Kirundi focus-fronting and non-verbal predication

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1 Introduction

This paper is concerned with "cleft constructions" in Kirundi, (1b).

(1) a. Yohaáni a-a-som-ye igitabu
Yohani 1SM-PST-read-PFV 7.book
'Yohani read a book.' (neutral sentence)

b. Ni **igitabu** Yohaáni a-a-som-yé
NI 7book Yohani 1SM-PST-read-PFV.EMB
'It's the book that Yohani read.' (*ni*-accompanied fronting)

Work on similar *ni*-constructions across Bantu, and related phenomena in other languages, have taken roughly two approaches:

· a left-peripheral account *ni*, typically monoclausal and following Rizzi (1997)

· a cleft-analysis, where *ni* is a clefting predicate

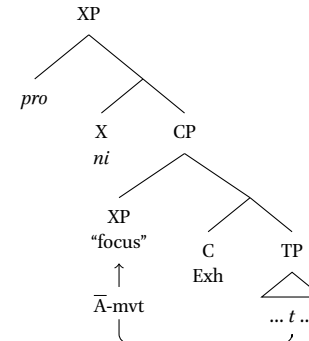The structural hypothesis I advance here, given in (2), consists of three claims:

1. the clefted XP (*igitabu* 'book' in (1b)) is A̅-moved to an embedded CP-internal position, §2

2. this CP is embedded; the overall structure is BI-CLAUSAL, §3

3. the root clause consists of a **non-verbal** head, with no additional verbal functional material; the overall structure is MONO-VERBAL, §4

Proposal

(2) A̅-derived cleft construction

This talk has two main goals:

1. Develop an analysis of Kirundi *ni*-clefts, unifying the copular and focus-uses of *ni*.

2. Outlines a typology of cross-linguistic variation in clefts and "cleft-like" focus constructions, based on two (lexical) parameters: (i) whether the clefted CP is a licit matrix clause in the language, and (ii) whether the language has a non-verbal predicator like *ni*. This is sketched in §5.

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2 Kirundi clefts are derived by $\bar{\text{A}}$-movement

> **Claim 1: XP-promotion**
>
> The clefted XP is $\bar{\text{A}}$-moved to an embedded CP-internal position. In this section, I will:
>
> 1. show that the clefted constituent is fronted by $\bar{\text{A}}$-movement
>
> 2. argue for a *promotional* analysis, where the fronted constituent is directly moved.

Constituents fronted with *ni* show properties of $\bar{\text{A}}$-movement:

$\Rightarrow$ they can form long-distance dependencies with their extraction site (3)

(3) **Long-distance dependencies**

    a.   Kagabo   a-a-vúg-ye   kó Yohaáni a-ī-baz-a   kó Petero
           1.Kagabo 1SM-PST-say-PFV C Yohani 1SM-RFLX-think-IPFV C Petero
           a-kūnd-a   Kēza
           1SM-love-IPFV Keza
           'Kagabo said that Yohani believes that Peter loves Keza.'

    b.   Ni Kēza$_i$ Kagabo a-a-vúg-ye   [kó Yohani
           NI 1.Keza 1.Kagabo 1SM-PST-say-PFV C   1.Yohani
           a-ī-baz-a   [kó Petero a-kūnd-a   ]]
           1SM-RFLX-think-IPFV C   Petero 1SM-love-IPFV
           'It's Keza that Kagabo said that Yohani believes that Peter loves.'

$\Rightarrow$ extraction is island sensitive, illustrated with an adjunct island (4)
    (see (31b) in Appendix A for pied-piping of the whole adjunct to post-*ni* position)

(4) **Adjunct Islands**

    a.   n-a-gīye   kw' isoko [kubēra n-kenér-ye   umukâté].
           1SG.SM-PST-walk.PFV to   store because 1SM-need-PFV bread
           'I went to the store because I needed bread.'

    b.   * Ni umukâté n-a-gīye   kw' isoko [kubēra
           NI bread   1SG.SM-PST-walk.PFV to   store because
           n-kenér-ye   ___].
           1SG.SM-need-PFV
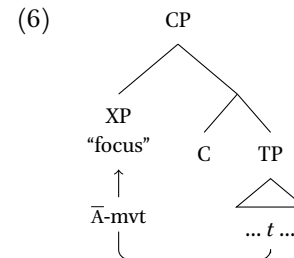   'It's bread that I went to the store because I need.'

$\Rightarrow$ moved constituents show reconstruction effects, illustrated for Condition C in (5)

(5) **Condition C reconstruction**

    a.   *pro*$_{*1/3}$ a-a-vúg-ye   [kó Petero$_2$ a-a-bōn-ye   Yohaáni$_1$]
           pro   1SM-PST-say-PFV C Petero 1SM-PST-see-PFV.EMB 1.Yohani
           'He$_{*1/3}$ said that Peter saw Yohani$_1$.'

    b.   Ni   Yohaáni$_1$ [*pro*$_{*1/3}$ a-a-vúg-ye   kó Petero$_2$
           FOC 1.Yohani *pro*   1SM-PST-say-PFV C 1.Petero
           a-a-bōn-ye   ___$_1$]
           1SM-PST-see-PFV.EMB
           'It's Yohani$_1$ who he$_{*1/3}$ said Peter saw.'

Following Torrence (2013a,b) and Hartmann and Zimmermann (2012), I take these data to show that the fronted constituent is directly $\bar{\text{A}}$-moved, or *promoted*, to its surface position (rather than binding a moved null operator).

> **Kirundi clefts are derived by $\bar{\text{A}}$-movement (*XP-promotion*)**
>
> (6)
>
>

3 Kirundi clefts are biclausal

> **Claim 2: bi-clausality of clefts**
>
> Cleft clauses are embedded; the overall cleft structure is bi-clausal. I will show that cleft clauses:
>
> 1. pattern morphosyntactically with non-matrix clauses
>
> 2. differ structurally from relative clauses (skipped for time, see Appendix A)

3.1 Kirundi cleft clauses are non-matrix clauses

Verbs in Kirundi clefts surface with a tonal melody that appears with relative and embedded clauses.

· Compare verb tone melody in matrix clauses (7a) to the cleft (7b)

(7) **Clefts take embedded tone**

    a.   Yohaáni a-a-som-ye   igitabu.
          Yohani   1SM-PST-read-PFV 7.book

          'Yohani read a book.'

    b.   Ni igitabu$_1$ [Yohaáni **a-a-som-yé**   ___$_1$].
          NI 7book   Yohani   1SM-PST-read-PFV.EMB

          'It's THE BOOK that Yohani read.'

⇒ The same tone is found in relative clause (8a), and complement clause in (8b)

(8) **Embedded tone across contexts**

    a.   N-a-bōn-ye   igitabu [Yohaáni **a-a-som-yé**].
          1SG.SM-PST-see-PFV 7.book 1.Yohani 1SM-PST-read-PFV.EMB

          'I saw the book that Yohani read.'   (Relative clause)

    b.   N-a-vug-ye   [kó Yohaáni **a-a-som-yé**   igitabu].
          1SG.SM-PST-say-PFV that Yohani 1SM-PST-read-PFV.EMB 7.book

          'I said that Yohani read a book.'   (Complement clause)

A similar cut between matrix/non-matrix clauses can be seen the form of negation (9) and the ability to take the disjoint/antifocus marker *-ra-* (10)

(9) **Clefts take secondary negation**

    a.   Yohaáni **nti**-a-kor-á   imikâté
          Yohani NEG-1SM-make-IPFV 4.bread

          'Yohani didn't make bread.'

    b.   Ni Yohaáni a-**da**-kor-á   imikâté
          NI Yohani 1SM-NEG-make-IPFV 4.bread

          'It's YOHANI who didn't make bread.'
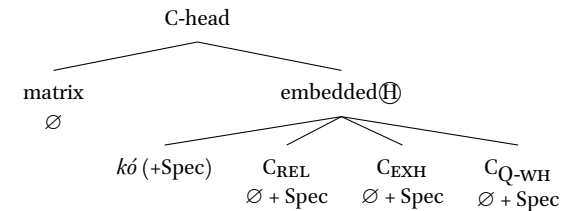
(10) **No *-ra-* in clefts (Ndayiragije 1999: p.407)**

    a.   Ni abâna   ba-á-(*ra)-nyôye   amatá
          NI 2.children 2SM-DIST.PST-RA-drink.PERF 6.milk

          'It was children who drank milk.'

    b.   Ni amatá abâna   ba-á-(*ra)-nyôye
          NI 6.milk children 2SM-DIST.PST-RA-drink.PERF

          'It was milk that children drank.'

· The main generalization is that these diagnostics partition clause types in Kirundi pattern into matrix vs. non-matrix.

⇒ I will assume the high tone which surfaces on the verb is the overt exponent of a C-head which is lexically specified as obligatorily selected

(11) **Inventory of the C system in Kirundi**

3.2 Kirundi cleft clauses are not relative clause

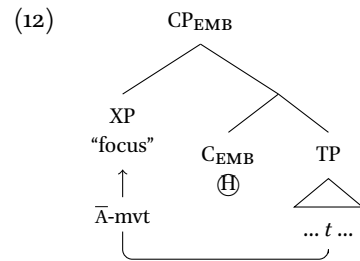I will skip the argument for time, but see Appendix A. Briefly:

· The relationship between cleft clauses and relative clauses has long been noted (Akmajian 1970, Lafkioui et al. 2016; Edenmyr 2001 for Kirundi)

· There are key differences that **challenge the straightforward identification** of clefts with relatives in Kirundi

3.3 Summary

So far, I have shown, illustrated in (12), that:

1. Kirundi cleft CPs are derived by A̅-movement of the clefted XP to Spec,CP.

2. Cleft CPs are morphosyntactically embedded. Kirundi C-heads are lexically specified as matrix or non-matrix.

Kirundi cleft clauses are embedded

(12)

```
                    CP_EMB
                   /      \
                  /        \
              XP           /\
            "focus"   C_EMB    TP
              ↑        Ⓗ      /\
            Ā-mvt            /  \
              |            ... t ...
              └──────────────┘
```

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4 Root clauses in Kirundi clauses are non-verbal

Claim 3: syntactically non-verbal root clause

I argue that *ni* is best seen as a syntactically *non-verbal* copula (Pustet 2003). In this section, I will show that:

1. the distribution of *ni* is limited to contexts without INFL, in both copular uses and clefts

2. this restricted distribution results from the non-verbal nature of *ni*, unlike the verbal copula *-ri*

Consider first English clefts, which consist of a cleft clause and a matrix copular clause headed by the verbal copula BE.

· The English copula is a clear verbal element, participating in the full range of English inflection (13)

(13) a. It **is** John who read the book.
      b. It **was** John who read the book.
      c. It **would have been** John who read the book (had he not given it away).

Kirundi *ni*, on the other hand has a restricted distribution when compared with the other verbal copula *-ri*.

⇒ I will show that the distinction made by Pustet (2003) between verbal and particle copulas implicate a larger structural difference in Kirundi (contra e.g., Jerro 2015)
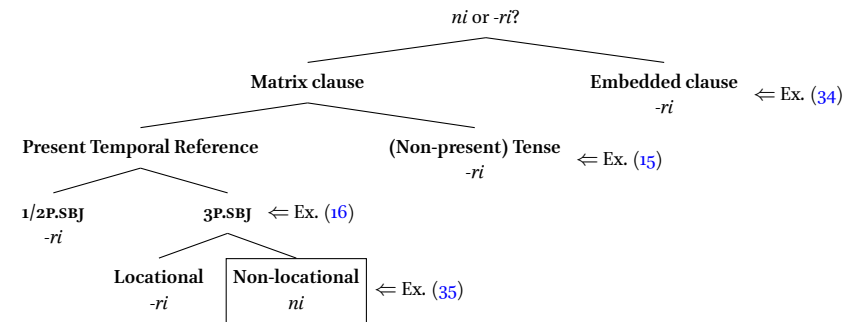
· In both non-verbal predication and clefts, I show:

1. …that *ni* is a NON-VERBAL PARTICLE COPULA and cannot appear in contexts with further verbal functional projections (e.g., TP and CP)

2. …that *-ri* is a VERBAL COPULA, which is used when extended verbal projections are independently required.

4.1 Non-verbal predication in Kirundi

The distribution of *ni* in non-verbal predication suggests that *ni* can only be used when no further verbal functional projections are present in the structure.

(14) **Contexts of use**

```
                          ni or -ri?
                        /           \
                       /             \
               Matrix clause      Embedded clause    ⇐ Ex. (34)
                /         \             -ri
               /           \
    Present Temporal    (Non-present) Tense   ⇐ Ex. (15)
      Reference               -ri
       /      \
      /        \
  1/2P.SBJ    3P.SBJ    ⇐ Ex. (16)
    -ri        /  \
              /    \
      Locational  Non-locational   ⇐ Ex. (35)
         -ri          ni
```

Non-present temporal reference and 1st/2nd person subjects require *-ri*; in all cases below, substituting *ni* for *-ri* results in ungrammaticality

(15) **Overt tense requires *-ri***
   a. Umwígīsha **ni** Yohaani
       1-teacher   *ni* John
       'The teacher is John'

   b. Keerá, Yohaáni yá**ri**   umwígīsha
       keerá Yohaani a-á-**ri**   umwígīsha
       before John   3SG.SM-PST-*ri* 1.teacher
       'John was a teacher, a while ago.'

(16) **Speech Act Participant subjects require *-ri***
   a. Yohaani **ni** umunyeshuúre
       John   *ni* 1.student
       'John is a student '

b. n-**ri** umunyeshuúre
1SG.S-*ri* 1.student
'I am a student.'

If speech act participant subjects require licensing by verbal functional projections (e.g., Béjar and Rezac 2003), we can capture the restrictions above with the generalization in (17).

(17) **Generalization on the distribution of *ni***
*[T$_{INFL}$ *ni*]

Interim summary

The distribution of *ni* follows from it being categorically distinct from *v*, therefore unable to project verbal inflectional categories (crucially, TP):

· Restriction to **present temporal reference**
⇒ no TP, the locus of tense

· Restriction to **third-person subjects**
⇒ no TP, the locus of person-feature licensing

· Restriction to **matrix/root clauses**
⇒ no TP to be selected for by C

· Restriction to **non-PP predicates**
⇒ no *v*P, locus of eventuality variable binding

4.2 XP in clefts

In cleft structures, the same set of generalizations hold.

· When the cleft is inflected for tense, *-ri* is used.

· The structure instantiated in (18) is disprefered for speakers I have consulted. To the extent that it is possible, however, it contrasts with the strict ungrammaticality of inflecting *ni*.

(18) ? a-a-ri **igitabu**$_1$ [Yohaáni a-a-som-yé ___$_1$]
1SM-PST-COP 7book Yohani 1SM-PST-read-PFV.EMB
'It was THE BOOK that Yohani read.'

A clearer case is when clefts are embedded, as in (19).

· This data also confirms that the clefted constituent does not agree with the embedding material (20b).

(19) **Embedded clefts use the copula *-ri***
a. Yohaáni a-a-vug-ye [kó a-ri Kagabo
Yohani 1SM.PST-say-PFV COMP 1SM-COP Kagabo
a-a-som-yé igitabu]
1SM.PST-say.EMB-PFV 7.book
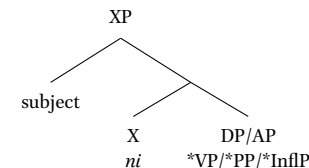'Yohani said that Kagabo read the book.'

(20) **Embedded clefts do not agree with post-copular constituent**
a. ...kó a-ri jēwé n-a-som-yé igitabu
...COMP 1SM-COP 1SG.PRON 1SG.SM-PST-say.EMB-PFV 7.book
'Yohani said that I read the book.'

b. * ...kó n-ri jēwé n-a-som-yé igitabu
...COMP 1SG.SM-COP 1SG.PRON.STR 1SG.SM-PST-say.EMB-PFV 7.book
'Yohani said that I read the book.'
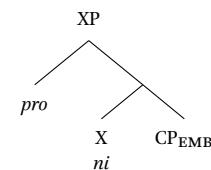
⇒ This further confirms that the clefted constituent is not a subject of the matrix clause.

Clefts have non-verbal root clauses

(21) **Non-verbal predication**

(22) **Ā-derived cleft construction**

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5   Implications and typological observations

> **Two-parameter typology for clefts**
>
> If the analysis above is on the right track, we can outline a two-parameter typology for cleft-like focus structures; this is given in (23).

5.1   A typological sketch

(23)   **Two parameter typology of cleft structures**

	Cleft clause is …	
	Matrix clause	Embedded clause
No copula	**Mono-clausal focus** Hungarian, Wolof	N/A
Verbal copula	N/A	**Bi-verbal cleft** English Kirundi *-ri* clefts
Particle copula	N/A	**Mono-verbal cleft** Kirundi *ni* clefts

Hungarian and Wolof both have a mono-clausal focus construction, where a constituent is $\bar{\text{A}}$-moved into the left periphery.

- This CP is a licit matrix clause in the language.

(24)   **Hungarian mono-clausal focus construction (É. Kiss 1998: p. 249)**

   a.   Mari **egy kalapot** nézett ki   magának
        Mary a   hat.ACC picked out herself.ACC
        'It was a hat that Mary picked for herself'

   b. $[_{\text{TopP}}$ Mari $[_{\text{FP}}$ **[egy kalapot]**$_j$ nézett$_i$ $[_{\text{VP}}$ t_i ki magának $t_j]]]$

(25)   **Wolof mono-clausal focus construction (Martinović 2021)**

   a.   Man, Yusu   Nduur la   a   gis
        1S.STR Youssou N'Dour C$_{\text{Wh}}$ 1SG see
        'Me, it's Yousouu N'Dour that I saw.'

   b. $[_{\text{TopP}}$ Man $[_{\text{CP}}$ **Yusu Nduur** la $[_{\text{IP}}$ a gis $]]]$

English, following roughly the analysis of É. Kiss (1998), consists of the same $\bar{\text{A}}$-movement structure in the embedded clause.

- The *that*-headed CP is obligatorily embedded.

- The sole available embedder lexically available is the verbal copula, so the full extended projection is also projected.

(26)   **English bi-clausal, bi-verbal cleft (É. Kiss 1998)**

   a.   It was to John that I spoke

   b. $[_{\text{IP}}$ It was $[_{\text{FP}}$ [to John]$_i$ F $[_{\text{CP}}$ that $[_{\text{IP}}$ I spoke $t_i]]]$

Kirundi, unlike English, has two means to embed the $\bar{\text{A}}$-movement structure:

- *ni* derives a minimal 'mono-verbal' cleft,

- *-ri* derives a bi-verbal cleft structurally similar to English clefts.

(27)   **Kirundi bi-clausal mono-verbal cleft**

   a.   Ni **igitabu**$_1$ [Yohaáni a-a-som-yé   ___$_1$]
        NI 7book   Yohani 1SM-PST-read-PFV.EMB
        'It's THE BOOK that Yohani read.'

   b. $[_{\text{XP}}$ *pro* ni $[_{\text{CP}}$ **igitabu**$_1$ C $[_{\text{TP}}$ Yohaáni yasomyé $t_1]]]$

(28)   **Kirundi bi-clausal bi-verbal cleft**

   a.   … kó   a-ri **jēwé**$_1$ [n-a-som-yé   igitabu]
        … COMP 1-COP 1SG.PRON   1SG.SM-PST-read-PFV.EMB 7.book
        '…that it was I that read the book.'

   b. $[_{\text{TP}}$ *pro* a-ri $[_{\text{vP}}$ t_v $[_{\text{CP}}$ **jēwé**$_1$ C $[_{\text{TP}}$ t_1 yasomyé igitabu]]]]$

5.2   Concluding thoughts

⇒   Kirundi represents a third member of a typological system already implicit in the work of É. Kiss (1998).

- As seen above, this typology rests on two (ultimately lexical) distinctions. This two-parameter typology is exhaustively exemplified by Hungarian/Wolof, English, and Kirundi.

   – Firstly, whether the high functional structure involved in these constructions is **a licit matrix clause in the language**, or whether it must be embedded: in English and Kirundi, the cleft clause is obligatorily embedded, whereas Hungarian FP-headed clauses need not be.

– Secondly, the **verbality** of the embedding material, motivated here by the distinct properties of Kirundi *ni*: this parameter makes use of the verbal/particle copula distinction from Pustet (2003). Ultimately, this rests on the language-specific availability for non-verbal structure (i.e., the particle-copula headed PredP) to be a matrix clause *without* additional functional structure surmounting it. Kirundi *ni*, I claimed, is an instance of such a language that permits this.

Finally:

· Work on multicopular systems do not typically take into account the multiple copulas having distinct categorical specifications. I developed a view where there are multiple ways to build a multicopular system: they may be the result of multiple instances of the same "copularization strategy" (i.e., Spanish has two verbal copulas), or the result of multiple "copularization strategies" entirely.

· A diachronic source? Kirundi *ni*-clefts might represent an intermediate stage between full bi-clausal, bi-verbal clefts and left-peripheral focus marker, as noted in much of the diachronic literature on the relation between focus markers and the copula in clefts.

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A   Clefts clauses are not relative clauses

· The relationship between cleft clauses and relative clauses has long been noted in the literature on English clefts (e.g., Akmajian 1970)

· For instance, see the data in (29) and (30), where there is no (free) relative source for the latter.

· There are key differences that challenge a straightforward identification of clefts with relatives in Kirundi

(29) **Extraposition analysis (É. Kiss 1998: p. 257)**

    a. $[_{CP}$ who is sick$]$ is me $\rightarrow$

    b.   it$_i$ is me [who is sick]$_i$

(30) a.   It was to John [that I spoke]

    b.   * $[_{CP}$ that I spoke$]$ was to John

Similar arguments can be made for Kirundi clefts, where both adverbs and full clauses may be clefted.

(31) a.   Ariko ni keénshi tu-ya-reéng-a
    but   NI often   1PL.SBJ-PRES-6OBJ-violate-FV.REL
    'But it is often that we violate them (the laws)'
    (Lafkioui et al. 2016: p. 82)

    b.   Ni [kubêra n-kenéy-e   u-mu-kâté] n-a-gīy-e   kw'
    NI because 1SG.SBJ-need-PFV AUG-3-bread 1SG.SBJ-go.REL-PFV to
    ī-sokó
    AUG-5.store
    'It's because I needed bread that I went to the store.'

A second argument is that the reconstruction data suggests that relative clauses and cleft clauses are structurally distinct.

· Consider the reconstruction data for relativization in (33a) and clefting in (33b).

· The result is that the bound-variable pronoun must be interpreted as anaphoric to the matrix subject when *relativized*, and as anaphoric to the embedded subject when *clefted*. **Clefting, but not relativization, reconstructs for Condition C.**

(32) *pro*$_{*1/2}$ a-a-shír-ye   igitabu cā   Kêza$_1$ ku mêzá
      pro   1SM-PST-put-PFV 7.book   7.LK 1.Keza on 5.table
      'She$_{*1/2}$ put Keza$_1$'s book on the table.'

(33) **Relative clauses do not reconstruct for Condition C**

   a.   N-a-som-ye   [igitabu cā   Kêza$_1$]$_i$ *pro*$_{1/2}$ a-a-shír-ye
        1SG.SM-PST-read-PFV 7.book   7.LK 1.Keza   1SM-PST-put-PFV
        t_i ku   mêzá
        on 5.table
        'I read Keza$_1$'s book that she$_1$/he$_2$ put on the table.'

   b.   Ni [igitabu cā   Kêza$_1$]$_i$ *pro*$_{*1/2}$ a-a-shír-ye t_i ku mêzá
        NI 7.book   7.LK 1.Keza   1SM-PST-put-PFV   on 5.table
        'I read Keza$_1$'s book that *she$_1$/he$_2$ put on the table.'

B   Additional restrictions in non-verbal predication

While the data in §4.1 may be formulated as a *morphological* restriction, data in here cannot be accounted for as such.

⇒ Embedded clauses must use *-ri* (34).

· To account for this, I assume that the complementizers obligatorily select for TPs

(34) **Matrix vs. Embedded clauses**

   a.   Umurwa mukuru wa u-Bu-rúundi **ni** Gitega.
        capital.city   of 14.Rundi   *ni* Gitega
        'The capital city of Burundi is Gitega.'

   b.   N-a-vug-ye   kó umurwa mukuru wa u-Bu-rúundi
        1SG.SM-PST-say-PFV C capital.city   3.of AUG-14-rundi
        u-∅-ri/*ni Gitega.
        3SM-PST-*ri* Gitega
        i. 'I said that the capital city of Burundi is Gitega (the city).' (Embedded spec.)
        ii. 'I said that the capital city of Burundi is in Gitega (the province).' (Locational)

⇒ Finally, PP predicates require *-ri*.

· Similar to the analysis of Scottish Gaelic in Adger and Ramchand (2003), I assume that PPs and VPs are introduced into the derivation with a syntactic (spatiotemporal) eventuality variable. This variable can only be bound by verbal *v*; Pred *ni* is excluded from PP predication.

(35) **Locational (PP) predicates**

   a.   inká **i-ri**   mu murima
        9.cow 9SM-*ri* in   3.field
        'The cow is in the field.'

   b.   * inká   **ni** mu murima
        9.cow *ni* in   3.field
        Intended: 'The cow is in the field.'

C   Pre-copular DPs

· When the clefted constituent appears in the pre-copular position, it must be resumed. That is, it is an **embedded topic**, not a subject.

(36) **Embedded clefts have an expletive subject**

   a.   …kó   Kagabo a-ri   *(we) a-a-som-yé   igitabu
        …COMP Kagabo 1SM-COP 1.PRON 1SM.PST-say.EMB-PFV 7.book
        'Yohani said that, Kagabo, he read the book.'

   b.   …kó   jēwé   a-ri   *(je)   n-a-som-yé
        …COMP 1SG.PRON.STR 1SM-COP 1SG.PRON 1SG.SM.PST-say.EMB-PFV
        igitabu
        7.book
        'Yohani said that, me, I read the book.'