

# Inverting the subject in Awing

Henry Z. Fominyam

Department of Linguistics, University of Potsdam, Germany <zamchang@uni-potsdam.de>

This paper addresses the morpho-phonological, syntactic and pragmatic properties of postverbal subject constructions in Awing. Analogous to other inversion constructions in Bantu literature (Marten & Van der Wal 2014), Awing has a construction in which the subject occurs immediately after the verb, resulting in a subject or sentence focus interpretation. However in Awing, crucially, a VSX clause cannot host a subject marker, but must contain a certain *l̥* morpheme in sentence-initial position. Following Baker (2003) and Collins (2004), I argue that the subject marker triggers movement of the subject from Spec/vP, explaining why it is banned in VSX clauses. I further claim that although the subject is interpreted as focus, it is not in a lower focus phrase (Belletti 2004), but rather trapped in Spec/vP. Awing postverbal subject constructions also exhibit verb doubling: VSVO. I argue that verb doubling is due to Case requirement: In canonical SVO clauses the subject marker and the verb value the nominative and accusative Cases, respectively. In VSVO constructions, on the contrary, the verb values both nominative and accusative Cases, thus forcing syntax to spell out two copies of the same verb.

## 1. Introduction

Awing is a SVO Grassfields Bantu language spoken by about 31,000 people natively in the North West region of Cameroon. The data is provided by the author, a native speaker of Awing and was checked/confirmed by Melvis Ngwemeshi and Godlove Acho, both native speakers of Awing, too. The number of Awing speakers given here represents those who are resident in the Awing village, according to the Joshua Project.<sup>1</sup> This paper is concerned with non-canonical subjects in Awing with special attention to their morpho-syntactic and pragmatic properties. The Awing postverbal subject construction is thoroughly described in section 2. Awing mainly differs from postverbal subjects in Bantu (Marten & Van der Wal 2014) in two ways: (a) the subject marker (**SM**) cannot occur in Awing postverbal subject constructions, and (b) transitive verbs exhibit verb doubling in postverbal subject clauses in Awing. I show in section 3 that Case checking is responsible for the doubling of the verb. It is argued that the Case of a noun phrase is checked if it is preceded by any potential ‘Case checker’ (e.g. a preposition, verb or the SM). Section 4 aims to identify the position of the subject in the Awing

postverbal subject clause and section 5 concludes the discussion with the question relating to how the EPP is satisfied in such constructions. Given that Awing is an under-documented language and that the issue at hand cannot be fully understood without an introduction to the verbal system of this language, the remainder of this section will familiarize the reader with aspects of verbal morphology that are deemed necessary to facilitate the topic under discussion. Canonical SVO constructions may exhibit the co-occurrence of non-contingent preverbal prefixes that express: tense, aspect, negation as well as subject-verb agreement, as can be seen in example (1) below.

- (1) *Alombah a- pe'- má- mbi- náŋnə məzǎ.*  
Alombah SM PST1 NEG ITE cook food  
'Alombah did not cook the food again'.

The Awing compound verb form is expressed by using any of its tense and/or aspectual markers, or by simply modifying the tone(s) on the verb. For an illustration consider the following examples, notice that the verb in example (1) is HL. The final schwa can take a high tone, as in (2a) expressing a habitual or a progressive state of the action. On the other hand, a LL tonal pattern (2b), is used to indicate that the action just ended.

- (2) a. *Alombah a- náŋnǎ məzǎ.*  
Alombah SM cook food  
'Alombah cooks/is cooking food'.
- b. *Alombah a- naŋnə məzǎ.*  
Alombah SM cook food  
'Alombah has (just) cooked food'.

The verb takes quite a number of additional forms depending on the type of clause it occurs in. We will now have a look at the infinitive verb form and the various forms which the verb takes depending on the clause type or position it occurs in the clause. Given that transitive post-verbal subject clauses in Awing obligatorily result in a VSVO order, and that verb doubling in Awing (Fominyam 2015) and other languages (see e.g. Gungbe and Russian: Aboh & Dyakonova 2009; Tuki: Biloa 2015; amongst many others), is used to express verb focus, this section will also briefly present the formal differences between the two constructions, and in particular the forms of the verbs. Moreover, the Awing verb sometimes occurs in a truncated form, which appears to be the conjoint/

disjoint forms identified in other Bantu languages (see in particular Van der Wal 2011). Thus, I will also indicate why the Awing verb is sometimes truncated in VSVO clauses.

### 1.1. The infinitive verb

In order to be able to subsequently provide a clear picture on the position of the verb(s) in VSVO constellations, it is important to first identify the Awing infinitive verb and the various morpho-phonological forms it takes in finite contexts. The infinitive verb occurs with the circumfix *má...ná* as shown in the examples in (3B).

(3) A. Verbs in finite forms		B. Verbs in non-finite forms	
<i>fé</i>	‘give’	<i>má-fé-ná</i>	‘to give’
<i>kwáalá</i>	‘receive’	<i>má-kwáa-ná</i>	‘to receive’
<i>náŋnà</i>	‘cook’	<i>má-náŋ-ná</i>	‘to cook’
<i>ŋá’á</i>	‘open’	<i>má-ŋá’-ná</i>	‘to open’
<i>ghenâ</i>	‘go’	<i>má-ghen-ná</i>	‘to go’

The examples below illustrate contexts within which the infinitive verbs can occur: As complements of the conjunction *ŋgá* ‘that’ in (4a) where it functions as a gerund, and in ‘control infinitive’ clauses (4b).

- (4) a. *Neh a- súŋ ŋgá má-fé-ná máló’á mbo móona a- má- mboŋ.*  
 Neh SM said that INF-give-INF wine to child SM NEG good  
 ‘Neh said that giving wine to a child is not good’.
- b. *Neh a- lónà má-zág-ná móona.*  
 Neh SM want INF-feed-INF child  
 ‘Neh wants to feed the child’.

### 1.2. The N-prefix

Concerning the various verbal forms, the first point to highlight is an N-prefix which sometimes shows up with the verb as well as on some other preverbal categories, e.g. negation and aspectual markers in Awing and other Grassfields Bantu languages (e.g. in Bafut, see Tamanji 2009). The prefix is homorganic with the first consonant it attaches to. A full description of elements that trigger the N-prefix and its distribution is still currently being worked out (Fominyam *in progress*). What is important to note here is that when the clause is realized with a future tense marker, neither the verb nor any other verbal prefix occurs with the N-prefix, as shown in (5a). Conversely, past tense markers trigger the N-prefix on the verb, and any other verbal prefix that follows the tense marker (5b).

- (5) a. *Alambah a- yó- tǎ- zǎ- tu'ǒ ηkiǎ mǎsǎna.*  
 Alambah SM FUT2 PROG HAB fetch water morning  
 'Alambah shall often be fetching water in the mornings'.
- b. *Alambah a- nǎ- n-tǎ- n-dzǎ- n-tu'ǒ ηkiǎ.*  
 Alambah SM PST2 N-PROG N-HAB N-fetch water  
 'Alambah was often fetching water'.

When the tense slot is empty, other inflectional categories can also trigger the following element(s) to occur with the N-prefix: In (6a), the habitual aspect causes the verb to occur with the N-prefix; notice that the aspect does not occur with the prefix. In (6b), the negation marker is the trigger, in this case the aspect and the verb take the N-prefix. In (6c) the past tense is optional, and as can be seen the prefix is also optional with the first 'aspectual' marker.

- (6) a. *Alambah a- zǎ- n-tu'ǒ ηkiǎ.*  
 Alambah SM HAB N-fetch water  
 'Alambah often fetches water'.
- b. *Alambah a- má- n-dzǎ- n-tu'ǒ ηkiǎ.*  
 Alambah SM NEG N-HAB N-fetch water  
 'Alambah does not fetch water often'.
- c. *Alambah a- (nǎ-) (η)-kǎ- m-bǐ- n-tǎ- η-kǎrǎ mǎkwunǎ.*  
 Alambah SM PST2 N-also N-ITE N-PROG N-eat rice  
 'Alambah is/was also eating rice again'.

Thus, the type of element preceding the verb determines whether the verb should be prefixed or not with the homorganic nasal.

### 1.3. Differentiating verb focus from VSVO constellations

The idea behind this sub-section is to point out the structural differences between verb focus and the postverbal subject construction in Awing, given that both constructions can be realized with two copies of the same verb. The first point to note is that when the verb is focused in Awing the second copy of the verb, which always appears sentence-final, takes the infinitive suffix *-nǎ*: (7a) and (8a). As can be seen in the examples in (7b) and (8b), the INF-suffix does not show up in any of the copies in postverbal subject clauses. Secondly, in VSVO clauses the second copy of the verb has the N-prefix when the prefix shows up with the first copy (8b).<sup>2</sup> Conversely, the second copy of the verb in verb focus cannot have the N-prefix, even when it shows up with the first copy, as is shown in (8a).

- (7) a. *Ayafor a- pe'- ηά'ə apa yíwə ló ηά'-nə.*  
 Ayafor SM PST1 open bag DEF LE open-INF  
 'Ayafor OPENED the bag'.
- b. *Ló pe'- ηά' Ayafor ηά'ə apa yíwə.*  
 LE PST1 open Ayafor open bag DEF  
 'It is Ayafor who opened the bag'.
- (8) a. *Tsefor a- nə- n-tó- m-bénə ló péñ-nə.*  
 Tsefor SM PST2 N-PROG N-dance LE dance-INF  
 'Tsefor was DANCING'.
- b. *ló nə- n-tó- m-bénə Tsefor m-bénə apénə.*  
 LE PST2 N-PROG N-dance Tsefor N-dance dance  
 'It was Tsefor who was dancing'.

The occurrence or lack of the N-prefix and the INF-suffix are not the only formal properties used to distinguish the two clause types. As already hinted, notice that the verb in the VSVO structure in (7b) occurs in two forms, that is, the final schwa is missing in the first copy. This is however not the case in (8b), which, as we will come to see, is due to the presence of the aspectual marker. What is important to keep in mind is that it is a common phenomenon in the language under study to see both verbs and nouns take two (long and short) forms. Rules governing such alternations are still under study (Fominyam *in progress*), but it is clear as of now that exhaustive/contrastive focus create a kind of sentential prosodic alignment which is manifested by the truncation of the constituent immediately preceding the focused phrase. This particularly applies to the verb and postverbal elements (in SVO structures). The following constructions show that the verb or any postverbal element has to take the short form when it immediately precedes the focused phrase. Note that in canonical SVO clauses focalization of postverbal elements is achieved by having the *ló* morpheme structurally precede them.

Before we proceed, it is important to note that Fominyam & Šimík (2017) clearly show that the *ló* morpheme is an exhaustive focus operator in Awing. Given that postverbal subject clauses express both narrow (subject) and wide (sentence) foci and that this paper neither aims to get into the technicalities of how that is achieved nor intends to discuss on the focus status (i.e. plain, contrastive or exhaustive) of the subject here, I will simply have this morpheme glossed LE throughout this work. The data in (9) and (10) point to the conclusion that the truncation of the verb in postverbal structures is not directly linked to what is described in Eastern and Western

Bantu languages as conjoint/disjoint forms (Van der Wal & Hyman 2017). Truncating the verb in VSX structures in Awing is rather a general focus alignment technique.

- (9) a. *Ayafor a- pe' náŋ(\*nə) lá neemə/\*na məsâna.*  
 Ayafor SM PST1 cook LE meat morning  
 'It is meat that Ayafor cooked in the morning'.
- b. *Ayafor a- pe' náŋnə \*neemə/na lá məsâna.*  
 Ayafor SMPST1 cook meat LE morning  
 'It is in the morning that Ayafor cooked meat'.
- (10)a. *mɔ̄-məngyě yíwə a- pe' n-ghenâ mæteená məsân(\*ə).*  
 small-woman DEF SM PST1 N-go market morning  
*lá ná ŋgásájá.*  
 LE with maize  
 'It is maize that the girl took to the market in the morning'.
- b. *mɔ̄-məngyě yíwə a- pe' n-ghenâ \*mæteená/məta lá ná ŋgásájá.*  
 small-woman DEF SM PST1 N-go market LE with maize  
 'It is maize that the girl took to the market'.

Having introduced the reader to the various Awing verbal forms, I will now take a critical look at inverted subject constructions.

## 2. The post verbal subject

This section provides a detailed description of non-canonical subject clauses in Awing with particular attention on their information structure and morpho-syntactic properties. Two types of subject focus interpretation with three different clause structures are attested in Awing. New information focus, that is, an answer to a *wh*-subject question is felicitously answered in-situ (11b). An exhaustive subject can either be realized as a cleft structure (11c) or with the use of a VSX construction (11d) (see Fominyam & Šimík 2017 for detailed analysis of exhaustive focus in Awing). Cleft constructions like the one in (11c) are ignored in this paper (for more on cleft see Fominyam 2015; Fominyam & Šimík 2017). As shown in the example in (11c): the subject immediately follows the verb; the clause cannot be realized with the SM, that is, agreement between the subject and the verb is not possible; the clause must begin with the *lá* morpheme; and the object is preceded by a doubled verb. Also observe that the preposition used to introduce the time adjunct is optional.

- (11)a. *wá pe'- η-kó' ndzõ (á) masâna.*  
 who PST1 N-eat beans in morning  
 'Who ate beans in the morning?'
- b. *Ayafor a- pe'- η-kórà zərə (á) masâna.*  
 Ayafor SM PST1 N-eat it in morning  
 'Ayafor ate it in the morning'.
- c. *\*(lá) Tsefor pá'a a- pe'- η-kó' ndzõ (á) masâna.*  
 LE Tsefor that SM PST1 N-eat beans in morning  
 'It is Tsefor who ate beans in the morning' (not Ayafor).
- d. *\*(lá) (\*a-) pe'- η-kó' Tsefor (\*a-) \*(ηkó')ndzõ (á) masâna.*  
 LE SM PST1 N-eat Tsefor SM N-eat beans in morning  
 'It is Tsefor who ate beans in the morning' (not Ayafor).

Example (11d) shows that the second copy of the verb is mandatory with transitive verbs. Conversely, when the verb takes a locative complement as object, the second verb is optional:

- (12) *lə pe'- tá- ndê Neh (ndê) fóna.*  
 LE PST1 PROG sleep Neh sleep farm  
 'It is Neh who was sleeping in the farm'.

It should be borne in mind that a preposition could be used in place of the optional verb in (12). However, when the second verb is phonetically realized, the preposition is banned. In other words, when the second verb is not realized, the locative phrase can be introduced by a preposition or as a bare location/phrase;<sup>3</sup> moreover, it is crucial to note that the second copy of the verb cannot show up in sentence-final position in intransitive clauses. This can be seen in the constructions in (13a) and (13b), with an unergative and unaccusative verb, respectively.

- (13)a. *lá pe'- η-kəə Tsefor (\*η-kəəlâ).*  
 LE PST1 N-run Tsefor N-run  
 'It is Tsefor who ran'.
- b. *lá pe'- η-gwũ Tsefor (\*η-gwũə).*  
 LE PST1 N-fall Tsefor N-fall  
 'It is Tsefor who fell'.

Although the inverted subject construction is primarily used to express subject focus, it is also used to express sentence focus. Thus, both constructions in (14) are felicitous answers to the question: *what is happening?* Nonetheless, the pragmatics are arguably not identical: the marked

construction, i.e. (14b), will be used in a context, for example, when the speaker is not happy that (the person named) Tsefor, in particular, is beating his son (perhaps Tsefor has the habit of beating the son). Informally, the construction in (14b) may be characterized as focus within focus – that is, emphasis on the subject within an entire focused structure;<sup>4</sup>

(14)a. *Tsefor a- tǎ- n-shúmǎ mǎ yǎ.*  
 Tsefor SM PROG N-beat child his  
 ‘Tsefor is beating his child’.

b. *lá tǎ- n-shúmǎ Tsefor \*(n-shúmǎ) mǎ yǎ.*  
 LE PROG N-beat Tsefor N-beat child his  
 ‘It is Tsefor who is beating his child’.

It is also possible to have the subject realized with both the definite and the indefinite articles or even have the subject as an indefinite pronoun in the VSX position; the constructions in (15) show such possibilities. It should however be noted that these constructions cannot be used as sentence focus. The example in (15a) is a logical follow up to a statement like: *our neighbour bought a dog*. The (15b) sentence is felicitous in a context where it is used to refute, say, a lie: For example, Tsefor is having a swollen leg and says that a dog bit him, but the speaker who utters (14b), knowing that Tsefor fought in the market uses the construction to refute Tsefor’s allegation;<sup>5</sup> Likewise (15c) would be likely used to refute a previous allegation that Tsefor’s swollen leg was caused by, say, a bicycle accident.

(15)a. *lá pe’- n-dú ǎgwúǎ yǎwǎ n-dúmǎ Tsefor.*  
 LE PST1 N-bite dog DEF N-bite Tsefor  
 ‘It is the dog that bit Tsefor’.

b. *lá pe’- n-tsǎg ɲwun-tsǎ n-tsǎgǎ yǎ.*  
 LE PST1 N-hit person-INF N-hit him  
 ‘It is someone who hit Tsefor/him’.

c. *lá pe’- n-dú ǎgwúǎ yǎtsǎ n-dúmǎ yǎ.*  
 LE PST1 N-bite dog IDF N-bite him  
 ‘It is a dog that bit Tsefor’.

Inserting a pronoun in the position immediately after the verb is also possible, for example in a context where information about what an individual is doing is required – i.e. VP focus. Thus, example (16) is a logical answer to the question: *What did Alombah do this morning?*, but not with a subject focus: *Who went to the market this morning*

- (16) *lá pe'- ŋ-ghen yá n-ghenâ mätenâ masâna.*  
 LE PST1 N-go him N-go market morning  
 'He is the one/it is him who went to the market in the morning'.

Thus far we have seen that unlike canonical SVO clauses, postverbal subject constructions can be used to express phrasal (i.e. subject) or sentence focus and that such clauses lack subject-verb agreement. Given that the postverbal position is used to express subject focus, it is also possible to have a subject *wh*-word in this position, as is the case in (most) Bantu inverted subject constructions (see e.g. Marten & Van der Wal 2014). The example in (17) shows this possibility in Awing.

- (17) *lâ pâ'- ŋ-ghen wâ ŋ-ghenâ mätenâ masâna.*  
 LE PST1 N-go who N-go market morning  
 'Who went to the market in the morning?'

Up till this point, we have only discussed the object and other adjuncts occurring in postverbal position. It is also possible to have the object and/or adjunct(s) occur in sentence-initial position; this can be seen in examples (18b) and (18c).

- (18)a. *Tsefor a- pe'- m-fé ŋgasáŋá mbo Ayafor masâna.*  
 Tsefor SM PST1 N-give maize to Ayafor morning  
 'Tsefor gave maize to Ayafor in the morning'.
- b. *ŋgasáŋ lá pe'- m-fé Tsefor mbo Ayafor masâna.*  
 maize LE PST1 N-give Tsefor to Ayafor morning  
 'It is Tsefor who gave the maize to Ayafor in the morning'.  
 OR: 'The maize was given by Tsefor to Ayafor in the morning'.
- c. *ŋgasáŋá mbo Ayafor (masân) lá pe'- m-fé Tsefor.*  
 maize to Ayafor morning LE PST1 N-give Tsefor  
 'It is Tsefor who gave maize to Ayafor in the morning'.  
 OR: 'The maize to Ayafor in the morning was given by Tsefor'.

As shown above, the direct object or both the object and adjunct(s) can be preposed to a position preceding the *lá* morpheme. Moreover, notice that such constructions can be interpreted in two different ways, that is, as a cleft or in the passive voice. Whenever the direct object, be it alone or with any adjunct(s) is in the preverbal position and the subject is in the postverbal position the sentence is construed as a passive. Such a passive has the additional property that the subject is interpreted as focused within the overall structure. Another issue that needs to be mentioned to complete the picture is that an indirect object of a 'two place' verb cannot occur in

sentence-initial position whilst the direct object is in the postverbal position:

- (19) \*á mbo Ayafor lǎ pe'- m-fé Tsefor m-fé ŋgásáŋá.  
to hand Ayafor LE PST1 N-give Tsefor N-give maize  
Intended meaning: 'It is Tsefor who gave maize to Ayafor'.

However, an adjunct can be preposed without the object as in (20) in which case the passive interpretation is completely missing.

- (20) á māsân lǎ pe'- ŋ-kɔ' Tsefor \*(ŋ-kórá) ŋgásáŋá.  
in morning LE PST1 N-eat Tsefor N-eat maize  
'It is Tsefor who ate maize in the morning' (lit. 'In the morning, it is Tsefor who ate maize').

Example (20) is typical of a context where the preposed time-adjunct is interpreted as a 'scene setting topic', e.g. *Ayafor ate beans in the afternoon...* but, *in the morning, it is Tsefor who ate beans*. In the same way, a PP of a transitive verb can also be preposed and the object remains in the postverbal position, see (21b), and still both the object and PP can occur in the preverbal position, see (21c).

- (21)a. lǎ yó- to' Tsefor tó'ə ŋkíá á mbo Ayafor.  
LE FUT2 carry Tsefor carry water to hand Ayafor  
'It is Tsefor who will fetch water for Ayafor'.
- b. á mbo Ayafor lǎ yó- to' Tsefor tó' əŋkíá.  
to hand Ayafor LE FUT2 carry Tsefor carry water  
'It is Tsefor who will fetch water for Ayafor' (lit. 'As for Ayafor, it is Tsefor who will fetch him water').
- c. ŋkíá mbo Ayafor lǎ yó- to' Tsefor (\*tó'ə).  
water hand Ayafor LE FUT2 carry Tsefor carry  
'It is Tsefor who will fetch water for Ayafor'.

Finally, the object cannot precede the subject, for example sandwiched between the verb and the subject:

- (22) \*lǎ pe'- nan ndzǒ (nan) Tsefor.  
LE PST1 cook beans cook Tsefor  
Intended meaning: 'It is Tsefor who cooked beans' (lit. 'It is beans that cooked Tsefor').

In this section we have seen that the direct object and its adjunct(s) can occur in a position preceding the verb. The rest of this paper will, how-

ever, concentrate on cases where such elements remain in the postverbal position. Two things to take away from this in relation to preposed objects and adjuncts are that such constructions are: (a) a means to express the passive voice, that is, whenever the object is preposed with or without its adjuncts; (b) a means to create a scene setting topic, that is, when just an adjunct is preposed. The possible word orders attested in postverbal subject clauses in Awing are shown in (23) below.

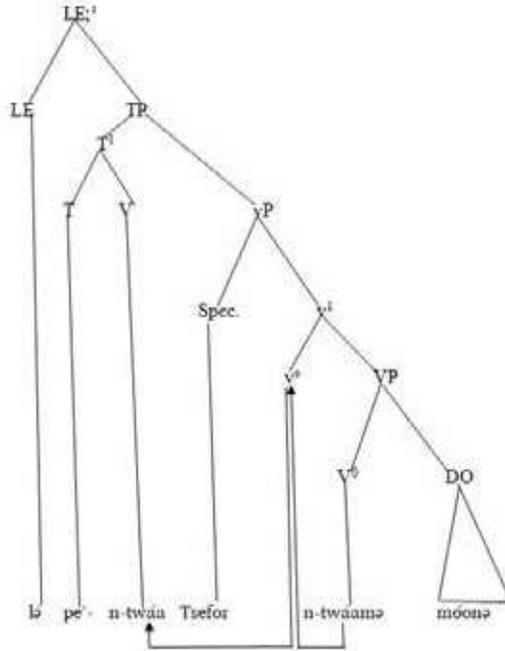
- (23) a. *l̥*...V-S-\*(V)-O-(adjunct),  
b. O-*l̥*...V-S-adjunct,  
c. O-IO-adjunct-*l̥*...V-S,  
d. \*IO-*l̥*...V-O,  
e. \*VOS (irrespective of the position of *l̥*).

(23d) shows the impossibility of having the indirect object of a ‘ditransitive’ verb precede the verb while the direct object occurs in a postverbal position. (23e) is ungrammatical because the object sits between the verb and the subject. This section has concentrated on the description of the postverbal subject clause and its information structure with emphasis on the verb forms and the various verb orders in such constructions. The next section will attempt an explanation as to why the verb is doubled in postverbal subject constructions in Awing.

### *3. Why is the verb obligatorily doubled in transitive constructions?*

In this section, I will answer the question why the verb must be doubled in postverbal subject transitive clauses in Awing. In section 1 it was noted that both copies of the verb in VSVO constructions have no infinitive properties. Thus, we can conclude that both copies are inflected in one way or the other. In fact, the comparison of VSVO constructions with verb focus reveals that the N-prefix is never realized on the infinitive lower verb in verb focus. Hence, the N-prefix on the second copy of the VSVO construction is a clear indication that the second copy of the verb is inflected. While an elaborated analysis of the N-prefix in Awing is still pending, I will assume for the time being that the N-prefix on the verb is obtained in-situ, that is, via ‘feature percolation’.<sup>6</sup> The idea that the N-prefix is obtained in-situ does not rule out the possibility of the verb subsequently moving to a higher position. In fact, the two copies of the verb attest that the first copy has raised to a higher position, preceding the subject. This can be captured in the tree diagram in (24), where the verb moves to the inflectional domain and the subject is, say in Spec/vP.

(24)



Without getting into an in-depth analysis of verb movement in Awing, I will follow Fominyam & Šimík (2017) and assume that the moved copy adjoins to the T node. I will further claim here that in such a situation the aspectual node is missing. The usage of truncated and non-truncated forms of the verb in VSVO constellations in Awing supports this claim. As shown in (25a), the first copy of the verb is truncated because it precedes a focused phrase, namely the subject. However, when the aspectual slot is activated both copies must maintain the non-truncated forms, as in (25b).

- (25)a. *lə nə- n-dzú Ayafor n-dzúnə ɲgəsáŋə.*  
 LE PST2 N-buy Ayafor N-buy maize  
 ‘It is Ayafor who bought the maize’.
  
- b. *lə zá- n-dzúnə Ayafor n-dzúnə ɲgəsáŋə.*  
 LE HAB N-buy Ayafor N-buy maize  
 ‘It is Ayafor who often buys maize’.

The data show that the first copy of the verb deflects truncation simply because, on its way to TP, it passes through the aspectual slot and since it must exhibit aspectual inflection, that is a high tone on the verb’s final syl-

lable, the latter must be preserved. Thus, when there is no aspect, the aspectual slot, as I claim, is altogether inactive and truncation applies: The verb immediately follows the focalized subject in such cases and exhibits a prosodic demarcation or alignment in terms of Féry (2013). We can therefore conclude that the truncation of the verb in VSVO constructions in Awing does not indicate a ‘close prosodic bond’ between the verb and the subject (as in Western and Eastern Bantu languages, see Marten & Van der Wal 2014), but rather it is a general focus alignment strategy which is applied to any postverbal element, including the verb. Let us now return to the core issue of this section, namely the reason why the verb is doubled in VSVO constellations.

Within the generative tradition, it is generally assumed that two copies of the same item often result via conditions determined at the interface level, that is, not within (narrow) syntax (see, in particular, Chomsky 2005; Nunes 2004; Bošković & Nunes 2007). For example, Nunes (2004) argues that the overt/phonological realization of two copies of a moved element can result due to a (post-syntactic) morphological reanalysis process. Such a process creates two distinct copies of the moved element and deletion of the lower copy is blocked by identity mismatch. Although, in most cases the two copies of the verb in Awing exhibit morpho-phonological differences, I will argue that the two copies of the verb in VSVO constellations can be best explained as a manifestation of a syntactic requirement, namely Case licensing; see Aboh & Dyakonova (2009) for a syntactic analysis of predicate doubling in Gungbe and Russian, too.

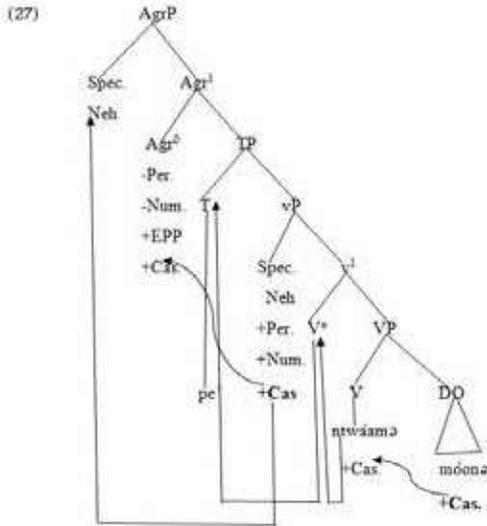
First, let us recap of verb doubling in VSVO constellations in Awing. The main issue to note is that it is only in transitive constructions, and crucially, if the direct object is realized postverbally, the second copy of the verb must be phonetically realized:

- (26)a. *lá pe'- n-dzú Ayafor \*(n-dzúnə) ɲgəsáŋá.*  
 LE PST1 N-buy Ayafor N-buy maize  
 ‘It is Ayafor who bought maize’.
- b. *ɲgəsáŋ lá pe'- n-dzú Ayafor (\*n-dzúnə).*  
 maize LE PST1 N-buy Ayafor N-buy  
 ‘It is Ayafor who bought maize’.

The obligatory realization of the second copy of the verb is conditioned by the presence of the direct object in the postverbal position. Assume that Awing grammar basically has a Case feature which needs to be checked on NPs. In a construction like (26a), distribute this feature to the NPs and call them nominative and accusative Cases. At one point in the derivation, there

has to be a mechanism capable of checking the Case features. It is generally assumed that agreement can be integrated in the Case system, see in particular Chomsky (2000; 2001) and Pesetsky & Torrogo (2004b; 2007), for such a view, although with different technicalities which are not relevant here. While anticipating the discussion on the position of the subject in a VSX construction to be developed in the next section, I will argue that the Awing SM takes care of the nominative Case in a SVO construction. This is captured in the tree diagram in (27), where the verb checks the accusative Case of the direct object and the SM checks the nominative case.

(27)

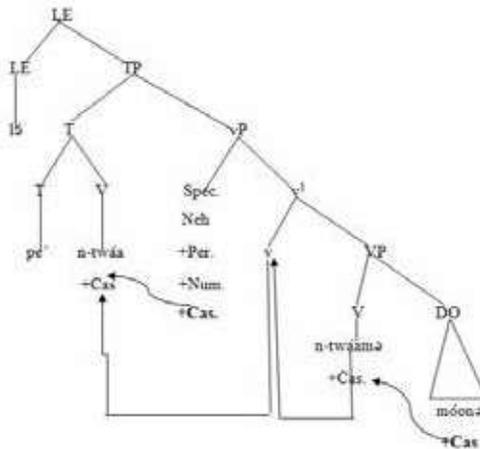


Notice that Case is simply represented as plus-Case (+). This is because I consider Case, at least in Awing, to differ from ‘featural agreement operations’ like those exhibited by person number agreement (see Sigurðsson 2014 for a similar position). Following an idea developed in Carstens (2001, 2005), I will propose that in Awing, Case checking should be differentiated from (person number) Agreement. From this perspective, I will argue that, on the one hand, the SM has uninterpretable (person number) features which are checked by the subject in Spec/AgrP, and on the other hand, the SM checks the Case feature of the subject. This means that, the SM in the tree diagram in (27) above accomplishes two distinct functions: (a) it checks the nominative Case of the subject by structurally preceding the latter, and (a) establishes a syntactic featural agreement relationship with the subject in Spec/vP and triggers it to Spec/AgrP. In oth-

er words, the SM checks the Case of the NP in Spec/vP even before it gets to Spec/AgrP. That is, movement of the subject to Spec/AgrP is not actually warranted by the necessity to check its Case, but rather the uninterpretable features of SM and since Spec/AgrP is endowed with an EPP feature, the subject’s displacement from within vP is facilitated, otherwise the subject could remain in Spec/vP and its Case still be checked.

With this picture in mind, we can now think of how Case checking, in particular nominative Case is achieved in a transitive inverted subject construction where the SM is missing. I will propose that in such a case, the same copy of the verb takes care of both the nominative and accusative Cases, as shown below:

(28)



In order to pursue this idea, I will have to create a model in which NPs are merged with intrinsic Cases and all they need is a ‘potential Case checker’ in the system. In such a system, nominative and accusative Cases are not actually assigned by the SM, and VP, respectively: the SM and VP simply check the intrinsic Case features endowed to NPs. The derivation proceeds as follows: Once the NP is merged, it remains ‘active’ because it has a Case value that needs to be checked. The term ‘active’ can be thought of as a kind of probing phenomenon. This means that, in Awing, the NPs have Case values but their morphologies are silent to this fact: they have abstract Cases. The Case checking process here is different from Chomsky’s (2001) system whereby a probe higher in the computation probes downward. On the contrary, I will follow Pesetsky & Torrego’s (2007) ‘reversed’ mechanism and propose that the

active NP waits for a potential Case checker to be introduced into the system. In such a system, the verb immediately values its internal argument – that is, its (active) complement. Meanwhile, the subject in Spec/vP remains active until the SM is merged and the subject creates a relation where its Case feature is checked. In a VSVO constellation, on the other hand, subject NP remains active till the verb moves and adjoins to TP, from which position the verb then checks the subject's Case. The crucial element of the theory is that any potential Case checker can check the Case of an 'active' element and valuation does not amount to deletion in the overall system (this will become obvious in the next section). The assertion that any potential checker can check Case is actually borne out, as it straightforwardly explains why the verb is optional in constellations where the verb takes as direct object a locative phrase, exemplified once more in (29) below.

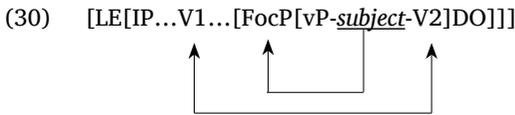
- (29) a. *lɔ̃ pə'- tɔ̃- ndâ Neh nde (\*a) fɔ̃onã.*  
LE PST1 PROG sleep Neh sleep in farm  
'It was Neh who was sleeping in the farm'.
- b. *lɔ̃ pə'- tɔ̃- ndâ Neh (\*nde) a fɔ̃onã.*  
LE PST1 PROG sleep Neh sleep in farm  
'It was Neh who was sleeping in the farm'.

As the above examples clearly indicate, either the verb or the preposition is needed to value the intrinsic LOC. Case of the NP 'farm'. So we can now add prepositions to the inventory of potential Case checkers in Awing. However, this does not really answer the question of why the verb must be phonetically realized in a VSVO constellation. If the analysis pursued here is correct, there does not seem to be any constraint forcing the lower copy of the verb, which in fact has already checked the accusative Case, to be phonologically overt. My take on this is that although Case checking in itself is by and large abstract in Awing, that is, there is no morphological indication that an NP actually bears a nominative or accusative Case, there must be a morpho-syntactic clue indicating the type of structural relations NPs share, in particular with the verb. In a SVO clause, the SM, among other things, indicates that the preverbal NP is the logical subject-nominative. Therefore, when the SM is absent the system has to indicate in one way or the other how, crucially, both the nominative and accusative Cases are checked; the two copies of the verb indicate that the verb takes care of both nominative and accusative Cases. Finally, we can now explain the ungrammaticality of \*VSV constellations, where a second copy of the verb cannot in isolation occur in sentence-final position as due to the fact that there is no active NP

(object) that requires the second copy of the verb to indicate/maintain its Case status in overt syntax. Let us now find out where exactly the subject resides in postverbal subject clauses in Awing.

*4. The position of the subject in VSX constructions*

Thus far we have simplistically considered the subject in non-canonical subject clauses to be in a position after the verb. However, it is not clear if the subject is in its base-generated position, i.e. Spec/vP (Zubizarreta 1998) or has left, say, to a lower focus position in terms of Belletti (2004). This section aims to clarify this query. First and foremost, the idea that the subject is in a focus phrase is compelling due to the informational status which is associated to the postverbal subject, namely focus. According to Belletti (2004), there is a lower focus phrase which is situated between the inflectional domain and the vP. Applying this to the Awing data, the VSX construction will suppose that the subject has moved to such a focus phrase, since such subjects are parsed as a kind of focus, in Awing. This line of reasoning can be vividly captured in the representation in (30) below where both the verb and the subject evacuate the vP domain.



In Awing, not only does the focus status of the postverbal subject appear to favour the analysis in (30) above but also the observation that the subject in such a clause is immune to movement. The main difference between a SVX and a VSX clause is that the subject of the latter cannot be extracted; a preverbal subject can be relativized – (31a) – or clefted – (31b) –, whereas a postverbal subject cannot, as shown in (32).

(31) a. *Tsefor pá'a \*(a-) pe' náηnə ηgəsáηá.*  
 Tsefor that SM PST1 cook maize  
 'Tsefor who cooked maize'.

b. *lá Tsefor pá'a \*(a-) pe' náηnə ηgəsáηá.*  
 LE Tsefor that SM PST1 cook maize  
 'It is Tsefor who cooked maize'.

(32) a. *\*Tsefor pá'a lá pe'- náη (γə) náηnə ηgəsáηá.*  
 Tsefor that LE PST1 cook him cook maize  
 Intended meaning: 'Tsefor who cooked maize'.

- b. \**l̥ Tsefor pá'a l̥ pe' n̥ɲ (yə) n̥ɲnə ɲgəsáɲǎ.*  
LE Tsefor that LE PST1 cook him cook maize  
Intended meaning: 'It is Tsefor who cooked maize'.

The reason why a postverbal subject cannot be clefted is related to its focus status. Recall that the (main) purpose of a VSX construction, in Awing, is to achieve an exhaustive/contrastive focus interpretation, otherwise such an interpretation must be achieved via clefting. Therefore, the position immediately after the verb must be filled by the focused subject in a VSX construction. Such a subject can no longer be extracted via clefting, given that cleft formation is mainly for focus, too. The same logic may explain why the relativized example (32b) is ungrammatical. If one assumes that the subject is sitting in a lower focus phrase, then such a focus gets stuck within this position and can no longer be extracted. In fact, such a conclusion seems to be further supported by the fact that there is no problem relativizing the object of a postverbal subject, see (33b), but the object cannot be clefted, see (33c). The data in (33c) may be read as a ban of focus crossing another focus.

- (33) a. *l̥ pe'- n̥ɲ Tsefor n̥ɲnə ɲgəsáɲǎ.*  
LE PST1 cook Tsefor cook maize  
'It is Tsefor who cooked maize'.
- b. *ɲgəsáɲǎ pá'a l̥ pe'- n̥ɲ Tsefor.*  
maize that LE PST1 cook Tsefor  
lit. 'The maize that was cooked by Tsefor' (not Ayafor).
- c. \**l̥ ɲgəsáɲǎ pá'a l̥ pe'- n̥ɲ Tsefor.*  
LE maize that LE PST1 cook Tsefor  
lit. 'It is maize that was cooked by Tsefor' (not Ayafor).

Despite the arguments advanced so far for an apparent lower focus position in Awing, I will show that the empirical data cannot favour such an analysis. First, information/plain focus (i.e. focus exempted from exhaustive, contrastive or corrective entailment) does not exhibit any structural constraints in Awing; it can be realized as canonical subjects and (in)direct objects with no additional phonological morphological or even syntactic cues. Secondly, and crucially, Awing grammar has a focus operator which structurally precedes presuppositional exhaustive foci. This happens to be the obligatory *l̥* morpheme in the VSX constructions. From a strict Cartographic view, one might rather expect this focus operator to form a single constituent with the focused element (i.e. both occurring in the low focused phrase) but they are separated by other functional and lexical cat-

egories. The distance association of the *lɔ́* morpheme with the focused element is not only attested in VSX clauses but also in cleft constructions, where the functional heads Tense (a copular verb) and NEG intervene between the *lɔ́* morpheme and the focalized constituent. The corrective statements in (34b) and (34c) below illustrate the point with cleft constructions:

- (34) a. *ɲgáɲ cato nə- ɲkwá-mbi ná anúá-ásâ alá'a nâ.*  
 people Catholic PST2 take-front with thing-God village this  
 'The Catholic church was the first to preach in this village'.
- b. *lɔ́ nə- má mbə ɲgáɲ cato pá'a pó nə- mbígnə sunj.*  
 LE PST2 NEG be people Catholic that SM PST2 start talk  
*anúá-ásâ...*  
 thing-God  
 'It was not the Catholics who began preaching...'
- c. ... *lɔ́ nə- mbə ɲgáɲ bǎbtísə pá'a pó nə- mbígnə sunjə anúá-ásâ.*  
 LE PST2 be people Baptist that SM PST2 start talk thing-God  
 'It was the Baptists that first preached...'

This shows that the focused element cannot be conceived as sitting in a focused phrase in cleft or in the VSX constructions. In fact, the Awing SV(X) data is reminiscent of a general property in Bantu where focused/*wh*-constituents structurally occur immediately after the verb thereby giving the impression that there is a focus projection Immediately After the Verb (IAV). As pointed out by Hyman & Polinsky (2010: 23):

The association between the IAV and focus is an artifact of a general focus-assignment rule. Focus is read off constituent structure, but is not directly projected. Rather, it is associated with a particular projection, namely the verb phrase; the association between the verb (or predicate) phrase and focus is cross-linguistically quite common.

Apart from this cross-linguistic observation, two specific facts about the Awing data indicate that the subject remains in its base generated position. The first factor is the obligatory presence of the *lɔ́* morpheme in such clauses. In Fominyam & Šimík (2017), it is shown that the *lɔ́* morpheme is an exhaustive focus operator which associates with the focus via an asymmetrical c-command relation (see Fominyam & Šimík 2017 for the elaborated analysis). The second point which I will comment on here is the second constraint on such clauses, namely the ban of the SM. In the preceding section I argued that the SM has uninterpretable person and

number feature which have to be checked by the subject. As such, the SM is said to have an EPP feature that triggers the subject to move to its specifier position. Given that the SM can by no means occur in a VSX construction (also see Samek-Lodovici 2002 for a cross-linguistic perspective), the subject will be trapped in Spec/vP; besides, its Case feature will be checked by the verb when the latter is adjoined to T. This, however, implies that the EPP, which requires finite clauses to have a subject in TP, is violated in Awing VSX clauses. This query will be examined in the next section, for the time being I will address another issue concerning the SM which appears to be problematic for the analysis pursued here, namely that the SM can be omitted in SVO clauses:

(35) a. *Ayafor (a-) kwárə-ŋkíə senâ.*

Ayafor SM take-water today  
'Ayafor has been baptized today'.

b. *mə-tíə (mə-) pe' - ŋ-gwúə laaŋə.*

PL-tree SM PST1 N-fall road  
'Trees fell on the road'.

c. *pó-pə-mbyâŋnə (pó-) nə- m-fé məlo'ə mbo pə-nyě.*

small-PL-man SM PST2 N-give wine to PL-woman  
'The boys gave wine to the women'.

The fact that the SM can be phonetically omitted may not necessarily mean that it is syntactically absent in SVO clauses. I will instead take the optionality of the SM as a kind of 'ambiguity' in terms of 'feature visibility' between the subject and the SM. Recall that the SM is merged with uninterpretable features (*u*  $\varphi$ -features). Once such uninterpretable features are checked, they are now visible at LF (Logical Form) and PF (Phonological Form), as can be seen, for example, through the different phonological shapes the SM exhibit in (35) above. However, feature checking, as I already mentioned, does not amount to deletion. In this particular case, this means that the person and number features of the subject are also available for the SM. Due to some kind of, what I will call 'feature redundancy avoidance', speakers sometimes decide to drop the SM. The idea here supposes that the SM and the subject are merged differently but eventually find a way to share features.

There are other ways to think of the agreement between the subject and the SM, which I will briefly comment on one that seems appealing to me but which, nonetheless, has to rely on the assumption that the SM has the potential to attribute information status features like [ $\pm$  focus] to an NP. Zeller (2008, 2012) for example, argues that in Zulu the agree-

ment is obtained via subsequent incorporation of the SM within the verb phrase. The argument is that the subject and the SM begin as a ‘big DP’ (à la Kayne 1994). As such, the SM which heads the big DP in SVO clauses then incorporates to the verb while the remnant (the subject) moves to Spec/TP. Crucially, Zeller argues that the SM within the vP marks the subject of a SV(O) clause as [-focus] and, since vP is a focus domain, the subject then moves out of such a domain: Hence, subject movement is interpreted in terms of its information category, not a grammatical function, per se. Zeller further claims that in Bantu the subject cannot be focused by showing that the focused exclusive morpheme ‘only’ cannot be used with Zulu and Kinyarwanda subjects (Kimenyi 1980). As I already mentioned, it is quite fine in Awing to have the subject in its canonical position as a reply to a *wh*-subject question introducing a new information focus, see (36b). Moreover, the exclusive particle ‘only’ can be used with the subject, as shown in (36c).

- (36) a. *wá tǎ- náǰná mǎǰá.*  
 who PROG cook food  
 ‘Who is cooking?’
- b. *Alombah a- tǎ- náǰná zǎǎ.*  
 Alombah SM PROG cook it  
 ‘Alombah is cooking it’.
- c. *ts’ǎ Alombah a- tǎ- náǰná mǎǰá.*  
 only Alombah SM PROG cook food  
 ‘Only Alombah is cooking’.

Taking the above into account, the subject in Awing cannot be considered as [-focus] in terms of Zeller’s analysis. In conclusion, I consider subject movement in Awing as a syntactic requirement which is motivated by the SM when the latter is merged in the inflectional domain. The remaining question, then, is what happens to the EPP requirement in VSX clauses where the SM is ban and as such the subject remains in vP.

### 5. VSX clauses and the EPP

The Extended Projection Principle (EPP) as originally formulated by Chomsky (1982: 10) requires the subject position, say Spec/TP, to be (obligatorily) filled in finite clauses. However, there are cases where a clause may be void of a semantic subject or, often, the logical subject may not be able to raise to this position due to some syntactic constraints. Thus, as it

has been the tradition in generative research, it is often shown that natural languages devise strategies to fulfil the EPP requirement. For example, this requirement can be met by merging a ‘meaningless’ subject (e.g. *it*) in the subject position, as in the English example in (37). So how does the Awing construction in (38), where the subject is trapped in Spec/vP fulfil this (universal?) requirement?

(37) *It rained heavily last night.*

(38) *lɔ̌ pəʔ- náj Tsefor nájɲə məzjá.*  
LE PST1 cook Tsefor cook food  
‘It is Tsefor who cooked the food’.

I argued in section 3 that agreement is responsible for subject movement in Awing. So how does this requirement work with the Awing construction in which the agreement morpheme is banned? The obligatory presence of the *lɔ̌* morpheme suggests that this morpheme could be an expletive, similar to the semantically void *it* in (37). Considering *lɔ̌* as the expletive *it* would entail that the *lɔ̌* morpheme could also be used to form constructions similar to the English example in (37); but as the example in (39) below shows, this is not possible.

(39) *#lɔ̌ peʔ- ndó mbəŋ á məsâna.*  
LE PST1 fall rain in morning  
Intended meaning: ‘It rained in the morning’ (lit. ‘It is rain that fell in the morning’).

The example in (39) is pragmatically incorrect. The sentence presupposes that something else fell, which cannot be the case – neither snow nor anything else falls in Awing. The Awing equivalent of (39) is shown in (40), where the subject ‘rain’ must be moved to precede the verb.

(40) *mbəŋ pəʔ- ndó á məsâna.*  
rain PST1 fall in morning  
‘Rain fell in the morning’.

If the intention is not to focus mark the subject, in which case the *lɔ̌* morpheme is absent, the subject has to always be preverbal. Therefore, in cases where the subject needs to be focalized, that is, where the clause has the obligatory *lɔ̌* morpheme, one could assume that the subject ends up in a postverbal position as a result of first moving out of vP to check the EPP and the verbal remnant subsequently moves over the subject, as proposed in Van der Wal (2012) for Makhuwa. This is tantamount to saying that the postverbal subject in a VSX clause is an

artefact: the subject has actually left vP and is somewhere higher, say in Spec/AgrP. An interesting test used in Van der Wal (2012) to test whether the subject is within the verbal domain or not consists of using a quantifier like ‘all’ with the subject while the verb is negated. The prediction is that if ‘all’ falls under the scope of negation, then the subject is within the vP domain. Now let us consider how this works in Awing by using both the monopartite and bipartite negation markers:

- (41) a. *lá pə'- ma- ŋáj ŋwúnj tsəm náj ndzǒ.*  
 LE PST1 NEG cook person all cook beans  
 ‘It is not everybody that cooked beans’ (i.e. some cooked something else).  
 NOT: ‘(It is) everybody (that) did not cook beans’ (i.e. no one cooked beans).
- b. *lá pə'- ŋ-kě- ŋáj ŋwúnj tsəm náj ndzǒ pǒ.*  
 LE PST1 N-NEG cook person all cook beans NEG  
 ‘It is not everybody that cooked beans’ (i.e. some cooked something else).  
 NOT: ‘(It is) everybody (that) did not cook beans’ (i.e. no one cooked beans).
- (42) a. *lá pə'- ma- n-dzú pə-ŋgyě pə-tsəm n-dzúnə məghɔlə.*  
 LE PST1 NEG N-buy PL-woman PL-all N-buy oil  
 ‘It is not all of the women that bought oil’ (i.e. some bought something else or nothing).  
 NOT: ‘It is all of the women that did not buy oil’.
- b. *lá pə'- ŋ-kě- n-dzú pə-ŋgyě pə-tsəm n-dzúnə məghɔ' pǒ.*  
 LE PST1 NEG N-buy PL-woman PL-all N-buy oil NEG  
 ‘It is not all of the women that bought oil’ (i.e. some bought something else or nothing).  
 NOT: ‘It is all of the women that did not buy oil’.

It does not matter whether the monopartite or bipartite negation marker is used, negation scopes over the indefinite NP: (41) and the quantified noun phrase in (42), too. This therefore indicates that the subject in VSX constructions cannot be treated as sitting in a higher position, that is out of vP, in Awing. In order to attain an ‘all > not’ interpretation, the quantified subject, for example, should be structurally above vP and the negation marker, as in (43) below.

- (43) a. *pə-ŋgyě pə-tsəm pe'- ma- ŋ-ghenə məteená.*  
 PL-woman PL-all PST1 NEG N-go market  
 ‘All of the women did not go to the market’.
- b. *pə-ŋgyě pə-tsəm pe'- ŋ-kě- məteená ghen pǒ.*  
 PL-woman PL-all PST1 NEG market go NEG  
 ‘All of the women did not go to the market’.

With that in mind, we can return to the *lɔ* morpheme. Fominyam (2015) suggests that the *lɔ* morpheme can function as a copula (although with some restrictions).<sup>7</sup> Thus, if this morpheme can assume the role of a copular verb, the conjecture is that some kind of ‘null expletive’ ‘cliticizes’ to it and forms what can be conceived in English as *it is*. The short answer in (44c) below demonstrates this stream of reasoning.

(45) a. *wá twamə móonə.*  
who carry child  
‘Who carried the child?’

b. ‘Ayafor’...

c. (*ámám*) *lɔ Tsefor.*  
(no) LE Tsefor  
lit. ‘(No) it is Tsefor’.

(45a) poses the question and (45b) answers it by phonetically ignoring the shared information. (45c) refutes the assertion in (b) by simply inserting the *lɔ* morpheme in front of the new information and the result conveyed literally in the English translation *it is*... Another context that strongly suggests that *lɔ* can be used as a kind of expletive is in clausal subjects, as shown in (46b), notice that the *lɔ* morpheme is obligatory.

(46) a. *ŋgá əsɛ a- kɔŋə ŋwún-tsəmə lɔ núə-yí-chí'nə.*  
that God SM love person-all is thing-link-fine  
‘That God loves everybody is a good thing’.

b. \*(*lɔ*) *núə-yí-chí'nə ŋgá əsɛ a- kɔŋə ŋwún-tsəmə.*  
it's thing-link-good that God SM love person-all  
‘It is a good thing that God loves everybody’.

The fact that the *lɔ* morpheme can, in some instances, serve as a kind of ‘expletive’ in Awing shows that the EPP requirement is actually met in constructions where the subject is trapped in Spec/vP. This does not, however, mean that the *lɔ* morpheme is merged in VSX constructions to satisfy the EPP. Its function is to have the subject type as focus and the mechanism through which this is achieved is explicitly developed in Fominyam & Šimík (2017). However, the *lɔ* morpheme (also) fulfils the EPP requirement in that it simply finds itself in a position preceding TP and is ‘read prosodically’ as the subject of the clause, see Mcfadden & Sunderesan (2018).

## 6. Conclusion

In Awing, there are a few cases which lead to the subject immediately following the verb: (a) the entire clause, or the postverbal subject needs to be in focus and, (b) the construction has to be read as a passive, in which case the object has to be in the preverbal position. In this paper, I have concentrated on the focus case and shown that, although postverbal subjects obligatorily result in verb doubled in transitive constructions, this has nothing to do with verb focus in Awing, nor in Bantu more generally. I have argued that doubling the verb in VSVO constructions in Awing is rather due to Case checking. It has been shown that the Awing postverbal subject is trapped within vP and that the EPP requirement is met indirectly by having the *l̥* morpheme precedes TP. There are some other aspects raised in this paper, which due to space restrictions we could not elaborate on: The overall analysis of verb movement in Awing, the homorganic nasal prefix and the ordering of verbal prefixes constitute some of the issues we could not get into the details here and have to be postponed for future research.

## Abbreviations

EPP: Extended Projection Principle; FUT2: future two (tomorrow or after); FM: focus marker; HAB: habitual aspect; HL: high low tone; IAV: Immediately After the Verb; INF: infinitive marker; ITE: iterative aspect; LE: *l̥* morpheme; LL: low low tone; N-: homorganic nasal prefix; NEG: negation marker; NP: noun phrase; PST1: past one (early today); PST2: past two (yesterday or earlier); PL: plural marker; PROG: progressive aspect; SM: subject marker; \*: ungrammatical; #: contextually inappropriate.

## Acknowledgements

This work was financed by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). I would like to thank the organizers (Delia Bentley and Silvio Cruschina) of the Non-canonical postverbal subject workshop at the SLE 2017 and the audiences for the intriguing questions and comments. I further wish to thank Doreen Georgi, Gisbert Fanselow, Jenneke van der Wal, Marta Wierzba, Malte Zimmermann and Radek Šimík. This paper also profited from the constructive comments of two anonymous reviewers. I take responsibility for all remaining errors.

Notes

- <sup>1</sup> The Joshua Project, <joshuaproject.net>, is an evangelical Christian body which seeks to identify ethnic groups with the least Christian followers.
- <sup>2</sup> Arguably this may be the same case in (7b), but given that the verb begins with a nasal the homorganic prefix sort of fuses with the verb's initial nasal.
- <sup>3</sup> The optionality of the preposition suggests that such locative phrases function as either adjuncts or arguments in Awing.
- <sup>4</sup> An anonymous reviewer was wondering whether what I term here as 'focus within focus' could be related to the surprise or unexpectedness reading described by Hartmann & Zimmermann (2007) for Hausa or Bianchi & Cruschina (2016) for (mirative focus in) Italian. This does not seem to be the case with the postverbal subject clause in Awing. In order to use this construction in the manner described by the scholars in Hausa and Italian, a morphological element (described in Fominyam 2015 as a question marker) must be realized in sentence-final position.
- <sup>5</sup> The example in (15b) appears to contradict the conclusion reached in Fominyam & Šimík (2017), namely that the post verbal subject is an exhaustive focus. This is however not the case: what is focused here is the entire VP and not the indefinite subject alone. Notice the change of verb in (15b) with the other examples. See Fominyam & Šimík (2017) on how the focus operator associates with the vP structure for VP focus.
- <sup>6</sup> Serial verb constructions where the first verb triggers the N-prefix on the second verb sort of support this idea, if one supposes that both verbs originate as a conjoined VP where the first verb also triggers the N-prefix on the following one (for whatever reason).
- (i) *Alambah a- ghen m-fe mažīa mbo Tsefor.*  
Alambah SM go N-give food to Tsefor  
'Alambah has gone and given food to Tsefor'.
- <sup>7</sup> As shown in (ii) below, a specificational copular clause in the present tense is realized with the *l̄* morpheme as the sole element functioning as a copula.
- (ii) *Alambah l̄ ndzara.*  
Alambah is thief  
'Alambah is a thief'.

*Bibliographical References*

- Aboh, Enoch & Dyakonova, Marina 2009. Predicate doubling and parallel chains. *Lingua* 119,7. 1035-1065.
- Baker, Mark 2003. Agreement, dislocation, and partial configurationality. In Carnie, Andrew; Harley, Heidi & Willie, MaryAnn (eds.), *Formal Approaches to Function in Grammar*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 107-132
- Baker, Mark 2010. *The Syntax of Agreement and Concord*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Belletti, Adriana 2004. Aspects of the low IP area. In Rizzi, Luigi (ed.), *The Structure of CP and IP: The Cartography of Syntactic Structures, Volume 2*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 16-51.
- Bianchi, Valentina & Silvio, Cruschina 2016. The derivation and interpretation of polar questions with a fronted focus. *Lingua* 170. 47-68.

- Bilola, Edmond 2015. Cartography and antisymmetry: Essays on the nature and structure of the C and I domains. Manuscript, University of Yaoundé I.
- Bošković, Željko & Nunes, Jairo 2007. The copy theory of movement: A view from PF. In Corver, Norbert & Nunes, Jairo (eds.), *The Copy Theory of Movement* [Linguistik Aktuell/Linguistics today 107]. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 13-74.
- Bresnan, Joan & Mchombo, Sam A. 1987. Topic, pronoun and agreement in Chichewa. *Language* 63. 741-782.
- Buell, Leston C. 2005. *Issues in Zulu verbal morphosyntax*. PhD dissertation. University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA).
- Carstens, Vicki 2001. Multiple agreement and case deletion: Against phi-(in)completeness. *Syntax* 4. 147-163.
- Carstens, Vicki 2005. Agree and EPP in Bantu. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 23,2. 219-279.
- Carstens, Vicki & Mletshe, Loyiso 2015. Radical defectivity: Implications of Xhosa expletive constructions. *Linguistic Inquiry* 46,2. 187-242.
- Chomsky, Noam 1982. *Some Concepts and Consequences of the Theory of Government and Binding*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Chomsky, Noam 1995. *The Minimalist Program*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Chomsky, Noam 2000. Minimalist inquiries: The framework. In Martin, Roger; Michaels, David & Uriagereka, Juan (eds.), *Step by Step: Essays on minimalist syntax in honor of Howard Lasnik*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 89-155.
- Chomsky, Noam 2001. Derivation by phase. In Kenstowicz, Michael (ed.), *Ken Hale: A life in language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 1-52.
- Chomsky, Noam 2005. Three factors in language design. *Linguistic Inquiry* 36,1. 1-22.
- Collins, Chris 2004. The agreement parameter. In Breitbarth, Anne & Van Riemsdijk, Henk (eds.), *Triggers*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. 115-136.
- Féry, Caroline 2013. Focus as prosodic alignment. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 31,3. 683-734.
- Fominyam, Henry 2015. The syntax of focus and interrogation in Awing: A descriptive approach. In Grubic, Mira & Bidhauer, Felix (eds.), *Working papers of the SFB632 18: Interdisciplinary Studies in Information Structure*. Potsdam: Universitätsverlag Potsdam. 29-62.
- Fominyam, Henry & Šimík, Radek 2017. The morphosyntax of exhaustive focus: A view from Awing (Grassfields Bantu). *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 35,4. 1027-1077.
- Fominyam, Henry *in progress*. *Aspects of Awing Grammar and Information Structure*. PhD dissertation. University of Potsdam.
- Hartmann, Katharina & Zimmermann, Malte 2007. In place – out of place? Focus in Hausa. In Schwabe, Kerstin & Winkler, Susanne (eds.), *On Information Structure, Meaning and Form: Generalizing Across Languages*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 365-403.
- Hyman, Larry M. & Polinsky, Maria 2010. Focus in Aghem. In Zimmermann, Malte & Féry, Caroline (eds.), *Information Structure: Theoretical, Typological, and Empirical Perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 206-233.
- Kayne, Richard 1994. *The Antisymmetry of Syntax*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Kimenyi, Alexandre 1980. *A Relational Grammar of Kinyarwanda*. Berkeley:

- University of California Press.
- Marten, Lutz & Van der Wal, Jenneke 2014. A typology of Bantu subject inversion. *Linguistic Variation* 14,2. 318-368.
- McFadden, Thomas & Sundaresan, Sandhya 2018. What the EPP and comp-trace effects have in common: Constraints on silent elements at the edge. *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics* 3,1 article 43.
- Nunes, Jairo 2004. *Linearization of Chains and Sideward Movement*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Pesetsky, David & Torrego, Esther 2007. The syntax of valuation and the interpretability of features. In Karimi, Simin; Samiian, Vida & Wilkins, Wendy (eds.), *Phrasal and Clausal Architecture*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 262-294.
- Samek-Lodovici, Vieri 2002. Agreement impoverishment under subject inversion: A crosslinguistic analysis. *Linguistische Berichte Sonderheft* 11. 49-82.
- Sigurðsson, Halldór Ármann 2014. Context-linked grammar. *Language Sciences* 46. 175-188.
- Tamanji, Pius N. 2009. *A Descriptive Grammar of Bafut*. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag.
- Van der Wal, Jenneke 2011. Focus excluding alternatives: Conjoint/disjoint marking in Makhuwa. *Lingua* 121,11. 1734-1750.
- Van der Wal, Jenneke 2012. Subject agreement and the EPP in Bantu agreeing inversion. *Cambridge Occasional Papers in Linguistics* 6. 201-236.
- Van der Wal, Jenneke & Hyman, Larry M. (eds.) 2017. *The Conjoint/Disjoint Alternation in Bantu*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Zeller, Jochen 2008. The subject marker in Bantu as an antifocus marker. *Stellenbosch Papers in Linguistics* 38. 221-254.
- Zeller, Jochen 2012. Object marking in isiZulu. *South African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies* 30,2. 219-235.
- Zubizarreta, Maria Luisa 1998. *Prosody, Focus, and Word Order*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.