Chapter 9

The expression of information structure in Cicopi

Nelsa Nhantumbo[a] & Jenneke van der Wal[b]

[a]Universidade Eduardo Mondlane [b]Leiden University

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

1 Introduction

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

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

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

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

2 Verbal inflection

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.1 Present tense

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

(1) Q: Ina matutu:ma cikolwa:ni?[1]   [conjoint]
     ina mu-a-tutum-a   ci-kolwa-ni
     Q 2PL.SM-DJ-run-FV 7-school-loc
     'Do you run at school?'

---

[1]No tone marking.

A: Hatútû:ma. [disjoint]
   hi-a-tutum-a
   1PL.SM-DJ-run-FV
   'We (do) run.'

A': Hígó:nda mabhu:ku. [conjoint]
    hi-gond-a   ma-bhuku
    1PL.SM-read-FV 6-book
    'We read books.'

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

(2) a. * Dikanéká hidiwo:na. [conjoint]
        di-kaneka hi-di-won-a
        5-mug   1PL.SM-5OM-see-FV
        int. 'The mug, we see it.'

     b.   Dikanéká hadiwo:na. [disjoint]
        di-kaneka hi-a-di-won-a
        5-mug   1PL.SM-DJ-5OM-see-FV
        'The mug, we see it.'

     c.   Hiwóná dikanê:ka. [conjoint]
        hi-won-a   di-kaneka
        1PL.SM-see-FV 5-mug
        'We see a/the mug.'

(3) (What are you doing?)

     a.   Hótútû:ma. [progressive]
        hi-o-tutum-a
        1PL.SM-PROG-run-FV
        'We are running.'

     b. * Hítútû:ma. [conjoint]
        hi-tutum-a
        1PL.SM-run-FV
        int. 'We are running. / We run.'

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

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

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

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

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

(6) a.   Muthúmá ca:ni?   [conjoint]
          mu-thum-a   cani
          2PL.SM-do-FV what
          'What are you (pl) doing?'

     b. * Mathúmá ca:ni?   [disjoint]
          mu-a-thum-a   cani
          2PL.SM-DJ-do-FV what
          int. 'What are you (pl) doing?'

     c.   Mothúmá ca:ni?   [progressive]
          mu-o-thum-a   cani
          2PL.SM-PROG-do-FV what
          'What are you (pl) doing?'

(7) Hi-xav-a   / * h-a-xav-a   / h-o-xav-a   ma-fá:ka dwé.
     1PL.SM-buy-FV /   1PL.SM-DJ-buy-FV / 1PL.SM-PROG-buy-FV 6-maize   only
     'We buy/are buying only maize.'

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

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

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

    a. Álórá ṁlo:ro.   [conjoint]

       a-lor-a   m-loro

       1sm-dream-fv 3-dream

       'S/he is dreaming a dream.'

    b. Ólˈó:rá ṁlo:ro.   [progressive]

       a-o-lor-a   m-loro

       1sm-prog-dream-fv 3-dream

       'S/he is dreaming a dream.'

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

(10) Jhoáná ázilé ákuwúlá hambí ni máláso:ro   [conjoint]

     Joana   a-z-ile   a-kuwul-a   hambi ni   ma-lasoro

     1.Joana 1sm-lim-pfv 1sm-wash-fv even   and 6-sheet

     'Joana washed even the sheets.'

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

(11)   a. Hárê:k-á mâ:ti.   [disjoint]

       hi-a-rek-a   mati

       1pl.sm-dj-draw-fv 6.water

       'We draw water (habitually, not at this moment).'

    b. Horê:k-á mâ:ti.   [progressive]

       hi-o-rek-a   mati

       1pl.sm-prog-draw-fv 6.water

       'We are drawing water (right now).'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

    b. Kóph⸢índa mǒːvha.   [progressive]
       ku-o-phind-a   movha
       17SM-PROG-pass-FV 3.car
       'A car is passing by.' (Someone else tells/ask you.)

(16) a. (Context: I see someone hitting the bulls and want to inform others
       that are inside.)
       Tápé(ː)kwá tího:mú.   [disjoint]
       ti-a-pek-w-a   ti-homu
       10SM-DJ-hit-PASS-FV 10-bull
       'The bulls are (being) beaten.'

    b. (Why do the bulls have these marks? – The sentence is not accepted
       out of the blue.)
       Tópé(ː)kwá tího:mú.   [progressive]
       ti-o-pek-w-a   ti-homu
       10SM-PROG-hit-PASS-FV 10-bull
       'The bulls are (being) beaten.'

(17) a. (Context: A friend passed by your field and tells you s/he has seen
       birds eating the maize.)
       Sinyaːna sâːdyá mafaːka.   [disjoint]
       si-nyana si-a-dy-a   ma-faka
       8-bird   8SM-DJ-eat-FV 6-maize
       '(The) birds are eating (the) maize.'

    b. (generic)
       Tikhuːmba tídyá khôːndze.   [conjoint]
       ti-khumba ti-dy-a   khondze
       10-pig   10SM-eat-FV grass
       'Pigs eat grass.'

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

2.2 Perfective

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

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

(18) Maria abháté dipápí:lo.
Maria a-bhal-ile   dipapilo
1.Maria 1SM-write-PFV 5-letter
'Maria wrote a letter.'

(19) Mwanâ:na adukê:te dibhúlú:ku.
mw-anana a-duket-ile   di-bhuluku
1-child   1SM-try-PFV 5-trousers
'The child tried on the trousers.'

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

(20) Átô:dya.
a-to-dy-a
1SM-TO-eat-FV
'S/he ate (it).'

   a.   answer to 'What happened with the food on the table?' [SoA focus]
   b.   # correction of 'She didn't eat.'   [verum]

(21) (She didn't eat.)
(i:m) Ádyî:te.   [verum]
ii   a-dy-ile
yes 1SM-eat-PFV
'(Yes) S/he ate.' / 'S/he *did* eat.

---

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

(22) Vátótútû:má kûmbe vátôsámbê:la?   [SoA focus]
      va-to-tutum-a   kumbe va-to-sambel-a
      2SM-TO-run-FV or   2SM-TO-swim-FV
      'Did they run or did they swim?'

(23) (Did Paulo wash the beans?)   [SoA focus]
      Ihî:mhim, Paulu aákuwúlá feijáu, átô:bhǐ:ká dwé.
      ihimhim Paulo a-a-kuwul-a   feijao a-to-bhik-a   dwe
      no   1.Paolo 1SM-NEG-wash-FV 9.bean 1SM-TO-cook-FV only
      'No, Paulo didn't wash the beans, he only cooked (them).'

(24) (Paulo didn't cook the beans.) You're lying, ...   [verum]

      a. #Páúlú átôbǐ:ká feijáu
          Paulo   a-to-bhik-a   feijao
          1.Paulo 1SM-TO-cook-FV 9.bean
          'Paulo cooked (the) beans.'
          #'Paulo did cook (the) beans.'

      b. Páúlú abhíkî:le feijáu.
          Paulo   a-bhik-ile   feijao
          1.Paulo 1SM-cook-PFV 9.bean
          'Paulo cooked (the) beans.'
          'Paulo did cook (the) beans.'

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

(25) a. Mutómahá câ:ni?
          mu-to-mah-a   cani
          2PL.SM-TO-do-FV what
          'What did you do?'

      b. A:nu mumahilé câ:ni?
          anu   mu-mah-ile   cani
          2PL.PRO 2PL.SM-do-PFV what
          'What did you do?'

(26) a. (What did you drink?)
          Nitóselá sérvhe:jha.
          ni-to-sel-a   servhejha
          1SG.SM-TO-drink-FV beer
          'I drank beer.'

      b. (Who did grandma give the mangoes?)
          Áníngílé titíyá Lu:rdi.
          a-ning-ile   titiya Lurdi
          1SM-give-PFV 1.aunt 1.Lurdes
          'She gave (them to) aunt Lurdes.'

(27) (What did you do?)

      a. Hikaláhatshi:lé hibhulá ní na:wé.
          hi-khalahatsi-ile   hi-bhul-a   ni   ni-awe
          1PL.SM-sit.down-PFV 1PL.SM-talk-FV with with-2SG.PRO
          'We sat and talked with you.'

      b. Hitókhaláhátshi hibhulá ní na:we.
          hi-to-khalahatshi hi-bhul-a   ni   ni-awe
          1PL.SM-TO-sit.down 1PL.SM-talk-FV with with-2SG.PRO
          'We sat and talked with you.'

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

3 Word order

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

---

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

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

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

3.1 No preverbal focus (?)

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

(29) * Mání afí:lé?
        mani a-f-ile
        who 1SM-die-PFV
        'Who died?'

(30) (Who is cooking rice?)
        # Luiza abhika mpu:nga.[4]
         Luisa a-bhik-a   mpunga
         1.Luisa 1SM-cook-FV 3.rice
        'Luisa is cooking rice.'

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

---

[4]This example lacks tone marking.

(31) **Mpu:nga** (***dwé**) Luiza óbhĭ:ka.
mpunga dwe Luisa   a-o-bhik-a
3.rice   only 1.Luisa 1SM-PROG-cook-FV
'(*only) The rice, Luisa is cooking (it).'

(32) Kupíndílé tixaka tá tî:ngí tá síha:ri, kámbé **pho:ngó dwé** yíwî:te.
ku-pind-ile   ti-xaka t-a   t-ingi   t-a   si-hari kambe
17SM-pass-PFV 10-kind 10-CONN 10-many 10-CONN 8-animal but
phongo dwe yi-w-ile
9.goat   only 9SM-fall-PFV
'There passed many types of animals, but only a/the goat fell.'

(33) **Páulu dwé** átsu:tí sóntô:ni.
Paulo   dwe a-tsul-ile   sonto-ni
1.Paulo only 1SM-leave-PFV church-LOC
'Only Paulo went to church.'

(34) [#] **Mimvhúnja dwé** yíbê:te.
mi-mvhunja dwe yi-bel-ile
4-rabbit   only 4SM-enter-PFV
[?]'Only the rabbits entered.'
'The rabbits just entered (and didn't do anything else).'

3.2 Preverbal topics

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

(35) (Context: QUIS map task, with speaker A explaining the route to speaker B.)

A: Ni-mán-á   dí-kávhâ:lu.
1SG.SM-find-FV 5-horse
'I find a horse.'

B: Ní-**dí**-wô:n-i.
1SG.SM-5OM-see-PFV
'I have seen it.'

(36) (How can I break a coconut?)
Kufá:ya ka dikho:kho, kuni mamahelo mambí:dí.
ku-faya   k-a   di-khokho ku=ni   ma-mahelo ma-mbidi
15-break 15-CONN 5-coconuts 17SM=with 6-way   6-two
'There are two ways to break coconuts.'

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

(37) (What did grandma give the girls?)
Áníngílé Lídíà mafá:ka, **Rozí:tá ní Laurí:nya** á**vá**níngá máphê:ra.
a-ning-ile   Lidia   ma-faka Rozita ni   Laurinya a-va-ning-a
1SM-give-PFV 1.Lidia 6-maize 1.Rozita and 1.Laurinha 1SM-2OM-give-FV
ma-phera
6-pear
'She gave Lidia maize; to Rosita and Laurinha she gave pears.'

(38) (Four of my siblings are girls.)
Vavámbî:dí vóbhilívî:la
va-va-mbidi   va-o-bhilivil-a
2-?CONN-two 2SM-PROG-be.light-FV
'Two are light-skinned'

ní **vavambî:dí** vántí:má vo:kô:ma.
ni   va-va-mbidi   va-ntima va-a-ku-koma
and 2-?CONN-two 2-black   2-CONN-15-be.short
'and two (are) black and short.'

(39) (Was it the house and the yard that s/he swept?)
Nyumbá:ni ayáhiyê:la.
nyumba-ini a-ya-hiyel-a
9.house-LOC 1SM-NEG-sweep-FV
'S/he didn't sweep the house.'

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

(40) (Are these people wearing hats? +QUIS picture of two women without
      hats and two men with hats.)
      Ka vá:thu váva, avá vákúni sígo:ko majǎ:ha.
      ka va-thu   vava   ava va=ku=ni   si-goko ma-jaha
      LOC 2-people 2.DEM.MED 2.PRO 2SM=REL=with 8-hat COP.6-man
      'Of/between these people, the ones that have hats are the men.'

(41) **Ká** kó:ká ní fâ:nta, utósélá kô:ka dwé?
      ka   koka ni   fanta u-to-sel-a   koka dwe
      LOC coke and fanta 2SG.SM-TO-drink-FV coke only
      'Between coke and fanta, did you drink only coke?'

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

(42) (Moving on, they saw many more frogs, in addition to the two they had
      seen. Those big ones who saw them turned out to be the parents of the
      other frogs. So, the big ones that they were seeing were jumping.)
      Sê, **m'pfáná wúlé** átsakí:lé já ángé adí díkhéle dá:kwé di angatídilá:va.
      se m'-fana wu-le   a-tsak-ile   ja a-nge   a-di
      so 1-boy   1-DEM.DIST 1SM-be.happy-PFV so 1SM-say AUG-5.DEM
      di-khele   di-akwe di   a-nga-ti-di-lav-a
      5.COP-frog 5-POSS.1 5.DEM 1SM-REL-IPFV-5OM-want-FV
      'So, that boy was happy, so he said: this is his frog that he was looking for.'

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

(43) (The boy stood there in pain.)
      Sê bhonyáni **yó:ná** yítsú:té.
      se   bhonyani y-ona yi-tsul-ile
      and 9.mouse   9-PRO 9SM-leave-PFV
      'As for the mouse, it is gone.'

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

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

se	yi-mbwa	**ni**	yi-ona	yi-a-pf-etetel-a		ma-kota	to.khene
then	9-dog	and	9-PRO	9SM-PRS-hear-STAT.APPL-FV		6-cry	COMP

ma-kota~kota	y-awa	ingawa	ci-di-hum-ete	ku-ya	hayi
6-cry~RED	6.DEM	could	7SM-DEP-leave-PFV	15-go	where

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

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

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

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

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

Já **yídímúrányílé thó:mbvú**, e:ne atósá:lá acítín'o:té thó:mbvú yílé inkú:pfá kúpá:ndá.

ja	yi-di-mu-rany-il-e		thombvu	ene	a-to-sal-a
so	9SM-DEP-1OM-scratch-PFV		9.nose	1.PRO	1SM-TO-stay-FV

a-ci-ti-n'ol-ile		thombvu	yi-le	in-ku-pfa	kupanda
1SM-CON-IPFV-touch-PFV		9.nose	9-DEM.MED	LINK-15-feel	15.pain

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

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

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

Má:mí, m'pá:wú, axávísí:lé ayáwǔ:dya.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(51) [Ití ní wúsí:kú dímwányání dítshí:kú], [ínkámá angádípfúxê:lá], díkhê:lé
      dítíngádí kô:ná múlé:yá ndání ka díbhójhé:lá.

      [i-ti   ni   wusiku di-mwanyani di-tshiku] [in-kama
       COP-PST and night 5-other   5-day   9-time

      a-nga-di-pfuxel-a]   di-khele di-ti-nga-di   kona mu-leya
      1SM-REL-5OM-visit-FV 5-frog   5SM-IPFV-NEG-be 17.PRO 18-DEM.DIST

      ndani ka   di-bhojhela
      inside LOC 5-bottle

      'One day at night, visiting him, the frog was not inside the bottle.'

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

(52) (Context: QUIS map task, where speaker A explains the route to speaker B.)

      A: **Cibhabha ca mî:ná** nimaná *tî:mbwa tírâ:ru.*
          ci-bhabha ci-a   mina   ni-man-a   *ti-mbwa ti-raru*
          7-left   7-CONN 1SG.PRO 1SG.SM-find-FV 10-dog 10-three
          'To my left, I find three dogs.'

      B: **A:ni** niwóná *tíhô:mu tí-râ:ru.*
          ani   ni-won-a   *ti-homu ti-raru*
          1SG.PRO 1SG.SM-see-FV 10-bull   10-three
          'As for me, I see three bulls.'

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

3.3 No dedicated focus position

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

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

A: Mwanáná ándíndá mé:za?
mw-anana a-ndind-a   meza
1-child   1SM-pull-FV 3.table
'Is the child pulling a/the table?'

B: Ihî:mhím, (mwaná:ná) ándíndá **cítu:lu**.
ihimhim mw-anana a-ndind-a   ci-tulu
no   1-child   1SM-pull-FV 7.chair
'No, the child is pulling a/the chair.'

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

(54) Recipient question

a. Vánánîngá másenórá ma:ní?
va-na-ning-a   ma-senora mani
2SM-FUT-give-FV 6-carrot   who
'Who will they give carrots?'

b. Hinánˈíngá ma:ní díkáne:ka?
hi-na-ning-a   mani di-kaneka
1PL.SM-FUT-give-FV who 5-mug
'Who will we give the mug to?'

(55) Theme question

a. Vánáníngá ndíyâ:wé câ:ni?
va-na-ning-a   ndiya-awe   cani
2SM-FUT-give-FV 1.sister-POSS.1 what
'What will they give his sister?'

b. Váná(mú)nˈíngá cá:ní ndíyâ:wé?
va-na-mu-ning-a   cani ndiya-awe
2SM-FUT-1OM-give-FV what 1.sister-POSS.1
'What will they give his sister?'

(56) (Who will they give carrots?)
Váná(*mu)nî:ngá (másenó:rá) Gô:mex.
va-na-mu-ning-a   ma-senora Gomes
2SM-FUT-1OM-give-FV 6-carrots 1.Gomes
'They will give Gomes carrots.'

(57) (Will you cook rice for the visitors?)
Ninábhikélá vapfumba mba:ba.
ni-ná-bhik-el-a   va-pfumba mbaba
1SG.SM-FUT-cook-APPL-FV 2-visitors 3.shima
'I will cook shima for the visitors.'

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

(58) a. Álúngisile **nja:ní** mo:vha?
a-lungis-ile   njani movha
1SM-repair-PFV how 3.car
'How did s/he repair the car?'

b. Álúngisile mo:vha **nja:ní**?

(59) a. Urumété **ha:yi** mípâ:wu?
u-rum-el-ile   hayi   mi-pawu
2SG.SM-send-APPL-PFV where 4-cassava
'Where did you send the cassava?'

b. Urumété mípâ:wu **ha:yi**?

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

---

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

Theme dwe Recipient	Theme dwe **Recipient**
#**Theme** Recipient dwe	Theme **Recipient** dwe
Recipient **Theme** dwe	#Recipient Theme dwe
Recipient dwe **Theme**	**Recipient** dwe Theme

(60) a. **Theme** only, Recipient
Vánáningá mábho:mú dwé, tshándza:na – vánambímún˩íngá cíkê:ta.
va-na-ning-a   ma-bhomu dwe tshandzana
2SM-FUT-give-FV 6-lemons   only 1.niece
va-na-mbi-mu-ning-a   ci-keta
2SM-FUT-NEG-1OM-give-FV 7-pineapple
'They will give only lemons to the niece, they will not give her pineapple.'

b. Recipient **Theme** only
Vánáningá tshándzá:na mábho:mu dwé – vánambímún˩íngá cíkê:ta.
va-na-ning-a   tshandzana ma-bhomu dwe
2SM-FUT-give-FV 1.niece   6-lemons   only
va-na-mbi-mu-ning-a   ci-keta
2SM-FUT-NEG-1OM-give-FV 7-pineapple
'They will give only lemons to the niece, they will not give her pineapple.'

(61) a. Theme **Recipient** only
Vánáningá mábho:mú tshándza:na dwé – vánamb˩íníngá ndíyâ:we.
va-na-ning-a   ma-bhomu tshandzana dwe va-na-mbi-ning-a
2SM-FUT-give-FV 6-lemon   1.niece   only 2SM-FUT-NEG-give-FV
ndiya-awe
1.sister-POSS.1
'They will give lemons to the niece only, they will not give to her sister.'

b. **Recipient** only, Theme
Vánáningá tshándzá:na dwé, mábho:mu – vánamb˩íníngá ndíyâ:we.
va-na-ning-a   tshandzana dwe ma-bhomu va-na-mbi-ning-a
2SM-FUT-give-FV 1.niece   only 6-lemon   2SM-FUT-NEG-give-FV
ndiya-awe
1.sister-POSS.1
'They will give lemons to the niece only, they will not give to her sister.'

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

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

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

(63) a. Álúngisilé câ:ni nja:ní?
          a-lungis-ile   cani njani
          1sm-repair-PFV what how
          'How did s/he repair what?'
      b. Álúngisilá nja:ní câ:ni?
          a-lungis-ile   njani cani
          1sm-repair-PFV how   what
          'How did s/he repair what?'

(64) a. Pédrú ámáné cˈá:ní aha:yi?
          Pedro a-man-e   cani ahayi
          1.Pedro 1sm-find-PFV what where
          'What did Pedro find where?'
      b. Pédrú ámáné ha:yí ca:ni?
          Pedro a-man-e   hayi cani
          1.Pedro 1sm-find-PFV where what
          'What did Pedro find where?'

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

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

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

3.4 Subject inversion

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

(66)   * Ntini mulé múbéte Joau.
       in-t-ini   mu-le   mu-bet-e   Joao
       3-home-LOC 18-DEM.MED 18SM-enter-PFV 1.Joao
       'In that home/compound entered João.'

(67)   (Context: QUIS picture of a girl pulling a chair.)
       Cítúlú cí cindí:nda mwáná:ná.
       ci-tulu ci   ci-ndind-a   mw-anana
       7-chair 7.DEM.PROX 7SM-pull-FV 1-child

       [?] 'The chair is pulling the child.'
       * 'The child is pulling the chair.'

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

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

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

---

[6]Locative Inversion is unacceptable with or without applicative morphology

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

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

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

(70) a. Kúwî:té ma:ní?
         ku-w-ile   mani
         17SM-fall-PFV who
         'Who fell?'

      b. Kúwí:te Marî:ya.
         ku-w-ile   Mariya
         17SM-fall-PFV 1.Maria
         'It was Maria who fell.'

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

      a. Kúndíndá ma:ni cítu:lu?   [VSO]
         ku-ndind-a   mwani ci-tulu
         17SM-pull-FV who   7-chair
         'Who is pulling the chair?'

      b. Kúndíndá mwánˈá:ná cítu:lu.   [VSO]
         ku-ndind-a   mw-anana ci-tulu
         17SM-pull-FV 1-child   7-chair
         'A child is pulling the chair.'
         (also OK as answer to 'Is a dog pulling the chair?')

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

(72) (Frog story)
Ká:sí kúvéní híngá n'dó:ngá wówó:má wúkú hálé.
kasi kuveni hinga   n'-donga w-a-woma wu-ku   hale
but [adv] COP.NEG 3-tree   3-CONN-dry 3SM=REL 16.DEM.MED
'But, after all, it isn't a dry tree that is there.'

Kútíní cíhâ:rí címwé:cô vácídhánâká ku ínyá:rá, cíhá:rí cí cíngáyáé:má.
ku-ti=ni   ci-hari ci-mweco va-ci-dhan-ak-a=ku   i-nyara
17SM-IPFV=with 7-animal 7SM-one 2SM-7OM-call-DUR-FV=REL 9-buffalo
ci-hari   ci   ci-nga-ya-em-a
7SM-animal 7.DEM.PROX 7SM-REL-go-stand-FV
'There was an animal called a buffalo that was standing.'

(73) Kúná ndzú:mà.
ku-n-a   ndzuma
17SM-rain-FV 9.rain
'It's raining.'

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

(74) Kúhókile mwaná:ná dwe.
ku-hok-ile   mw-anana dwe
17SM-arrive-PFV 1-child   only
'Only the child arrived.'

(75) Kútútumilé Gó:mes dwé.
ku-tutum-ile Gomes   dwe
17SM-run-PFV 1.Gomes only
'Only Gomes ran.'

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

---

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

(76) (Context 1, subject focus: I can see that someone is filling the water
      containers and ask: who is drawing water?
      #Context 2, object focus: What is Nelsa drawing?)
      Kúr'éká mâ:tí Nê:lsa.   [VOS]
      ku-rek-a   mati   Nelsa
      17SM-draw-FV 6.water 1.Nelsa
      'Nelsa is drawing water.'

(77) (Who is cooking rice? / #What is Luisa cooking?)
      Kubhiká Lúízá mpû:nga.   [VSO]
      ku-bhik-a   Luiza   mpunga
      17SM-cook-FV 1.Luisa 3.rice
      'Luisa cooked rice.'

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

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

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

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

(80) Kúbhálá mâ:ní câ:ni?[8]
      ku-bhal-a   mani cani   [VSO]
      17SM-write-FV who what
      'Who is writing what?'

All three present tense verb forms (see Section 2) are acceptable in DAI, with slight differences in meaning. The progressive form is used as a question or as a progressive action (81a), the disjoint form is used to express habitual action, as we can see in (81b), and the conjoint form for punctual action as in (81c). The precise conditions for the use of each form, and their interpretations in combination with subject inversion, remain to be investigated.

(81) a. (Context: You are wondering what noise is that you hear, and a friend answers this.)
          Kóph ˈ índa mǒ:vha.   [progressive]
          ku-o-phind-a   movha
          17SM-PROG-pass-FV 3.car
          'A car is passing by.'

      b. (Context: There's is a road that seems to be narrow for a car or looks unused and someone ask if cars pass there.)
          Káphínda mǒ:vha.   [disjoint]
          ku-a-phind-a   movha
          17SM-dj-pass-FV 3.car
          'A car passes by.' (in a particular road, usually)

      c. (Context: Someone hears a noise and asks 'What is that noise?' / 'What is passing by?')
          Kúphínda mǒ:vha.   [conjoint]
          ku-phind-a   movha
          17SM-pass-FV 3.car
          'A car is passing by.'

In summary, Cicopi accepts only two subject inversion constructions, Agreeing Inversion and Default Agreement Inversion. Not much can be said at this stage about the former, but the latter is possible with predicates of different valencies: with intransitives it is used in thetic environments as well as with focus on the postverbal logical subject, and with transitives the logical subject must be

---

[8]It is uncertain whether the inverse order of question words (*kúbhă:lá c ˈ á:ní ma:ni?*) is also accepted, and if so, in which contexts.

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

3.5 Right periphery

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

(82)   (Why do the bulls have these marks?)
        Tópé:kwá **tího:mú**.
        ti-o-pek-w-a   ti-homu
        10sm-prog-hit-pass-fv 10-bulls
        'They are (being) beaten, the bulls.'

(83)   (When the boy passed, he went to climb that tree because he saw that
        where he had been looking, where the mouse was, it was not the place he
        was looking for.)
        Ayamáná cíhárí ci angátícílá:vá ca **díkhelé dá:kwé**.
        a-ya-man-a   ci-hari ci   a-nga-ti-ci-lav-a
        1sm-neg-find-fv 7-animal 7.dem.prox 1sm-rel-ipfv-7om-want-fv
        ci-a   di-khele di-akwe
        7-conn 5-frog   5-poss.1
        'He did not find the animal he was looking for, his frog.'

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

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

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

(85) Átô:bhǐka, Páulu, feijáu.
a-to-bhik-a   Paulu feijau
1SM-TO-cook-FV 1.Paulo 10.bean
'He cooks (them) well, Paulo, the beans.'

(86) (Description of definiteness pictures Bloom Ström. A man goes to the market. He sees a pineapple.)
Digwǐta díwóná míko:mbva, diyâyídhu:ndha (, **miko:mbva**).
di-gwit-a   di-won-a   mi-kombva di-ya-yi-dhundh-a   mi-kombva
5SM-finish-FV 5SM-see-FV 4-banana   5SM-NEG-4OM-like-FV 4.banana
'He looks at some bananas. He didn't like them (the bananas).'

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

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

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

(88)   a.   **Vaná:ná**, ngóndî:sí á*(**vá**)ningíle mápâ:xta.
         va-nana   n-gondisi a-va-ning-ile   ma-paxta
         2-child   1-teacher 1SM-2OM-give-PFV 6-bag
         'The children, the teacher gave them bags.'

      b.   Ngóndî:si á(**vá**)níngílé hambí ní mápa:xta **vanâ:na**.
         n-gondisi a-va-ning-ile   hambi ni   ma-paxta va-nana
         1-teacher 1SM-2OM-give-PFV even   and 6-bag   2-child
         'The teacher gave even bags to the children.'

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

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

topic	subject	V	non-topic	non-topic/non-focus

Figure 1: Template for Cicopi word order

4 Cleft

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

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

(89) Ngú ha:yí údímâ:ku?
      ngu hayi   u-dim-a=ku
      COP where 2SG.SM-farm-FV=REL
      'Where do you dig/farm?' / 'Where are you digging?'

(90) a. Mpú:nga (dwé) Luiza abhikâ:ku.
          mpunga   dwe Luisa   a-bhik-a=ku
          COP.3.rice only 1.Luisa 1SM-cook-FV=REL
          'It's (only) the rice Luisa is cooking.'

      b. Mpu:nga (*dwé) Luíza óbhǐ:ka.
          mpunga dwe Luisa   a-o-bhik-a
          3.rice   only 1.Luisa 1SM-PROG-cook-FV
          'The rice, Luisa is cooking (it).'

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

(91) (*I ncani yiku ka dipanela?* 'What is in the pot?')
      Í féjaú yíkú ka dípáne:la
      i   fejau yi=ku   ka di-panela
      COP 9.bean 9SM=REL LOC 5-pot
      'It's beans that are in the pot.'

(92) Vanáná (vá) ningavawo:na váwí:te.
      va-nana va   ni-nga-va-von-a   va-w-ile
      2-child 2.DEM.PROX 1SG.SM-REL-2OM-see-FV 2SM-fall-PFV
      'The(se) children that I saw fell.'

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

4.1 Basic cleft

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

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

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

(94)   Í nc'ání Teré:za angatíyo:ka?
       i   cani Tereza   a-nga-ti-yok-a
       COP what 1.Teresa 1SM-REL-IPFV-bake-FV
       'What was Teresa baking?'

(95)   Í m'ání ándíndâ:ku cítu:lu?
       i   mani a-ndind-a=ku   ci-tulu
       COP who 1SM-pull-FV=REL 7-chair
       'Who is pulling the chair?'

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

(96)   (What was Teresa baking?)

       A1: Téréza átíy'óká díbhoólu.
            Tereza   a-ti-yok-a   di-bholu
            1.Teresa 1SM-IPFV-bake-FV 5-cake
            'Teresa was baking a/the cake.'
       A2: I díbholú angatíy'óká Téréza.
            i   dibholu a-nga-ti-yok-a   Tereza
            COP 5-cake   1SM-REL-IPFV-bake-FV 1.Teresa
            'It was a/the cake that Teresa was baking.'

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

(97) Q: 'Who is pulling the chair?'

A1: Í mwán˩á:ná ándíndâ:ku.   [cleft]
      i   mw-anana   a-ndind-a=ku
      COP 1-child   1SM-pull-FV=REL
      'It's the child who is pulling.'

A2: Kúndíndá mwán˩á:ná cítu:lu.   [VSO]
      ku-ndind-a   mw-anana ci-tulu
      17SM-pull-FV 1-child   7-chair
      'A child is pulling the chair.'

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

(98) A: (I have walked and I find a bicycle.)

B: Hingá bhasíké:ní, í m˩ó:vha níwónâ:ku.
      hinga   bhasikeni, i   movha ni-won-a=ku
      COP.NEG 9.bicycle COP 5.car 1SG.SM-see-FV=REL
      'It's not a bicycle, it's a car that I see.'

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

(99) Q: Í m˩ání angatutu:ma?
      i   mani a-nga-tutum-a
      COP who 1SM-REL-run-FV
      'Who ran?'

A: Í Go:mes angatutu:ma dwé.
      i   Gomes a-nga-tutum-a dwe
      COP 1.Gomes 1SM-REL-run-FV only
      'It was only Gomes that ran.'

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

asks, 'Is [the sheep]$_{EXH}$ eating a carrot?' and the negation applies to the exhaustivity: it is true that the sheep is eating the carrot, but it is not *only* the sheep (also the tortoise). However, an answer with 'yes' was also given to a similarly "incomplete" question, as in (101), showing that exhaustivity is not inherent to the basic cleft.

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

　　　Q:　I mbvhu:tá yídyáku sénó:rá?
　　　　　i　　mbvhuta yi-dy-a=ku　　　senora
　　　　　COP 9.sheep　9SM-eat-FV=REL 5.carrot
　　　　　'Is it the sheep that is eating a/the carrot?'

　　　A:　Ihî:mhím, í mbvhû:ta ní fu:tu, hingá mbvhú:tá dwé yídyâ:ku séno:ra.
　　　　　ihimhim i　　mbvhuta ni futu　　　hinga　mbvhuta dwe
　　　　　no　　　 COP 9.sheep　 and 9.tortoise COP.NEG 9.sheep　 only
　　　　　yi-dy-a=ku　　senora
　　　　　9SM-eat-FV=REL 5.carrot
　　　　　'No, it is the sheep and tortoise, it's not only the sheep that eats a/the carrot.'

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

　　　Q:　Símá:tí axávísá:kú wansika:ti?
　　　　　si-mati　　　a-xav-is-a=ku　　　　wansikati
　　　　　COP.8-tomato 1SM-buy-CAUS-FV=REL 1.woman
　　　　　'Is it tomatoes the woman is selling?'

　　　A:　Iim/Ihî:mhím sím˧á:tí ní tíny˧á:lá áxávísâ:kú wánsíka:ti.
　　　　　Iim/ ihimhim si-mati　　　ni　 ti-nyala a-xav-is-a=ku
　　　　　yes/ no　　　COP.8-tomato and 10-onion 1SM-buy-CAUS-FV=REL
　　　　　wansikati
　　　　　1.woman
　　　　　'Yes/no, it's tomatoes and onions that the woman is selling.'

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

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

Q: Í mvh^ꞌú:njá ni cíwô:ngá ákúnású Marî:ya?[9]

i   mvhunja ni   ci-wonga a-ku=na=su   Mariya
COP 5.rabbit and 7-cat   1SM-REL=with=8OM 1.Mary

'It is a rabbit and a cat that Mary has?'

A: Ihî:mhím, i mvhu:njá akuna:cú, akáná cíwó:ngá.

ihimhim i   mvhunja a-ku=na=cu   a-ka=na   ci-wonga
no   COP 9.rabbit 1SM-REL=with=7OM 1SM-NEG=with 7.cat

'No, it is a rabbit that she has. She doesn't have a cat.'

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

(103)   * Í hambí mpû:nga Laurínyá átiningile típhô:ngo.

i   hambi mpunga Laurinya a-ti-ning-ile   ti-phongo
COP even   3.rice 1.Laurinha 1SM-10OM-give-PFV 10-goat

int. 'It's even rice that Laurinha gave to the goats.'

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

(104)   * I so:tshe siketa ningaxa:va.[10]

i   si-otshe si-keta   ni-nga-xav-a
COP 8-all   8-pineapple 1SM-REL-buy-FV

int. 'It's all the pineapples that I bought.'

---

[9]The enclitic object marker is used in relative clauses and with SM=na=CL 'be with'; in other environments we find a prefixal object marker.

[10]This example lacks tone marking.

(105) (Context: There's a pest and someone wants to know which animals
will die if they don't fumigate.)
Síhǎrí sô:tshé sínô:fa.

si-hari	si-otshe	si-na-o-f-a
COP.8-animal	8-all	8SM-FUT-REL-die-FV

'It's all the animals that will die.'

(106) (Did the cat really break every single thing?)
Í sʹó:tshé ciwo:ngá cíngáfa:ya.

I	si-otshe	ci-wonga	ci-nga-fay-a
COP	8-all	7-cat	7SM-REL-break-FV

'It's everything that the cat broke.'

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

(107) (Where can I buy spring onions?)
  a. # Í bazá:rá ungóxává:kú cíbhi:la.

i	bazara	u-nga-ku-xav-a=ku	ci-bhila
COP	market	2SG.SM-POT-15-buy-FV=REL	7-spring.onion

  'It's on the market that you can buy spring onion.'
  b. Ungáxává bazâ:ra.

u-nga-xav-a	bazara
2SG.SM-POT-buy-FV	market

  'You can buy (them) on the market.'

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

(108)   (Where did you get this idea?)
        Ḿlʼó:ró ningalo:ra.
        m-loro   ni-nga-lor-a
        COP.3-dream 1SG.SM-REL-dream-FV
        'It's a dream that I dreamt.'

(109)   (What happened with him/her?)
        Díbhʼá:vhú ángákha:va.
        di-bhavhu   a-nga-khav-a
        COP.5-bucket 1SM-REL/PFV-kick-FV
        'It's a bucket that s/he kicked.'
        'S/He passed away.'

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

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

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

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

(111) a. Í ncꞋá:ní angawo:mbá ma:ni?
       i   cani a-nga-womb-a mani
       COP what 1SM-REL-say-FV who
       'Who said what?', lit. 'It's what that who said?'

     b. Í m!ání angawo:mbá ca:ni?
       i   mani a-nga-womb-a cani
       COP who 1SM-REL-say-FV what
       'Who said what?', lit. 'It's who that said what?'

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

4.2 Pseudocleft

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

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

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

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

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

(114) Q: Awú atsímbítisáku mo:vhá í má:ní?

a-wu   a-tsimbitis-a=ku   mo:vha   i   ma:ni
AUG-1.DEM 1SM-drive-FV=REL 3.car   COP who

'Who is driving/can drive a/the car?', lit. The one driving the car is who?

A1: Hingá:nthu.

hinga   nthu.
COP.NEG 1.person

'Nobody.'

A2: Awú atsímbítisáku mo:vhá hingá:nthu.

a-wu   a-tsimbitis-a=ku   mo:vha hinga   nthu
AUG-1.DEM 1SM-drive-FV=REL 3.car   COP.NEG 1.person

'Who can drive a/the car is nobody.'[11]

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

(115) Q: Àwú atsímbítísákú mo:vhá i má:ní?

a-wu   a-tsimbitis-a=ku   movha   i   mani
AUG-1.DEM.PROX 1SM-drive-FV=REL 3.car   COP who

'Who is driving the car?'

A: Àwú atsímbítísakú mo:vhá i Sá:ra.

a-wu   a-tsimbitis-a=ku   movha   i   Sara
AUG-1.DEM.PROX 1SM-drive-FV=REL 3.car   COP 1.Sara

'The one who's driving the car is Sara.'

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

---

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

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

(116)   * Awu angádya ciké:ta i hambí Arli:ndu.
     a-wu   a-nga-dy-a   ci-keta   i   hambi Arlindu
     AUG-1.DEM.PROX 1SM-REL-eat-FV 7-pineapple COP even   1.Arlindu
     int. 'The one who ate pineapple was even Arlindo.'

(117)   Así angákhá:vá i díbhá:vhu.
     a-ci   a-nga-khav-a   i   di-bhavhu
     AUG-DEM.PROX 1SM-REL-kick-FV COP 5-bucket
     'What s/he kicked is a bucket.'
     * 'S/He passed away'

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

(118)   (Who cut the banana, the big boy or the small boy?)
     Awú angawílá nkô:mbvá ḿ'fá:ná wándo:to.
     a-wu   a-nga-wil-a   nkombva m'-fana w-a   ndoto
     AUG-1.DEM.PROX 1SM-REL-cut-FV 9.banana COP.1-boy 1-CONN small
     'The one who cut the banana is the small boy.'

(119)   (Who has a parrot, Thomas or Samuel? + QUIS picture of Samuel with a parrot.)
     Aw' ákúni cinyáná:na í S⌐ámué:le.
     a-wu   a=ku=ni   ci-nyanana i   Samuel
     AUG-1.DEM.PROX 1SM-REL=with 7-parrot   COP 1.Samuel
     'The one who has a parrot is Samuel.'

(120)   (Do these people wear hats? +QUIS picture of two women without hats and two men with hats.)
     Ka váthu vá:va, avá vákúni sígo:ko májǎ:há.
     ka va-thu vava   a-va   va=ku=ni   si-goko ma-jaha
     LOC 2-people 2.DEM.PROX 2.PRO 2SM=REL=with 8-hats COP.6-man
     'Of/between these people, the ones that have hats are the men.'

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

4.3 Reverse pseudocleft/left-peripheral NP + cleft

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

(121) (Context: We were talking about school and I mentioned Marta, but you don't know Marta. So, you ask: 'Who is Marta?')
Ma:rta, i **wú** angárépwé:la cikólwá:ni.
Marta   i   wu   a-nga-repwel-a   ci-kolwa-ni
1.Marta COP 1.DEM.PROX 1SM-REL.PST-fail-FV 7-school-LOC
'Marta is the one who failed at school.' / 'Marta, it is her who failed at school.'

(122) (Having climbed onto that trunk, his dog also climbed, showing him by scent that the animal we are looking for may be there. Then he sniffed.)
Yí:mbwá, ngu **yóna** yifémbá:kú ngu makô:ta yá yó:na.
yi-mbwa ngu yi-ona yi-femb-a=ku   ngu ma-kota y-a   y-ona
9-dog   COP 9-PRO 9SM-sniff-FV=REL PREP 6-nose 6-CONN 9-PRO
'The dog is what sniffs with its snout.'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(125)   * Ma:ni i wú híngámuwó:na?
        mani i   wu   hi-nga-mu-won-a
        who   COP 1.DEM.PROX 1SM.PL-REL-1OM-see-FV
        int. 'Who is it / Who is the one that we saw?'

(126)   (We expect to receive Pedro, Paulo, Teresa and others. Did they come?)
        Tere:za dwé, i wu angá:ta ntí:ni.
        Tereza dwe i   wu   a-nga-t-a   n-t-ini
        1.Teresa only COP 1.DEM.PROX 1SM-REL-come-FV 3-home-LOC
        'It was only Teresa who came home.'
        'Only Teresa. It's her who came home.'

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

5 Predicate doubling

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

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

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

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

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

(129)   (Context: You meet someone on the street and you don't even greet –
s/he asks whether you're annoyed.)
Niyákwâ:ta max kuja:ha nijáhi:le.

| ni-ya-kwat-a | | max | ku-jaha | ni-jah-ile | | 'I'm not angry, |
| 1SG.SM-NEG-be.angry-FV | | but | 15-hurry | 1SG.SM-hurry-PFV | |

but I am in a hurry.'

(130)   (Context: You were left at home with tasks of washing (clothes) and
cooking beans. When mum comes home and sees you sitting, she is
annoyed: 'You didn't do anything, you're just sitting here watching
television!')
Niyákuwû:la ká:mbe [kubhika tifeijáu] nibhíkî:le.

| ni-ya-kuwul-a | | kambe | ku-bhika | ti-feijau | ni-bhik-ile |
| 1SG.SM-NEG-wash-FV | | but | 15-cook | 10-bean | 1SG.SM-cook-PFV |

'I didn't wash, but I *did* cook the beans.'

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

(131)   Kubhi:ka nibhíkíle tifeijau.

| ku-bhika | ni-bhik-ile | ti-feijau |
| 15-cook | 1SG.SM-cook-PFV | 10-bean |

'I cooked (the) beans.'

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

(132)   (Context: Someone gave a task and wants to confirm that it is done,
saying 'You are not doing what I said'.)
Kuthu:ma háthû:ma!

| ku-thuma | hi-a-thum-a |
| 15-work | 1PL.SM-DJ-work-FV |

'We are actually doing it.'

(133)   (You are not eating the cake that I bought. It'll go bad.)
Ku:dya hâ:dyá.

| ku-dya | hi-a-dy-a |
| 15-eat | 1PL.SM-DJ-eat-FV |

'We *are* eating (it).'

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

(134)   (Context: You're talking with your friends and someone else is further away; he comes towards you and you change the topic of conversation and he asks why you're laughing at him, but you say no, we're just happy.)
Kuse:ka hasê:ka.
ku-seka hi-a-sek-a
15-laugh 1PL.SM-DJ-laugh-FV
'We're just laughing.'

(135)   (Context: There are people with a bad body odour and someone appears asking what is going on with these ones.)
Kusá:mbá vásá:mbá.
ku-samba va-a-samb-a
15-bathe   2SM-DJ-bathe-FV
'They do take a bath (but they don't get clean).'

(136)   (Context: Mary is getting fat and her aunt is surprised with her. What is happening with Mary?)
Ku:dya wâ:dya.
ku-dya w-a-dy-a
15-eat   1SM-DJ-eat-FV
'She is eating too much.'

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

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

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

(138)   (Context: They hit the child more than a normal spanking.)
Vapékíle kúpê:ka (mwanâ:na).
va-pek-ile   ku-peka mw-anana
2SM-hit-PFV 15-hit   1-child
'They really hit the child.'

(139)   (Context: They walked a longer distance than usual, perhaps as far as
Xai-Xai from Chidenguele.)
Vátsímbíté kútsímbî:la.
va-tsimbil-ile ku-tsimbila
2SM-walk-PFV 15-walk
'They really walked!'

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

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

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

Table 2: Predicate doubling options in Cicopi

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

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

6 Referent expression

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

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

(141)   (The boy and the dog were still looking for the frog and they found bees on their way and started to run.)
Se, vácípíndí:le a:hu, yímbwá yíngâdí yicótútú:ma, ∅ **y**itsú:la.
se va-ci-pind-ile ahu   yi-mbwa yi-nga-di
so 2SM-pass-PFV 16.DEM.MED 9-dog   9SM-still-be
yi-ci-o-tutum-a   yi-tsul-a
9SM-CON-PROG-run-FV 9SM-leave-FV
'After that, the dog kept running, and left.'

∅ **Y**itsú:té **y**íyátúmbé:lá, akáyíwô:ne.
yi-tsul-ile   yi-ya-tumbel-a a-ka-yi-won-i
9SM-leave-PFV 9SM-go-hide-FV 1SM-NEG-9OM-see-NEG
'He went to hide, he doesn't see him.'

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

(142)   A: Nákwélélá ngú cíné:né; nímána dipháphálátá:ni.
n-a-kwel-el-a   ngu cinene; ni-man-a   di-phaphalatani
1SM-PRS-go.up-APPL-FV PREP 7.right 1SG.SM-find-FV 5-butterfly
'I go to the right, I find a butterfly.'
        B: Ní**d**ímá:ne, ni**d**ímá:ne.
ni-di-man-e   ni-di-man-e
1SG.SM-5OM-find-PFV 1SG.SM-5OM-find-PFV
'I have found it.'

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

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

(143) a. * Vánámún⸽íngá **ndíyâ:wé** câ:ni?
          va-na-mu-ning-a   ndiya-awe   cani
          2SM-FUT-1OM-give-FV 1.sister-POSS.1 what
          'What will they give his sister?'

       b. Vánámún⸽íngá cá:ní **ndíyâ:wé**?
          va-na-mu-ning-a   cani ndiya-awe
          2SM-FUT-1OM-give-FV what 1.sister-POSS.1
          'What will they give his sister?'

(144) U(*ma)xaveté **máma:nga** mâ:ni?
       u-ma-xav-el-ile   ma-manga mani
       2SG.SM-6OM-buy-APPL-PFV 6-mangos   who
       'Who did you buy mangoes for?'

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

(145) A: Nikwélé:lá nimáná nyú:mbá yóbhílívi:la.
          ni-kwelel-a   ni-man-a   nyumba yi-a-ku-bhilivila
          1SG.SM-climb-FV 1SG.SM-find-FV 9.house 9-CONN-15-be.red
          'I go up and find a red house.'

       B: Nay**í**wó:na nyú:mba, má:ji áni já níyíwóná háhá:tshí.
          ni-a-yi-won-a   nyumba, maji ani   ja
          1SG.SM-DJ-9OM-see-FV 9.house   but   1SG.PRO now
          ni-yi-won-a   ha-hatsi
          1SG.SM-9OM-see-FV 16-down
          'I see (it) the house, but below.

(146) (Could it be that Pedro found the phone?)
       Pédrú áyím⸽ání fó:ní sála:ni.
       Pedro a-yi-man-e   foni   sala-ini
       1.Pedro 1SM-9OM-find-PFV 9.phone 5.room-LOC
       'Pedro found the phone in the room.'

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

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

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

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

7 Conclusion

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Nelsa Nhantumbo & Jenneke van der Wal

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations and symbols

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

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

References

Ariel, Mira. 1990. *Accessing noun-phrase antecedents*. London: Routledge.

Asiimwe, Allen & Jenneke van der Wal. 2025. The expression of information structure in Rukiga. In Jenneke van der Wal (ed.), *The expression of information structure in Bantu*, 335–405. Berlin: Language Science Press. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.14833614.

Bailey, Richard A. 1976. *Copi phonology and morphotonology*. Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand. (B.A. Honours Dissertation).

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.

Carstens, Vicki & Loyiso Mletshe. 2015. Implications of Xhosa expletive constructions. *Linguistic Inquiry* 46(2). 187–242.

Chafe, Wallace L. 1987. Cognitive constraints on information flow. In Russell Tomlin (ed.), *Coherence and grounding in discourse*, 21–51. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Dalrymple, Mary & Irina Nikolaeva. 2011. *Objects and information structure*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Devos, Maud. 2008. *A grammar of Makwe*. Munich: LINCOM Europa.

Dos Santos, Luiz Feliciano. 1941. *Gramática da língua chope*. Lourenço Marques: Imprensa Nacional de Moçambique.

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.

Gundel, Jeanette K. 1988. Universals of topic-comment structure. In Michael Hammond, Edith A. Moravcsik & Jessica Wirth (eds.), *Studies in syntactic typology*, 209–242. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. DOI: 10.1075/tsl.17.

Gundel, Jeanette K., Nancy Hedberg & Ron Zacharski. 1993. Cognitive status and the form of referring expressions in discourse. *Language* 69. 274–307.

Guthrie, Malcolm. 1948. *The classification of the Bantu languages*. Oxford: Oxford University Press for The International Africa Institute.

Halpert, Claire. 2017. Prosody/syntax mismatches in the Zulu conjoint/disjoint alternation. In Jenneke van der Wal & Larry M. Hyman (eds.), *The conjoint/disjoint alternation in Bantu*, 329–349. Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter.

Instituto Nacional Estatistica. 2017. *Censo 2017: IV Recenseamento Geral da População e Habitação. Indicadores Sócio-demográficos Moçambique.*

Kanampiu, Patrick N. & Jenneke van der Wal. 2025. The expression of information structure in Kîîtharaka. 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 Asiimwe, Patrick N. Kanampiu, Zhen Li, Ernest Nshemezimana & Jenneke van der Wal. 2023. Bantu word order between discourse and syntactic relations. *Linguistique et langues africaines* 9(1). DOI: 10.4000/lla.9496.

Lusekelo, Amani, Jenneke van der Wal & Simon Msovela. 2025. The expression of information structure in Kinyakyusa. In Jenneke van der Wal (ed.), *The expression of information structure in Bantu*, 407–452. Berlin: Language Science Press. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.14833616.

Maho, Jouni Filip. 2009. *NUGL online: The online version of the new updated Guthrie list, a referential classification of the Bantu Languages.* http://goto.glocalnet.net/mahopapers/nuglonline.pdf.

Marten, Lutz & Jenneke van der Wal. 2014. A typology of Bantu subject inversion. *Linguistic Variation* 14(2). 318–368.

Ngunga, Armindo & Osvaldo Faquir. 2011. *Padronização da ortografia de línguas moçambicanas: Relatório do III seminário* (As Nossas Línguas 3). Maputo: Centro de Estudos Africanos, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane.

Nhantumbo, Nelsa. 2005. *A morfofonologia da marca do passado em Copi.* Maputo: Monografia de licenciatura, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane.

Nhantumbo, Nelsa. 2009. A morfofonologia da marca do passado na língua Copi. In Armindo Ngunga (ed.), *Lexicografia e Descrição das Línguas Bantu. Colecção: "As Nossas Línguas" I.* Maputo: Centro de Estudos Africanos. Universidade Eduardo Mondlane.

Nhantumbo, Nelsa. 2014. *A morfofonologia das marcas do Presente e Futuro em Copi.* Maputo: Universidade Eduardo Mondlane. (MA thesis).

Nhantumbo, Nelsa. 2019a. *A morfologia e fonologia do verbo em Copi.* Maputo: Universidade Eduardo Mondlane. (Doctoral dissertation).

Nhantumbo, Nelsa. 2019b. A variação morfémica em Cicopi: Um passeio pela marca de negação. *Revista Cadernos de África Contemporânea* 2(3). 64–78. https://www.revistas.uneb.br/index.php/cac/article/view/14302/9771.

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.

Sasse, Hans-Jürgen. 1996. *Theticity*. Working paper 27. Cologne: Institut für Sprachwissenschaft der Universität zu Köln.

Sasse, Hans-Jürgen. 2006. Theticity. In Giuliano Bernini & Marcia L. Schwarz (eds.), *Pragmatic organization of discourse in the languages of Europe*, 255–308. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

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.

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. *The BaSIS basics of information structure*. https://bantusyntaxinformationstructure.files.wordpress.com/2021/08/the-basis-basics-of-information-structure-complete-6.pdf).

van der Wal, Jenneke. 2022. *A featural typology of Bantu agreement*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

van der Wal, Jenneke. 2025. 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 Asiimwe, 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 & Larry M. Hyman (eds.). 2017. *The conjoint/disjoint alternation in Bantu*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Zeller, Jochen, Sabine Zerbian & Toni Cook. 2017. Prosodic evidence for syntactic phrasing in Zulu. In Jenneke van der Wal & Larry M. Hyman (eds.), *The conjoint/disjoint alternation in Bantu*, 295–328. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

Zerbian, Sabine. 2006. *Expression of information structure in the Bantu language Northern Sotho*. Berlin: Humboldt University. (Doctoral dissertation).