8-8-2023

Focus In Kenyan Maay

Chiara Di Maio
Syracuse University

Abstract:

In this thesis, I describe and analyze focus in Kenyan Maay, an under-described Cushitic language. Since focus in Somali, a closely related language, has been described and analyzed in detail, its characteristics are compared to focus in Kenyan Maay to develop its description and morphosyntactic analysis. Significant variation was observed between the two speakers I worked with, so my goal is to account for both varieties (Kenyan Maay Bu'aale and Kenyan Maay Baidoa).

Keywords: Kenyan Maay, syntax, morphology, focus

Focus in Kenyan Maay

by

Chiara Di Maio

M.A., Università degli Studi di Padova, 2021
M.A., University of Westminster, 2017
B.A., Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, 2015

Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Linguistic Studies

Syracuse University
June 2023

Acknowledgements

This thesis was written thanks to the support and generosity of many people at Syracuse University. I look up to them so much, and I am extremely grateful I was able to work under their guidance.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my advisor, Professor Kornfilt. Her never-ending patience, support, and encouragement have been fundamental for me, not only to write this thesis, but also for my personal growth. Professor Kornfilt's guidance shaped me into the linguist I am today, and I am extremely thankful I was able to work with her.

I would also like to thank Professor Green, who introduced me to linguistic fieldwork and to this wonderful language I had the privilege to work on. Since the very first semester, he has never stopped giving me his full support and guidance, and I am extremely grateful for everything he has done for me.

I would also like to thank Professor Singerman, who started helping me with my thesis as soon as he arrived at Syracuse University, giving me all his support, encouragement, and guidance.

I would also like to thank my Committee Chair, Professor Giannini, and all the Professors in the Italian Program. They welcomed me into the Program and they greatly helped me improve my teaching skills.

Table of Contents

Abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
COMP	complementizer
DEF	basic definite determiner
DISJ	disjunctive
DP	determiner phrase
EXPL	expletive
F	feminine
FAC	factitive
FOC	focus marker
IRR	irrealis
K	k-series
KM	Kenyan Maay
M	masculine
MID	middle
OBJ	object marker
OCL	object clitic
PART	participle
PL	plural
PRES	present
PROG	progressive
PST	past
RDEF	remote definite determiner

RED	reduced agreement
REFL	reflexive
SCL	subject clitic
SG	singular
SUBJ	subject marker
STV	stativizing
T	t-series
VC	verb complex.

1. Introduction

The aim of this project is to describe and analyze focus in Kenyan Maay, an under-described language whose focus marking strategies have not yet been treated in detail. Data collected thus far show that Kenyan Maay gives prominence to new information morphologically by way of two focus markers: *yaa* and *wəli*. *Yaa* is a marker of pre-verbal focus, which signals the presence of a focused constituent before the language's Verb Complex[1] (the Verb Complex in Somali is discussed by Green, 2021: 255; Puglielli, 1981a; Saeed, 1999: 163; Svolacchia & Puglielli, 1999) and has an impact on the syntactic structure of the sentence; *yaa* immediately follows the constituent that it places into focus. *Wəli* is instead a marker of post-verbal focus, which indicates that an element following the Verb Complex (VC) is in focus. The focused element can either immediately follow the VC or follow both the VC and a DP. *Wəli*, in particular, affects the syntactic structure of the sentence, as well as the morphology and tone of the verb. These observations permit parallels to be drawn to focus in Somali [iso: som], whose focus marking strategies have been thoroughly described and analyzed. The reason Somali was the language chosen for comparison is that it is closely related to Kenyan Maay. Somali also exhibits markers of pre-verbal and post-verbal focus, and subject and object focus constructions (see Green, 2021: 308-311; Puglielli, 1981b: 13; Saeed, 1999: 192; Svolacchia, Mereu & Puglielli, 1995) also affect the syntactic, morphological, and phonological characteristics of a sentence. They have served as a reference point for my data collection, and the starting point of my analysis. Although Kenyan Maay and Somali have some characteristics in common, they also differ in significant ways. According to Paster (2018), Somali and Maay [iso: ymm] (Kenyan Maay is

---

[1] In line with scholarship on Somali, I consider Kenyan Maay's Verb Complex (VC) to be a constituent that includes elements that express grammatical relations, such as verbs, pronominal elements (e.g., object clitics), and adpositions (the heads of a PP, referred to by Puglielli (1981a) as 'prepositions'), but excludes DPs (Svolacchia & Puglielli, 1999).

a variety of Maay, see Section 1.1) are not mutually intelligible. In order to analyze focus in

Kenyan Maay, first I will discuss word order in both pragmatically neutral and focused

sentences in Kenyan Maay to show the differences in their syntactic structures. Then, the

focused sentences will be compared to the Somali ones, which will highlight similarities and

differences in the way the two languages encode focus.

1.1 Kenyan Maay

Maay is closely related to Somali, as well as to Dabarre [iso: dbr], Garre [iso: gex], Jiiddu

[iso: jii], Tunni [iso: tqq], and Ashraaf (see Eberhard, Simons & Fennig, 2019; Green, 2021:

6). Kenyan Maay is a variety of Maay and it is considered a Lowland East Cushitic language

(Saeed, 1999) spoken in southern Somalia, parts of Kenya, and by speakers in diaspora

communities around the world. There are just a few descriptive studies published on varieties

of Maay. Perhaps best known among this is Saeed's (1982a) grammatical outline, which

specifically describes 'Central Somali,' which is a name formerly attributed to Maay. Paster

(2006; 2010; 2018), Comfort & Paster (2009), and Paster & Ranero (2015) describe and

analyze aspects of Lower Jubba Maay, another variety of Maay spoken in extreme southern

Somalia. Biber (1982) describes a Maay variety spoken in Mandera, Kenya, though this

paper covers only aspects of the nominal system. The nominal system and tonology of

Kenyan Maay were also recently described by Smith (2022). Among these, the only work

discussing focus in Maay is Saeed (1982a).

According to Saeed (1982a: 29), focus in this language shows some similarities with Somali.

For example, to place constituents into focus, Maay uses two focus markers – a pre-verbal

focus marker, *(y)a*, and a marker of post-verbal focus, *wey ba* – notably, these cannot focus

an NP within a complex NP or an NP in a subordinate clause (Saeed, 1982a: 30). These are

characteristics that *yaa* and *wəli* also exhibit in Kenyan Maay. However, while *(y)a* clearly corresponds to *yaa*, the only marker of post-verbal focus that Saeed (1982a) mentions is *wey ba*, not *wəli*. The focus marker *wey ba* was used by neither language consultant I worked with, though they recognize it as a characteristic in the speech of other Maay speakers.

The Kenyan Maay data included below were collected from two language consultants. One of them is a 24-year-old woman from Dadaab, Kenya, whose parents are originally from Bu'aale, Somalia. She moved to the US when she was 15, and she lived in the Midwest before moving to Syracuse, NY. Her household's primary language remains Kenyan Maay, and she also speaks English, as well as some Somali and Arabic, though her use of these languages is mostly passive. The other language consultant is a 22-year-old woman who is also from Dadaab, Kenya, and also moved to Syracuse when she was 15 years old. Her parents, however, are from Baidoa, and her household's primary language is also Kenyan Maay, and she also speaks Somali and English. Since significant variation has been observed between the two speakers in the way post-verbal subject focus affects subject-verb agreement, I will refer to the first speakers' variety as 'Kenyan Maay Bu'aale' (henceforth: KM^{Bu}), and I will call the second speaker's variety 'Kenyan Maay Baidoa' (henceforth: KM^{Bai}) in the relevant sections. However, for the sake of simplicity, they will be referred to as 'Kenyan Maay' in all instances where no difference has been observed (i.e., non-focused sentences and pre-verbal focus constructions). Most of the data presented were collected from the first speaker, but the second speaker also provided acceptability judgements and produced the necessary data to account for focus constructions in both varieties in my analysis, which is my ultimate goal. All data were collected after having obtained both speakers' consent, as required by the Institutional Review Board.

Thus far, I have collected data primarily via direct elicitation, but also storyboards, grammaticality checks, narratives, and conversations (Appendix A).

1.2 Focus

The collected data, which will be presented in Chapter 2, show that focus in Kenyan Maay and in Somali exhibit many similarities, but also some key differences. In order to better understand them, Chapter 1 reviews analyses of focus in Somali, which has been described and analyzed in detail. The aim of Section 1.2 is to provide an overview of how focus has been described in the literature. Section 1.3 includes a discussion on basic word order in Somali, as word order is tightly connected to the morphosyntax of focus in both languages. In Section 1.4, I will give an overview of how focus has been described and analyzed in the literature in Somali, which will help me develop an analysis of focus in KM[Bu] and in KM[Bai].

According to Jackendoff (1972), every language has a strategy to convey new information that is known by the speaker but not by the hearer, which is typically called focus. Focus is considered a universal category of information structure (Zimmermann & Onéa, 2011) that affects the formal properties of the sentence (Frascarelli, 2010), such as its syntax, morphology, and prosody (Downing & Hyman, 2015). From a syntactic standpoint, focus is tightly connected to reordering (Rizzi, 1997), as in some languages it changes the position of the focused element, realizing it *in situ* or *ex situ* (Green & Jaggar, 2003; Hartmann & Zimmermann, 2009) with respect to its pragmatically neutral position.

Morphologically, focus markers are grammatical devices used to identify material as focused, and, in some languages (see Frascarelli & Puglielli 2005 on Cushitic languages), they may have originated from copular forms (Frascarelli, 2010; Lamberti, 1983). There are also

several prosodic means that can be used to express focus, such as prosodic prominence (see D'Imperio, 1997 for Neapolitan Italian), and insertion of a phonological boundary that precedes or follows the constituent in focus (Kanerva, 1990). Semantically, focus introduces a set of alternatives (Krifka, 2008; Rooth, 1985) that are useful for the interpretation of an utterance (Rooth, 1985). With respect to pragmatics, there is a debate on how many types of focus there are. The most used distinction is between information focus and contrastive focus (Halliday, 1967; Lambrecht, 1994).

Information focus involves the constituent that answers the *wh-* part of a question, and it can be of two types, 'broad' or 'narrow' (Féry & Krifka, 2008; Krifka, 2008; Lambrecht, 1994). One of the most common ways to differentiate them is connected to the *wh*-question they answer. Broad focus refers to the whole sentence that answers the question 'What happened?' (Frascarelli, 2010). With narrow focus, the element that is placed into focus is usually a smaller constituent that answers questions such as 'Who did it?'. On the other hand, contrastive focus suggests one of the alternatives already present in previous discourse. Other types of focus have also been investigated, such as corrective and selective focus (Hartmann & Zimmermann, 2009; Krifka, 2008; Zimmermann & Onéa, 2011). I will refer to Zimmermann & Onéa (2011)'s four types of focus to identify those in Kenyan Maay.

1. Information focus introduces new knowledge that was not presented previously in the discourse ('What did he eat?' 'He ate [bread].').

2. With corrective focus, the alternative mentioned in the discourse is not the 'correct' one, so it is replaced by the element that is the focused constituent ('He ate rice.' 'No, he ate [bread].').

3. Selective focus introduces a set of alternatives in the discourse from which an element is chosen ('Did he eat rice or bread?' 'He ate [bread].').

4. With contrastive focus, a set of alternatives previously introduced in the discourse refers to different constituents that are of the same syntactic category and semantic field ('He ate [bread], and they ate [rice].').

1.3 Basic syntactic properties of Somali

In order to better understand Somali's focus marking strategies, I will first provide some information about its basic syntactic properties in this section. Somali is a non-pro-drop language (Frascarelli & Puglielli, 2009) described as polysynthetic, in line with Baker's (1996: 17) definition, which states that, in polysynthetic languages, every argument of a head has to be associated with a morpheme in the word containing the head. According to Svolacchia & Puglielli (1999), Somali is a 'Clitic Polysynthetic Language', because it exhibits a particular form of noun incorporation, which is clitic incorporation. Svolacchia & Puglielli's (1999) syntactic analysis of word order in Somali can be explained through the Morphological Visibility Condition (MVC) and Incorporation. According to Baker (1996), the MVC states that theta roles have to be assigned through the Theta Criterion by a predicate to a phrase, but that phrase requires co-indexation with a morpheme on the predicate by the MVC. Incorporation is head movement that is associated with linear order (Baker, 1996) and respects the Head Movement Constraint (Travis, 1984), which states that an element that moves from head to head also has to move into all the intervening heads. Furthermore, head movement respects the 'Mirror Principle' (Baker, 1985; 1988), which states that the order of morphemes in a constituent reflects that of the elements in the syntactic structure. In light of the definitions of MVC and Incorporation, Svolacchia & Puglielli (1999) provide a reason for why Somali exhibits free word order – subject[2] and object clitics are arguments within the

---

[2] Only if the subject is not the focused constituent. In Somali, subject clitics and subject clitics are not allowed under subject focus.

VC that are co-indexed with adjunct DPs, which are freely able to move about the sentence as satellites. As mentioned, the same was proposed by Jelinek (1984) and Baker (1996) for other languages. In sentences (1) and (2), which involve object focus, the subject *Cali* and the object *adiga* are co-indexed with the clitics *-uu* and *ku*, respectively.

(1) *Cali*   *[adiga]³*   *b-uu*   *ku*   *dil-ay.*

     Ali   2SG   FOC-SCL.3SG.M   OCL.2SG   beat-PST

     'Ali beat [you].' (adapted⁴ from Svolacchia & Puglielli, 1999: 102)   *Somali*

(2) *[Adiga]*   *b-uu*   *Cali*   *ku*   *dil-ay.*

     2SG   FOC-SCL.3SG.M   Ali   OCL.2SG   beat-PST

     'Ali beat [you].' (adapted from Svolacchia & Puglielli, 1999: 102)   *Somali*

To sum up, in non-subject focus constructions, it is subject and object clitics that allow co-reference with full DPs, as the latter are adjuncts and are not licensed in argument position but inserted in extrasentential projections (Frascarelli, 2010). Such clitics satisfy the MVC, trigger full agreement on the verb, and bind DPs. Considering this analysis of non-subject focused full DPs as adjuncts, it has been hypothesized that even in pragmatically neutral sentences, they are all interpreted as Topics (Frascarelli & Puglielli, 2009). According to Krifka (2008), Topics are the constituents about which the speaker provides information or comments. Amongst the many types of Topics (Krifka, 2008; Büring, 2015), Contrastive, Aboutness-shift, Familiar/Given Topics are perhaps the most frequently encountered.

1. Krifka (2008) states that a Contrastive Topic contains a focus that indicates an alternative.

---

³ Brackets indicate focus.
⁴ The examples are transcribed according to the source cited, but I adapted some of the morphological glosses to the ones I use for my examples.

2. According to Frascarelli (2007), an Aboutness-shift Topic signals a new Topic or a Topic change in the discourse.

3. Frascarelli and Puglielli (2009) and Frascarelli (2007) state that Familiar/Given Topics can refer to background information (left periphery) or they can be afterthoughts (right or 'clause internal' periphery).

This description of Somali's basic properties is essential to analyze DPs in Kenyan Maay. From there, an account of focus can be initiated. Kenyan Maay's basic word order is SOV, and it is fairly free (see Section 2.1), like Somali's (Svolacchia & Puglielli, 1999). However, unlike Somali, Kenyan Maay does not exhibit subject clitics, and object clitics are not required. Furthermore, overt subjects are not obligatory, as the language allows *pro*-drop. This might mean that, in Kenyan Maay, DPs are in fact the arguments, or that theta roles are assigned to phonologically null clitics. The data collected thus far suggest that DPs are arguments, unlike Somali, where DPs are adjuncts. This hypothesis will be further explained in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.

1.4 Focus in Somali

In Somali, focus has been extensively described and analyzed in the literature, and the following provides an overview of the morphosyntactic analyses of pre-verbal and post-verbal focus. A constituent can be placed into focus with different strategies that display distinct formal properties. Somali uses three focus markers to place constituents into focus, and their use is associated with a different position of the focused element, which will be located either to the right (post-verbal) or to the left (pre-verbal) of the VC. When a pre-

verbal focus marker (*báa* and *ayáa*[5]) occurs in a sentence, both the focus marker and the focused element precede the VC (3)-(4), while with the marker of post-verbal focus (*wáxa(a)*[6]) precedes the VC, and the focused constituent follows it (5).

(3) *[Cali]*   *baa*   *adiga*   *ku*   *dil-ay.*

   Ali   FOC   2SG   OCL   beat-PST

   '[Cali] beat you.' (Svolacchia & Puglielli, 1999: 103)   *Somali*

(4) *[Cali*   *iyo*   *macallinka]*   *ayaa*   *sabuuradda*   *ag*   *taagan.*

   Ali   and   teacher.DET   FOC   blackboard.DET   close   stand.PRES.RED

   '[Cali and the teacher] stand close to the blackboard.'

   (Frascarelli & Puglielli, 2009: 160)   *Somali*

(5) *Wáxa*   *tag-Ø-ay*   *[Cáli].*

   FOC   go-3SG.M-PST.RED   Cali

   '[Cali] went.' (Green, 2021: 304)   *Somali*

Declarative main clauses should also be mentioned here, as they use an element, *waa*, that some argue is a predicate focus marker (Frascarelli, 2010), because Somali is a 'focus-prominent' language (Frascarelli, 1999). Others support the idea that it is a declarative marker (Green, 2021: 316; Saeed, 1984: 160) because, unlike *báa*, *ayáa* and *wáxa(a)*, its presence does not entail the same morphological and tonological alternations that others do. For example, it does not trigger reduced agreement on the verb, it always allows the use of

---

[5] The two focus markers are considered equivalent, but *ayáa* is more formal than *báa* (Svolacchia, Mereu, and Puglielli, 1995).

[6] According to Svolacchia, Mereu, and Puglielli (1995), *wáxaa* is more common than *wáxa*, which seems to only be used in northern Somali. When *wáxa(a)* is present in an example in Somali, I use what occurs in the source.

resumptive subject clitics, and the subject of a clause containing it can exhibit morphological subject marking (6). None of these properties are found in sentences with focus markers. No use of declarative or subject markers has been observed in Kenyan Maay.

(6) *Wiilk-u*   *waa*   *soomaali.*

    boy.DET-SUBJ   waa   Somali

    'The boy is Somali.' (adapted from Frascarelli & Puglielli, 2009: 152)   *Somali*

As discussed above, other than word order, the presence of a focus marker affects other properties of a sentence in Somali, depending on which element is focused.

According to Lecarme (1999), foci occupy a functional Case position in Somali, and focus markers are free functional morphemes which are heads merged in CP. The reason they are not generated in TP is that they are non-verbal categories (Lecarme, 1999). In Somali, the focused DP and the focus marker *báa* are part of the same constituent and are located, respectively, in the specifier and in the head of a Focus Phrase (FocP) in the C-domain (Frascarelli & Puglielli, 2009; Frascarelli, 2010). Although not for Somali, this internal structure of the C-domain was proposed by Rizzi (1997) in his 'cartographic approach' (7). According to Rizzi (1997), while a FocP cannot be reiterated, it is located between Topic Phrases (TopP), which have this recursive property.

(7) [ForceP [TopP TOPIC [FocP FOCUS [TopP TOPIC [FinP [TP [VP…]]]]]]]]

According to Belletti (2002), Focus and Topic positions can also be identified within the TP, in the 'clause internal periphery' or 'CP-like periphery' (8).

(8) [TP [TopP TOPIC [FocP FOCUS [TopP TOPIC [vP [FocP FOCUS [VP…]]]]]]

In order to explain pre-verbal focus in Somali (and in many other languages), Frascarelli (2010) argues for a cleft-like strategy, which is considered to offer an exhaustive interpretation to information focus that other focus marking strategies do not have (Krifka, 2008). Its name 'cleft-like' derives from the fact that this construction shares some formal characteristics with clefting (Frascarelli, 2000). This strategy uses a two-clause construction where the focused constituent is a predicate, and a free relative clause is located in the subject position.[7] According to Frascarelli and Puglielli (2009), the focus construction that uses *báa* in Somali undergoes 'type-shifting' with the help of the ι-operator, so the focused constituent becomes type <e,t> (predicate) and the relative clause changes to type <e> (NP), as in sentence (9).

(9) *[Cali]   baa   soomaali   ah*.

    Cali   FOC   Somali   be.RED

    '[Cali] is Somali.'

    lit. 'Cali is the one who is Somali.' (Frascarelli & Puglielli, 2009: 162)   *Somali*

According to Frascarelli and Puglielli (2009), the focus marker *báa* has undergone grammaticalization: from being a copular element, it became a morpheme that signals the position of the focused constituent to the left of the verb and that connects two main constituents in a sentence.

---

[7] As is the case in subject focus, realis mood verbs in subject relative clauses also exhibit reduced subject-verb agreement.

In Somali, the focused DP is merged as an independent constituent, so it is not moving from an argument position (Frascarelli 2010). This analytical hypothesis is supported by the 'anti-agreement effect' (Frascarelli, 1999; Ouhalla, 1993) or 'suspended subject-verb agreement' (Lambrecht & Polinsky, 1997). In Somali, subject-verb agreement is reduced because subject marking and subject clitics are not allowed under subject focus. According to Frascarelli (1999), this happens because of a feature-checking conflict, where different syntactic operations occur simultaneously (focus feature checking, subject marking, and verb agreement). This issue can be solved by a computational system that gives priority to the operations whose interpretation cannot be recovered ('visibility priority' in Frascarelli, 1999). In particular, [+F] and [+wh] feature checking is prioritized over subject marking and agreement checking (Frascarelli, 1999). Furthermore, anti-agreement occurs when the verb does not raise to the head where it should receive agreement (Phillips, 1996; Richards, 1997). To sum up, the presence of subject focus does not allow coreferential clitics and, therefore, subject marking, causing reduced subject-verb agreement. The following examples show the difference between non-focused sentences (10a) and subject focus constructions (10b).

(10) a. *Naág-t-u*   *w-ey*   *gaab-án-t-ah-ay.*

woman-T.DEF-SUBJ   DEC-3SG.F   short-STV-3SG.F-be-PRES

'The woman is short.' (Green, 2021: 110)   *Somali*

b. *Nín-kií*   *[naág-tií]*   *báa*   *arag-t-aý.*

man-K.RDEF   woman-T.RDEF   FOC   see-3SG.F-PST.RED

'[The woman] saw the man.' (Green, 2021: 295)   *Somali*

One of the aspects that pre-verbal focus in Kenyan Maay and Somali have in common is the fact that the focused constituent precedes the focus marker and the VC. The linear position of the focused constituent and the focus markers in the two languages is the same on the surface. However, unlike Somali, pre-verbal subject focus and pre-verbal object focus in Kenyan Maay do not affect verb agreement, subject pronoun clitics, negative particles, or subject marking. This suggests that DPs might be arguments instead of clitics as in Somali, because they would raise to the Specifier of an Agreement projection to allow subject-verb agreement and still c-command their trace after movement

Turning to post-verbal focus, Lecarme's (1999) analysis proposes that *wáxa(a)* constructions are a subset of *báa* constructions, where the focused constituent occurs after the verb or an NP. The constituent placed into focus by *wáxa(a)* is in a right-hand specifier, while the focus marker is in C (Lecarme 1999). According to Lecarme (1991, 1994, 1999), *wáxa(a)* is a combination of *báa* or *ayáa* and *wáx* 'thing,' an expletive item. If *wáx* is analyzed as a pure expletive (11a), it has no semantic or formal properties, and it is merged in the Specifier of CP, where its categorial [N] feature is checked in C for EPP reasons (Lecarme 1999). According to Lecarme (1999), this structure needs an associate (clitic). Lecarme (1999) assumes the syntactic structure in (11b) for post-verbal focus constructions, where the focused DP has a [+acc] feature,[8] as it cannot exhibit morphological subject marking in that position.

(11) a. *Wúxuu*   *akhriyay*   *[búug].*

      EXPL.FOC.3SG.M   read   book

      'He read [a book].' (adapted from Lecarme, 1999: 298)   *Somali*

---

[8] Lecarme (1999) assumes that Somali has Case.

b. Post-verbal focus (adapted from Lecarme, 1999: 297)

```
                    CP
                 ／      ＼
              C'          DP
            ／   ＼       [+acc]
          C        TP
        wáxa       △
                   …
```

If *wáx* is analyzed as an implicit argument as in sentence (12), it does not require an associate (Lecarme, 1999).

(12) *[Wax]*   *búu*   *akhriyay.*

    thing.M   FOC.3SG.M read

    'He read (lit. he read [thing]).' (adapted from Lecarme, 1999: 298)   *Somali*

The markers of post-verbal focus and the focused constituents have the same syntactic position inside the CP, on the surface, both in Kenyan Maay and in Somali.

To sum up, Somali has two focus constructions. With pre-verbal focus, the focused constituent and the focus marker precede the VC and respectively occupy the Specifier and the head of CP, which has a left-hand Specifier. With post-verbal focus, the focus marker precedes the VC, and the focused constituent follows the VC. While the former occupies the head of CP (left), the latter is located in a right-hand specifier. Under subject focus, morphological subject marking and subject clitics are not allowed, and subject-verb agreement is reduced.

2. Basic syntactic properties of Kenyan Maay

The aim of this Chapter is to present an overview of some basic syntactic constructions in Kenyan Maay, which will help to highlight the similarities and differences between non-focused and focused sentences in the language. Since the only distinctions observed so far between KM[Bu] and KM[Bai] are related to post-verbal subject focus constructions, I will only refer to the two varieties by their respective names in the relevant sections of Chapter 3. Therefore, 'Kenyan Maay' will be used when no distinction has been observed between the two varieties.[9]

The description of word order, pronouns, and subject-verb agreement in non-focused sentences in Kenyan Maay is necessary for two reasons. First, their characteristics are helpful to determine or make hypotheses about the status of DPs (whether they are arguments or adjuncts) and, therefore, to understand the nature of focused constituents as well. Second, these are the main elements of a sentence that change in focus constructions, so they are essential to make comparisons. For instance, the presence of markers of pre-verbal and post-verbal focus affects word order in Kenyan Maay by making it significantly less flexible. Furthermore, this Chapter includes a comparison between focused sentences in Kenyan Maay and in Somali. In Chapter 3, the differences between post-verbal subject focus in KM[Bu] and KM[Bai] will be further discussed and analyzed.

---

[9] The data presented were checked with both speakers. However, the KM[Bai] speaker only gave acceptability judgements, while the KM[Bu] speaker produced most sentences, unless otherwise stated. For focused sentences, both speakers were asked to produce them.

2.1 Basic word order

Kenyan Maay exhibits the same basic SOV word order as other Cushitic languages (see Green, 2021: 258; Saeed, 1999: 185; Svolacchia, Mereu & Puglielli, 1995), shown in sentence (13).

(13) *annə́*   *məlái-k-ə*   *aam-Ø-í.*

     1SG   fish-K-DEF   eat-1SG-PST

     'I ate the fish.'   *Kenyan Maay*

As (12) shows, phonologically null first person singular (and third person singular and plural) person markers are assumed to be located after the verb root, as this is their position in cases where such person marking is phonologically realized in other instances. Here and elsewhere, examples are presented in the IPA, with few exceptions. I have chosen to do so given that there is no standard orthography for Maay. The orthography proposed by Mukhtar (2007) is seen by some as problematic (Morrison & Abokor, 2016), and indeed was not viewed favorably by my speakers. Note that Green (2021: 103) refers to grammatical gender in Somali as 't-series' and 'k-series', while Saeed (1999: 54) refers to the two forms as 'feminine' and 'masculine', respectively. Green's terminology references the basic forms of these gender markers, though they undergo alternations, or 'sandhi effect' (Green & Morrison, 2018) in predictable instances.

Kenyan Maay can also exhibit different word orders, such as SVO (14), OVS (15), OSV (16), VSO (17) and VOS (18). The fact that word order is free might support the pronominal argument hypothesis (Jelinek, 1984) or the clitic left dislocation proposed by Baker (1996).

However, for Kenyan Maay, the possibility of movement-based approaches to 'free word orders' will be explored instead (see Chapter 3 and Chapter 4).

(14) *annə́*   *aam-Ø-í*   *məlái-k-ə.*

     1SG   eat-1SG-PST fish-K-DET

   'I ate the fish.'   *Kenyan Maay*

(15) *məlái-k-ə*   *aam-Ø-í*   *annə́.*

    fish-K-DEF eat-1SG-PST 1SG

   'I ate the fish.'   *Kenyan Maay*

(16) *məlái-k-ə*   *annə́*   *aam-Ø-í.*

    fish-K-DEF 1SG   eat-1SG-PST

   'I ate the fish.'   *Kenyan Maay*

(17) *aam-Ø-í*   *annə́*   *məlái-k-ə.*

    eat-1SG-PST   1SG   fish-K-DEF

   'I ate the fish.'   *Kenyan Maay*

(18) *aam-Ø-í*   *məlái-k-ə*   *annə́.*

    eat-1SG-PST   fish-K-DEF   1SG

   'I ate the fish.'   *Kenyan Maay*

It is worth noting that these sentences were part of an acceptability task, so they have not been offered spontaneously, but were considered acceptable. When the speakers were asked

what the difference was between sentences (14) to (18), they stated that there is none. However, word orders other than SOV that the language exhibits might encode pragmatic differences that the speakers may have not recognized because the sentences were taken out of context to complete the acceptability task. Furthermore, these pragmatic differences are probably not as evident as those found in sentences with focus markers.

Constituents that occur post-verbally, which are not signaled by a focus marker, are interpreted as aftertopics adjoined to TP in Somali, unlike focused constituents, which are located in the CP (Svolacchia, Mereu & Puglielli, 1995). In Kenyan Maay, however, the position of aftertopics may be the C-domain (as focused constituents, but in TopP) through adjunction or a TopP projection within the TP after movement from vP or VP. According to Svolacchia, Mereu, and Puglielli (1995), pretopics and aftertopics are used to communicate given information. In sentences (14)-(18), when a subject or an object does not occupy its 'typical' syntactic position given by the SOV word order, it may be interpreted as a pretopic or an aftertopic, as it encodes information that was already know from previous discourse (for this task, the speaker heard the same sentence multiple times, so the information given was not new).

Although all these word orders are possible, SOV can be considered the basic one in Kenyan Maay for two reasons. One is based on frequency, as it was the most used by the language consultants. The other reason is linked to the ambiguous meaning of sentences (19) and (20), where 'the dog bit the snake' and 'the snake bit the dog' are both logically possible and would have to be disambiguated by context.

(19) *éy-k-ə*   *mə́s-k-ə*   *qanin-Ø-í.*

dog-K-DEF snake-K-DET   bite-3SG.M-PST

'The dog bit the snake.'   *Kenyan Maay*

(20) *mə́s-k-ə*   *éy-k-ə*   *qanin-Ø-í.*

snake-K-DEF   dog-K-DEF   bite-3SG.M-PST

'The snake bit the dog.'   *Kenyan Maay*

When the speakers were asked if (19) was a possible translation for 'the dog bit the snake', they agreed. However, when asked the same question for sentence (20), they said they would translate it as 'the snake bit the dog'. This could also be used as evidence to say that DPs might in fact be arguments, unlike Somali, because it seems that their syntactic position determines their function in the sentences if the interpretation is potentially ambiguous.

2.2 Order of arguments

In the presence of an intransitive verb, the subject generally precedes the verb in Kenyan Maay, as shown in sentence (21).

(21) *éy-k-ə*   *roor-Ø-é.*

dog-K-DEF   run-3SG.M-PRES

'The dog runs.'   *Kenyan Maay*

In pragmatically neutral sentences that are syntactically more complex than SOV, arguments usually precede the VC. Sentences that include transitive verbs have already been discussed

in the previous Section (2.1). Sentence (22) shows that when the main verb is ditransitive, both the direct and indirect objects precede the VC.

(22) *aðə̀ ʋntə̀ i   sii-ð-í.*

2SG food   1SG.OBJ   give-2SG-PST

'You gave food to me.'   *Kenyan Maay*

However, some sentences that include ditransitive verbs may exhibit other word orders, probably for the same pragmatic reasons discussed above for less complex constructions. In the sentences below, both objects follow the VC in (23), but just one of them does in (24) and (25).

(23) *annə̀ si-y-í*[10]   *ʋntə̀-ð-ə   ey-yáal-k-ə.*

1SG give-1SG-PST   food-T-DEF   dog-PL-DEF

'I gave the food to the dog.'   *Kenyan Maay*

(24) *aðə̀ annə̀   i   sii-ð-í   ʋntə̀-ð-ə.*

2SG 1SG.OBJ   1SG.OCL   give-2SG-PST   food-T-DEF

'You gave the food to me.'   *Kenyan Maay*

(25) *unnə̀ ʋntə̀-ð-ə   sən   siia-n-ə̀   isíŋ.*

1PL   food-T-DEF   2PL.OCL   give-1PL-PRES   2PL.OBJ

'We give the food to you.'   *Kenyan Maay*

---

[10] Here and elsewhere, the slot proposed for the typically phonologically null 1SG and 3SG.M suffix reveals itself as it is occupied by *y* after a vowel-final verb stem.

2.3 Order of adjuncts

Adjuncts behave much in the same way as arguments in non-focused sentences, as they can precede or follow the VC. In sentence (26), the adjunct precedes the VC, and the adposition *kə* ('up'), located within the VC, selects the noun *búrtə* ('the hill').

(26) *éy-k-ə*   *búr-t-ə*   *kə*   *roor-Ø-í.*

      dog-K-DEF   hill-T-DEF   up   run-3SG.M-PST

      'The dog ran up the hill.'   *Kenyan Maay*

Adverbials, as all the other types of adjuncts, precede the VC in non-focused sentences (focused sentences allow a different word order, which will be presented in Chapter 3). In non-focused sentences, the adposition, which is part of the VC, follows the noun it selects and precedes the verb, as shown in sentence (27).

(27) *géber-t-ə́*   *tartíip*   *ən*   *duruk-t-í.*

      girl-T-DEF   quietness   with   move-3SG.F-PST

      'The girl moved quietly.'

      (lit. 'The girl moved with quietness.')   *Kenyan Maay*

2.4 Subject-verb agreement

Since post-verbal subject focus affects person marking on verbs in Kenyan Maay, this Section includes a description of subject-verb agreement in non-focused sentences in order to compare them to focused sentences later. Table 1 summarizes person, tense, and number marking used on verbs in non-focused sentences in the simple past. The person marker occurs between the stem (*ʃeen-*) and the tense marker (*-i*) in the second (*-t-*), and third (feminine)

person singular (-*t*-), and in the first person plural (-*n*-). The second person plural exhibits

three markers: the second person marker (-*t*-) occurs between the stem (*ʃeen*-) and the tense

marker (-*e*-), and the plural marker (-*ŋ*) occurs after the tense marker. In the third person

plural, the plural marker (-*ŋ*) occurs after the tense marker (-*e*-). The person markers in the

first and third (masculine) person singular and in the third person plural do not have

phonetically realized forms.

Gloss	Root 'bring'	Person marker	Tense marker	Number marker	Non-focused sentence
1SG	*ʃeen*	Ø	*i*	Ø	*ʃeén-Ø-i*
2SG	*ʃeen*	*t*	*i*	Ø	*ʃeén-t-i*
3SGM	*ʃeen*	Ø	*i*	Ø	*ʃeén-Ø-i*
3SGF	*ʃeen*	*t*	*i*	Ø	*ʃeén-t-i*
1PL	*ʃeen*	*n*	*i*	Ø	*ʃeén-n-i*
2PL	*ʃeen*	*t*	*e*	*ŋ*	*ʃeén-t-e-ŋ*
3PL	*ʃeen*	Ø	*e*	*ŋ*	*ʃeén-Ø-e-ŋ*

Table 1 – Person, tense, and number marking on verbs in non-focused sentences, Simple Past

2.5 Pronouns and pro-dropping

As previously mentioned, Kenyan Maay requires the presence of overt person marking on the

verb in the second and third (feminine) person singular, and in the first and second person

plural. Unlike Somali, a sentence in Kenyan Maay does not require the presence of subject

pronouns, subject clitics, or a DP in subject position to be considered grammatical (28). It is

essential that this characteristic be highlighted because the absence of subject clitics in

argument position in focused constructions in Somali affects the sentence in ways that significantly differ from Kenyan Maay (see Section 3.3).

(28) a. *aðə́*   *ʊntə́-ð-ə*   *ʃeen-**t**-í.*

      2SG   food-T-DEF   bring-**2SG**-PST

      'You brought the food.'   *Kenyan Maay*

   b.   *ʊntə́-ð-ə*   *ʃeen-**t**-í.*

      food-T-DEF   bring-**2SG**-PST

      'You brought the food.'   *Kenyan Maay*

(29) a. *usə́*   *ɲaaɲə́-ð-ə*   *aam-Ø-í.*

      3SG.M   tomato-T-DEF   eat-3SG.M-PST

      'He ate the tomato.'   *Kenyan Maay*

   b.   *ɲaaɲə́-ð-ə*   *aam-Ø-í.*

      tomato-T-DEF   eat-3SG.M-PST

      'He ate the tomato.'   *Kenyan Maay*

After providing a brief description of the context, the KM[Bu] speaker was asked to translate these sentences: 'You brought the food' and 'He ate the tomato'. The KM[Bai] speaker also stated that the meaning of sentences (28b) and (29b) could not be considered ambiguous, despite the fact that the subject is not overt, and that the verb morphology is the same as the third person singular feminine and the first person singular, respectively. It is possible that

Kenyan Maay is a language that allows *pro* to occupy the subject position and that contextual cues would disambiguate the interpretation of sentences (28b) and (29b).

While object clitics are obligatory in Somali,[11] they are optional in Kenyan Maay. For example, the second person singular resumptive object clitic *kə* occurs in (30), but no clitic occurs in (31). One could assume that the subject *yó* and the object *aðə́* in (30) are located in a Topic position within the CP and that *kə* is a resumptive clitic within the VC.

(30) *yó*   *aðə́*   *kə*   *fəða-y-ə́-ŋ.*

3PL   2SG   2SG.OCL   want-3-PRES-PL

'They want you.'   *Kenyan Maay*

(31) *yó*   *aðə́*   *fəða-y-ə́-ŋ.*

3PL   2SG   want-3-PRES-PL

'They want you.'   *Kenyan Maay*

Third person singular and third person plural object clitics are phonologically null in Somali (32), while they can be phonologically realized as *kə* in Kenyan Maay (33), although this is not obligatory, as seen in sentence (31).

(32) *W-áy*   *maqa-sh-ay.*

DEC-3SG.F hear-3SG.F-PST

'She heard him/her/it/them.' (Green, 2021: 265)   *Somali*

---

[11] Subject clitics, however, are found only if the co-indexed DP has not undergone *wh*-movement.

(33) *yé*   *usə́*   *kə*   *fəð-ð-ə́s.*

     3SG.F   3SG.M   3SG.M.OCL want-3SG.F-PST

     'She wants him.'   *Kenyan Maay*

Table 2 summarizes the pronoun system in Kenyan Maay. Subject pronouns and object pronouns have identical morphology, while resumptive object clitics exhibit different forms.

Gloss	Subject Pronouns	Object Pronouns	Resumptive Object Clitics	Reflexive Pronouns
1SG	*annə*	*annə*	*i*	*ɛs*
2SG	*aðə*	*aðə*	*ki*	*ɛs*
3SGM	*usə*	*usə*	*kə*	*ɛs*
3SGF	*ye*	*ye*	*kə*	*ɛs*
3SG ('one')	*lə*	-	-	-
1PL	*unnə*	*unnə*	*nə*	*ɛs*
2PL	*ɪsiŋ*	*ɪsiŋ*	*siŋ kə*	*ɛs*
3PL	*yo*	*yo*	*kə*	*ɛs*

Table 2 – Pronoun system in Kenyan Maay

Subject pronouns and object pronouns have identical forms, but they have been included twice in Table 2 to make a distinction between the syntactic position they occupy.

3. Focus in Kenyan Maay

In this Chapter, I present some basic characteristics of focus in Kenyan Maay before turning in sub-sections below to specific details concerning pre-verbal vs. post-verbal focus with some comparisons to Somali (Section 3.3).

3.1 Pre-verbal focus

Word order in focused sentences is not as flexible as in non-focused ones. If the marker of pre-verbal focus *yaa* occurs in a sentence to signal new information, both the focused constituent and the focus marker must precede the VC (34), or the sentence will be ungrammatical (35).

(34) *[məs-k-ə́]*   *yaa*   *ʃeen-Ø-í*   *ʊntə́-ð-ə.*

   snake-K-DEF   FOC   bring-3SG.M-PST   food-T-DET

   '[The snake] brought the food.'   *Kenyan Maay*

(35) * *ʃeen-Ø-í*   *ʊntə́-ð-ə*   *[məs -k-ə́]*   *yaa.*

   bring-3SG.M-PST   food-T-DEF   snake-K-DEF FOC

This focus marker can only occur in matrix clauses, even when it co-occurs with the marker of post-verbal focus (see Section 4.1).

3.2 Post-verbal focus

The marker of post-verbal focus *wəli*, on the other hand, must precede the VC, and the element that it places into focus as new information must follow the VC (36), or the sentence will be ungrammatical (37). This is observed for both varieties.

(36) *éy-k-ə*   *wəli*   *qanin-Ø-í*   *[mə́s-k-ə].*

      dog-K-DEF   FOC   bite-3SG.M-PST   snake-K-DEF

      'The dog bit [the snake].'   *Kenyan Maay*

(37) * *éy-k-ə*   *[mə́s-k-ə]*   *wəli*   *qanin-Ø-í.*

      dog-K-DEF   snake-K-DEF   FOC   bite-3SG.M-PST

Like *yaa*, the marker of post-verbal focus *wəli* cannot occur in embedded clauses, even in the presence of the pre-verbal focus marker in the same sentence (see Section 4.1).

3.3 Comparison with focus in Somali

3.3.1 Subject vs. object focus with markers of pre-verbal focus

Just like Kenyan Maay, Somali uses markers of pre-verbal and post-verbal focus, though there are both similarities and differences in their properties between the two languages. In Somali, there are two markers of pre-verbal focus– *báa* (38) and *ayáa*[12] (39), while in Kenyan Maay there is only one, *yaa* (40). All three follow the constituent they place into focus, precede the VC, and each can occur independently, without coalescing with any other element, at least when the subject is in focus.

(38) *[Macállin-ka]*   *báa*   *buug-ág*   *ná*   *sii-y-eý.*

      teacher-K.DEF   FOC   book-PL   1PL.OBJ   give-3SG.K-PST.RED

      '[The teacher] gave the books to us.' (Green, 2021: 294)   *Somali*

---

[12] The latter is associated with a more formal register. They otherwise share the same distribution and syntactic properties, but they have different behavior concerning their ability to coalesce with subject pronoun clitics and enclitics (Lecarme, 1999).

(39) *[Akhbaár-tií]*   *ayáa*   *tuulá-dií*   *kú*

news-T.RDEF   FOC   village-T.RDEF   around

shaac-d-áy.

spread-MID.3SG.F-PST.RED

'[The news] spread around the village.' (Green, 2021: 299)   *Somali*

(40) *[məs-k-ə́]*   *yaa*   *ʃeen-Ø-í*   *ʊntə́-ð-ə.*

snake-K-DEF   FOC   bring-3SG.M-PST   food-T-DET

'[The snake] brought the food.'   *Kenyan Maay*

When the subject is in focus, the Somali markers of pre-verbal focus *báa* and *ayáa* trigger reduced subject-verb agreement, which is one of the effects of the subject focus construction, as shown in Table 3 (adapted from Saeed, 1984: 83).

keen 'bring'	Somali (*keen*) Non-focused sentence	Somali (*keen*) Pre-verbal subject focus
1SG	*keen-Ø-ay*	*keen-Ø-áy*
2SG	*keen-t-ay*	*keen-Ø-áy*
3SGM	*keen-Ø-ay*	*keen-Ø-áy*
3SGF	*keen-t-ay*	*keen-t-áy*
1PL	*keen-n-ay*	*keen-n-áy*
2PL	*keen-t-ee-n*	*keen-Ø-áy*
3PL	*keen-Ø-ee-n*	*keen-Ø-áy*

Table 3 – Non-focused sentences and pre-verbal subject focus (Somali)

In Kenyan Maay, subject-verb agreement is only affected under post-verbal subject focus, so when *yaa* places a subject into focus (41), the sentence has the same characteristics as non-focused ones (42).

(41) *aðə́* *ʋntə́-ð-ə* *ʃeen-t-í.*

2SG   food-T-DEF   bring-2SG-PST

'You brought the food.'   *Kenyan Maay*

(42) *[aðə́]*   *yaa*   *ʋntə́-ð-ə*   *ʃeen-t-í.*

2SG   FOC   food-T-DEF   bring-2SG-PST

'[You] brought the food.'   *Kenyan Maay*

Table 4 compares verb paradigms in non-focused sentences and in pre-verbal subject focus constructions in Kenyan Maay, which are identical.

ʃeen 'bring'	Non-focused sentence	Pre-verbal subject focus
1SG	*ʃeen-Ø-í*	*ʃeen-Ø-í*
2SG	*ʃeen-t-í*	*ʃeen-t-í*
3SGM	*ʃeen-Ø-í*	*ʃeen-Ø-í*
3SGF	*ʃeen-t-í*	*ʃeen-t-í*
1PL	*ʃeen-n-í*	*ʃeen-n-í*
2PL	*ʃeen-t-é-ŋ*	*ʃeen-t-é-ŋ*
3PL	*ʃeen-Ø-é-ŋ*	*ʃeen-Ø-é-ŋ*

Table 4 – Non-focused and pre-verbal subject focus sentences

Just like Somali (Green, 2021: 311), the pre-verbal object focus construction in Kenyan Maay can be considered the default given that the same characteristics can be found in sentences that do not involve a focus marker (43) or that do include it (44). The only difference that should be pointed out is word order. As seen in Chapter 2, word order is flexible in Kenyan Maay, but the presence of *yaa* requires the focused constituent to occur before the VC.

(43) *aðə́* *yó*   *fəð-ə́s.*

    2SG 3PL.OBJ   want.2SG-PRES

    'You want them.'   *Kenyan Maay*

(44) *aðə́* *[yó]*   *yaa*   *fəð-ə́s.*

    2SG 3PL.OBJ   FOC   want.2SG-PRES

    'You want [them].'   *Kenyan Maay*

The markers of pre-verbal focus in Kenyan Maay and Somali exhibit differences concerning their ability to coalesce with other elements in a clause. In Somali, *báa* and *ayáa* can coalesce with subject clitic pronouns when an object is in focus and with negative and interrogative markers (Green, 2021: 295-303; Saeed, 1999: 193), however, this does not occur in Kenyan Maay. The pre-verbal focus marker *báa* can also coalesce with a preceding noun phrase in Somali (Green, 2021: 298), but this has not been observed with *yaa* in Kenyan Maay.

In Kenyan Maay, *yaa* can be used for broad focus[13] (45), and it can place different

constituents into focus, such as indirect objects, oblique objects, adverbials, and predicate

nominals.

(45) *[ʃə̆l]*   *yaa*   *dîi-y-í.*

    accident   FOC   happen-3SG-PST

   '[An accident] happened.'   *Kenyan Maay*

In (46), an indirect object is in focus, and it signals new information (it was given as an

answer to the question 'Who did you give the food to?').

(46) *annə́*   *[éj-k-ə]*   *yaa*   *sii-y-í*   *ʊntə́-ð-ə.*

    1SG   dog-K-DEF   FOC   give-1SG-PST   food-T-DEF

   'I gave the food [to the dog].'   *Kenyan Maay*

Sentence (47) indicates that the oblique object 'the woman' is the element that is placed into

focus.

(47) *yó*   *[íslan-t-ii]*   *yaa*   *ən*   *ʃəqeya-y-ə́-ŋ.*

    3PL   woman-T-RDEF   FOC   for   work-3-PRES.PROG-PL

   'They work for [the woman].'   *Kenyan Maay*

The focused adverbial in sentence (48) can also be considered new information, as it was

used to describe the manner in which the cat moved for the first time.

---

[13] This sentence was the answer to the question *may dîi?* ('what happened?') after providing the description of a scenario where such a question could be asked.

(48) géber-t-ә́   [tartíp]   yaa   ən   duruk-t-í.

girl-T-DEF   quietness   FOC   with   move-3SG.F-PST

'The girl moved [quietly].'   *Kenyan Maay*

The predicate nominal in sentence (49) is also new information. The speaker was asked to translate this sentence with no context from previous discourse.

(49) usә́   [mədərísə-ð-ii]   yaa   rooɣ-Ø-ә́.

3SG.M   school-T-RDEF   FOC   be.at-3SG.M-PRES

'He is at [the school].'   *Kenyan Maay*

Table 5 sums up the differences between pre-verbal focus in Kenyan Maay and in Somali under the subject and object focus constructions. As made clear in this comparison, the behavior of Kenyan Maay and Somali differ markedly when pre-verbal focus is involved. It would appear that the many idiosyncrasies of Somali are simply absent in Kenyan Maay's grammar.

Pre-verbal Focus	Subject Focus		Object Focus	
Language	Somali	KM	Somali	KM
Focus Markers	*báa / ayáa*	*yaa*	*báa / ayáa*	*yaa*
Word Order	XP[14]+FOC+VC	XP+FOC+VC	XP+FOC+VC	XP+FOC+VC
Reduced Subject-Verb Agreement	Yes	No	No	No
Coalescence with other elements	Yes	No	Yes	No

Table 5 – Kenyan Maay (KM) and Somali Pre-verbal Subject and Object Focus

In pre-verbal focus sentences in Kenyan Maay, the focused constituent and the focus marker must precede the VC, while in non-focused sentences, a DP can occur before or after the VC. Unlike Somali, there is no reduced subject-verb agreement or coalescence of *yaa* with other elements under subject focus, so this construction, alongside the object focus one, are considered the default. Another difference between Kenyan Maay and Somali is that the absence of subject marking in Kenyan Maay cannot be due to subject focus because the language does not exhibit it in any contexts.

3.3.2 Subject vs. object focus with the marker of post-verbal focus

In both Kenyan Maay and Somali, the markers of post-verbal focus, respectively *wǝli* and *wáxa(a)*, occur before the VC, introduce the cataphoric focalization of a constituent that

---

[14] I will refer to the focused constituent as XP here, as constituents can be of different types, such as DPs, CPs and AdvPs.

follows the VC, and tend to focus a longer noun phrase or clause (Green, 2021: 303; Saeed, 1999: 194; Svolacchia, Mereu & Puglielli, 1995). Another characteristic that *wáxa(a)* and *wəli* have in common is of semantic nature, as both *wáx* and *wəl* - the historical lexical basis of these focus markers – mean 'thing', in Somali and Kenyan Maay, respectively.

The following sentences show the distribution of markers of post-verbal focus in Somali (50), Kenyan Maay (51), and Maay (52), for the sake of comparison.

(50) *Wáxa*   *tag-Ø-aý*   *[Cáli].*

     FOC   go-3SG.M-PST   Cali

     '[Cali] went.' (Green, 2021: 304)   *Somali*

(51) *wəli*   *ʊntə́-ð-ə*   *ʃéen-Ø-ey*   *[aðə́].*

     FOC   food-T-DEF   bring-RED-PST   2SG

     '[You] brought the food.'   *Kenyan Maay*

(52) *Abdi wey ba*   *sheen-Ø-ey*   *[besə].*

     Abdi FOC   bring-3SG.M-PST   money

     'Abdi brought [money].' (Saeed, 1982a: 30)   *Maay*

The marker of post-verbal focus *wəli* in sentence (51) places into narrow focus a constituent that introduces new information. Sentence (51) was given as an answer to the question 'Who brought the food?'.

Both in Kenyan Maay and in Somali, broad focus and narrow subject focus overlap. (53) shows a sentence that was used as the answer to the question 'What happened?' in Kenyan Maay.

(53) *wəli*   *dii-y-éy*   *[ʃə̌l]*.

       FOC   happen-3SG-PST   accident

       '[An accident] happened.'   *Kenyan Maay*

In instances of post-verbal subject focus, a puzzling but clear-cut distinction arises between the KM[Bu], KM[Bai], and Somali. While in Somali, there is always reduced subject-verb agreement on realis mood verbs under subject focus, this occurs in the two Kenyan Maay varieties only in the Simple Past. Since post-verbal subject focus constructions in KM[Bu] and KM[Bai] differ significantly, they will be compared to Somali in two separate Sections (3.4.2.1 and 3.4.2.2) and then to each other in Section 3.5.

3.3.2.1 KM[Bu] and Somali

KM[Bu] and Somali differ significantly in the way post-verbal subject focus constructions affect verbs. While Somali's full five-way inflectional agreement collapses to just a three-way distinction when reduced, the only inflectional distinction that is reduced (i.e., lost) in KM[Bu] is for the second person singular. Sentence (54) shows a non-focused sentence with full agreement, while sentence (55) includes a focused subject and reduced agreement.

(54) *aðə́*   *ʊntə́-ð-ə*   *ʃeen-t-í.*

       2SG   food-T-DEF   bring-2SG-PST

       'You brought the food.'   *KM[Bu]*

(55) *wəli   ʊntə́-ð-ə   ʃéen-Ø-ey   [aðə́].*

     FOC   food-T-DEF   bring-RED-PST   2SG

     '[You] brought the food.'   *KM^Bu*

Table 6 also shows that the realization of the Past Tense marker changes from *-i* to *-ey*, except in the second and third person plural, where the tense marker is also followed by a marker that indicates number (plural *-ŋ*). According to Kanerva (1990), there can be a phonological boundary between VP and the focused constituent. Therefore, the change in the tense marker is probably due to pre-boundary lengthening that precedes the focused constituent. There is also a difference in tone between non-focused and post-verbal focus sentences. While in the former tone is on the last syllable of the verb, the latter exhibit tone on the penultimate syllable.

ʃeen- 'bring'	Non-focused sentence	Post-verbal subject focus
1SG	*ʃeen-Ø-í*	*ʃéen-Ø-ey*
2SG	*ʃeen-t-í*	*ʃéen-Ø-ey*
3SGM	*ʃeen-Ø-í*	*ʃéen-Ø-ey*
3SGF	*ʃeen-t-í*	*ʃéen-t-ey*
1PL	*ʃeen-n-í*	*ʃéen-n-ey*
2PL	*ʃeen-t-é-ŋ*	*ʃeen-t-é-ŋ*
3PL	*ʃeen-Ø-é-ŋ*	*ʃeen-Ø-é-ŋ*

Table 6 – Verb Paradigms in KM^Bu Post-Verbal Subject Focus

Table 7 shows the significant differences between subject-verb agreement in Somali (adapted from Saeed, 1984: 83) and KM^Bu in post-verbal subject focus constructions.

Person	Somali (*keen*) Non-focused sentence	Somali (*keen*) Post-verbal subject focus	KM^Bu (*ʃeen*) Non-focused sentence	KM^Bu (*ʃeen*) Post-verbal subject focus
1SG	*keen-Ø-ay*	*keen-Ø-áy*	*ʃeen-Ø-í*	*ʃéen-Ø-ey*
2SG	*keen-t-ay*	*keen-Ø-áy*	*ʃeen-t-í*	*ʃéen-Ø-ey*
3SGM	*keen-Ø-ay*	*keen-Ø-áy*	*ʃeen-Ø-í*	*ʃéen-Ø-ey*
3SGF	*keen-t-ay*	*keen-t-áy*	*ʃeen-t-í*	*ʃéen-t-ey*
1PL	*keen-n-ay*	*keen-n-áy*	*ʃeen-n-í*	*ʃéen-n-ey*
2PL	*keen-t-ee-n*	*keen-Ø-áy*	*ʃeen-t-é-ŋ*	*ʃeen-t-é-ŋ*
3PL	*keen-Ø-ee-n*	*keen-Ø-áy*	*ʃeen-Ø-é-ŋ*	*ʃeen-Ø-é-ŋ*

Table 7 – Post-verbal Subject Focus in Somali and KM^Bu

In Somali, *wáxa(a)* can coalesce with subject clitic pronouns when a constituent other than the subject is in focus, or with negative and interrogative markers (Green, 2021: 304-308; Saeed, 1999: 194-196), but *wəli* does not do the same in KM^Bu.

In the object focus construction (56), a sentence in Somali exhibits the same characteristics as a non-focused sentence (57), except for word order.

(56) *Wux-uu*   *keenay*   *[lacag-t-ii].*

     FOC-3SG.M   bring-PST   money-T-RDEF

     'He brought [the money].' (adapted from Saeed, 1984: 181)   *Somali*

(57) *Haa, Cali   lacag-t-ii   w-uu   keenay.*

     yes   Ali   money-T-RDEF   DECL-3SG.M   bring.PST

     'Yes, Ali brought the money.' (adapted from Saeed, 1984: 178)   *Somali*

The marker of post-verbal focus *wəli* can also place into focus direct objects (58), indirect objects (59), and adjuncts (60), and they exhibit the same characteristics as non-focused sentences (61), except for the previously discussed word order.

(58) *usə́   wəli   áam-Ø-ey   [barəðə́-ð-ə].*

     3SG.M   FOC   eat-3SG.M-PST   potato-T-DEF

     'He ate [the potato].'   *KM^Bu*

(59) *annə́   wəli   síi-y-ey   ʊntə́-ð-ə   [éy-k-ə].*

     1SG   FOC   give-1SG-PST   food-T-DEF   dog-K-DEF

     'I gave the food [to the dog].'   *KM^Bu*

(60) *usə́   wəli   ʃéen-Ø-ey   hes-t-ə́   [halfə́-ð-ə].*

     3SG.M   FOC   bring-3SG.M-PST   music-T-DEF party-T-DEF

     'He brought the music to [the party].'   *KM^Bu*

(61) *usə́   barəðə́-ð-ə   aam-Ø-í.*

     3SG.M   potato-T-DEF   eat-3SG.M-PST

     'He ate the potato.'   *KM^Bu*

In these sentences, *wəli* places the indicated constituents into narrow focus. These sentences were elicited by providing the language consultant with some context and then asking, 'What did he eat?', 'Who did you give the food to?', and 'Where did he bring the music?', respectively.

Table 8 sums up the differences between post-verbal focus in KM[Bu] and Somali, both under subject and object focus. The important difference is that inflectional reduction in KM[Bu] post-verbal focus constructions is limited in that it affects only the second person singular.

Post-verbal Focus	Subject Focus		Object Focus	
Language	Somali	KM[Bu]	Somali	KM[Bu]
Focus Markers	*wáxa(a)*	*wəli*	*wáxa(a)*	*wəli*
Word Order	FOC+VC+XP	FOC+VC+XP	FOC+VC+XP	FOC+VC+XP
Reduced Subject-Verb Agreement	Yes	Yes (2SG only)	No	No
Coalescence with other elements	Yes	No	Yes	No

Table 8 – KM[Bu] and Somali Post-Verbal Subject and Object Focus

In post-verbal focus sentences in KM[Bu], the focused constituent must follow the VC, and the focus marker must precede the VC, while in non-focused sentences an XP can occur before

or after it. KM^{Bu} only exhibits reduced subject-verb agreement in the second person singular, and coalescence of *wəli* with other elements has not been observed.

Table 9 illustrates the differences between all focus constructions in KM^{Bu} and in Somali discussed above.

Focus	Subject Focus				Object Focus			
	Pre-verbal		Post-verbal		Pre-verbal		Post-verbal	
Language	Somali	KM^{Bu}	Somali	KM^{Bu}	Somali	KM^{Bu}	Somali	KM^{Bu}
Focus Markers	*báa / ayáa*	*yaa*	*wáxa*	*wəli*	*báa / ayáa*	*yaa*	*wáxa*	*wəli*
Word Order	XP+F+VC	XP+F+VC	F+VC+XP	F+VC+XP	XP+F+VC	XP+F+VC	F+VC+XP	F+VC+XP
Reduced Subject-Verb Agreement	Yes	No	Yes	Yes (only 2SG)	No	No	No	No
Coalescence with other elements	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No

Table 9 – Focus Constructions in KM^{Bu} and in Somali

3.3.2.2 KM^{Bai} and Somali

The data discussed in the previous section have been collected from a speaker of KM^{Bu}, and in this section, I turn to productions from a second speaker who, though raised in the same area as the first speaker, has a somewhat different linguistic background. The variation

between the two speakers is significant and must be explained, even if they both grew up in Dadaab, Kenya. The differences between them may ultimately stem from the fact that their parents are from Bu'aale and Baidoa, Somalia, respectively.

In Table 10, the realization of the Past Tense marker changes from *-i* to *-ey*, which is probably due to the insertion of a phonological boundary before focused constituent (Kanerva, 1990). There is also a difference in tone between non-focused and post-verbal focus sentences. While in the former tone is on the last syllable of the verb, the latter can either exhibit tone on the last or on the penultimate syllable of the verb.[15]

ʃeen- 'bring'	**Non-focused sentence**	**Post-verbal subject focus**
1SG	*ʃeen-Ø-í*	*ʃéen-Ø-ey*
2SG	*ʃeen-t-í*	*ʃéen-Ø-ey*
3SGM	*ʃeen-Ø-í*	*ʃéen-Ø-ey*
3SGF	*ʃeen-t-í*	*ʃéen-t-ey*
1PL	*ʃeen-n-í*	*ʃéen-Ø-ey*
2PL	*ʃeen-t-é-ŋ*	*ʃéen-Ø-ey*
3PL	*ʃeen-Ø-é-ŋ*	*ʃéen-Ø-ey*

Table 10 – Verb Paradigms in KM[Bai] Post-Verbal Subject Focus

Table 11 shows the relevant differences between subject-verb agreement in Somali (data taken from Saeed, 1984: 83) and KM[Bai] in post-verbal subject focus constructions.

---

[15] The position of tone in post-verbal focus sentences changes according to the shape of the penultimate syllable.

Person	Somali (*keen*) Non-focused sentence	Somali (*keen*) Post-verbal subject focus	KM[Bai] (*ʃeen*) Non-focused sentence	KM[Bai] (*ʃeen*) Post-verbal subject focus
1SG	*keen-Ø-ay*	*keen-Ø-áy*	*ʃeen-Ø-í*	*ʃéen-Ø-ey*
2SG	*keen-t-ay*	*keen-Ø-áy*	*ʃeen-t-í*	*ʃéen-Ø-ey*
3SGM	*keen-Ø-ay*	*keen-Ø-áy*	*ʃeen-Ø-í*	*ʃéen-Ø-ey*
3SGF	*keen-t-ay*	*keen-t-áy*	*ʃeen-t-í*	*ʃéen-t-ey*
1PL	*keen-n-ay*	*keen-n-áy*	*ʃeen-n-í*	*ʃéen-Ø-ey*
2PL	*keen-t-ee-n*	*keen-Ø-áy*	*ʃeen-t-é-ŋ*	*ʃéen-Ø-ey*
3PL	*keen-Ø-ee-n*	*keen-Ø-áy*	*ʃeen-Ø-é-ŋ*	*ʃéen-Ø-ey*

Table 11 – Post-verbal Subject Focus in Somali and KM[Bai]

Like in KM[Bu], in KM[Bai] *wəli* cannot coalesce with subject clitic pronouns, nor with negative and interrogative markers.

Table 12 shows the differences between post-verbal focus in KM[Bai] and in Somali, both under subject and object focus. The inflectional reduction in KM[Bai] post-verbal subject focus constructions affects all persons except for the third person singular feminine. This differs from KM[Bu], where the inflectional reduction is only observed in the second person singular.

Post-verbal Focus	Subject Focus		Object Focus	
Language	Somali	KM[Bai]	Somali	KM[Bai]
Focus Markers	*wáxa(a)*	*wəli*	*wáxa(a)*	*wəli*
Word Order	FOC+VC+XP	FOC+VC+XP	FOC+VC+XP	FOC+VC+XP
Reduced Subject-Verb Agreement	Yes	Yes (except for 3SG.F)	No	No
Coalescence with other elements	Yes	No	Yes	No

Table 12 – KM[Bai] and Somali Post-Verbal Subject and Object Focus

In post-verbal focus sentences in KM[Bai] the focused constituent must follow the VC, and the focus marker must precede the VC, while in non-focused sentences an XP can occur before or after it. Under subject focus, KM[Bai] only exhibits full subject-verb agreement in the third person singular feminine, and coalescence of *wəli* with other elements has not been observed. Table 13 sums up all the differences discussed so far between focus constructions in KM[Bai] and in Somali.

Focus	Subject Focus				Object Focus			
	Pre-verbal		Post-verbal		Pre-verbal		Post-verbal	
Language	Somali	KM^{Bai}	Somali	KM^{Bai}	Somali	KM^{Bai}	Somali	KM^{Bai}
Focus Markers	*báa / ayáa*	*yaa*	*wáxa*	*wəli*	*báa / ayáa*	*yaa*	*wáxa*	*wəli*
Word Order	XP+F+ VC	XP+F+ VC	F+VC+ XP	F+VC+ XP	XP+F+ VC	XP+F+ VC	F+VC+ XP	F+VC+ XP
Reduced Subject-Verb Agreement	Yes	No	Yes	Yes (except 3SG.F)	No	No	No	No
Coalescence with other elements	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No

Table 13 – Focus Constructions in KM^{Bai} and in Somali

3.4 Post-verbal focus in KM^{Bu} and in KM^{Bai}

While the basic characteristics of pre-verbal focus are the same in both KM^{Bu} and KM^{Bai}, post-verbal focus exhibits notable differences in subject-verb agreement. Table 14 shows both paradigms.

ʃeen- 'bring'	KM^Bu	KM^Bai
1SG	ʃéen-Ø-ey	ʃéen-Ø-ey
2SG	ʃéen-Ø-ey	ʃéen-Ø-ey
3SGM	ʃéen-Ø-ey	ʃéen-Ø-ey
3SGF	ʃéen-t-ey	ʃéen-t-ey
1PL	ʃéen-n-ey	ʃéen-Ø-ey
2PL	ʃeen-t-é-ŋ	ʃéen-Ø-ey
3PL	ʃeen-Ø-é-ŋ	ʃéen-Ø-ey

Table 14 – Post-verbal Subject Focus in the Past Tense

As seen here, the speaker of KM^Bai neutralizes all inflectional distinctions in past simple post-verbal subject focus, except for the third person feminine singular. The tense marker becomes *-ey* and tone shifts from the last to the penultimate syllable. This differs not only from the KM^Bu speaker, but also from Somali. While this pattern is indeed more akin to what is found in Somali, it is not identical to it. Somali's reduced inflectional paradigm maintains both third person singular feminine and first person plural inflection while neutralizing all other distinctions. With this overview of subject and object focus in two varieties of Maay now presented, I turn in the next section to provide an account of focus in both varieties.

Table 15 sums up the differences between focus constructions in KM^Bu and in KM^Bai. The only distinction that can be observed is in the subject-verb agreement in the post-verbal subject focus constructions.

Focus	Subject Focus				Object Focus			
	Pre-verbal		Post-verbal		Pre-verbal		Post-verbal	
Language	KM^Bu	KM^Bai	KM^Bu	KM^Bai	KM^Bu	KM^Bai	KM^Bu	KM^Bai
Focus Markers	*yaa*	*yaa*	*wəli*	*wəli*	*yaa*	*yaa*	*wəli*	*wəli*
Word Order	XP+F+VC	XP+F+VC	F+VC+XP	F+VC+XP	XP+F+VC	XP+F+VC	F+VC+XP	F+VC+XP
Reduced Subject-Verb Agreement	No	No	Yes (only 2SG)	Yes (except 3SG.F)	No	No	No	No
Coalescence with other elements	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

Table 15 – Focus Constructions in KM^Bu and in KM^Bai

3.5 An account of focus in KM^Bu and in KM^Bai

The comparisons between focus in the two Kenyan Maay varieties and in Somali showed significant similarities, but also key differences. The pre-verbal focus marker *yaa* does not cause any reduced subject-verb agreement as *báa* and *ayáa*, and *wáxa(a)* do in Somali under subject focus in the Past Tense. In the two Kenyan Maay varieties, the verb exhibits reduced agreement only when the marker of post-verbal focus *wəli* occurs in the sentence. However, under post-verbal subject focus, subject-verb agreement in KM^Bu is only reduced in the second person singular, while in KM^Bai the reduction involves the whole paradigm except for the third person singular feminine.
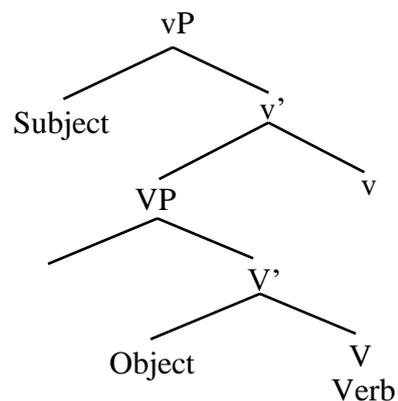
In order to initiate an analysis of focus, the status of DPs needs to be clarified. As previously stated, in Somali, full DPs in non-focused sentences are inserted in an extrasentential projection and are co-indexed with clitics, which are in argument position (Frascarelli, 2010). Such clitics are not allowed in subject focus constructions, so DPs cannot be co-indexed with them and exhibit morphological subject marking, which leads to reduced subject-verb agreement. However, in the two Kenyan Maay varieties, object clitics are not obligatory, or at least they do not have to be phonologically realized, and subject clitics never occur. There could be two ways to explain this difference. Either subject and object clitics are phonologically null arguments and DPs are adjuncts, or DPs are in argument position. In the next section, I explain why I took into consideration but did not adopt the phonologically null argument hypothesis.

The Kenyan Maay data show that it is a language where object clitics can be omitted, which could support the hypothesis that DPs are adjuncts co-indexed with clitics that can be phonologically null. Frascarelli (2010) states that the 'zero form' for clitics is common in Cushitic languages. However, since subject clitics never occur in Kenyan Maay, it would not be plausible to posit that the whole paradigm is phonologically null. In Somali, only a very limited number of cells is a 'zero form' (object clitics in the third person singular and plural) in the clitic paradigm (Frascarelli, 2010), but the others are all phonologically realized. Positing the existence of phonologically null clitics is also different than having a *pro* in certain syntactic positions, because *pro* replaces a subject that can be phonologically realized, while subject clitics in Kenyan Maay never occur at PF. Even though clitics have been analyzed as arguments in a closely related language like Somali, there is not enough evidence to base my analysis of focus on the phonologically null clitic hypothesis in the two varieties of Kenyan Maay. Therefore, the next section will explore the argument DP hypothesis.

3.5.1 The Argument DP Hypothesis

The other possible solution is analyzing DPs as arguments and assume that movement, and
not external merge operations, is involved. The Argument DP Hypothesis can account for
three main facts about Kenyan Maay. First, it explains why, unlike Somali, subject clitics are
absent and object clitics are optional in Kenyan Maay. In Somali, clitics receive theta roles,
but not in Kenyan Maay, so their absence (subject clitics) or optionality (object clitics) is
plausible, because the Theta-Criterion is fulfilled by DPs. The syntactic structure in (62)
shows the position where I assume subject, object, and verb are base generated.

(62) Basic SOV syntactic structure

```
                    vP
                  /    \
            Subject     v'
                      /    \
                    VP      v
                  /    \
                        V'
                      /    \
                 Object     V
                            Verb
```

The subject is base generated in the left-hand Specifier of vP, where it is assigned its external
agent theta role. The object is base generated as a complement of V, where it receives its
internal theta role. The syntactic structure in (63) exemplifies the main movement operations
for subject and verb in a non-focused sentence in both KM[Bu] and KM[Bai], which exhibit the
same characteristics in such constructions.

(63) Non-focused sentence (KM[Bu] and KM[Bai])

```
                          AgrP
                 ┌─────────┴──────────┐
              Subjectⱼ              Agr'
                          ┌──────────┴──────────────┐
                        TP                          Agr
                 ┌───────┴────────┐               Verbᵢ
                tⱼ                T'
                          ┌────────┴────────┐
                        AgrP                T
                 ┌────────┴────────┐        tᵢ
                tⱼ               Agr'
                          ┌────────┴────────┐
                        vP                 Agr
                 ┌───────┴────────┐         tᵢ
                tⱼ               v'
                          ┌────────┴────┐
                        VP              v
                    ┌────┴────┐         tᵢ
                   V'
              ┌────┴────┐
           Object       V
                        tᵢ
```
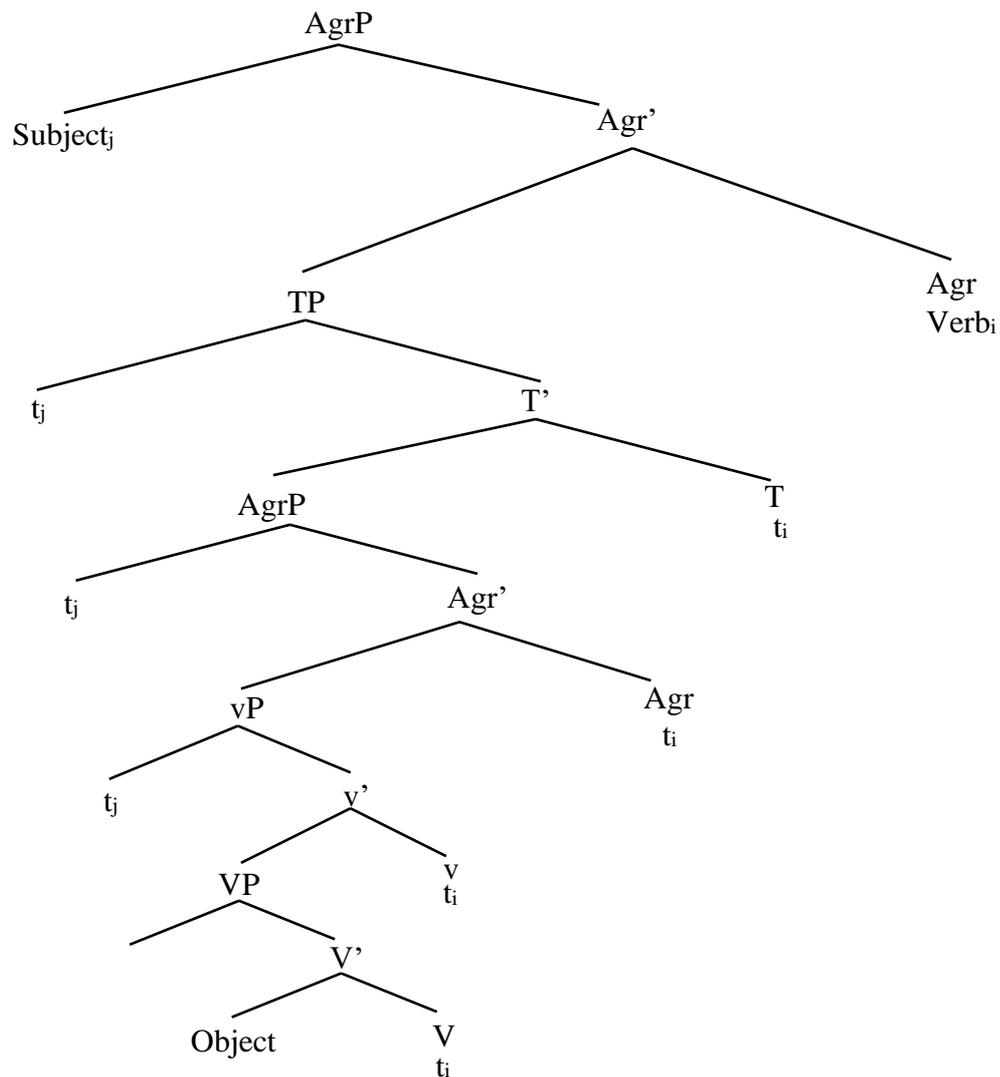
Subject and verb need to be in a Spec-Head relation in all the projections because each one

encodes different features in the linear order shown in (63). The Agreement projection above

the TP encodes grammatical gender and number of first (at LF), second, and third (masculine

at LF and feminine at PF) person singular, and of first and second person plural. If the subject

is second or third person plural, an additional Agreement projection below the TP has to be

activated in order to accommodate agreement in number only.

The Argument DP Hypothesis could also explain free word order. We can assume that certain

DPs are Given Topics (see Frascarelli & Puglielli (2009) for Somali) which signal

information that was already known. Sentence (64) shows that the object ('the fish') is probably in a Topic position within the CP, which is higher than the subject position. This means that the object received its theta role in VP and then moved to the Specifier of a TopP in CP.

(64) *məlái-k-ə   annə́   aam-Ø-í.*

    fish-K-DEF 1SG   eat-1SG-PST

    'I ate the fish.'   *Kenyan Maay*

According to Svolacchia, Mereu & Puglielli (1995), aftertopics are constituents that occur post-verbally which are not signaled by a focus marker and are also used to communicate known information. Sentence (65) shows an example of aftertopic ('the fish'), which was base generated in VP and then moved to the Specifier of a lower TopP within the TP (Belletti, 2002). The post-verbal Topic seems to not be internal as (64), but external to the clause, and right-adjoins to the TopP in the left periphery. However, the difference between internal and external Topics in Kenyan Maay needs to be researched further.

(65) *annə́ aam-Ø-í   məlái-k-ə.*

    1SG eat-1SG-PST fish-K-DET

    'I ate the fish.'   *Kenyan Maay*

The other word orders can be derived in the same way, if we assume that the language makes use of both the left periphery in CP (Rizzi, 1997) and the 'clause internal periphery' in TP (Belletti, 2002).

The third phenomenon that can be accounted for by the Argument DP Hypothesis is focus in both KM[Bu] and in KM[Bai]. If DPs are arguments, the focused constituent will be base generated in the Specifier of vP (subject) or as a complement of V within the VP (object) and then raise to FocP to check the focus feature in Foc either through movement (pre-verbal focus) or adjunction to the Specifier of FocP (post-verbal focus). This hypothesis helps account for pre-verbal and post-verbal focus constructions, as well as for the differences the two varieties exhibit in subject-verb agreement under post-verbal subject focus.

Since both varieties exhibit the same syntactic structure for pre-verbal focus constructions, they will both be referred to as 'Kenyan Maay' in the next Section. However, post-verbal subject focus constructions in KM[Bu] and in KM[Bai] differ significantly, and they will be dealt with in two distinct Sections.

3.5.2 Pre-verbal focus in Kenyan Maay

In order to analyze pre-verbal focus in Kenyan Maay, several proposals have been taken into consideration. The first follows Rizzi's (1997) analysis of the structure of the left-periphery and Belletti's (2002) clause internal periphery proposal. According to Rizzi (1997), a constituent with focus (or topic) features is required to be in a Spec-Head configuration with Foc (or Top). Therefore, in Kenyan Maay, the focused constituent moves to the Specifier of FocP from a position within the TP, driven by a focus feature that needs to be checked against the marker of pre-verbal focus in Foc. The marker of pre-verbal focus *yaa* may be base generated in Foc within the clause internal periphery and then move to the head of FocP

within the left periphery,[16] where it would precede the VC. In order to account for this, I assume that the FocP is left-headed (66).

(66) Movement of the marker of pre-verbal focus to the left-headed FocP

```
TopP
   \
    Top
   /    \
 FocP    Top'
  /   \
       Foc'
      /     \
    Foc      TopP
    yaa_i   /    \
           AgrP   Top
          /    \
              Agr'
             /     \
           TP       Agr
          /   \
              T'
             /    \
          AgrP      T
         /    \
             Agr'
            /     \
         FocP      Agr
        /    \
             Foc'
            /     \
          Foc      vP
          t_i     /   \
                 VP    v'
                /    \
                    VP    v
                   /   \
                        V
                       /  \
                           V
```
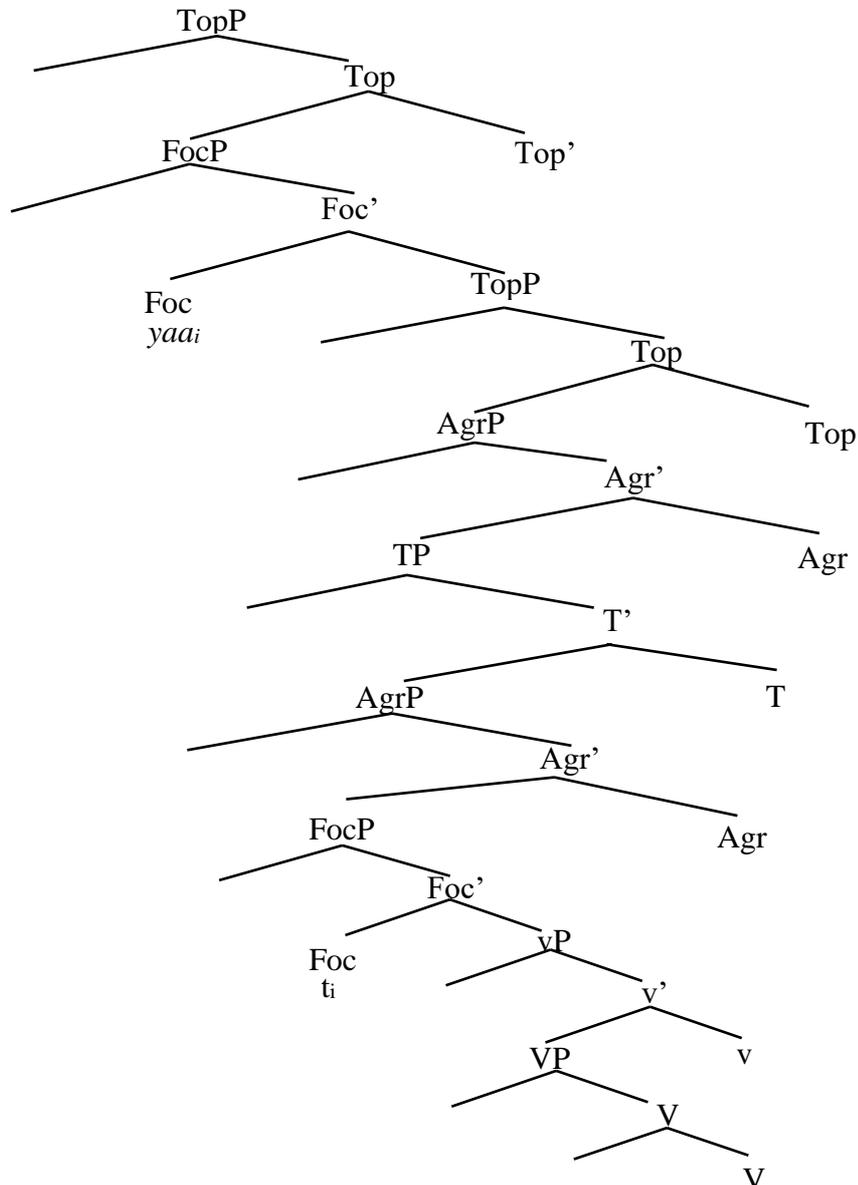
With pre-verbal subject focus, subject-verb agreement is realized in both varieties of Kenyan Maay because, under this analysis, the subject is base generated in the Specifier of vP. In order to be in a Spec-Head relation with the focus marker *yaa*, the subject moves to the

---

[16] If a constituent raises to FocP within the left periphery, it can be interpreted as focus fronting, which Rizzi (1997) argues is only allowed when focus is contrastive and does not include new information (see sentence 72).

Specifier of the clause internal FocP. After this, it raises to the Specifier of the lower AgrP for number agreement (although number marking is only phonologically realized for second and third person plural). Then, it moves to the Specifier of TP to receive its syntactic Case, and to the Specifier of AgrP for grammatical gender and person agreement. Finally, it raises to the Specifier of FocP with the focus marker *yaa* to check its Focus feature. These movements (67) explain why, unlike Somali, subject-verb agreement is not reduced under pre-verbal subject focus in Kenyan Maay.

(67) Pre-verbal subject focus
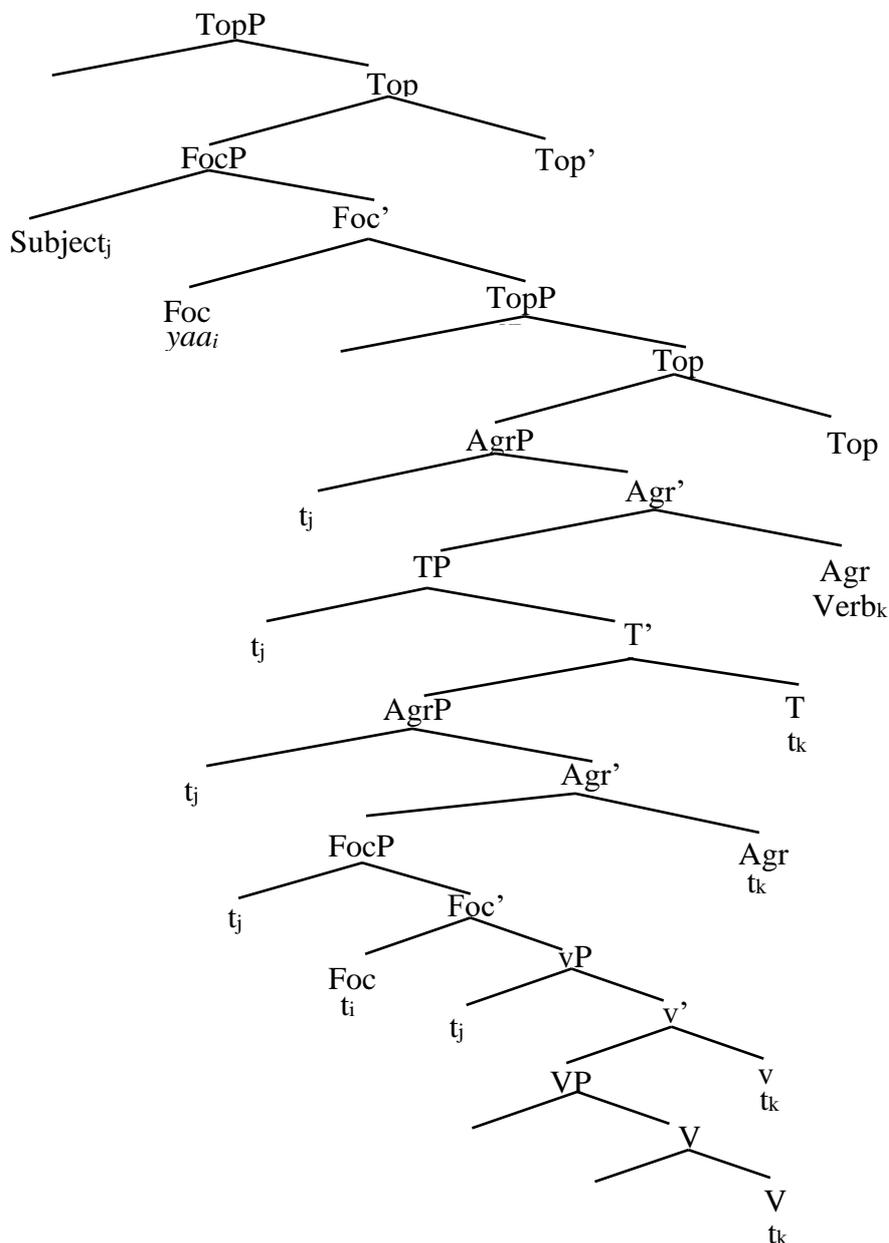
When an object is in focus, it is base generated in VP, where it also receives its theta role, and it moves to the Specifier of the clause internal FocP to be in a Spec-Head relation with the focus marker *yaa*. In order to check its Focus feature, the object moves to the Specifier of the higher FocP. The syntactic structure in (68) exemplifies these movements.

(68) Pre-verbal object focus

```
TopP
├── 
└── Top
    ├── FocP
    │   ├── Objectⱼ
    │   └── Foc'
    │       ├── Foc
    │       │   yaaᵢ
    │       └── TopP
    │           ├── 
    │           └── Top
    │               ├── AgrP
    │               │   ├── 
    │               │   └── Agr'
    │               │       ├── TP
    │               │       │   ├── 
    │               │       │   └── T'
    │               │       │       ├── AgrP
    │               │       │       │   ├── 
    │               │       │       │   └── Agr'
    │               │       │       │       ├── FocP
    │               │       │       │       │   ├── tⱼ
    │               │       │       │       │   └── Foc'
    │               │       │       │       │       ├── Foc
    │               │       │       │       │       │   tᵢ
    │               │       │       │       │       └── vP
    │               │       │       │       │           ├── 
    │               │       │       │       │           └── v'
    │               │       │       │       │               ├── VP
    │               │       │       │       │               │   ├── 
    │               │       │       │       │               │   └── V
    │               │       │       │       │               │       ├── tⱼ
    │               │       │       │       │               │       └── V
    │               │       │       │       │               └── v
    │               │       │       │       └── Agr
    │               │       │       └── T
    │               │       └── Agr
    │               └── Top
    └── Top'
```
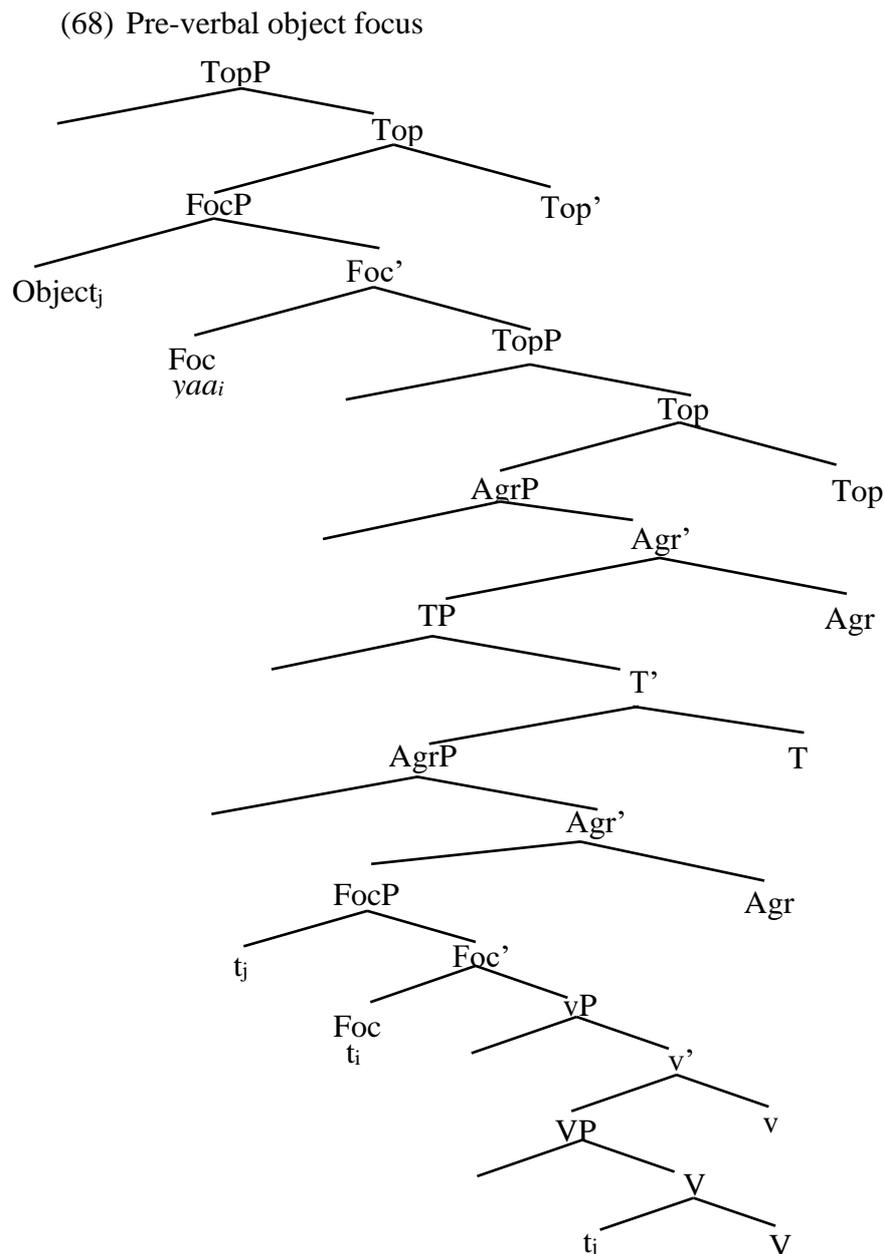
Other types of constituents that can be focused by *yaa* (for instance, indirect and oblique objects) would undergo the same movements shown in (68) from the position where they are base generated.

The second proposal considered for the analysis of pre-verbal focus in Kenyan Maay follows Horvath (2007). For Hungarian, Horvath (2007) proposes that the focused constituent only undergoes movement if exhaustive identification is involved (69), otherwise it occurs *in situ* (70), and it is considered non-exhaustive, i.e., information focus.

(69) *Mari   cask   [a fogadásról]   késett   el.*

Mary.NOM only   the reception.from   late.was   away

'Mary was late only for [the reception].' (adapted from Horvath, 2007) *Hungarian*

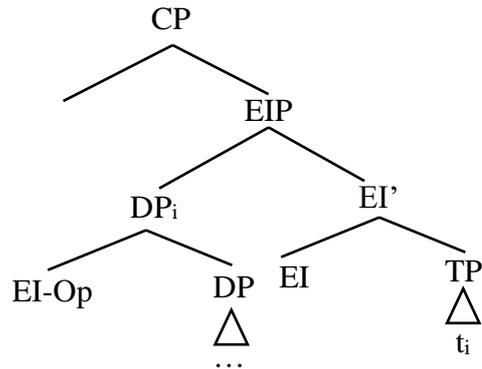(70) *Mari   elkésett   még   [az   esküvőjéről]   is.*

Mary.NOM away.late.was yet   the   wedding.her.from   also

'Mary was late even for [her wedding].' (adapted from Horvath, 2007) *Hungarian*

With exhaustive identification, Horvath (2007) means that the predicate cannot refer to other members within the set of alternatives, so exclusion of a subset is obligatory. For focused constituents that encode exhaustive identification, Horvath (2007) assumes the existence of a quantificational Exhaustive Identification operator (EI-Op), which is what triggers focus movement instead of a Focus feature. According to Horvath (2007), Focus does not need to be associated with such operator. When it does, the Focus is interpreted as exhaustive (also identificational or contrastive). When it does not, it is interpreted as information Focus and it occurs *in situ*. Horvath's (2007) proposal is shown in the structure in (71), where the operator occurs between CP and TP.

(71) EI-Op (adapted from Horvath, 2007)

```
                    CP
                   /  \
                  /    EIP
                 /    /    \
               DPᵢ         EI'
              /   \        /  \
          EI-Op   DP   EI     TP
                  △                △
                  …                 tᵢ
```

Under this analysis, Focus would not be encoded in the syntax, but the EI-Op would associate with it and would need the focused constituent in its c-command domain.

Although much more evidence would be needed to argue for this analysis, some data I have access to may be used to support it. In (72b), the marker of pre-verbal focus *yaa* seems to signal contrastive focus, which could also be interpreted as exhaustive since the set of alternatives previously presented in the discourse included both John and Mary but only one member ('Mary') is focused and the other one is excluded ('John').

(72) a. *[John iyi   Mary] yaa   koren-Ø-é-ŋ   kaár-k-ə   boostá-ð-ə?*

       John   or   Mary FOC   write-3-PST-PL   card-K-DEF   post-T-DEF

       'Did [John or Mary] write the postcard?'   *Kenyan Maay*

    b. *[Mary]   yaa   kor-t-í   kaár-k-ə   boostá-ð-ə.*

       Mary   FOC   write-3SG.F-PST   card-K-DEF   post-T-DEF

       'Mary wrote the postcard.'   *Kenyan Maay*

Following Horvath's (2007) analysis, the EI-Op would associate with the focused constituent 'Mary' and need it in its c-command domain, as shown in (71). The marker of pre-verbal focus *yaa* would occupy the head of EIP.

3.5.3 Post-verbal focus in KM[Bu]

In order to analyze post-verbal focus in KM[Bu], I explored three possible hypotheses. The first two possibilities still involve movement to the left periphery as proposed by Rizzi (1997) but differ in the internal structure of FocP. The first hypothesis assumes that FocP has a right-hand specifier to which the focused constituent raises. This solution would be coherent with pre-verbal focus since it would assume the same syntactic movements for the focused constituent, i.e., to the Specifier of FocP. However, it would be necessary to posit the existence of a Focus projection with two different internal structures, one for pre-verbal and one for post-verbal focus constructions. The former would exhibit a left-hand specifier, while the latter would have a right-hand specifier. I will not adopt this solution because right-hand Specifiers do not seem to be as frequent as left-hand ones in SOV languages, and it probably is a costly operation to posit two different Specifier positions for the same projection.

The second possibility is rightward adjunction of the focused constituent to FocP. According to Kornfilt (2005), movements driven by information structure do not necessarily have to be strictly syntactic movements, with all their constraints.[17] Since right adjunction of the focused constituent is driven by focus, I will assume that this is a more p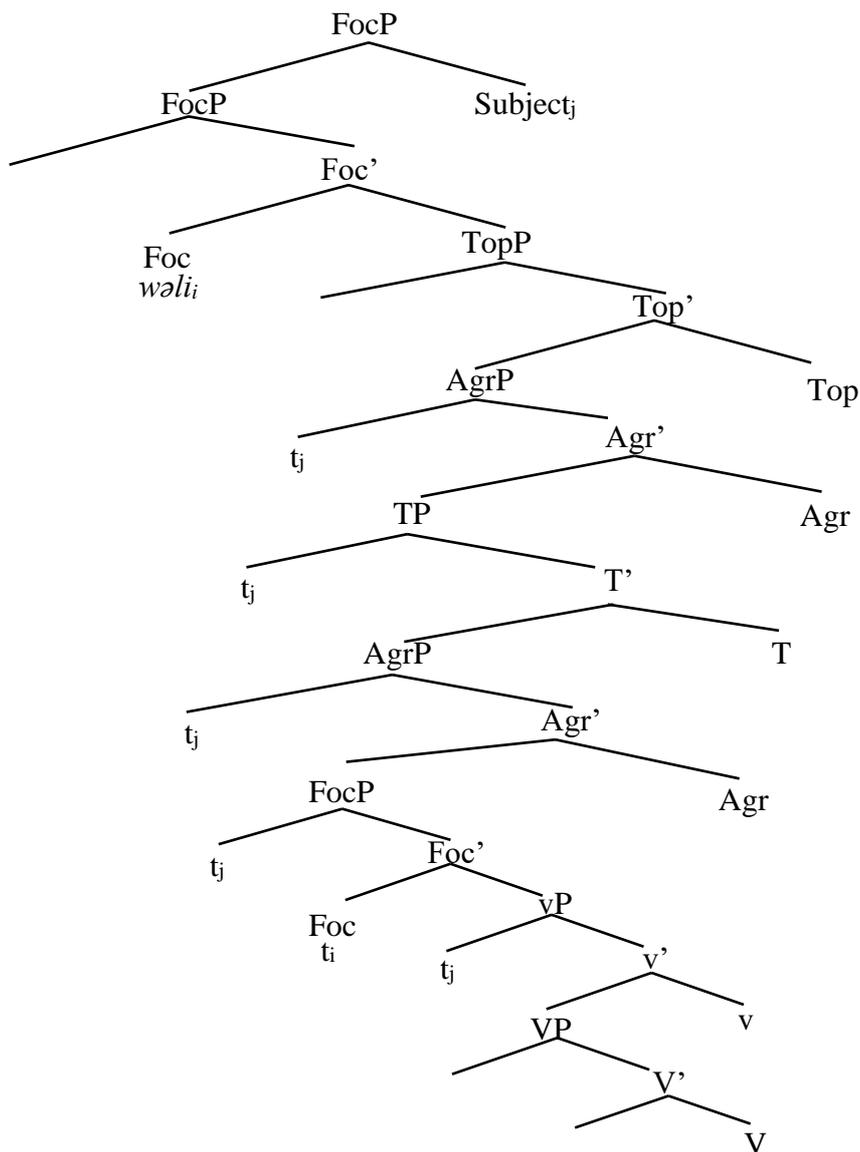lausible solution. Furthermore, Otsuka (2005) maintains that adjunction is costless when it generates a structure that is consistent with the language's parameters. The structure in (73) shows that rightward

---

[17] However, Kornfilt's (2005) work does include scope judgements, which are not available for the two varieties of Kenyan Maay, so my assumptions are simply based on the data I have.

adjunction would not change the internal structure of FocP, because it would still contain a left-hand specifier, which is needed for constituents placed into focus by *yaa*. As with pre-verbal focus, the marker of post-verbal focus *wəli* also moves to FocP within the CP from a clause internal periphery (Belletti, 2002).

(73) Rightward adjunction of the focused constituent

```
                          FocP
                     ┌──────┴───────┐
                   FocP          Subject_j
              ┌──────┴──────┐
           (spec)         Foc'
                     ┌──────┴──────┐
                   Foc           TopP
                   wəli_i    ┌─────┴──────┐
                          (spec)        Top'
                              ┌───────────┴──────────┐
                            AgrP                     Top
                        ┌────┴────┐
                       t_j       Agr'
                            ┌──────┴──────┐
                           TP            Agr
                       ┌────┴────┐
                      t_j        T'
                           ┌──────┴──────┐
                         AgrP             T
                     ┌────┴────┐
                    t_j       Agr'
                         ┌──────┴──────┐
                       FocP            Agr
                   ┌────┴────┐
                  t_j       Foc'
                       ┌─────┴─────┐
                     Foc          vP
                     t_i      ┌────┴────┐
                             t_j        v'
                                   ┌─────┴─────┐
                                  VP           v
                              ┌────┴────┐
                                        V'
                                   ┌─────┴─────┐
                                             V
```

In KM^Bu, the post-verbal focused constituent undergoes adjunction to the right of FocP. Since verb agreement is not reduced under subject focus, the subject would raise to all the positions to be in a Spec-Head relation with the verb, which encodes person and number markers. The same movements were also assumed for pre-verbal focus in (67). From the higher AgrP, the

subject undergoes adjunction to the right of FocP (73).[18] Under object focus, the focused

constituent would also undergo rightward adjunction to the Specifier of FocP, but from the

position where it is base generated within the VP, instead of a derived position as the subject.

The third possible analysis follows Horvath's (2007) proposal for *in situ* focus in Hungarian.

When focus in non-exhaustive, it is not associated with the EI-Op and it can be interpreted as

information focus which occurs *in situ* post-verbally (Horvath, 2007). Some evidence in

KM[Bu] might support this hypothesis. In (74b), the speaker introduced new information by

stating what Mary wrote, which is information that had not been presented previously in the

discourse.

(74) a. *[Mary]*   *yaa*   *kor-t-í*   *warká-ð-ə?*

       Mary   FOC   write-3SG.F-PST   letter-T-DEF

       'Did [Mary] write the letter?'   *Kenyan Maay*

   b. *[John]*   *yaa*   *kor-Ø-í*   *warká-ð-ə*   *laakin Mary wəli*

       John   FOC   write-3SG.M-PST letter-T-DEF but   Mary FOC

       kór-t-ey   *[kaár-k-ə   boostá-ð-ə].*

       write-3SG.F-PST   card-K-DEF   post-T-DEF

       '[John] wrote the letter, but Mary wrote [the postcard].'   *Kenyan Maay*

This data might support the hypothesis that there is no movement of the focused constituent,

which would probably occur in a FocP within the TP (Belletti, 2002).

---

[18] This structure also incorrectly predicts that an XP could occupy the Specifier of FocP, while a YP right-adjoins to FocP. However, information-structural considerations could filter out the focus that does not fit the context.

These proposals have been presented in an attempt to explain the syntactic behavior of post-verbal focus in KM[Bu]. However, subject-verb agreement is another aspect of post-verbal focus that needs to be explained in this variety. In KM[Bu], only the second person singular does not show agreement on the verb under subject focus. While it would not be plausible to posit a different syntactic structure only to explain the behavior of the second person singular, it is possible that this is a morphophonological process. The second person singular marker -*t*- that occurs in non-focused sentences or under object focus and the null marker that occurs under subject focus could, therefore, be allomorphs because they are in complementary distribution. Table 16 illustrates the morphological rules that involve person marking for the whole verb paradigm under subject focus.

Subject	Rule
1SG	1SG $\rightarrow$ $\emptyset$ / *wəli* _____ (XP) Subj$_{1SG}$
2SG	2SG $\rightarrow$ $\emptyset$ / *wəli* _____ (XP) Subj$_{2SG}$
3SG.M	3SG.M $\rightarrow$ $\emptyset$ / *wəli* _____ (XP) Subj$_{3SG.M}$
3SG.F	3SG.F $\rightarrow$ *t* / *wəli* _____ (XP) Subj$_{3SG.F}$
1PL	1PL $\rightarrow$ *n* / *wəli* _____ (XP) Subj$_{1PL}$
2PL	2[19] $\rightarrow$ *t* / *wəli* _____ (XP) Subj$_{2PL}$
3PL	3 $\rightarrow$ $\emptyset$ / *wəli* _____ (XP) Subj$_{3PL}$

Table 16 – Morphological rules for post-verbal subject focus

The rule in (75) shows that, if a second person singular subject is under post-verbal focus, the second person marker becomes phonologically null if the verb occurs before an optional XP and a second person singular subject.

---

[19] Only person marking was included. Person and number marking do not change in the second and third person plural.

(75) 2SG → ∅ / *wəli* _____ (XP) Subj$_{2SG}$

The licensing of a phonologically null form may be linked to the fact that second person

singular features are the easiest to recover because contextual cues (e.g., talking directly to

another person) disambiguate the interpretation of a sentence.

3.5.4 Post-verbal focus in KM^{Bai}

The three proposals presented for post-verbal focus in KM^{Bu} can also be used to account for

post-verbal object focus in KM^{Bai}. The syntactic structure of post-verbal object focus in

KM^{Bai} would be identical to that of KM^{Bu}'s (68). However, post-verbal subject focus would

require further explanation, since subject-verb agreement is reduced for all persons except for

the third person singular feminine. Table 17 shows morphological rules for all persons in

post-verbal subject focus constructions.

Subject	Rule
1SG	1SG → ∅ / *wəli* _____ (XP) Subj$_{1SG}$
2SG	2SG → ∅ / *wəli* _____ (XP) Subj$_{2SG}$
3SG.M	3SG.M → ∅ / *wəli* _____ (XP) Subj$_{3SG.M}$
3SG.F	3SG.F → *t* / *wəli* _____ (XP) Subj$_{3SG.F}$
1PL	1PL → ∅ / *wəli* _____ (XP) Subj$_{1PL}$
2PL	2PL → ∅ / *wəli* _____ (XP) Subj$_{2PL}$
3PL	3PL → ∅ / *wəli* _____ (XP) Subj$_{3PL}$

Table 17 – Morphological rules for post-verbal subject focus

The morphological rule in (76) states that, if a third person singular feminine subject is under focus, the verb includes *-t-*, the grammatical gender marker.

(76) 3SG.F → *t* / *wəli* _____ (XP) Subj₃SG.F

Table 18 shows that this can be modeled by having one rule for the second person singular and another one as the elsewhere form.

Subject	Rule
3SG.F	3SG.F → *t* / *wəli* _____ (XP) Subj₃SG.F
Elsewhere	elsewhere → ∅ / *wəli* _____ (XP) Subj

Table 18 – Two morphological rules for post-verbal subject focus

The movement of the focused subject could be analyzed as wh-subject extraction, as Brandi and Cordin (1989) suggested for Trentino, which does not exhibit an impersonal clitic preverbally as Fiorentino. In Trentino, when the wh-subject is located in the post-verbal position, agreement between the subject and the verb is not possible (77a), so the default third person singular is used instead. However, this type of agreement is possible in a closely related language such as Italian (77b).

(77) a.　　*E'*　　　　　　*vegnú*　　　　　　*qualche*　　　*putel-a.*

　　　　　　be.3SG　　　come.PST.PART　　some　　　　girl-SG.F

　　　　　　'Some girls came.' (adapted from Brandi and Cordin, 1989: 115) *Trentino*

b.　*E'*　　　　*venut-a*　　　　　*qualche*　　　*ragazz-a.*

　　be.3SG　　　come.PST.PART-SG.F　　some　　　girl-SG.F

　　'Some girls came.'　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　*Italian*

This may be considered to be similar to what occurs with post-verbal subject focus in KM[Bai], where I assume that subject-verb agreement could be reduced for two different reasons that are associated with the hypotheses discussed above for KM[Bu]. The first is because the subject is base generated in the specifier of vP and then undergoes rightward adjunction to FocP in CP (as per the second hypothesis presented in Section 3.5.3 for KM[Bu]) instead of raising to all the positions as subjects do under pre-verbal focus. The second reason is because the focused subject might occur *in situ* (following Horvath's, 2007 analysis presented in Section 3.5.3) within the clause internal periphery (Belletti, 2002) and does not raise to any agreement positions. The focused subject would not move to TP or to AgrP to check its agreement features, as it does in KM[Bu]. The presence of subject-verb agreement in the third person singular feminine could instead be due to the fact that the language prefers to maintain certain features of marked forms.

4. Discussion

In order to account for pre-verbal focus in both Kenyan Maay varieties, two proposals have been taken into consideration.

1. Movement of the focused constituent to a Focus projection within the left periphery. This analysis follows Rizzi (1997) and assumes that the focused constituent moves to the Specifier of FocP because it encodes a Focus feature which needs to be checked against Foc, a position occupied by the marker of pre-verbal focus *yaa*.

2. Movement of the focused constituent to a quantificational Exhaustive Identification operator (EI-Op). This proposal follows Horvath's (2007) analysis of focus in Hungarian. Some data in Kenyan Maay (72) show that the constituent placed into focus by *yaa* could be interpreted as exhaustive focus, which would associate with the EI-Op and occupy the Specifier of EIP.

In order to account for post-verbal focus, three different syntactic structures have been taken into consideration. These structures can be adopted to account for both Kenyan Maay varieties, but subject-verb agreement will change according to the movement of the focused constituent, which is different in the two varieties.

1. Movement of the focused constituent to a right-hand Specifier in FocP. This solution posits the existence of a Focus projection in CP with two different internal structures, one for pre-verbal (left-hand Specifier) and one for post-verbal (right-hand Specifier) focus constructions. It was deemed unsuitable because the structure of FocP should be consistent throughout this analysis.

2. Rightward adjunction of the focused constituent to FocP. This solution was preferred over the first one because rightward adjunction would not change the internal structure of FocP, as it would still contain a left-hand specifier, which is needed for constituents placed into focus by *yaa*.

3. *In situ* focus. When focus in non-exhaustive, it is not associated with the EI-Op and it can be interpreted as information focus, which occurs *in situ* post-verbally (Horvath, 2007). This might be supported by some evidence in KM[Bu] (74), where the marker of post-verbal focus *wəli* places into focus a constituent that signals new information.

Although Horvath's (2007) proposal would help interpret the differences between pre-verbal and post-verbal focus in Kenyan Maay in terms of exhaustivity, I currently do not have enough evidence to adopt this analysis. I take Horvath's (2007) proposal as a starting point for my future research, where I will make sure I gather the necessary data to test this theory accurately. For this reason, in this thesis I assume Rizzi's (1997) analysis to account for the syntactic structures of both pre-verbal and post-verbal focus, where movement of the focused constituent is driven by a Focus feature. In Kenyan Maay, this Focus feature has to be checked against the phonetically realized focus markers *yaa* (pre-verbal focus) or *wəli* (post-verbal focus) in Foc.

Under pre-verbal object focus in both varieties of Kenyan Maay, the focused constituent moves from the position where it was base generated to the Specifier of FocP within the CP. Thus, the focused constituent enters a Spec-Head relation with Foc, which is occupied by *yaa*, and it needs to check its Focus feature against it. If the subject is in focus, it raises to all the intermediate positions to also enter a Spec-Head relation with the verb for agreement and tense purposes before moving to the Specifier of FocP.

Under post-verbal focus in KM[Bu], the focused constituent undergoes right-adjunction to FocP either from the position where it was base generated (e.g., if it is a direct or an indirect object) or from the higher AgrP (e.g., if it is a subject), to which it raises for agreement purposes. In this position, the focused constituent needs to check its Focus feature against *wəli*, which is in Foc. In KM[Bu], the second person singular marker *-t-* does not occur on the verb under subject focus, so I assume that the phonologically null person marker and *-t-* are allomorphs. A phonologically null person marker might be licensed under subject focus because contextual cues (e.g., talking directly to another person) would make the second person singular features easier to recover.

In KM[Bai], the constituent placed into focus by *wəli* undergoes right adjunction to FocP from the position where it was base generated, so it does not raise to any intermediate positions for agreement purposes, which results in subject-verb agreement reduction. In KM[Bai], the person marker *-t-* only occurs in verbs in the third person singular feminine, which might be due to the fact that the language wants to preserve its markedness.

4.1 Future research

The work presented thus far is only a preliminary account of focus in Kenyan Maay. There are several topics I plan on further exploring. First, as previously mentioned, scope judgements are currently not available in the two varieties of Kenyan Maay, and they are necessary to corroborate the claims made about rightward adjunction and focus constructions in general.

Secondly, more work is needed to understand if there is any difference in the type of focus

the two focus markers encode in order to check if Horvath's (2007) analysis of focus in

Hungarian could also account for focus in Kenyan Maay. The data in (78) and (79) suggest

that *yaa* could be used as corrective or contrastive focus, whereas *wəli* in (78b) seems to only

focus new information.

(78) a.   *[Mary]*   *yaa*   *kor-t-í*   *warká-ð-ə?*

          Mary   FOC   write-3SG.F-PST   letter-T-DEF

          'Did [Mary] write the letter?'   *Kenyan Maay*

     b.   *[John]*   *yaa*   *kor-Ø-í*   *warká-ð-ə*   *laakin Mary wəli*

          John   FOC   write-3SG.M-PST   letter-T-DEF   but   Mary   FOC

          kór-t-ey   *[kaár-k-ə*   *boostá-ð-ə].*

          write-3SG.F-PST   card-K-DEF   post-T-DEF

          '[John] wrote the letter, but Mary wrote [the postcard].'   *Kenyan Maay*

(79) a.   *[John iyi*   *Mary] yaa*   *koren-Ø-é-ŋ*   *kaár-k-ə*   *boostá-ð-ə?*

          John   or   Mary   FOC   write-3-PST-PL   card-K-DEF   post-T-DEF

          'Did [John or Mary] write the postcard?'   *Kenyan Maay*

     b.   *[Mary]*   *yaa*   *kor-t-í*   *kaár-k-ə*   *boostá-ð-ə.*

          Mary   FOC   write-3SG.F-PST   card-K-DEF   post-T-DEF

          'Mary wrote the postcard.'   *Kenyan Maay*

These facts should be further analyzed and checked against additional data from multiple speakers in order to make more precise generalizations.

Related to this, is the presence of both focus markers in the same sentence. Both *yaa* and *wəli* can occur in the same sentence, but when doing so, they must place two different phrasal elements into focus. This resembles what occurs in Somali (Green, 2021: 336; Tosco, 2002: 39), and, thus far, it has only been observed in KM[Bu].

Thirdly, I plan to explore other types of clauses, and in particular relative clauses because, in Somali, they exhibit the same reduced verb paradigm observed for subject focus constructions. Embedded clauses would also need further investigation because the data collected so far show that they can be placed into focus by *wəli* (82).

(80) *annə́ wəli éxr-Ø-ey   [ɪntɪ fəras-Ø-ɪn-ə́]*.

    1SG FOC say-1SG-PRES   that   be.happy-1SG-STV-PRES

    'I say that I am happy.'   *Kenyan Maay*

Finally, working with more language consultants who speak the Bu'aale and Baidoa varieties will be necessary to make more precise generalizations. In particular, one of my goals is to continue exploring tone and analyze it.

Also, more evidence is needed to further explain the two solutions of right adjunction and right-hand specifier. For instance, it would be helpful to obtain grammatical and ungrammatical sentences that contain wh- elements to check what movements they are allowed.

Appendix A: conversation

A: Hello! How are you?

B: Hi! I am good. How are you?

A: I am good but tired. What did you do yesterday?

B: I went to school. And you?

A: I went to my grandma's house. She gave me a lot of food.

B: Great! See you!

A: Bye!

bahaj   fejle-t-ə́

hello   be.good-2SG-PRES

'Hello! How are you?

(annə́) fejlah-Ø-á   *sehek-t-ə́*   *aðə́*

1SG   be.good-1SG-PRES   be-2SG-PRES   2SG

I am good. How are you?

(annə́)   feilah-Ø-á   *laakin delən-Ø-ə́*

1SG   be-1SG-PRES   but   be.tired-1SG-PRES

I am good but tired.

ʃaley   aðə́   may   samey-t-í

yesterday   2SG   what   do-2SG-PST

What did you do yesterday?

annə́ skúlə   eð-Ø-í

1SG   school   go-1SG-PST

I went to school.

aðə́ nə?

2SG   too

And you?

annə́ wəli éð-Ø-ey   gurú-ɣ-ii   awó-ð-ey

1SG   FOC   go-1SG-PST   house-K-RDEF   grandma-T-my

I went to my grandma's house.

yé   wəli i   síi-ð-ey   untə́ bəðən

3SG.F   FOC   1SG.OBJ give-3SG.F-PST   food   much

She gave me a lot of food.

kataru   arag dəmbə

great   see   soon

Great! See you soon!

mahsaləm.

bye

Bye!'

References

Aboh, E. (2016). Information Structure: A Cartographic Perspective. In C. Féry, and S. Ishihara (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Information Structure*, 147–164. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Andrzejewski, B. W. (1968). Inflectional characteristics of the so-called 'weak verbs' in Somali. *African Language Studies*, 9, 1–51.

Baker, M. (1985). The Mirror Principle and Morphosyntactic Explanation. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 16(3), 373–417. Cambridge, MA: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Baker, M. (1988). *Incorporation: A theory of grammatical function changing*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Baker, M. (1996). *The Polysynthesis Parameter*. New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Belletti, A. (2002). Aspects of the low IP area. In Luigi Rizzi (ed.). *The structure of IP and CP: The cartography of syntactic structures 2*, 16–51. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Biber, D. (1982). Accent in the Central Somali nominal system. *Studies in African Linguistics*, 13, 1–10.

Brandi, L. & Cordin, P. (1989). Two Italian Dialects. In O. Jaeggli and K. J. Safir (eds.), *The null subject parameter*, 111–142. Dordrecht, Boston, London: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Büring, D. (1997). *The Meaning of Topic and Focus: The 59th Street Bridge Accent* (1st ed.). London: Routledge.

Büring, D. (2015). (Contrastive) Topic. In C. Féry, and S. Ishihara (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Information Structure*, 64–85. Oxford Academic (online edition).

Comfort, J. & Paster, M. (2009). Notes on Lower Jubba Maay. In M. Matondo, F. McLaughlin, and E. Potsdam (eds.) *Selected proceedings of the 38th Annual Conference*

on African Linguistics: Linguistic theory and African language documentation, 204–216. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla.

D'Imperio, M. (1997). Breadth of Focus, Modality, and Prominence Perception in Neapolitan Italian. In K. Ainsworth Darnell, and M. D'Imperio. (eds.) *Papers from the Linguistics Laboratory*, n. 50, 19–39. The Ohio State University, Department of Linguistics.

Defior, S., Alegría, J., Titos, R., Martos, F. (2008). Using morphology when spelling in a shallow orthographic system: The case of Spanish. In D. Kuhn (ed.) *Cognitive Development*, Volume 23, Issue 1, 204–215.

Downing, L. J., & Hyman, L. M. (2015). Information Structure in Bantu. In C. Féry, and S. Ishihara (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Information Structure*, 790–813. Oxford Academic (online edition).

Eberhard, D. M., Simons, G. F., & Fennig, C. D. (2019). *Ethnologue: Languages of the World, 22nd edition*. Dallas, TX: SIL International.

Frascarelli, M. (1999). Subject, Nominative Case, Agreement and Focus. In L. Mereu (ed.), *Boundaries of morphology and syntax*, 99–123. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Frascarelli, M. (2007). Subjects, Topics and the Interpretation of Referential Pro: An Interface Approach to the Linking of (Null) Pronouns. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*, 25(4), 691–734.

Frascarelli, M. (2010). Narrow focus, clefting and predicate inversion. *Lingua*, 120(9), 2121–2147.

Frascarelli, M. & Puglielli, A. (2009). Information Structure in Somali. *Brill's Annual of Afroasiatic Languages and Linguistics 1*, 146–175.

Gebert, L. 1986. Focus and word order in Somali. *Afrikanistische Arbeitspapiere 5*, 43–69.

Green, C. (2021). *Somali Grammar*. Berlin & Boston: De Gruyter Mouton.

Green, C. R. and Morrison, M. E. (2018). On the morphophonology of domains in Somali verbs and nouns. *Brill's Journal of Afroasiatic Languages and Linguistics*, 10: 200–237.

Green, M. & Jaggar, P. (2003) Ex-situ and in-situ focus in Hausa. In J. Lecarme, *Research in Afroasiatic Grammar II: Selected Papers From the Fifth Conference on Afroasiatic Languages, Paris, 2000*, 187–214. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Hartmann, K. & Zimmerman, M. (2009). Morphological focus marking in Gùrùntùm (West Chadic). *Lingua*, 119, 1340–1365.

Horvath, J. (2007). Separating "Focus Movement" from Focus. In K. Simin, V. Samiian, & W. K. Wilkins (eds.), *Phrasal and clausal architecture: syntactic derivation and interpretation*, 108–145. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Jackendoff, R. (1972). *Semantic Interpretation in Generative Grammar*. Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press.

Jelinek, E. (1984). Empty Categories, Case, and Configurationality. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory*, 2(1), 39–76.

Kanerva, J.M. (1990). *Focus and Phrasing in Chichewa Phonology*. New York: Garland.

Krifka, M. (2008). Basic Notions of Information Structure. *Acta Linguistica Hungarica*, 55(3-4), 243–276.

Kornfilt, J. (2005). Asymmetries between pre-verbal and post-verbal scrambling in Turkish. In J. Sabel and M. Saito (eds.), *The Free Word Order Phenomenon. Its Syntactic Sources and Diversity*, 163–179. Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Kural, M. (1997). Postverbal Constituents in Turkish and the Linear Correspondence Axiom. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 28(3), 498–519.

Lamberti, M. (1983). The Origins of the Focus Particles in Somali. In R. Voßen and U. Claudi (eds.). Sprache, Geshichte und Kultur in Afrika. Vorträge, gehalten auf dem III. Afrikanistentag, Köln, 14./15. Oktober 1982, Hamburg, Helmut Buske, 57–112.

Lambrecht, K. & Polinsky, M. (1997). "Typological variation in sentence-focus constructions." *CLS 33, II: Panels*, 189–206.

Lampitelli, N. (2019). On nominal declensions and syntactic case. Paper presented at *Workshop on Somali Grammar*, University of Gothenburg.

Lecarme, J. (1991). Focus en somali. Syntaxe et interpretation. *Linguistique Africaine*, 7, 33–64.

Lecarme, J. (1994). Focus et effets 'verbe second' en somali. In L. Picabia (ed.), *Syntaxe des langues africaines, Recherches Linguistique de Vincennes* 24, 25–45, Paris: Université Paris VIII.

Lecarme, J. (1999). Focus in Somali. In G. Rebuschi and L. Tuller (eds.), *The Grammar of Focus*, 275–309. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Co.

Morrison, M. E. & Abokor, A. A. (2016). *A comparative reference guide to Maay and other language varieties of southern Somalia*. unpublished ms. University of Maryland.

Mukhtar, M. H. & Ahmed, O. M. (2007). *English-Maay dictionary*. London: Adonis and Abbey.

Nilsson, M. (2017). Does tone mark case in Somali? Paper presented at the *14th International Conference of Africanists*, Moscow.

Otsuka, Y. (2005). Scrambling and information focus: VSO-VOS alternation in Tongan. In J. Sabel and M. Saito (eds.), *The Free Word Order Phenomenon. Its Syntactic Sources and Diversity*, 243–279. Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Ouhalla, J. (1993). Subject-Extraction, Negation and the Anti-Agreement Effect. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory*, 11(3), 477–518.

Paster, M. (2006). Aspects of Maay phonology and morphology. *Studies in African Linguistics*, 35, 73–120.

Paster, M. (2010). Optional multiple plural marking in Maay. In F. Rainer (ed), *Current issues in linguistic theory 310: Variation and change in morphology*. 177–192. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Paster, M. (2018). Gender instability in Maay. In J. Kandybowicz & H. Torrence (eds.), *Selected proceedings of the 45th Annual Conference on African Linguistics*, 205–218. Berlin: Language Science Press.

Paster, M. and Ranero, R. (2015). *CASL introductory structural sketches for African languages: Maay. Technical Report 2.9b (DO0050).* University of Maryland-CASL.

Phillips, C. (1996). Ergative subjects. Theoretical approaches to empirical questions. In C. Burgess, K. Dziwerek and D. Gerdts, Grammatical Relations. *Theoretical Approaches to Empirical Questions*, 341–357. Stanford: CSLI.

Puglielli, A. (1981a). La derivazione nominale in somalo. In A. Puglielli (ed.), *Aspetti morfologici, lessicali e della focalizzazione*, 1–52. Rome: MAE, Dipartimento per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo.

Puglielli, A. (1981b). *Sintassi della lingua somala. Studi Somali 2*. Roma: Ministero degli Affari Esteri.

Richards, N. (1997). *What Moves Where When in Which Language?* PhD thesis, MIT.

Rizzi, L. (1997). The fine structure of the left periphery. In L. Haegeman, (ed.), *Elements of Grammar*, 281–337. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Rooth, M. (1985). *Association with Focus*. PhD Dissertation, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Saeed, J. I. (1982a). Central Somali: A Grammatical Outline. *Afroasiatic Linguistics*, 8(2), 77–119.

Saeed, J. I. (1982b). *Focus and Topic in Somali*. PhD Dissertation, London University.

Saeed, J. I. (1984). *The Syntax of Focus and Topic in Somali*. Hamburg: Helmut Buske.

Saeed, J. I. (1999). *Somali*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Smith, K. (2022). The Maay Maay nominal system and its tonology. MA Thesis, Syracuse University..

Svolacchia, M. & Puglielli, A. (1999). Somali as a polysynthetic language. In L. Mereu (ed.), *Boundaries of morphology and syntax*, 99–123. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Svolacchia, M., Mereu, L. & Puglielli, A. (1995). Aspects of Discourse Configurationality in Somali. In K. Kiss (ed.), *Discourse Configurational Languages*, 65–98. New York: Oxford University Press.

Tosco, M. (2002). A whole lotta focusin' goin' on: Information packaging in Somali texts. *Studies in African Linguistics*, 31(1-2), 27–53.

Travis, L. (1984). *Parameters and Effects of Word Order Variation*. PhD. Dissertation, Cambridge, MA: MIT.

Zimmermann, M. & Onéa, E. (2011). Focus Marking and Focus Interpretation. *Lingua*, 121(11), 1651–1670.

Zorc, R. D. & Issa, A. A. (1990). *Somali Textbook*. Kensington, MD: Dunwoody.

Zorc, R. D. and Osman, M. M. (1993). *Somali-English dictionary with English index, 3rd edition*. Kensington, MD: Dunwoody.

CHIARA DI MAIO
+1(315) 992-5960 ⬦ cdimaio@syr.edu

EDUCATION

Master of Arts, Linguistics   June 2023
Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY
• Concentration in Linguistic Theory
• Thesis: *Focus in Kenyan Maay*

MA, Modern Languages for International Communication and Cooperation   July 2021
University of Padua, Padua, Italy
• Computer Assisted Translation
• English and French
• Thesis: *La phraséologie aux temps du Coronavirus*

Master of Arts, Translation and Interpreting   November 2017
University of Westminster, London, UK
• Computer Assisted Translation
• Conference and Public Service Interpreting
• Institutional Translation
• Thesis: Translation Project

Bachelor of Arts, Languages, Civilization and the Science of Language November 2015
Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Venice, Italy
• English and French
• Thesis: *Immigration in Italy*

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Syntax, morphology, language documentation, fieldwork, African languages, Cushitic languages, Romance languages, Italian varieties, typology, heritage languages.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Kenyan Maay (East Cushitic language)   August 2021 - Present
• Fieldwork with two language consultants
• Collection of narratives and conversations
• Independent Study on pre-verbal and post-verbal focus
• Collaboration with Haley Muth to present at ACAL53 and write a paper for its Proceedings
• Collaboration with other classmates to study the language in Field Methods class

Buranelo (Romance language, North-Eastern Italy)   August 2020 - Present
• Fieldwork with four language consultants
• Collaboration with Dr.Iara Mantenuto and Dr.Marju Kaps to conduct linguistic experiment including 50 speakers
• Collaboration with Dr.Iara Mantenuto and Dr.Marju Kaps to write paper Subject Pronouns in Buranelo Heritage Syntax (under review)

• Morphosyntactic study on Head Movement in Buranelo
• Sociolinguistic study Language Variation and Speaker Attitudes in Buranelo-Italian Bilinguals

PUBLICATIONS

Di Maio, C., Mantenuto, I. & Kaps, M. (under review). Subject Pronouns in Buranelo Heritage Syntax. *Chapter for Syntactic Variation and Change of Heritage Languages*. Languages.

Di Maio, C. & Muth, H. (forthcoming). Post-Verbal Focus by wəli in Kenyan Maay Maay. *Selected Papers from the 53rd Annual Conference on African Linguistics*.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Di Maio, C. (June 2023). Subject Focus in Kenyan Maay. *54th Annual Conference on African Linguistics*, University of Connecticut. Storrs, CT.

Di Maio, C. (November 2022). V to T Movement and T to C Movement in Buranelo. *Romance Language Colloquium*, Syracuse University. Syracuse, NY.

Di Maio, C., & Muth, H. (April 2022). The Function Word wəli: Post-Verbal Focus in Maay Maay. *53rd Annual Conference on African Linguistics*, University of California San Diego. San Diego, CA.

INVITED TALKS

Di Maio, C., Mantenuto, I. & Kaps, M. (March 2022). A Preliminary Analysis of Heritage Buranelo Subject Pronouns (pt.2). *AIS*, University of California Los Angeles. Los Angeles, CA.

Di Maio, C., Mantenuto, I. & Kaps, M. (November 2021). A Preliminary Analysis of Heritage Buranelo Subject Pronouns (pt.1). *AIS*, University of California Los Angeles. Los Angeles, CA.

Di Maio, C. (September 2021). Present Progressive in Buranelo. *AIS*, University of California Los Angeles. Los Angeles, CA.

Di Maio, C. & Mantenuto, I. (January 2021). Demonstratives in Burano Venetian. *AIS*, University of California Los Angeles. Los Angeles, CA.

SCOLARSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Summer Fellowship, Syracuse University. Syracuse, NY.   Summer 2022

Full Tuition, Teaching Assistantship, Stipend, Syracuse University, NY. August21-May23

UNIVERSITY TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Department of Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics, Syracuse University. Syracuse, NY. **Teaching Assistant (Instructor of Record)**

ITA 101 - Italian I	Fall 2022
ITA 102 - Italian II	Spring 2022
ITA 102 - Italian II	Fall 2021
ITA 100 - SU Abroad	Fall 2021

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

Assistant Director of ITALengUSA (English - Italian Conversation)   Spring 22-Spring 23
Panel Chair at the Romance Language Colloquium, Syracuse University.   November 22

LANGUAGES

Italian (native)
English (fluent)
Spanish (fluent)
French (fluent)
Turkish (beginner)
Buranelo (research and heritage)
Kenyan Maay (research)
Neapolitan (heritage)

CERTIFICATIONS

Certificate of University Teaching (CUT)	Fall 2022-Spring 2023
Future Professoriate Program (FPP)	Fall 2021-Spring 2023
CITI Training Certificate - Human Subject Research	August 2021
TOEFL (Reading: 29; Listening: 25; Speaking: 28; Writing: 29)	November 2020
IELTS (8.00/9.00)	February 2016

OTHER SKILLS

MS Office, Windows and Mac proficiency, LaTeX, Computer Assisted Translation (SDL Trados Studio).