Datasheet for *OV in Bantu: The syntax of Tunen*

Elisabeth J. Kerr (Leiden University)
CNRS-LLACAN seminar series, 20th October 2023

Slides: https://kerrej.co.uk/output/ > Talks > Oct 2023

1 Intro

(1) N-jûchi **zi-ná-wá-lum-a** a-lenje
10-bee SM.10-PST-OM.2-bite-FV 2-hunter
'The bees bit them, the hunters.' (Chichewa; Bresnan and Mchombo 1987:744)[1]
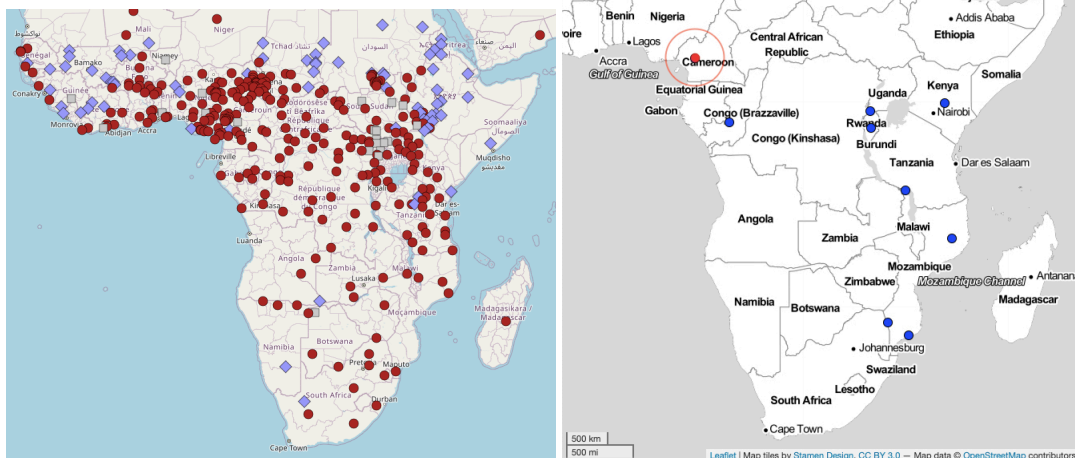
[NB: Other word orders are possible in Chichewa]

Figure 1: a. WALS feature 83A (order of O and V) (Dryer 2013). Red circle = VO, blue diamond = OV, grey square = no dominant order. **b.** Languages of BaSIS project (Tunen in red/circled).

(2) Àná mònɛ́ **índì**.
SM.1.PST2 money give
'S/he gave money.' (Tunen; Mous 1997:126)

"In Nen A44, basic word order is SOV [(3a)]. However, when the object is focused, it is placed after the verb [(3b)]."

(3) a. Àná mònɛ́ **índì**.
SM.1.PST2 money give
'S/he gave money.'

b. Àná **índì** á mònɛ́.
SM.1.PST2 money FOC money
'S/he gave MONEY.' (Mous 1997:126)

(Downing and Marten 2019:273-4)

(4) a. fíl   á mɔ̀ á'zɔ́ɔ   **zí** <u>kí-bɛ́</u>.
    friends 3P PST yesterday eat CL-fufu
    'The friends ate FUFU (not yams) yesterday.'

    b. fíl   á mɔ̀ <u>bɛ́-'kí</u> **zí** á'zɔ́ɔ.
    friends 3P PST fufu-CL eat yesterday
    'The friends ate fufu YESTERDAY (not two days ago).'

    c. fíl   á máà <u>bɛ́-'kí</u> á'zɔ́ɔ **zí**.
    friends 3P PST.PF fufu-CL yesterday eat
    'The friends DID TOO eat fufu yesterday.'
                             (Aghem; Watters 1979:148-50, cited in Güldemann 2007:94)

2 Results

2.1 RQ1: OV and IS

2.1.1 Thetics

(5) Context: Your friend asks what happened at church.
    mɔtát a ná <u>imbə́nu</u> <u>yɛ</u> <u>fəkin</u> <u>nɛ́</u> <u>Yə́səs</u> ɔ <u>Yɛrúsalɛm</u> **nɔŋɔnak**.

    /mɔ-táta a   ná   <u>ɛ-mbə́nu</u> <u>yɛ</u>   <u>fəkinə</u>   <u>nɛ́</u>   <u>Yə́səsu</u> ɔ   <u>Yɛrúsalɛmɛ</u>
    1-pastor SM.1 PST2 9-news ASSOC.9 5.entrance ASSOC.5 Jesus PREP Jerusalem
        nɔŋɔn-aka/
      tell-DUR
    'Le pasteur a raconté des nouvelles de l'entrée de Jésus à Jerusalem'.
    'The pastor told the news of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem.'   [DM 166]

2.1.2 Object focus

(6) What did Maria apply? (term focus on object)
    Malíá a ná <u>bilə́liə</u> **fɔfɔ́kiə**.
    /Malíá a   ná   <u>bɛ-lə́liə</u> **fɔfɔ́kíə́**/
    1.Maria SM.1 PST2 8-varnish anoint.DUR
    'Maria a oint [le vernis]_{FOC}.'
    'Maria applied [the varnish]_{FOC}.'   [JO 2518]

2.1.3 VP focus

(7) Context 1: What did Maria apply? (term focus on object)
    Context 2: What did Maria do? (VP focus)
    Malíá a ná <u>bilə́liə</u> **fɔfɔ́kiə**.
    /Malíá a   ná   <u>bɛ-lə́liə</u> **fɔfɔ́kíə́**/
    1.Maria SM.1 PST2 8-varnish anoint.DUR
    'Maria applied [the varnish]_{FOC}.'
    'Maria [applied the varnish]_{FOC}.'   [JO 2518]

2.1.4   Other Predicated-Centred Focus

(8)   Context: 'Do you see the sheep?' (truth focus)
mɛ́ nd(ɔ) ɛndɔ́mbá **sin**.

/mɛ   ᴴndɔ   ɛ-ndɔ́mbá   **sinə**/
SM.1SG PRS   4-sheep   see
'Je vois les moutons.'
'I see the sheep.'   [EO 695]

2.1.5   Reverse pseudocleft

(9)   Context: Someone says incorrectly that you speak Tunen.
bɔ́ɔ, fɛlɛ́nd͡ʒ **á** mɛ́ nd(ɔ) ɔ́k.

/bɔ́ɔ, fɛlɛ́nd͡ʒɛ **á**   mɛ́   ᴴndɔ ɔ́kɔ/

no   French COP SM.1SG.REL PRS   understand
'Non, c'est [le français]ꜰᴏᴄ que je comprends.'
'No, it's [French]ꜰᴏᴄ that I understand.'   [PM 93, 94]

2.1.6   'VO' examples
See appendix §4.1.

2.2   RQ2: Other restrictions on OV

2.2.1   Affirmative vs negative polarity

(10)   a.   mɛ ndɔ tunəni **ɔ́kɔ**.   b.   mɛ lɛ́ ndɔ tunəni **ɔ́kɔ**.

/mɛ   ᴴndɔ tɔ-nəní **ɔ́kɔ**/   /mɛ   lɛ   ᴴndɔ tɔ-nəní
SM.1SG PRS   13-Nen understand   SM.1SG NEG PRS   13-Nen
'Je comprends la langue Tunen.'   **ɔ́kɔ**/
'I understand the Tunen language.'   understand
[JO 801]   'Je ne comprends pas la langue
                                                           Tunen.'
                                                           'I don't understand the Tunen lan-
                                                           guage.' [JO 804]

2.2.2   Embedded clauses: OV/*VO

(11)   a.   Malíá a ná láá ásɛa Jɔhánɛs(ɛ) á ndɔ bilíbílíbí **nyɔ** ɔ wayɛ́á ɔ́mbɛ́l.
/Malíá a   ná   laa a-séá   Jɔhánɛsɛ   a   ᴴndɔ bɛ-líbílíbí   **nyɔ**
1.Maria SM.1 PST2 say SM.1-say 1.Johannes SM.1 PRS   8-chilli.pepper cultivate
        ɔ   wayɛ́á   ɔ-mbɛ́la/
        PREP poss.pron.1.3 3-house
'Maria a dit que Johannes cultive des pilipilis chez lui.'
Maria said that John grows chillies at home.'   [JO 2450]

        b.   *Malíá a ná láá ásɛa Jɔhánɛs á ndɔ **nyɔ** bilíbílíbí.
/Malíá a   ná   laa a-séá   Jɔhánɛsɛ   a   ᴴndɔ **nyɔ**   bɛ-líbílíbí/
1.Maria SM.1 PST2 say SM.1-say 1.Johannes SM.1 PRS   cultivate 8-chilli.pepper
Intd.: 'Maria a dit que Johannes cultive des pilipilis.'
Intd.: 'Maria said that John grows chillies.'   [JO 2451]

3

2.2.3 TAM context

See examples on this datasheet (e.g. PRS, OV: (10a), PST1, OV: (12), PST2, OV: (7), PST3, OV: (19a)) + further examples in Dugast (1971); Mous (1997, 2005, 2014); Kerr (to appear); Kerr (in prep *b*).

2.2.4 Object factors

See appendix §4.2.

2.3 Multiple objects

(12) Context: 'Who is the woman giving a gourd to?' + photo from BaSIS stimuli

a nɔ́ ɔsɔ́kɔ́ hɛtɛ́tɛ́ **indi**.

/a nɔ́ ɔsɔ́kɔ́ hɛ-tɛ́tɛ́ **índíə́**/

SM.1 PST1 1.other 19-gourd give

'Elle donne une gourde à l'autre.'
'She gives a gourd to the other (woman).' [PM 1541]

[NB: Also possible to have the recipient postverbal, obliquely marked (S-Aux-O-V-**X**); see Kerr (in prep. *a, b*)]

3 Analysis

(13)
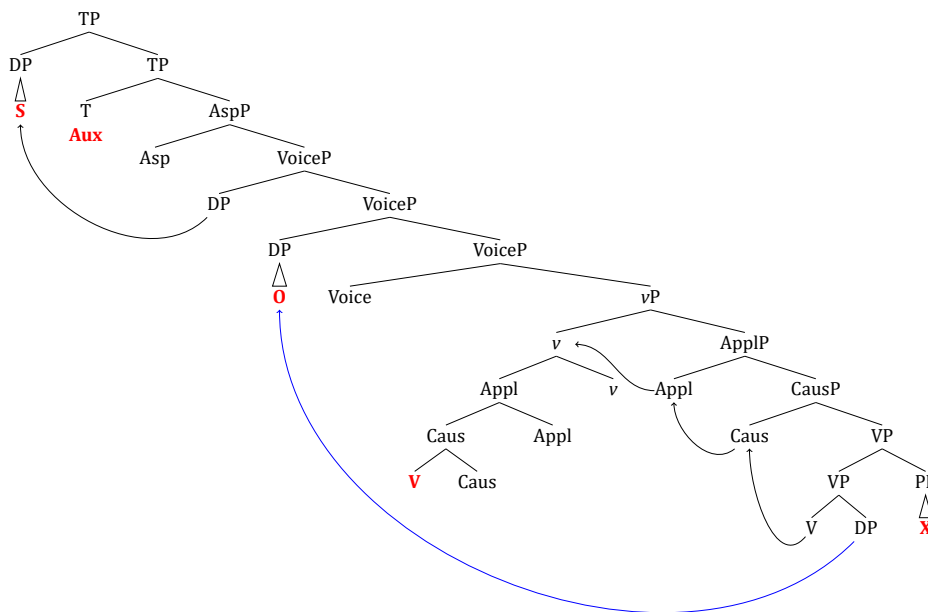
⇒ In a nutshell: Tunen's basic S-Aux-O-V-X word order is derived in parallel way to S-V-O-X order in other Bantu, with addition of object movement as single innovation (+ lower level of verb movement, reflecting lack of aspectual encoding on final vowel)

Glosses and abbreviations

Glosses: 1, 2, 3… = Bantu noun class marker; 1S(G), 1PL = 1st person singular, plural; 2S(G) = 2nd person singular; APPL = applicative; ASSOC = associative (=connective) marker; CAUS = causative; COP = copula; DEM = demonstrative; DUR = durative; EMPH = emphatic (pronoun); FUT = future tense; H = high tone; HOD.PAST = hodiernal past tense; INF = infinitive; L = low tone; LOC = locative; NEG = negation; PST1 = first-degree past tense (just now); PST2 = second-degree past tense (hodiernal); PST3 = third-degree past tense (yesterday);POSS = possessive; PREP = preposition; PRON = pronoun; PROX = proximal; PRS = present tense; RECIP = reciprocal; REL = relative; SM = subject marker; TAM = tense/aspect/mood

Abbreviations: Asp = aspect; Aux = auxiliary; DP = determiner phrase; IS = information structure; O = object; PCF = predicate-centred focus; PP = prepositional phrase; RQ = research question; TP = tense phrase; *v*P = highest projection in verbal domain; V = verb; X = other (non-S/O arguments and adjuncts).

References

Bresnan, J. and Mchombo, S. A. (1987). Topic, pronoun, and agreement in Chicheŵa. *Language*, 63(4):741–482.

Downing, L. J. and Marten, L. (2019). Clausal morphosyntax and information structure. In Van de Velde, Mark L.O., K. B. D. N. and Philippson, G., editors, *The Bantu Languages*, pages 270–307. London/New York: Routledge, 2 edition.

Dryer, M. S. (2013). Order of object and verb. In Dryer, Matthew S. & Haspelmath, M., editor, *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online.* Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology. (Available online at http://wals.info/chapter/83, Accessed on 2022-02-11.).

Dugast, I. (1971). *Grammaire du Tunen.* Éd. Klincksieck.

Güldemann, T. (2007). Preverbal objects and information structure in Benue-Congo. In E. O. Aboh, Hartmann, K. and Zimmermann, M., editors, *Focus strategies in African languages*, pages 83–112. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter.

Kerr, E. J. (2020). The grammaticalisation of a specific indefinite determiner: Prenominal *-mɔ̀té* in Tunen. In Wal, J. v. d., Smits, H. J., Petrollino, S., Nyst, V. A., and Kossmann, M. G., editors, *Essays on African languages and linguistics: In honour of Maarten Mous*. Leiden: African Studies Centre Leiden Occasional Publications.

Kerr, E. J. (in prep.). Tunen syntax and information structure. PhD thesis, Leiden University.

Kerr, E. J. (to appeara). The expression of information structure in Tunen (A44).

Kerr, E. J. (to appearb). On OV and VO at the Bantu/Bantoid borderlands. In Yaqian Huang, Nina Hagen Kaldhol, J. L. S. R. and Struthers-Young, A., editors, *Selected Papers from the 53rd Annual Conference on African Linguistics, Language Science Press*.

Mous, M. (1997). The position of the object in Tunen. In R.M., D. and Manfredo, V., editors, *Object positions in Benue-Kwa*, pages 123–137. Holland Academic Graphics.

Mous, M. (2005). The innovative character of object-verb word order in Nen (Bantu A44, Cameroon). *Studies in African Comparative Linguistics with Special Focus on Bantu and Mande. Tervuren: MRAC*, pages 411–424.

Mous, M. (2014). TAM-full object-verb order in the Mbam languages of Cameroon. *Preverbal Domain(s)*, page 72.

Watters, J. R. (1979). Focus in Aghem. In Hyman, Larry, editor, *Aghem Grammatical Structure*, pages 137–197. University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

4   Appendix

4.1   'VO' examples

4.1.1   'VO' and secondary predication

(14)   Context: EO and PM are discussing the funeral of a local figure called Papa Daniel.

bá sɛ .. mukót ... mba a ka **híána** <u>munɛn</u>.

/bá	sɛ́á	..	mɔ-kóto	...	mba	a	ka	**híána**	mɔ-nəni/
SM.2	say	..	1-Bamileke	...	but	SM.1	PST3	become	1-Nen

'On dit que c'est un Bamileke, mais il est devenu un Munen.'

'They say he's a Bamileke, but he became a Munen.'   [EO 1037]

4.1.2   'VO' with hesitation

(15)   Context: PM is giving EO instructions for the QUIS map task.

PM: 'There is an intersection with three roads. On the first road-'

mɛ́ ndɔ **sinə** ... <u>mɛnyama</u> <u>ɛ-káhɔ</u>.

/mɛ	ᴴndɔ	**sinə**	...	mɛ-nyama	ɛ-kahɔ/
SM.1SG	PRS	see	...	9-animal	9-beef

'Je vois ... une vache.'

'I see ... a cow.'   [EO 664]

4.1.3   'VO' with French

(16)   PM: 'I myself saw the first vehicle he bought, it was Inyas who drove (it) -'

EO: 'I (also) saw (it)'.

- a ka **tiləkə** « <u>Dieu</u> <u>hait</u> <u>les</u> <u>méchants</u> ».

/a	ka	**tilə-aka**	Dieu	hait	les	méchants/
SM.1	PST3	write-DUR	God.FR	hates.FR	the.FR	wicked_people.FR

'- Il avait écrit « Dieu hait les méchants ».'

'- He wrote "God hates the wicked".'   [PM 1047]

4.1.4   'VO': if object in clause 1

(17)   Context: JO explains how to make the dish *kok* [*kok* leaves boiled with smoked fish and ground peanuts].
Mɛ ka ákán(a) (ɔ) ɛmbɔ́m, mɛ ná hɛkɔkɛ kɛ́ták, mɛ ná nda híáná ɔ ɔmbɛ́l, mɛ ná **tábɔ́náka** <u>tɔánd͡ʒɛ</u> <u>tɔbíá</u> mɛ **ombokok**.

/mɛ	ka	akana	ɔ	ɛ-mbɔma	mɛ	na	hɛ-kɔkɛ	kɛtaka	mɛ	na	nda	hiana
SM.1SG	PST3	leave	PREP	7-bush	SM.1SG	PST2	19-kok	gather	SM.1SG	PST2	PROX	enter

ɔ	ɔ-mbɛla	mɛ	na	**tabɔnaka**	<u>tɔ-and͡ʒɛ</u>	<u>tɔ-bia</u>	mɛ	**ombokoko**/
PREP	3-house	SM.1SG	PST2	arrange	13-leaf	13-bad	SM.1SG	throw.REP

"Je suis partie en brousse, j'ai cueilli le *kok*, je suis revenue à la maison, j'ai arrangé les mauvaises feuilles, je les ai jété,"
"I went to the bush, I gathered *kok*, I returned home, I arranged the bad leaves, I threw them out,"

[JO 1339]

4.2   Object factors
4.2.1   Definiteness/specificity
Unmarked noun phrase, OV:

(18)   mɛ́ ndɔ <u>mɔ́ndɔ</u> **si**.

/mɛ	ᴴndɔ	mɔ-ndɔ	siə/
SM.1SG	PRS	1-person	search

'Je cherche {quelqu'un/une personne/la personne}.'
'I'm looking for {someone/a person/the person}.'

[JO 898]; (Kerr 2020:246)

Definite noun phrase (D-linked / proper name), OV:

(19)   a.   Context: 'What happened?'
yəmisə́ a ka <u>wə́yíə́</u> <u>mɔtɔ́á</u> **lú**.

/yamía-isə́		a	ka
POSS.PRON.1SG.9-9.father		SM.1	PST3

<u>wə́yíə́</u>	<u>mɔ-tɔ́á</u>	**lúə**/
POSS.PRON.1.3	3-car	sell

'Mon père a vendu sa voiture.'
'My father sold his car.'   [JO 2445]

b.   mɛ́ ndɔ <u>Biə́lə</u> **sin** isiŋak.

/mɛ	ndɔ	<u>Biɛlɛ</u>	**sinə**	isiŋaka/
SM.1SG	PRS	1.Pierre	see	now

'Je vois Pierre maintenant.'
'I see Pierre now.'   [EO 1412]

Indefinite noun phrase (under negation / marked by specific indefinite determiner), OV:

(20)   a.   a sá <u>mɔndɔ</u> **sin**.

/a	sá	<u>mɔ-ndɔ</u>	**sinə**/
SM.1	NEG	1-person	see

'Il n'a vu personne.'
'He hasn't seen anybody.'   [EO 1485]

b.   Context: You are looking for your friend Daniel.
mɛ́ ndɔ <u>wɔmɔté</u> <u>mɔ́ndɔ</u> **si**. neayá nínyə á Təniɛl.

/mɛ	ᴴndɔ	<u>ɔ-ᴴmɔté</u>	<u>mɔ-ndɔ</u>	**siə**	neayá	nɛ-nyə	á	Təniélɛ/
SM.1SG	PRS	1-one	1-person	search	POSS.PRON.1.5	5-name	COP	1.Daniel

'Je cherche une certaine personne. Son nom est Daniel.'
'I'm looking for someone. His name is Daniel.'   [JO 891]; (Kerr 2020:246))

Contact: e.j.kerr@hum.leidenuniv.nl