Contrastive focus and low verb doubling in Dzə

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1 Introduction

This paper discusses contrastive verb focus (CVF) in Dzə, a construction that typically involves verb doubling. The following illustrate where the SVOX construction in (1a) becomes SVOVX when contrastively focused (1b).

(1) a. Kanmila dʒə́ nìŋjasì dè lòmwè.
         Kanmila dʒə́ nìŋjasì dè   lòmwè
         Kanmila buy cloth   DEF market
         'Kanmila bought cloth at the market.'

     b. Kanmila dʒə́ nìŋjasì dè dʒə lòmwè.
         Kanmila **dʒə́** nìŋjasì dè   **dʒə** lòmwè
         Kanmila buy cloth   DEF buy market
         'Kanmila BOUGHT cloth at the market.' (She didn't, say, sell any there.)

Verb doubling constructions are common in many African languages, though they vary in form and function. Existing syntactic analyses of focus verb doubling constructions differ in:

- *Underlying structures* involved in verb focus,

- *Landing sites* of focused verbs/verbal constituents, &

- *Derivational processes* that yield multiple copies

Our goals in this talk:

- Highlight core morphosyntactic properties of CVF with verb doubling in Dzə

- Provide evidence that Dzə CVF is low, occurring in the middle field toward the vP edge

- Demonstrate that the derivational path for verb doubling cannot be straightforwardly accounted for under existing syntactic analyses for doubled verbs in focus constructions

- Suggest that the key to understanding Dzə CVF may lie in understanding interactions with objecthood

Roadmap:

2   Language background

- Dzə [dzə] (also known as Jen and Jenjo) cataloged with the ISO 639-3 identifier [jen] and glottocode dzaa1238 is an Adamawa language spoken in North-East, Nigeria, with roughly 100,000 speakers as of 2014 (Eberhard, Gary and Fennig, 2022).

- Dzə exhibits SVO word order, with pre-verbal aspect marking, but shows head-finality in DP and with some aspectual and clausal particles.

(2) a.   Nlàbèfì dʒə́ də̀ró dè jə́ŋ.
　　　　　Nlàbèfì dʒə̀ də̀ró dè   jə́ŋ
　　　　　Nlabefi buy book DEF COMPL
　　　　　'Nlabefi bought the book.'

　　　b.   sɨ̀ mì mín və̀ lò.
　　　　　sɨ̀   mì mín və̀   lò
　　　　　PROG 1SG build house NEG
　　　　　'I am not building a house.'

- All the data shown today are from the second author's judgments and from collected narratives.

3   Verb doubling constructions

In this section, we introduce verb doubling constructions, a type of reduplication that produces full or partial copies of verbs.

- Section 3.1 introduces verb doubling constructions generally, with a non-exhaustive focus on languages in West Africa

- Section 3.2 orients to Dzə, specifically, discussing verb doubling for contrastive focus plus two other similar-looking constructions in the language (future tense & present progressive)

This section thus helps contextualize contrastive verb focus in Dzə, situating this within a broader array of constructions whose grammatical reflex is verb doubling.

3.1 Verb doubling constructions in African languages

Verb doubling in verb/verbal predicate focus constructions is widespread in West African languages. Here we highlight select aspects of focus with verb doubling, and also note the use of verb doubling beyond focus in the region.

3.1.1 Verb doubling and focus

One of the most commonly attested functions of verb doubling constructions in West African languages is to indicate focus. For some languages, one instance of the verb is displaced to a left-peripheral position, while another remains lower or *in situ*.

(3) Yoruba (Manfredi 1993, as cited in Aboh & Dyakonova 2009: 1045)
Rírà ni Ajé **ra** ìwé.
buying FOC Ajé buy book
'Aje BOUGHT a book.'

(4) Gungbe (Aboh & Dyakonova 2009: 1050)
Xíá Sɛná nù **xíá** wémà lú ná Kòfí.
read Sena HAB read book DET PREP Kofi
'Sena habitually READS the book to Kofi.'

(5) Gengbe (Aboh & Dyakonova 2009: 1054)
to ye Kòfi **to**-na.
go.out FOC Kofi go.out-HAB
'Kofi often GOES OUT.'

- Yoruba, Gungbe, & Gengbe illustrate instances of verb focus with a fronted verb + another instance in the same sentence, lower in the clausal structure

- The Yoruba example illustrates a fronted verb requiring nominalization

- Gungbe & Gengbe fronted verbs do not require nominalization

Other languages with verb doubling in verb focus constructions house both instances of the verb in TP-/IP-internal positions.

(6) Ghɔmálá' (Foko Mokam 2020: 106)
Fôtsǒ kɔ̀-**dʒó** bɛ̆ **jó**
Fotso PST2-buy groundnut buy
'Fotso BOUGHT groundnuts.' (as opposed to say, *he stole*)

- Both verb copies follow the subject

- The second verb copy follows the object

Some languages also contain multiple verb focus strategies.

(7) Ikpana (Kandybowicz et al., to appear)

    a. Zá Kɔfí ozá azàì unáme.

       Zá   Kɔfí   o-**zá**   a-zàì   unáme.
       cook   Kofi   3SG-cook.PST   CL-bean   yesterday
       'It's COOKING that Kofi did to the beans yesterday.'

    b. Kɔfí zá ozá azàì unáme.

       Kɔfí   **zá**   o-**zá**   a-zàì   unáme
       Kofi   cook   3SG-cook.PST   CL-bean   yesterday
       'Kofi COOKED beans yesterday.'

- Ikpana has a pre-subject focus position that can house one verb copy, while another appears after the subject (7a)

- In a second verb focus strategy, both verb copies surface between the subject and the object (7b)

And, in languages like Ibibio, the high and low focus layers can target the same verb, yielding a double verb focus construction:

(8) Ibibio (Duncan et al. 2018: 285)

    Éké ébɔ̀ɔ́bwɔ́t ákʌ́k kpɔ́t.

    é-ké   é-**bɔ̀ɔ́**∼**bwɔ́t**   ákʌ́k   kpɔ́t
    3PL-PST.FOC   3PL-borrow∼borrow   money   only
    'They only BORROWED money.'

- The Ibibio low focus phrase houses contrastively focused verbs

- The higher focus layer houses exhaustive focus

3.1.2   Verb doubling beyond focus

Verb doubling in focus constructions has been widely attested in African languages as well as cross-linguistically. In fact, verb doubling is not confined to focus constructions; it may serve other functions within and across languages. Since this is the case in Dzə, we survey some of the regional prevalence of verb doubling in non-focus clauses.

Ghɔmálá', which as noted above uses low verb doubling for verb focus, also showcases verb doubling with "durative aspect":

(9) Ghɔmálá' (Tala 2015: 32)

    a. mú   jwɔ́   **dɔ́** **lɔ̄**

       child   DUR   cry cry
       'The child cried all day long.'

    b. pə̄dʒwǐ   kwó?   **nɛ́**   tʃə̄ŋ   **nê**   dzŭ   lɔ́

       women   DUR   cook   food   cook   day   wake.up
       'Women cooked food all night long.'

The Niger-Congo language Kam uses various forms of verb reduplication to encode affirmative future and also an "intensity construction":[1]

(10)   Kam (Lesage 2020)

    a.   Affirmative future

        ḿ   búg   à   būg-ī

        Ń   būg\HL á   būg-ī

        1SG.SUBJ.FUT pinch   FUT 2SG.OBJ

        'I will pinch you.' (Lesage 2020: 248)

    b.   Affirmative future without object

        ḿ   búgbūg-ī

        Ń   būg\HL

        1SG.SUBJ.FUT pinch

        'I will pinch it.' (Lesage 2020: 249)

    c.   Intensity construction

        àɲàván á   ꜜdúb hñ, àmá àwú dúddūbī   hn.

        àɲàván á   ꜜdúb hñ, àmá àwú **dúddūb**-ī   hn

        man   PROX be.tall NEG but 3SG INT~be.tall\INT-i NEG

        'This man is not (just) tall, but he is very tall.' (Lesage 2020: 266)

- Affirmative future: Final vowel *-i* + optional inclusion of 2nd instance of verb after object; FV *-i* + partial reduplication w/ HL tone when no object

- Intensity construction: Partially reduplicated verb w/ HM replacive tone + clause-final negator *hǹ*

The Admawa language Kyak, which like Dzə is a language in the Bikwin-Jen subgroup, has a special type of future ("definite future") that involves verb reduplication.

(11)   Kyak (Harley 2020)

    a.   mə̀n tɛ́.

        mə̀n   tɛ́

        1SG.IPFV go

        'I will go.' OR 'I go.' (Harley 2020: 394)

    b.   mə̀n tə̀tɛ́.

        mə̀n   **tə̀-tɛ́**

        1SG.IPFV RED-go

        'I will go.' (Harley 2020: 396)

- The imperfective in Kyak also has a future reading (12a)

- The "definite future" construction is encoded w/ a "*Cə-* prefix" where *C* is a copy of the initial consonant of the verb (12b)

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[1]Lesage also notes instances recorded of "unmotivated reduplication": two instances of a verb appear although a meaning difference could not be identified.

Transitive constructions with an "object index" involve this *Cə-* prefix plus an additional full copy of the verb:

(12)   Kyak (Harley 2020)

    a. mə̀n gbɔ̀ó.

        mə̀n   gbɔ̀-ó

        1SG.IPFV hit-3SG.OBJ

        'I will hit him.' OR 'I hit him.' (Harley 2020: 396)

    b. mə̀n gbɔ̀ó gbə̀gbə̀p.

        mə̀n   **gbɔ̀**-ó   **gbə̀-gbə̀p**

        1SG.IPFV hit-3SG.OBJ RED-hit

        'I will (certainly) hit him.' (Harley 2020: 396)

Mingang Doso, one of the most closely related languages to Dzə, may also be of relevance for the use of verb doubling beyond focus. Benson & Andrason (2022) document the use of reduplication of verbs in some "verbal nouns":

(13)   Mingang Doso (Benson & Andrason 2022: 9)

    a. nɨ̀ŋínɨ̀ŋ 'stealing'

    b. nɨ̀ŋlə́nɨ̀ŋ 'farming'

    c. tsánɨ̀ŋtsá 'playing'

- (13a-b) involve a verb root (*í* 'steal', *lə́* 'farm') flanked by copies of the noun nɨ̀ŋ 'thing'

- *tsánɨ̀ŋtsá* 'playing' (13c) shows the opposite—two instances of the verb *tsá* 'play' flank *nɨ̀ŋ* 'thing'

3.1.3   Interim summary

In general, verb doubling is a found widely in languages of West Africa, marking both focus constructions as well as other categories.

3.2   Verb doubling constructions in Dzə

- In Dzə we find verb-doubling in a few distinct environments.[2]

    1. Verb focus

    2. Future tense

    3. Present progressive

3.2.1   Verb Focus

- Focus is marked in two ways in Dzə. First, *dɨ́* can mark focus on non-verbal constituents (14b) & (15b).

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[2]Othaniel (2020: 89) reports an example where a verb root is repeated three times to "show that the event occurred more than once." We consider this as a separate phenomenon from verb doubling constructions and do not discuss such cases.

(14) a. ò tə́ŋ wὲ

    ò   tə́ŋ wὲ
    3SG eat yam
    'She ate yams.'

   b. Dɨ́ wὲ bɨ́ ò tə́ŋ

    dɨ́ wὲ bɨ́ ò tə́ŋ
    FOC yam REL 3SG eat
    'She ate YAMS.'

(15) a. Fìlə́ tə́ fànìŋ

    Fìlə́ tə́ fànìŋ
    Fillah go farm
    'Fillah went to the farm'

   b. Fìlə́ tə́ dɨ́ fànìŋ , Ò tə́ dɨ́ lòmwὲ lō

    Fìlə́ tə́ **dɨ́** fànìŋ, Ò tə́ dɨ́ lòmwὲ
    Fillah go FOC farm, 3SG go FOC market
    'Fillah went to the FARM, she didn't go to the market.'

- *Dɨ́* may also be used to mark predicate focus directly after the verb (16b).

(16) a. Fìlə́ wὲ mɨ́ŋ

    Fìlə́ wὲ   mɨ́ŋ
    Fillah bathe water
    'Fillah bathed.'

   b. Fìlə́ wὲ dɨ́ mɨ́ŋ

    Fìlə́ **wὲ** **dɨ́** mɨ́ŋ
    Fillah bathe FOC water
    'Fillah BATHED'

- Second, verb doubling also serves as a mechanism to express predicate focus. It is not accompanied by an overt marker.

(17) a. Lami mə̄ mə̄

    Lami **mə̄** **mə̄**
    Lami laugh laugh
    'Lami LAUGHED.'

   b. Bò dè gbɨ́ gbá

    Bò   dè **gbɨ́** **gbá**
    Picher DEF break break
    'The pitcher BROKE.'

   c. Buba dʒɨ́ dʒə́, ò jí jí lò

    Buba **dʒɨ́ dʒə́**, ò jí jí lò
    Buba buy buy 3SG steal steal NEG
    'Buba BOUGHT it, he didn't STEAL it.'

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   d. Nlàbèfí dʒɔ́ dɔ́rò dè dʒɔ́

       Nlabefi **dʒɔ́** dɔ́rò dè **dʒɔ́**

       Nlabefi buy book DEF buy

       'Nlabefi BOUGHT the book.'

3.2.2 Future tense

- Future tense is marked via verb doubling, and a nonpast marker *n* appears before the first copy.

- Note that verb doubling often includes some additional phonological changes.[3]

(18) a. Nlàbèfí n dʒɨ́ dʒɔ́

       nlàbèfí **n** **dʒɨ́ dʒɔ́**

       Nlabefi NPST buy buy

       'Nlabefi will buy it.'

   b. Fìlɔ́ n hú hó

       Fìlɔ́ **n** **hú** **hó**

       Fìl'ə NPST walk walk

       'Fila will walk.'

   c. mɔ̀-n tɔ́ tɔ́

       mɔ̀-**n** **tɔ́ tɔ́**

       2SG-NPST go go

       'You will go.'

- It is possible for the object of the verb to occur between the first and the second copies.

- This occasionally leads to SVOV (Subject-Verb-Object-Verb) word order.

(19) a. Fìlɔ́ n dʒʷì íɲẽ dʒʷì

       Fìlɔ́ n dʒʷì **íɲẽ** dʒʷì

       Fillah NPST harvest corn harvest

       'Fillah will harvest corn.'

   b. è ìmwɔ̀ dè n tsá nìŋtsá tsá

       è ìmwɔ̀ dè n tsá **nìŋtsá** tsá

       PL child DEF NPST play game play

       'The children will play the game.'

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[3]Specifically, the first verb's vowel may shift to a high vowel. If this shift occurs, the vowel preserves its original front frontness or backness qualities.

(20) a. Fíjídì sǎ hù
          Fìjídì   sǎ   hù
          Fiyidi   read letter
          'Fiyidi studied.'

     b. Fìjídì n sǎ hù sǎ
          Fìjídì   n   sǎ   **hù**   sǎ
          Fiyidi NPST read letter read
          'Fiyidi will study.'

3.2.3 Present tense

- Verb doubling is associated with the progressive form of the present tense.

- It is crucial to emphasize that verb doubling in this context applies only to intransitive verbs (21).

(21) a. Fìlɔ́ sì-n tá tá
          Fìlɔ́   sì-n   **tá tá**
          Fillah COP-NPST cry cry
          'Fillah is crying.'

     b. Fìlɔ́ sì-n mɨ́ mə̄
          Fìlɔ́   sì-n   **mɨ́   mə̄**
          Fillah COP-NPST laugh laugh
          'Fillah is laughing.'

- Verb doubling in the present progressive tense is not observed with transitive verbs. See (22b) below.

(22) a. Fìlɔ́ sì-n jɔ́ ʃə̀.
          Fìlɔ́   sì-n   jɔ́   ʃə̀
          Fillah COP-NPST kill rat
          'Fillah is killing a rat.'

     b. *Fìlɔ́ sì-n jɔ́ ʃə̀ jɔ́.
          Fìlɔ́   sì-n   **jɔ́**   ʃə̀   **jɔ́**
          Fillah COP-NPST kill rat kill
          (Intended: 'Fillah is killing a rat.')

3.2.4 Interim summary

Verb doubling is found in a range of distinct constructions in Dzə. Select morphosyntactic properties of verb doubling constructions in Dzə are compared in Table 1.

We leave it to future work whether these distinct contexts have a unifying account. We turn now to a detailed look at the distribution of verb doubling specifically in focus constructions.

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	Pres. Prog.	Future	Verb Focus
n	✓	✓	✗
sɨ	✓	✗	✗
Verb doubling	✓	✓	✓

Table 1: Constructions with verb doubling in Dzə

4 Contrastive focus and low verb doubling in Dzə

In this section, we explore the nature and distribution of Dzə CVF constructions in more detail, highlighting:

- Evidence for CVF w/ verb doubling occurring low, somewhere in the middle field

- Observations about when CVF is possible, but not with verb doubling

4.1 Locating CVF w/ doubling

Initial evidence for the positions of verbs in CVF w/ verb doubling has to do with their location relative to the subject.

(23)   a.   Fila ŋwà mɨ́ŋ dè pə̄pí.
           Fila ŋwà   mɨ́ŋ   dè   pə̄pí
           Fila drink water DEF   quickly
           'Fila drank the water quickly.'

       b.   Fila ŋwà mɨ́ŋ dè ŋwà pə̄pí.
           Fila **ŋwà**   mɨ́ŋ   dè   **ŋwà**   pə̄pí
           Fila drink water DEF   drink quickly
           'Fila DRANK the water quickly.'

       c.   *ŋwa Fila mɨŋ de ŋwa pəpi.
           ŋwa   Fila mɨŋ   de   **ŋwa**   pəpi
           drink Fila water DEF   drink quickly
           (Intended: 'Fila DRANK the water quickly.' OR 'It's DRINKING that Fila did to the water quickly.')

       d.   *ŋwa Fila ŋwa mɨŋ de pəpi.
           ŋwa   Fila **ŋwa**   mɨŋ   de   pəpi
           drink Fila drink water DEF   quickly
           (Intended: 'Fila DRANK the water quickly.' OR 'It's DRINKING that Fila did to the water quickly.')

- For the CVF w/ verb doubling construction, both copies of the verb obligatorily follow the subject (23b)

- Attempts to front either of the verbs before the subject (absent any ostensive focus morphology) is ungrammatical (23c-d)

Material that precedes and follows the verb copies in CVF constructions helps further illuminate the landing site of focused verbs. In (23b) just mentioned, we saw that low adverbs like *pə̀pí* 'quickly' follow the 2nd verb, and other low adjuncts follow the verb as in (24), repeated from (1b).

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(24) Kanmila dʒə nìŋjasɨ̀ dè dʒə lòmwè. (=(1b) above)

Kanmila **dʒə** nìŋjasɨ̀ dè **dʒə lòmwè**

Kanmila buy cloth   DEF buy market

'Kanmila BOUGHT cloth at the market.' (she didn't, say, sell any there)

The negative particle *lo* follows the second instance of the verb, too:

(25) Kanmila dʒə nìŋjasɨ̀ dè dʒə lò.

Kanmila **dʒə** nìŋjasɨ̀ dè **dʒə lò**

Kanmila buy cloth   DEF buy NEG

'Kanmila didn't BUY the cloth.' (she stole it)

The clause-final polar question marker *á* also follows the 2nd verb in CVF w/ doubling:

(26) a. Kanmila dʒə́ nìŋjasɨ̀ dè dʒə́ **à**?

    Kanmila **dʒə́** nìŋjasɨ̀ dè **dʒə́** à

    Kanmila buy cloth   DEF buy Q

    'Did Kanmila BUY cloth?.'

   b. Nlabefi dʒə́ dɜ̀ró dè dʒə́ á?

    Nlabefi **dʒə́** dɜ̀ró dè **dʒə́ á**

    Nlabefi buy book DEF buy Q

    'Did Nlabefi buy the book?'

Perhaps a more intriguing case of material following the second verb is seen below with *hɛ̃* 'all':

(27) Nlabefi dʒə́ dɜ̀ró dè dʒə́ hɛ̃.

Nlabefi **dʒə́** dɜ̀ró dè **dʒə́ hɛ̃**

Nlabefi buy book the buy all

'Nlabefi BOUGHT all the books.'

- If we take *hɛ̃* as quantifier modifying the NP/DP *dəro de* 'the book(s)', this looks like Q-float/stranding for an object

- Suggests that objects may not stay *in situ*, at least in CVF w/ verb doubling

In addition to following the subject, both verbs in CVF w/ verb doubling appear after the nonpast marker *n*.

(28) *Context: Fila is a person who is known to have stolen before, but is trying to change her ways. Speaker 1 & Speaker 2 are talking about Fila who is in a store looking at a book. They disagree on what she will do.*

   a. Speaker 1: Fìlə́ n jí dɜ̀ró dè jí.

    Fìlə́ n   jí   dɜ̀ró dè   jí

    Fila steal book DEF steal

    'Fila will steal the book.'

   b. Speaker 2: Oho, Fìlə́ n dʒə́ (*dɨ́) dɜ̀ró dè dʒə́.

    oho Fìlə́ **n**   **dʒə́** (*dɨ́)   dɜ̀ró dè **dʒə́**

    no   Fila NPST buy (*FOC) book DEF buy

    'No, Fila will BUY the book.'

- The response from Speaker 2 shows that CVF w/ verb doubling is compatible with the future construction, which also features verb doubling

- In terms of surface form, the standard future and CVF w/ verb doubling are identical

- The focus marker *dí* cannot be added as an attempt to disambiguate the future & CVF

Another strategy for identifying the sites of doubled verbs in CVF is to consider their availability in embedded contexts (rationale: embedded clauses in the language may be less articulated than matrix clauses).

(29) Fitʃuwe să Fila dʒɔ́ dɜ̀ró dè dʒɔ́, ò jí jɨ́ lò.

      Fitʃuwe **să** Fila **dʒɔ́** dɜ̀ró dè **dʒɔ́**, ò jí jɨ lò.

      Fichuwe say Fila buy book DEF buy 3SG steal steal NEG

      'Fichuwe said Fila BOUGHT the book, she didn't STEAL it.'

- Result: CVF w/ verb doubling is available under *verba dicendi*

Complements of *want*-clauses also serve as tests for the locations of doubled verbs, as these tend to be small(er) clauses cross-linguistically.

(30) a. Obefi jídì pɨ̀dʒɔ́ dɜ̀ró dè dʒɔ́.

        Obefi **jídì** pɨ̀ **dʒɔ́** dɜ̀ró dè **dʒɔ́**

        Obefi want NONF buy book DEF buy

        'Obefi wanted to BUY the book.' (not say, sell/steal/etc. it)

    b. *Obefi jidi Midafi dʒə dəro de dʒə.

        Obefi **jidi** Midafi **dʒə** dəro de **dʒə**

        Obefi want Midafi buy book DEF buy

        (Intended: 'Obefi wanted Midafi to BUY the book.' (not say, sell/steal/etc. it))

- Results for this test are mixed, but still support a low-ish focus position

- Clauses where the matrix subject and embedded subject are the same allow CVF w/ doubling in the embedded clause (30a)

- Clauses where the subject of the embedded clause differs disallows CVF w/ doubling (30b)

- **Important note:** In languages like Ibibio (Duncan 2016), this test has been used to argue for a *v*P-internal LowFocP—for Dzə, this may suggest that the landing site of the lower verb is low, but *v*P-external

Analytic causatives are another possible test case for a low focus position:

(31) Nlabefi tswè Midafi dʒɔ́ dɜ̀ró dè (*dʒɔ́).

      Nlabefi tswè Midafi **dʒɔ́** dɜ̀ró dè (***dʒɔ́**)

      Nlabefi do Midafi buy book DEF buy

      'Nlabefi made Midafi buy the book.'

- Results are compatible with sites of verb doubling being low (i.e., below the standard subject position of matrix clauses) but not so low that they're *v*P-internal

Another embedded context that is relevant for understanding how CVF with doubling works in Dzə is headed relative clauses. Here, the size of the embedded constituent is not relevant, but rather the presence of *kə*, a particle that occurs in some A-bar movement contexts:

(32) a. də̀ró nɨ Fila dʒə́ kə̀ nɨ

      də̀ró nɨ   Fila dʒə́ **kə̀** nɨ

      book REL Fila buy KƏ REL

      'the book that Fila bought'

    b. *də̀ró nɨ Fila dʒə́ kə̀ dʒə́ nɨ

      də̀ró nɨ   Fila **dʒə́** **kə̀** **dʒə́** nɨ

      book REL Fila buy KƏ buy REL

      (Intended: 'the book that Fila BOUGHT' (not, say, the one she sold))

- Results: The particle *kə* and CVF with doubling are incompatible

- Interaction between argument extraction and the availability of low focus suggests that similar mechanisms underly each

Above, we noted that *di* can occur with focused constituents, and that *di* co-occurs when focused constituents are displaced to the left periphery.

- Expectation: If the first verb in a CVF construction w/ verb doubling is high, it should be marked with *di*

- Above examples show that this does not occur

- However, it is possible to displace a verb to a high position focused with *di*, as seen below

(33) Dɨ dʒə*(lɨ) a dəro bɨ Fila dʒə.

    dɨ **dʒə-*(lɨ)** a   dəro bɨ Fila **dʒə**

    FOC buy-NMLZ LNK book REL Fila buy

    'It's BUYING THE BOOK that Fila did.'

- Results: Focused verb can be displaced with *di*, but must be nominalized

- The fact that displacing a focused verb with *di* to a high position has this requirement (plus additional morphosyntax) suggests that high and low focus constructions are distinct, structurally and positionally

Finally, we also note that it is possible to nominalize and focus a constituent containing CVF w/ doubling and the object to a high position with *di*:

(34) Dɨ dʒə a dəro dʒə lɨ bɨ Fila dʒə.

    dɨ **dʒə** a   dəro **dʒə** **lɨ**   bɨ Fila **dʒə**

    FOC buy LNK book buy NMLZ REL Fila buy

    'It's BUYING THE BOOK that Fila did.'

- Results: This construction yields 3 instances of the verb in total—the displaced verb phrase has 2, and one occurs low

- The fact that CVF w/ verb doubling occurs *inside the displaced verb phrase* suggests that this occurs lower in order to precede displacement to a high position

4.2 Cases where CVF is possible, but verb doubling is not

Interestingly, verb doubling is not uniformly available across all CVF constructions.

Above we showed examples of verbs that do and do not have objects, both of which feature in CVF w/ verb doubling. However, inherent complement verbs (ICVs) behave differently:

(35) a. Fidʒamilo bwɔ̀ dɔ́ŋ
          Fidʒamilo bwɔ̀   dɔ́ŋ
          Fijamilo   dance dance
          'Fijamilo danced.'

      b. *Fidʒamilo bwə dəŋ bwə
          Fidʒamilo **bwə**   dəŋ   **bwə**
          Fijamilo   dance dance dance
          (Intended: 'Fijamilo DANCED.' (she didn't, say, sing))

      c. Fidʒamilo bwɔ̀ dɨ́ dɔ́ŋ
          Fidʒamilo **bwɔ̀**   **dɨ**   dɔ́ŋ
          Fijamilo   dance FOC dance
          'Fijamilo DANCED.' (she didn't say, sing)

- Results: ICVs cannot be doubled, and require *dɨ* postverbally
- Perhaps notable is the nature of the object in an ICV

Ditransitive verbs also resist verb doubling under CVF:

(36) Nlabefi tɔ̀ Kanmila (*tə) dɔ̀ró dè (*tə), ò dʒɔ́ wɔ̀ lɔ̀ dʒɔ́ lò.
      Nlabefi tɔ̀   Kanmila (*tə)   dɔ̀ró dé   (*tə),   ò   dʒɔ́ wɔ̀   lɔ̀   dʒɔ́ lò
      Nlabefi give   Kanmila (*give) book DEF (*give) 3SG.SUBJ sell 3SG.OBJ BEN   sell NEG
      'Nlabefi GAVE the book to Kanmila, she didn't sell it to her.'

- Results: There is no morphosyntactic material corresponding to CVF in the first clause, but the presence of doubling in the second clause (and the overall interpretation) suggests CVF is present
- Perhaps notable is the fact that the indirect object immediately follows the verb in a double object construction

And, finally, we note that the verb *jidi* 'want, love, like' also cannot be doubled:

(37) a. *Fila jidi e idzwa jidi.
          Fila **jidi**   e   idzwa **jidi**
          Fila want PL   dog   want
          (Intended: 'Fila LIKES dogs.' (she doesn't hate them))

      b. Fila jìdí dɨ ìdzwá.
          Fila **jìdí**   **dɨ**   è   ìdzwá
          Fila want FOC PL   dog
          'Fila LIKES dogs.' (she doesn't hate them)

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4.3 Section summary

In sum, we find that verb-doubling in Dzə ICVs is low, but not too low, occurring after objects but before low modifiers.

5 Analyses of verb doubling constructions

This section introduces two broad approaches to accounting for verb doubling in focus constructions, based on where verbs end up:

1. Verbs end up in separate domains (e.g., one in the C-layer & another in the inflectional domain)

2. Verbs end up in the same domain (e.g., both in the inflectional domain)

Our aim for this talk is to highlight proposed locations of landing sites for verb doublets rather than the mechanisms that drive movement.

5.1 Verbs move & split across domains

Several approaches to verb focus constructions with doubling take a V(P)-fronting approach. A simplified example of this derivation is schematized in (38), based on Aboh & Dyakonova's (2009: 1054) analysis of verb focus yielding VO in Gungbe:

(38) $[_{FocP}\ [_{Foc}\ V_i\ [_{TP}\ S\ [_T\ [_{XP}\ V_i\ [_{vP}\ [_{VP}\ t_i\ O\ ]]]]]]]$

Key steps in this derivation:

- Two heads above vP form movement chains

- Foc head bears a focus feature attracting V (chain 1)

- An Asp head below T inherits features from Fin and attracts V (chain 2)[4]

- Note: OV sequences in Gungbe do not produce verb doubling; one key difference in deriving OV is that the O raises to Spec,AspP

Split-domain approaches have mainly been proposed to account for languages where the first verb appears before/higher than the subject.

5.2 Verbs move & land in the same domain

Analyses for languages where doubled verbs remain below the subject position typically invoke the existence of a low, TP-internal focus phrase (Belletti 2004, Aboh 2007).

The following derivation is based on Becker & Nformi's (2016) analysis of verb doubling in the Grassfields Bantu language Limbum:

(39) $[_{TP}\ S\ [_T\ [_{FocP}\ [_{vP}\ V{+}O\ ]\ [_{Foc}\ Foc{+}V\ [_{vP}\ t_i\ [_{VP}\ t_i\ O\ ]]]]]]]$

Key steps in this derivation:

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[4]For simplicity, in our schematization we represent multiple Asp layers with XP.

- Low Foc head attracts V, triggering V-to-*v*-to-Foc movement (and blocks other Foc exponents appearing there)

- VP containing V & O raises to Spec,FocP

Important note: Becker & Nformi's analysis makes the prediction "that no other constituent can follow the focused copy of the verb" (2016: 80).

6 Towards an analysis for Dzə contrastive verb focus

What do we need an analysis to account for to generate CVF w/ verb doubling in Dzə?

1. Produce a structure/derivation where 2 verb copies can be pronounced

2. Host two verb copies in the middle field: below the (surface) subject position & above *v*P

3. Generate SVOVX order

4. Explain why doubled verbs are unavailable in certain CVF constructions

Problems w/ brute force applying extant analyses:

- Split-domain approaches produce VSVO (or possibly VSOV) order

- Modifying these by positing a LowFocP below surface subjects alone is insufficient—we might expect SVVO order (similar to CVF in Ibibio, see Duncan 2016, Duncan et al. 2018)

- The same-domain, TP-internal approach of Becker & Nformi generates SVOV order, but comes with an undesirable constraint: nothing should follow the 2nd verb copy

An observation that may point to a solution: **Objecthood matters!** Recall:

- ICVs in Dzə resist doubling, and, crosslinguistically, objects in ICVs often receive special treatment

- A-bar extracting an object bleeds verb doubling in a headed relative clause

- The quantifier *hɛ̃* 'all' can be stranded clause-finally—after the 2nd verb copy—when modifying an object

- Ditransitives like *tə* resist doubling and have SVIODO order (the indirect object could interfere with the direct object)

- The verb *jidi* 'want' also resists doubling

- **Implication:** Canonical objects do something that non-canonical objects don't

A tentative solution:

- One surface copy of V raises out of *v*P (perhaps to T or lower)

- Canonical objects vacate the *v*P before VP movement

- VP raises to Spec,FocP but is a VP remnant

- ICVs bleed this last step because the object doesn't vacate (drawing from Anyanwu 2012)

- The position of the low FocP is higher than low layers that house manner adverbs (like *pə̀pí* 'quickly') and location adjuncts (like *lomwe* '(at the) market') and perhaps negation

7 Conclusion

Verb doubling is a prominent feature for three constructions in Dzə:

1. Constrastive verb focus (CVF)

2. Future

3. Present progressive

Narrowing in on CVF, we noted the following:

- Evidence suggests that the landing site for each copy is in the middle field, below the surface subject position and above *v*P

- Dzə CVF w/ doubling has SVOV order similar to languages like Ghɔmálá' and Limbum, but one difference between Dzə and Limbum is that material can follow the second verb copy in Dzə

- Verb doubling surprisingly does not always obtain for Dzə CVF: inherent complement verbs (ICVs) and ditranstives are among verbs that resist doubling

- The behavior of objects seems central to understanding the syntax of Dzə CVF

Thank you!

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Abbreviations

Abbreviations in glosses follow the Leipzig Glossing rules whenever possible, with some exceptions. Glossing abbreviations used include: 1 = 1st person, 2 = second person, 3 = third person, BEN = benefactive, DEF = definite, DUR = durative, FOC = focus, FUT = future, HAB = habitual, INT = intensive, IPFV = imperfective, LNK = linker, NEG = negation, NMLZ = nominalizer, NONF = nonfinite, NPST = nonpast, OBJ = object, PL = plural, PROG = progressive, PROX = proximate, PST = past, PST2 = past, type 2, Q = polar question particle, RED = reduplication, REL = relative marker, SG = singular, SUBJ = subject.

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