

Chapter 6

The expression of information structure in Rukiga

Allen Asimwe^a & Jenneke van der Wal^b

^aMakerere University ^bLeiden University

This chapter offers a systematic descriptive analysis of the various strategies the language uses to express information structure in Rukiga. Notably, word order is determined primarily by discourse roles, the augment on modifiers encodes a restrictive reading, and predicate doubling is associated with a contrastive interpretation among other multiple readings. The particle *-o* functions as a contrastive topic marker, which is often used in topic doubling constructions to reinforce a given interpretation. Although there is a tonal remainder of the conjoint/disjoint alternation, in Rukiga, it does not directly influence information structure. Rukiga also uses three types of clefts, a common strategy used to express focus as in many other languages of the world.

1 Introduction

This chapter gives a general overview of the expression of information structure in Rukiga. Rukiga is a Bantu language (Guthrie classification JE14, ISO code [cgg]) of the Nyoro-Ganda group, spoken predominantly in South-Western Uganda by approximately 2.3m people (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2016). Rukiga is closely related to Runyankore with a lexical similarity of up to 94% (Eberhard et al. 2020). Because of this high mutual intelligibility and a high level of lexical and grammatical affinity, the two languages are often clustered and studied together as one language (e.g. Taylor 1985, Turamyomwe 2011, Asimwe 2014, Ndoleri-ire 2020, among others). Together the two languages form the language cluster: Runyankore-Rukiga. Some studies on (Runyankore-)Rukiga exist. Two descriptive grammars are available, namely Morris & Kirwan (1972) and Taylor (1985).



Various other studies on Runyankore-Rukiga have been carried out, including ones on tense and aspect (Turamyomwe 2011, Asiimwe 2024a), definiteness and specificity (Asiimwe 2014), and the syntax of relative clause constructions (Asiimwe 2019). Two articles on aspects of information structure in Rukiga have been published within the Bantu Syntax and Information Structure (BaSIS) project: van der Wal & Asiimwe (2020) on the conjoint/disjoint alternation and Asiimwe & van der Wal (2021) on the contrastive marker *-o*. This chapter presents the first detailed (descriptive) study of information structure in Rukiga. It examines different strategies the language employs to express the various categories of information structure.

Data for this chapter are based on the Runyaifo variety largely spoken in Ndorwa county in Kabale district. Other dominant varieties of Rukiga include Rusigi, Ruhimba and Runyangyenzi. The rest of the dialects share a common grammar, and are quite distinct from Runyaifo. As part of the BaSIS research, data were collected during the month of January 2019 using the BaSIS project methodology, available through the Leiden Repository. Data were mainly collected through elicitation with three native speakers of Rukiga. In addition, data from natural speech in the form of narratives and recipes were also collected through interactions with the three native speakers. Additional data come from the first author who is a native speaker of Rukiga, and were checked by the three native speakers that participated in the elicitation sessions. The data were transcribed and stored in an Online Language Database accessible through the Dative user interface that allows data sharing in a collaborative research. This database will be accessible through The Language Archive. More information about Dative can be accessed via <https://www.dative.ca> (and see the introduction to this book). We also refer to the introduction to this book for further background on the terms and diagnostics used for information structure.

The chapter is structured as follows: Section 2 discusses the tonal conjoint/disjoint alternation in Rukiga. Section 3 gives an extensive discussion on word order and notes that word order in Rukiga is influenced mainly by discourse. Section 4 then looks at particle *-o* as a marker of contrastive topics, which also occurs in predicate doubling constructions, as discussed in Section 5. This section observes that predicate doubling constructions are associated with multiple readings and these readings are context-dependent. In Section 6, we discuss the optional augment on nominal modifiers in Rukiga, which is shown to express restrictiveness. Section 7 is concerned with the role of cleft constructions in the expression of focus and Section 8 examines object marking in Rukiga with a focus on the role of pragmatic object doubling. A summary of the chapter is given in Section 9.

2 Conjoint/disjoint residue

Some eastern and southern Bantu languages show a segmental morphological alternation in verbal conjugations known as the conjoint/disjoint alternation (see Chapter 5, Nshemezimana & van der Wal 2025 [this volume] on Kirundi and Chapter 8, van der Wal 2025b [this volume] on Makhuwa). This alternation can function as a marker of focus, as illustrated for Kimatuumbi in (1), where the disjoint verb form is marked by *eenda* whereas the conjoint form is unmarked. Using the disjoint form results in focus on the predicate, whereas the conjoint form indicates focus on the constituent following the verb (see van der Wal 2017, 2025a, for an overview of the conjoint/disjoint alternation across Bantu). Crucially, the conjoint verb form cannot appear clause-finally, whereas the disjoint form can – this is consistent across the Bantu languages.

- (1) Kimatuumbi (P13, Odden 1996: 60–61, glosses added)
- a. CJ Ni-kat-a *(kaámba).
1SG.SM-cut-FV rope
'I am cutting *rope* (not something else).'
 - b. DJ Eendá-kaat-á.
1SG.SM.PROG.DJ-cut-FV
'He is cutting.'
 - c. DJ Eendá-kaat-á kaámba.
1SG.SM.PROG.DJ-cut-FV rope
'He is *cutting* rope (not doing something else to it).'

Rukiga shows only a tonal residue of the alternation, as we argue in van der Wal & Asimwe (2020). Rukiga is the first Bantu language for which a purely tonal alternation has been described – all other languages that are known to have the alternation mark it by segmental morphology in at least one conjugation.

In Rukiga, the tone of the verb is in some tenses affected by a process of tonal reduction (TR), as earlier described for Haya (Hyman 1999). Van der Wal & Asimwe (2020) show how tonal reduction applies to the verb when it is not clause-final. Compare the tonal pattern of the clause-final verb in (2a) with high tones on the TAM marker and verb stem, with that in (2b) where the verb is not final and surfaces with only a suffixal high tone on the final vowel. The tone of the following constituent remains unaffected, as far as we could see.

- (2) a. María y-áá-hiing-a.
1.Maria 1SM-N.PST-dig-FV
'Maria has dug.'

- b. TR María y-aa-hing-á o-mu-siri.¹
 1.Maria 1SM-N.PST-dig-FV AUG-3-field
 ‘Maria has dug the field.’
 (van der Wal & Asiimwe 2020: 44)

Tonal reduction can still be seen as marking the conjoint/disjoint alternation here, because it is not an automatic process, but is restricted to a subset of tenses – just as is the case for the conjoint/disjoint alternation in other languages. If TR were a tonal process applying as a general rule, we would expect it to apply across the board to all sequences of verb and following element. Instead, only the present/habitual, yesterday past, remote past, and near past conjugations in Rukiga show tonal reduction when the verb is not clause-final. For table overviews and details on the tonal behaviour of verb and object we refer to van der Wal & Asiimwe (2020).

Given the sentence-final restriction of TR being the same as that of the conjoint/disjoint alternation, we investigated whether TR has an effect on information structure as well, as is the case for other Bantu languages with the alternation (van der Wal 2017), but in Rukiga the only determining factor for the form of the verb is its appearance in final position: Tonally reduced verb forms cannot appear in final position in a main clause, as illustrated for the present habitual and the yesterday past in (3).

- (3) a. A-b-áana ba-záan-a / *ba-zaan-a. [present habitual]
 AUG-2-children 2SM-play-FV
 ‘Children play.’
 b. Ekikópo, Hélen akitwíire / *akitwiiré. [yesterday past]
 e-ki-kopo Helen a-ki-twar-ire
 AUG-7-cup 1.Hellen 1SM-7OM-take-PFV
 ‘The cup, Hellen took it.’
 (van der Wal & Asiimwe 2020: 48)

Even when the verb is in focus (a typical environment for the disjoint/non-reduced form), as in (4) and (5), clause-finality determines the form of the verb in Rukiga: final = no TR, as shown in (4); non-final = no TR, as shown in (5a) – the non-reduced form is not acceptable, as shown in (5b).

¹In natural speech, this is pronounced with liaison as *yaahing’ ómusiri*, and the final H appears on the augment of the object.

- (4) Tí-ba-a-karang' é-bi-nyôbwa, bá-á-bi-shékur-a.
 NEG-2SM-N.PST-roast AUG-8-groundnuts 2SM-N.PST-8OM-pound-FV
 'They didn't roast the groundnuts, they pounded them.'
 (van der Wal & Asimwe 2020: 51)
- (5) a. TR E-nyonyi tí-z-aa-tambur-a júba kwonká
 AUG-10.birds NEG-10SM-N.PST-walk-FV quickly but
 z-aa-guruk-a júba.
 10SM-N.PST-fly-FV quickly
 'The birds have not walked quickly, they have flown quickly.'
- b. * Enyonyi tizatambura júba konká zááguruka júba.

There is no correlation between the absence of TR and verb focus, and neither do we find a correlation between the presence of TR and focus following the verb. This can be shown by placing an idiomatic object in postverbal position: since idiomatic objects can only be interpreted together with the verb, generating alternatives for a focused object results in a loss of the idiomatic meaning (van der Wal 2021). Therefore, if TR on the preceding verb would induce focus, only the literal meaning should remain, not the idiomatic one. Example (6) shows that the idiomatic reading is present, and that the TR form is required (because the verb is not final).

- (6) a. TR Naayeyaguz' órugusyo.
 n-aa-e-yaguz-a o-ru-gusyo
 1SG.SM-N.PST-REFL-scratch.CAUS-FV AUG-11-shard
 'I was in a bad situation.'
 lit. 'I scratched myself with a shard.'
- b. * Nááyéyaguz' orugúsyó.

TR equally applies in default agreement inversion (see Section 3.3.3), illustrated in (7), where the interpretation is *thetic*.

- (7) TR Hiiij' ómuntu.
 ha-aa-ij-a o-mu-ntu
 16SM-N.PST-come-FV AUG-1-person
 'Someone has come.'

Van der Wal & Asimwe (2020: 56) conclude:

[...] that there is never a true minimal choice between applying TR or not, that is, there is no alternation depending on information structure, but rather a tonal rule that is sensitive to (some) constituency boundaries. There is no direct tonal marking of focus (see Hyman 1999). The options available to the speaker are to phrase a postverbal element within or outside of the same constituent as the verb, and the form of the verb follows automatically. (van der Wal & Asimwe 2020: 56)

We refer to van der Wal & Asimwe (2020) for more examples and a detailed exposition and argumentation of this tonal residue of the conjoint/disjoint alternation.

3 Word order

Word order in Rukiga is partly determined by information structure and therefore shows more flexibility than a characterisation as SVO can do justice to, as was observed already for many other Bantu languages (e.g. Morimoto 2000, Zerbian 2006, van der Wal 2009, Yoneda 2011, Bostoen & Mundeke 2012, Kerr et al. 2023, and others). Hence, word order can be viewed as enabling both syntactic and discourse functions. In this section, we show that word order in Rukiga is determined by discourse roles more than grammatical roles (Kerr et al. 2023). If a canonical order has to be specified, we indicate that the best answer to a VP question is the order given in (8), with the preverbal *Pamela* functioning as the topic, and the verb and Theme being the comment, i.e. providing the new information anchored to the topic.

- (8) (What will Pamela do?)
Paméla a-ryá-téek-a muhógo
1.Pamela 1SM-FUT-cook-FV 9.cassava
'Pamela will cook cassava.'

We also find that it is common to find all active arguments expressed by subject and object markers on the verb as illustrated in (9).

- (9) (Has grandmother given the children the mangos?)
Y-áa-gi-bá-h-a.
1SM-N.PST-4OM-2OM-give-FV
'She (grandmother) has given them (the mangoes) to them (the children).'

The canonical word order is also used in the context of focus on the predicate, that is, State-of-Affairs focus (10a) and polarity focus (10b). Note that it is more natural to pronominalise given arguments, as in the TAM focus in (10c).

- (10) a. (Did you write the book?)
 Nshomir' ékitabó kyônka,² tindákíhandiikire.
 n-shom-ire e-ki-tabo ki-onka
 1SG.SM-read-PFV AUG-7-book 7-only
 ti-n-ra-ki-handiik-ire
 NEG-1SG.SM-F.PST-7OM-write-PFV
 'I only *read* the book, I didn't write it.'
- b. (Are you sure mother bought bananas; I can't see them?)
 Máama y-aa-gur-a é-mi-nekye. Ronda gye.
 1.Mother 1SM-N.PST-buy-FV AUG-4-banana. look.for.IMP well
 'Mother *did* buy bananas. Check properly.'
- c. (Have you bathed the children?)
 Íngaaha, kwonká ninzá kubánaabisa.
 ngaaha kwonka ni-n-z-a ku-ba-naab-is-a
 no but 1SG.SM-PRS-go-FV 15-2OM-bathe-CAUS-FV
 'No but I *will* bathe them.'

In the rest of this section, we discuss the preverbal and postverbal positions and show the extent to which information structure influences word order in Rukiga. Arguments can be left- or right-dislocated and there are discourse interpretational variations depending on the order of constituents in a sentence.

3.1 Preverbal position

3.1.1 No preverbal focus

It is generally the case that the preverbal domain is associated with topics, and focused elements are not permitted in the preverbal domain. It is therefore ungrammatical to use an interrogative word preverbally (11a), or put an answer to an interrogative element in the preverbal domain (11b).

- (11) a. *Kí Jóvani y-aa-twar-a?
 what 1.Jovan 1SM-N.PST-take-FV
 int. 'What has Jovan taken?'

²Note that *kyonka* 'only' does not agree with *ekitabo* 'book' – as an adverb it takes this invariant form (ignoring dialectal variation with *kwonka*), as in *Náárya kyonka* 'I only ate (I didn't drink)'.

- b. (What has Jovan taken?)

E-n-tébe Jóvani y-áá-twár-a.
 AUG-9-chair 1.Jovan 1SM-N.PST-take-FV
 int. 'Jovan has taken a chair.'

Grammatical subjects as focal elements cannot be questioned in the preverbal domain either. Instead, a cleft construction (12a) can be used, or a pseudocleft (12b), or default agreement inversion (DAI) (12c) – see Section 3.3.3 for more information on DAI, and Section 7 on clefts.

- (12) a. Nooh' ówíija?

ni o-ha o-u-aa-ij-a
 COP 1-who AUG-1RM-N.PST-come-FV
 lit. 'It is who who came?'
 'Who has come?'

- b. Owíija n' ooha?

o-u-aa-ij-a ni o-ha
 AUG-1RM-N.PST-come-FV COP 1-who
 'Who has come?'

- c. Haija oha?

Ha-ij-a o-ha
 16SM-come-FV 1-who
 'Who has come?'

Equally, a preverbal argument cannot be modified by the focus particle 'only' as the ungrammaticality of (13) and (14) show.

- (13) * Táátá wenká yíij-a

Taata w-enka a-aa-ij-a
 1.father 1-only 1SM-N.PST-come-FV
 'Only dad came.'

- (14) * Emigaatí yonká omukáma aguririre ábéegi.

e-mi-gaati y-onka o-mu-kama a-gur-ir-ire a-ba-egi
 AUG-4-bread 4-only AUG-1-king 1SM-buy-APPL-PFV AUG-2-student
 'Only bread the king bought for the students.'

3.1.2 Preverbal topics

Topics typically appear in the preverbal domain. By topic, here we mean “what the sentence is about” (Reinhart 1981), or the “spatial, temporal, or individual framework within which the main predication holds” (Chafe 1976: 50) (see also van der Wal et al. 2025 [this volume]). This is complemented by the comment, in which some information is added to the topic. Theme and Recipient arguments appear postverbally when they are part of the comment, but when topical, they preferably occur preverbally, as illustrated in (15). When an object appears preverbally, the presence of an object marker on the verb is required (*ba-* in (15)). Note that both *abaana* ‘children’ and *kaaka* ‘grandmother’ in (15) can be analysed as topics.³

- (15) (Context: Children are seen leaving their grandmother’s house, one carrying a basket on her head.)
 Abáána kááka yaa*(ba)há ki?
 a-ba-ana kaaka a-aa-ba-h-a ki
 AUG-2-child 1.grandmother 1SM-N.PST-2OM-give-FV what
 ‘The children, what did grandmother give them?’

Deriving a passive verb may also be used to promote objects in the active counterpart not just to subjects but also to topics, as exemplified in (16) and further discussed in Section 3.3.5. In this example, the suffix *-w* creates a passive verb which promotes the Theme to a subject function (as seen in the subject marking), while leaving the Actor argument (the wind) in a postverbal position.⁴

- (16) (Who opened the window?)
 Edirisá ekaigurw’ ómuyaga.
 e-dirisa e-ka-igur-w-a o-mu-yaga
 AUG-9.window 9SM-F.PST-open-PASS-FV AUG-3-wind
 ‘The window was opened by the wind.’

Locative inversion constructions equally present topical locative phrases in the left periphery, such as *aha rutindo* ‘on the bridge’ in (17) – see the discussion on inversion constructions in Section 3.3.

³Left-dislocated subjects (as *kaaka*) occur as contrastive topics, see Section 3.1.4.

⁴Note that in Rukiga the demoted Actor does not require further marking, i.e. no preposition such as ‘by’ is needed.

- (17) Aha rutindo haarabah'émótoka
a-ha ru-tindo ha-aa-rab-a=ho e-motoka
AUG-16 11-bridge 16SM-N.PST-pass-FV=16 AUG-10.car
‘Cars have passed on the bridge.’

Locative and temporal expressions also appear sentence-initially if they help to set the scene, as illustrated in (18) and (19). Note that these may be separated from the rest of the sentence by a pause, as indicated by the comma in (19).

- (18) Omu mbága obugiineyó baahe?
o-mu n-baga o-bugan-ire=yo ba-he?
AUG-18 9-party 2SG.SM-find-PFV=23 2-who
‘At the party, whom did you meet?’
- (19) Erizóobá (,) Píta yaateek' ákahûnga.
e-ri-zooba Pita a-aa-teek-a a-ka-hunga
AUG-5-day 1.Peter 1SM-N.PST-cook-FV AUG-12-posho
‘Today, Peter has cooked posho.’

The preverbal position is not exclusively reserved for topics, however, even if Taylor (1985: 79) notes that the initial position is the only reliable marker of topicality. Subjects inthetic sentences may appear preverbally, as in (20), and this suggests that Rukiga allows non-topical elements in the preverbal position (Kerr et al. 2023), because the subject in athetic sentence is detopicalised (Sasse 1996, Lambrecht 1994).

- (20) (What is the matter?)
O-mu-gôngo ni-gu-n-sháash-a.
AUG-3-back IPFV-3SM-1SG.OM-hurt-FV
‘My back is hurting.’

It is also possible for an indefinite subject such as *omuntu* ‘person, someone’ to occur in a preverbal position (21–22). As indefinite non-specific referents cannot form topics, this too suggests that the preverbal position in Rukiga is not a dedicated topic position.

- (21) (Context: We are three and have different jobs to do, but don’t worry about the grazing, there is somebody from outside that will do that.)
Ente zó, omuntu naazá kuziríisa.
e-n-te z-o o-mu-ntu n-aa-za ku-zi-ri-is-a
AUG-10-cows 10-CM AUG-1-person IPFV-1SM-go 15-10OM-eat-CAUS-FV
‘As for the cows, someone will graze them.’

- (22) (Have you heard a loud bang?)
 Ekintu kyó kyáhirima.⁵
 e-ki-ntu ki-o ki-aa-hirim-a
 AUG-7-thing 7-PRO 7SM-N.PST-fall-FV
 ‘Something (indeed) has fallen.’ (and made a very loud noise)

Note, though, that it is more natural to use a presentational subject inversion construction here (see Section 3.3.3), as in (23), to compare with (21).

- (23) E-n-te z-ó **ha-ine** **ó-mu-ntu** ó-ríku-z-á
 AUG-10-cows 10-CM 16SM-have AUG-1-person 1RM-IPFV-go-FV
 ku-zi-ríis-a
 15-10OM-eat-CAUS-FV
 ‘As for the cows, there is someone who will graze them.’

Furthermore, an indefinite (non-topical) interpretation does not seem to be acceptable for preverbal objects (24), suggesting that there is a dedicated non-dislocated preverbal subject position in addition to the topic positions in the left periphery.

- (24) (Has s/he bought something?)
 * Ekintu kyó yáákígura.
 e-ki-ntu ki-o a-aa-ki-gur-a
 AUG-7-thing 7-CM 1SM-N.PST-7OM-buy-FV
 int. ‘The thing, s/he bought it.’

In summary, there is a preference for topical constituents to appear preverbally, either fronted or assuming a subject function through passivisation or subject inversion, but non-topical subjects may also appear in the preverbal domain.

3.1.3 Multiple topics

Multiple topics are allowed in the preverbal domain, both arguments (25–26) and adverbs (27–28). The topical constituents are indicated by square brackets in these examples. As for preverbal objects, they must be resumed by an object marker. The adverbs are scene-setting topics, and the arguments may be familiarity topics (active from previous discourse) or contrastive topics (see next section). Some could also be analysed as “secondary topics”, meaning “an entity such that

⁵The contrastive topic marker *kyo* here is optional; it adds intensity in this case.

the utterance is construed to be about the relationship between it and the primary topic” (Nikolaeva 2001) – a typical example of a secondary topic is *ebihimba* ‘the beans’ in (25).

- (25) (Did father cook the beans?)
 Táát’ ebihimba abiteekíre.
 [taata] [e-bi-himba] a-bi-teek-ire
 1.father AUG-8-bean 1SM-8OM-cook-PFV
 ‘Father, the beans, he cooked them.’
- (26) Omwán’ ámaté yáágánywa?
 [o-mw-ana] [a-ma-te] a-aa-ga-nyw-a?
 AUG-1-child AUG-6-milk 1SM-N.PST-6OM-drink-FV
 ‘Has the child drunk the milk?’
- (27) (Context: Herdsmen passing on information to the cattle owner.)
 Nyómwébazy’ ómu kashéeshe tutwire énte kunywa áamázi.
 [nyomwebazyo] [o-mu kasheeshe] tu-twar-ire e-n-te
 yesterday AUG-18 12.morning 1PL.SM-take-PFV AUG-10-cow
 ku-nywa a-ma-izi
 15-drink AUG-6-water
 ‘Yesterday morning, we took the cows to drink water.’
- (28) Omu bwire bwa Yés’ ábant’ ábaabaire baba bain’ éndwára nk’ébibémbe,
 hamwé n’ézindi ndwára bakabá babashoróora.
 [o-mu bu-ire bu-a Yesu] [a-ba-ntu a-ba-aba-ire ba-ba
 AUG-18 14-time 14-CONN 1.Jesus AUG-2-person AUG-2RM-be-PFV 2SM-be
 ba-ine e-n-dwara nka e-bi-bembe hamwe na e-zi-ndi
 2SM-have AUG-10-disease like AUG-8-leprosy and and AUG-10-other
 n-dwara] ba-ka-b-a ba-ba-shoroor-a
 10-disease 2SM-F.PST-be-FV 2SM-2OM-discriminate-FV
 ‘During Jesus’ time, people who were suffering from diseases like leprosy
 and other diseases were discriminated against.’, lit. ‘... they discriminated
 them.’

3.1.4 Contrastive topics

A preverbal element can also form a contrastive topic, as seen for the independent pronouns *íwe* and *nyówe* in (29), and the adverbial *omu mushana* ‘during the day’ in (30), which is contrasted with *nyekiro* ‘at night’.

- (29) (QUIS map task)

Íwe oine piki ya burúru kusha nyowe tíhó nd' ááho.

iwe o-ine piki y-a bururu kusha nyowe
2SG.PRO 2SG.SM-have 9.motorcycle 9-CONN blue but 1SG.PRO
ti=ho n-ri a-ho
NEG.COP=16 1SG.SM-be DEM-16.PROX

'You have a blue motorcycle. But for me, that is not where I am.'

- (30) Kikáá nikirond' émére nyékiro; omumushaná kinyam' áhitagi ryómutí murungi; kishwek'ámíísho kitagahúmbya góona.

Ki-ka-b-a ni-ki-rond-a e-mere nyekiro o-mu
7SM-F.PST-be-FV IPFV-7SM-look.for-FV AUG-10.food night AUG-18
mu-shana ki-nyam-a a-ha i-taagi ri-a o-mu-ti mu-rungi
3-day 7SM-sleep-FV AUG-16 5-branch 5-CONN AUG-3-tree 3-good
ki-shwek-a a-ma-isho ki-ta-ga-humby-a ga-ona
7SM-cover-FV AUG-6-eye 7SM-NEG-6OM-close-FV 6-all

(about the owl) 'It would look for food at night and during the day sleep on a nice tree branch; when it sleeps, it does not close the eyes completely.'

A contrastive topic can also be indicated by the particle *-o* – see Section 4 for a discussion on this particle. This is illustrated for the adverb *nyomwebazo* 'yesterday' in (31), where the contrast marker comes out as *bwe*.

- (31) (Did you go to school yesterday and today?)

Nyómwébázyó bwé tinshomíre.

nyomwebazyo bu-o ti-n-shom-ire

yesterday 14-CM NEG-1SG.SM-read-PFV

'Yesterday I did not go to study.' (but I did study today)

Independent pronouns are also used to mark contrastive topics. As such, they typically occur in the preverbal position (see (32b) and (33a)), although they can also come in the final position as in (33b). These pronouns are optional in Rukiga. When absent, a contrastive reading on the topic is not obvious, as can be seen in the comparison of (32a) and (32b).

- (32) a. Naaruk'ékíibo.

n-aa-ruk-a e-ki-ibo

1SG.SM-N.PST-weave-FV AUG-7-basket

'I weaved a basket.'

- b. Nyowé naaruk'ékíibo.
 nyowe n-aa-ruk-a e-ki-ibo
 1SG.PRO 1SG.SM-N.PST-weave-FV AUG-7-basket
 'Me, I weaved a basket.' (maybe others did not weave baskets but
 other kinds of crafts or did other activities)
- (33) a. Imwe mushitam' ómumíisho.
 imwe mu-shitam-e o-mu ma-isho
 2PL.PRO 2PL.SM-sit-SBJV AUG-18 6-front
 '(For you) You sit in front.'
- b. Mushitam' ómumíish' íimwe.
 mu-shitam-e o-mu ma-isho imwe
 2PL.SM-sit-SBJV AUG-18 6-front 2PL.PRO
 '(For you) You sit in front.'

In summary, we have seen in this section that in Rukiga, the preverbal position is not dedicated to topics since it accommodates thetics and indefinite subjects which are non-topical. We have further demonstrated that it is possible to have multiple topics in the preverbal position, both arguments and adverbs. Objects as topics must, however, be resumed on the verb. And lastly, we have noted that contrastive topics are also marked, by being expressed as the independent personal pronoun, or by an additional contrastive particle in *-o*. Before discussing this particle further in Section 4, we first continue our presentation of word order and how it reflects information structure. The next subsection (3.2) focuses on the postverbal position. As we have shown that there is no preverbal focus in Rukiga, focused elements must come after the verb.

3.2 Postverbal focus

Focused elements typically appear postverbally, as seen in questions and answers for Themes and Locatives in (34) and (35).

- (34) a. Hélen atwire ki?
 Helen a-twar-ire ki
 1.Hellen 1SM-take-PFV what
 'What did Hellen take?'
- b. Hélen atwir' ékikópo.
 Helen a-twar-ire e-ki-kopo
 1.Hellen 1SM-take-PFV AUG-7-cup
 'Hellen took a cup.'

- (35) a. Amahúrire nibagagurá **nkáhe**?
a-ma-hurire ni-ba-ga-gur-a nkahi
AUG-6-newspaper IPFV-2SM-6OM-buy-FV where
‘Where do I buy a newspaper?’
- b. Nibagagurá aha **mídia sénta**.
ni-ba-ga-gur-a a-ha midia.senta
IPFV-2SM-6OM-buy-FV AUG-16 9.media.centre
‘They buy them at the Media Centre.’
‘They are bought at the Media Centre.’

Focused elements are preferably adjacent to the verb in Rukiga, in the immediate-after-verb (IAV) position (see Watters 1979 for coining the term, and Yoneda 2011, van der Wal 2009, Buell 2009 for claims of an IAV focus position in Matengo, Makhuwa-Enahara, and Zulu, respectively). To show that the IAV position is preferred for focus, consider that an interrogative word needs to be in the IAV position, as shown in (36) and (37): different word orders are possible as long as the interrogative word is in the IAV position. In (37a–37c), the interrogative word *oha* ‘who’ must occur in the IAV position. As illustrated in (37d), the construction becomes ungrammatical once there is an intervening element between the verb and the interrogative word.

- (36) a. Kááka yaaha ky’ ábáana?
Kaaka ya-aa-h-a ki a-ba-ana
1.grandmother 1SM-N.PST-give what AUG-2-child
‘What has grandmother given the children?’
- b. * Kááka yaah’ ábáána ki?
kaaka a-aa-h-a a-ba-ana ki
1.grandmother 1SM-N.PST-give-FV AUG-2-child what
int. ‘What has grandmother given the children?’
- (37) a. Káák’ émiyembe agihiir’ óha?
kaaka e-mi-yembe a-gi-h-ire o-ha
1.grandmother AUG-4-mango 1SM-4OM-give-PFV 1-who
‘Who did grandmother give the mangoes?’
- b. Kááka ahiir’ óhá emiyembe?
kaaka a-h-ire o-ha e-mi-yembe
1.grandmother 1SM-give-PFV 1-who AUG-4-mango
‘Who did grandmother give mangoes?’

- c. Emiyembe káák' agihiir' óha?
 e-mi-yembe kaaka a-gi-h-ire o-ha
 AUG-4-mango 1.grandmother 1SM-4OM-give-PFV 1-who
 'Who did grandmother give the mangoes?'
- d. * Kááka ahiir' émiyemb' óha?
 kaaka a-h-ire e-mi-yemba o-ha
 1.grandmother 1SM-give-PFV AUG-4-mango 1-who
 int. 'Who did grandmother give mangos?'

Although the interrogative word must appear in the IAV position, the answer does not need to. As illustrated in (38), the Theme 'hat' can be an answer to an interrogative word in its canonical (non-IAV) position (independently of the animacy of the objects). This suggests that interrogative words are more restricted in word order than their answers.

- (38) a. Waaha kí Jéini?
 u-aa-ha ki Jeini?
 2SG.SM-N.PST-give-FV what 1.Jane
 'What have you given Jane?'
- b. Naaha Jéin' énkofiira.
 n-aa-h-a Jeini e-n-kofiira
 1SG.SM-N.PST-give-FV 1.Jane AUG-9-hat
 'I have given a hat to Jane.'

Unlike arguments, as we just saw, not all questioned adverbs are restricted to the IAV position. The interrogative adverb of time 'when' in Rukiga can appear in the IAV or in a non-IAV position, as shown in (39). Compare with the adverb 'where' in (40), which prefers to be in the IAV position.

- (39) a. Okaza Kampálá ryári?
 o-ka-z-a Kampala ryari
 2SG.SM-F.PST-go-FV 23.Kampala when
 'When did you go to Kampala?'
- b. Okaza ryarí Kampala?
 o-ka-z-a ryari Kampala
 2SG.SM-F.PST-go-FV when 23.Kampala
 'When did you go to Kampala?'

- (40) a. Tuguré **nkah'** ébitookye?
 tu-gur-e nkahe e-bi-tookye
 1PL.SM-buy-SBJV where AUG-8-plantain
 'Where should we buy plantains?'
 b. [?] Tugur' ébitookye **nkahe'**
 tu-gur-e e-bi-tookye nkahe
 1PL.SM-buy-SBJV AUG-8-plantains where
 int. 'Where should we buy plantains?'

Objects modified by 'only' equally require an IAV position and do not allow right-dislocation, as shown in (41). Both the tonally reduced and the non-reduced form of the verb are indicated, and the order is unacceptable for either.

- (41) a. Píta yaateek' **ákahúngá kónk'** érizóoba.
 Pita a-aa-teek-a a-ka-hunga ka-onka e-ri-zooba
 1.Peter 1SM-N.PST-cook-FV AUG-12-posho 12-only AUG-5-day
 'Peter cooked only posho today.'
 b. * Pita yaa(ka)teeká/yáátéeka erizooba **akahúnga kónka**.
 Pita a-aa-teek-a e-ri-zooba a-ka-hunga ka-onka
 1.Peter 1SM-N.PST-cook-FV AUG-5-day AUG-12-posho 12-only
 'Peter cooked only posho today.'

For completeness, we mention that multiple argument questions are ungrammatical in Rukiga, neither in situ as in (42), nor with a cleft as in (43) (unlike in for example Cicopi).

- (42) (Context: At a charity, someone gave various people various clothes.)
 *Yaah'oha éнки? / *Yaah'énki oha?
 a-a-h-a o-ha enki / enki o-ha
 1SM-PST-give-FV 1-who what / what 1-who
 int. 'Who did s/he give what?' / 'What did s/he give who?'
 (43) *N' ooh' órikukurur' éнки?⁶
 ni o-ha o-riku-kurur-a enki
 COP 1-who 1SM.REL-IPFV-pull-FV what
 int. 'Who is pulling what?'

⁶The sentence is equally unacceptable with the clitic form for 'what', =*ki*.

The present analysis confirms that Rukiga has an IAV position, although it is not a strict one because answers to interrogative questions and some adverbs are not required to be in this position. Further discussion of the word order and interpretation can be found in Kerr et al. (2023). Non-topical subjects also appear postverbally, but a subject inversion construction is used in that case, as shown in the next section.

3.3 Subject inversion

In subject inversion constructions, the logical subject comes after the verb and is non-topical. Marten & van der Wal (2014) identify seven subject inversion constructions in Bantu languages. These are: formal locative inversion, semantic locative inversion, instrument inversion, patient inversion, complement inversion, default agreement inversion and agreeing inversion. Passive constructions are added to the list as they present related features to the inversion constructions. Bantu languages differ in terms of the inversion constructions each language allows (for a detailed analysis of these constructions; we refer to Marten & van der Wal 2014). Below we show subject inversion constructions that are possible in Rukiga.

3.3.1 No patient inversion or instrument inversion

Rukiga does not allow patient inversion (44) or instrument inversion (45), in which the preverbal element is a Theme or Instrument agreeing with the verb and the logical subject is in a postverbal position.

- (44) a. Abacáina nibombek' éнкуuto.
a-ba-caina ni-ba-ombek-a e-n-kuuto
AUG-2-chinese IPFV-2SM-build-FV AUG-10-road
'The Chinese are building roads.'
- b. *Enkuuto nizibombek' abacaina.
e-n-kuuto ni-zi-bombek-a a-ba-caina
AUG-10-road IPFV-10SM-build-FV AUG-2-chinese
int. 'The *Chinese* are building roads.'
- (45) a. Táát' akahandiikis' ákacúmu.
taata a-ka-handiik-is-a a-ka-cumu
1.father 1SM-F.PST-write-CAUS-FV AUG-12-pen
'Father wrote with a pen.'

- b. * Akacúmu kakahandiikisa táata.
a-ka-cumu ka-ka-handiik-is-a taata
AUG-12-pen 12SM-F.PST-write-CAUS-FV 1.father
int. ‘Father wrote with a pen.’

3.3.2 Locative inversion (LI)

Locative inversion is possible, but is restricted with respect to the predicate, the locative marking, as well as the locative noun classes. We first discuss the restricted locative noun classes of Rukiga. Class 17 is disappearing from Rukiga; it is not available as a locative prefix⁷ (see examples in (46)) as in other related Bantu languages such as Luganda (JE15) (Grégoire 1975).⁸

- (46) a. a-ha n-tebe
AUG-16 9-chair
‘on the chair’
b. o-mu mu-ti
AUG-18 3-tree
‘in the tree’
c. * o-ku n-tebe
AUG-17 9-chair
int. ‘on/to the chair’

However, *ku* (class 17) can be found as a noun class prefix in one lexical entry *okuzimu* (underground) and is also used in locative demonstratives (see Asimwe 2024b) as in *kunu* ‘here/this place’, *okwo* ‘there/that place near speaker’ and *kuri(ya)* ‘there/that place (place far from both the speaker and hearer)’.

Class 18 *omu* is used productively to derive locative nouns with a meaning of containment. However, there is neither a subject nor an object marker for class 18, and class 18 nouns use the class 16 subject and object prefix marker. Only the class 16 subject and object marker *ha-* is used for all the three noun classes as shown in (47–49) (but see Asimwe 2014, Beermann & Asimwe 2024). Note that only classes 16 and 18 are used as enclitics to the verb, and in addition also =*yo* of class 23 (49), which can co-occur with noun phrases in any of the locative classes.

⁷While the locative augment and prefix are written separately from the noun, following the orthography, they do not function as prepositions (yet) but form part of the NP.

⁸Note that the augment on the noun cannot be present when preceded by a locative prefix.

- (47) Omu rufûnjo hamezirey' ébihîmba.
 o-mu ru-funjo **ha-mer-ire=yo** e-bi-himba
 AUG-18 11-swamp 16SM-sprout-PFV=23 AUG-8-bean
 'Beans sprout in the swamp.'
- (48) (Omu kibira) nimpakûnda.
 o-mu ki-bira ni-n-**ha-kund-a**
 AUG-18 7-forest IPFV-1SG.SM-16OM-like-FV
 '(In the forest) I like (it) there.'
- (49) O-ku-zîmu ti-há-ri=**yó** ky-erérezi.
 AUG-17-underground NEG-16SM-be=23 7-light
 'Underground there is no light.'
 (Asiimwe 2014: 144)

Typical locative inversion in Rukiga needs formal locative marking on the locative noun, as shown in (50) for class 18 *omu-muti* 'in the tree' (and many examples below).

- (50) Omu mut' ómwo niharáaramú enyonyi.
 o-mu mu-ti omwo ni-ha-raar-a=**mu** e-nyonyi
 AUG-18 3-tree 18.DEM.MED IPFV-16SM-sleep-FV=18 AUG-10.birds
 'Birds sleep in that tree.'

Nevertheless, we also find examples with a formally unmarked locative noun in initial position, as in (51). Note that the subject marker here is still in the locative class 16 (to be distinguished from semantic locative inversion) and there is a locative enclitic (to be distinguished from Default Agreement Inversion).

- (51) Ishomer' éeri nihegyéramw' ábántu bakúru.
 e-i-shomero e-ri ni-**ha-egyer-a=mu** a-ba-ntu ba-kuru
 AUG-5-school DEM-5.PROX IPFV-16SM-learn-FV=18 AUG-2-people 2-big
 'Older people study at this school.'
 lit. 'This school studies older people.'

So-called Semantic Locative Inversion, where the preverbal NP is semantically locative but is not formally marked as such and subject marking agrees with the preverbal locative (Marten & van der Wal 2014, Buell 2007), is attested only with a restricted number of predicates and in specific circumstances (that are yet to be determined precisely); some examples are given in (52–55). A locative enclitic is obligatorily present on the verb in both types of locative inversion, in these examples =*mu* and =*ho*.

- (52) Ebicére bikabá nibituur' ómu kidiba kiríkushangw' ómwihamba ekidiba
 kirimw' ámiizi.
 e-bi-cere bi-ka-b-a ni-bi-tuur-a o-mu ki-diba
 AUG-8-frog 8SM-F.PST-be-FV IPFV-8SM-live-FV AUG-18 7-pond
 ki-riku-shang-w-a o-mu i-hamba, e-ki-diba ki-ri=**mu**
 7RM-IPFV-find-PASS-FV AUG-18 5-forest AUG-7-pond 7SM-be=18
 a-ma-izi
 AUG-6-water
 'The frogs used to stay in a pond in a forest. There used to be water in the
 pond.'
- (53) O-mw-enda gw-a-z-a=**mu** o-bu-rofa.
 AUG-3-cloth 3-N.PST-go-FV=18 AUG-14-dirt
 'Dirt has gone into the cloth.' / 'The cloth has become dirty.'
- (54) Orutookye rumezirem'w' ámózi.
 o-ru-tookye ru-mer-ire=**mu** a-ma-izi
 AUG-11-banana.plantation 11SM-germinate-PFV=18 AUG-6-pumpkin
 'Pumpkins germinated in the banana plantation.' (nobody planted them
 there)
- (55) E-meezá y-aa-yaatik-a=**ho** áamá-izi.
 AUG-9.table 9SM-N.PST-pour-FV=16 AUG-6-water
 'Water is poured on the table.'

Formal locative inversion is only found with intransitive predicates (both unaccusative (56) and unergative (57)) and passivised predicates (59); transitive predicates are not accepted in inversion constructions (58); these are systematically passivised to ameliorate the attempted construction, as in (59). We translate the sentences into idiomatic English, but note that this reflects only the basic content and not the information structure.

- (56) unaccusative:
 Omu nj'óomu hagwiremw' ómugurúsi.
 o-mu n-ju o-mu ha-gw-ire=**mu** o-mu-gurusi
 AUG-18 9.house AUG-18 16SM-fall-PFV=18 AUG-1-old.man
 'In this house an old man fell.'
- (57) unergative:
 Omu rufûnjo hamezirey' ébihîmba.
 o-mu ru-funjo ha-mer-ire=**yo** e-bi-himba
 AUG-18 11-swamp 16SM-sprout-PFV=23 AUG-8-bean
 'In the swamp beans germinated.'

(58) transitive:

* Omu musiri habingiremu abahingi enyonyi / enyonyi abahingi.
 o-mu mu-siri ha-bing-ire=mu a-ba-hingi e-nyonyi
 AUG-18 3-field 16SM-chase-PFV=18 AUG-2-farmer AUG-10.bird
 ‘On the field the farmers chased the birds.’

(59) passive of transitive:

Omu musiri habingirwemw’ ényonyi (*abahingi).
 o-mu mu-siri ha-bing-w-ire=mu e-nyonyi a-ba-hingi
 AUG-18 3-field 16SM-chase-PASS-PFV=18 AUG-10.bird AUG-2-farmer
 ‘From the garden the birds were chased (*by farmers).’

The preverbal locatives in inversion constructions function as true subjects, as they can be relativised using the subject relative strategy (60)⁹ (even if this is not used naturally, it is judged fully grammatical), and because it triggers subject marking in complex tenses, i.e. on both the auxiliary and the lexical verb (61).

(60) Omu nj’ óomw’ ahaagwamw’ ómugurúsi, harimw’ émbeba.
 o-mu n-ju o-mu a-ha-aa-gw-a=mu o-mu-gurusi
 AUG-18 9-house DEM-18.PROX AUG-16.REL-N.PST-fall-FV=18 AUG-1-old.man
 ha-ri=mu e-m-beba
 16SM-be=18 AUG-9-rat
 ‘In this house where an old man fell, there is a rat.’

(61) Omu katáre hakabá hagwiremw’ ómukázi.
 o-mu ka-tare ha-ka-b-a ha-gw-ire=mu o-mu-kazi
 AUG-18 12-market 16SM-F.PST-be-FV 16SM-fall-PFV=18 AUG-1-woman
 ‘In the market a woman had fallen.’

Locative inversion can be used for narrow focus on the postverbal logical subject, as shown for the question-answer pairs in (62) and (63a–63c), or inthetic/presentational contexts, as in (63c) in answer to (63b).

(62) a. Omu mut’ óomwo niharááramú ki?
 o-mu mu-ti omwo ni-ha-raar-a=mu ki
 AUG-18 3-tree 18-DEM.MED IPFV-16SM-sleep-FV=18 what
 ‘What sleeps in that tree?’

⁹See Asiimwe (2019) for a detailed analysis of the syntax of relative clauses in Runyankore-Rukiga.

- b. Omu mut' óomwo niharáaramw' ényonyi.
 o-mu mu-ti omwo ni-ha-raar-a=mu e-nyonyi
 AUG-18 3-tree 18.DEM.MED IPFV-16SM-sleep-FV=18 AUG-10.bird
 'Birds sleep in that tree.'
- (63) a. Aha rutindo haarabahó ki?
 a-ha ru-tindo ha-aa-rab-a=ho ki
 AUG-16 11-bridge 16SM-N.PST-pass-FV=16 what
 'What has passed on the bridge?'
 b. Orutindo rwaba ki?
 o-ru-tindo ru-aa-b-a ki
 AUG-11-bridge 11SM-N.PST-be-FV what
 'What has happened to the bridge?'
 c. Aha rutindo haarabah' émotoka nyíngi.
 a-ha ru-tindo ha-aa-rab-a=ho e-motoka ny-ingi
 AUG-16 11-bridge 16SM-N.PST-pass-FV=16 AUG-10.car 10-many
 'On the bridge many cars have passed.'

3.3.3 Default Agreement Inversion (DAI)

More frequently used than locative inversion is default agreement inversion (DAI), where the subject marker is in class 16, and there is no locative enclitic on the verb. Nothing needs to precede the verb in DAI. As with LI, DAI also requires the tonally reduced form of the verb, as illustrated in (64).

- (64) a. Ha-a-shohor-a Píta. [with TR]
 16SM-N.PST-move.out-FV 1.Peter
 'Peter has left.' / 'It is Peter who has moved out.'
- b. * Há-á-shohor-a Píta. [no TR]
 16SM-N.PST-move.out-FV 1.Peter
 'Peter has left.'

DAI can be used when introducing a new referent, as in (65) and (66), in content questions regarding the postverbal logical subject and answers to those questions, as in (67), as well as when contrasting or correcting an alternative referent, shown in (68).

- (65) (Context: Out-of-the-blue statement.)
Harihó ekintú kyangy'ékibuzire.
ha-ri=ho e-ki-ntu ki-angye e-ki-bur-ire
16SM-be=16 AUG-7-thing 7-POSS.1SG AUG-7SM.REL-get.lost-PFV
'There is something that I lost.'
- (66) Hii' ómuntu.
ha-aa-ij-a o-mu-ntu
16SM-N.PST-come-FV AUG-1-person
'Someone has come.'
- (67) (Context: You see people running and gathering, and you wonder what is going on.)¹⁰
- a. Haij' óoha?
ha-aa-ij-a o-ha
16SM-N.PST-come-FV 1-who
'Who has come?'
- b. Haija purésidenti.
ha-aa-ij-a puresidenti
16SM-N.PST-come-FV 1.president
'The President has come.'
- (68) (Is it Ron who left?)
Ingaaha, haagyenda Jack.
ngaaha, ha-aa-gyend-a Jack.
no 16SM-N.PST-go-FV 1.Jack
'No. It is Jack who has gone.'

Furthermore, the postverbal logical subject can be modified by 'only', as shown in (69), and also by 'also/even' (70). This suggests that the postverbal logical subject may be in focus, but is not inherently interpreted as exclusive: the interpretation as 'also/even' means that the proposition is true for other referents besides Daniel, which means that the construction in which it occurs (the DAI) does not come with an inherently exclusive focus interpretation.

- (69) Haagambíre Dániel wénka.
ha-aa-gamb-ire Daniel w-enka
16SM-N.PST-talk-PFV 1.Daniel 1-only
'Only Daniel talked.'

¹⁰ Although in this context, a basic cleft is preferred: *N'oha owaija?*

- (70) Haabyama ná Dániel.
 ha-aa-byam-a na Daniel
 16SM-N.PST-sleep-FV and 1.Daniel
 ‘Even/also Daniel slept.’

In neither LI nor DAI can an object marker be used, whether for the Theme or the Agent, as shown in (71) and (72), respectively.

- (71) * Omu musiri hazibingiremu abahingi.
 o-mu mu-siri ha-zi-bing-ire=mu a-ba-hingi
 AUG-18 3-field 16SM-10OM-chase-PFV=18 AUG-2-farmers
 ‘On the field chased the farmers them.’
- (72) * Aha rutindo haazirabahó.
 a-ha ru-tindo ha-aa-zi-rab-a=ho
 AUG-16 11-bridge 16SM-N.PST-10OM-pass-FV=16
 ‘On the bridge have passed they.’

3.3.4 Agreeing inversion

Rukiga also seems to allow agreeing inversion, whereby the subject marker on the verb agrees with the postverbal subject. It can be difficult to distinguish this from a verb with a right-dislocated subject as in an afterthought (see further in Section 3.4). However, for afterthoughts we would expect a pause between the verb and the subject, and an indefinite interpretation of the postverbal subject would be unacceptable for an afterthought. The fact that the postverbal subject in (73) is not preceded by a pause, and there is liaison between verb and subject, suggests that this is an instance of agreeing inversion, and the indefinite interpretation is unacceptable for a dislocated phrase. Example (74) is felicitous in athetic context (but not with contrastive focus on the subject), and could (with the right prosody) also be used as an afterthought. Note that the tones on the verb remain as in SV order, that is, the verb does not undergo TR (e.g. see (74a)), unlike in default agreement inversion (see van der Wal & Asiimwe 2020).

- (73) a. Yíij’ ómuntu. [no TR]
 a-aa-ij-a o-mu-ntu
 1SM-N.PST-come-FV AUG-1-person
 ‘Someone/a person has come.’

- b. * Yijj' ómuntu. [with TR]
a-aa-ij-a o-mu-ntu
1SM-N.PST-come-FV AUG-1-person
'Someone/ a person has come.'
- (74) a. Yááyéésyamur' émbúzi (#tí nte). [no TR]
e-aa-esyamur-a e-n-buzi ti n-te
9SM-N.PST-sneeze-FV AUG-9-goat NEG 9-cow
'The goat sneezed (#not the cow).' (thetic)
'It did sneeze, the goat.' (right-dislocated)
- b. * Yaayeesyamur' émbúzi. [with TR]
e-aa-esyamur-a e-m-buzi
9SM-N.PST-sneeze-FV AUG-9-goat
'The goat sneezed.'

Further research may elucidate the exact properties and use of Rukiga agreeing inversion.

3.3.5 Passive

The passive resembles patient inversion in Rukiga, because the Agent can be present without further marking (no “by-phrase”), as shown in (75b). The difference is that in the passive the Agent may be omitted, whereas in the (other) inversion constructions it is obligatorily present (75c). Furthermore, the verb is morphologically marked as passive by the extension -(g)w- (with its allomorphs such as *-ibw-*, *-ebw-*, *-ew-*).

- (75) a. Abakázi baahing' ómusiri.
a-ba-kazi ba-aa-hing-a o-mu-siri
AUG-2-woman 2SM-N.PST-dig-FV AUG-3-field
'(The) women dug a/the field.'
- b. Omusíri gwahingwá (abakázi). [passive]
o-mu-siri gu-aa-hing-w-a a-ba-kazi
AUG-3-field 3SM-N.PST-dig-PASS-FV AUG-2-women
'The field was dug (by women).'
- c. Omu musiri hakarabamw' *(ábakázi). [LI]
o-mu mu-siri ha-ka-rab-a=mu *(a-ba-kazi).
AUG-18 3-field 16SM-F.PST-dig-FV AUG-2-women
'On the field the women have dug.'

The preverbal referent in the passive is interpreted as topical, and the postverbal Agent may be the focus, as illustrated in the question-answer pair in (76).

- (76) a. Enju ya shwénkuru enkombekw' óha?
 e-n-ju y-a shwenkuru e-ka-ombek-w-a o-ha
 AUG-9-house 9-CONN 1.grandfather 9SM-F.PST-build-PASS-FV 1-who
 'Who built grandfather's house?'
 b. Ekombekwa Róbati.
 e-ka-ombek-w-a Robati
 9SM-F.PST-build-PASS-FV 1.Robert
 'It was built by Robert.'

Apart from the passive morpheme *-(g)w*, Rukiga uses the class 2 prefix *ba-* in impersonal constructions, as in other Bantu languages (e.g. Kula & Marten 2010 for Bemba, van der Wal 2016 for Matengo; see also other chapters in van der Wal 2025). The impersonal *ba-* is used when the Agent is unknown or unimportant, or when it needs to be kept anonymous. The construction contains no logical subject NP and the attention is on the object. The *ba-* construction is structurally not a passive because the preverbal object, although promoted to the IS function of topic, has not assumed the grammatical role of subject. This can be seen in the fact that it is marked on the verb with coreferential object marker – in (77), the preverbal object *esimu yangye* 'my phone' is marked on the verb by the object marker *gi-*, and the same for *enkuuto* 'the road' in example (79). Example (78) shows the impersonal interpretation of the *ba-* construction.

- (77) (Context: A girl is checking her bag, removing and throwing everything down and when her friend asks what she's doing, she replies:)
 E-símu y-angye b-áá-gí-ib-a.
 AUG-9.phone 9-POSS.1SG 2SM-N.PST-9OM-steal-FV
 'They have stolen my phone.' / 'My phone has been stolen.'
 (78) (Context: Father comes back home and his daughter tells him that someone she does not know was looking for him.)
 Taata ba-a-b-a ni-ba-ku-rond-a.
 1.Father 2SM-N.PST-be-FV IPFV-2SM-2SG.OM-look.for-FV
 'Father, they were looking for you.' / 'Someone was looking for you, father.'

- (79) (Context: Mother asks why we have come back home late.)
 Twakyererwa kuhik' ómuka ahabwókuba omu kugaruka twashang'
énkuuto bagisibire. Náhabwékyo twabanza kwétooroora.
 tu-aa-kyererw-a ku-hika o-mu ka ahabwokuba o-mu
 1PL.SM-N.PST-delay-FV 15-reach AUG-18 9.home because AUG-18
 ku-garuka tu-aa-shang-a e-n-kuuto ba-gi-sib-ire.
 15-return 1PL.SM-N.PST-find-FV AUG-9-road 2SM-9OM-close-PFV.
 nahabwekyo tu-aa-banz-a ku-etooroora.
 therefore 1PL.SM-N.PST-be.first-FV 15-go.round
 'We delayed to arrive home because on our way back, we found that the
 road had been closed. So, we had to take a longer route.'

In this subsection, we have shown that locative inversion, default agreement inversion and to some extent agreeing inversion are available in Rukiga. In addition we briefly discussed passive constructions where the object is promoted to topic in the preverbal position while the logical subject may or may not be present in the postverbal position. We generally note that the element that appears in the preverbal position is topicalised, whereas the postverbal logical subject forms part of the new or contrasted information (whether in athetic interpretation or as narrow focus on the subject).

3.4 Right periphery

What is not topical, but not focal either, can appear in the right periphery. This is for example the case for any constituents that follow the LAV focus, as in (80–81). Note that object marking in this case is optional.

- (80) Kááka yaa(ba)ha ky' ábáána?
 kaaka a-aa-ba-h-a ki a-ba-ana
 1.grandmother 1SM-N.PST-2OM-give-FV what AUG-2-child
 'What has grandmother given the children?'
 (81) Nitubaasá ku(bí)gura nkah' ébitoockye?
 ni-tu-baas-a ku-bi-gura nkahe e-bi-toockye
 IPFV-1PL.SM-be.able-FV 15-8OM-buy where AUG-8-plantains
 'Where can we buy plantains?'

Other examples involve an afterthought, that is, a full NP “used to clarify the referent of an earlier pronoun” (Lopez 2016: 414), as illustrated in (82). These are in Rukiga preceded by a pause.

- (82) a. (Has Peter cooked posho?)
 Píta yáákatéeka, ákahúngá.
 Pita a-aa-ka-teek-a a-ka-hunga
 1.Peter 1SM-N.PST-12OM-cook-FV AUG-12-posho
 ‘Peter cooked it, posho.’
- b. (Is the posho well cooked?)
 Ka-sy-á gye a-ka-hunga
 12SM-be.well.cooked-FV well AUG-12-posho
 ‘It is well cooked, the posho.’

A secondary topic may also appear in the right periphery of the sentence (Asiimwe & van der Wal 2021), illustrated in (83). Note that this secondary topic is marked by the contrastive topic marker *go*. The prosody indicates that it is not right-dislocated, as *amaizi go* cannot be preceded by a pause/prosodic break. Had the contrastive marker *go* been absent, a pause would have been acceptable in that position. Another difference is that in the presence of *-o*, both primary and secondary topics require co-indexing on the verb (compare to the optional object marking in (80) for example).

- (83) (Asiimwe & van der Wal 2021: 9)
 (Did the cows drink the water?)
 Ente záá*(gá)nyw’ ámíizi go.
 e-n-te zi-aa-ga-nyw-a a-ma-izi ga-o
 AUG-10-cow 10SM-N.PST-6OM-drink-FV AUG-6-water 6-CM
 ‘The cows, as for the water, they have drunk it.’

To summarise the word order properties of Rukiga, the preverbal domain preferably contains topics and may host non-topical subjects. Furthermore, Rukiga allows multiple topics and contrastive topics in the preverbal domain. However, focused elements are not allowed to appear preverbally. Interrogative constituents need to appear in IAV position (or in a cleft), and other focused constituents, for example some adverbs, may appear non-adjacent to the verb. Non-focal/non-topical constituents appear postverbally as well, exemplified bythetic subject inversions, afterthoughts, and secondary topics in the right periphery. Relevant to the marking of contrastive topics, in the next section, we discuss particle *-o* present in Rukiga as a contrastive topic marker which also performs other pragmatic roles.

4 Particle -o

Although Rukiga does not have dedicated focus or topic particles, it has a morphological particle that marks contrastive topics, as we discuss in Asiimwe & van der Wal (2021). Its presence in a sentence triggers an interpretational difference as indicated in (84). This particle is also found in Kĩitharaka and Kirundi with similar functions, see Kanampiu & van der Wal (2025 [this volume]) and Nshemezimana & van der Wal (2025 [this volume]).

- (84) a. Enjojo záija.
e-n-jojo zi-aa-ij-a.
AUG-10-elephant 10SM-N.PST-come-FV
'(The) elephants have come.'
- b. Enjojo zó záija.
e-n-jojo z-o zi-aa-ij-a.
AUG-10-elephant 10-CM 10SM-N.PST-come-FV
'As for the elephants, they have come (maybe the antelopes, the zebras, the lions etc. have not shown up).'

According to Taylor (1985), the particle encodes contrastiveness or mere emphasis such as in (85b), as the particle *ko* emphasises 'pen' in a contrastive manner.

- (85) (Taylor 1985: 74, glosses adapted)
- a. Y-aa-reet-a é-ki-tabo, a-ka-cumu ka-buz-ire.
1SM-N.PST-bring-FV AUG-7-book AUG-12-pen 12SM-lose-PFV
'He brought the book and lost his pen.' (sic)
- b. Y-aa-reet-a é-ki-tabo, a-ka-cumu **k-ó** ka-buz-ire.
1SM-N.PST-bring-FV AUG-7-book AUG-12-pen 12-CM 12SM-lose-PFV
'He brought the book, but the pen is lost.'

In addition to Taylor's observation, Asiimwe (2014) argues that the particle triggers a contrastive reading in a sentence between referents that are familiar (86).

- (86) (Adapted from Asiimwe 2014: 236)
(Context: To counter the claim that nobody was invited, not even the teachers.)
Abashomésa **bó** twábéeta.
a-ba-shomesa ba-o tu-aa-ba-et-a
AUG-2-teacher 2-CM 1PL.SM-N.PST-2OM-call-FV
'As for the teachers, we have invited them.'

Without wanting to repeat the whole description and analysis in Asiimwe & van der Wal (2021), we will summarise the main morphosyntactic properties in Section 4.1, then proceed to the interpretation in Section 4.2 and finally present its combination with *na* ‘and’ in Section 4.3.

4.1 Morphosyntactic properties of the particle

The particle stands as an independent morpheme and like all the other nominal elements, it is marked for noun class as Table 1 shows.

Table 1: Morphological structure of the particle *-o* (Asiimwe & van der Wal 2021: 4)

Noun class + prefix	Example noun	Gloss	Particle
1 mu-	omuhara	girl	we
2 ba-	abahara	girls	bo
3 mu-	omuyembe	mango	gwo/gwe
4 mi-	emiyembe	mangoes	yo
5 ri-/i-	eihuri	egg	ryo
6 ma-	amahuri	eggs	go
7 ki-	ekihumi	granary	kyo
8 bi-	ebihumi	granaries	byo
9 n-	ente	cow	yo
10 n-	ente	cows	zo
11 ru-	orushare	calabash	rwo/rwe
12 ka-	akatare	market	ko
13 tu-	oturo	sleep	two/twe
14 bu-	obumanzi	bravery	bwo/bwe
15 ku-	okuguru	leg	kwo/kwe
16 ha-	aheeru	outside	ho
17 ku-	okuzimu	hell	yo
18 mu-	omwiguru	in heaven	yo/ho/mwo/mwe

The particle typically follows the noun it refers to, as in (87a). However, it is free to move to the prenominal position, seen in (87b). It can also appear after the verb as exemplified in (87c).

- (87) (Asiimwe & van der Wal 2021: 5)
- a. E-n-te z-ó Ámos n-aa-zá ku-zi-ríis-a. [Post-N]
AUG-10.cows 10-CM 1.Amos IPFV-1SM-go 15-10OM-feed-FV
'For the sake of the cows, Amos will graze them.'
- b. ...kwónka z-ó e-n-taama z-áá-nyw-a. [Pre-N]
but 10-CM AUG-10-sheep 10SM-N.PST-drink-FV
'...but as for the sheep, they drank'
- c. E-n-te ni-n-zá ku-zi-ríis-a z-o. [Post-V]
AUG-10-cow IPFV-1SG.SM-go 15-10OM-feed-FV 10-CM
'As for the cows, I will graze them.'

The particle can be used pronominally, for highly accessible referents, with just a subject (88a) or an object marker (88b). Note that although the particle is free to appear in the postverbal position, in the examples given (88) below it is in the preverbal position because topics are typically marked in the preverbal position.

- (88) (Asiimwe & van der Wal 2021: 5)
- a. **Bó** baateek' ómucéeri. [CM + SM]
ba-o ba-aa-teek-a o-mu-ceeri
2-CM 2SM-N.PST-cook-FV AUG-3-rice
'As for them (the women), they have cooked rice.'
- b. **Gw'** ábakázi báágutéeka. [CM + OM]
gu-o a-ba-kazi ba-aa-gu-teek-a
3-CM AUG-2-woman 2SM-N.PST-3OM-cook-FV
'As for it (the rice) the women have cooked it.'

The particle occurs with both arguments and adverbials, as illustrated in (89a) for a subject NP and (89b) for an adverbial.

- (89) a. Ebihimba **byó** tíbikamezire.
e-bi-himba bi-ó tí-bi-ka-mer-ire
AUG-8-bean 8-CM NEG-8SM-NEG-germinate-PFV
'As for the beans, they have not yet germinated.'
- b. Nyómwébázyo **bwé** tegwîre.
nyomwebazyo bu-o ti-e-gw-ire.
yesterday 14-CM NEG-9SM-fall-PFV
'Yesterday it did not rain (it rained on other days).'

In case of conjoined clauses, the particle can appear in either the first or second clause (but preferably in the second clause and not both – that would be overdoing it), as in (90).

- (90) a. (What is the woman eating and what is the man eating? + QUIS picture)
 Omukázi arikuryá ápo, kándi wé omushíija arikurya' ómunekye.
 o-mu-kazi a-riku-ri-a apo kandi w-o o-mu-shaija
 AUG-1-woman 1SM-IPFV-eat-FV 9.apple and 1-CM AUG-1-man
 a-riku-ri-a o-mu-nekye
 1SM-IPFV-eat-FV AUG-3-banana
 'The woman is eating an apple while the man is eating a banana.'
- b. Omukázi wé arikuryá ápo, omushíija arikury' ómunekye.
 o-mu-kazi w-o a-riku-ri-a apo o-mu-shaija
 AUG-1-woman 1-CM 1SM-IPFV-eat-FV 9.apple AUG-1-man
 a-riku-ri-a o-mu-nekye
 1SM-IPFV-eat-FV AUG-3-banana
 'The woman is eating an apple, the man is eating a banana.'

4.2 Functions of -o

The particle combines with topic referents and is infelicitous in focus environments (Asiimwe & van der Wal 2021). For example, the particle is incompatible with content questions which are inherently focused as shown in (91), and equally infelicitous in an answer to a content question (92).

- (91) (Asiimwe & van der Wal 2021: 7)
 Saúda y-aa-teek-á ki (*ky-o)?
 1.Sauda 1SM.SG-N.PST-cook-FV what 7-CM
 'What has Sauda cooked?'
- (92) (Asiimwe & van der Wal 2021: 7)
 (Who broke the cup?)
 # Omwáná wé akyasíre.
 o-mu-ana w-o a-ki-at-ire
 AUG-1-child 1-CM 1SM.SG-7OM-break-PFV
 'The child broke it.'

Instead, we argued that the particle *-o* is a contrastive topic marker. We can see that it is contrastive in the fact that it is infelicitous in an environment where no alternative referents are expected, as illustrated in (93).

- (93) (Asiimwe & van der Wal 2021: 8)
(Context: You only have sheep and perhaps you have come back from shepherding.)
Entaama ([#]**zó**) zaanyw' ámiizi.
e-n-taama z-o zi-aa-nyw-a a-ma-izi
AUG-10-sheep 10-CM 10SM-N.PST-drink-FV AUG-6-water
'The sheep have drunk water.'

The particle thus evokes a salient alternative topic that is either explicit or implicit. The implicature in (94) is that the maize garden they have not weeded, for example.

- (94) (Asiimwe & van der Wal 2021: 11)
Orutookye **rwó** báarubágara.
o-ru-tookye ru-o ba-aa-ru-bagar-a
AUG-11-banana.plantation 11-CM 1SM-N.PST-11OM-weed-FV
'As for the banana plantation, they have weeded it.'

The particle is equally felicitous in situations where only a subset is mentioned. The response (95b) to the question in (95a) with the contrastive particle indicates that the set of referents contains different kinds of food including, for example, *posho*, rice and bananas and out of the different kinds of food that were being cooked, only bananas were ready for serving. Note that with the presence of the particle, the contrasted referents need not be mentioned, and in fact the proposition is not necessarily false for the alternatives that the referent is contrasted with. As shown in (95c), the speaker may choose to say 'others I don't know'.

- (95) a. Ebyókuryá byáhiire?
e-byokurya bi-aa-sy-ire?
AUG-8.food 8SM-N.PST-be.ready-PFV
'Is the food ready?'
b. Ebitookye byó byáhiire.
e-bi-tookye bi-o bi-aa-sy-ire
AUG-8-banana 8-CM 8SM-N.PST-be.ready-PFV
'As for the bananas, they are ready.'

- c. Ebitookye byó byáhiire, ebíndi tibikahiire/tindíkumanya.
 e-bi-tookye bi-o bi-aa-sy-ire e-bi-ndi
 AUG-8-banana 8-CM 8SM-N.PST-be.ready-PFV AUG-8-other
 ti-bi-ka-sy-ire /ti-n-riku-many-a
 NEG-8SM-NEG-be.ready-PFV /NEG-1SG.SM-IPFV-know-FV
 ‘As for the bananas, they are ready; the rest are not ready / I don’t know.’

The particle is equally found to mark shift topics. This is commonly observed in news anchoring where the particle is used when switching to a new news item. For this particular use, the particle occurs in the initial position preceding the topic as in the illustration in (96).

- (96) (Asiimwe & van der Wal 2021: 13)
 (Recorded on TV West 08-05-2020 from the 8pm news.)
 Bó abanyamakúru omurí Mbarara baatung’ óbuhwezi bw’óbuhúnga...
 ba-o a-ba-nya-makuru o-mu-ri Mbarara ba-aa-tung-a
 2-CM AUG-2-NMLZ-news AUG-18-be 23.Mbarara 2SM-N.PST-get-FV
 o-bu-hwezi bu-a o-bu-hunga...
 AUG-14-help 14-CONN AUG-14-posho
 ‘Journalists in Mbarara (district) have received aid in form of *posho*...’

The particle may in given contexts also express the speaker’s surprise at an event or situation that is beyond expectation. This gives rise to a mirative reading, as illustrated in (97) (see also Asiimwe 2023). Example (98) expresses a polarity focus but at the same time also gives a counterexpectation reading – it is surprising to the speaker that gorillas can sing.

- (97) (Asiimwe & van der Wal 2021: 19)
 (Context: Someone has a function or has organised an event and sends out invitations. For one reason or another, s/he does not expect many guests to turn up. Many guests turn up to the surprise of the host.)
 Abantu bó bíja.
 a-ba-ntu ba-o ba-ij-a
 AUG-2-person 2-CM 2SM.N.PST-come-FV
 ‘People really came.’ (many people turned up, more than those expected)
- (98) (Is it true that the gorillas sang for you?)
 Engagi zó záátwéshongorerá!
 e-n-gagi zi-o zi-aa-tu-eshongor-er-a
 AUG-10-gorilla 10-CM 10SM-N.PST-1PL.OM-sing-APPL-FV
 ‘(It is true) They have indeed sung for us!’

We further note in Asiimwe & van der Wal (2021) that two particles can occur referring to one entity as indicated in (99).

- (99) (Context: Mother is amazed by the love and special care her two-year-old twins show each other.)

Mbwénu **b-ó** a-bá **b-o...**!

DM 2-CM DEM-2.PROX 2-CM

‘As for those ones...!’ (Asiimwe & van der Wal 2021: 26)

The particle, given the right context, is also associated with other pragmatic interpretations, namely intensity and verum, and may also give rise to a depreciative interpretation as shown in (100).

- (100) E-n-júra y-ó y-áa-gw-a.
AUG-9-rain 9-CM 9-N.PST-fall-FV.

‘It has rained.’

Context 1: Someone is in doubt whether it rained in my area. [verum]¹¹

Context 2: It rained really heavily and/or for a long time. [intensity]

Context 3: It has rained but it is no use since the crops have already withered. [depreciative]

Furthermore, the particle may be used in predicate doubling constructions (101), as we elaborate further in Section 5 with the various interpretations.

- (101) Okugyenda (**kó/kwé**), tákagyenziré... konká naazá kugyenda.
o-ku-gyenda ku-o ti-a-ka-gyend-ire... konka ni-a-z-a
AUG-15-go 15-CM NEG-1SM-not.yet-go-PFV... but IPFV-1SM-go-FV
ku-gyenda
15-go
‘S/he has not yet gone, but... s/he will/must go.’

The particle may also be used ironically as in the context in (102).

- (102) (Context: In the context of Covid-19 pandemic, the speaker heard that the government announced that it will provide free face masks to all its citizens)

Z-ó ni-zi-ij-á ryarí báitu?

10-CM IPFV-10-come-FV when by.the.way

‘By the way when are they (the masks) coming?’

¹¹The verum interpretation comes out more naturally with a discourse marker *nangwa* ‘truly’ or *buzima* ‘indeed/truly’ used in the construction.

In summary, the particle not only realises a contrastive topic reading but also a wide range of pragmatic meanings including mirativity. A detailed discussion on the roles of the particle and its origin are presented in Asiimwe & van der Wal (2021).

4.3 Na + PRO

The pronoun in *-o* realises an additive meaning when attached to *na* which may mean ‘with’, ‘and’, ‘also’ or ‘even’, as illustrated in (103–105). The combination *na+PRO* follows a noun, and it marks the non-initial topic, that is, some topic has to have been mentioned before in order to felicitously use *na+PRO* after another topic. In (103), the crested cranes are mentioned first, and it is added that the same proposition also holds for doves. In (104), no prior referent is mentioned explicitly in the sentence itself, but this can only be said in reaction to an earlier statement mentioning other referents (participating in the same action).

- (103) (Did you see the crested cranes?)
 N-aa-reeb-a é-n-tuuha, e-n-dahi na-zó
 1SG.SM-see-FV AUG-10-crested.cranes AUG-10-dove and-10.PRO
 n-áá-zí-reeb-a.
 1SG.SM-N.PST-10OM-see-FV
 ‘I saw crested cranes, and also doves.’
- (104) (Tomorrow we will iron bedsheets, trousers and skirts.)
 E-sáati na-zó, nyénsákare ni-tu-z-á ku-zí-gorora
 AUG-10.shirts and-10.PRO tomorrow IPFV-1PL.SM-go-FV 15-10OM-iron
 ‘The shirts too, we will iron them tomorrow.’
- (105) (Context: Other animals had already sought advice from the (clever) owl.)
 Wakamé yaayitw’émbého nayó yaayebuuz’ékyokukóra yaaza kubúúz’
 ékihuunyira
 wakame y-aa-it-w-a e-n-beho na-yo
 9.Hare 9SM-N.PST-kill-PASS-FV AUG-9-coldness and-9.PRO
 y-aa-e-buuz-a e-ki-a o-ku-kora y-aa-za ku-buuz-a
 9SM-N.PST-REFL-ask-FV AUG-7-CONN AUG-15-do 9SM-N.PST-go 15-ask-FV
 e-ki-huunyira
 AUG-7-owl
 ‘The hare also felt very cold, and wondered about what to do and went to ask the owl.’

The additive meaning is also clear in the following example from a recipe.

- (106) (Make sure you wash the bucket where you put the porridge. It is thoroughly washed, there is no dirt at all.)
 Reero wáamara orondé esafuriya yaawe **nay'** ógibóneze.
 reero u-aa-mar-a o-rond-e e-safuriya
 then 2SG.SM-N.PST-finish-FV 2SG.SM-look.for-SBJV AUG-9.saucepan
 i-a-we na-yo o-gi-bonez-e
 9-POSS.2SG and-9.PRO 2SG.SM-9OM-clean-SBJV
 'Then you get a saucepan and clean it as well.'

The combination *na*+PRO facilitates topic shift. The topic in (107) shifts from good chairs to bad chairs and the marker can only occur with the second topic as the ungrammaticality of (107b) shows.

- (107) a. Yaareeb' éntéb' énungi n'embí **nazó** yáázíreeba.
 a-aa-reeb-a e-n-tebe e-n-rungi na e-n-bi
 1SM-N.PST-see-FV AUG-10-chairs AUG-10-good and AUG-10-bad
 na-zo a-aa-zi-reeb-a
 and-10.PRO 1SM-N.PST-10OM-see-FV
 'S/he saw good chairs, and bad ones s/he also saw.'
 b. Yaareeb' éntéb' (é)nnungi (***nazó**) n'embí yáázíreeba.
 a-aa-reeb-a e-n-tebe e-n-rungi na-zo na
 1SM-N.PST-see-FV AUG-10-chairs AUG-10-good and-10.PRO and
 e-n-bi a-aa-zi-reeba
 AUG-10-bad 1SM-N.PST-10OM-see
 'S/he saw good chairs, and bad ones s/he also saw.'

The difference with the contrastive particle *-o* used by itself is that with *na*+PRO, the same predicate applies to both topics, as opposed to contrasting truth values or alternative predicates for the referents marked by *-o* alone.

We conclude that the particle *-o* and the combination *na*+*-o* are used in Rukiga to mark topics, either contrastively or additively. In the next section we turn to predicate doubling, in which one type also involves contrastive topicalisation, and as mentioned, this topic doubling can be combined with the *-o* particle.

5 Predicate doubling

In predicate doubling, the same predicate occurs twice in one clause. Rukiga shows two types of predicate doubling: topic doubling and in-situ doubling. These will be presented in turn below.

5.1 Topic doubling

In topic doubling, an infinitive form of the verb precedes an inflected form of the same verb, as in (108). The marker *kwo/kwe* (see Section 4) can also be added here to reinforce the various interpretations, showing that the initial infinitive typically functions as a contrastive topic. Relevant in comparison with (128) below, it is ungrammatical to add *na* ‘and, also, even’ when the construction contains the topic marker *-o* as shown in (108b).

- (108) a. Okuhínga (**kwé**) nimpínga.
o-ku-hing-a ku-o ni-n-hing-a
AUG-15-dig-FV 15-CM IPFV-1SG.SM-dig-FV
'For the case of digging, I can dig.' / 'Digging I can do...'
- b. *N'okuhínga (**kwé**) nimpínga.
na o-ku-hing-a ku-o ni-n-hing-a
and AUG-15-dig-FV 15-CM IPFV-1SG.SM-dig-FV
int. 'For the case of digging, I can also dig.' / 'Even digging I can do...'

The construction can be used in a range of contexts with varying interpretations. A prototypical interpretation contrasts the topical infinitive with another action. The contrastive interpretation is made explicit in (109) by the following negative clause.

- (109) (Context: The Hare has been very lazy while the other animals worked on the field. The Hare could say:)
Okukóra (kwé), tínaakora, konká nínzá kurya.
o-ku-kora ku-o ti-n-a-kor-a kwonka
AUG-15-work 15-CM NEG-1SG.SMN.PST-work-FV but
ni-n-z-a ku-ria
IPFV-1SG.SM-go-FV 15-eat
'I've not worked, but I will eat.'

The contrastive interpretation is inherent to the strategy, as becomes evident from example (110): even if nothing else is said, it is clear that eating is contrasted to something else.

- (110) (Context: You are visiting someone and have only been given food.
When you're asked how it is, you can say this and the host will know
that you expected something else too, for example a drink; or you did
not get satisfied.)
Okuryá náarya...
o-ku-ria n-aa-ri-a
AUG-15-eat 1SG.SM-N.PST-eat-FV
'Eating I did...'

Topic doubling can also be used to express polarity focus and verum,¹² as in (111). The contrast here is with the negative value of not having done the action.

- (111) (Have you spread the sorghum? Context: You want to emphasise that
you have sowed enough seeds because the other person cannot see the
seeds.)
Okugutéera náágutéera.
o-ku-gu-teera n-aa-gu-teer-a
AUG-15-3OM-beat 1SG.SM-N.PST-3OM-beat-FV
'I DID scatter them.'

Apart from the contrastive and polarity/verum readings, the interpretation can also be what Meeussen (1967) called "concessive" and van der Wal & Jerro (2022) have named "depreciative", as in (112). In this interpretation, the action is evaluated as being not worth a lot, and/or as the low quality potentially preventing further actions or achievements. Furthermore, it can be intensive/to a high degree, as illustrated in (113).

- (112) O-ku-támbura kw-é tw-á-támbur-a...
AUG-15-walk 15-CM 1PL.SM-N.PST-walk-FV
'Although we walked... (I don't know whether we'll ever arrive).'

¹²Polarity focus may be used in yes/no contexts; verum is used in a corrective context, to prevent the hearer from assuming the negative statement.

- (113) (Context: You're telling somebody that you really played football, you've done it with a passion. You have maybe not done anything other than playing football.)
 Okutéér' ómupiíra gwé náágutééra.¹³
 o-ku-teera o-mu-piira gu-o n-aa-gu-teer-a.
 AUG-15-beat AUG-3-ball 3-CM 1SG.SM-N.PST-3OM-beat-fv
 'I really played football.'

A mirative reading is also possible with a predicate doubling construction, as in (114), further illustrated in context 5 in (115), with the speaker expressing surprise that the event described indeed took place.

- (114) (Context: There is a function at school and teachers join students on the dance floor, something that is totally unexpected by the students.)
 O-ku-zína b-aa-zín-a.
 AUG-15-dance 2SM-N.PST-dance-fv
 'Dancing, they did (to the surprise of the students)!'

That these interpretations are fully context-dependent can be seen in (115): the sentence is the same, also in terms of prosody, but the possible interpretations are many.

- (115) O-ku-hínga tu-hing-íre.
 AUG-15-dig 1PL.SM-dig-PFV
 Context 1: Did you really plough?
 'We actually ploughed.' [polarity]
 Context 2: We were expected to dig and feed the animals
 'Digging we did (but we didn't feed the animals).' [contrast]
 Context 3: It's planting season but there is no rain.
 'We (went ahead and) ploughed anyway...' [depreciative]
 Context 4: The size of the ploughed land is big.
 'We really ploughed a lot!' [intensive]
 Context 5: We were expected to plough only a small part of the field but to our surprise, we ploughed all of it in a short time.
 'We ploughed a surprising amount!' [mirative]

¹³Note that the contrastive marker here modifies and agrees with the object in class 3, not the infinitive.

The intensive and mirative interpretations can easily overlap as one may be surprised at something that is done to a high degree. Nevertheless, example (116) also shows that the two can be distinguished by their contexts.

- (116) Okuryá fene náágírya.
o-ku-ria fene n-aa-gi-ri-a
AUG-15-eat 9.jackfruit 1SG.SM-N.PST-9OM-eat-FV
'Eating jackfruit, I have eaten it.'

Context 1: I have eaten a whole jackfruit. These fruits are usually big.
[intensive]

Context 2: I don't usually eat jackfruit. I am surprised that I have eaten it and in big quantity.
[mirative]

We noted in Section 4 that the pragmatic interpretations that are associated with particle *-o* are possible with predicate doubling as demonstrated in (115). The particle *-o* can, however, be used together with the predicate doubling construction. In fact, it is typical for the particle to appear in predicate doubling. With both linguistic strategies marking contrastive topics, their combination can be described as reinforcing the various interpretations as we illustrate in (117).

- (117) O-kw-óga (kw-é) n-áá-yog-a.
AUG-15-swim 15-CM 1SG.SM-N.PST-swim-FV
'I have really/indeed swum (but...).'

Context 1: Pool attendant sees me walking away from the pool area showing no sign that I entered the water.
[verum]

Context 2: I was expected to swim and play baseball.
[contrast]

Context 3: The water was too cold but I went ahead and swam anyway.
[depreciative]

Context 4: I went into the pool and swam for a long time with lots of energy.
[intensity]

Context 5: I have always feared to get into the water but hey I can swim!
[mirative]

Note that topic doubling is not used to express VP focus or state-of-affairs (SoA) focus – when these interpretations were assessed in examples (118) and (119), respectively, the interpretation given by the speakers is one of polarity focus. Example (118) is not felicitous as answer to the VP question 'what are you doing?' (VP focus) and example (119) cannot be used to correct 'washing' by 'ironing' (SoA focus).

- (118) (Context 1: Can you dig? E.g. when you want to give somebody a job, or test them
 #Context 2: What are you doing?)
 Okuhînga nimpînga.
 o-ku-hinga ni-n-hing-a
 AUG-15-dig IPFV-1SG.SM-dig-FV
 ‘I can dig (but...).’
- (119) (Context: Two pictures of Lydia washing the sheets and ironing the sheets; ‘Did she wash the sheets?’)
 (Yeego, konká) n’ ókuzígorora azigorwîre.
 yeego kwonka na o-ku-zi-gorora a-zi-goror-ire
 yes but and AUG-15-10OM-iron 1SM-10OM-iron-PFV
 ‘(Yes, but) she ironed them too.’
 #‘(No), she ironed them.’

For transitive predicates, when the object is included in the infinitive, the interpretation is still one of the above-mentioned (contrastive, polarity, depreciative, intensive, mirative). The intensive and mirative interpretations are illustrated in (116) above, and see (120) for a contrast on different actions.

- (120) (Context: There is one task left to do, which is mingling *karo* ‘millet bread’; the others will get the water or do the weeding. Now you volunteer to do the mingling.)¹⁴
 [O-ku-góyá a-ka-ró] tu-ryá-ka-góy-a.
 AUG-15-stir AUG-12-millet.bread 1PL.SM-N.FUT-12OM-stir-FV
 ‘Mingling millet bread, we will do it.’

When the object instead follows the inflected verb, however, the most natural interpretation is that of object focus, as indicated in the preceding question in (121).

- (121) (What will you mingle?)
 O-ku-góyá tu-ryá-góy-á á-ká-ro.
 AUG-15-stir 1PL.SM-N.FUT-stir-FV AUG-12-millet.bread
 ‘(As for mingling,) We will mingle millet bread.’

If an object marker is present, it should be present on both verbs – neither can be omitted, as shown in (122).

¹⁴‘Mingle’ is Ugandan English for stirring and preparing thick porridge-like substances.

- (122) a. Okuziriisa kó, Ámós naazá ku*(zi)riisa.
 o-ku-zi-ri-is-a ku-ó Amos n-aa-z-á
 AUG-15-10OM-eat-CAUS-FV 15-CM 1.Amos IPFV-1SM-go-FV
 ku-zi-ri-is-a
 15-10OM-eat-CAUS-FV
 'For the case of grazing them, Amos can do it.'
- b. Oku*(zi)riisa kó, Ámós naazá kuziriisa.
 o-ku-zi-ri-is-a ku-o Amos n-aa-z-á
 AUG-15-10OM-eat-CAUS-FV 15-CM 1.Amos IPFV-1SM-go-FV
 ku-zi-ri-is-a
 15-10OM-eat-CAUS-FV
 'For the case of grazing them, Amos can do it.'

Note also that if the object is made explicit in the first phrase, the object marker cannot be omitted on the inflected verb, as shown in (123).

- (123) Okukárya ákahúnga kó Jein yáá*(ká)rya.
 o-ku-ka-ria a-ka-hunga ka-o Jein a-aa-ka-ri-a
 AUG-15-12-eat AUG-12-posho 12-CM 1.Jane 1SM-N.PST-12OM-eat-FV
 'Jane has truly eaten (the posho).'

The subject, also functioning as a topic, can either precede the topical infinitive or the inflected verb, as shown in (124).

- (124) a. Jéin ókuryá yáarya.
 Jein o-ku-ria a-aa-ri-a
 1.Jane AUG-15-eat 1SM-N.PST-eat-FV
 'Jane has eaten (it is true).'
- b. Okurya (kwó) Jein yáarya.
 o-ku-ria ku-o Jein a-aa-ri-a
 AUG-15-eat 15-CM 1.Jane 1SM-N.PST-eat-FV
 'Jane has eaten (it is true/has eaten a lot).'

To summarise, in topic doubling, an infinitive form of the verb functions as the contrastive topic, and it is followed by an inflected form of the same verb. The interpretation can be that of polarity focus, a contrast with other actions, depreciative, intensive, or mirative, depending on the context of use. We now turn to the second predicate doubling construction.

5.2 In-situ doubling

In two cases can the non-finite form follow the same inflected verb:¹⁵ when nominalised in class 14 with *bu-*, and when the infinitive is preceded by *na* ‘and/with’. The *bu-* doubling, illustrated in (125), can be seen as the verbal parallel to a nominal reduplication procedure illustrated in (126), resulting in a dismissive reading, indicated in the translation by ‘just, merely’.

- (125) (Context: I came home late, didn’t have supper.)
 N-aa-byam-a bu-byáma.
 1SG.SM-N.PST-sleep-FV 14-sleep
 ‘I just went to sleep.’
- (126) Ente bute neetumá wáiruk-a munónka?
 e-n-te bu-te ni-e-tum-a u-aa-iruk-a
 AUG-9-cow 14-cow IPFV-9SM-cause-FV 2.SG.SM-N.PST-run-FV
 munonga
 fast/for.long
 ‘Can a mere cow cause you to run so much?’

The second strategy is illustrated in (127), where either order of infinitive and inflected verb is allowed, as long as the infinitive is preceded by *na* ‘and, also, even’. On the scale of expectation, the additive *na* adds an above expectation reading; in this example perhaps it is to some degree expected that one might have a 5-minute power nap, but dreaming is one step further than napping.

- (127) (Context: You fell asleep in the office and wake up surprised.)
 a. N-áá-róot-a *(n’) ó-ku-róóta!
 1SG.SM-PST-dream-FV even AUG-15-dream
 ‘I even dreamed!’
 b. N’ ókuróóta nááróóta!
 ‘I even dreamed!’

The object can be added after either the inflected or the infinitive verb. The examples in (128) show different word orders (with an optional object noun because of the presence of the object marker), but the interpretation remains the same: you expected that they would only wash the bicycles, but they in addition repaired them, too.

¹⁵This is called in-situ focus doubling by Güldemann & Fiedler (2022) as the non-finite form seems to function as an object in the unmoved postverbal position.

(128) (Context: You thought they only wash bicycles.)

- a. N'ókubukánika (óbugaari) nibabukanika.
Na o-ku-bu-kanika o-bu-gaari
Even/also AUG-15-14OM-repair AUG-14-bicycle
ni-ba-bu-kanik-a
IPFV-2SM-14OM-repair-FV
'They even/also repair them (talking of bicycles).'
- b. Nibabukaniká n'ókubukánika (óbugaari).
ni-ba-bu-kanik-a na o-ku-bu-kanik-a
IPFV-2SM-14OM-repair-FV even/also AUG-15-14OM-repair
o-bu-gaari
AUG-14-bicycle
'They even/also repair them (talking of bicycles).'
- c. N'ókubukánika nibabukanika (obugáari).
na o-ku-bu-kanika ni-ba-bu-kanik-a
even/also AUG-15-14OM-repair IPFV-2SM-14OM-repair-FV
o-bu-gaari
AUG-14-bicycle
'They even/also repair them (talking of bicycles).'
- d. Nibabukanik-a (óbugaari) n'ókubukánika.
ni-ba-bu-kanik-a o-bu-gaari na o-ku-bu-kanik-a
IPFV-2SM-14-repair-FV AUG-14-bicycle even/also AUG-15-14-repair-FV
'They even/also repair them (talking of bicycles).'

A third type of predicate doubling known as cleft doubling (see the Kĩitharaka chapter, Kanampiu & van der Wal 2025 [this volume]), is not possible in Rukiga as the ungrammatical example shows in (129). In cleft doubling, an infinitive forms the focused constituent in a cleft (see further Section 7.1), while the same predicate is also the main predicate.

- (129) *Ni o-ku-hing-a a-hing-ire.
COP AUG-15-dig-FV 1SM-dig-PFV
int. 'It is digging that s/he did.', 'S/he *dug*.'

In this section, we have shown that Rukiga, just like Kĩitharaka, Kinyakyusa, Makhuwa, Kirundi and Cicopi (see chapters in van der Wal 2025), uses predicate doubling as a strategy to express information structure. Two kinds of predicate doubling, namely topic and in-situ doubling, are identified in Rukiga. In-situ

doubling with *bu-* is less prevalent and allows a dismissive interpretation, while in-situ doubling with *na*+infinitive is associated with a degree higher than expectation as well as mirativity. Topic doubling is more prevalent and is associated with various context-induced interpretations. It expresses contrastive topics, verum, intensity, depreciative and mirative interpretations. We noted that the contrastive topic reading is inherent to the strategy. We further showed that the particle *-o* as a contrastive topic marker (discussed in Section 4) is often used in topic doubling constructions to reinforce a given interpretation. However, further research should be carried out to determine the precise circumstances under which the two strategies co-occur.

6 Augment

Rukiga presents an augment morpheme in its grammar, in the form of a vowel preceding the noun class prefix on nouns. Besides occurring on nouns, it optionally appears in the morphology of various nominal modifiers, specifically adjectives, possessives, relatives, numerals and some quantifiers. In some previous studies, the presence of an optional augment on nominal modifiers has been associated with definiteness (Morris & Kirwan 1972, Taylor 1972, 1985). By “definite” they mean that the speaker has a particular referent in mind, and expects the hearer to uniquely distinguish it from other referents. Although the augment has been associated with various semantic and pragmatic roles (see Morris & Kirwan 1972, Taylor 1972, 1985, Asiimwe 2014 on Runyankore-Rukiga), in this section we argue that the presence of the augment on nominal modifiers marks a restrictive reading, that is, it selects a subset out of a set of alternatives (Asiimwe et al. 2023) and therefore has the effect of exclusive focus. We only summarise the main points here and refer to Asiimwe et al. (2023) for a detailed analysis.¹⁶

We illustrate the interpretation of the augment as a restrictive marker when it attaches to relative clauses, adjectives, possessives and some quantifiers, beginning with relative clauses. Relative clauses in Rukiga take an optional augment. When the augment is present, it triggers a restrictive reading that is unattainable when the augment is absent. Compare (130a) and (130b):

¹⁶The analysis of the augment presented in Asiimwe et al. (2023) compares the augment to the phenomenon of determiner spreading in Greek.

(130) (Asiimwe et al. 2023: 1288)

a. *non-restrictive*

e-n-yungu yí w-aa-goy-a=mu
 AUG-9-pot 9REL.PRO 2SG.SM-N.PST-mingle-FV=18
 á-ká-ro
 AUG-12-millet.bread
 ‘the/a pot, which you cooked millet bread in’
 (we already know which pot, there is one pot)

b. *restrictive*

e-n-yungw’ é-yí w-aa-goy-a=mu
 AUG-9-pot AUG-9REL.PRO 2SG.SM-N.PST-mingle-FV=18
 á-ká-ro
 AUG-12-millet.bread
 ‘the pot that you cooked millet bread in’ (not the other pot)

The above analysis is in contrast to Taylor’s (1985) claim that the augment is itself a relative clause marker, as a relative clause reading is attainable even when the augment is absent (see (130a) above). Instead, the relative meaning is marked as a variation in tone patterns (see Asiimwe 2019).

We predicted that, if the augment on relatives marks a restrictive referent, it should be incompatible with unique referents, since there are no alternatives. This was borne out. It is infelicitous to use an augment on a relative clause that modifies a unique referent, such as the sun or the Pope. The augment on the subject relative in (131) triggers a set of alternative suns – yet in daily life outside of astronomy there are no alternative suns to consider.

(131) (Asiimwe et al. 2023: 1289)

Ndeebir’ éizóób’ (#é)liri hale.
 n-reeb-ire e-i-zooba e-ri-ri hare
 1SG.SM-see-PFV AUG-5-sun AUG-5RM-be far
 ‘I saw the sun, which is far.’

Furthermore, we used ‘which’ questions to test whether the augment is indeed associated with restrictive interpretation. A ‘which’ question typically selects one member from a set. It is expected that in the answer to the question, a subset is selected, and the presence of the augment as in (132b) is indeed preferred.

(132) (Asiimwe et al. 2023: 1290)

- a. Context: At the market when looking at pieces of cloth in different colors.
 Orugóye nooyendá kugura ruuha?
 o-ru-goye ni-o-end-a ku-gura ru-ha
 AUG-11-cloth IPFV-2SG.SM-want-FV 15-buy 11-which
 ‘Which cloth do you want to buy?’
- b. Niinyendá kugur’ órugóy’ # (ó)ruríkutukura.
 ni-n-end-a ku-gura o-ru-goye o-ru-riku-tukur-a
 IPFV-1SG-want-FV 15-buy AUG-11-cloth AUG-11RM-IPFV-be.red-FV
 ‘I want to buy a/the red cloth.’
 lit. ‘I want to buy a/the cloth that is red.’

Based on such tests (for more see Asiimwe et al. 2023), we concluded that the presence of the augment on relative clauses triggers a restrictive reading while its absence means that there are no alternatives to select from.

The same holds for adjectives. Taylor (1972, 1985) equates the augment on adjectives to the definite marker in the Indo-European languages when he suggests that the presence of the augment on the adjective in (133) renders the noun *omushaija* definite while its absence in (133b) signifies an indefinite referent. However, we show that (133b) can also be used with an indefinite interpretation and therefore the question is what function the augment has on the adjective.

(133) (Taylor 1972: 74; glosses added)

- a. o-mu-sháíja mu-rungi
 AUG-1-man 1-good
 ‘a good man’
- b. o-mu-sháíj’ ó-mu-rúngi
 AUG-1-man AUG-1-good
 ‘the good man’

Building on the work of Asiimwe (2014) and discussed in detail in Asiimwe et al. (2023), we propose that the augment realises a restrictive reading on adjectives: while the absence of the augment on the adjective *mbisi* ‘unripe’ in (134b) gives no special interpretation, its presence on *embisi* in (134a) means that there are alternative pineapples that are ripe and that the buying is restricted to the subset that is unripe.

(134) (Asiimwe et al. 2023: 1294)

- a. Naagur' énanáás' émbísi. [+A]
 n-aa-gur-a e-nanaasi e-n-bisi
 1SG.SM-N.PST-buy-FV AUG-9.pineapple AUG-9-unripe
 'I have bought the unripe pineapple.' (as opposed to a ripe pineapple)
- b. Naagur' énanaasi mbísi. [-A]
 n-aa-gur-a e-nanaasi n-bisi
 1SG.SM-N.PST-buy-FV AUG-9.pineapple 9-unripe
 'I have bought an unripe pineapple.'

The example in (135) involves a 'which' question again. The hearer is not expected to respond to (135a) with an augmentless adjective because the question targets one referent from a set of given alternatives. Therefore, it is natural for the hearer to answer with an augment on the adjective, selecting big cups (the alternative being small cups). It is also infelicitous for the augment to be used with the adjective when the entities to select from include forks, plates, knives etc.

(135) (Asiimwe et al. 2023: 1295)

- a. E-bi-kópo w-aa-gur-a bi-íha?
 AUG-8-cup 2SG.SM-N.PST-buy-FV 8-which
 'Which cups have you bought?'
- b. N-aa-gur' e-bi-kóp' é-bi-hángo.
 1SM-N.PST-buy AUG-8-cup AUG-8-big
 'I have bought the big cups.'
- c. # N-aa-gur' e-bi-kopo bi-hángo.
 1SM-N.PST-buy AUG-8-cup 8-big

To further illustrate, the sentence in (136) was said as part of the instructions in the QUIS (Skopeteas et al. 2006) map task, in which one speaker has to lead another speaker through a map with various entities on crossroads. When asked whether the adjective 'big' could have an augment here, it was indicated that this would mean the animal has various tails from which it could choose.

(136) ('In the middle of the road, there is a fox... no, a mongoose.')

- O-mu-terere gw-in' ó-mu-kira __-mu-hángo gw-a kitaka.
 AUG-3-mongoose 3SM-have AUG-3-tail 3-big 3-of brown
 'The mongoose has a big brown tail.'

By using an adjective with an augment, the speaker intends to provide the hearer with extra information, so that the hearer learns that there is a choice between referents.

Possessives too allow an optional augment. We again use a context containing a ‘which’ question in (137) to show that the augment attached to possessives selects one referent from a set (see again Asimwe et al. 2023 for further evidence).

(137) (Context: Which garden has Mr Elephant dug?)

- a. # Warujojo y-aa-hing-á o-mu mu-siri gw-é(ye).
1.Elephant 1SM-N.PST-dig-FV AUG-18 3-garden 3.POSS.1
‘Mr Elephant cultivated in his garden.’
- b. Warujojo y-aa-hing-á ó-mu mu-siri o-gw-é(ye).
1.Elephant 1SM-N.PST-dig-FV AUG-18 3-garden AUG-3.POSS.1
‘Mr Elephant cultivated in his own garden (e.g. not in Mr Hare’s garden).’
- c. # Y-aa-hing-a ó-mu mu-siri gw-a Wakame.
1SM-N.PST-dig-FV AUG-18 3-garden 3-CONN Hare
‘He cultivated in Mr Hare’s garden.’
- d. Y-aa-hing-a ó-mu mu-siri ó-gw-a Wakame.
1SM-N.PST-dig-FV AUG-18 3-garden AUG-3-CONN Hare
‘He cultivated in Mr Hare’s garden (and not in his).’

We further show that the use of the augment with quantifiers restricts a subset of referents. Indefinite quantifiers such as *-ingi* ‘many’, *-kye* ‘few’, *-mwe* ‘some’ as observed with relative clauses, adjectives and possessives allow an optional augment that restricts a subset of the noun. The presence of an augment selects a subset of gardens that are many in (138b) leaving the subset of gardens that are few or the rest of the gardens.

- (138)
- a. E-mi-siri y-a Wakamé mí-ngi e-hing-ire.
AUG-4-garden 4-CONN 1.Hare 4-many 4SM-dig-PFV
‘Many gardens belonging to Mr Hare are ploughed.’
 - b. E-mi-siri y-a Wakame e-mi-ngi e-hingire.
AUG-4-garden 4-CONN Hare 4-many 4SM-dig-PFV
‘Most of the Mr Hare’s gardens are ploughed.’

The quantifier *-mwe* ‘some’ also expresses meaning about referents excluded from a given set.¹⁷ Like *-ingi* ‘many’/ *-kye* ‘few’, the augment is optional on *-mwe*.

¹⁷The quantifier without the augment can also mean ‘certain’.

are not necessarily excluded in the examples in (142) and (143). If the noun phrase containing the augmented modifier had been interpreted as exclusive,¹⁸ we would not expect the acceptability of the second clause in these examples, as these state that the predicate is not exclusively true for the subset mentioned in the first clause. This “mismatch” between the restrictive/exclusive interpretation on the sub-NP level and the non-exclusive interpretation on the NP level remains a topic for further research.

(142) (Asiimwe et al. 2023: 1332)

Yakóbo y-aa-gabur-ir' é-nyamaishwa. **Pusi e-n-tó**
 1.Jacob 1SM-N.PST-feed-APPL-FV AUG-10.animal 10.cat AUG-10-young
 z-aa-b-a zi-ine é-n-jara na **púsi é-n-kuru**
 10SM-N.PST-be-FV 10SM-have AUG-9-hunger and 10.cat AUG-10-old
 z-aa-b-a zi-ine é-n-jara
 10SM-N.PST-be-FV 10SM-have AUG-9-hunger
 ‘Jacob fed the animals. The young cats were hungry, and also the old cats were hungry.’

(143) (Asiimwe et al. 2023: 1332) Yaareeb **entéb' (é)nungí n'eémbí** nazó yáázíreeba.

a-aa-reeb-a e-n-tebe e-n-rungi na e-n-bi na-zo
 1SM-N.PST-see-FV AUG-10-chair AUG-10-good and AUG-10-bad and-10.PRO
 a-aa-zi-reeb-a
 1SM-N.PST-10OM-see-FV
 ‘S/he saw good chairs, and bad ones s/he also saw.’

Another question is how the contrast on a modifier (sub-NP level) interacts with the information structure in the clause. In preliminary data, there does not seem to be any restriction: noun phrases functioning as the topic, and noun phrases functioning as the focus can occur with or without an augment on the modifier, as shown in the left-peripheral topic in (144) and the cleft in (145).

(144) (Asiimwe et al. 2023: 1332)

E-bi-kóp' (é-)bi-hángo n-aa-bi-teer-a=mu á-ba-gyenyi.
 AUG-8-cup AUG-8-big 1SG.SM-N.PST-8OM-put-FV=18.LOC AUG-2-visitor
 ‘As for the big cups, I have served the visitors tea in them.’

¹⁸If other sizes between small and large, or old and new, are also taken into account, then those could potentially be excluded, and in that case, the test only shows that this cannot be an exhaustive interpretation in which *all* alternatives are excluded.

- (145) N'ébíkóp' (é)biháng' ébí naateeramw' ábagyenyi.
 ni e-bi-kopo (e)-bi-hango e-bi n-aa-te-er-a=mu
 COP AUG-8-cup AUG-8-big AUG-REL.PRO 1SG.SM-N.PST-put-APPL-FV=18
 a-ba-gyenyi
 AUG-2-visitor
 'It is the big cups that I have served the visitors tea in.'

We conclude in the paper that “there seems to be no correlation between “focus within the DP” (the restrictive reading of the augment) and focus in the clause: they are independent and all combinations occur” (Asiimwe et al. 2023: 1333). This too remains an interesting field for further investigation.

7 Cleft constructions

Rukiga features three constructions that can be described as “cleft”: the basic cleft, the pseudocleft, and what looks like a reverse pseudocleft but turns out to be an NP constituent followed by a clefted pronoun. Each consists of three elements: 1) the copula *ni*, 2) the clefted constituent, and 3) the relative clause. We present relative marking here, as it will be relevant for all the three constructions.¹⁹

Non-subject relatives are marked by the proximal demonstrative functioning as the relative pronoun, as in (146b). We gloss it here as REL.PRO.

- (146) (Asiimwe et al. 2023: 1287–1288)
- a. W-aa-teek' á-ka-ró o-mu n-yúngu.
 2PL.SM-N.PST-cook AUG-12-millet.bread AUG-18 9-pot
 'You have prepared millet bread in a pot.'
- b. e-n-yungw' (é)-yí w-aa-goy-a=mu
 AUG-9-pot AUG-9REL.PRO 2SG.SM-N.PST-mingle-FV=18.LOC
 á-ká-ro
 AUG-12-millet.bread
 'the pot that you prepared millet bread in'

Subject relatives are marked by a different tone pattern, as shown in (147).

- (147) (Asiimwe et al. 2023: 1288)
- a. Wakame y-áá-záár-a.
 9.rabbit 9SM-N.PST-give.birth-FV
 'A/the rabbit has given birth.'

¹⁹We acknowledge Melle Groen and Nina van der Vlugt for their help in investigating Rukiga clefts.

- b. wakamé y-aa-záar-a
 9.rabbit 9RM-N.PST-give.birth-FV
 ‘a/the rabbit which has given birth’

As discussed in Section 6, relative clauses may be preceded by an augment, which Asiimwe et al. (2023) (see also Asiimwe 2019) argue marks a restrictive relative clause.

7.1 Basic cleft

The basic cleft consists of the copula *ni* (or negative copula *ti*) preceding the clefted constituent, and a relative clause following it, marked with the usual markers explained above, illustrated in (148) and (149).

- (148) (What has Maria swept?)
 N’ ékibúge éki María yaakondóora.
 ni e-ki-buga e-ki Maria a-aa-kondoor-a
 COP AUG-7-compound AUG-7REL.PRO 1.Maria 1SM-N.PST-sweep-FV
 ‘It’s the compound that Maria has swept.’
- (149) (What will Pamela cook?)
 Ni muhógo eyí Paméla aryátéeka.
 ni muhogo e-yí Pamela a-rya-teek-a
 COP 9.cassava AUG-9.REL.PRO 1.Pamela 1SM-FUT-cook-FV
 ‘It’s cassava that Pamela will cook.’

Basic clefts are not very commonly used, and a construction with a left-peripheral NP + cleft (see Section 7.3) is preferred for noun phrases. We do find clefts naturally with interrogatives, as in (150) and (151), and with personal pronouns, as in (152–154). Note that with clefted non-subject pronouns, the relative marker is not present, also shown in (153) and (154). Note also that example (152) shows the use of the negative copula *ti*.

- (150) N’ oh’ ógyénzire?
 ni o-ha o-gyend-ire
 COP 1-who 1SM.REL-go-PFV
 ‘Who left?’
- (151) Ni nkahe áh’ oseeriir’ ómugúsha?
 ni nkahe a-hu o-s-er-ire o-mu-gusha
 COP where AUG-16.REL.PRO 2SG.SM-grind-APPL-PFV AUG-3-sorghum
 ‘Where did you grind the sorghum from?’

- (152) Ekitábo nkishomíre konka tíinye naakihandííkire.
 e-ki-tabo n-ki-shom-ire konka ti nye
 AUG-7-book 1SG.SM-7OM-read-PFV but NEG.COP 1SG.PRO
 n-a-ki-handiik-ire
 1SG.SM-PST-7OM-write-PFV
 ‘The book, I have read it but I’m not the one who wrote it.’
- (153) Nizó (*ezi) naabuganáho.
 ni z-o e-zi n-aa-bugan-a=ho
 COP 10-PRO AUG-REL.PRO 1SG.SM-N.PST-meet-FV=16.LOC
 ‘They are the ones that I have met there.’
- (154) Níinye waaréeba.
 ni inye u-aa-reeb-a
 COP 1SG.PRO 2SG.SM-N.PST-see-FV
 ‘It is me that you saw.’

When tested, the focus on the clefted constituent in the basic cleft comes out as exhaustive. The basic cleft cannot be followed up by a clause asserting the truth for another referent, as in (155); and it cannot be modified by ‘primarily’, as in (156), or the universal quantifier ‘all’ as in (157). These facts follow straightforwardly if the basic cleft has an inherent exhaustive meaning: ‘primarily’ indicates that the predicate is also true for other referents (other people spoke besides Sara), and ‘all’ does not exclude any referents in the set (there are no cups that did not fall); just as John also cooking posho means that Sara is not the only one. Thus, the alternatives that are necessarily present for the referents in (155–157), and for which the proposition is also true, are incompatible with the exhaustive interpretation of the cleft construction, requiring that the proposition be false for all alternatives.

- (155) (Who cooked posho?)
 Ni Sáár’ ówaateekir’ ákahúnga (*, na Jóoni nawe).
 ni Saara o-u-aa-teek-ire a-ka-hunga na Jooni
 COP 1.Sara AUG-1SM-N.PST-cook-PFV AUG-12-posho and 1.John
 na-we
 and-1.PRO
 int. ‘It is Sara who cooked posho (*, and John also).’
- (156) *Owáágamba ni Sáár’ okukira.
 o-u-aa-gamb-a ni Saara okukira
 1SM.REL-1SM-N.PST-speak-FV COP 1.Saara primarily
 int. ‘The one who spoke is primarily Sara.’

- (157) * Ni byón' ebikóp' ébyâgwa.
 ni bi-ona e-bi-kopo e-bi-aa-gw-a
 COP 8-all AUG-8-cup AUG-8SM.REL-N.PST-fall-FV
 'It is all the cups that fell.'

7.2 Pseudocleft

In a pseudocleft, the copula joins a free relative (FR) on its left with a noun on its right: [FR] COP [NP]. What looks like a verb in (158) is a relative clause that functions as a noun phrase, which is known as a free relative. The free relative typically creates a presupposition of existence, and the described entity is then identified by the focused noun, as in (158) we describe the existence of some who welcomed us, and this person is then identified as Peace.

- (158) (Who welcomed you?)
 Owaatwákíira ni Piisi.
 o-u-aa-tu-akiir-a ni Piisi
 AUG-1SM.REL-PST-1PL.OM-receive-FV COP 1.Peace
 'The one who welcomed us is Peace.'

The existence presupposition can be seen in the oddness to answer the pseudocleft question in (159) with 'nobody', i.e. there must be someone who took the salt. Relevant to the question in this example, note that there is an asymmetry between subjects and non-subjects here: whereas subjects can be questioned in a pseudocleft, this is unacceptable for non-subjects, presumably because they have the possibility to be questioned postverbally.

- (159) Owaatwar' ómwónyo n'ooaha?
 o-u-aa-twar-a o-mu-onyo ni o-ha
 AUG-1SM.REL-N.PST-take-FV AUG-3-salt COP 1-who
 'Who has taken the salt?'
 # Tiháriho.
 ti-ha-ri=ho
 NEG-16SM-be=16
 'Nobody.'
 lit. 'There isn't (who has taken the salt).'

While the NP expresses identificational focus, the focus seems to differ from that in a basic cleft in allowing modification by 'primarily' (160), thus arguing

against inherent exhaustivity, but still disallowing ‘even’ (161), ‘all’ (162), and ‘for example’ (163), which are also tests for exclusivity and exhaustivity. We suggest that this is due to the function of identification, which should select one primary referent: inclusive ‘even’ and ‘all’ do not select, and ‘for example’ is not specific enough for proper identification.

- (160) (Who spoke?)
 Okukír’ ówáagamba ni Sáara.
 okukira o-u-aa-gamb-a ni Saara
 primarily 1SM.REL-1SM-N.PST-speak-FV COP 1.Saara
 ‘It is primarily the case that it was Sara who spoke.’
- (161) (What else has Jane cooked?)
 *Eki Jéin yaateeka ni n’ ákáro.
 e-ki Jein a-aa-teek-a ni na a-ka-ro
 AUG-7.REL.PRO 1.Jane 1SM-N.PST-cook-FV COP and AUG-12-millet.bread
 int. ‘What Jane has prepared is even/also millet bread.’
- (162) (What drank water?)
 Ekyanyw’ ámíizi n’éntaama (*zóona).
 e-ki-a-nyw-a a-ma-izi ni e-n-taama zi-ona
 AUG-7SM-drink-FV AUG-6-water COP AUG-10-sheep 10-all
 ‘It is (*all) the sheep that drank water.’
- (163) (Who has a pen?)
 Oyine péeni ni (*nka) Rónald.
 o-ine peeni ni nka Ronald
 1SM.REL-have 9.pen COP like 1.Ronald
 ‘Who has a pen is (*for example) Ronald.’

7.3 Left-peripheral NP + cleft

A direct reverse of the pseudocleft is not grammatical in Rukiga: compare the pseudocleft in (164a) with the attempt in (164b). Instead, an independent pronoun in *-o* must be used in this construction (see also Section 4), as in (164c).

- (164) a. [E-kí Bíiru y-aa-yozy-á] ni sókisi.
 AUG-7REL.PRO 1.Bill 1SM-N.PST-wash.CAUS-FV COP 10.sock
 ‘What Bill washed is socks.’
- b. *Sókisi n’ [e-kí/e-zí Bíiru y-aa-yózy-a].
 10.sock COP AUG-7/10.REL.PRO 1.Bill 1SM-PST-wash.CAUS-FV

- c. Sókisi ni-zó Bĩiru y-aa-yózy-a.
 10.sock COP-10.PRO 1.Bill 1SM-PST-wash.CAUS-FV
 ‘Socks Bill washed.’ / ‘Socks is what Bill washed.’

There are further indications, however, that the construction in (164c) is not in fact a reverse pseudocleft, but a noun phrase in the left periphery followed by a basic cleft in which the pronoun is the clefted element. First, the initial NP can be separated from the rest of the construction, as in (165), where both *amaizi* ‘water’ and *ente* ‘cows’ are topics in the left periphery.

- (165) (Did the cows eat the food I left for them?)
 A-má-ízi e-n-te ni-gwó z-áá-nyw-a.
 AUG-6-water AUG-10-cow COP-6.PRO 10SM-N.PST-drink-FV
 ‘It is water that the cows have drunk.’,
 lit. ‘Water, the cows, it is that that they have drunk.’

Second, an optional prosodic break is possible between the initial NP and the rest of the clause, as in (166).

- (166) Sókisi, ni-zó Bĩiru y-aa-yózy-a.
 10.socks COP-10.PRO 1.Bill 1SM-PST-wash.CAUS-FV
 ‘Socks is what Bill washed.’
 lit. ‘Socks, it is that/them that Bill washed.’

The next task is then to determine the information-structural function of the initial NP. In some contexts it functions as a topic, and can co-occur with the contrastive topic marker, as in (167) and (168). Note that the dispute in the context shows that the referent is known, and also that the combination of the contrastive marker and cleft in this context result in an emphatic verum interpretation: this is true, end of discussion.

- (167) A: Carol baked mandaazi, Liz prepared chapati; and I think Jonah baked pancakes.
 B: No, Kate baked pancakes.
 A: Sure?
 B: Kéeti wé niwé yaateek’ óbubânda.
 Kate w-o ni-we a-a-teek-a o-bu-banda
 1.Kate 1-CM COP-1.REL.PRO 1SM-PST-cook-FV AUG-14-pancakes
 ‘It is Kate who has made pancakes.’, ‘As for Kate, it is her who made pancakes.’

- (168) (Context: There is an argument as to whether it is sheep or cows that Juma grazed.)

Entaama zó nizó yaariisa.

e-n-taama z-o ni-z-o a-aa-ri-is-a

AUG-10-sheep 10-CM COP-10-REL.PRO 1SM-N.PST-eat-CAUS-FV

‘He has (only) grazed the sheep.’, ‘The sheep, it’s them that he grazed.’

The impression of focus on the initial NP in these examples is derived from the fact that the initial NP (e.g. socks) and the clefted pronoun (e.g. *zo*) refer to the same referent. Expressing it in this construction allows for the expression of both properties: it is accessible, topical (as expressed by the NP), but also in exhaustive focus (as indicated by the clefted pronoun).

The initial NP cannot be analysed as a regular focus, since an initial interrogative in this construction is ungrammatical, as seen in (169). As interrogative pronouns are taken to be in focus, their appearance initially would have been expected had the initial position be one of focus in this construction.

- (169) a. *Enki/ki ni-kyo Paméra a-ryá-téek-a?
 what COP-7PRO 1.Pamela 1SM-FUT-cook-FV
 ‘What is it that Pamela will cook?’
 b. *Oha ni-we o-waa-shohor-a?
 1.who COP-1.PRO 1SM.REL-N.PST-move.out-FV
 ‘Who has moved out?’

If the initial NP is a topic, as we proposed, it is unexpected that the exhaustive ‘only’ is accepted as a modifier of the initial NP. Nevertheless, this is what we find in (170), as this associates with focus and not topic.

- (170) (Which animals drank water?)
 Entaamá zonká ni-zó zanyw’ ámiizi. e-n-taama zi-onka ni-zo
 AUG-10-sheep 10-only COP-10.PRO
 z-aa-nyw-a a-ma-izi.
 10SM-N.PST-drink-FV AUG-6-water
 ‘Only the sheep drank water.’

There are two possible options to analyse this: either the construction is grammaticalising to become integrated as a focus construction with a left-peripheral focus position, or the initial NP forms a phrase by itself, comparable to a fragment answer. If the construction is moving to a monoclausal focus construction

with an initial focus position (which for some reason excludes interrogatives), then the initial focused constituent must have moved from inside the clause. This movement is expected to show reconstruction effects, i.e. the referent must be interpretable in the position where it moved from. We can test this by using a universal quantifier and a possessive pronoun, as in (171). If the initial NP with the possessive pronoun has moved and reconstructs, then the pronoun should be able to be bound by the universal quantifier *buri* ‘every’ in the subject, resulting in a reading that each parent loves their own child (the distributive reading). But in fact we only get the non-distributive reading, in which there is one particular child (belonging to a third person) that every parent loves. This shows us that the initial NP is not moved and that the first analysis is not likely to be correct (at this stage of the language – it may of course grammaticalise further).

- (171) [O-mw-ana wé] ni-wé buri mu-zíir’ a-ríku-kûnd-a.
 AUG-1-child 1-POSS.1 COP-1.PRO every 1-parent 1SM-IPFV-love-FV
 ‘[His/her]_{k/*i} child is the one that [every parent]_i loves.’
 (only non-distributive)

The second option, the initial NP being a fragment answer, seems to account also for sentences like (172), where the initial NP is modified by ‘only’ but separated from the rest by the adverb ‘yesterday’.

- (172) E-saati z-ônká, nyómwébazó, ni-z-ó zi-gw-ir’
 AUG-10.shirts 10-only yesterday COP-10-PRO 10SM-fall-PFV
 á-hâ-nsi.
 AUG-16-down
 ‘It was only the shirts, yesterday, that fell down.’
 lit. ‘The shirts, yesterday, it is them that fell down.’

If the initial NP can form a fragment answer, which is then followed up by an explicating cleft, we would expect this construction to be possible in answering a content question, which is indeed the case, as shown in (173) – note that the cleft is not obligatory.

- (173) (Which mats did Jovia weave?)
 Emigúfu (niyó Jóviya arukíre).
 e-mi-gufu ni-yo Jovia a-ruk-ire
 AUG-4-short COP-4.PRO 1.Jovia 1SM-weave-PFV
 ‘The short ones (it’s them that she weaved).’

The construction is also used in a corrective context, as in (174).

- (174) (The cook has finally come.)
 Íngaaha, mááma niwé yíija, tí mutéeki.
 ngaaha maama ni-we a-aa-ij-a ti mu-teeki
 no 1.mother COP-1.PRO 1SM-N.PST-come-FV NEG 1-cook
 ‘No, mother has come, not the cook.’

As the pronoun in the basic cleft is interpreted as exhaustive (see Section 7.1), it is expected that the initial coreferential NP cannot be non-exhaustive, as illustrated in (175) with ‘for example’ and in (176) for ‘even’.

- (175) (I’m looking for someone who can lend me a pen.)
 * Nka Rónald niw’ áine péeni.
 nka Ronald ni-we a-ine peeni
 like 1.Ronald COP-1.PRO 1SM.REL-have 9.pen
 int. ‘For example Ronald is the one who has a pen.’
- (176) * Nab’ ábáaná nibó omushomésa abahiir’ ékarámu.
 na-bo a-ba-ana ni-ba-o o-mu-shomesa a-ba-h-ire
 and-2 AUG-2-children COP-2-PRO AUG-1-teacher 1SM-2OM-give-PFV
 e-karamu
 AUG-10.pencil
 ‘It is even children the teacher gave pencils.’

Which syntactic analysis turns out to be preferable for this construction remains a topic for further research. For now, we conclude that this is not a direct reverse of the pseudocleft (i.e. it is not a copular construction), but that the initial NP may be a topic or a fragment answer, followed by a basic cleft. As for the interpretation, it seems to combine exhaustive focus brought about by the basic cleft with the givenness expressed by the topic in initial position or the simple focus expressed in a fragment answer.

8 Object marking

The object marker in Rukiga can in principle not co-occur with the coreferential noun phrase in the same domain and object marking in Rukiga is hence characterised as “non-doubling” (see van der Wal 2022 and references therein for discussion on doubling object marking). This is shown in (177), where the object marker may only be present if the object is dislocated to the right of the adverb ‘today’.

- (177) a. *Píta y-aa-ka-teek-a a-ka-húunga e-ri-zóoba.
 1.Peter 1SM-N.PST-12OM-cook-FV AUG-12-posho AUG-5-day
 int. ‘Peter cooked posho today.’
 b. Píta y-aa-ka-teek’ é-ri-zóob’ a-ka-húunga.
 1.Peter 1SM-N.PST-12OM-cook AUG-5-day AUG-12-posho
 ‘Peter cooked it today, posho.’

Note that the verb takes the tonally reduced form in (177), indicating that the object marker and the object NP are in the same domain. The non-reduced verb form on the other hand is grammatical with the object marker, see (178a), which indicates that the verb is final and the following object is not in the same domain.

- (178) a. Bamukomiré Káto. [no TR]
 ba-mu-kom-ire Káto
 2SM-1OM-tie-PFV 1.Kato
 ‘They tied Kato.’
 b. *Bamukomire Káto. [TR]
 ba-mu-kom-ire Káto
 2SM-1OM-tie-PFV 1.Kato
 int. ‘They tied Kato.’

Given these properties, there are two interesting aspects in Rukiga with respect to object marking. The first is that we do not see a lot of object drop, that is, the complete absence of any form referring to the object (compare e.g. with Kîitharaka in Chapter 5 (Nshemezimana & van der Wal 2025 [this volume]) and Ma-khuwa in Chapter 8 (van der Wal 2025b [this volume])). In a recipe for sorghum porridge, for example, reference to given objects is always marked through an object marker (or subject marker), as can be seen in the fragment in (179). Whether object drop is possible at all (and if so, when it occurs), remains for further research.

- (179) (When the water (cl 6) cools, you get back to that other bucket (cl 9) with a cooking stick (cl 11) and start stirring to mix the flour (cl 9) with that other porridge (cl 14) so that they both get well cooked.)
 Byámara kus' okwaté gá mízí agáárugirem' ékyóya ogashuké mu
 baketi reero obureke buráareho
 bi-aa-mar-a ku-sya o-kwat-e g-a ma-izi
 8SM-N.PST-finish 15-get.ready 2SG.SM-get-SBJV 6-DEM 6-water
 a-ga-aa-rug-ir-e=mu e-ki-o-ya
 AUG-6RM-N.PST-come.from-APPL-SBJV=18 AUG-7-heat
 o-ga-shuk-e mu baketi reero o-bu-rek-e
 2SG.SM-6OM-pour-SBJV 18 9.bucket then 2SG.SM-14OM-leave-SBJV
 bu-raar-e=ho
 14SM-stay.for.night-SBJV=16
 'When they are both well-cooked you get that other water which has
 been cooled and you pour it in the bucket and leave the porridge to stay
 for a night.'
 Nínga bwába buri bwíngi obucwánuurire nk'omu bín-di bisafuriya
 kugira ngu buhore reeró nyenkyakare mubúnywe búgiziré kí...
 burafuka.
 nainga bw-a-ba bu-ri bw-ingi o-bu-cwanuur-ir-e
 or 14SM-N.PST-be 14SM-be 14-much 2SG.SM-14OM-reduce-APPL-SBJV
 nka o-mu bí-ndi bi-safuriya ku-gira ngu bu-hor-e reero
 like AUG-18 8-other 8-saucepan 15-say COMP 14SM-cool-SBJV then
 nyenkyakare mu-bu-nyw-e bu-giz-ire kí...
 tomorrow 2PL.SM-14OM-drink-SBJV 14SM-do-PFV what...
 bu-ra-fuk-a
 14SM-IPFV-cool-FV
 'Or when the porridge is much, you divide it and put in other big
 saucepans so that it cools and you drink it tomorrow [the next day]
 when it has cooled.'

A second interesting point is that despite the fact that the object marker may not double the coreferring noun phrase in the same domain, both *can* co-occur under specific pragmatic contexts, as Sikuku & Diercks (2021) first noted for Lubukusu (see also Lippard et al. 2023). The interpretation is one of *verum*, that is, an emphatic focus on the truth of the proposition (Höhle 1992, cf. Romero & Han 2004), as illustrated in the acceptable and unacceptable contexts in (180). The first context elicits VP focus, and the second object focus, neither of which

is acceptable. Only the corrective *verum* in the third context is acceptable. Note, however, that this is only possible with the form of the verb that is not tonally reduced, indicating that the object NP is not in the same domain as the verb (compare (177) and (180)).

- (180) (#Context 1: ‘What did Peter do today?’
 #Context 2: ‘What did Peter cook today?’
 Context 3: ‘I don’t believe that Peter cooked posho today!’)
 Píta y-áá-ka-téek-a a-ka-húúnga e-ri-zóoba.
 1.Peter 1SM-N.PST-12OM-cook-FV AUG-12-posho AUG-5-day
 ‘Peter cooked posho today.’ (adapted from van der Wal & Asimwe 2020: 52)

In addition, object doubling is possible under a mirative or counterexpectation reading, as in (181), as well as an intensity interpretation (182).

- (181) (Context: It was expected that the sorghum would be ground well, which was not the case.)
 W-áá-gu-s-a o-mu-gúsha (báasi)!
 2SG.SM-N.PST-3OM-grind-FV AUG-3-sorghum (really)
 ‘You have ground the sorghum (what happened? It is not fine-ground)!’
- (182) (Context: The sorghum is so fine-ground.)
 W-áá-gu-s-a o-mu-gúsha (buzima)!
 2SG.SM-N.PST-3OM-grind-FV AUG-3-sorghum (really)
 ‘You have ground the sorghum (it is fine)!’

Further research into the exact contexts in which the object marker can be present is needed, specifically paying attention to what Lippard et al. (2023) call “emphatic” interpretations, and to the interaction between word order and tonal marking on the verb.

9 Chapter summary

The chapter has provided a descriptive analysis of information structure in Rukiga. We note that there are various strategies the language employs, using prosody, morphology, and syntax. One of the strategies is word order. Word order in Rukiga is flexible, and is determined more by discourse roles than grammatical roles. We note that topics are preferred in the preverbal position. For

example, in a locative inversion construction, the locative phrase appears in the preverbal position and acts as the topic. In the same vein, in passive constructions, erstwhile objects are promoted to subject and moved to the preverbal position to function as topics. In addition, Rukiga possesses a particle *-o* that marks contrastive topics, and there are other pragmatic interpretations associated with it, namely polarity focus/verum, depreciative, intensive and mirative. Focused elements do not occur in the preverbal domain, but are typically marked in the immediate after verb position. Non-focal and non-topical elements also appear postverbally, for example the subject in athetic sentence (primarily in locative inversion), and other non-topical non-focal elements appear in the right periphery. Predicate doubling is another strategy that is prevalently used in Rukiga for multiple readings depending on context: in topic doubling, an infinitive functions as a contrastive focus and the resulting interpretations include polarity focus/verum, depreciation, intension, and mirativity (the same interpretations that are encoded by particle *-o*), whereas in-situ doubling with a class 14 nominalisation creates a dismissive reading, and in-situ doubling with *na* and an infinitive is used to indicate an event happening above expectation. Clefts are a common strategy used to express focus as observed in the other languages described in this book. A detailed syntactic account of cleft constructions remains for further research, but we concluded that the basic cleft has an exhaustive interpretation and that the pseudocleft is associated with identification. A third construction that superficially is reminiscent of a reverse pseudocleft was shown to involve an independent (topic or fragment answer) NP followed by a basic cleft in which a coreferential pronoun is clefted. Further research should also consider whether object drop in Rukiga is possible (and if so, under which circumstances), the role of prosody in expressing information structure, and it would also be interesting to conduct a diachronic investigation of particle *-o* and study this particle comparatively between Rukiga and other Bantu languages that have it.

Acknowledgements

This research was supported by an NWO Vidi grant 276-78-001 as part of the Bantu Syntax and Information Structure (BaSIS) project at Leiden University. We thank our speakers Pamellah Geiga Birungi, the late Joel Tumusiime, Ronald Twesigomwe for their enthusiasm and patience in working with us; we thank Nina van der Vlugt and Melle Groen for their work on Rukiga cleft constructions; we thank the BaSIS colleagues for their support; and we thank the reviewers of this chapter for their helpful comments. Any remaining errors are ours alone.

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. High tones are marked by an acute accent; low tones remain unmarked. We stick to orthography as much as possible. Orthographic ⟨k⟩ and ⟨g⟩ before [i], as well as ⟨ky⟩ and ⟨gy⟩ before other vowels, are pronounced [tʃ] and [dʒ], respectively. Although sometimes speakers pronounce [l], there is no ⟨l⟩ in orthography (instead ⟨r⟩ is used). Liaison between words is indicated by an apostrophe. Vowels before a prenasalised consonants and vowels after palatalised and labialised consonants are automatically lengthened, but written with only one symbol.

*	ungrammatical	F.PST	far past
#	infelicitous in the given context	FV	final vowel
		LI	locative inversion
*(X)	the presence of X is obligatory and cannot grammatically be omitted	MED	medial (demonstrative)
		N.FUT	near future tense
		N.PST	near past tense
(*X)	the presence of X would make the sentence ungrammatical	OM	object marker
		PRO	pronoun
(X)	the presence of X is optional	RM	relative marker
AUG	augment	SM	subject marker
CM	contrastive marker	TR	tonal reduction
CONN	connective		
DAI	default agreement inversion		

References

- Asiimwe, Allen. 2014. *Definiteness and specificity in Runyankore-Rukiga*. Stellenbosch University. (Doctoral dissertation).
- Asiimwe, Allen. 2019. The syntax of relative clause constructions in Runyankore-Rukiga: A typological perspective. *Stellenbosch Papers in Linguistics Plus* 58. 131–154.
- Asiimwe, Allen. 2023. On the expression of mirativity in Rukiga. *Studies in African Linguistics* 52(Supplement 14). 28–46. <https://journals.flvc.org/sal/article/view/131123>.

- Asiimwe, Allen. 2024a. The expression of tense and aspect in Rukiga. In Levis Mugumya, Allen Asiimwe, Medadi E. Ssentanda, William G. Wagaba & Florence T. Bayiga (eds.), *The promise of linguistics and language studies in Africa*, 169–195. Kampala: Fountain Publishers.
- Asiimwe, Allen. 2024b. The structure, distribution and function of demonstratives in Runyankore-Rukiga. In Hannah Gibson, Rozenn Guérois, Gastor Mapunda & Lutz Marten (eds.), *Morphosyntactic variation in East African Bantu languages: Descriptive and comparative approaches*, 43–83. Berlin: Language Science Press. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.10663765.
- Asiimwe, Allen, Maria Kouneli & Jenneke van der Wal. 2023. Determiner spreading in Rukiga. *Linguistics* 61(5). 1285–1339. DOI: 10.1515/ling-2021-0027.
- Asiimwe, Allen & Jenneke van der Wal. 2021. The multifunctionality of -o in Rukiga: Pronoun, contrastive topic, and mirative marker. *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 30(1). 26–26. DOI: 10.53228/njas.v30i1.758.
- Beermann, Dorothee & Allen Asiimwe. 2024. Locatives in Runyankore-Rukiga. In Eva-Marie Bloom Ström, Rozenn Guérois, Hannah Gibson & Lutz Marten (eds.), *Approaches to morphosyntactic variation in Bantu*, 273–290. Oxford: Oxford University Press. DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198821359.003.0010.
- Bostoen, Koen & Léon Mundeke. 2012. Subject marking, object-verb order and focus in Mbuun (Bantu, B87). *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies* 30(2). 139–154.
- Buell, Leston C. 2007. Semantic and formal locatives: Implications for the Bantu locative inversion typology. *SOAS Working Papers in Linguistics* 15. 105–120.
- Buell, Leston C. 2009. Evaluating the immediate postverbal position as a focus position in Zulu. In Masangu Matondo, Fiona McLaughlin & Eric Potsdam (eds.), *Selected proceedings of the 38th Annual Conference on African Linguistics*, 166–172. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.
- Chafe, Wallace L. 1976. Givenness, contrastiveness, definiteness, subjects, topics and point of view. In Charles N. Li & Sandra A. Thompson (eds.), *Subject and topic*, 27–55. New York: Academic Press.
- Eberhard, David M., Gary F. Simons & Charles D. Fennig (eds.). 2020. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. 23rd edn. Dallas, Texas: SIL International.
- Grégoire, Claire. 1975. *Les locatifs en bantou*. Tervuren: Musée royal de l’Afrique centrale.
- Güldemann, Tom & Ines Fiedler. 2022. Predicate partition for predicate-centred focus and Meeussen’s Proto-Bantu “advance verb construction”. In Koen Bostoen, Gilles-Maurice Schryver, Rozenn Guérois & Sara Pacchiarotti (eds.), *On reconstructing Proto-Bantu grammar*, 537–580. Berlin: Language Science Press.

- Höhle, Tilman N. 1992. Über Verum-Fokus im Deutschen. In Joachim Jacobs (ed.), *Informationsstruktur und Grammatik*, 112–141. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.
- Hyman, Larry M. 1999. The interaction between focus and tone in Bantu. In Georges Rebushu & Lauren Tuller (eds.), *The grammar of focus*, 151–177. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Kanampiu, Patrick N. & Jenneke van der Wal. 2025. The expression of information structure in Kĩtharaka. In Jenneke van der Wal (ed.), *The expression of information structure in Bantu*, 199–269. Berlin: Language Science Press. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.14833610.
- Kerr, Elisabeth J., Allen Asimwe, Patrick N. Kanampiu, Zhen Li, Ernest Nshemzimana & Jenneke van der Wal. 2023. Bantu word order between discourse and syntactic relations. *Linguistique et langues africaines* 9(1). DOI: 10.4000/lla.9496.
- Kula, Nancy C. & Lutz Marten. 2010. Argument structure and agency in Bemba passives. In Karsten Legère & Christina Thornell (eds.), *Bantu languages: Analyses, description and theory*, 115–130. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag.
- Lambrecht, Knud. 1994. *Information structure and sentence form: Topic, focus, and the mental representations of discourse referents* (Cambridge Studies in Linguistics 71). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. DOI: 10.1017/CBO9780511620607.
- Lippard, Hannah, Justine Sikuku, Crisófia Langa da Câmara, Rose Letsholo, Madelyn Colantes, Kang (Franco) Liu & Michael Diercks. 2023. Emphatic interpretations of object marking in Bantu languages. *Studies in African Linguistics* 52(Supplement 14). 78–109.
- Lopez, Luis. 2016. Dislocations and information structure. In Caroline Féry & Shinichiro Ishihara (eds.), *The Oxford handbook of information structure*, 402–421. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Marten, Lutz & Jenneke van der Wal. 2014. A typology of Bantu subject inversion. *Linguistic Variation* 14(2). 318–368.
- Meeussen, Achille Emile. 1967. Bantu grammatical reconstructions. *Africana Linguistica* 3(1). 79–121.
- Morimoto, Yukiko. 2000. *Discourse configurationality in Bantu morphosyntax*. Stanford: Stanford University. (Doctoral dissertation).
- Morris, Henry Francis & Brian Edmond R. Kirwan. 1972. *Runyankore grammar*. Kampala: East Africa Literature Bureau.
- Ndoleriire, Oswald. 2020. *Runyakitara language studies: A guide for advanced learners and teachers of Runyakitara*. Kampala: Makerere University Press.
- Nikolaeva, Irina. 2001. Secondary topic as a relation in information structure. *Linguistics* 39(1). 1–49.

- Nshemezimana, Ernest & Jenneke van der Wal. 2025. The expression of information structure in Kirundi. In Jenneke van der Wal (ed.), *The expression of information structure in Bantu*, 271–334. Berlin: Language Science Press. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.14833612.
- Odden, David. 1996. *The phonology and morphology of Kimatumbi*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Reinhart, Tanya. 1981. Pragmatics and linguistics: An analysis of sentence topics. *Philosophica* 27(1). 53–94. DOI: 10.21825/philosophica.82606.
- Romero, Maribel & Chung-hye Han. 2004. On negative yes/no questions. *Linguistics and philosophy* 27(5). 609–658.
- Sasse, Hans-Jürgen. 1996. *Theticity*. Working paper 27. Cologne: Institut für Sprachwissenschaft der Universität zu Köln.
- Sikuku, Justine & Michael Diercks. 2021. Object marking in Lubukusu: Information structure in the verb phrase. In Akinbiyi Akinlabi, Lee Bickmore, Michael C. Cahill, Michael Diercks, Laura J. Downing, James Essegbey, Katie Franich, Laura McPherson & Sharon Rose (eds.), *Celebrating 50 Years of ACAL: Selected Papers from the 50th Annual Conference on African Linguistics*, 305–330. Berlin: Language Science Press. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.5578822.
- Skopeteas, Stavros, Ines Fiedler, Samantha Hellmuth, Anne Schwarz, Ruben Stoel, Gisbert Fanselow, Caroline Féry & Manfred Krifka. 2006. *Questionnaire on Information Structure QUIS* (Interdisciplinary Studies on Information Structure 4). Potsdam: University of Potsdam.
- Taylor, Charles. 1972. Some functions of the initial vowel in Nkore-Kiga. *Linguistics* 79. 73–82.
- Taylor, Charles. 1985. *Nkore-Kiga*. London: Croom Helm.
- Turamyomwe, Justus. 2011. *Tense and aspect in Runyankore-Rukiga: Linguistic resources and analysis*. Norwegian University of Science and Technology. (MPhil Dissertation).
- Uganda Bureau of Statistics. 2016. *The national population and housing census 2014: main report*. Kampala. <http://www.ubos.org/onlinefiles/uploads/ubos/NPHC/2014%20National%20Census%20Main%20Report.pdf>.
- van der Wal, Jenneke. 2009. *Word order and information structure in Makhuwanahara*. Utrecht: LOT.
- van der Wal, Jenneke. 2016. Diagnosing focus. *Studies in Language* 40(2). 259–301. DOI: 10.1075/sl.40.2.01van.
- van der Wal, Jenneke. 2017. What is the conjoint/disjoint alternation? Parameters of crosslinguistic variation. In Jenneke van der Wal & Larry M. Hyman (eds.), *The conjoint/disjoint alternation in Bantu*, 14–60. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

- van der Wal, Jenneke. 2021. On the use of idioms for testing focus. *Semantic Field Methods* 3(2).
- van der Wal, Jenneke. 2022. *A featural typology of Bantu agreement*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- van der Wal, Jenneke. 2025a. The conjoint/disjoint alternation. In Lutz Marten, Nancy Kula, Ellen Hurst & Jochen Zeller (eds.), *The Oxford guide to the Bantu languages*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- van der Wal, Jenneke. 2025b. The expression of information structure in Makhuwa-Enahara. In Jenneke van der Wal (ed.), *The expression of information structure in Bantu*, 453–509. Berlin: Language Science Press. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.14833618.
- van der Wal, Jenneke & Allen Asimwe. 2020. The tonal residue of the conjoint/disjoint alternation in Rukiga. *Studies in African Linguistics* 49(1). 43–59.
- van der Wal, Jenneke, Allen Asimwe, Patrick N. Kanampiu, Elisabeth J. Kerr, Zhen Li, Amani Lusekelo, Nelsa Nhantumbo & Ernest Nshemezimana. 2025. On the expression of information structure in Bantu. In Jenneke van der Wal (ed.), *The expression of information structure in Bantu*, 1–51. Berlin: Language Science Press. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.14833604.
- van der Wal, Jenneke & Kyle Jerro. 2022. *Contrastive topic and predicate doubling in Bantu*.
- Watters, John R. 1979. Focus in Aghem. In Hyman, Larry (ed.), *Aghem grammatical structure*, 137–197. Los Angeles: University of Southern California.
- Yoneda, Nobuko. 2011. Word order in Matengo (N13): Topicality and informational roles. *Lingua* 121(5). 754–771. DOI: 10.1016/j.lingua.2010.11.008.
- Zerbian, Sabine. 2006. *Expression of information structure in the Bantu language Northern Sotho*. Berlin: Humboldt University. (Doctoral dissertation).

