LEFT DISLOCATION IN BANTU LANGUAGES WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM LINGALA AND SWAHILI

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Summary: This paper addresses the empirical question of whether left-dislocation is base-generated or derived by syntactic movement. The paper is interested in both Contrastive Left Dislocation (henceforth, CLD) and Clitic Left Dislocation (henceforth, CLLD) and provides illustration and evidence from Bantu languages.

1. Introduction

This paper discusses left dislocation in Bantu Languages with illustration and evidence from Kiswahili and Lingala. It is argued in this work that left dislocation is a movement of the fronted element which is derived by syntax. The fronted NP is assumed to be base-generated from a clausal-internal position. It is then moved to a position at the extreme left edge of the clause leaving behind a gap which is filled by a resumptive element. In the current case, the vacated site is filled by either an overt or covert pronominal copy which is as well generated in D-structure alongside with the fronted NP and which agrees in gender, number, and person with the left dislocated NP.

My proposal in this paper finds support from the contrastive examples which show in one hand the realization of the resumptive pronoun in the vacated site in the clause which is associated with the left dislocate prior to its movement. Evidence comes from the case where the resumptive pronoun is covertly realized, that is, it is not realized on the S-structure. The vacated site suggests the presence of a syntactic movement which has left-dislocated the D-structure object of the verb leaving behind a gap which is filled by a covert pronoun which is just not realized on the S-structure.

Further, my argument in this paper finds support from subject morphological case agreement. It is observed in the case of embedded clause, that the finite verb of the embedded clause agrees in person and number with the left-dislocated element. Clearly, this shows that the base-generated D-structure object of the finite matrix clause is moved to the left periphery of the clause leaving behind a covert resumptive pronominal copy which is co-indexed with it and reflects the agreement of the former with the finite embedded verb in terms of number and person. It is even further posited that the fronted element was generated as the subject of the embedded finite verb and then moved to the object position of the finite matrix verb prior to being fronted.

Finally, the presence of a clitic object marker incorporated within the verb shows that the dislocated element was generated as an object of the verb and then moved to the peripheral position leaving behind a vacate site which is covertly filled by a null pronoun which is not realized in the S-structure.

This squib is organized as follows: section 1 is the current introduction. Section 2 briefly reviews the literature on left dislocation. Section 3 presents my empirical assumptions and arguments on left dislocation and thus states the research hypothesis of the work. Section 4 analyzes the data and supplies the relevant interpretation. Section 5 discusses the findings of the paper and its implications thereof.

2. Literature review

Left dislocation is a syntactic form which is structured with a full lexical *NP*, *PP*, or pronoun at the extreme left periphery of a sentence and is doubled or copied by a co-referential resumptive element within the sentence with which the left dislocated element is associated [Hidalgo 2002].

Left-dislocation is a syntactic operation represented by the equation *X Y Z*, constituents of the clause, of which *Y* and *Z* are the elements of the predicate with *Z* as the internal argument. *Z* is said to be left-dislocated when it is fronted out of the clause to the left peripheral position producing the linear structure as *Z*[*X Y* -] whereby the vacate site within the associate clause is filled by a resumptive element which co-refers to the left-dislocate.

Literature on left dislocation is legion and it presents an array of possibilities on how left-dislocation could be approached and analyzed. The said review of literature distinguishes two types of left dislocation of which mention can be made of Contrastive Left Dislocation (henceforth, CLD) and Hanging Topic Left Dislocation (henceforth, HTLD). Both types differ from each other in that in the former, the left dislocated element displays a co-indexical relationship with the resumptive element which is a pronoun or a demonstrative pronoun depending on the language. Whereas, in HTLD the fronted element does not, agreement wise, correlate with the resumptive pronoun.

Unlike in Icelandic [Zaenen 1997] and in other varieties of Germanic dialects, Dutch and West Flemish to name but those two present a neat distribution of resumptive element in the absence of case distinction. The demonstrative pronoun is strictly observed in a high occurrence, the CP, the constituent that immediately precedes V2 [Boeckx & Grohmann 2005] and it patterns with the CLD. The personal pronoun occurs in a lower position between C and V and is correlated with HTLD.

Furthermore, Clitic Left Dislocation (henceforth, CLLD) is another type which is observed in most African languages, in Lebanese Arabic [Aoun & Benmamoun 1998], in Romance languages, and in Greek to name but a few. CLLD is characterized by the fronting of the left dislocated constituent which correlates with a resumptive argument clitic occurring within the base-generated clause from which the dislocate element moved. It is worth noting that the argument clitic is referred to as the weak resumptive pronoun which is insensitive to Island in Lebanese Arabic.

Aoun & Benmamoun [op cit.] assume that CLLD is an obvious case of either base-generation or syntactic movement which is but blocked in island context. Likewise, Grohmann [1997, 2000, 2003] analyzing Germanic languages suggests a hybrid approach on the resumptive pronoun whereby CLD is a case of syntactic movement while HTLD is a base-generated construction.

Boeckx [2003] disapproves the hybrid theory of resumption positing a more unified view which is movement-based and which is derived from Chomsky's [2000: 122] Probe-Goal model of syntactic relations [Boeckx & Grohmann 2005].

Unlike Chomsky, who bases the Probe-Goal model of syntactic relations upon a tridimensional variable Match-Agree-Move which accounts for the displacement in natural language, Boeckx [2003] values a duo-dimensional approach which is based on Move-Match. Boeckx and Grohmann [2005] posit in the case of HTLD that left-dislocate NP moves under Match influence, as a result it is neither impacted by Island effects nor does it license reconstruction whereas, they assume in CLD that Agree is involved resulting in Island effects and reconstruction observance.

In light of the literature above, two main types of analyses are offered of which, on the one hand, it is assumed that dislocate is base-generated in the sentence initial position. Thus, two implications are drawn from this assumption. Primo, the resumptive element which is, at some extent, a pronoun or demonstrative depending on the language should be treated as a true object of the verb. Segundo, dislocate is considered as a fronted constituent which is generated from the D-structure. On the other hand, left dislocate can be analyzed as derived by syntactic movement.

3. Research hypothesis

In this paper, I argue that left dislocation is derived by a syntactic movement of the fronted element. The analysis assumes that dislocate is base-generated from a clausal-internal position. It is then moved to a position at the extreme left edge of the clause leaving behind a gap which is filled by a resumptive element. In the current case, the vacated site is filled by either an overt or covert pronominal copy which is as well generated in D-structure alongside with the fronted NP and which agrees in number and person with the left dislocated NP.

4. Data analysis and interpretation

This section discusses and organizes the data in terms of context of occurrence of left dislocation in both Kiswahili and Lingala. The next subsection addresses the context of subject.

4.1. Left dislocation in subject context

An external argument of a predicate can move to the front position of a clause which is a non-theta position leaving behind a resumptive pronominal copy which agrees in ϕ-features with the preverbal *DP* which has been left dislocated. In (1) and (2), the preverbal *DP*s *mbwa wangu* and *watoto wangu* were both generated in clausal internal position as subjects of respectively (1) and (2). As they moved to the front position of the clause, they are each copied by a pronominal resumptive element which respectively agrees in ϕ-features with the antecedent. *Mbwa wangu* in (1) agrees in person and number with the overt pronominal resumptive element *yeye* which fills in the subjective position in the clause after the preverbal has moved.

Example 1

Mbwa	wangu	yeye	a-	-li-	-ni-	kimbi	-z-	-a	Sana
Dog	mine	it	SPP.cl1.anim	past	ObjMk.1stPs	run	Caus	FV	a lot

'My dog, it made me run a lot'

Likewise, the overt resumptive pronominal element *wao*, the copy of the antecedent *watoto wangu*, agrees in ϕ-features with the latter (class 2, animate, plural, subject prefix). Besides, further evidence that the fronted *DP* was base-generated from a clausal-internal position and then moved to the left periphery of the clause is the subject agreement case. In (1), the preverbal *DP* which has been moved to the front agrees in ϕ-features with the verb and this is shown by the Subject Prefix Pronominal morpheme *a-* which is prefixed to the verb. Similarly, *wa-* in (2) shows the same realities as in (1).

Example 2

Wa-	-toto	w-	-angu	wao	wa-	-na-	-pend-	-a	kula
cl2.anim	child	cl2	Poss	they	SPP.cl1.anim	Pres	like	FV	eat

'My children, they like to eat'

4.2. Left dislocation in object context

Left dislocate *NP* can also move from its postverbal position to the front of the (matrix) clause, and this context is illustrated within this section. Let us consider (3) and (4) in Kiswahili to illustrate the derivation by syntactic movement of CLLD. In (3), the presence of the resumptive argument clitic *-ki-*, a pronominal concord of class 7 which marks the object agreement, is self-evident. This optional clitic is incorporated within the verb only when the verb has an object of class 7. In attempting to reconstruct this sentence by repositioning the fronted element within the vacated site, we have the form as in (4) whereby the left dislocate fits the object position and agrees in number and class with the resumptive argument clitic.

Example 3

Kitabu	changu	Mtoto	yule	a-	-li-	-ki-	-pote-	-z-	-a
Book	my	child	that	3PS.ani.SPP.cl1	past	Obj.mark.cl7	lose	Caus.Ext	FV

'My book, that child lost it'

Example 4

Mtoto	yule	a-	-li-	-ki-	-pote-	-z-	-a	Kitabu	changu
Child	that	3PS.ani.SPP.cl1	past	Obj.mark.cl7	lose	Caus.ext	FV	book	my

'That child lost my book'

(4) reconstructs the structure of (3) prior to the dislocation of the fronted element. The fronted element *kitabu changu* is an *O.d* (direct object) in (4) and it agrees in ϕ-features with the optional resumptive argument clitic *-ki-* which is as well generated in D-structure alongside with the fronted NP. This shows that the fronted element was base-generated from the clausal internal position and then it was derived by the syntactic movement.

Considering (5), the fronted element *Mwasi wana* was base-generated from a clausal-internal position. It was the object of the verb *ayebaki* prior to the derivation, as it moved to the extreme left edge of the clause it has left behind it a gap which is filled by an overt resumptive pronominal copy *ye*. The said overt resumptive pronominal copy *ye* agrees in number and person with the left dislocated NP. Unlike in (5), the displacement of the fronted *NP* to the extreme left periphery of the clause in (6) has resulted in a vacated site which is as well filled by a covert null resumptive pronominal copy which reflects all the syntactic properties of the dislocated *NP*, *Mtu yule*. In fact, in (6) the postverbal *DP Mtu yule* is the internal argument functioning as the object of the finite verb *-ona*. Its function as the object of the verb is attested by the presence of the obligatory incorporated clitic object marker *-mw-*. This clitic agrees in class, number, and person with the *DP Mtu yule*. Besides, this is the only argument in the clause which agrees in ϕ-features with the obligatory clitic object marker in the predicate. This is evidence of the derivation of the *NP* by syntactic movement.

Example 5

Mwasi	wana	Paul	a-	-yeb-	-aki-	ye	Na	Kelasi
Woman	that	Paul	3PS.ani.SPP	know	past	her	and	school

'That woman, Paul knew her at school'

Example 6

Mtu	yule	ni-	-li-	-mw-	-on-	-a	Hapa
Person	that	SPP1Ps.Sing	past	Ob.M.cl1	see	FV	here

'That person, I saw him here'

However, in (7) the DP *Mtoto* was generated as the specifier of the embedded finite verb *akichoka* prior to moving to the subject position of the same verb. The evidence that *mtoto* has been the subject of the embedded clause is shown by the Subject Prefix Pronominal agreement *a-* which agrees in ϕ-features with the *DP mtoto*. Other evidence is that there is no other *DP* in either the matrix or the embedded clause which agrees with the embedded verb *akichoka*. Furthermore, as the matrix verb *-fundisha* requires at least an internal argument functioning as the *o.d* (direct object), the *DP mtoto* raises to the objective position of the matrix verb marking its presence by the incorporation of an obligatory clitic object marker (which is of the same class 1 as the *DP*) within the verb. This obligatory clitic object marker constitutes a vestige which signals the presence of an obligatory object of class 1 in the postverbal position within the matrix clause. Finally, it moved to non-theta position at the extreme left edge of the matrix clause.

Example 7

M-	-toto	wa-	-limu	wa-	-li-	-m-	-fundish-	-a	a-	-li-	-chok-	-a
cl1	child	cl2 PL	teacher	cl2 SPP	past	Ob.mk	teach	FV	SPP	past	tired	FV

'The child, teachers taught him then he was tired'

The vacated site can also be filled by a null pronoun once the *NP* is displaced to the left periphery of the clause as in (8) in respectively Kiswahili and Lingala. The covert resumptive element agrees in number, person, and class with the fronted *NP* and it licenses the agreement with the finite verb of the embedded clause.

Example 8

Kitabu	changu	Baba	a-	-li-	-ki-	-nunua	ki-	-me-	-potea
Book	my	father	3PS.an.SPP.cl1	past	Obj.mark.cl7	buy	3PS.ina.SPP.cl7	Pr.Per	lose

'My book, the father bought it has been lost'

In (8), *kitabu changu* is fronted leaving behind an empty site which is filled by an empty pronoun. The empty site is a linguistic vestige which allows for the reconstruction of the former structure prior to the derivation. For instance, the fronted *NP kitabu changu* was base-generated as the specifier of the embedded *VP -potea*. Then, it moved to the subject position of the finite embedded clause agreeing with the finite verb in number, person, and class prior to moving to the object position of the matrix transitive verb *-nunua*. *Kitabu* is assumed to have been the subject of the embedded finite verb by the presence of the 3rd person subject pronominal prefix *ki-* of class 7 which is the vestige that agrees in ϕ-features with the fronted *NP kitabu.* It is assumed that the vacated site is filled by a covert element at the abstract level which is co-indexed with the fronted *NP* and thus agrees in ϕ-features with the dislocated *NP*. It is the covert resumptive element which actually licenses its agreement with the embedded finite verb.

As the matrix verb *-nunua* requires at least an internal argument to behave as the object of the verb, *kitabu* moves to the object position of the matrix finite verb marking its object position by the incorporation of the clitic object marker within the verb, agreeing in ϕ-features with the *NP kitabu* prior to its final journey to the extreme left periphery of the main clause. The covert resumptive pronoun with no *PF* features has the accusative case which is reflected by the clitic object marker. It also licenses the agreement with the finite embedded verb in the lower clause.

4.3. Left dislocation in oblique context

A DP in an oblique context is blocked by the *P* from being extracted to move to the left position of the clause. However, it is the whole *PP* which moves to the left extreme of the clause as in (9). In the former, the *DP meza* cannot move to the front of the clause because it is blocked by the head of the phrase which is a preposition *Juu*. However, the movement is possible only with the whole phrase moving to the left position of the clause as illustrated in (9).

Example 9

Juu	ya	meza	pa-	-na	ki-	-tabu	ch-	-angu
on	of	table	SPP. loc.cl16	have	cl7	book	cl7	poss

'On the table, there is my book'

Example 10

*Nyumba	Mbwa	a-	-me-	-lala	Katika
House	dog	3PS.an.SPP.cl1	Pres.Perf	sleep	In

'*House, dog is sleeping in'

(10) is ungrammatical because the *DP nyumba* moved out of the *PP* to the front of the clause. The movement is blocked by the *P* head of the phrase. This shows that a *DP* cannot be extracted out of a *PP* in order to be left dislocated. The fronting is only possible with the whole constituent as in (11).

Example 11

Katika	nyumba	mbwa	a-	-me-	-lala
In	house	dog	3PS.an.SPP.cl1	Pres. Perf	sleep

'In the house, the dog is sleeping'

(11) is grammatical because the whole *PP* moves to the front as a constituent. Considering (12) whereby locative is expressed through the suffix *-ni* which is appended to the *DP nyumba*, the latter moves to the front position of the clause leaving an empty site which is filled in by an overt element. The movement is possible here because there is no *P* acting as the head of the phrase. As a result, the locative noun *nyumbani* of class 17 moves to the front of the clause. The co-indexation of *nyumbani* with *kule* shows that *nyumbani* was base-generated in clausal internal position as the locative and then moved to the front leaving not only an empty site which is filled by an element which shares the same ϕ-features as it, locative. Strong evidence of the movement of *nyumbani* comes from the resumptive clitic relative marker of class 17 which expresses location. The clitic *-ko* which is incorporated within the verb shows location and it agrees with the locative *DP nyumbani.*

Example (12)

Meza-	-ni	ki-	-tabu	ki-	-ko	Kule
Table	Loc. Suff	cl7	book	SPP. cl7	Loc. cl17	There

'On the table, the book is there'

4.4. Left dislocation within Islands context

Left-dislocation is as well observed within Islands. (13) does not obey the complex *NP* constraint as the left dislocated element moves out of the relative clause. The *NP Tata wana* in (13) was generated as the *spec* of the embedded *VP alataki*. Then, it moved to the subject position of the said verb. Thereafter, it moved to the subject position of the higher finite embedded verb *az'omela* crossing the relative pronoun *oyo* and then moving out of the relative clause to the extreme left edge of the matrix clause. These movements violate the complex *NP* constraint.

Example 13

Tata	Wana	Mamie	a-	-kut-	-aki	a-	-z'-	'omela	na	bar
Father	that	Mamie	3PS.ani.SPP	find	past	3PS.ani.SPP	be	to drink	at	bar

oyo	e-	-za'	Na	coin	a-	-lat-	-aki	kitambala
this	3PS.ina.SPP	be	at	corner	3PS.ani.SPP	wear	past	scarf

'The father, Mamie found drinking at the bar which is at the corner wore a scarf'

In (14), the *DP mtoto* was generated as the Spec of VP and then moved to the subject position of the embedded verb prior to raising as the object of the matrix verb. The evidence that *mtoto* was the subject of the embedded verb is shown by the agreement case whereby the embedded verb agrees in number and person with the left-dislocate *DP*.

Example 14

M-	-toto	wa-	-limu	wa-	-li-	-m-	-fundish-	-a	a-	-li-	-chok-	-a
cl1	child	cl2 PL	teacher	cl2 SPP	past	Ob.mk	teach	FV	SPP	past	tired	FV

'The child, teachers taught him then he was tired'

In its object position of the matrix verb, *mtoto* attests its position by the presence of the obligatory clitic object marker *-m-* which agrees with it in class, number, and person. Then, it finally moved to its last non-theta position at the extreme left edge of the matrix clause. This movement violates the Island constraint and shows that left-dislocation is not sensitive to Island.

4.5. VP left dislocation in the context of a non-finite *T*

The last context in which left dislocation can move is on the embedded non-finite *T*. The infinitive verb can move to the front position of the clause just like this is observed in other contexts. In Swahili, the infinitive form can occur in two major positions. First, the verbal infinitival is observed after a finite verb as in (15).

Example 15

Mtoto	ha-	-tak-	-i	ku-	-lala
Child	Neg.SPP.cl1	want	Pres	Inf. Mark	sleep

'The child does not want to sleep'

(15) shows that an infinitive form is required after a finite verb in Swahili. The other regular case is observed when the infinitive is used as the verbal noun. This use is similar to the gerund form or the infinitive form in English. In this case, the infinitive behaves like the subject of the clause. This is illustrated in (16).

Example 16

Ku-	-cheka-	-cheka	si	nzuri	sana
Inf.MK	laugh	Reduplicative form	Neg	good	a lot

'Laughing at any time is not good at all'

However, considering (17) from Moshi [1988], whereby the infinitive precedes the finite verb. Moshi [1988: 40] says that this use is attested in Swahili when the «idea in the infinitive verb is given prominence». In fact, this is the pragmatic interpretation of this construction. In syntactic perspective, this is a pure case of an infinitival left dislocation in Swahili. In this current case, the non-finite verb *kulala* is moved to the extreme left edge of the matrix clause. This use of the infinitive is different from the major case of uses which have been discussed in (15) and (16).

Example 17

Kulala	a-	pend-	-a	sana	ni	kufanya	kazi	ha-	pend-	-i
To sleep	3PS.an.SPP	like	FV	a lot	is	to do	work	Neg-	like	Pres

'To sleep, he likes very much, it is to work that he does not like'

(17) is derived from (18) which is the reconstruction form of the former. In (17) the non-finite verb *kulala* was generated as the complement of the matrix finite verb *-penda*. This form abides by the case of infinitive use in (15), whereby the infinitive form is used after a finite verb. Then, it moved to the front of the clause leaving behind an empty site which is filled by a covet operator which has the feature [- finite]. This covert resumptive operator shares the same feature as the left-dislocated non-finite verb *kulala* in (17).

Example 18

a-	-na-	-penda	kulala	sana	lakini	ha-	-pend-	-i	kufanya	kazi
3PS.an.SPP	Pres	like	to sleep	a lot	but	Neg	like	Pr.Ng	to do	Work

'He likes to sleep very much but he does not like to work'

(18) reconstructs this structure prior to the left-dislocation of the non-finite verb. The reconstruction patterns with the regular form of infinitival use in (15). The construction in (17) is just the case of verb left-dislocation in Swahili.

5. Findings and conclusion

The analysis and interpretation of the data has shown that left dislocation in Swahili and Lingala is a result of the derivation by the syntactic movement. The movement is attested by different vestiges which are observed in the vacated site: either a resumptive clitic argument, an overt pronominal element, a covert pronominal element, or a covert operator which agrees in ϕ-features with the fronted element. Cliticization is strong evidence which has attested the movement of the fronted element from different contexts to the front of the clause. Also, distant agreement of the fronted NP with the embedded finite verb through either the covert or overt resumptive element has provided more evidence to our analysis. It is also shown in (13) and (14) that left dislocation is not sensible to Island Constraints. Finally, left-dislocation is as well observed with non-finite verbs in Swahili. The infinitive form is moved to the left of the matrix clause and the vestige is filled in by a covert operator which agrees in ϕ-feature with the verb.

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