

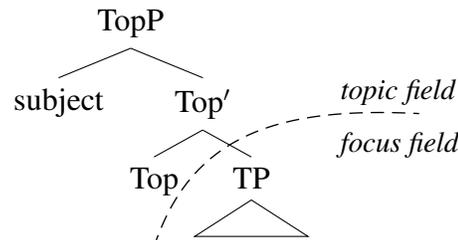


## 2 The LONG/SHORT-alternation

- Postverbal focus in Bantu (Watters 1979, Hyman & Watters 1984, Ndayiragije 1999, Hyman & Polinsky 2010, Morimoto 2000, Cheng & Downing 2012)

⇒ A manifestation of discourse configurationality (Kiss 1995)

- (5) *Who left?*  
 a. #UFanele ufikile.  
     Fanele left.  
 b. Kufike uFanele. ✓  
     left Fanele.



POSTVERBAL FOCUS: a TP must contain focus (cf. Morimoto's (2000) Focus Principle)  
 (By assumption, preverbal subjects are left-peripheral topics.)

- The LONG/SHORT-alternation is related to information structure

Verb is *not* part of focus ⇒ SHORT

- (6) Q: What are you reading?  
 A1: Ngi-bala [inganegwane]<sub>F</sub>.  
     1sg-read fairy-tale  
     'I'm reading a fairy tale.'  
 A2: #Ngi-ya- bala [inganegwane]<sub>F</sub>.  
     1sg- LNG- read fairy-tale  
     'I'm reading a fairy tale.'

Verb *is* part of focus ⇒ alternation

i) wide vP focus ⇒ SHORT

- (7) Q: What are you doing?  
 A1: [ Ngi-bala inganegwane. ]<sub>F</sub>  
     1sg-read fairy-tale  
     'I'm reading a fairy tale.'  
 A2: # [ Ngi-ya-bala inganekwane. ]<sub>F</sub>  
     1sg-LNG-read fairy-tale  
     'I'm reading a fairy tale.'

ii) narrow verb focus ⇒ LONG

- (8) Q: Do you read or write fairy tales?  
 A1: # [ Ngi-bala ]<sub>F</sub> inganegwane.  
     1sg-read fairy-tale  
     ('I read fairy tales.')
- A2: [ Ngi-ya-bala ]<sub>F</sub> inganekwane.  
     1sg-LNG-read fairy-tale  
     'I read fairy tales.'

- Focus or constituency?

FOCUS ANALYSIS: The alternation is regulated by discourse properties of whatever follows

CONSTITUENCY ANALYSIS: The alternation marks the content of the v P

### 3 Analysis: $\delta$ -agreement

**CLAIM: the alternation is regulated by both discourse features and constituency**

- The alternation is not directly related to focus,
- neither can it be read off the constituent structure alone.
- Rather, it is regulated by features and configurations that are input to focus assignment.

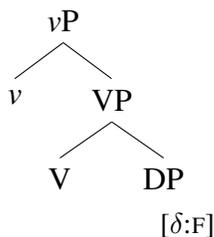
PIECES OF ANALYSIS:

- Phrases have  $[\delta:F]$  freely
- $v$  has  $[\delta: \_]$  freely
- $[\delta: \_]$  is valued by agreement with  $[\delta:F]$
- Last resort valuation:  $ya$  is inserted when  $[\delta: \_]$  is not valued in syntax
- POSTVERBAL FOCUS: TP must contain an instance of  $[\delta:F]$ <sup>1</sup>
- Focus interpretation is assigned to the smallest constituent containing all instances of  $[\delta:F]$ . (cf. F-marking (Selkirk 1996, Schwarzschild 1999))
  - Consequently, **the verb can only be in/part of focus if  $v$  has  $[\delta: \_]$**
- **long form is the reflex of last resort  $[\delta: \_]$  valuation.**

#### 3.1 Non-probing $v$

**When  $v$  has no  $[\delta]$ -probe, the verb is SHORT and cannot be part of focus**

(9) Narrow object focus: SHORT



(10) Q: What do you read?

A: Ngi- bala [inganegwane]<sub>F</sub>.  
 1sg- read fairy-tales  
 'I read fairy tales'.

When  $v$  has no  $\delta$ -feature, Postverbal Focus (11) is the only restriction on possible configurations:

(11) POSTVERBAL FOCUS: TP must contain an instance of  $[\delta:F]$

1. ✓  $\left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{TP V DO}_{[\delta:F]} \end{array} \right]$
2. \*  $\left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{TP V DO} \end{array} \right]$
3. \*  $\left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{TP V} \end{array} \right]$

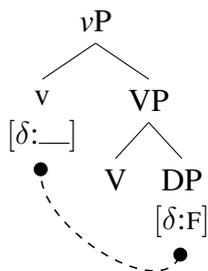
<sup>1</sup> Under this view, the postverbal position of focus is a product of verb movement to a position preceding all arguments and the fact that adverbs are right-attached.

### 3.2 Probing $v$

**When  $v$  has a  $\delta$ -probe the SHORT/LONG-alternation emerges**

- a.  $\delta$ -valuation in syntax  $\rightarrow$ SHORT
- b. Last-resort  $\delta$ -valuation  $\rightarrow$ LONG

(12)  $\delta$ -agreement with the object: SHORT



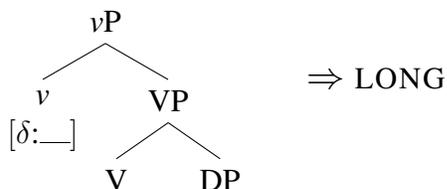
(13) Q: What are you doing?

A1: Ngi- bala inganegwane.  
1sg- read fairy-tale  
'I'm reading a fairy tale'.

A2: # Ngi- ya- bala inganekwane.

INTERPRETATION:  $vP$  is the smallest constituent containing all  $\delta$ -features  $\rightarrow vP$  focus

(14) No  $\delta$ -goal in the  $vP$ : LONG



(15) Q: Do you read or write fairy tales?

A1: Ngi- ya- bala inganekwane.  
1sg- LNG- read fairy tale  
'I read fairy tales'.

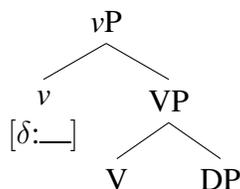
A2: # Ngi- bala inganekwane.

INTERPRETATION:  $v$  is the smallest constituent containing all  $\delta$ -features  $\rightarrow$  narrow verb focus<sup>2</sup>

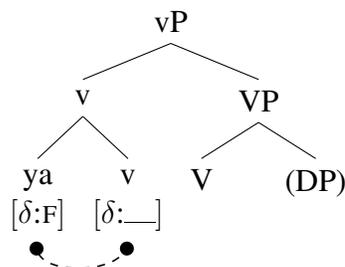
### 3.3 Last resort valuation: "ya-support"

- LONG-forms arise when a  $\delta$ -probe on  $v$  is not valued in syntax.
- Proposal: an unvalued  $\delta$ -feature triggers postsyntactic insertion of the morpheme  $ya$ <sup>3</sup>
- The inserted morpheme bears  $[\delta:F]$  and values the probe on  $v$  under head adjunction

(16) Syntax: No  $\delta$ -valuation



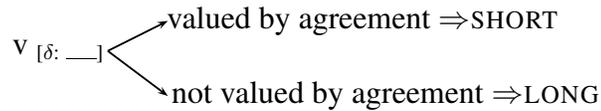
(17) Postsyntax:  $ya$ -support



<sup>2</sup> I assume that  $V$  moves at least as high as  $v$ , in which position it is part of the focused constituent.

<sup>3</sup> In the past tense, the inserted morpheme is the suffix *-ile*.

- (18) Summary of analysis:  
 a. The alternation occurs under  $\delta$ -probing (when v has [ $\delta$ : \_\_\_]):



- b. When v has no [ $\delta$ : \_\_\_]  $\rightarrow$  no alternation (SHORT)

The idea that the long form is the reflex of failed agreement has a precedent in Halpert 2012, who links the alternation to argument licensing. The present implementation in terms of discourse-agreement has two advantages: it accounts for the particular discourse effects of the alternation and ii) it accounts for the asymmetry between arguments and adjuncts (see section 6).

## 4 Against a constituency-only approach

- Constituency-based approaches (Van der Spuy 1993, Buell 2006, Halpert 2012 for Zulu) relate the long form to object dislocation:

- (19) Buell (2006): Constituency-based analysis

- a.  $[V_{\text{SHORT}} \text{ XP}]_{\text{AgrSP}} (\text{YP})$   
 b.  $[V_{\text{LONG}}]_{\text{AgrSP}} (\text{XP}) (\text{YP})$

- (20) Halpert (2012): Argument licensing analysis

- a.  $[V_{\text{SHORT}} \text{ XP}]_{\text{vP}} (\text{YP})$   
 b.  $[V_{\text{LONG}}]_{\text{vP}} (\text{XP}) (\text{YP})$

Prediction: Dislocation is required to trigger the long form  
 Ndebele: not borne out

- (21) Conditions on object dislocation in Ndebele:

- a. DO-dislocation  $\Rightarrow$  optional object marking (22-a)  
 b. IO-dislocation  $\Rightarrow$  obligatory object marking (22-b)

- (22) a. Inganekwane, ngi- (yi)- bal- el- a abantwana.  
 9fairy-tales 1sg- (9o)- read- app- fv 2children.  
 'Fairy tales, I read to children.'
- b. Abantwana, ngi- \*(ba)- bal- el- a inganekwane.  
 2children 1sg- \*(2o)- read- app- fv 9fairy-tales.  
 'To children, I read fairy tales.'

$\Rightarrow$  **An OM-ed indirect object is dislocated**  
 $\Rightarrow$  **A non-OM-ed indirect object is in situ**

(23) Word order in distransitives: applied object + direct object (without OM-ing):

	Base order IO DO (25)	Reverse order DO IO (24)
SHORT	✓	*
LONG	✓	*

- The reverse order is impossible due constraints on object dislocation: IO-dislocation ⇒ OM-ing

(24) No OM-ing : reverse order

- a. \*UFanele u- bal- el- a inganekwane abantwana. SHORT  
 Fanele 3sg- read- app- fv fairy-tales children  
 ('Fanele reads fairy tales to children.')
- b. \*UFanele u- ya- bal- el- a inganekwane abantwana. LONG  
 Fanele 3sg- LNG- read- app- fv fairy-tales children  
 ('Fanele reads fairy tales to children.')

- Base order allows both SHORT and LONG forms.

(25) No OM-ing : basic order

- a. UFanele u- bal- el- a abantwana inganekwane. SHORT  
 Fanele 3sg- read- app- fv children fairy-tales  
 'Fanele reads fairy tales to children.'
- b. UFanele u- ya- bal- el- a abantwana inganekwane. LONG  
 Fanele 3sg- LNG- read- app- fv children fairy-tales  
 'Fanele READS fairy tales for children (not writes).'

In (25-b) the IO is not object marked ⇒ it is in situ.

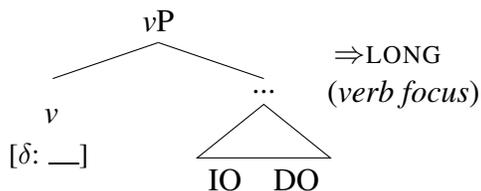
A constituency based approach incorrectly predicts that only SHORT-form is possible in (25)

- The  $\delta$ -agreement analysis predicts both:

SHORT: when at least one of the objects has [ $\delta$ : F]

LONG: when neither object has [ $\delta$ : F]

- (25-b) is only compatible with verb-focus



## 5 Against the postverbal focus approach (IAV focus)

(26) Focus based approaches: (Creissels 1996, Ndayiragije 1999, Van der Wal 2006 for related languages)

- a.  $V_{SHORT} XP_{Foc}$
- b.  $V_{LONG} XP_{Top}$

(27) Predictions:

- a.  $V IO_{Foc} DO \Rightarrow SHORT$
- b.  $V IO_{Top} DO \Rightarrow LONG$

**The prediction is not borne out:**

(28) UFanele u- bal- el- a abantwana inganekwane. SHORT  
 Fanele 3sg- read- app- fv children fairy-tales  
 'Fanele reads fairy tales to children.'

Sentence (28) is a felicitous answer to both:

- i. an IO wh-question: "Who does Fanele read fairy tales to?" and
- ii. a DO wh-question: "What does Fanele read to children?"

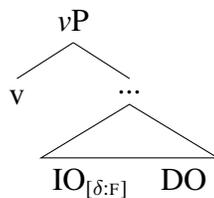
In the answer to question ii, the Direct Object is in narrow focus and the Indirect Object is outside of focus (it's part of the backgrounded information).

The present analysis:

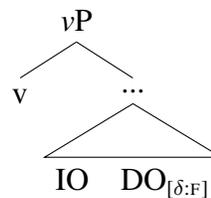
- i. narrow object focus means that  $v$  has no  $\delta$ -feature
- ii. no  $\delta$ -probing means no alternation (SHORT)

(29) Who does Fanele read fairy tales to?

(30) What does Fanele read to children?



$\Rightarrow$  narrow focus on IO



$\Rightarrow$  narrow focus on DO

- (31) a. The postverbal focus analysis predicts SHORT in (29) but, incorrectly, LONG in (30).
- b.  $\delta$ -agreement analysis correctly predicts SHORT-form in both cases

## 6 Argument-adjunct asymmetry

For adjuncts attached outside of vP, the  $\delta$ -agreement analysis derives the following asymmetry between arguments and adjuncts:

(32) focus domain	XP=argument	XP=(high) adjunct
V [XP] <sub>F</sub>	short	short
[V XP] <sub>F</sub>	<b>short</b>	<b>long</b>
[V] <sub>F</sub> XP	long	long

### 6.1 Narrow XP focus

- Narrow focus on the postverbal XP means that the verb is outside of focus  $\rightarrow$  doesn't have a  $\delta$ -probe.
- A verb without a  $\delta$ -probe surfaces invariably in its short form.
- This means that narrow XP focus always occurs with the short form, whether XP is an argument or an adjunct.

(33) a.  $v + \text{Object}_{[\delta:F]} \Rightarrow \text{no probing} \Rightarrow \text{SHORT}$  (34)

b.  $v + \text{Adjunct}_{[\delta:F]} \Rightarrow \text{no probing} \Rightarrow \text{SHORT}$  (35)

(34) Narrow object focus:

Q: What are you reading?

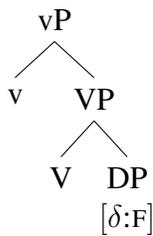
A: Ngi- bala [inganegwane]<sub>F</sub>  
1sg- read fairy-tale  
'I'm reading a fairy tale'.

(35) Narrow adjunct focus:

Q: Where are you reading?

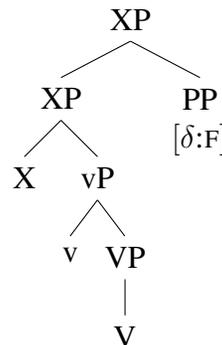
A: Ngi- bala [engadini]<sub>F</sub>  
1sg- read garden.Loc  
'I'm reading in the garden'.

(36) No  $\delta$ -probe: SHORT



$\rightarrow$  narrow object focus

(37) No  $\delta$ -probe: SHORT



$\rightarrow$  narrow adjunct focus

### 6.2 Wide [V XP] focus – the asymmetry

(38) a.  $v_{[\delta: \_]} + \text{Object}_{[\delta:F]} \Rightarrow \text{agreement} \Rightarrow \text{SHORT}$  (39)

b.  $v_{[\delta: \_]} + \text{Adjunct}_{[\delta:F]} \Rightarrow \text{no agreement} \Rightarrow \text{LONG}$  (40)

The interpretive consequence is that wide-focus (containing the verb and postverbal material) requires the **short form when followed by an object**, but the **long form when followed by an adjunct**:

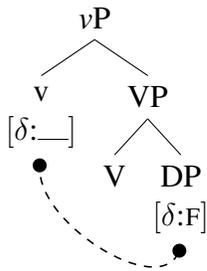
(39) Q: What are you doing?

A: [Ngi- bala inganegwane]<sub>F</sub>  
 1sg- read fairy-tale  
 'I'm reading a fairy tale'.

(40) Q: What are you doing?

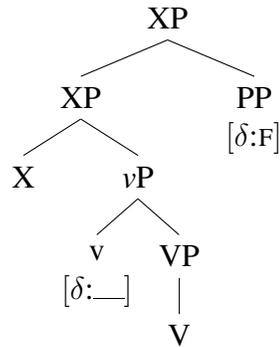
A: [Ngi- ya- bala engadini]<sub>F</sub>  
 1sg- LNG- read garden.Loc  
 'I'm reading in the garden'.

(41)  $\delta$ -agreement with the object: SHORT



→ vP-focus

(42) The adjunct is too high for the  $\delta$ -probe: LONG



→ XP-focus

### 6.3 Narrow V focus

Narrow verb focus occurs when the verb has a  $\delta$ -probe and is the only element with a  $\delta$ -feature in the TP.

(43) a.  $v_{[\delta: \_]} + \text{Object} \Rightarrow \text{no agreement} \Rightarrow \text{LONG}$  (44)

b.  $v_{[\delta: \_]} + \text{Adjunct} \Rightarrow \text{no agreement} \Rightarrow \text{LONG}$  (45)

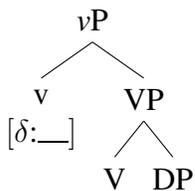
(44) Q: Are you reading or writing a story?

A: [Ngi-ya-bala]<sub>F</sub> inganegwane  
 1sg-LNG-read story  
 'I'm reading a story'.

(45) Q: Do you read or sleep in the garden?

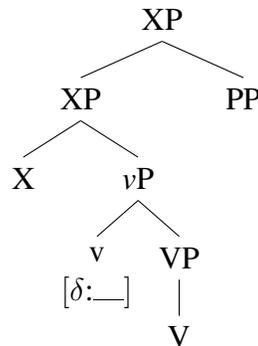
A: [Ngi-ya-bala]<sub>F</sub> engadini.  
 1sg-LNG-read garden.Loc  
 'I read in the garden'.

(46) Last-resort  $\delta$ -valuation LONG



→ verb focus

(47) Last-resort  $\delta$ -valuation LONG



→ verb focus

## 6.4 Summary

We thus derive the different ways in which arguments and adjuncts interact with the alternation:

(48)	focus domain	XP=argument	XP=(high) adjunct
	V [XP] <sub>F</sub>	short	short
	[V XP] <sub>F</sub>	<b>short</b>	<b>long</b>
	[V] <sub>F</sub> XP	long	long

The argument-licensing approach (Halpert 2012) is, then, partly correct:

- LONG form means there is no goal within the vP
- SHORT form does *not* mean there is a goal within the vP
  - short form can appear when there is agreement with an object  
OR
  - when there is no probe (in which case there is narrow argument or adjunct focus)

AN ALTERNATIVE: adjuncts preceded by a short form are in fact inside the vP, like arguments.

PROBLEM: this predicts that adjuncts and arguments should interact with the alternation the same way, contrary to fact (48).

Other constituency-based approaches face the same problem.

## 7 Conclusions

- The LONG/SHORT-alternation: a head-marking phenomenon regulated by agreement in discourse-related syntactic features
- The alternation is only observed when the the verb is part of focus ( $\delta$ -probe on v )
  - (i) successful probing: SHORT-form, v P focus
  - (ii) unsuccessful probing: LONG-form, verb focus
  - (iii) argument-adjunct asymmetries
- no  $\delta$ -probe on v : narrow object/adjunct focus  $\Rightarrow$  SHORT

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