ON THE POST-VERBAL POSITION OF IDENTIFICATIONAL FOCUS IN CHANGANA

INTRODUCTION: The main goal of this talk is demonstrate that Changana[1] displays a dedicated focus projection, FocP, that lies in an intermediate position between TP and vP, to which contrastive focus XPs are moved to. The first diagnostic in favor of this analysis comes from object agreement, since, in Changana, only presupposed objects can trigger agreement, as follows:

(1)　　*ni-tiv-a*　　　　　*mùfánà*
　　　　1SG.SM-know-FV　　1.boy
　　　　'I know a boy.'

(2)　　*na-**mu**-tiv-a*　　　　*(a)*　*mùfánà*
　　　　1SG.SM-1.OM-know-FV　　part　1.boy
　　　　'I know the boy (a specific and definite one).'

Note that the agreement prefix {mu-} above encodes that the referent of the XP *mùfánà* is the topic, since it has already been mentioned in a previous discourse. However, when the theme object carries contrastive focus, the object prefix cannot occur on the verb morphological complex and the tone pattern of the focus $XP_{[+F]}$ must change from low tone to high tone. Compare examples below.

(3)　　*ni-tiv-a*　　　　múfánà
　　　　1SG.SM-know-FV　　1.boy
　　　　'I know A BOY [and not a woman].'

(4)　　na-**mu**-tiv-a　　　　(a)　　*múfánà
　　　　1SG.SM-1.OM-know-FV　　PART　1.boy
　　　　'I know THE BOY (a specific and definite one) [and not the woman].'

The second diagnostic regards the change of tone pattern and word order facts in double object construction. In such constructions, if the focus $XP_{[+Focus]}$ has a lexical tone pattern as low in all the syllables, it must change from low to high tone up to the penultimate syllable, regardless of the fact that it carries low tones in all the syllables (Langa, 2013). This constraint is confirmed by the fact that the theme object changes its tone pattern from low in (5) to high in (6) in order to encode the identificational focus feature. Additionally, the focus phrase must move around the goal object to a higher position in the structure.

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[1] Changana, also referred to as Xitchangana in the literature, is one of the several native languages catalogued by the Geographic Atlas of Mozambique. The language belongs to the Bantu branch of the Niger-Congo languages and is mainly spoken in the Gaza District and in Maputo, in the southern region of Mozambique.

(5) hǐnà   hǐ-tà-xàv-èl-à   xǐkòxà   màzàmbhànà

we   1PL-FUT-buy-APPL-FV   old woman   potato

'We will buy the old woman some potato.'

(6) hǐnà   hǐ-tà-xàv-èl-à   mázámbhánà xǐkòxà   àngàlì   nyàmà

we   1PL-FUT-buy-APPL-FV   potato   old woman   NEG-be   meat

'We will buy [SOME POTATO] to the old woman and not meat.'

PROPOSAL: Based on the empirical data presented above, we will then postulate that there is a floating tone in constructions with contrastive focus that is responsible for changing the tone pattern of focus XPs in sentences (3) and (6) above. This in turn brings further evidence in favor of Kiss's (1998) proposal according to which identification focus is quantificational and requires movement into a scope position. This fact then explains the reason why, in double object construction, such as (6) above, the basic word order is systematically changed from [V Goal Theme] to [V THEME$_{+F}$ Goal]. According to Kiss (1998), contrastive focus XPs must always move to a specifier position of FocP projection. We will also posit that a derivation, in which the theme object can skip the goal object in its way to a focus position, is possible because its movement is not to A-position but to A-bar position.

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