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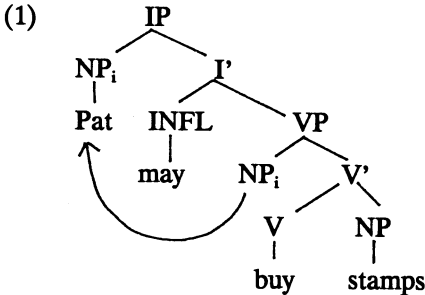
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Two Subject Positions in Lango

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Data from Lango (a Western Nilotic language spoken in Uganda) suggests that this SVO language generates its thematic subject inside the VP, supporting the proposals of Kuroda (1988) and Koopman and Sportiche (1988) that SVO languages have VP-internal subjects at D-Structure.¹ Lango may, in fact, provide more direct evidence for this proposal than more familiar SVO languages like English which require the thematic subject to occupy the external subject position (Spec of IP) at S-Structure so that the observed word order does not reflect the proposed underlying structure.²



Lango appears to allow its thematic subject to remain inside the VP at S-Structure while another NP moves to the Spec of IP. Noonan and Bavin Woock (1978) argue that Lango examples like (2b) and (3b) are not derived by Topicalization, but rather by a process they term "NP-Fronting". This is described as a passive-like clause-internal movement to a sentence-initial slot, which is to the left of "the subject slot in immediate preverbal position" (Noonan and Bavin Woock (1978, 138)). While they do not show a formal structure for this process, their description suggests a structural derivation like that shown in (4).³

(2) (Noonan and Bavin Woock (1978 (1)))

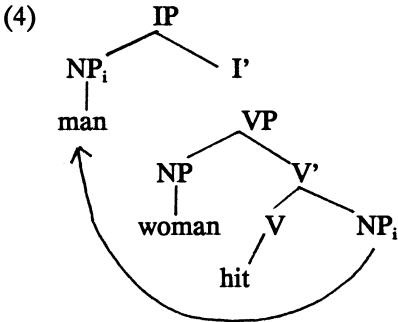
a. dákó ò-jwát-ò lóca
woman 3sg-hit man
'The woman hit the man.'

b. lóca dákó ò-jwát-ò
man woman 3sg-hit
'The woman hit the man.'

(3) (Noonan and Bavin Woock (1978 (3)))

a. dákó òtámò ní àtín òjwátò lóca
woman thought that child hit man
'The woman thought that the child hit the man.'

- b. dákó òtámò ní lóca àtín òjwátò
 woman thought that man child hit
 'The woman thought that the child hit the man.'



This paper will discuss a range of data supporting this conclusion. Data involving relativization shows that NP-Movement must be available as at least one option for fronting NPs in Lango, although it does not rule out the possibility that Lango allows other ways of fronting NPs as well, such as Topicalization or Left Dislocation. However, additional data shows that the behavior of constructions with fronted NPs is very different from what one would expect to find if either Topicalization or Left Dislocation were allowed in Lango. This suggests that NP-Movement to the Spec of IP may be the only possible derivation that Lango allows for examples like those in (2) and (3).⁴

The second part of this paper will focus on the properties of these two 'subject' positions, the Spec of IP and the Spec of VP. Noonan and Bavin Woock (1978) show that the NP that fronts can usurp some, but not all of the properties normally reserved for subjects in Lango. Properties such as the ability to trigger agreement, to be a controlled PRO, and to be the antecedent of a subject-oriented reflexive remain the exclusive domain of the thematic subject, even when another NP fronts to the Spec of IP. This indicates that the relevant notion of 'subject' with respect to these properties is not the Spec of IP. In contrast, other 'subject' properties such as the ability to launch floated quantifiers and the ability to be the antecedent of a logophoric pronoun subject of an embedded clause are not the exclusive domain of the thematic subject. These properties are preferentially linked to the Spec of IP, even when this node is not occupied by the thematic subject.

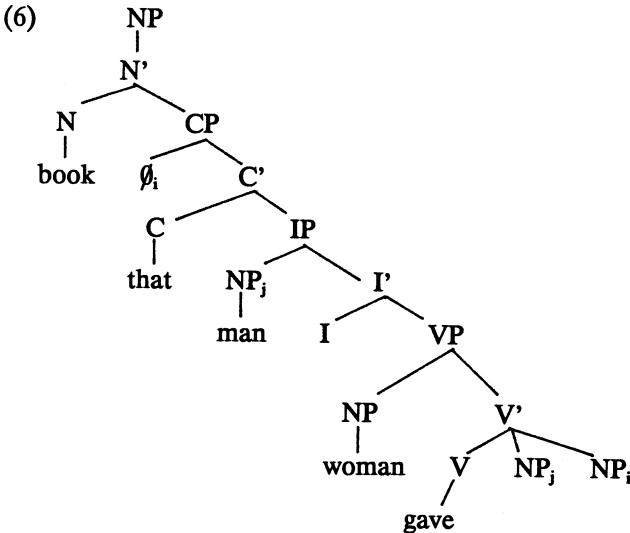
1. Evidence of NP-Movement in Lango

The strongest evidence that NP-Movement is possible in active clauses in Lango comes from relativization. In example (5b), the object, 'man', has fronted, but this does not create an island for relativization. This contrasts with the example in (5c) which shows that a cleft construction does create an island, blocking relativization.

(5) (Noonan and Bavin Woock (1978 (23)))

- a. *búk á'mé dákó òmfì lócà dwóη*
 book rel woman gave man big
 'The book that the woman gave the man is big.'
- b. *búk á'mé lócà dákó òmfì dwóη*
 book rel man woman gave big
 'The book that the woman gave the man is big.'
- c. **búk á'mé lócà én á'mé dákó òmfì dwóη*
 book rel man it rel woman gave big
 'The book that it is the man that the woman gave is big.'

We expect (5b) to be grammatical if the object fronts by NP- Movement to the Spec of IP, creating no more structure than is already present in an ordinary relative construction like (5a).



In contrast, we expect (5c) to be ungrammatical because the additional structure involved in a cleft creates an island for relativization. Such constructions are absolutely unacceptable in English, for example.

(7) *The book that it is the man that the woman gave is big.

If (5b) were derived by Topicalization or Left Dislocation, rather than by NP Movement, we would expect this example to be as bad as (5c) because such constructions also involve extra structure that creates an island with respect to relativization. Compare the impossibility of relativizing out of the English Topicalized construction in (8a) and the Left Dislocated construction in (8b).

(8) a. *The book that the man the woman gave is big.

b. *The book that (as for) the man the woman gave him is big.

This argument for the possibility of NP-Movement in active clauses in Lango would be valid even if Lango allowed other fronting processes such as Topicalization or Left Dislocation. However, the data considered below suggests that NP-Movement may be the only means available for fronting bare NPs in Lango. These constructions are somewhat difficult to analyze, but they do show that the behavior of this NP-Fronting construction differs markedly from the behavior of clefts and relative clauses. In (9b), we see that it is ungrammatical to front the object NP of the lower clause across a clause boundary to the sentence-initial position of the matrix clause. This contrasts with (9c) where clefting the object in this same context is grammatical.

(9) (Noonan and Bavin Woock (1978 (22)))

a. dákó òdǫ́ lóca 'ní 'kwál gwèndò
woman forced man that steal chicken
'The woman forced the man to steal the chicken.'

b. *gwèndò dákó òdǫ́ lóca 'ní 'kwál
chicken woman forced man that steal
'The chicken the woman forced the man to steal.'

c. gwèndò é n'ám'é dákó òdǫ́ lóca 'ní 'kwál
chicken it that woman forced man that steal
'It's the chicken that the woman forced the man to steal.'

If Lango allowed either Topicalization or Left Dislocation, we would expect examples like (9b) to be grammatical (unless there are additional non-structural constraints on these rules that do not hold of clefts). Topicalization should be subject to the same syntactic constraints as clefts are, and Left Dislocated constructions should be even freer, since no gap is involved. Thus this data suggests that neither Topicalization nor Left Dislocation is available in Lango.

Examples like (9b) are interpreted in Noonan and Bavin Woock (1978) as evidence that NP-Fronting cannot cross a clause boundary. However, this claim is contradicted by data in Noonan (1981).⁵

(10) (Noonan (1981, 51))

àbwòr rwòt támó 'ní Ènékò
lion king think that 3-killed
'The lion, the king thinks that he killed it.'

(11) (Noonan (1981, 175))

ògwàng àwínyò ní àlábà àkòbbò ní òcwé
O. 1s-hear-perf that A. 3s-say-perf that 3s-become-
fat-perf
'Ogwang, I heard Alaba was saying that he was fat.'

While the idea that NP-fronting is clause-bounded is a key argument in Noonan and Bavin Woock (1978) that this movement is not Topicalization, the fact that it turns out not to be clause-bounded is not inconsistent with the hypothesis that it is NP-Movement.⁶ NP-Movement can cross clause boundaries, if conditions are right, as in Raising constructions.

(12) The lion_i seems [t_i to have been expected [t_i to be asleep].

If examples like (10) and (11) are derived by successive applications of NP-Movement to the Spec of IP, the derivation would be as follows. In (10), the object would first move to the Spec of IP of that same clause, paralleling the movement that we have seen is possible in embedded clauses like (3b). Then this NP would move again, from the Spec of IP of the lower clause to the Spec of IP of the upper clause, as in Raising constructions in English.

(13) [_{NP}lion_i king_j think that [t_i pro_j 3-killed t_i]]

Under the assumption that what makes NP Movement possible at all in active clauses in Lango is that case assignment is optional, the lower two traces could be left caseless. This optionality of case assignment in Lango, in contrast to English, would account for why NP Movement would be possible out of a tensed clause in Lango, but not in English.

(14) *The lion seems that t_i is asleep.

This leaves the question of whether we expect the presence of the complementizer in the Lango example to create any problem for NP-Movement. This complementizer would not prevent this trace from being governed because it would still be governed by the INFL of this tensed clause, even if INFL takes the option of not assigning case to this NP. This contrasts with the situation in Raising constructions in English like (14) where, in the absence of government from *to*, exceptional government by the matrix verb is required, which might be blocked by a complementizer.⁷

Thus we see that an NP-Movement account of examples like (10) is possible in Lango and examples like (11) would work in a similar manner. As for why NP-Movement is not allowed across a clause boundary in examples like (9b), we can only speculate that the particular type of clause boundary in this example does not allow NP-Movement to cross it.⁸ We don't fully understand the conditions necessary to allow NP-Movement to cross clause boundaries even in English. Even verbs that are exceptional case markers in active constructions, and should therefore still govern across the clause boundary in a passive construction, do not always allow NP-Movement out of the subordinate clause.

(15) a. They want [you to leave].
b. *You are wanted [to leave].

(16) a. They want you on the telephone.
b. You are wanted on the telephone.

(18) * [CP [IP [CP XXX [IP]]]]

This would not necessarily affect NP-Movement, however. NP-Movement in such a construction would not be long-distance movement, but only the ordinary sort of NP-Movement from the Spec of IP of the lower clause to the Spec of IP of the upper clause.

(19) [CP [IP [CP [IP]]]]

There are two additional types of data that might initially make one doubt that all NP-Fronting in Lango involves NP-Movement to the Spec of IP. The first of these is the fact that this movement is not limited to object NPs. A wide range of NP arguments can front, including NPs inside PPs. Moreover, fronting such NPs leaves behind an agreement marker/resumptive pronoun.

(20) (Noonan and Bavin Woock (1978 (5)))

a. lóca ðmfis mət bət àtfn
man gave gift to child
'The man gave a gift to the child.'

b. àtfn 'lóca ðmfis mət bətə
child man gave gift to-3sg
'The man gave a gift to the child.'

One might assume that NP-Movement cannot move an NP out of a PP unless there has been reanalysis (given that this is true of English, as in 'This bed has been slept in'). However, this restriction is expected in English if case assignment is obligatory and NP-traces cannot occupy cased positions. If case assignment is optional in Lango, as assumed here, a preposition need not assign case and NP-Movement should be possible out of a PP. As for the agreement/resumptive pronouns left behind by this movement, this is a problem for the hypothesis that this is NP-Movement only if one assumes (based on the behavior of resumptive pronouns in English) that only A'-type movements can leave resumptive pronouns. However, Sells (1987, 274) argues that English does not have true resumptive pronouns and that true resumptive pronouns (which occur in Celtic languages, for example, and which look very much like what occurs in Lango) are the result of A-Movement/Binding, not A'-Movement/Binding.

The second type of construction that could be taken as evidence that Lango allows Topicalization involves what looks like an overt auxiliary. When the object fronts in the example below, the resulting word order appears to be O S INFL V, which is what one would expect following Topicalization, instead of the O INFL S V that would be expected if the subject remained in the Spec of VP while the object fronted by NP-Movement.

(21) (Noonan and Bavin Woock (1978 (16)))

- a. dákó 'bínó nènnò lóca
woman will see man
'The woman will see the man.'
- b. lóca dákó 'bínó nènnò
man woman will see
'The woman will see the man.'

However, Noonan (1981, 35) states that the form translated here as 'will' is actually the verb 'come'. If this is a main verb rather than an auxiliary, then the word order in such constructions is consistent with an NP-Movement analysis and no longer constitutes evidence for Topicalization. If 'woman' is the thematic subject of 'come', it is expected to precede 'come' even if it occupies the Spec of the VP dominating 'come'. Under this account, the verb 'see' would occupy a separate complement VP (or a complement IP whose subject is controlled by the matrix thematic subject) embedded under 'come'.

(22) [_{IP} [_{VP} woman [_V come [_{VP} [_V see man]]]]]

To sum up this section, there is good evidence that Lango allows NP-Movement to the Spec of IP in active clauses and that this movement is not limited to the thematic subject. This indicates that Lango does not generate the thematic subject in the Spec of IP, but in some lower position such as the Spec of VP. A survey of the behavior of such NP-fronting constructions in Lango suggests that Lango probably does not allow Topicalization or Left Dislocation as alternate means of fronting NPs. Lango does allow clefting and relativization, but the behavior of these constructions is very different from that of NP-fronting constructions.

Now let us turn to some related theoretical implications of this analysis involving the distribution of 'subject' properties.

2. Properties of the Two 'Subject' Positions

Noonan and Bavin Woock (1978) show that some, but not all of the properties of 'subjects' can be taken over by a fronted NP.

The fronted NP preferentially usurps the ability to be the antecedent of a logophoric pronoun subject of an embedded clause as well as the ability to launch floated quantifiers. However, the thematic subject retains the ability to trigger subject agreement on the verb, the ability to be a controlled PRO, and the ability to be the antecedent of a reflexive, even if another NP fronts.

Assuming that NP-fronting can move an NP to the Spec of IP in Lango while the thematic subject remains in its base position, this data is relevant to our understanding of precisely what notion of 'subject' is actually relevant for these properties. In a language like English where the thematic subject is forced to move to the Spec of IP, it is difficult to determine whether properties of 'subjects' are properties of the Spec of IP, or of something else such as AGR (subject agreement) or the thematic subject itself. For example, the fact that only a subject can be a controlled PRO in English is derived in Chomsky (1981) from the fact that only the subject position (Spec of IP) can provide the ungoverned environment that PRO needs. In contrast, Borer (1989) argues that PRO in control constructions is limited to subjects because

what is actually controlled is not PRO itself, but AGR. The Lango data is relevant to this debate because it shows that occupying the Spec of IP is not sufficient to enable an NP to be a controlled PRO. Only the thematic subject can be a controlled PRO, even if some other NP fronts to the Spec of IP. (23) shows an ordinary control construction without NP-fronting where the PRO in the lower clause is the thematic subject of that clause. In (24), the PRO is the object of the lower clause which has been fronted to the Spec of IP of that clause. The thematic subject of that clause is the overt NP, 'the man'. The ungrammaticality of this example indicates that an NP other than the thematic subject cannot be a controlled PRO, even if it occupies the Spec of IP.

(23) (Noonan and Bavin Woock (1978 (17b)))

a. *dákó òmítò jwàttò lóca*
 woman wanted to-hit man
 'The woman wanted to hit the man.'

b. *woman_i wanted [PRO_i to hit man]*

(24) (Noonan and Bavin Woock (1978 (17d)))

a. **dákó òmítò lóca jwàttò*
 woman wanted man to-hit
 'The woman wanted the man to hit her.'

b. *woman_i wanted [PRO_i man to hit t_i]*

As expected under Borer's (1989) account, the ability to be a controlled PRO correlates with the ability to trigger subject agreement.¹¹ That is, only the thematic subject can trigger subject agreement on the verb in Lango, just as only the thematic subject can be a controlled PRO. In (25b), we see that the fronted object is first person, but the agreement on the verb remains third person, matching the thematic subject 'stone'.

(25) (Noonan and Bavin Woock (1978 (14)))

a. *gwén òcélé*
 stone 3sg-hit-1sg
 'The stone hit me.'

b. *án gwén òcélé*
 1-sg stone 3sg-hit-1sg
 'The stone hit me.'

The third property that is retained by the thematic subject even if some other NP fronts is the ability to be the antecedent of a (subject oriented) reflexive. In the example below, the fronted object NP cannot be interpreted as the antecedent of the reflexive; only the thematic subject can.

(26) (Noonan and Bavin Woock (1978 (18)))

a. *loca òkwád dákó pìré kènè*
 man asked woman about self
 'The man asked the woman about himself (*herself).'

- b. *dákó 'lòcà òkwáò pìré kènè*
 woman man asked about self
 'The man asked the woman about himself (*herself).'

This indicates that the external subject position (Spec of IP) is not the notion of 'subject' that is relevant for subject-oriented reflexives.

In contrast to these three 'subject' properties that cannot be usurped by a fronted NP, there are two other 'subject' properties that are preferentially taken over by a fronted NP. The first of these is the ability to be the antecedent of a logophoric pronoun subject of an embedded clause. The ordinary form of the subject agreement in Lango is interpreted as indicating switch-reference, according to Noonan and Bavin Woock (1978). That is, the null subject of an embedded clause in an example like (27) has to be interpreted as disjoint in reference to the subject of the matrix clause.

- (27) (Noonan and Bavin Woock (1978 (9a)))
dákó òkóbò ní òcámò rìrò.
 woman said that 3sg-eat meat
 'The woman_i said that he/she_j would eat meat.'

To indicate coreference between these subjects, a different form of the subject agreement marker must be used on the lower verb. When this non-switch reference marker (logophoric pronoun) is used, the subject of the lower clause must be interpreted as coreferent with the thematic subject of the upper clause in examples like (28).¹²

- (28) (Noonan and Bavin Woock (1978 (10a)))
dákó òkóbò lóçà ní é'bínó òk
 woman told man that 3sg-go back
 'The woman_i told the man that she_i will go back.'

What is interesting is the fact that if some other NP fronts to the Spec of IP, it is the fronted NP that is interpreted as coreferent with the subject of the lower clause.¹³

- (29) (Noonan and Bavin Woock (1978 (10b)))
lòcà dákó òkóbò ní é'bínó òk
 man woman told that 3sg-go back
 'The woman told the man_i that he_i will go back.'

This data shows that the thematic subject does not retain the exclusive right to be the antecedent of a logophoric subject pronoun/agreement marker in Lango.

The second 'subject' property that is preferentially usurped by a fronted NP is the ability to launch floated quantifiers. When no other NP has fronted, a floated quantifier is interpreted as modifying the thematic subject, as in (30b). Inside an NP, a quantifier follows the head noun, as in (30a). The quantifier occurs in immediate postverbal position when it has been 'floated', as in (30b).

(30) (Noonan and Bavin Woock (1978 (11)))

a. àwóbé dúcú òcém̀³
 boys all ate.
 'All the boys ate.'

b. àwóbé òcém̀³ dúcú
 boys ate all
 'The boys all ate.'

When another NP fronts, however, that fronted NP is interpreted as modified by the quantifier.

(31) (Noonan (1981, 77))

a. rwòt ònÉ̀nò gwóggí 'dúcú
 king 3sg-see-perf dogs all
 'The king saw all the dogs.'

b. gwóggí rwòt ònÉ̀nò dúcú
 dogs king 3sg-see-perf all
 'The king saw all the dogs.'

The thematic subject cannot be interpreted as having floated the quantifier unless it is impossible to interpret the fronted NP as being modified by the floated quantifier (Noonan (1981, 183)).

Since neither of these last two properties are exclusive to the fronted NP, it cannot be said that they are inherently linked to the Spec of IP. However, it might be correct to say that they are linked to the highest suitable NP in the clause.

3. Conclusion

This paper has argued that Lango has the structure proposed for SVO languages in work such as Koopman and Sportiche (1988). That is, Lango shows evidence that its thematic subject is not generated in the Spec of IP, but in some lower position such as the Spec of VP, while the Spec of IP is generated empty. Unlike SVO languages like English, Lango allows NP arguments other than the subject to move to the Spec of IP in active clauses. The behavior of this NP fronting construction is unlike Topicalization or Left Dislocation. This account formalizes and strengthens Noonan and Bavin Woock's (1978) claim that Lango has a rule that fronts NPs to sentence initial position inside the clause and that this process is something like a passive, although the sentence remains active.

The distribution of subject properties described by Noonan and Bavin Woock (1978) indicates that the Spec of IP is not the relevant notion of subject for three 'subject' properties: the ability to trigger subject agreement, the ability to be a controlled PRO, and the ability to be the antecedent of a subject oriented reflexive. These properties are linked to the thematic subject. In contrast, the Spec of IP is the preferred location in Lango for the antecedent of a logophoric pronoun subject of an embedded clause and for floating quantifiers.

¹⁰Note that the presence or absence of object agreement on the verb has nothing to do with this contrast. In (17c), forms with and without object agreement are shown and both are ungrammatical.

¹¹However, in languages with dative subjects, the ability to be a controlled PRO does not always correlate with the ability to trigger subject agreement (see Cole, et al. (1978)). This may indicate that only the thematic subject (the most prominent argument in the argument structure in Grimshaw's (1990) terms) can be a controlled PRO.

¹²While Noonan and Bavin Woock (1978) describe this as switch reference, this type of agreement is referred to as a logophoric pronoun in other African languages (see Clements (1975)).

¹³The thematic subject can be the antecedent only if the fronted NP cannot be (e.g. because of a feature mismatch) Noonan (1981, 182).

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