

PhD project:
Doubled verbs. Focus marking in Sara-Bagirmi

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1 The field of research

1.1 Basic notions of information structure

Information structure reflects the formal means exploited to organize utterances, sentences and texts according to the **common ground of the interlocutors** (Chafe 1976, Krifka 2007). The most important categories of information structure are **topic** and **focus**.

- **Topic** characterizes “what the sentence is about” (Reinhart 1981). It marks the old, given, presupposed or predictable information (e.g. Chafe 1976, Prince 1981, Givón 1987, Gundel 1988).
- **Focus** is the most salient part of the utterance (Dik 1997: 326), which is also associated with the newly added, or asserted information as opposed to the presupposed information (“focus relation” Lambrecht 1994: 209ff.).

Different scopal types of focus are distinguished in the literature. Depending on the syntactic category of the element which is in focus we distinguish **term focus** and **non-term focus** or “predicate-centered focus” (Güldemann 2009).

- **Term focus** concentrates on the information-structural marking of nominal elements.
- **Predicate-centered focus (PCF)** refers to the non-nominal elements. It subsumes focus on the lexical meaning of the verb (“SoA focus”) and focus on sentence operators. Operator focus can be split into focus on the tense, aspect or mood operators and focus on the truth value of the utterance (figure 1).

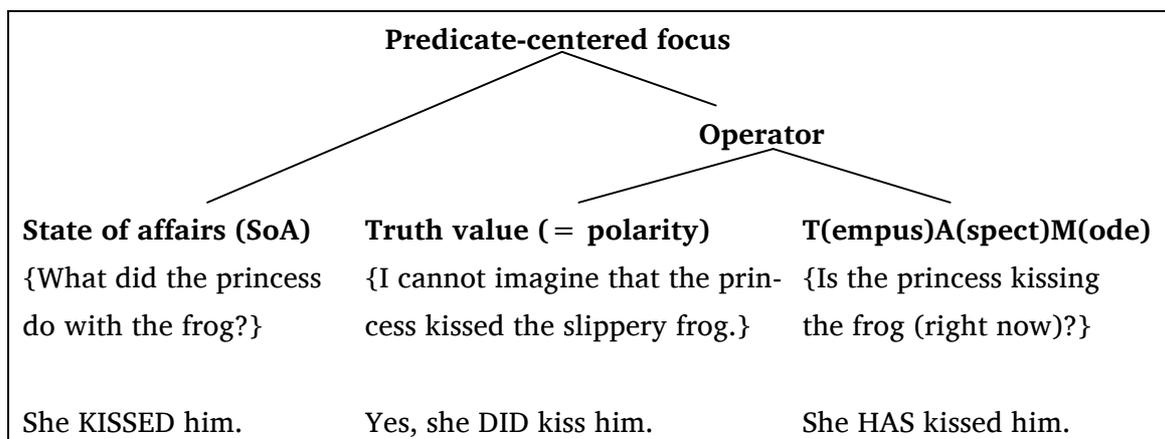


Figure 1: Basic subclassification of predicate-centered focus types (Güldemann 2009)

1.2 The group of Sara-Bagirmi languages

1.2.1 Genetic affiliation

Nilo-Saharan > Central Sudanic > West > Bongo-Bagirmi > **Sara-Bagirmi**

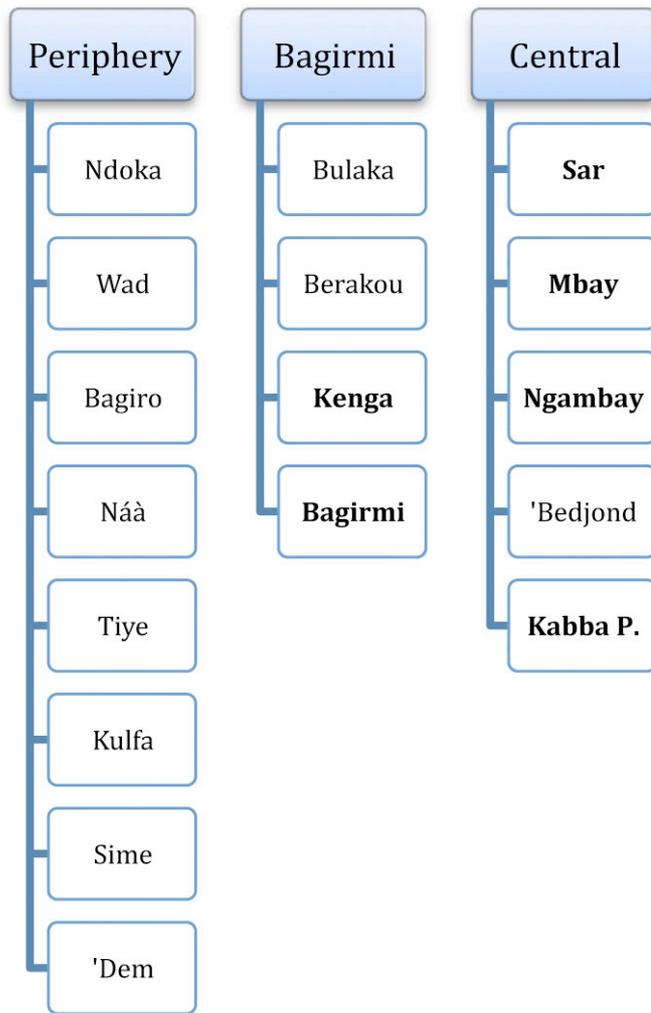


Figure 2: Languages of Sara (Lewis 2009, Boyeldieu 2006)

1.2.2 Typological information

- predominantly agglutinative languages with synthetic features
- all languages have S(subject)V(erb)O(bject) word order
- all languages are tone languages
 - BAGIRMI, MBAY and KABBA have three level tones (H, L, M)

1.2.3 Geographical and socio-cultural situation

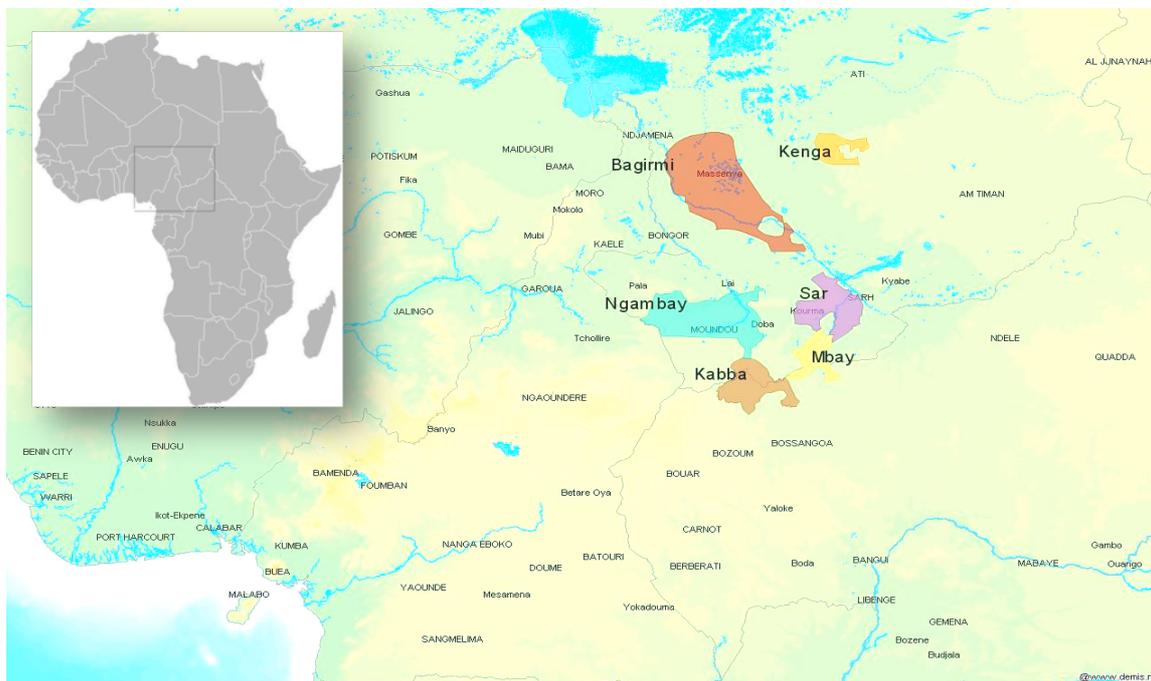


Figure 3: Languages for my project (areal information from Lewis 2009)

My language sample:

BAGIRMI (Group: Bagirmi)

- ISO 639-3: bmi; 44,800 speakers; Chari-Bagirmi region (SW Chad)

KENGA (Group: Bagirmi)

- ISO 639-3: kyq; 40,000 speakers; Guéra region (SW Chad)

SAR (Group: Central)

- ISO 639-3: mwm; 183,000 speakers; Moyen-Chari region (SW Chad)

MBAY (Group: Central)

- ISO 639-3: myb; 88,300 speakers; Mandoul region (NE CAR/SW Chad)

KABBA (Group: Central)

- ISO 639-3: ksp; 83,000 speakers; Ouham-Pendé region (NE CAR/SW Chad)

NGAMBAY (Group: Central)

- ISO 639-3: sba; 896,000 speakers, Logone-Occidental region (SW Chad)
- (statistics from Lewis 2009)

1.3 Focus marking in Sara-Bagirmi

Sara-Bagirmi marks information structure morphosyntactically:

- by extra-posing the relevant element and
- additional marking with morphological markers.

Extra-posing can apply both to foci (1a) and topics (1b), e.g. in BAGIRMI:

(1a) Kro kɛɛɛ ɗáŋ, Boukar ndugo tɛprɛ kasko.
 donkey IDEF FOC PN PFV.buy yesterday market
 Boukar bought A DONKEY at the market yesterday.

(1b) Tɛprɛ kasko ná, Boukar ndugo kro kɛɛɛ.
 yesterday market BG PN PFV.buy donkey IDEF
 Yesterday at the market, Boukar bought a donkey. (Jacob 2010: 124f.)

Extra-posed, here fronted, elements are disambiguated by means of several markers. Most of the languages show a “**simple morphological marking**”:

- For indication of information structure, the occurrence of **one marker** (focus marker or background marker) is **sufficient**, e.g. focus marker *ɗáŋ* in (1a) and background marker *ná* in (1b).

The only exception is MBAY which shows “**double morphological marking**”:

- For indication of focus, the focused element **and** the background part of the sentence are marked by the relevant markers:

(2a) Súu lā ndà ngōn-ñ yé.
 PN G.FOC hit child-POSS.3S.MSR BG
 It was SUU_i who hit his_i child.

(2b) Ngōn-á lā Súu ndà-á yé.
 child-POSS.3S G.FOC PN hit-3S BG
 It was HIS CHILD that Suu hit. (Keegan 1997: 158)

The focused element – the subject in (2a) and the object in (2b) – is marked by the focus marker *lā*, and the background information is marked by *yé*.

- (4a) blak~blak
black~DUPL
very black
- (4b) álà~álà
shout~DUPL
shout continuously
- (4c) àlà~áà
shout~DUPL
a quarrel (Graz data base on reduplication < Nylander 2003)

Beyond morphological reduplication, “**contrastive focus reduplication**” is described. This phenomenon is presented in “The SALAD-salad paper” (Ghomeshi et al. 2004) and illustrated with lots of examples from ENGLISH (and other languages), e.g.:

- (5a) I’ll make the tuna salad, and you make the SALAD–salad.
(5b) Oh, we’re not LIVING-TOGETHER–living-together.
(5c) Did you TALK-ABOUT-IT–talk-about-it, or did you just mention it?

While reduplication applies only on word level, doubling is a syntactic process.

Reduplication and doubling have two points in common:

1. The repetition of phonological material and
2. A related function: Focus and intensification.

The differences between reduplication and doubling are listed in the following table:

Reduplication	Doubling
Morphological process	Syntactic process
Repetition of phonological material – only within a word	Repetition of phonological material – beyond the word boundary
Creating a new word	Changing the sentence structure
Adjacency of reduplicated elements is necessary	Adjacency of doubled elements is not necessary
Used to express plurality, TAM, diminutives, augmentatives, intensification, ...	Used to mark PCF

Table 2: Reduplication and doubling

2.2 *The structure of verbal doubling*

The extra-posed verb is the original, the remaining verb is the doublet.

I assume, that **the extra-posed element is the original, while the doublet remains in-situ**. This analysis is based on two observations.

First, verb doubling shows **structural parallels nominal extra-position for focus**:

(6a) [N]_{FOC} – [...]_{BG}

(6b) [V_{INF}]_{FOC} – [...]_{BG}

In contrast to focused extra-posed nouns, which do not need to be referred to at their canonical position (7a) or – if necessary – which can be resumed by a pronoun (7b), extra-posed verbs need a cross-reference (7c):

(7a) [N]_{FOC} – [S V Ø]_{BG}

(7b) [N]_{FOC} – [S V PRO]_{BG}

(7c) [V_{INF}]_{FOC} – [S V_{FIN} O]_{BG}

(7d) [V_{INF}]_{FOC} – [S V_{dummy} O]_{BG}

The resumption of a verbal element is necessary, because **the verb bears the illocution** of the sentence. Nouns don't play such a central role in the sentence structure. They can be extra-posed without any reference to their canonical position. Therefore, **nouns don't need such (information-structural) doubling like verbs**.¹

The second argument refers to the **applicability of “dummy verb constructions”** (7d). Only the auxiliary can be classified as doublet, not the lexical verb, which bears the lexical content of the item, cf. (11) to (13).

¹ Nevertheless, nouns can be highlighted by doubling, cf. (28).

The original and the doublet need not to be similar to each other.

AJA-GBE (Kwa, Niger-Congo), **shows no differences** between original and doublet:

(8) context: Did the woman eat the beans?

óò,	ḍà	(yí)	e	ḍà.	
no,	cook	(FOC)	3S	cook	
	original			doublet	

No, she COOKED them. (Güldemann 2009 < Fiedler f.n.)

In MORU-MADI (Central-Sudanic), original and doublet **differ in their tonal specification:**

(9)	ópí	ḗsú	gàlámò	ḍí	ḗsú	`
	PN	find	pen	this	find	PC.FOC
		doublet			original	

Opi FOUND this pen. (i.e. he didn't BUY it)

(Güldemann 2010 < Blackings & Fabb 2003: 596)

The original can be nominalized, the doublet (or the dummy verb) is finite.

If the original and the doublet differ in form, the differences can be explained by the **nominalization of the original**. In AMA (Nyimang), the original is **nominalized by suffix -ḍā:**

(10)	láḍā	bá	nē	inḍù	ká	láḍí
	walk.INF	EMPH	G.FOC	3S.DET	?	walk.IPFV
	original					doublet

She is WALKING. (Fiedler 2010)

In most languages, **nominalization seems to be necessary for extra-posing verbs**. This can be motivated by the fact, that nouns are more **accessible for extra-posing** than verbs or that focus strategies are rather applicable to nominals.

Some languages use “**dummy verbs**” in **doubling constructions**, e.g. HAUSA:

(11)	sàyé-n	àbinci	kòò,	zá	sù	yi
	buy:VN-GEN	food	moreover	FUT	3P	do
	original					doublet

Buying food moreover, they will do. (Güldemann 2010 < Jaggar 2001: 542)

2.3 *The functions of verbal doubling*

The main function of verbal doubling is the expression of predicate-centered focus.

As seen in the last section, verbal doubling can indicate **SoA focus**, cf. (3), (8), (9), and (10). Furthermore, it is also used for operator focus, see below.

Even if verbal doubling is used for SoA focus as well as operator focus, there are nevertheless **structural differences** between both. In GERMAN, **prosody** disambiguates SoA focus (12a) and truth-value focus (12b):

(12a) [lEs-En]^{FOC} [tut er]^{TOP}
 read-INF does he
 he READS (“READING he does”)

(12b) [lEs-en]^{TOP} [tUt er]^{FOC}
 read-INF does he
 he DOES read (“as for reading, he DOES (it)”) (Güldemann 2010: 6)

In (12a) and (12b), the nominalized original is extra-posed, while the finite (dummy) doublet remains in-situ. The different interpretations result from the different structures: If the extra-posed original is in focus (“**focus preposing**”), the whole construction indicates **SoA focus** (12a). If the original provides the background and the doublet is in focus (“**topic preposing**”), the whole construction indicates **truth-value focus** (12b), cf. Güldemann (2010).

HAUSA (Chadic, Afro-Asiatic) organizes this differentiation **morphologically**:

(13a) **gyaaraa** (nèe) ya **yi**
 repair:VN G.FOC 3M.S.PFV.DEP do
 he REPAIRED it (lit.: it was REPAIRING, he did)

(13b) **gyaaraa**, yaa **yi**
 repair:VN 3M.S.PFV do
 he DID repair it (lit.: as for repairing, he DID (it)) (Fiedler, p.c.)

“**Focus preposing**” indicates (with the dependent form *ya*) **focus on the lexical verb** (13a), while “**topic preposing**” (with the independent form *yaa*) indicates **truth-value focus** (13b), cf. Güldemann (2010).

3 Verbal doubling in Sara-Bagirmi

3.1 Doubling strategies in BAGIRMI

SoA focus is expressed by verbal doubling:

(14) Q: Boukar táǎ djùm téŋ làbà sà ksàa wà?
 PN PFV.do gruel millet or PFV.eat INF.eat Q
 Did Boukar cook millet gruel or did he eat it?

A1: Djùm téŋ ná, Boukar táǎ táǎà.
 gruel millet BG PN PFV.do INF.do
 doublet original

A2: Boukar táǎ djùm téŋ táǎà.
 PN PFV.do gruel millet INF.do
 doublet original

Boukar COOKED millet gruel. (Jacob 2010: 129)

Example (14) presents two possible answers to the question for focus on lexical verbs:

- In (14-A1), the object is topicalized by extra-posing.
- In (14-A2), the object remains inside the proposition and takes the position between the doublet and the original.

In both cases,

- The **original** occurs (for focus marking) – in contrast to most examples before – in **right-most position**, the **doublet** remains **in-situ** and provides the background.
- The **doublet** can be analyzed as **finite** and the **original** as **non-finite** (in analogy to the “marked” infinitive *ksàa* with *k*-prefix in the question).

SoA focus structure:

[S – V – (OBJ)] _{BG}	–	[V _{INF}] _{FOC}
doublet		original

These findings show **parallels to the indirect term-focus marking**, where all non-focused elements are left-peripheral and marked by the particle *ná* as background.

- **The focused element is not focus-marked itself.** As the only unmarked element it must be interpreted as focus, because it is excluded from the background domain.
- The focused object remains (without any morphological marking) **sentence-finally**.

- (15) context: WHAT did Boukar buy at the market yesterday?
 Tɛprɛ kasko ná, Boukar ndugo ná, kro kɛɖɛ.²
 yesterday market BG PN PFV.buy BG donkey IDEF
 Yesterday at the market, Boukar bought A DONKEY. (Jacob 2010: 125)

The right-most position is a preferred position for focus in BAGIRMI.

3.2 *Doubling strategies in KENGA*

3.2.1 SoA focus

SoA focus can be marked by **doubling**³:

- (16) context: What do you do? – Didn't you see it?
 m-ɔ̃ɔc k-ɔ̃ɔcɔ.
 1S-semer INF-semer
 doublet original
 Je sème. (Neukom 2010: 130)
 I'm SOWING.

The nominalized **original** is **extra-posed** and occurs in **sentence-final position**, the **doublet** is **finite** and **remains in-situ**.

The structure shows **intensification** of the lexical verb.

SoA focus structure:

[... V ...]_{BG} – [V_{INF}]_{FOC}
 doublet original

² I argue, that – especially for the indirect focus marking in (15) – the object is not extra-posed, but the whole background. Conversely, the verbal doubling in (14) indeed shows extra-posing of the original. For the discussion here, I consider that the structure is less important than the sentence-final position itself.

³ After a short look into few texts, I have discovered this construction, which deserves more detailed investigation.

3.2.2 Operator focus

Operator focus involves verbal doubling as well:

- (17) K-ààñā kìc òŋ ààñ èyo, bàà mákálà mákálà.
 INF-courir aussi 3:pouvoir 3:courir NEG aller doucement doucement
 original doublet
 Il (= un serpent) ne pouvait pas courir (lit. courir, il ne pouvait pas courir),
 il s'en est allé doucement. (Neukom 2010: 226)
 It could NOT run (as for running, it could not run), it walked there very slowly.

The **nominalized original** is **extra-posed**, and the **finite doublet** remains **in-situ**.

- The adverb *mákálà* shows **morphological reduplication** for intensification.

The element *kìc* ‘also’ functions as **focus-sensitive particle for additive focus** which cross-linguistically often marks preceding parts as topics. Therefore, the construction in (17) can be analyzed as an instance of “**topic preposing**” (Güldemann 2010). This implies that the construction must be interpreted as expressing **truth-value focus**.

Operator focus structure:

[V_{INF} kìc]_{BG} – [... V ...]_{FOC}
 original doublet

3.3 Doubling strategies in MBAY

3.3.1 SoA focus

Focus on the lexical verb is expressed by the **interplay between morphological elements and verbal doubling**:

- (18) A: Kā-gē lò-í màjàí.
 tree-P POSS-2S be.good.NEG
 Your wood is bad.
- B: Jágó, ì kā-gē kó màjè kàrī,
 no ID tree-P that be.good fine
 nà ndūsō lā ndūsō yé.
 but INF.worm.eaten G.FOC worm.eaten BG
 original doublet
 No, the wood is fine; it's just that it's WORM-EATEN. (Keegan 1997: 148)

Example (18B) is in **more than one way** information-structurally marked: First, by verbal doubling, second, by morphological marking.

The **original is nominalized** and marked with the generic focus marker, the **doublet is finite** and provides the background.

- This analysis contradicts the description in the literature: Keegan (1997: 147f.) describes the first element in the sentence as finite and the second one as non-finite.
- Compared to the marking strategies for term focus in MBAY, e.g. in (19), it is more likely that **verb focus follows the same structure**.

Term focus constructions are morphologically “double marked”: The focused element is extra-posed and marked by the **generic focus marker *lā***. The rest of the sentence is marked by the **background marker *yé***:

(19a) Súu lā ndà ngōn-ñ yé.
 PN G.FOC hit child-POSS.3S.MSR BG
 It was SUU_i who hit his_i child.

(19b) Ngōn-á lā Súu ndà-á yé.
 child-POSS.3S G.FOC PN hit-3S BG
 It was HIS CHILD that Suu hit. (Keegan 1997: 158)

Furthermore, (19b) supports once again my hypothesis that the extra-posed verb can be classified as original, while the remaining verb is the doublet, cf. (7b) and (7c). Here, the object itself is in sentence-initial position, whereas it is resumed by a pronoun in its canonical position.

SoA focus structure:

[V_{INF} lā]_{FOC} – [... V ... yé]_{BG}
 original doublet

3.3.2 Operator focus

There is another construction used for PCF marking, which involves verbal doubling: the combination of marker *ń* and *dá*. With **adjectival verbs**, this construction serves to give **greater emphasis to the whole verb phrase** (20), with **other verbs**, it puts **emphasis on the truth value** (21):

(20a) Tèjèh ñ-tèn dá yīkēh ñ yīkēh dá.
 honey DEM BG INF.be.sweet that be.sweet BG
 This honey is very sweet.

(20b) Mótòh dá màjèh ñ màjèh dá.
 motorcycle BG INF.be.good that be.good BG
 This motorcycle is terrific! (Keegan 1997: 151)

(21a) fògèh ñ à fògèh dá.
 INF.steal that ? 3S.PST.steal BG
 He really steals a lot.

(21b) Ngōn ñ-tèn dá k-àyh kàsèh ñ à àyh dá.
 child DEM BG INF-drink alcohol that ? 3S.PST.drink BG
 This boy really drinks a lot. (Keegan 1997: 151)

With dynamic verbs (21), particle *à* appears, but it is absent with stative verbs (20) and in declarative sentences. It is probably used for clause linkage, even though not in all cases, e.g. it doesn't occur in relative sentences, cf. (23). As seen in (21b), the extraposing can **involve the object** which then occurs adjacent to the original only and is **not repeated again** with the doublet.

Because of the insufficient description of *ñ* in the literature, I will first have a look at the marker *dá*. As shown in (20) and (21), *dá* marks preceding elements as background. Furthermore, *dá* functions as frame-setter:

(22) Ndōh ká kòò-mètàh dhá Súu àw̄ gògòh bāa-á.
 day that DET-three BG PN go back river-LOC
 Three days later, Suu went back again to the river. (Keegan 2009: 35)

With respect to its function, *dá* can be analyzed as a **(real) background marker**, e.g. the preposed element in the construction has to be considered as focus, even though the status of *ñ* is unclear. Keegan (1997: 119ff.) classified it as a **complementizer** for introducing relative clauses:

(23a) Ngōn ñ ndà-á nhò.
 child that hit-3S EC

The child who hit him. (Keegan 1997: 120)

(23b) M-ōòh ngōn ñ fògèh biyāh lò-í nhò.
 1S.PST-see child that 3S.PST.steal goat POSS-2S EC
 I saw the child who stole your goat. (Keegan 1997: 146)

Based on the observation, that *dá* marks the background, one can assume, that the with *ń* marked part of the sentence must be in focus.

I argue that the combination *ń* + *dá* indicates focus (24a), while the combination *ń* + *nò* is used for relative constructions (24b):

(24a) [... *ń*]_{FOC} – [... *dá*]_{BG}

(24b) [NP] [*ń* ... *nò*]_{REL}

Whether these two occurrences of *ń* in (24) are related and how, is a matter of future research.

The structure of the verbal doubling in (20) and (21) is the same as in (18):

- The (extra-posed) **original** is **nominalized** and marked with *ń*.
- The remaining **doublet** is **finite** and provides the background.

Beyond dispute is that all the constructions shown so far are used for PCF marking.

Due to structural parallels, (18) and (20)/(21) could be analyzed as **SoA focus**:

(25a) (...) – [V_{INF} *lā*]_{FOC} – [... V ... *yé*]_{BG}

(25b) (...) – [V_{INF} *ń*]_{FOC} – [... V ... *dá*]_{BG}

But some facts contradict this hypothesis, that both are used for marking SoA focus:

- Every construction uses **another combination of morphological markers**.
- The translations in (20) and (21) **suggest an** (additional or exclusive) **operator focus interpretation** resp. a truth-value focus interpretation.

It is conceivable, that – due to the parallels to term focus marking – (25a) could be the **canonical focus structure**, which can be applied for focussing the lexical meaning of subjects, objects and verbs, but (25b) indicates operator focus only:

Operator focus structure:

[V_{INF} *ń*]_{FOC} – [... V ... *dá*]_{BG}

original doublet

3.3.3 Further strategies for PCF marking

Structure [... V ... *tā*]_{BG} – [V_{INF}]_{FOC}

PCF can be expressed by another strategy involving verbal doubling:

(26a) *àw mbāa tā k-àw*
 go guest only INF-go
 doublet original

(S/he) does nothing but travel.

(26b) *ày kàsè tā k-ày*
 drink alcohol only INF-drink
 doublet original

(S/he) does nothing but drink.

(26c) *ndii èdè tā k-èdè*
 rain precipitate only INF-precipitate
 doublet original

It does nothing but rain. (Keegan 1997: 147)

With adjectival verbs, *tā* rather causes **intensification**:

(27a) *Mbūr lò-á màjè tā màjè.*
 boule POSS-3S be.good only INF.be.good
 doublet original

Her 'boule' is very good.

(27b) *bòo tā bòo*
 be.big only INF.be.big
 doublet original

(It is) extremely big. (Keegan 1997: 147)

The constructions in (26) and (27) are canonical sentences finished by the particle *tā*. The (nominalized) original occurs in sentence-final position without further morphological marking.

The element *tā* could be translated as 'now' or 'only'. With *tā*, a **restrictive semantics of the verb** is expressed as well as the **intensification** of the lexical verb.

(Restrictive) SoA focus structure:

[... V ... *tā*]_{BG} – [V_{INF}]_{FOC}
 doublet original

3.3.4 Excuse: Reduplication for focus

After all, PCF can be marked with reduplication:

(30a) N̄dii à b̄ày k̄ōk̄ā n̄ēē à à èd̄à èd̄à.
rain FUT come.from direction here EC ? pour pour

When the rain comes from this direction it is certain to pour.

(30b) W̄ōng à d̄āa b̄d̄ō-ì à à nd̄à-ī nd̄à-ī.
anger FUT do father-POSS.2S EC ? hit-2S hit-2S

When your father gets angry he is sure to hit you. (Keegan 1997: 151f.)

The focused elements are **highlighted by repetition**.

- It involves the verb (30a) or the whole VP (30b).
- The repetition occurs sentence-finally.

In contrast to the other examples presented here, the repeated elements in (30) **can not be considered as a (nominalized) original and a remaining doublet**. They are indeed two identical verbs, but they don't show the characteristic structure of verbal doubling. Therefore, the construction in (30) cannot be interpreted as verbal doubling. It is more likely an example for "**contrastive focus reduplication**".

Nevertheless, (30) indicates **intensification**, and could be used for marking **SoA focus**.

4 Comparison

	Bagirmi	Kenga	Mbay
SoA focus	[... V ...] _{BG} - [V _{INF}] _{FOC}	[... V ...] _{BG} - [V _{INF}] _{FOC}	[... V ... tā] _{BG} - [V _{INF}] _{FOC}
			[... V ...] _{BG} - [V _{INF}] _{FOC} (kǎ)
			[V _{INF} lā] _{FOC} - [... V ... yé] _{BG}
Operator focus		[V _{INF} kǐc] _{BG} - [... V ...] _{FOC}	[V _{INF} ń] _{FOC} - [... V ... dá] _{BG}

Table 2: Verbal doubling for PCF marking in Sara-Bagirmi

Table 2 lists structures with **preposed originals** (31) and **postposed originals** (32):

- (31a) KENGA operator focus [V_{INF} kǐc]_{BG} - [... V ...]_{FOC}
(31b) MBAY operator focus [V_{INF} ń]_{FOC} - [... V ... dá]_{BG}
(31c) MBAY SoA focus [V_{INF} lā]_{FOC} - [... V ... yé]_{BG}
- (32a) BAGIRMI SoA focus [... V ...]_{BG} - [V_{INF}]_{FOC}
(32b) MBAY SoA focus [... V ... tā]_{BG} - [V_{INF}]_{FOC}
(32c) MBAY SoA focus [... V ...]_{BG} - [V_{INF}]_{FOC} (kǎ)
(32d) KENGA SoA focus [... V ...]_{BG} - [V_{INF}]_{FOC}

All structures with postposed originals express SoA focus.

In analogy to term-focus marking in BAGIRMI, it can be repeated here, that **(morphological unmarked) focus prefers sentence-final position.**

Operator focus prefers structures with preposed originals.

The only exception is (31c). This structure can be analyzed as the **generic focus structure** in MBAY, as it mirrors the canonical term-focus structure.

Postposing needs no morphological marking.

All **postposed structures** don't show further morphological marking of the extra-posed element.

Morphology disambiguates preposed originals.

In contrast to postposed structures, all **preposed structures** show an additional morphological marking. In case of the two MBAY fronting constructions, the marker serves to **disambiguate SoA focus from operator focus**. Thus, morphology plays an important role in the marking of the information-structural categories.

Güldemann (2010):

“Focus preposing” indicates SoA focus.

This claim is confirmed by data in MBAY (31c) and KENGA (31a). Even though (31c) seems to be an exception concerning the general tendency of morphosyntactic focus marking in Sara-Bagirmi, it confirms the theory of **“focus preposing”**: The focal element is preposed for the expression of **SoA focus**. Its exact role in the information-structural system of the language, especially with regard to the other doubling strategies, has to be studied in more detail on the basis of texts.

The strategies involving postposing of the focused original in turn mirror this structure and could be regarded as **“focus postposing”**.

Güldemann (2010):

“Topic preposing” indicates truth-value resp. operator focus.

In (31a), the preposed original is followed by the focus-sensitive particle ‘also’, which usually marks background information. This structure can be analyzed as an instance of **“topic preposing”**: The topical element is preposed for expressing **operator focus**.

(31b) shows focus fronting for expressing operator focus. This constitutes an exception to the general rule. Even though the structure is not well understood yet, it is:

- First, **clearly an instance of “focus preposing”**, as the part marked by *dá* can only be analyzed as background, marking thus the fronted part as focus.
- Second, **an instance of predicate-centered focus**: its interpretation as truth-value resp. operator focus is only based on the translation provided by Keegan (1997). It cannot be excluded, that a SoA focus reading is also possible or even the only true reading what would confirm the hypothesis. This has to be checked again on the basis of texts.

Based on the data shown, **verbal doubling in Sara-Bagirmi** can be characterized as follows:

- 1. Verbal doubling is the main means for expressing predicate-centered focus.**
- 2. SoA focus is (mostly) indicated by postposing the focused verb.**
- 3. Operator focus is always expressed by preposing.**

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