

Mismatching nominals and the small clause hypothesis¹

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I propose a comprehensive analysis of what has been commonly referred in the literature to as split, discontinuous noun phrases or split topicalization. Based on data from Basaá, a Narrow Bantu language spoken in Cameroon, I partly capitalize on previous authors such as Mathieu (2004), Mathieu & Sitaridou (2005) and Ott (2015a), who propose that this morphosyntactic phenomenon involves two syntactically unrelated constituents which are only linked semantically in a predication relation in a small clause (Moro 1997, 2000; Den Dikken 1998). According to these analyses, split noun phrases are obtained as a result of predicate inversion across the subject of the small clause. Contrary to/but not against these views, I suggest that what raises in the same context in Basaá is rather the subject of the small clause as a consequence of feature-checking under closest c-command (Chomsky 2000, 2001), and for the purpose of labelling and asymmetrizing an originally symmetric syntactic structure on the surface (Ott 2015a and related work). The fact that the target of movement is the subject and not the predicate of the small clause follows from agreement and ellipsis factors. Given that the subject of predication is a full DP while the predicate is a reduced DP with a null head modifier, the surface word order is attributed to the fact that noun/noun phrase ellipsis is possible if the elided noun is given in the discourse and is recoverable from the morphology of the stranded modifier. This paper offers a theoretical contribution from an understudied language to our understanding of this puzzling nominal construction.

KEYWORDS: Bantu, Basaá, mismatching nominals, predication, small clause

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Arabic numerals in glosses of Basaá examples designate noun class. The following abbreviations are used in the glosses: 2.SG = second person singular; ACC = accusative; ASSOCM = associative marker; AUX = auxiliary; BEN = benefactive; DEF = definiteness marker; ERG = ergative; FOC/F = focus marker; FV = final vowel; LINK = linker; LOC = locative; NOM = nominative; NON PAST = non past tense; PASS = passive; PERF = perfective; PRS = present; PST1 = past tense one; PST2 = past tense two; POSS = possessive; REFL = reflexive; REL = relative marker; s = subject agreement; SM = subject marker; SUBJ = subjunctive; TOP = topic. The abbreviations NL and ST are not explained in the source examples cited in examples (1c) and (2a) of this paper.

1. INTRODUCTION

Based on data from Basaá² (Bantu), I discuss a relatively new topic in the morphosyntax of nominal constructions of African languages, which has however been addressed across various language families, as can be observed in (1a) for Warlpiri (Autralian), (1b) for German (Indo-European) and in (1c) for Japanese (Asian), among others.

- (1) (a) **Wawirri** kapi-rna panti-rni **yalumpu**
 kangaroo AUX spear-NON PAST that
 ‘I will spear that kangaroo.’
 (Warlpiri; Hale 1983: 6)
- (b) **Bucher** habe ich **keine** mehr
 books have I none more
 ‘As for books, I don’t have any anymore.’
 (German; van Riemsdijk 1989: 105)
- (c) [[**hon-wa**]_P]_I [[Peter-ga]_P [**omosiroi-no-o** yonda]_P]_I
 book-TOP Peter-NOM interesting- NL-ACC read
 ‘As for books, Peter read an interesting one.’
 (Japanese; Fanselow & Féry 2006: 24)

The commonly used names for this construction include split topicalization (van Riemsdijk 1989; van Hoof 2006; Ott 2011, 2012, 2015a), discontinuous noun phrases (Mchombo, Morimoto & Féry 2005, Fanselow & Féry 2006, Mchombo 2006, Féry, Fanselow & Paslawska 2007, Cardoso 2018), (XP-)split constructions (Fanselow & Čavar 2002). In the constructions in (1), the head noun in boldface occurs in sentence-initial position and seems to have been separated from its modifier in boldface inside the clause.

The same phenomenon has been reported in some Bantu languages as illustrated in (2a) for Kiitharaka (Fanselow & Féry 2006: 47) and (2b) for Chichewa (Mchombo 2006: 151). See also Mchombo et al. (2005) for Chichewa.

- (2) (a) **Mabuku**, Peter n-a-thom-eet-e **ma-ingi**
 6.book 1.Peter F-SM1-read-ST-FV 6-many
 ‘Peter has read many books.’
 (Kiitharaka; Fanselow & Féry 2006 : 47)
- (b) **Mbûzi** atsíkáná á mfúmu a-a-gul-á **zákúú-a**
 10.goats 2.girls 2.ASSOCM 9.chief 2S-PERF-buy-FV 10.SM-black
 Lit. ‘Goats, the chief’s girls have bought black (ones).’
 (Chichewa; Mchombo 2006: 151)

[2] Though the Basaá data analysed here are based on my personal judgments of the Mbénê dialect, I also obtained native speaker judgments from my consultants, all speakers of the same dialect. It is important to note that variation across dialects as well as interpersonal variation is a reality. However, investigating such variation is beyond the scope of this paper. The sentences discussed in this paper are attested only in specific discourse contexts.

In (2), the head noun in these two Bantu languages is allowed to occur in sentence-initial position while its modifier occurs inside the clause. Though Fanselow & Féry (2006: 47) mention the presence of this construction in other Niger-Congo languages, no illustration is provided in their work, unfortunately. In fact, only little attention has been paid to this phenomenon in African languages. The main goal of this paper is to bridge this gap by proposing a comprehensive analysis of this morphosyntactic phenomenon in Basaá, with a special accent focalization, topicalization, relativization and *wh*-questions, as shown, respectively, in (3). Note that the relative marker is optional, as indicated by parentheses.

- (3) (a) **ma-mbót ma-lâm má-sámal mɔ́-n** mɛ n-sómb **má-pē**
 6-clothes 6-nice 6-six 6-FOC I PST1-buy 6-other
 Lit. ‘I have bought six other nice clothes.’ (focalization)
- (b) **ma-mbót ma-lâm má-sámal,** mɛ n-sómb **má-pē**
 6-clothes 6-nice 6-six I PST1-buy 6-other
 Lit. ‘I have bought six other nice clothes.’ (topicalization)
- (c) **í ma-mbót ma-lâm má-sámal (má)** mɛ n-sómb **má-pē** ...
 DEF 6-clothes 6-nice 6-six 6.REL I PST1-buy 6-other
 Lit. ‘The six other nice clothes that I have bought ...’ (relativization)
- (d) **má-mbê má-mbót** u n-sómb **má-pé**
 6-which 6-clothes you.2SG PST1-buy 6-other
 Lit. ‘Which other clothes have you bought?’ (*wh*-question)

One might assume that (4) represents the unmarked order, in which the head noun *mámboṭ* ‘clothes’ is modified by a quality adjective, a numeral and an indefinite on its right:

- (4) mɛ n-sómb **má-mbót ma-lâm má-sámal ma-pé**
 I PST1-buy 6-clothes 6-nice 6-six 6-other
 Lit. ‘I have bought six other nice clothes.’

Following this assumption, the constructions in (3a)–(3c) show that (4) can change so that the string of words *mámboṭ malâm másámal* ‘six nice clothes’ in sentence-initial position seems to have been detached from the postverbal modifier *mápé* ‘other’. The same observation holds for the distribution of the quantifier phrase *mámbe mámbót* ‘which clothes’ and the postverbal indefinite *mápé* ‘other’ in the interrogative sentence in (3d).

After discussing the morphosyntax of these constructions and their semantic/pragmatic properties, I will provide evidence that the sentences in (3) are by no means derived from (4), despite appearances. I propose an approach in which the chunk of words in clause-initial position and the postverbal stranded modifier are underlyingly merged as two independent and symmetric DPs in a subject–predicate relation within a small clause (Moro 1997, 2000) complement of a lexically overt/covert verb. The surface word order is obtained by raising the subject of predication into some higher position under closest c-command for feature-checking, labelling

and asymmetrization purposes, except for topic fronting constructions. In this latter case, it is suggested that the topicalized constituent is not derived in a monoclausal structure, but a series of two parallel clauses, such that after clausal ellipsis of the first clause, the remnant (i.e. the topic) seems to stand in a structural discontinuity with its correlate found inside the juxtaposed clause, which is fully pronounced at PF (see Ott 2015b). The advantage of this approach is that it nicely accounts for case marking and theta-role assignment, as well as for the absence of island and connectivity effects in topicalization. In short, split DPs under topicalization do not involve a small clause, while other split constructions do. In the latter, subject raising takes place under closest c-command between a probing head and the subject of predication (goal), following Chomsky (2000, 2001), as a way to obtain an asymmetric syntactic structure and for the purpose of labelling. In Basaá, subject raising is preferred to predicate inversion (see e.g. Mathieu 2004; Mathieu & Sitaridou 2005; Ott 2011, 2015a) because the subject is a full DP while the predicate is a reduced DP containing a null head modifier. The elided noun inside the reduced predicate is discourse-given and recoverable from the rich agreement morphology, as reflected on the stranded modifier.³ Arguments in support of a small clause analysis derive from the various morphosyntactic and semantic/pragmatic mismatches between the continuous DP structure in (4) and their counterparts in (3). This approach capitalizes to a certain extent on previous works such as Mathieu (2004), Mathieu & Sitaridou (2005), and Ott (2011, 2012, 2015a). However, the current implementation is not exactly similar to theirs. Throughout the paper, I will sometimes borrow from Ott's analysis by using the term 'symmetric' noun phrases to refer to structures delineated in (3) with a sentence-initial DP and a DP-internal modifier inside the clause.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents some basic facts about word order, clause structure and nominal modification in Basaá. The analysis sheds light on postnominal and prenominal modification as well as noun/noun phrase (N/NP) ellipsis. Section 3 deals with the semantic/pragmatic mismatches between continuous noun phrases and split ones. These mismatches are discussed in focus, *wh*-question, relative clause and topic constructions. Section 3.6 presents the first interim conclusion. In Section 4, I address the syntactic properties of symmetric noun phrases, with a focus on island effects (Sections 4.1 and 4.2), the subject islands and oblique objects (Section 4.3), binding and reconstruction effects (Section 4.4), and noun class and number mismatches (Section 4.5). In Section 4.6, evidence is given, based on the DP hypothesis and lexical degeneration, that the phenomenon under study does not involve subextraction. Section 4.7 is concerned with multiple fronting constructions and the impossibility of inverted structures. Section 4.8 presents an interim conclusion. Section 5 very briefly presents some competing approaches and Section 5.1 presents the proposal for the syntactic derivation of symmetric noun phrases as realized in Basaá. The last section is the conclusion.

[3] On the connection between noun/noun phrase ellipsis and rich agreement morphology in Classical Greek, see Mathieu (2004), Mathieu & Sitaridou (2005).

2. PRELIMINARIES: WORD ORDER AND CLAUSE STRUCTURE

This section provides some basic facts about clause structure and word order within the nominal construction in Basaá. Basaá is a Narrow Bantu language spoken in Cameroon by about 300,000 speakers (Lewis, Simons & Fennig 2018). The data explored in this paper are from the Mbene dialect as spoken in the Sanaga Maritime administrative division.

2.1. Basic clause structure

Basaá is a noun class language with a basic SVO word order (5a) and a rich morphological agreement system. It also allows *pro*-drop (5b).

- (5) (a) **ma-wándá m-ê m má-n-sómb-ól mé bi-tám b bi-lám**
 6-friends 6-my 6.SM-PST1-buy-BEN me 8-shoes 8-nice
 ‘My friends have bought me nice shoes.’
 (b) **pro_i má-n-sómb-ól mé bi-tám b bi-lám**
 6.SM-PST1-buy-BEN me 8-shoes 8-nice
 ‘They (talking about my friends) have bought me nice shoes.’

2.2. Nominal modification and morphosyntactic agreement

As expected from a noun class Bantu language, modifiers of the noun agree in class and number with the head noun within the noun phrase. This morphosyntactic agreement is subject to some constraints in Basaá as will be seen in the following sections.

2.2.1. Postnominal modification

Recent works on nominal modification in the language include Makasso (2010), Hyman, Jenks & Makasso (2013) and Jenks, Makasso & Hyman (2017). As illustrated in (6), postnominal modifiers agree with the head noun (here *malaŋ* ‘onions’) in class (class 6) and number (plural). No agreement is attested here with the prenominal definiteness marker⁴ *í*, in (6a).

- (6) (a) **í ma-laŋ m-ê m ma-lám má-sámal má-ná**
 DEF 6-onions 6-my 6-nice 6-six 6-these
 ‘These six nice onions of mine.’
 (b) **má-laŋ m-ê m ma-lám má-sámal má-ná**
 6-onions 6-my 6-nice 6-six 6-these
 ‘These six nice onions of mine.’
 (c) ***ma-laŋ m-ê m ma-lám má-sámal má-ná í**
 6-onions 6-my 6-nice 6-six 6-these DEF

[4] While Jenks et al. (2017) show that this marker encodes definiteness, and gloss it as AUG (for augment), I will simply use the gloss DEF for definiteness.

In fact, the prenominal definiteness marker always bears a high tone [´] and is invariable in Basaá. Put differently, the definiteness marker *t* is not gender-sensitive like postnominal modifiers. It always co-occurs with a postnominal demonstrative. When used in a nominal construction, the definiteness marker *t* indicates that the following head noun encodes definiteness or specificity. When the definiteness marker is dropped, as in (6b), its high tone spreads onto the first syllable of the following head noun ((5a) vs. (5b)). Sentences (6a) and (6b) can also be translated as ‘These specific six nice onions of mine’ and constitute felicitous fragment answers to ‘What did you sell?’.

One important thing about postnominal modifiers is that their ordering is not highly constrained. However, whenever a postnominal demonstrative and a possessive co-occur in the same noun phrase, the former should follow the latter as in (6) and (7).

- (7) (a) *í ma-laŋ ma-lâm m-êṁ má-sámal má-ná*
 DEF 6-onions 6-nice 6-my 6-six 6-these
 ‘These six nice onions of mine.’
 (b) *í ma-laŋ ma-lâm má-sámal m-êṁ má-ná*
 DEF 6-onions 6-nice 6-six 6-my 6-these
 ‘These six nice onions of mine.’

In short, a possessive never follows a demonstrative in the postnominal⁵ position. A noun phrase in which the possessive follows the demonstrative is ruled out (see (8a)). This ordering constraint does not hold for the distribution of the demonstrative, qualifying adjectives and numerals.⁶ As shown in (8b) and (8c), when the

[5] Both (i) and (ii), where a possessive follows a demonstrative are predicative constructions that are similar in meaning. They are not noun phrases. The difference between the two is that the predicative structure in (i) with a topic reading has no overt copula while in its counterpart in (ii), both the subject marker *bá* and the copula *jé* ‘be’ are overtly realized.

- (i) *í 6-ɔŋ bá-ná, 6-êṁ*
 DEF 2-children 2-these 2-mine
 ‘These children, they are mine.’
 (ii) *í 6-ʒŋ bá-ná bá jé 6-êṁ*
 DEF 2-children 2-these 2.SM be.PRS 2-mine
 ‘These children are mine.’

[6] I only consider simple numerals (i.e. those below ten). Numerals from ten and above are complex and are not discussed here. In addition, the simple cardinal numerals *ɕwem* ‘eight’ and *boó* ‘nine’, as opposed to other simple numerals, are not gender-sensitive.

- (i) (a) *ma-laŋ ɕwem* (b) *ba-ken ɕwem* (c) *mi-ntómbá ɕwem*
 6-onions eight 2-guests eight 4-sheep eight
 ‘eight onions’ ‘eight guests’ ‘eight sheep’
 (ii) (b) *ma-laŋ boó* (b) *ba-ken boó* (c) *mi-ntómbá boó*
 6-onions nine 2-guests nine 4-sheep nine
 ‘nine onions’ ‘nine guests’ ‘nine sheep’

possessive is dropped, the ordering between the demonstrative and other modifiers is flexible.

- (8) (a) **í* **ma-laŋ** **ma-lâm** **má-sámal** **má-ná** **m-ê**m
 DEF 6-onions 6-nice 6-six 6-these 6-my
 (b) *í* **ma-laŋ** **má-ná** **ma-lâm** **má-sámal**
 DEF 6-onions 6-these 6-nice 6-six
 (c) *í* **ma-laŋ** **ma-lâm** **má-ná** **má-sámal**
 DEF 6-onions 6-nice 6-these 6-six

Although all the grammatical noun phrases in (6)–(8) can be literally translated into English as ‘these six nice onions of mine’, it is worth mentioning that they do not have the same interpretation. The word order flexibility in postnominal modification phrase is linked to the predicative nature of modifiers in the sense that each modifier can function as a predicate, giving rise to a kind of successive complex predication. For instance, in the ordering [... [N–Adj] Poss] Num] Dem] delineated in (7a), the adjective is predicated to the head noun, forming the sequence [... [N–Adj]]. Then the possessive is merged as the predicate of the sequence [... [N–Adj]] forming [... [N–Adj] Poss]. Predicating the numeral to the complex [... [N–Adj] Poss] yields the sequence [... [N–Adj] Poss] Num]]. The final step consists in predicating the demonstrative to the complex [... [N–Adj] Poss] Num]] to form [... [N–Adj] Poss] Num] Dem]].

2.2.2. *Prenominal modification*

However, premodification is restricted to a certain class of modifiers. While a postnominal demonstrative in (6a) and (6b) is associated with a definite or specific reading on the head noun, its prenominal counterpart in (9a) encodes a contrastive interpretation (see also Hyman 2003, Hyman et al. 2013, Jenks et al. 2017). Thus, the noun phrase in (9a) can be used as a correction to the statement ‘she bought those six nice onions of mine’, where a near speaker demonstrative ‘these’ contrasts with a far speaker demonstrative ‘those’. A prenominal demonstrative can never co-occur with the definiteness marker *í*, as shown by the ungrammaticality of (9b) and (9c).

- (9) (a) **má-ná** **ma-laŋ** **m-ê**m **ma-lâm** **má-sámal**
 6-these 6-onions 6-my 6-nice 6-six
 ‘These (as opposed to those) six nice onions of mine.’
 (b) **í* **má-ná** **ma-laŋ** **m-ê**m **ma-lâm** **má-sámal**
 DEF 6-these 6-onions 6-my 6-nice 6-six
 (c) ***má-ná** *í* **ma-laŋ** **m-ê**m **ma-lâm** **má-sámal**
 6-these DEF 6-onions 6-my 6-nice 6-six

Simple numerals are disallowed in the prenominal position (see (10a) below), while a possessive can occur prenominally along with other postnominal modifiers, as

illustrated in (10b). Just like a prenominal demonstrative, a prenominal possessive conveys a contrastive interpretation. It may be preceded by the definiteness marker *í*. As shown in (8a), postnominally a demonstrative is not allowed to precede a possessive modifier. However, prenominally a demonstrative may precede or follow a possessive: both (10c) and (10d) are grammatical, with a contrastive interpretation on the two modifiers.

- (10) (a) ***má-sámá** **ma-laŋ**
 6-six 6-onions
- (b) (í) **m-ê**m **ma-laŋ** **ma-lâm** **má-sámá**
 DEF 6-my 6-onions 6-nice 6-six
 ‘My (as opposed to your) six nice onions.’
- (c) **má-ná** **m-ê**m **ma-laŋ** **má-sámá** **má-ń-hé** *djê*
 6-these 6-my 6-onions 6-six 6.SM-PRS-COST expensive
 ‘These (as opposed to those) six onions of mine (as opposed to yours) are expensive.’
- (d) (í) **m-ê**m **má-ná** **ma-laŋ** **má-sámá** **má-ń-hé** *djê*
 DEF 6-my 6-these 6-onions 6-six 6.SM-PRS-COST expensive
 ‘These (as opposed to those) six onions of mine (as opposed to yours) are expensive.’

In (10d), the definiteness marker *í* optionally precedes a possessive. Note that a preposed demonstrative and the definiteness marker are incompatible only when they are adjacent, as shown in (9b) and (9c). But if a possessive intervenes between the two, there is no illicitness as shown in (10d). Qualifying adjectives may also occur prenominally. A prenominal adjective, as seen in (11) below, is associated with a focus interpretation (marked by underlining in the English translation). Instead of undergoing agreement with the head noun, as is the case with its postnominal counterpart, a prenominal adjective (in bold) is, rather, the element that controls agreement on all the elements inside the noun phrase, with the exception of the noun (in italics).

- (11) (a) *í* ***ma-/ba-lâm** **ba** *má-laŋ* **ba-ê**m **ba-ná** **ba-sámá**
 DEF 6-/2-nice 2.LINK 6-onions 6-my 2-these 2-six
 Lit. ‘These six nice onions of mine.’
- (b) *í* ***ma-/ba-lâm** **ba** *má-laŋ* **ba-ê**m **ba-ná** **ba-sámá**
 DEF 6-/2-nice 2.LINK 6-onions 2-my 2-these 2-six
 ***má-/ba-ń-lol** *Nyaang*
 6.SM-/2.SM-PRS-COME.LOC *Nyaang*
 Lit. ‘These nice six nice onions of mine are/come from Nyaang.’

According to Hyman et al. (2013), prenominal adjectives are nominal adjectives because they act as nominal heads. Thus they bear a fully-fledged noun class prefix, just like bona fide nouns in the language, and control agreement on all the modifiers inside the noun phrase structure. In (11a) for instance, the prenominal *balâm* ‘nice’

bears the prefix *ba* which encodes class 2. It also controls agreement on the linking morpheme *bá*, the postnominal possessive *bêm* ‘my’, the demonstrative *báná* ‘these’ and the numeral *básámal* ‘six’. Only the noun *málay* ‘onions’ evades this agreement. Nominal structures with a prenominal adjective behave like nominal compounds (see Hyman et al. 2013 for more detail). Similarly, in (11b) the subject marker *bá*, which encodes subject–verb agreement, agrees not with the noun *málay* ‘onions’, but with the prenominal adjective *balâm* ‘nice’. The agreement patterns are supported by the incompatibility of the agreeing prefix *ma*, which agrees not with the prenominal adjective *balâm* ‘nice’, but with the noun *málay* ‘onions’. Should a prenominal demonstrative or possessive modifier be introduced in the noun phrase, agreement will still be controlled by the nominal adjective and not the noun. Consider the agreement patterns in (12) and (13) below, between postnominal adjectives in the (a) sentences and prenominal adjectives (boldface) in the (b) ones. The noun *bikaat* ‘books’ is in bold in the (a) and italicized in the (b) sentences.

- (12) (a) **bí-ní** **bí-kaat** **bi-lâm** **gw-ê**m **bí-jé** **bí-tân**
 8-these 8-books 8-nice 8-my 8.SM-be.PRS 8-five
 ‘These (as opposed to those) nice books of mine are five.’
 (b) ***bí-/bá-ná** **bi-/ba-lâm** ***bí-/bá** *bí-kaat* **ê**-m
 8-/2-these 8-/2-nice 8-/2.LINK 8-books 2-my
 ***bí-/bá-jé** ***bí-/bá-tân**
 8-/2.SM-be.PRS 8-/2-five
 ‘These (as opposed to those) nice books of mine are five.’

By virtue of being the head of the subject *bíní bikaat bilâm gwêm* ‘these nice books of mine’ in (12a), the noun *bikaat* ‘books’ controls agreement not only on the prenominal demonstrative *bíní* ‘these’ but also on the postnominal adjective *bilâm* ‘nice’, the possessive *gwêm* ‘my’ and the numeral *bítân* ‘five’. Likewise, subject–verb agreement, as encoded by the subject marker *bí*, is controlled by the head noun *bikaat* ‘books’. In (12b), where the adjective *balâm* ‘nice’ is prenominal, it is marked with different morphology and becomes the controller of agreement inside the noun phrase and inside the whole sentence. The same holds for the prenominal possessive construction in (13).

- (13) (a) (i) **gw-ê**m **bí-kaat** **bi-lâm** **bí-jé** **bí-tân**
 DEF 8-my 8-books 8-nice 8.SM-be.PRS 8-five
 ‘My (as opposed to your) nice books are five.’
 (b) (i) ***gw-/b-ê**m ***bi-/ba-lâm** ***bí/bá** *bí-kaat*
 DEF 8-/2-my 8-/2-nice 8-/2.LINK 8-books
 ***bí-/bá-jé** ***bí-/bá-tân**
 8-/2.SM-be.PRS 8-/2-five
 ‘My (as opposed to yours) nice books are five.’

These interesting agreement patterns seem to support Hyman et al.'s (2013) proposal that nominal adjectives are nominal heads because they seem to behave like bona fide nouns (see Hyman et al. 2013 for more detail).

2.2.3. Noun/noun phrase ellipsis and the ability to stand alone

One interesting property of nominal modification in Basaá, which is the core of the current discussion, is that modifiers of the head noun can stand in isolation in certain discourse contexts. Specifically, when the head noun is given or salient contextually, it can be elided, leaving its modifiers stranded. That N/NP ellipsis is possible in Basaá is supported by the following coordination and question–answer tests.

- (14) (a) u η-ájη **bí-kaat** **bi-lâm** tólé (**bi-kaat**) **bī-bé**
 you.2SG PST1-read 8-books 8-nice or 8-books 8-unpleasant
 ‘Have you read nice books or unpleasant ones?’
 (b) (mε η-ájη **bí-kaat**) **bí-lâm**
 I PST1-read 8-books 8-nice
 ‘I have read nice ones.’
- (15) (a) mε n-nóg lé u η-ǵwês **má-tówa** **ma-títígí**
 I PST-hear that you.2SG PRS-like 6-cars 6-small
 ‘I heard that you like small cars.’
 (b) tɔ, (**ma-tówa**) **má-kéηí** (mɔ-n mε η-ǵwês)
 no 6-cars 6-big 6-FOC I PRS-like
 ‘No, I like big ones.’

In (14a), where the head noun *bikaat* ‘books’ can be elided, the DP constituent *bíkaat bilâm* ‘nice books’ can be coordinated with the stranded adjective *bībé* ‘unpleasant’ without any resulting ungrammaticality. Sentence (14b) shows that a stranded adjective can be used as a fragment answer. Similarly, the fact that the size adjective *mákéηí* ‘big’ in (15b) can stand alone as a correction to the DP *mátówa matítígí* ‘small cars’ shows that a nominal modifier can stand alone, contra Hyman et al.’s (2013: 161) prediction.

Noun/noun phrase ellipsis is not restricted to adjectives. It is possible for possessive and demonstrative modifiers to be used as sentence fragments as well. This is illustrated in (16)–(17).

- (16) (a) **bí-mbé** **bí-tâmb** *pro* a-η-ǵwês?
 9-which 9.shoes SM-PST1-like
 ‘Which shoes did s/he like?’
 (b) (*pro* a-η-ǵwês) **ǵw-ê̄m**
 SM-PST1-like 3-mine
 ‘S/he likes my shoes.’
 (c) (*pro* a-η-ǵwês) **ǵw-ê̄s**
 SM-PST1-like 9-these
 ‘S/he likes our shoes.’

- (17) (a) **má**-mbê **má**-kúbé ηgoj í-n-ɖʒê
 6-which 6-bananas 10.pigs 10.SM-PST1-eat
 ‘Which bananas did pigs eat?’
 (b) *pro* í-ń-ɖʒê **má**-ná
 10. SM-PRS-eat 6-these
 ‘They ate these ones.’

Interrogative, numeral as well as colour adjective modifiers can also stand alone in the context of N/NP ellipsis, as shown in (18)–(20).

- (18) (a) mɛ n-nóg lé mu-daá a-n-sómb **bí-tám**
 I PST1-hear that 1-woman 1.SM-PST1-buy 8-shoes
 ‘I heard that the woman bought the shoes.’
 (b) **bí-mbê** (bí-tám)
 8-those 8-shoes
 ‘Which ones?’
- (19) (a) mɛ n-nóg lé u η-óη **má-ndáp** **má**-sámál
 I PST1-hear that you.2SG PST1-build 6-houses 6-six
 ‘I heard that you have built six houses.’
 (b) tɔ, (mɛ η-óη ndígí **má-ndáp**) **m-áá**
 no I PST1-build only 6-houses 6-three
 ‘No, I have only built three.’
- (20) mɛ n-sómb [**bí-tám** **bi**-púbí ni (**bi-tám**) **bí**-kojǒgáǵá]
 I PST1-buy 8-shoes 8-white and 8-shoes 8-red
 ‘I have bought white shoes and red ones.’

It could be hypothesized from these facts that there is a strong connection between the availability of morphological richness and N/NP ellipsis in Basaá. In fact, modifiers of the noun share the same *phi*-features, namely class and number information with the head noun. It is this strong morphological agreement that licenses N/NP ellipsis. For example, the omission of the head noun *bitám* ‘shoes’ in (18) and (20) is linked to morphological richness as reflected on the stranded interrogative (18) and colour adjective (20) modifiers. These two modifiers bear the same morphological features as the head noun *bitám* ‘shoes’. These features include class (class 8) and number (singular) information as reflected in the class prefix *bi*. Basaá is therefore a null head modifier language in the sense of Androutsopoulou (1997), Devine & Stephens (2000), Mathieu (2004) and Mathieu & Sitaridou (2005), because modifiers of the noun are allowed to strand without any support of an overt noun.

In conclusion, the availability of N/NP ellipsis⁷ in Basaá is related to the saliency of the elided noun in the discourse and the morphological richness of the stranded

[7] On the relationship between N/NP ellipsis and the availability of morphological richness cross-linguistically, see Lobeck (1995), Kester (1996), Mathieu & Sitaridou (2005).

modifier associated with it. In what follows, I build on these elliptical constructions to claim that nominal structures with stranded nominal modifiers are reduced DPs, the noun/NP of which is subject to ellipsis.

3. THE SEMANTICS/PRAGMATICS OF SYMMETRIC NOUN PHRASES

This section examines the different discourse conditions in which symmetric noun phrases arise in Basaá. As has been established cross-linguistically, these constructions are used only in specific discourse contexts⁸ such as passivization, *wh*-questions (Obenauer 1976), relativization, focalization and topicalization (Kirkwood 1970, 1977; Fanselow 1988; van Riemsdijk 1989; Fanselow & Ćavar 2002; Butler & Mathieu 2004; Mchombo et al. 2005; Fanselow & Féry 2006; Féry et al. 2007; Ott 2011, 2012, 2015a; Cardoso 2018). Basaá is no exception.

Although previous studies have explored split constructions extensively, few have elaborated on whether or not split nominal constructions share semantic/pragmatic commonalities with their non-split counterparts (but see Obenauer 1976, 1983; de Swart 1992 and Mathieu 2004). In this section I argue that symmetric DPs differ from their continuous counterparts pragmatically and semantically. The logical consequence of this being that nominal constructions with symmetric DPs should not be taken as syntactically derived from their continuous counterparts via a subextraction mechanism.

3.1. Focalization

Symmetric noun phrases can be associated with a focus interpretation, as illustrated in (21), where the noun phrase *bíkaat bilâm bísámál* ‘six nice books’ occurs continuously as a single constituent in the postverbal position. In (21b), the whole constituent made of the head noun *bíkaat* ‘books’ and all its modifiers is fronted for the purpose of focalization (underlining indicate focus in the English translation). In (21c), the head noun *bíkaat* ‘books’ and the quality adjective *bilâm* ‘nice’ have been fronted for the purposes focalization while the numeral modifier *bísámál* ‘six’ is stranded postverbally. The symbol # used here and throughout the paper indicates unattested interpretation.

- (21) (a) *mɛ bí-sómb bí-kaat bi-lâm bí-sámál*
 I PST2-buy 8-books 8-nice 8-six
 ‘I bought six nice books.’
- (b) *bí-kaat bi-lâm bí-sámál gw-ón mɛ bí-sómb*
 8-books 8-nice 8-six 8-FOC I PST2-buy
 ‘I bought six interesting books.’

[8] Though split noun phrases are not widely used in daily conversions, speakers nevertheless find them acceptable in specifically well-defined contexts.

- (i) There was a set *x* of different items such as books, pens, clothes, etc. such that I bought only six nice books (as opposed to other items) and nothing else out of the set *x*.
 - (ii) There was a set *x* of nice and unpleasant books such that out of *x*, only six nice ones were bought. I may have bought three unpleasant ones as well.
 - (iii) There was a set *x* of nice books such that out of *x*, I bought only six nice ones.
- (c) **bí-kaat** **bi-lâm gw-ón** **mɛ** **bí-sómb** **bí-sámál**
 8-books 8-nice 8-FOC I PST2-buy 8-six
 ‘I bought six nice (as opposed to unpleasant) books.’
- (i) There was only a set *x* of nice and unpleasant books such that out of *x*, I bought only six nice ones. I may have bought three unpleasant ones as well.
 - (ii) #There was a set *x* of different items such as books, pens, clothes etc. such that I bought only six nice books (as opposed to other items).
 - (iii) #There was a set *x* of nice books such that out of *x*, I bought only six nice ones.

Note that though (21b) and (21c) contain almost the same lexical elements, they differ considerably in interpretation. While (21a) and its counterpart in (21b) are ambiguous, sentence (21c) allows only one reading. In other words, (21b) conveys three different readings. First of all, it is true in every situation where somebody went to a shop and saw different items such as pens, books, bags, etc. and decided to buy only six nice books and nothing else. In this case, six nice books contrasts with other items such as pens, bags, etc. Secondly, (21b) holds in every situation where somebody went to a shop and saw a set of nice and unpleasant books. They decided to buy six nice ones, though the possibility of buying a different number of unpleasant ones is not excluded. Sentence (21b) holds in every context where someone went to a shop and saw only nice books and decided to buy six of them. In contrast, sentence (21c) can only be used in one context, precisely as a corrective reply to the statement ‘I heard that you bought six unpleasant books’ or ‘have you bought six unpleasant books or six nice ones?’. In this case, the numeral *bí-sámál* ‘six’ is taken as given information in the discourse whereas the adjective *bi-lâm* ‘nice’ can be associated either with new or given information with a contrastive interpretation in the sense of É. Kiss (1998 and subsequent work). The Basaá data contradict a widely-held view that parts of a split are triggered by an asymmetric information structure (Pittner 1995, Féry 2007, Féry et al. 2007, but see Ott 2011 for an alternative view). On this view, in most cases, the fronted element has a topic interpretation, while the remnant is associated with focal information. According to these authors, a split construction arises as a way ‘to separate two accents which

would be adjacent in an unmarked word order' (Féry 2007: 69).⁹ However, in the Basaa constructions in (21c) the fronted material is focal and can be new or given, while the modifier inside the clause represents given information.

3.2. *Wh*-questions

Starting from sentence (22a), the head noun *bíkaat* 'books' and its modifiers *bímbê* 'which' and *bikojbágá* 'red' co-occur postverbally as a single noun phrase. This word order is maintained in the *wh*-fronting construction in (22b). In contrast, in (22c) the noun *bíkaat* 'books' is fronted along with the interrogative word *bímbê* 'which' while the colour adjective *bikojbágá* 'red' remains in situ.

- (22) (a) u *bí-sômb* ***bí*-mbê** ***bí*-kaat** ***bí*-kojbágá**
 you.2SG PST2-buy 8-which 8-books 8-red
 'Which red books did you buy?'
 (i) There is only a set of red books.
 (ii) #Which books of the set of books (mathematics, biology, linguistics, etc.) did you buy that have a red colour? There is a set of books of different colours.
- (b) ***bí*-mbê** ***bí*-kaat** ***bí*-kojbágá** u *bí-sômb*
 8-which 8-books 8-red you.2SG PST2-buy
 (i) There is only a set of red books.
 (ii) #Which books of the set of books (mathematics, biology, linguistics, etc.) did you buy that have a red colour? There is a set of books of different colours.
- (c) ***bí*-mbê** ***bí*-kaat** u *bí-sômb* ***bí*-kojbágá**
 8-which 8-books you.2SG PST2-buy 8-red
 (i) Which *x* of the set of books (mathematics, biology, linguistics, etc.) did you buy such that *x* has a red colour? There is a set of books of different colours.
 (ii) #Which red books did you buy? There is only a set of red books.

There is a clear semantic distinction between the sentences with continuous noun phrases in (22a)–(22b) and their counterpart in (22c). The presupposition associated with (22a) and (22b) is that all the books of the set are red. The question is about the identity (biology, physics, etc.) of the red books. But in (22c), there is a set of different books that have different colours. Here, the question is about the identity of the books *x* of the set of different books such that *x* have a red colour.

[9] As noted by Féry (2007: 82), if parts of the elements that make up a split bear structural information, an asymmetrical information structure seems to be obligatory. Thus, she makes it clear that the preposed element can also be a focus, provided that the two parts of the split are not elements of one and the same focus.

The unifying factor between the sentences in (22) is at the level of d-linking, triggered by the presence of the D-linked interrogative phrase *bímbê* ‘which’ in the phrase *bímbê bíkaat bíkojǎgá* ‘which red books’ in (22a) and (22b), and in the phrase *bímbê bíkaat* ‘which books’ in (22c). The presence of this D-linked interrogative phrase implies that red books in the case of (22a) and (22b) or simply books in the case of (22c) has already been mentioned in a previous discourse. Hence, the *wh*-phrase ranges over a discourse-salient set of alternatives. By uttering the sentences in (22), the speaker is inquiring either about the identity of the red books, as in (22a)–(22b), or simply about the identity of the books *x* out of a set of different books, such that *x* have a red colour. Therefore, in these two readings both the books and the colour (red) represent given information. This indicates that no asymmetric information structure exists between the fronted nominal and the colour adjective inside the clause in (22c).

The interpretative mismatches attested between the continuous noun phrase in (22a) and (22b) and the construction in (22c) suggest that these constructions do not have the same syntactic structure. The split in (22c) cannot be derived from the continuous noun phrase in (22a) and (22b). Although the phenomenon in (22c) has been reported cross-linguistically (see Obenauer 1976, 1983; Fanselow & Ćavar 2002; Butler & Mathieu 2004; Fanselow & Féry 2006; Féry et al. 2007 for Germanic, Romance and Slavic), to my knowledge, no attention has been paid from the perspective of African languages to the possible semantic/pragmatic relationship between continuous noun phrases their split counterparts.

3.3. *Topicalization*

It is not uncommon to find cases whereby a speaker makes use of these constructions to express contrast in terms of incompleteness or continuation in relation to some salient entities that have been mentioned in the discourse. Besides, these constructions can also be used in relation to an already mentioned entity without any contrastive effects. I refer to the former situation as contrastive topicalization (Büring 1997, 2003; Tamioka 2010) while the latter is simply referred to as aboutness topicalization in the sense of Reinhart (1981). To begin with, a sentence such as (23) can be associated with a wide range of readings as shown in (i)–(iii).

- (23) [**bi-tám** **bi-lám** **bi-kojǎgá**]_i, me bí-nuŋûl gwó; ...
 8-shoes 8-nice 8-red I PST2-sell 8.them
 ‘As for the nice red shoes, I sold them.’

- (i) As for **the nice red shoes** (as opposed to other items),
I sold them.
- (ii) As for the nice **red shoes** (as opposed to nice **black** ones),
I sold them.
- (iii) As for the **nice red shoes** (as opposed to **unpleasant** red ones),
I sold them.

The reading in (23i) can be obtained as a partial answer to the question ‘what did you do with the items you received?’ where the phrase *bitám̄ bilám̄ bikojbágá* ‘nice red shoes’ contrasts with other possible salient alternatives (e.g. clothes, books, bags, etc.) in the discourse. In this context, the phrase *bitám̄ bilám̄ bikojbágá* ‘nice red shoes’ represents an incomplete or partial answer. The reading in (23ii) holds in every context where there is a set of ‘nice red shoes’ and ‘nice black ones’ such that ‘red’ contrasts with ‘black’. The ‘nice red shoes’ are identified as a subset of the set {nice red shoes, nice black shoes} for which the act of selling holds. Similar results are obtained in (23iii), where nice red shoes and unpleasant red ones are salient alternatives that contrast with each other in the discourse.

The following example shows that though (23) and (24) contain the same lexical material and are interpreted as contrastive topic constructions, they differ considerably:

- (24) **bi-tám̄ bi-lám̄**, m̄e bí-nuŋûl (*gwó) **bí-kojbágá** (*gwó) ...
 8-shoes 8-nice I PST2-sell 8.them 8-red 4.them
 Lit. ‘As for the **nice** shoes (as opposed to **unpleasant** ones), I sold the red ones.’
 (i) #As for **the nice red shoes** (as opposed to other items),
 I sold them.
 (ii) #As for the nice **red** shoes (as opposed to nice **black** ones),
 I sold them.

Only the reading analogous to (23iii) is possible in (24). Thus, (24) is felicitously interpreted in a situation where the phrase ‘nice shoes’ contrasts with ‘unpleasant ones’.

As shown in (25) and (26), (23) and (24) can also be interpreted as aboutness topic constructions.

- (25) Context: What about/tell me about the nice red shoes(?)
 (a) [**bi-tám̄ bi-lám̄ bí-kojbágá**]_i, m̄e bí-nuŋûl **gwó**_i ...
 8-shoes 8-nice 8-red I PST2-sell 8.them
 Lit. ‘As for the nice red shoes, I sold them.’
 (b) #**bi-tám̄ bi-lám̄**, m̄e bí-nuŋûl (*gwó) **bí-kojbágá** (*gwó) ...
 8-shoes 8-nice I PST2-sell 8.them 8-red 8.them
 ‘As for/talking about the **nice** shoes, I sold the red ones.’
- (26) Context: What about/tell me about the nice shoes(?)
 (a) **bi-tám̄ bi-lám̄**, m̄e bí-nuŋûl **bí-kojbágá** (*gwó) ...
 8-shoes 8-nice I PST2-sell 8-red 4.them
 ‘As for/talking about the **nice** shoes, I sold the red ones.’
 (b) #[**bi-tám̄ bi-lám̄ bí-kojbágá**]_i, m̄e bí-nuŋûl **gwó**_i ...
 8-shoes 8-nice 8-red I PST2-sell 8.them
 Lit. ‘As for the nice red shoes, I sold them.’

From a syntactic point of view, it can be noted that while the question under discussion in (25) requires a topic with a large syntactic structure i.e. *bitám̄b bilám̄ bikojbágá* ‘nice red shoes’, its counterpart in (26) requires a topic with a smaller structure i.e. *bitám̄b bilám̄* ‘nice shoes’. However, the fronting of the continuous noun phrase *bitám̄b bilám̄ bikojbágá* ‘nice red shoes’ requires a resumptive pronoun inside the clause, while the fronting of its counterpart *bitám̄b bilám̄* ‘nice shoes’ with a DP-internal null head modifier *bikojbágá* ‘red’ does not allow resumption. This indicates that the two constructions have different syntactic sources, as will be discussed in detail in Section 5.

Last but not least, another interesting aspect about Basaá is that the phenomenon under discussion also allows for topic constructions with genus-species¹⁰ effects. In other words, there are structural configurations in which the topicalized DP and its correlate inside the clause appear in a super-ordinate/hyponym relation (Mchombo 2006: 149–150). These effects have been reported crosslinguistically (e.g. van Riemsdijk 1989 for Chinese and Japanese; Mchombo 2006 for Chichewa; Ott 2011, 2015a for German).

In (27a), the noun *dinuní* ‘birds’ denotes a superordinate or general term whose meaning is specified by the hyponym *ngôs* ‘parrots’, while the reverse word order is disallowed as shown in (27b).

- (27) (a) **di-nuní** **di-lâm**, m̄ ń-gwês ndígí **ngôs**
 13-birds 13-nice I PRS-like only 10.parrots
 ‘As for nice birds, I like only parrots.’
 (b) ***ngôs**, m̄ ń-gwês ndígí **di-nuní di-lâm**
 10.parrots I PRS-like only 13-birds 13-nice

This construction has been referred to in the literature as aboutness¹¹ topic topicalization (Badan & Del Gobbo 2010), or gapless splits (see Fanselow & Cavar 2002; Puig Waldmüller 2006; Nolda 2007; Ott 2011, 2012, 2015a). As shown in (28), under no circumstances can the super-ordinate and its hyponym form a single syntactic unit (see Mchombo 2006 for similar results in Chichewa).

[10] See also Cable (2004) and Landau (2006) for a crosslinguistic discussion of these effects.

[11] This is not the only example of aboutness topic in the language. Following Reinhart (1981), and as discussed in (25)–(26), the following context also denotes aboutness topicalization:

- (i) A: Tell me/what about Ntogue. How is he these days?
 B: **Ntogue**, m̄ n-téhé **njé** l̄n. Nsán a-n-sómb-ól
 1.Ntogue I PST1-see 1.him 1.today 1.father.his 1.SM-PST1-buy-BEN
 njé li-tówa
 1.him 5-car
 ‘As for/talking about Ntogue, I saw him today. His father has bought him a car.’

The conversation in (i) is about Ntogue, the referent of the proper noun *Ntogue*, as indicated in (iA). In (iB), *Ntogue* has been preposed to sentence-initial position, separated from the rest of the clause by a break (a comma) and is connected sentence-internally to the anaphoric pronoun *njé* ‘him’.

The following sentences are instances of split constructions in the active and passive forms, respectively:

- (28) (a) *mε ɲ-gwêš **dí-nuní** **di-lâm** **ɲgôš**
 I PRS-like 13-birds 13.nice 10.parrots
 (b) *mε ɲ-gwêš **ɲgôš** **di-nuní** **di-lâm**
 I PRS-like 10.parrots 13-birds 13-nice
 (c) ***dí-nuní** **di-lâm** **ɲgôš** mε ɲ-gwêš
 13-birds 13-nice 10.parrots I PRS-like

These facts show that the sentence-initial constituent and its counterpart inside the clause in (27a) are not related syntactically.

3.4. *Relativization*

Relativization is another construction where the head of a relative can be fronted alone or along with some modifier(s), leaving other modifiers in isolation inside the clause (see also Butler & Mathieu 2004 for Imbabura Quechua, Mohawk and Japanese; Cardoso 2018 for Early Stage Portuguese). Let us consider the sentence in (29a) as the basic form in which the head noun *bodaá* ‘women’ and the modifiers *balâm* ‘nice’ and *básámal* ‘six’ co-occur as a single constituent. When this constituent is fronted, as in (29b), it is ambiguously interpreted as a restrictive relative clause with either a broad reading on ‘six nice women’ or a narrow reading on ‘nice women’. Conversely, in (29c), where the head noun *bodaá* ‘women’ and the numeral *básámal* ‘six’ are fronted for the purpose of relativization, with the quality adjective *balâm* ‘nice’ stranded, only a narrow reading is possible. More precisely, (29c) is true in every context where less than six women were called out of a set of six.

- (29) (a) mε n-sébêl **fo-daá** **fa-lâm** **fa-sámal**
 I PST1-call 2-women 2-nice 2-six
 ‘I have called six nice women.’
 (b) í **fo-daá** **fa-lâm** **fa-sámal** (**fa**) mε n-sébel ...
 DEF 2-women 2-nice 2-six 2.REL I PRS-call
 ‘The six nice women that I have called ...’
 (i) There is a set of women, of which I have called six nice ones.
 (ii) There is a set of nice women, of which you have called six ones.
 (c) í **fo-daá** **fa-sámal** (**fa**) mε n-sébêl **fa-lâm**
 DEF 2-women 2-six 2.REL I PRS-call 2-nice
 (i) There is only a set of six women, of which I called nice ones
 (e.g. two of the nice women).
 (ii) #There is a set of women, of which you have called six nice ones.

These semantic mismatches between the relative clause in (29b) and its counterpart in (29c) suggest that the continuous noun phrase in the former and the split in the latter do not have the same underlying structure. The absence of such structural

connectedness is also attested in passive and active constructions,¹² but cannot be discussed here for reasons of space.

3.5. *Interim conclusion*

The preceding discussion has revealed that nominal constructions in which the head noun and some of its modifiers are fronted as a single constituent differ in meaning from their counterparts in which a fronted nominal chunk seems to have been separated from a DP-internal nominal modifier. The following section is concerned with the syntactic properties of symmetric noun phrases and provides evidence that the fronted nominal chunk and the stranded nominal inside the clause do not form a constituent in the underlying syntactic structure.

4. THE SYNTACTIC PROPERTIES OF SYMMETRIC NOUN PHRASES

In this section, I discuss the constraints that underlie noun phrases with apparent discontinuity. The different properties to be discussed include island and reconstruction effects, noun class and number mismatches, multiple and inverted constructions (known in the literature as multiple and inverted splits).

4.1. *Ross's (1967) islands*

Focus fronting (see (30a)), *wh*-fronting (see (30b)) and relativization (see (30c)) out of a complex NP (and other syntactic islands; Ross 1967) are disallowed in constructions with symmetric noun phrases (see van Riemsdijk 1989; Ott 2011, 2015a, among others, for crosslinguistic evidence). However, there are no detectable island effects for topicalization in the same context, as shown in (30d). In the following examples, the underscore ___ notation indicates the original position of the extracted element(s), and square brackets [] indicate islands. Because topics are insensitive to islands, I assume they have no syntactic connection with the host clause, which therefore contains no sign of extraction.

[12] The following sentences are instances of split constructions in the active and passive forms, respectively:

- (i) **ḡ-ḡḡḡ** ḡá-n-jéḡá málét **ḡá-sámal/ḡḡandag**
 2-children 2.SM-PST1-greet 1.teacher 2-six/many
 Intended: 'Six/many students have greeted the teacher.'
- (ii) bí-kaat bí-lám bí-n-sómb-á bí-sámal
 8-books 8-nice 8.SM-PST1-buy-PASS 8-six
 Intended: 'Six nice nice books have been bought.'

Early studies in Germanic (see Kirkwood 1970, 1977; Engel 1973; Akmajian 1975) have also explored passive constructions with split nominals.

- (30) (a) ***ma-mbót ma-lâm mɔ́-n** mɛ bí-téhé [ím-ut_i (nú)
6-clothes 6-nice 6-FOC I PST2-see 1-man.DEF 1.REL
*pro*_i a-bí-sómb ___ **má-pé**]
1.SM-PST2-buy 6-other
Intended: 'I saw the man who bought other nice clothes.'
- (b) ***kíí** u bí-téhé [ím-ut_i (nú)
9.what you.2SG PST2-see 1-man.DEF 1.REL
*pro*_i a-bí-sómb ___ **í-pé**]
1.SM-PST2-buy 9.other
*'What did you see the man who bought another?'
- (c) ***í** **ma-mbót ma-lâm (má)** u bí-téhé [ím-ut_i (nú)
DEF 6-clothes 6-nice 6.REL you.2SG PST2-see 1-man.DEF 1.REL
*pro*_i a-bí-sómb ___ **má-pé**]
1. SM-PST2-buy 6-other
*'The other clothes that you saw the man who bought.'
- (d) **ma-mbót ma-lâm,** u bí-téhé [ím-ut_i (nú)
6-clothes 6-nice you.2SG PST2-see 1-man.DEF 1.REL
*pro*_i a-bí-sómb ___ **má-pé**]
1.SM-PST2-buy 6-other

As shown in (31), the same results obtain with respect to the Coordinate Structure Constraint.

- (31) (a) ***ma-mbót ma-lâm mɔ́-n** mɛ bí-sómb
6-clothes 6-nice 6-FOC I PST2-buy
[bí-támb ni ___ **má-pé**]
8-shoes and 6-other
Intended: 'I bought shoes and other nice clothes.'
- (b) ***kíí** u bí-sómb [bí-támb ni ___ **í-pé**]
9.what you.2SG PST2-see 8-shoes and 9.other
*'What did you buy and other?'
- (c) ***í** **má-mbót ma-lâm (má)** u bí-sómb
DEF 6-clothes 6-nice 6.REL you.2SG PST2-buy
[bí-támb ni ___ **má-pé**]
8-shoes and 8-other
*'The nice shoes that you bought the shoes and other.'
- (d) **ma-mbót ma-lâm,** mɛ bí-sómb [**má-pé** ni bí-támb]
6-clothes 6-nice I PST2-buy 6-other and 8-shoes
Intended: 'I bought other nice clothes and the shoes.'

4.2. Genitive phrase islands

Genitive phrases are islands for syntactic movement in Basaá. Thus, *wh*-movement (32b), focalization (32c), relativization (32d), and passivization (32e) out of a

genitive phrase are prohibited, while topicalization is acceptable in the same context, see (32f). In the latter case, the topicalized noun *malê* ‘teacher’ should be resumed sentence-internally by the complex *mê* (lit. ‘of his’), indicating that the topicalized constituent arrives at the clause-initial position by internal merge (movement). The genitive phrase is represented in square brackets.

- (32) (a) $m\epsilon$ n-têhé [má-mbót má má-lêt ma-lâm]
 I PST1-see 6-clothes 6.LINK 1-teacher 6-nice
 ‘I have seen the teacher’s nice clothes.’
 (b) *ndžéé u n-têhé [má-mbót má__ ma-lâm]
 1.who you.2SG PST1-see 6-clothes 8.LINK 6-nice
 (c) *ma-lêt njé-n $m\epsilon$ n-têhé [má-mbót má__ ma-lâm]
 1-teacher 1-FOC I PST1-see 6-clothes 6.LINK 6-nice
 (d) *í ma-lêt (nú) $m\epsilon$ n-têhé [má-mbót má__ ma-lâm]
 DEF 1-teacher 1.REL I PST1-see 6-clothes 6.LINK 6-nice
 (e) *ma-mbót má-ń-téé-já [__má má-lêt ma-lâm]
 6-clothes 6.SM-PST1-see-PASS 6.LINK 1-teacher 6-nice
 (f) ma-lêt_i, $m\epsilon$ n-têhé [má-mbót mē_i ma-lâm]
 1-teacher I PST1-see 6-clothes 1.of.his 6-nice

The data pattern in (33) then indicates that split noun phrases formed by *wh*-fronting (33b), focus fronting (33c), relativization (33d) and passivization (33e) involve movement, while those formed by topicalization as in (33f) do not.¹³

- (33) (a) $m\epsilon$ n-têhé [má-mbót ma-lâm má má-lêt]
 I PST1-see 6-clothes 6-nice 6.LINK 1-teacher
 ‘I have seen the teacher’s nice clothes.’
 (b) *kíí u n-têhé [__í-lâm í má-lêt]
 9.what you.2SG PST1-see 9.nice 9.LINK 1-teacher
 (c) *ma-mbót mɔ́-n $m\epsilon$ n-têhé [__má-lâm má má-lêt]
 6-clothes 6-FOC I PST1-see 6-nice 6.LINK 1-teacher
 (d) *í ma-mbót (má) $m\epsilon$ n-têhé [__má-lâm má má-lêt]
 DEF 1-clothes 1.REL I PST1-see 6-nice 6.LINK 1-teacher
 (e) *ma-mbót má-n-sómb-á [__ma-lâm má má-lêt]
 6-clothes 6.SM-PST1-buy-PASS 6-nice 6.LINK 1-teacher
 (f) ma-mbót, $m\epsilon$ n-têhé [__má-lâm má má-lêt]
 6-clothes I PST1-see 6-nice 6.LINK 1-teacher

As predicted by this analysis, the island effects in (33b–e) are avoided if the syntactic configuration that forms the island is fully extracted:

[13] The parallelism effects between the split constructions in (34) and their non-split counterparts in (33) sets Basaá apart from German, where certain syntactic positions that are reported to be opaque to regular movement are transparent to extraction in the context of split noun phrases (Fanselow & Cavar 2002, Ott 2015a and related work).

- (34) (a) [kíí í má-lêt]_i u n-téhé t_i [í-lâm]
 9.what 9.LINK 1-teacher you.2SG PST1-see 9.nice
 (b) [ma-mbót má má-lêt]_i mɔ́-n mɛ n-téhé t_i [má-lâm]
 6-clothes 9.LINK 1-teacher 6-FOC I PST1-see 6-nice
 (c) í [ma-mbót má má-lêt]_i (má) mɛ n-téhé t_i [má-lâm]
 DEF 1-clothes 6.LINK 1-teacher 1.REL I PST1-see 6-nice
 (d) [ma-mbót má má-lêt]_i má-n-sómb-á t_i [má-lâm]
 6-clothes 6.LINK 1-teacher 6.SM-PST1-buy-PASS 6-nice

As seen in (34), the fronted constituent (shown in square brackets) is coindexed with a trace inside the sentence while the stranded adjective forms an independent constituent. Crucially, the grammaticality of the examples in (34) also indicates that the stranded adjective inside the clause and the fronted material are two independent constituents. This state of affairs suggests that the island in these cases involves two nominals connected by the linking morpheme only. I will argue in section five that the syntactic structure for (34) is roughly that in (35), where DP₁, containing the head noun (and its modifiers), originates as the subject of a small clause prior to movement. DP₂ is the predicate of this small clause and contains an elliptical head noun and a stranded modifier (*e* indicates ellipsis).

- (35) [DP₁ N (modifier)]_i ...[SC [<DP₁> [DP₂ *e* modifier]]

4.3. The subject island and oblique objects

As with genitive islands, extraction out of a subject in regular cases is banned, as seen in (36b), while a split construction is perfectly acceptable in the same context, as in (36c).

- (36) (a) ma-ŋwin má má-lêt m-â má-n-hélés mê
 6-news 6.LINK 1-teacher 6-two 6.SM-PST1-surprise me
 ‘News (lit. Two news) from the teacher surprised me.’
 (b) *[má má-lêt m-â]_i mɔ́-n [ma-ŋwin t_i] má-n-hélés mê
 6.LINK 1-teacher 6-two 6-FOC 6-news 6.SM-PST1-surprise me
 (c) [ma-ŋwin má má-lêt]_i mɔ́-n t_i [m-â] má-n-hélés mê
 6-news 6.LINK 1-teacher 6-FOC 6-two 6.SM-PST1-surprise me

Similarly, extraction of an oblique object is ungrammatical, as seen in (37b), while a split is perfectly correct, as in (37c).

- (37) (a) ŋane a-bí-bodôl [ma-óŋ má má-ndâp ma-pé]
 1.chief 1.SM-PST2-start 6-construction 6.LINK 6-houses 5-other
 ‘The chief started the construction of additional/new houses.’
 (b) [*má-ndâp ma-pé]_i mɔ́-n ŋane a-bí-bodôl
 6-houses 6-other 5-FOC 1.chief 1.SM-PST2-start
 [ma-óŋ [má____]
 6-construction 6.LINK

- (c) [í ma-óŋ má má-ndâp má]_i ŋanɛ a-bí-bodól t_i
 DEF 6-construction 6.LINK 6-houses 6.REL 1.chief 1.SM-PST2-start
 [má-pé]
 6-other

These facts are similar to the ones discussed above in terms of constituency and island (in)sensitivity, partly supporting Fanselow & Ćavar (2002) and Ott (2015a), who show convincingly that split noun phrases are insensitive to some constraints that constrain regular cases of extraction in German.

4.4. *Binding and reconstruction effects*

The following examples indicate that the relationship between the fronted constituent and the remnant inside the clause exhibits connectivity effects for Principle A. This holds only for focus fronting (38b), *wh*-fronting (38c), and relative clause (38d) constructions. The same effects are not present in topicalization (38e). Sentence (38a) is considered as the input.

- (38) (a) Bella_i a-ŋ-gwêš [bí-títí gw-ê_i bi-lâm njé-médé_i
 1.Bella 1.SM-PRS-like 8-pictures 8-her 8-nice 1.her-REFL
 bí-sámal]
 8-six
 Lit. ‘Bella_i likes six nice pictures of herself_i.’
 (b) [bí-títí gw-ê_i bi-lâm njé-médé_i]_j gwɔ-n Bella_i a-ŋ-gwêš t_j
 8-pictures 8-her 8-nice 1.her-REFL 8-FOC 1.Bella 1.SM-PSR-like
 bí-sámal
 8-six
 (c) [bí-mbê bí-títí gw-ê_i njɛ-médé_i]_j Bella_i a-ŋ-gwêš t_j
 8-which 8-pictures 8-her her-REFL 1.Bella 1.SM-PSR-like
 bí-sámal
 8-six
 (d) [bí-títí gw-ê_i bi-lâm njé-médé_i]_j bí Bella_i a-ŋ-gwêš t_j
 8-pictures 8-her 8-nice her-REFL 8.REL 1.Bella 1.SM-PSR-buy
 bí-sámal
 8-six
 (e) [bí-títí gw-ê_i bi-lâm njé-médé_i]_j, Bella_{j/*i} a-ŋ-gwêš t_j
 8-pictures 8-her 8-nice her-REFL 1.Bella 1.SM-PSR-like
 bí-sámal
 8-six

The reflexive *njémédé* ‘herself’ inside the DP *bítítí gwê bilâm bísámal njémédé* ‘six nice pictures of herself’ is bound by the matrix subject *Bella* not only in the input sentence in (38a), but also in the focus, *wh*-question and relative clause constructions. Conversely, binding between the matrix subject *Bella* and the reflexive *njémédé* is impossible in

topicalization (38e). These facts can be readily understood if the split constructions in (38b–d) are formed through movement, while the topic fronting construction is not.¹⁴

Connectivity effects are also detectable for variable binding in focus fronting (40b), *wh*-movement (39c), relativization (39d), but unattested in topicalization (39e).

- (39) (a) *híkíí* η -úúú_i a-bí-â η **bí-kaat** gw-ê_{i/j} **bi-lâm** t_j
 every 1-student 1.SM-PST2-read 8-books 8.his 8-nice
bí-sámal
 8-six
 ‘Every student read his six nice books.’
- (b) [**bí-kaat** gw-ê_{i/j} **bi-lâm**]_k gw-ón *híkíí* η -úúú_i a-bí-â η t_k
 8-books 8-his 8-nice 8-FOC every 1-student 1.SMPST2-read
bí-sámal
 8-six
- (c) [**bí-mbê** **bí-kaat** gw-ê_{i/j}]_k *híkíí* η -úúú_i a-bí-â η t_k
 8-which 8-books 8-his every 1-student 1.SM-PST2-read
bí-sámal
 8-six
- (d) [**bí-kaat** gw-ê_{j/*i} **bi-lâm**]_k **bí** *híkíí* η -úúú_i a-bí-â η t_k
 8-books.DEF 8-his 8-nice 8.REL every 1-student 1.SM-PST2-read
bí-sámal
 8.six
- (e) [**bí-kaat** gw-ê_{i/j} **bi-lâm**]_k *híkíí* η -úúú_i a-bí-â η t_k
 8-books.DEF 8-his 8-nice every 1-student 1.SM-PST2-read
bí-sámal
 8-six

The grammaticality of (39b)–(39d) on the bound reading of the pronoun indicates that the quantified subject *híkíí* *ηúúú* ‘every student’ can bind the pronominal element *gwê* ‘his’ contained in the fronted DP *bikaat gwê bilam* ‘his nice books’. This can be understood if the fronted DP reconstructs to its canonical position in the c-command domain of the quantified subject *híkíí* *ηúúú* ‘every student’. Conversely, if topic fronting is not derived through movement, as suggested above, then the impossibility of the bound reading in (39e) is expected.

4.5. Noun class and number mismatch

This section discusses constructions in which a fronted DP with plural morphology co-occurs in the same clause with a stranded modifier which bears singular morphology. I discuss this morphological mismatch and use it as additional

[14] An anonymous *JL* referee points out that the use of the NP *bítítí* ‘pictures’ in (38) is problematic in English because it gives rise to fake reconstruction effects which trigger a logophoric reading on the anaphor. Unlike in English, no logophoric reading on the anaphor *njémédé* ‘herself’ is possible in the Basaa examples in (38).

evidence for the view that no syntactic connectedness relates the clause-initial DP and the remnant inside the clause. This morphological mismatch is present in focus fronting, *wh*-question, relative clause and passive constructions. In the baseline sentence in (40), the singular noun *híβeŋ* ‘pigeon’ belongs to class 19 in the Basaá noun class system. The postmodifiers *hilâm* ‘nice’ and *hjádá* ‘one’ agree with this noun in class and number.

- (40) *mε* n-sómb ndígí **hí-βeŋ** **hi-lâm** **hj-áda**
 I PST1-buy only 19-pigeon 19-nice 19-one
 ‘I have bought only one/a nice pigeon.’

In (41), the topicalized plural DP *díβeŋ dilâm* ‘nice pigeons’ co-occurs with the singular numeral modifier *hjádá* ‘one’ inside the clause.

- (41) **dí-βeŋ** **di-lâm**, *mε* n-sómb ndígí **hj-áda**
 13-pigeons 13-nice I PST1-buy only 19.one
 Lit. ‘As for nice pigeons, I have bought only one.’

This morphological mismatch suggests that the fronted plural DP *díβeŋ dilâm* ‘nice pigeons’ and the remnant *hjádá* ‘one’ are not related syntactically. This is further supported by the ungrammatical sentence (42), in which the plural DP *díβeŋ dilâm* ‘nice pigeons’ and the singular modifier *hjádá* ‘one’ co-occur adjacently as a single constituent.

- (42) **mε* n-sómb ndígí **di-βeŋ** **di-lâm** **hj-áda**
 I PST1-buy only 13-pigeons 13-nice 19-one

The same morphological mismatch is found in focus, relative clause and *wh*-question constructions, as illustrated in (43), with (39a) taken as the input sentence.

- (43) (a) **β-ɔn** **β-ɔŋ** **βá-sámal** **βá-rń-pót** **βásaá**
 2-children 2-your 2-six 2.SM-PRS-speak Basaá
 ‘Your six children speak Basaá.’
 (b) **β-ɔn** **β-ɔŋ** **βɔ-n** **w-adá** **a-rń-pót** **βásaá**
 2-children 2-your 2-FOC 1-one 1.SM-PRS-speak Basaá
 (c) **í** **β-ɔn** **β-ɔŋ** **(βá)** **w-adá** **a- rń-pót** **βásaá**
 DEF 2-children 2-your 2.REL 1-one 1.SM-PRS-speak Basaá
 (d) **β-ɔn** **β-én** **w-adá** **a-rń-pót** **βásaá**
 2-children 2-of.who 1-one 11.SM-PRS-speak Baaá
 Intended: ‘Whose child speaks Basaá?’

The above sentences suggest that the sentence-initial plural DP and the sentence-internal singular DP are merged independently: no subextraction occurs in these constructions. Similar morphological mismatches have been discussed cross-linguistically (e.g. Haider 1985; Fanselow 1988; Fanselow & Čavar 2002; Ott 2011, 2015a) and presented as arguments against the view that the fronted DP and the remnant inside the clause form a single constituent underlyingly.

4.6. *The DP hypothesis, lexical degeneration and the impossibility of subextraction*

At first glance, it is tempting to suggest that a passive construction such as (44b) is derived by simply subextracting the chunk *mambót malâm* ‘nice clothes’ from the continuous noun phrase *mámbót malâm mapé* ‘other nice clothes’ (44a) as depicted in (45), where indicates the original position of the chunk *mambót malâm* ‘nice clothes’ prior to extraction. Strikethrough indicates the original position of the lexical verb prior to movement to Voice, the head of VoiceP.

- (44) (a) $\text{m\text{e}} \text{ n-s\text{o}mb} \text{ má-mb\text{o}t} \text{ ma-l\text{a}m} \text{ ma-p\text{e}}$
 I PST1-buy 6-clothes 6-nice 6-other
 ‘I have bought other nice clothes.’
 (b) $\text{ma-mb\text{o}t} \text{ ma-l\text{a}m} \text{ má-n-s\text{o}mb-á} \text{ má-p\text{e}}$
 6-clothes 6-nice 6.SM-PST1-buy-PASS 6-other
 ‘Other nice clothes have been bought.’

- (45) [_{AgrSP} **mambót malâm**
 6.clothes 6.nice
 [_{AgrS} má [_{TP} [_T n [_{VoiceP} [_{Voice} ~~sómb-á~~ [_{VP} [_V ~~sómb~~ [_{DP} má-pé]]]]]]]]]]
 6.SM PST2 buy-PASS 6-other

If movement is restricted to heads and maximal projections (Chomsky 1986), the fact that in (45) the head noun moves along with one modifier, leaving the stranded indefinite modifier *mápé* ‘other’ behind, poses a theoretical problem: such movement targets neither a maximal projection nor a head. This is conceptually problematic as movement targets an *X'* category, as proposed in van Riemsdijk (1989). If we adopt instead a version of the DP hypothesis according to which adjectives and other nominal modifiers such as demonstratives are specifiers of functional projections within the extended nominal projection (e.g. Cinque 1994; Brugè 2002; Laenzlinger 2005a, b), then adjunction of adjectives to NP is banned, as in Kayne (1994). Rather, adjectives are merged as specifiers of functional projections in-between the functional domain headed by D and the lexical layer headed by the lexical noun. This approach seems to undermine the structure in (45) adequately. In line with the specifier-based approach and the N-raising analysis of Cinque (1994), the lexical noun *mambót* ‘clothes’ originates as the head of the lowest NP below the functional projections containing the modifiers *mapé* ‘other’ and *malâm* ‘nice’ as depicted in (46).

- (46) [_{DP} [_D **mambót**_i [_{FP Adj} **malâm** [_F **t**_i [_{FP Adj} **mapé** [_F **t**_i [_{NP} [_N **t**_i]]]]]]]]
 6-clothes 6-nice 6-other

The surface order *mámbót malâm mapé* ‘other nice clothes’ in (44a), as depicted in (46) is obtained through cyclic head raising (Cinque 1994) to D of the head noun *mámbót* ‘clothes’ via the intermediate functional head positions, the specifiers of which are occupied by the modifiers *mapé* ‘other’ and *malâm* ‘nice’. This successive cyclic N-movement is allowed as long as no intervening head blocks it. If (46) is derived along these lines, then there is no principled way to allow subextraction of the chunk *mambót*

malâm ‘nice clothes’ out of the DP and the stranding of the modifier *mapé* ‘other’, as in (45). Therefore, even the Cinquian approach is undermined by the Basaá empirical data.

Another argument against subextraction is lexical degeneration. In the quantified noun phrase *libím lí bikaat* (lit. ‘a good number of books’) in (47), the lexical item *libím* (lit. ‘a good number’) and the noun *bikaat* ‘books’ form a continuous noun phrase along with the linking morpheme *lí* as shown in (47a).

- (47) (a) $\text{m}\epsilon$ n-sómb **lí-bím** **lí** **bí-kaat**
 I PST1-see 5-good number 5.LINK 8-books
 ‘I have bought a good number of books.’
- (b) (*lí) **bi-kaat** bí-n-sómb-á **lí-bím** (*lí)
 5-LINK 8-books 8-PST1-buy-PASS 5-good.number 5.LINK
 ‘A good number of books have been bought.’
- (c) (*lí) **bi-kaat** gwó-n $\text{m}\epsilon$ n-sómb **lí-bím** (*lí)
 5.LINK 8-books 8-FOC I PST1-buy 5-good.number 5.LINK
 Intended: ‘I bought a good number of books.’

In the passive (47b) and focus (47c) constructions above, the noun *bikaat* ‘books’ has been fronted alone, while the nominal modifier *libím* ‘a good number’ is stranded. The linking morpheme *lí* is disallowed in the split constructions in (47b) and (47c). This indicates that there is a lexical degeneration or loss of this functional morpheme in the split forms: the linking morpheme cannot be left adjacent to the fronted noun *bikaat* ‘books’. Similarly, it cannot occur on the right of the stranded modifier *libím* ‘a good number’, as in the continuous noun phrase in (47a). This constitutes a major challenge to a movement analysis based on subextraction, which would certainly resort to postsyntactic mechanisms to account for this phenomenon. Lexical degeneration remains problematic on the assumption that the fronted constituent and the remnant are not parts of a single source constituent in the split, making it difficult to explain why and how the linking morpheme gets deleted in the split forms. I conclude that the phenomenon under study in Basaá cannot be considered an instance of a discontinuous noun phrase as in Tappe (1989), van Riemsdijk (1989), Diesing (1992), Franks & Progovac (1994), Kniffka (1996) and Sekerina (1997), where the subparts of the split form a single source constituent underlyingly, with the discontinuous noun phrase formed by subextraction. Instead, the view defended in this paper is that the fronted nominal and the null head modifier inside the clause are related through a subject–predicate relation within a small clause (Moro 1997, 2000, Den Dikken 1998), with subsequent raising of the subject under closest c-command. As a result, no violation of structure dependency arises, despite appearances.

4.7. Multiple fronting and inversion

In this section, I show that so-called multiple splits (see e.g. Pafel 1996, Fanselow & Ćavar 2002, van Hoof 2006, Féry et al. 2007, Ott 2011) are also present in Basaá,

whereas inverted splits are unattested. In (48a), the noun *mambót* ‘clothes’ is preceded by the demonstrative *máná* ‘these’ and followed by the quality and indefinite adjectives *malâm* ‘nice’ and *mapé* ‘other’, respectively.

- (48) (a) $\text{m}\epsilon$ n-sómb **má-ná** **ma-mbót** **ma-lâm** **ma-pé**
 I PST1-buy 6-these 6-clothes 6-nice 6-other
 ‘I have bought these six other nice clothes.’
 (b) **má-ná** **ma-mbót**, **ma-lâm** **mó-n** $\text{m}\epsilon$ n-sómb **má-pé**
 6-these 6-clothes 6-nice 6-FOC I PST1-buy 6-other
 (c) ***má-ná** **ma-mbót** **mó-n** **ma-lâm**, $\text{m}\epsilon$ n-sómb **má-pé**
 6-these 6-clothes 6-FOC 6-nice I PST1-buy 6-other

In the multiple fronting construction in (48b), the chunk *máná mambót* ‘these clothes’ is topicalized and precedes the focalized adjective *malâm* ‘nice’. The null head indefinite modifier *mápé* ‘other’ remains in-situ. The illicitness of (48c) is linked to the fact that the topic is preceded by the focus. Note that this topic–focus hierarchy is not only attributed to the nature of the construction under study, but also to the Basaá grammar as a whole. In Basaá, topic should always precede focus (Bassong 2010, 2014)¹⁵ as illustrated in (49), where the topic *makebla malâm* ‘nice presents’ should precede (see (49b)) and not follow (see (49c)) the focus *mudaá* ‘woman’.

- (49) (a) $\text{m}\epsilon$ n-tí *mú-daá* **ma-kebla** **ma-lâm**
 I PST1-give 1-woman 6-presents 6-nice
 ‘I have given nice presents to the woman.’
 (b) **ma-kebla** **ma-lâm**, *mu-daá* *njé-n* $\text{m}\epsilon$ n-tí **mó**
 6-presents 6-nice 1-wife 1-FOC I PST1-give 6.them
 ‘As for nice presents, I gave them to the woman.’
 (c) **mu-daá* *njé-n* **ma-kebla** **ma-lâm**, $\text{m}\epsilon$ n-tí **mó**
 1-woman 1-FOC 6-presents 6-nice I PST1-give 6.them

Unlike Croatian, Estonian, German, Polish, Serbian (Fanselow & Ćavar 2002, Fanselow & Féry 2006), French, Classical Greek (Mathieu 2004), Chichewa (Mchombo et al. 2005, Mchombo 2006) and Early Stage Portuguese (Cardoso 2018), where modifiers and complements of the head noun can be fronted leaving the latter in situ, Basaá does not allow such a reverse word order. Under no circumstances can null head modifiers or complements of the head noun be fronted leaving the head stranded. This is illustrated in (50).

- (50) (a) ***má-ná** **ma-lâm** **ma-pé**, $\text{m}\epsilon$ n-tí *mú-daá* **ma-kebla**
 6-these 6-nice 6-other I PST1-give 1-woman 6-presents
 (b) ***ma-lâm** **mó-n** $\text{m}\epsilon$ n-tí *mú-daá* **má-ná** **ma-kebla** **ma-pé**
 6-nice 6-FOC I PST1-give 1-woman 6-these 6-presents 6-other

[15] On the topic–focus ordering crosslinguistically, see Benincà (1988, 2001), Benincà & Poletto (2004), Rizzi (2004), Ott (2015b) and related work.

- (c) ***bí mí-nsəŋgí, mə bí-sóm̩ bí-kaat**
 8.LINK 4-mathematics I PST1-buy 8-books
 Lit. ‘*Of mathematics, I read books.’

The illicitness of these sentences boils down the fact that in Basaá N/NP ellipsis is dependent on discourse structure requirements. More precisely, N/NP ellipsis is possible only when the elided noun is e-given i.e. if it is given or salient in the discourse. When this condition is not met, ungrammaticality arises. The grammaticality of sentences such as (48) and (49b) among others follows from this requirement. In these grammatical cases, the fronted element is the head noun or the head noun along with its modifier(s) while the stranded remnant stays in situ. This suggests that there is crosslinguistic variation: some languages like Croatian, French, German, Classical Greek, etc., which are reported to be morphologically rich, allow inverted splits while others, such as Basaá, do not, despite their strong morphological richness.¹⁶

4.8. *Interim conclusion*

I have shown that split noun phrases in focus fronting, *wh*-fronting and relative clauses exhibit reflexes of syntactic movement, as evidenced by island and binding reconstruction effects (Section 4.1 to Section 4.3). Because topic fronting is island-insensitive and exhibits no binding reconstruction effects, topicalization seems not to be derived by internal merge of the topic in the clausal left periphery. Morphological mismatches between the clause-initial DP constituent and its reduced DP counterpart inside the clause provided a strong empirical argument against syntactic connectedness between the fronted constituent in clause-initial position and the stranded remnant inside the clause. I also provided a conceptual argument to this effect, based on the impossibility of a subextraction analysis. These constructions are therefore by no means instances of syntactic discontinuity. It was also shown in Section 4.6 that multiple fronting is possible in a topic–focus hierarchy while inverted structures (known as inverted splits) are disallowed due to the licensing requirements on N/NP ellipsis.

In the following section, I partly capitalize on Mathieu (2004) and Ott’s (2011, 2012, 2015a) proposals, according to which the fronted constituent and the remnant inside the clause are syntactically independent, but semantically related in a predicate relation inside the VP. Building on Ott, and given that this initial merge position is syntactically unstable, syntactic movement needs to occur for the purpose of feature-checking, labelling and asymmetrization.

5. THE COMPETING APPROACHES

I will not discuss the various proposals in the literature to account for the syntax of the phenomenon under study. For an in-depth investigation on the topic, I refer the reader to Tappe (1989), van Riemsdijk (1989), Diesing (1992), Franks & Progovac

[16] Note that even in a genetically related language like Chichewa (Bantu), as analysed by Mchombo et al. (2005) and Mchombo (2006), inverted splits are available.

(1994), Kniffka (1996) and Sekerina (1997) for a simple movement analysis, to Hale (1983) and Jelinek (1984) for a base-generation approach, to Fanselow & Ćavar (2002) for a copy and deletion approach, to Mathieu (2004), Mathieu & Sitaridou (2005), and Ott (2011, 2012, 2015a) for a predication approach, and to Cardoso (2018) for a remnant movement analysis.

5.1. *The proposal*

In the last decade, Ott (2011, 2012, 2015a) has proposed an approach in which the NP in clause-initial position has a topic reading while the remnant inside the clause is a term-denoting DP. Both NP and DP are predicatively related underlyingly in a symmetric structure which is syntactically unstable. According to him, a German sentence such as (51) is derived as in the simplified structure in (52).

- (51) **Seltene Raubvögel** hat Jürgen nur **ein paar Bussarde** gesehen.
 rare birds.of.prey has Jürgen only a few buzzards seen
 ‘As for rare birds of prey, Jürgen only saw a couple of buzzards.’

- (52) [_{NP} Seltene Raubvögel]_i ... [_{VP} [[_{DP} ein paar Bussarde] <_{NPI}>] gesehen]

According to Ott, *Seltene Raubvögel* ‘rare birds of prey’ is an NP while *ein paar Bussarde* *gesehen* ‘a couple of buzzards’ is a DP. The two are initially merged as predicate and subject in an argument/adjunct position within the VP. Following Chomsky (2013), Ott suggests that this original merge position is locally unstable because it has no detectable head (label). As a result of this instability, predicate inversion in the sense of Moro (1997, 2000) and Den Dikken (1998) must apply by moving the predicate¹⁷ NP to the left periphery of the clause, yielding split topicalization whereby the fronted predicate and the remnant subject inside the clause end up being syntactically asymmetric.

My analysis mostly borrows from Mathieu (2004), Mathieu & Sitaridou (2005) and Ott (2011, 2012, 2015a) in terms of constituent independency (see also Fanselow 1988) and the search of syntactic asymmetry (Ott 2015a and related work). However, deviating from their analyses, I propose a clause structure in which a lexical verb (overt/covert) selects a small clause (SC) complement with a subject–predicate structure in which a subject DP₁ and its reduced DP₂ counterpart in the predicate position are initially merged symmetrically. This is illustrated in the simplified structure in (53), where angle brackets indicate movement.

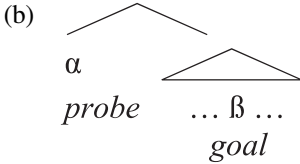
- (53) ... DP₁ ... [_{VP} V_[overt/covert] [_{SC} [<_{DP1}> [_{DP2} *e* modifier(s)]]]

Note that DP₂ is the remnant that can be made up of one or more than one modifier and an elliptical N head (represented by *e*). Recall from Section 2.2.3 that DP₂ is reduced as a consequence of N/NP ellipsis. As opposed to Ott’s predicate inversion strategy, I propose that the constituent which undergoes movement is the subject

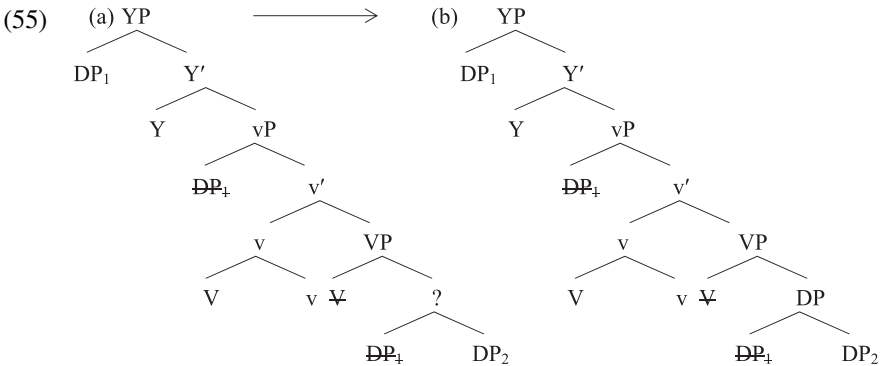
[17] Though Mathieu (2004) and Mathieu & Sitaridou (2005) also derive split DPs using predicate inversion, they show that the raised predicate is a DP rather an NP as proposed by Ott.

DP₁ rather than the reduced predicate DP₂. The fronting of DP₁ is motivated by two factors. First of all, it follows from an AGREE relation between a probing head with uninterpretable features and DP₁ (goal) with matching features under closest c-command (Chomsky 2000, 2001).

- (54) (a) Agree (α, β) if α c-commands β; α, β have matching features; there is no γ with matching features such that α c-commands γ and γ c-commands β.



Secondly, following Chomsky (2013) and as recently developed by Ott (2015a) and related work, I suggest that the underlying structure of a split involves a predication relation between a subject DP₁ and a predicate DP₂ within a VP-internal argument position that is label-less initially and syntactically unstable as shown by the symbol ? in (55a). For the configuration {DP₁ DP₂} to enter into thematic interpretation, it needs to be assigned a label by moving either DP₁ or DP₂. Being the closest goal to a matching probe, DP₁ undergoes movement for the purpose feature-checking, which also enables asymmetrization and labelling, as shown in (55b). In other words, once DP₁ raises into a dedicated checking position (to be determined in the following sections) via the vP edge, the initial configuration {DP₁ DP₂}, now labelled as DP becomes accessible to thematic interpretation as in Ott (2015a).



How (53)–(55) are implemented for Basaá is the subject matter of the following sections.

5.1.1. *The derivation of focus constructions*

Two main phrasal movements are involved in the derivation of the focus construction. They include A-movement of DP₁ into the main TP and A'-movement of a null

operator into the embedded Spec-CP of a headless relative clause. Before discussing focus fronting with split noun phrases, I will talk about the derivation of ordinary focus fronting (see Bassong 2014, 2019; Hamlaoui & Makasso 2015 for recent analyses of focus fronting in Basaá).

5.1.1.1. *Deriving ordinary focus fronting*

Sentence (56b), derived from the basic structure in (56a) is an instance of ordinary focus fronting. Small capitals in the translation sentences in (56) and (57) and similar examples indicate focus.

- (56) (a) mɛ n-sómb má-mbót ma-lâm
 I PST1-buy 6-clothes 6-nice
 ‘I bought nice clothes.’
 (b) [ma-mbót ma-lâm]_i mót-n mɛ n-sómb t_i
 6-clothes 6-nice 6-FOC I PST1-buy
 ‘I have bought NICE CLOTHES.’

Focus fronting in Basaá exhibits properties of long-distance dependency such as unboundedness (57a), parasitic gaps (57b), island sensitivity (58) and reconstruction effects (59).

- (57) (a) [ma-mbót ma-lâm]_i mót-n mɛ ŋ-hóŋɔl lé mu-daá
 6-clothes 6-nice 6-FOC I PRS-think that 1-woman
 a-ŋ-kal lé hi-ŋgondahí-bí-sómb t_i
 1.SM-PST1-say that 19.girl 19.SM-PST NICE CLOTHES.’
 (b) [ma-mbót ma-lâm]_i mót-n mɛ n-sómb ŋgi hegɓa
 6-clothes 6-nice 6-FOC I PST1-buy without try
 Lit. ‘I bought NICE CLOTHES without trying.’
 (58) (a) *[ma-mbót ma-lâm]_i mót-n mɛ je ma-séé íŋuúlé
 6-clothes 6-nice 6-FOC I be.PRS 6-happiness because
 ŋwaa w-ê-m a-n-sómb t_i (adjunct island)
 1.wife 1.my 1.SM-PST1-buy
 (b) *[ma-mbót ma-lâm]_i mót-n mɛ n-téhé í mut nú
 6-clothes 6-nice 6-FOC I PST1-see DEF 1.person 1.REL
 a-ŋ-gwês t_i (relative clause island)
 1.SM-PRS-like
 (59) (a) [ma-mbót ma-lâm mɛ_{i/j}]_k mót-n híkíí mu-daá_i a-ŋ-gwês tk
 6-clothes 6-nice 6.her 6-FOC each 1-woman 1.SM-PRS-like
 ‘Every woman_k likes her_{i/j} nice clothes.’
 (b) [bi-tíí bi-lâm gwê_{i/j} njé-médé]_{i/j} mót-n Kondé a-gwéé ti/j
 6-pictures 8-nice 6.his 1.him-RFM 6-FFOC 1.Konde 1.SM-have.PRS
 ‘Konde has pictures of himself.’

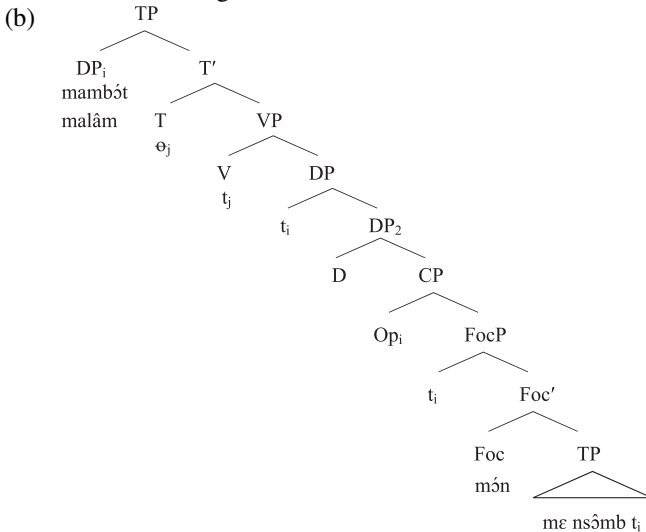
These facts follow Bassong (2014, 2019) and contradict Hamlaoui & Makasso’s (2015) claim that focus fronting in Basaá lacks island and connectivity effects. I

suggest that in focus fronting, the focalized constituent is underlyingly merged inside a small clause as the subject of predication while a headless relative clause is merged as the predicate as in Belletti (2009). I also suggest, as in Ott (2015a) and related work, that this original configuration is syntactically unstable and needs to be asymmetrized by movement. A null copula which is the equivalent of *be*-like copula in the sense of Belletti is a kind of light verb which selects a small clause complement, as shown in (60). This copula starts in V and ends up under the main T head. DP₁, the subject of predication, raises into the matrix TP position to satisfy the EPP requirements.

(60) [TP DP₁ [T \emptyset_j [VP [V t_j [<DP₁> [DP₂ [D [CP ...]]]]]]]

According to Bassong (2019), subject raising arises in the absence of an expletive subject that would otherwise fulfil the EPP requirements. DP₂ contains a headless relative in which operator movement takes place. More precisely, following (60), sentence (61a) is derived as illustrated in (61b).

(61) (a) [ma-mbót ma-lâm]_i mót-n me n-sómb t_i
 6-clothes 6-nice 6-FOC I PST1-buy
 ‘I have bought NICE CLOTHES.’



As shown in (61b), DP₁ and DP₂ are unrelated syntactically but semantically related in a subject–predicate relation inside a small clause, the complement of the null copula \emptyset . The syntactic configuration of this small clause is unstable and needs to be labelled. DP₁ raises to the subject position of the matrix TP (via the vP edge; little vP is intentionally omitted from the diagram) for the purpose of asymmetrization and labelling while a null operator inside the headless relative moves into Spec–CP via Spec–FocP. I assume that the null operator inside the headless CP and the subject of predication are semantically identical, i.e. they have matching features. As such, the availability of connectivity effects arises as a result of feature matching between the raised subject and the null

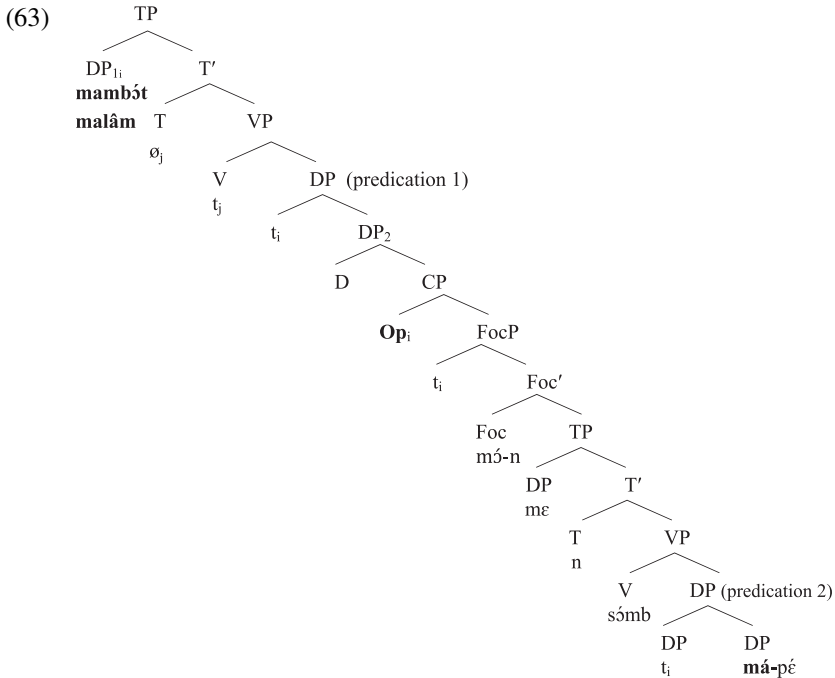
operator. The fact that a predication relation holds between the raised subject and the predicate and that there is feature identity between the two constituents explains why reconstruction is possible. I will adopt the same analysis in the following section.

5.1.1.2. *Deriving focus fronting with symmetric noun phrases*

Let us begin with the following sentence:

- (62) **ma-mbót ma-lâm mós-n mε n-sómb má-pé**
 6-clothes 6-nice 6-FOC I PST1-buy 6-other
 Intended: ‘I have bought other nice clothes.’

The fronted DP₁ originates as the subject of predication while the remnant *mápé* ‘other’ is contained in the predicate DP₂, the complement of which is a headless relative clause. This original merger position is syntactically unstable as it has no detectable label (Chomsky 2013). CP, the complement of D₂ is a headless relative containing the modifier *mápé* ‘other’



As is the case with ordinary focus fronting seen in (61) above, the verbal element that selects the small clause in focus constructions is phonologically silent and represented by the light verb \emptyset . The derivation of focus fronting with symmetric noun phrases is peculiar in the sense that it involves two levels of predication. The

first one is contained in the matrix clause and is selected by a null copula. The second one inside a headless relative is selected by the verb *sómb* ‘buy’. One ends up with two parallel structures containing each a syntactically unstable configuration. Adopting Ott’s analysis, I assume that each of these configurations is unstable and needs to be asymmetricized by movement. In the matrix clause, the subject, DP₁ *mambót malâm* ‘nice clothes’, in the high predication moves into the main TP position by virtue of being the closest category to the T head for the purpose of the EPP. This symmetry-breaking movement à la Ott is followed by labelling the initial small clause as DP. I assume that movement into the main and embedded clauses takes place simultaneously. In this case, the same scenario takes place inside the headless relative clause. More precisely, I assume that a null operator and the null head modifier *mápé* ‘other’ enter in the same predication relation as in the matrix clause. As the original merger position between a null operator in the subject position and the stranded modifier in the embedded clause is unstable, the former needs to move to the C-phase for the sake of asymmetricization and checking.

As for the simplified structure of DP₂ containing the relative clause, I follow Kayne’s (1994) head raising analysis of relative clauses according to which a functional D category selects a CP complement. With this in mind, a CP-internal movement operation normally targets a headless/elliptical NP and a null relative operator. Globally, the syntax of focus fronting with an apparent discontinuity is a bit intricate as it involves two parallel syntactic configurations, each one having a subject predicate structure that is syntactically unstable. I assume that symmetry-breaking movement, the labeling and checking operations in both cases arise simultaneously under closest c-command.

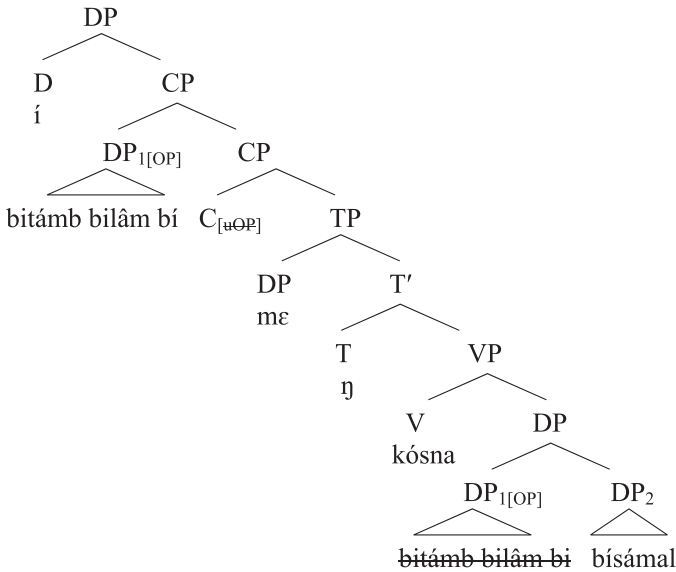
5.1.2. *The derivation of relative clauses and wh-questions*

The syntactic derivation of relative clauses is almost the same as the previous ones. The difference can be observed in (65). Consider example (64).

- (64) *í bi-tám bi-lâm (bí) mē ŋ-kósnâ bí-sámal ...*
 DEF 8-shoes 8-nice 8.REL I PST1-receive 8-six
 Lit. ‘The six nice shoes that I have received...’

I adopt Kayne’s (1994) head raising analysis of relative clauses (see Jenks et al. 2017 for a study of relative clauses in Basaá) and the tenet that the fronted constituent and the stranded modifier inside the clause are linked semantically under predication in a syntactically unstable configuration. As shown in (65), the verb *kosna* ‘receive’ selects a small clause complement, the subject of which is DP₁ containing *bitám bilâm* ‘nice shoes’ and the relative marker (operator) *bí*. The predicate is DP₂ containing the stranded modifier *bisámal* ‘six’. A functional D head occupied by the definiteness marker *í* selects a CP complement.

(65)



The final stage in (65) is obtained by leaving the stranded numeral *bísám̄l* ‘six’ in situ and raising the subject DP₁ to Spec-CP for the purpose of asymmetricizing an initially unstable structure and as a consequence of Agree under closest c-command. Closest c-command holds between the raised constituent and the C head whose (OP)erator features are uninterpretable. In line with (54), DP₁ is the closest goal whose features match and value the uninterpretable operator features on C. Once DP₁ is raised into Spec-CP, these features are checked and deleted.

Similarly, and while keeping with the small clause hypothesis, I propose that in (66), the quantifier phrase/DP₁ *mám̄bê mám̄bót* ‘which clothes’ and the modifier *mápé* ‘other’ are underlingly merged in a subject–predicate relation which is syntactically unstable as illustrated in (67).

- (66) *má-mbê má-mbót* u n-sómb *má-pé*
 6-which 6-clothes you.2SG PST1-buy 6-other
 Lit. ‘Which other clothes have you bought?’

- (67) [CP DP₁ *mám̄bê mám̄bót*_[OP]
 6-which 6-clothes
 [C _{uOP} [TP u [T n [VP [V sómb [DP < DP₁> [C [DP₂ e *mápé*]]]]]]]]]]
 you PST1 buy 6.other

First of all, I assume that the head C of CP is a probe endowed with uninterpretable operator features. Secondly, the initial merger position between DP₁ and DP₂ before movement is unstable and lacks a label. The uninterpretable features under C need to be valued by a category with matching features. Under minimalist assumptions, the closest phrasal category that meets these requirements in (67) is

the quantifier phrase *mámbê mámbót* ‘which clothes’. Once an Agree relation has been established between C and *mámbê mámbót* ‘which clothes’ under closest c-command, the latter is attracted by C into its specifier position for checking purposes, yielding the sentence in (67), whereby the quantifier phrase *mámbê mámbót* ‘which clothes’ is clause-initial while the null head modifier *mapé* ‘other’ occurs inside the clause. A'-movement of the quantifier phrase into Spec-CP is then followed by the labelling of the small clause as a DP category which contains DP₂ and a copy of DP₁.

5.1.3. *The derivation of topic constructions*

Based on the absence of island, binding and reconstruction effects, I showed that topic constructions as discussed here do not exhibit reflexes of syntactic movement. Furthermore, arguments were provided from genus-species effects¹⁸ and morphological mismatches (see Section 4.4) that topics in the construction under study are base-generated in the clausal left periphery rather than moved there. Though a base-generation analysis seems to follow from these semantic and syntactic arguments, there still remains a striking question as to the licensing of the base-generated DP in the left periphery. Case and theta-role facts make it difficult to handle these constructions as involving just a simple base-generation. The facts discussed here can be handled at least from two diverging approaches, namely Cinque’s (1977, 1983) and more recently Ott’s (2015b). From the perspective of Cinque, as these topic constructions show neither syntactic connectedness nor connectivity effects, they cannot be conceived of as being part of core sentence grammar. Rather, they can be taken as extra-sentential constituents akin to parentheticals. As such, they can be analysed as instances of hanging topics and not part of sentence grammar.

[18] An anonymous *JL* referee wonders if genus-species effects are also compatible with other constructions. The answer is negative. As shown below, a genus-species split is incompatible with *wh*-constructions, as in (i), focus constructions, as in (ii), and relative clauses, as in (iii).

- (i) *dí-mbê di-nuní di-lâm u n-sómb ngôs
 13-which 13-birds 13-nice 2SG PST1-buy 10.parrots
 Lit. ‘*Which nice birds did you buy the parrots?’
- (ii) *di-nuní di-lâm tʃ-ón u n-sómb ngôs
 13-birds 13-nice 13-FOC 2SG PST1-buy 10.parrots
 Lit. ‘*NICE BIRDS you bought the parrots.’
- (iii) *í di-nuní di-lâm tʃi u n-sómb ngôs
 DEF 13-birds 13-nice 13.REL 2SG PST1-buy 10.parrots
 Lit. ‘*The nice birds that you bought the parrots.’

Recall that genus-species effects are only compatible with topics. Morphological mismatches are attested in *wh*-constructions, focus and relative clauses (recall Section 4.4 and example (40) there).

The sentences in (68a) and (68b) can be syntactically derived as sketched out in (69a) and (69b), respectively. The Ω symbol acts as a discourse category which projects an ΩP above CP.

- (68) (a) **di-nuní di-lâm**, mɛ n-téhé ndígí **dí-sámal**
 13-birds 13-nice I PST1-see only 19-six
 ‘I have seen six nice birds.’
- (b) **di-nuní di-lâm**, mɛ n-téhé ndígí **ngos**
 13-birds 13-nice I PST1-see only 10.parrots
 ‘I have only seen parrots.’
- (69) (a) [ΩP [DP **di-nuní di-lâm**]_i Ω], [CP [C [IP ... [DP [NP [e_i] **dí-sámal**]_i ...]]]
 19-birds 19-nice 19-six
- (b) [ΩP [DP **di-nuní di-lâm**]_i Ω], [CP [C [IP ... [DP **ndígí ngos** ...]]]_i
 19-birds 19-nice only 10.parrots

In (69), the topicalized constituent is structurally unrelated to the host CP as no syntactic dependency holds between the topic and the host clause. In the spirit of Cinque (1977), the nominal element inside the clause is a kind of epithet that represents a description of the topic. In Cinque’s (1990) terms, only a binding chain relates the hanging topic to its correlate inside the host clause via coindexation and through theta-role identity between the left dislocated constituent and the clause-internal remnant. Though this approach can account for the empirical facts, it nevertheless leaves two unanswered questions. Following Ott (2015b: 231), the first challenge to Cinque’s approach concerns case and theta-roles assignment. It remains difficult to explain how the extra-sentential constituent happens to share the same theta role and case.¹⁹ Another issue raised by Ott concerning the analysis along the lines of (69) deals with binding. He points out that the non-local binding relation between the extra-sentential constituent and the epithet inside the clause corresponds to no known type of syntactic binding in the literature. Based on this and other problems related to the Cinquean approach, Ott (2015b)²⁰ proposes an alternative in terms of sentence ellipsis and linear juxtaposition.

According to Ott (2015b), in cases like (68) above, the fronted topic and its correlate are separately merged in two juxtaposed and parallel CPs, as sketched out in (70).

- (70) (a) [CP_1 [DP **di-nuní di-lâm**]_i C_1 [IP ... [VP [v **téhé** t_i]]]],
 19-birds 19-nice
 [CP_2 [C_2 [IP ... [VP [v **téhé** [DP [NP [e_i] **dí-sámal**]_i ...]]]]]
 see 19-six

[19] Basaá has no morphological case. I assume that it has abstract case. In languages with morphological case, the distinction between hanging topic and left dislocation is obvious. The former shows case mismatching, while the latter does not. See e.g. Frey (2004), López (2009), for a crosslinguistic analysis of left dislocation.

[20] Ott’s (2015b) arguments cannot be fully developed here.

- (b) [_{CP1} [_{DP} **di-nuní di-lâm**]_i C₁ [_{IP}...[_{VP} [_V **téhé** t_i]]];
 19-birds 19-nice
- [_{CP2} [_{C2} [_{IP} ... [_{VP} [_V **téhé** [_{DP} **ndígí ngos**]]]]]
 see only 10.parrots

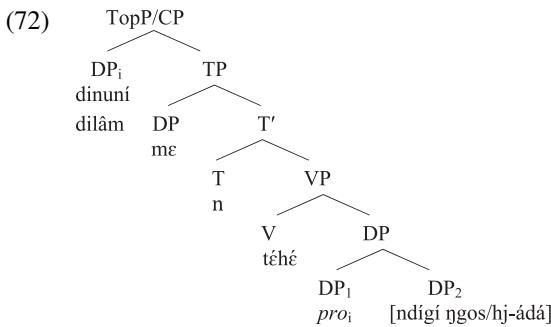
The simplified structure in (70a) shows that both CP₁ and CP₂ are complete clauses containing the verbal predicate *téhé* ‘see’. The latter assigns case and theta roles. Recall that CP₁ and CP₂ are juxtaposed in the discourse and parallel. Parallelism is explained by the fact that both clauses have an identical syntactic structure and contain almost the same lexical material. The semantic difference between the topic in CP₁ and its correlate within CP₂ is that the former denotes a superordinate term while its correlate inside the host clause is a hyponym. At the base, the hypernym *dinuní dilâm* ‘nice birds’ in CP₁, and its epithet *ngos* ‘parrots’ inside CP₂ are selected by the predicate *téhé* ‘see’ and assigned case and theta role in an identical way. The second step consists in fronting the topic to the left periphery of CP₁ and triggering backward ellipsis of the IP from which extraction has taken place. Ellipsis arises in order to avoid the repetition of the same lexical material at PF (Ott 2015b). Backward ellipsis of IP makes CP₁ cataphoric in the sense of Ott (2015b) and is similar to previous work on clausal ellipsis (e.g. Ross 1969; Merchant 1998, 2001, 2004; Brunetti 2003). The difference between CP₁ and CP₂ is that the former contains the topicalized material and an unpronounced IP. The juxtaposed CP containing the epithet is fully realized at PF. The unpronounced IP inside CP₁ is easily recovered under identity between CP₁ and CP₂. Following Ott, no syntactic connection exists between the two clauses. Both are simply linked by means of cataphoric ellipsis and anaphoricity between the topic and its correlate. The latter is a free nominal expression which is connected cross-sententially to the topic. This approach is appealing in many respects. First of all, it shows that the target of ellipsis is a constituent after movement²¹ has taken place. Secondly, it nicely shows how theta-role and case marking work, weakening the possibility of theta-role sharing. Thirdly, the presence of an intonation break (represented by a comma) between the topic and the host CP₂ seems to support an analysis along the lines of parenthetical prosody crosslinguistically.²² Last but not least, Ott’s account nicely shows that the clausal left periphery can involve juxtaposition in the discourse as well, hence the absence of island and connectivity effects which are the hallmarks of syntactic dependency.

[21] I assume that only constituents delete. Ott (2015b: 239) does not seem to show A’-movement of the topic inside the first CP. Deletion seems to apply at the base, making it difficult to figure out how ellipsis in his sense applies. Following the movement plus deletion analysis (e.g. Brunetti 2003, Merchant 2004) as depicted in (70), it makes sense to think that after topic movement in the left periphery of CP₁, the target of ellipsis is IP, the complement of the C head. IP contains a silent copy of the moved constituent.

[22] For more detail, see Ott (2015b) and references cited therein.

If the preceding analysis holds, then topicalization does not need to be derived from a predication structure like other constructions. An analysis based on ellipsis and juxtaposition sufficiently accounts for the empirical facts. In fact, an analysis along the lines of the small clause is simply weak because it is unable to account for the data under study. Adopting such an analysis suggests that (71a) and (71b) would be derived as indicated in (72).

- (71) (a) **di-nuní di-lâm, mɛ n-téhé ndígí hj-ádâ**
 13-birds 13-nice I PST1-see only 19-one
 ‘I have only seen one nice bird.’
- (b) **di-nuní di-lâm, mɛ n-téhé ndígí ngos**
 13-birds 13-nice I PST1-see only 10.parrots
 Lit. ‘As for nice birds, I only saw the parrots.’

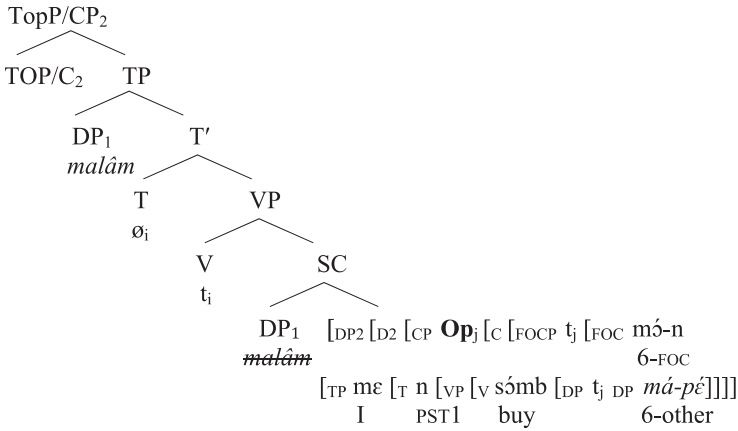


Given the unavailability of syntactic connectedness between the topic and the remnant inside the clause, one would suggest that in (71a) and (71b), the DP *dinuní dilâm* ‘nice birds’ is base-generated in Spec-CP or Spec-TopP (Rizzi 1997 and subsequent work) while a null pronominal element under DP₁ is merged in the subject position of the small clause. The clause-internal DP₂ *ndígí hjádâ/ndígí ngos* ‘only one/parrots’ is merged as the predicate of the small clause. In this case, a predication relation would be established between a null pronominal subject co-indexed with the topic and the predicate DP₂ *ndígí ngos* ‘only parrots’ or *ndígí hjádâ* ‘only one’. The absence of syntactic connectedness between the topic and the null *pro* raises a question with respect to case and theta-role marking as already discussed.

An analysis along these lines also faces a major challenge with respect to multiple fronting constructions like (73), where the topicalized constituent *mána mambót* ‘these clothes’ is followed by the focalized adjective *malâm* ‘nice’.

- (73) **má-ná ma-mbót, ma-lâm mó-n mɛ n-sómb má-pé**
 6-these 6-clothes 6-nice 6-FOC I PST1-buy 6-other
 Intended: ‘I bought other nice clothes.’

(76) [TOP/CP₁ [DP *máná* *mambót*]_i [TOP/CP₁ [TP *mε* [T n- [VP [V *sómb* [DP *t_i*]]]]],
 6.these 6.clothes I PST- buy



After CP₁ and CP₂ have been linked in the discourse, the constituent *mána malaŋ* ‘these onions’ is merged inside the VP contained in CP₁. The same operation takes place simultaneously in CP₂ where the small clause containing the null head modifier *malâm* ‘nice’ and the DP containing a headless relative clause are assigned case and theta roles. As the small clause containing the modifier *malâm* ‘nice’ in the subject position and the DP₂ predicate is syntactically unstable, the stranded adjective *malâm* ‘nice’ raises into Spec-TP for the purpose of the EPP asymmetrization. This renders the fronted adjective *malâm* ‘nice’ asymmetric with the DP that contains a headless CP. I assume that the stranded modifier *mápé* ‘other’ in the headless CP is the predicate of a null operator inside another small clause selected by the lexical verb *sómb* ‘buy’. Given the syntactic instability of this initial configuration, the null operator raises into CP via FocP to make the structure asymmetric. Topic fronting of the DP *mána malaŋ* ‘these onions’ takes place inside CP₂, followed by backward ellipsis of IP containing a silent copy of the extracted topic. Recall that backward ellipsis of TP inside CP₁ takes place under identity with its counterpart inside CP₂ as a way to avoid repetition of the lexical material inside CP₂. After ellipsis, one ends up with a structure whereby the topicalized constituent *mána malaŋ* ‘these onions’ in Spec-CP/TopP seems to stand in discontinuity with the stranded modifiers *malâm* ‘nice’ and *mápé* ‘other’ inside the host clause.

6. CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have documented as well as comprehensively analysed some puzzling nominal constructions commonly known as split/discontinuous noun phrases or split topicalization. Based on data from the Bantu language Basaá, I have argued that split nominals, as realized in focus, relative clause and *wh*-movement constructions, involve a predicative structure between syntactically

independent constituents, notably a clause-initial DP and a stranded null head modifier inside the clause. In these constructions, DP constituents are semantically linked underlyingly in a subject–predicate relation in a syntactically unstable configuration, the surface word order of which yields an apparent discontinuous nominal construction. This apparent discontinuity arises under closest c-command for the purpose feature-checking, labelling and asymmetrization. It was argued that topic constructions are not derived from a predicative source, but are obtained by means of sentence juxtaposition in the discourse and clausal ellipsis. This analysis is supported by a number of semantic/pragmatic and morphosyntactic mismatches attested between these nominal constructions and continuous noun phrases.

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