<sub>9</sub>-NP<sub>9</sub>-knife REL<sub>9</sub> SC<sub>1sg</sub>-buy-PRF NP<sub>5</sub>-yesterday  
 i-vil-idi  
 SC<sub>9</sub>-be.lost-PRF  
 ‘The knife which I bought yesterday is lost.’
- (59) KISIKONGO (Ndonga Mfuwa 1995: 216)  
**Énkòmbò yìnà kánètè yàté kòkàngà**  
 e-N-kombo yina ka-nat-idi  
 AUG<sub>9</sub>-NP<sub>9</sub>-goat REL<sub>9</sub> SC<sub>1</sub>-carry-PRF  
 i-a-tek-uk-ang-a  
 SC<sub>9</sub>-PST-sell-INTR-IPFV-FV  
 ‘The goat he carries has already been sold.’

- (60) KISIKONGO (Fieldnotes IB 2003)  
**Ndandu kabakidi ndandu yamasumu.**  
 N-landu ka-bak-idi N-landu ya ma-sumu  
 NP<sub>10</sub>-result SC<sub>1</sub>-procure-PRF NP<sub>10</sub>-result CONN<sub>9</sub> NP<sub>6</sub>-sin  
 ‘The blessings it has is only sin.’  
 Literally: ‘The results he brings [are] results of sin.’

### 3.3 Cleft-constructions

Given the variation displayed both by the copula (presence vs. absence) and by the relative clause (optionality of relativizer and flexible position of the subject), cleft-constructions in Kisikongo also vary considerably regarding their formal realization.

In example (61), a common cleft-construction is given in which the copula precedes the focused element, thus resembling the well-known IT-cleft in English and related languages (cf. Lambrecht 2001).

- (61) KISIKONGO (JW’s Tusansu 2013: 57)  
**Kieleka, i yandi kasolele o Yave**  
 ki-eleka i [yandi]<sup>FOC</sup> ka-sol-idi o-Yave  
 NP<sub>7</sub>-truth COP PRN<sub>1</sub> SC<sub>1</sub>-choose-PRF AUG<sub>1</sub>-Jehovah  
 [‘When Samuel sees Jesse’s oldest son Elirab, he says to himself :’]  
 ‘Truly, it is HIM (whom) Jehovah chose.’

The copula can, however, also follow the focused element, as *byere*, ‘beer’ in (62), *onkhongo*, ‘hunter’ in (63), *dimpa*, ‘bread’ in (64) and *ntinu*, ‘king’ in (65). The copula then precedes either a generic noun, such as *malavu*, ‘alcohol’, *muntu*, ‘person’, *lekwa*, ‘thing’ or a personal pronoun such as *yandi*, which function as head of the relative clause of the cleft-construction. This type rather resembles the inverted/reverse-pseudo cleft (cf. Hamlaoui & Makasso in press) or the reverse WH-cleft or the reverse WH-cleft. Lambrecht (2001) uses this latter term, as he himself admits, from an anglocentric point of view. Indeed, in Kisikongo no use is made of question words in this type of clefts, but rather of generic terms. Note that these generic terms must agree semantically with the clefted constituent, unlike in certain other Bantu languages where a relative head such as *muntu* broadens its range and becomes to be used with inanimate nouns as well (cf. Van der Wal and Maniacky forthcoming).

- (62) KISIKONGO (JDK fieldwork Brussels 2014)  
**E byére i málavu mwivi kánwini.**  
 [e-Ø-byere]<sup>FOC</sup> i ma-lavu mu-ivi ka-nw-ini  
 AUG<sub>9</sub>-NP<sub>9</sub>-beer COP NP<sub>6</sub>-alcohol NP<sub>3</sub>-thief SC<sub>1</sub>-drink-PRF  
 ‘BEER is the (type of) alcohol the thief drank.’
- (63) KISIKONGO (JDK fieldwork Brussels 2014)  
**Ónkhóngo i muntú kawénde o mfúmu.**  
 [o-N-kongo]<sup>FOC</sup> i mu-ntu ka-wand-idi o-N-fumu  
 AUG<sub>1</sub>-NP<sub>9</sub>-hunter COP NP<sub>1</sub>-person SC<sub>1</sub>-hit-PRF AUG<sub>1</sub>-NP<sub>9</sub>-chief  
 ‘THE HUNTER is the man the chief hit.’
- (64) KISIKONGO (JDK fieldwork Brussels 2014)  
**O nsadisi, dímpa i lekwa kasúmbidi.**  
 o-n-sadisi [di-mpa]<sup>FOC</sup> i Ø-lekwa ka-sumb-idi  
 AUG<sub>1</sub>-NP<sub>1</sub>-healer NP<sub>5</sub>-bread COP NP<sub>7</sub>-thing SC<sub>1</sub>-buy-PRF  
 ‘The healer, A BREAD is the thing he bought.’
- (65) KISIKONGO (JDK fieldwork Brussels 2014)  
**Ntinú i yándi e mívi bavondéle.**  
 N-tinu i [yandi]<sup>FOC</sup> e-mi-ivi ba-vond-idi  
 NP<sub>1</sub>-king COP PRN<sub>1</sub> AUG<sub>4</sub>-NP<sub>4</sub>-thief SC<sub>2</sub>-kill-PRF  
 ‘THE KING is the one whom the thieves have killed.’

More frequently than being expressed, the relative head is deleted, which does not seem illogical given its poor semantic value. This results in headless relatives, which are best translated in English as inverted pseudo-clefts making use of question words (i.e. a reverse WH-cleft in English), as in (66) to (68).

- (66) KISIKONGO (JW’s Tusansu 2013: 104)  
**O Yesu i kasola o Nzambi mu kala se ntinu.**  
 [o-Yesu]<sup>FOC</sup> i ka-sol-a o-N-zambi mu kala  
 AUG<sub>1</sub>-Jesus COP SC<sub>1</sub>-choose-FV AUG<sub>1</sub>-NP<sub>9</sub>-God NP<sub>18</sub> to.be  
 se N-tinu  
 PART NP<sub>1</sub>-king  
 ‘Jesus is the One God chose to be king.’  
 Literally: ‘JESUS is whom God chose to be king.’

(67) KISIKONGO (JDK fieldwork Brussels 2014)

**O málavú í kanwíni o mwívi.**

[o-ma-lavu]<sup>FOC</sup> i ka-nw-idi o-mu-ivi  
 AUG<sub>6</sub>-NP<sub>6</sub>-alcohol COP SC<sub>1</sub>-drink-PRF AUG<sub>3</sub>-NP<sub>3</sub>-thief  
 ‘ALCOHOL is what the thief drank.’

(68) KISIKONGO (JDK fieldwork Brussels 2014)

**Onkongó i kawénde o mfumu.**

[o-N-kongo]<sup>FOC</sup> i ka-wand-idi o-N-fumu  
 AUG<sub>1</sub>-NP<sub>9</sub>-hunter COP SC<sub>1</sub>-hit-PRFAUG<sub>1</sub>-NP<sub>9</sub>-chief  
 ‘THE HUNTER is whom the chief hit.’

Another variable in the realization of this type of cleft-construction is the presence or absence of the copula. As was illustrated earlier, the copula can be omitted in non-cleft constructions (cf. examples (42), (43) and (60)). Comparably, it is neither required in cleft-constructions, as is shown in examples (69) and (70) below:

(69) KISIKONGO (Fieldwork JDK Brussels 2014)

**Wan’ayíngi kawúta Yakobo**

[wa-ana a-íngi]<sup>FOC</sup> ka-wut-a Yakobo  
 NP<sub>2</sub>-child CONN-many SC<sub>1</sub>-father-FV Jacob  
 ‘Jacob fathered MANY CHILDREN.’  
 ‘MANY CHILDREN is what Jacob fathered.’

(70) KISIKONGO (JW’s Tusansu 2013: 66)

**Owu kasoneka: [...]**

[owu]<sup>FOC</sup> ka-sonek-a  
 DEM<sub>14</sub> SC<sub>1</sub>-write-FV  
 ‘He writes: [...].’  
 Literally: ‘THIS [is what] he writes [...].’

A final variable in the expression of cleft-constructions concerns the position of the subject. As with non-subject relatives, four options can be distinguished. First, the subject can appear post-verbally, as is illustrated in examples (61), (63), (66), (68) and (69). This results in an OVS order. Second, the subject can be expressed pre-verbally, between the object and the verb, i.e. OSV. Examples are given in (62) and (65). Third, the subject can occur clause-initially or left-dislocated, which also seems to be used for reasons of topicality. Examples include (64), (71), (72), (73) and (74).



- (71) KISIKONGO (JW's Onkanda 2013: 41)  
**O Nzambi yandi Yesu kaka i kasadila vava kavanga e lekwa yawonso.**  
o-N-zambi yandi [Yesu kaka]<sup>FOC</sup> i ka-sal-il-a  
AUG<sub>1</sub>-NP<sub>9</sub>-God PRN<sub>1</sub> Jesus only COP SC<sub>1</sub>-work-APPL-FV  
vava ka-vang-a e-ø-lekwa i-a-onso  
DEM<sub>16</sub> SC<sub>1</sub>-make-FV AUG<sub>8</sub>-NP<sub>8</sub>-thing PP<sub>8</sub>-CONN-all  
‘Jesus is also the only one whom God used when He created all other things.’  
Literally: ‘God, he, JESUS ONLY is [whom] he used when he made all things.’
- (72) KISIKONGO (JW's Tusansu 2013: 10)  
**O Mose muna kolo kiakina i kawutuka.**  
o-Mose [muna Ø-kolo kiakina]<sup>FOC</sup> i  
AUG<sub>1</sub>-Moses DEM<sub>18</sub> NP<sub>7</sub>-period DEM<sub>7</sub> COP  
ka-wut\_uk-a  
SC<sub>1</sub>-bear-INTR-FV  
Literally: ‘Moses IN THAT PERIOD it is he was born.’
- (73) KISIKONGO (Fieldwork JDK Brussels 2014)  
**Ó mfumú, nkhóngo i kawénde.**  
o-N-fumu [N-kongo]<sup>FOC</sup> i ka-wand-idi  
AUG<sub>1</sub>-NP<sub>9</sub>-chief NP<sub>9</sub>-hunter COP SC<sub>1</sub>-hit-PRF  
‘The chief, THE HUNTER is (whom) he hit.’
- (74) KISIKONGO (Fieldwork JDK Brussels 2014)  
**O nsadisí, dimpá i kásúmbidi.**  
O-N-sadisi [di-mpa]<sup>FOC</sup> i ka-sumb-idi  
AUG<sub>1</sub>-NP<sub>1</sub>-healer NP<sub>5</sub>-bread COP SC<sub>1</sub>-buy-PRF  
‘The healer, A BREAD is (what) he bought.’

A final possibility is to leave the subject implicit, so that it is simply referred to anaphorically by means of the SC. This is illustrated in (70) above, and (75) and (76) below:

- (75) KISIKONGO (Fieldwork JDK Brussels 2014)  
**Dimpá í kásúmbidi.**  
[di-mpa]<sup>FOC</sup> i ka-sumb-idi  
NP<sub>5</sub>-bread COP SC<sub>1</sub>-buy-PRF  
‘A BREAD is (what) he bought.’

(76) KISIKONGO (Fieldwork JDK Brussels 2014)

**Ntinu i bavóndéle.**

[N-tinu]<sup>FOC</sup> i ba-vond-idi

NP<sub>1</sub>-king COP SC<sub>2</sub>-kill-PRF

‘THE KING is (whom) they killed.’

#### **4 Conclusion and issues for further research**

In this paper, I have given an overview of different mono- and bi-clausal pre-verbal focus strategies in Kisikongo. Kisikongo does not make a distinction between ‘informative’ and ‘contrastive’ focus (cf. Kiss 1998) in focus strategies, and both constructions can be used for both focus types. Mono-clausal pre-verbal focus involves preposition of the object or adjunct in IBV position, triggering an SOV or SXV word order. Bi-clausal focus strategies are cleft-constructions which vary considerably, depending on the position and optionality of the copula, the optionality of the relative head and the position of the subject.

Although both constructions seem unrelated at first sight, there are some interesting similarities to be found. First, the same SC<sub>1</sub> **ka-** is used in both focus strategies, alternating with other SCs in SVO or non-relative phrases. Second, the large variation in cleft constructions in Kisikongo actually forms a continuum on the word order level from a bi-clausal inverted pseudo-cleft to a mono-clausal SOV focus order. The optionality of the copula and the relative head, as well as the unfixed position of the subject could account for such an evolution. However, this hypothesis needs further corroboration by tonal data. The role of tone cases should be considered. It should be investigated whether the tonal pattern of pre-verbal objects in mono-clausal focus constructions correlates with the tonal pattern of focused constituents in bi-clausal cleft-constructions. A second issue related to tone concerns relative verbs. For the time being, I have not considered tonal data on relative verbs for two reasons: most corpus data lack tonal information and the elicited data were found insufficient to draw any conclusions regarding tone. The observations made from these elicited data did also not fully correspond to the existing description of relative verbs by Ndonga Mfuwa (1995). Ndonga Mfuwa (1995) consistently notes high tone SC on relative verbs, as opposed to low tones for non-relative verbs. This distinction is, however, not that clear in my data. Interestingly, however, is that in Ndonga Mfuwa’s (1995) account, the SC in SOV constructions also bears a high tone, which would corroborate the hypothesis that the mono-clausal SOV order originates from a bi-clausal cleft-construction. It remains to be investigated whether this tonal distinction can still be found in

new spontaneous discourse data, or whether the distinction is being weakened, which in turn might facilitate a pragmatic neutralization of the SOV order.

## 5 References

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