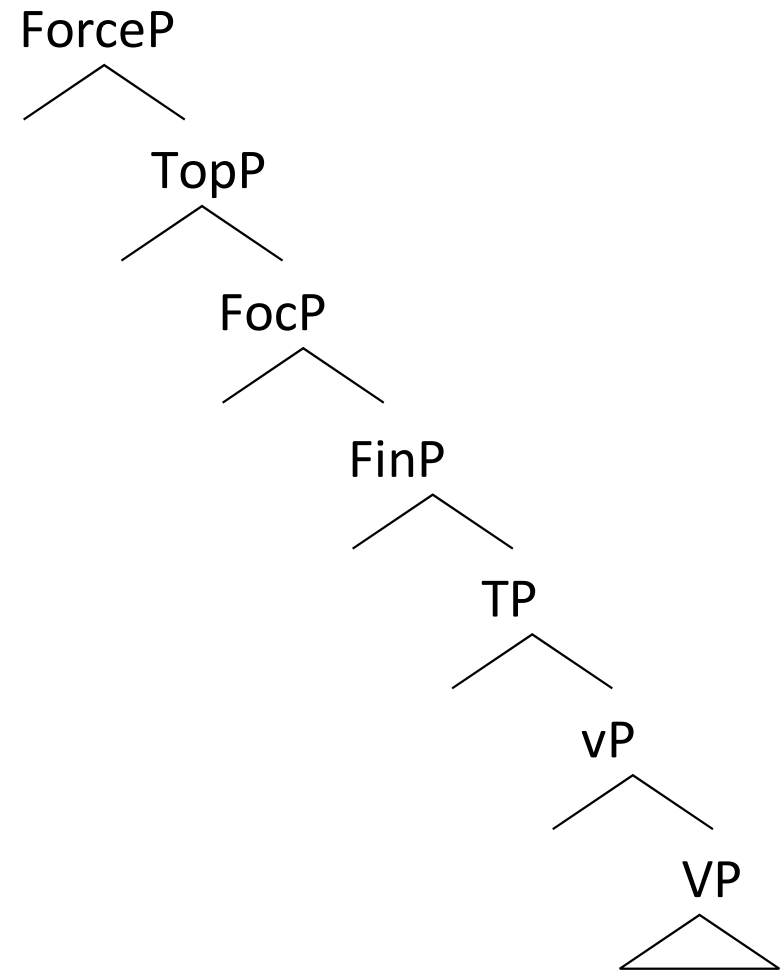


INFORMATION STRUCTURE AS A-SYNTAX

Jenneke van der Wal



(BBC good food)



- Bantu basics
- Object marking in ditransitives
 - Symmetry
 - Flexible licensing
- Subject inversion
 - Flexible licensing
- Broader picture

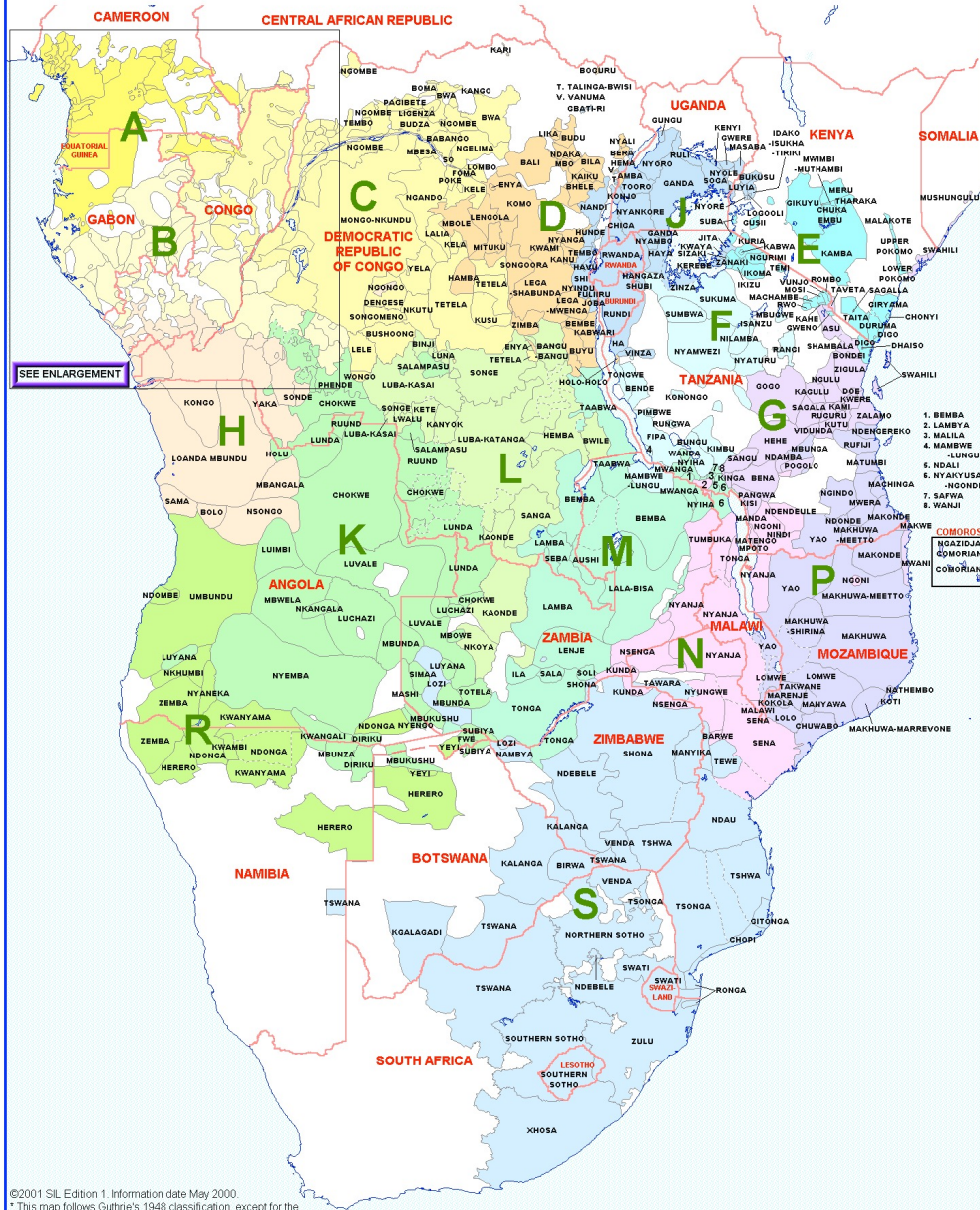
(based on OUP book to appear – please contact me if interested)



Bantu basics

The Bantu languages of Africa

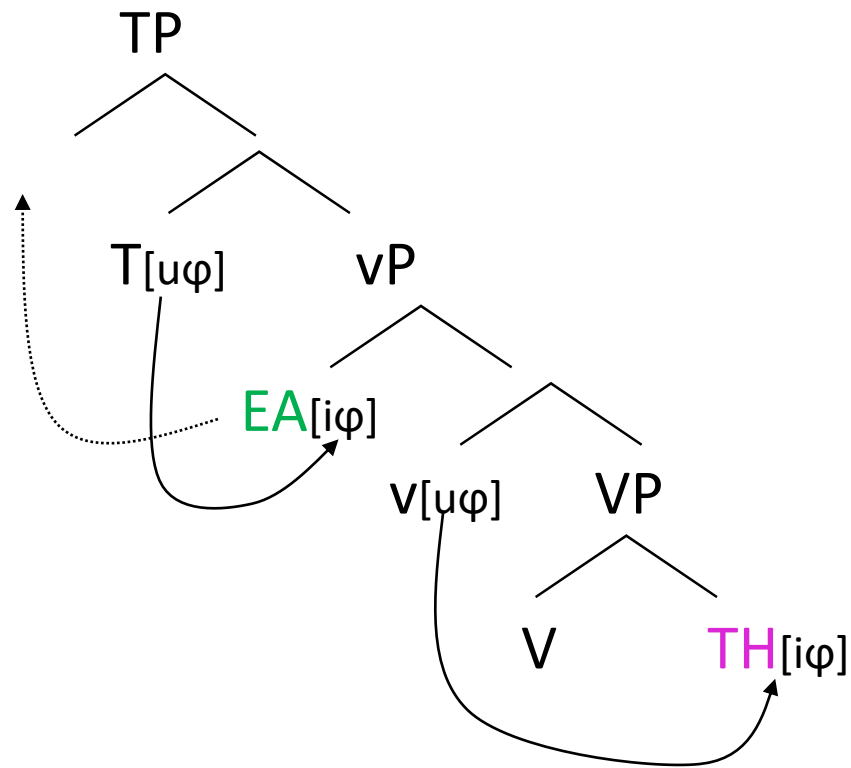
Groupings based on Guthrie, 1948*



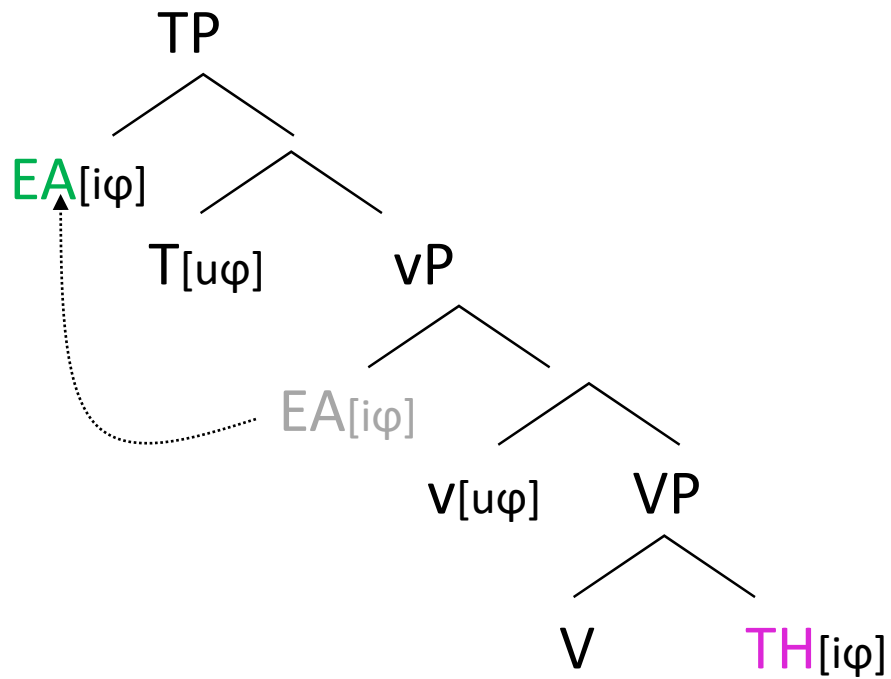
Swahili

(1) Babu a-me-m-kosoa waziri w-a afya.
 1.grandpa 1sm-pfv-1om-criticise 1.minister 1-conn 9.health
 ‘Grandfather has criticised the Health minister.’

- (1) Babu a-me-m-kosoa waziri w-a afya.
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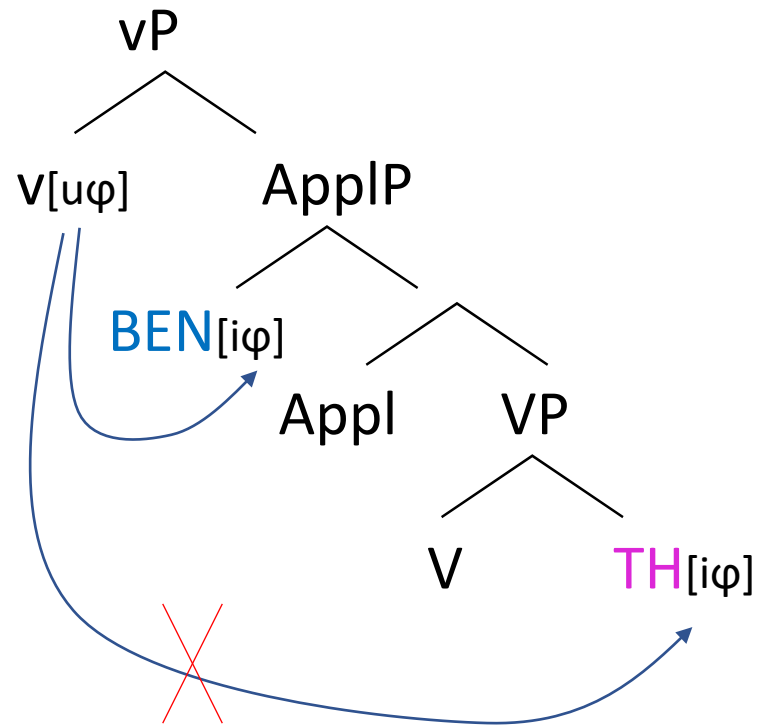


(A)Symmetry

Swahili

- (2) a. Amani a-me-**m**-nunul-i-a **Simon** **ndizi**.
1.Amani 1SM-PFV-1OM-buy-APPL-FV 1.Simon 10.banana
'Amani has bought Simon bananas.'
- b. *Amani a-me-**zi**-nunul-i-a **Simon** **ndizi**.
1.Amani 1SM-PFV-10OM-buy-APPL-FV 1.Simon 10.banana
int. 'Amani has bought Simon bananas.'

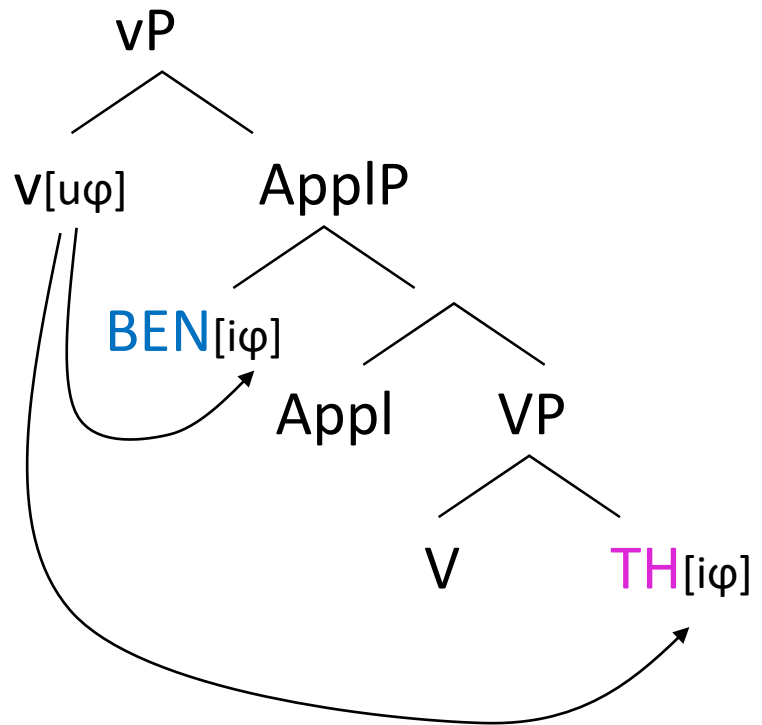
➤ Asymmetric object marking



Kiluguru (Marten & Ramadhani 2001)

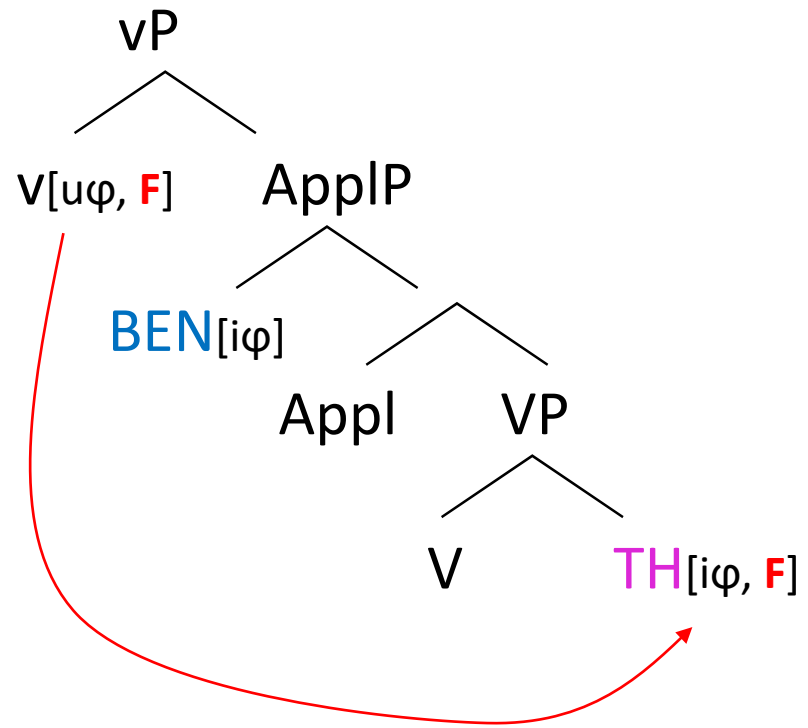
- (3) a. Chibua ko-**w**-eng'a iwana ipfitabu.
1.Chibua 1SM-2OM-give 2.children 8.books
- b. Chibua ko-**pf**-eng'a iwana ipfitabu.
1.Chibua 1SM-8OM-give 2.children 8.books
'Chibua is giving children books.'

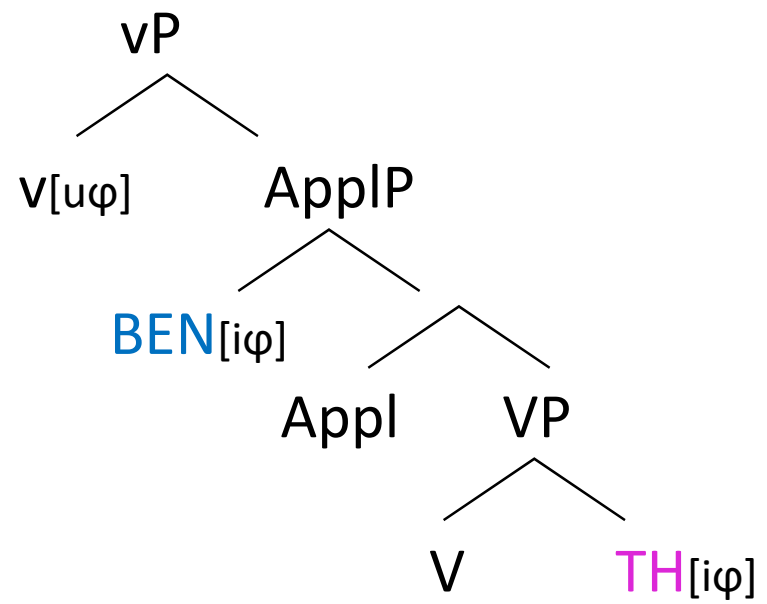
➤ Symmetric object marking

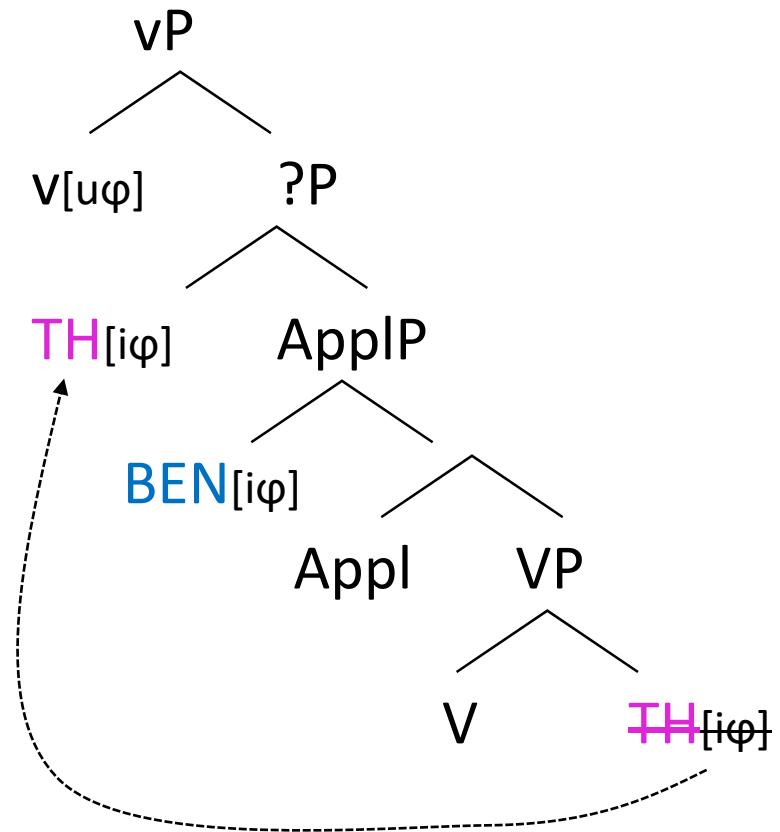


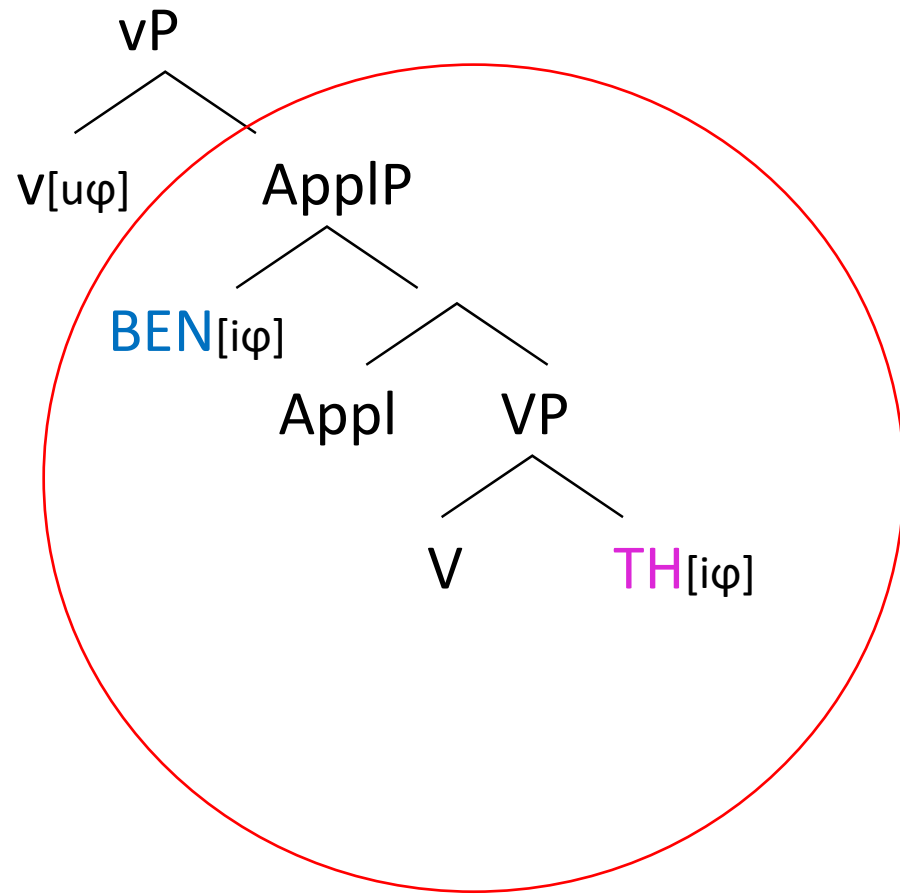
Locality:

How come agreement with the Theme is not blocked?









φ and Case as two sides of the same coin

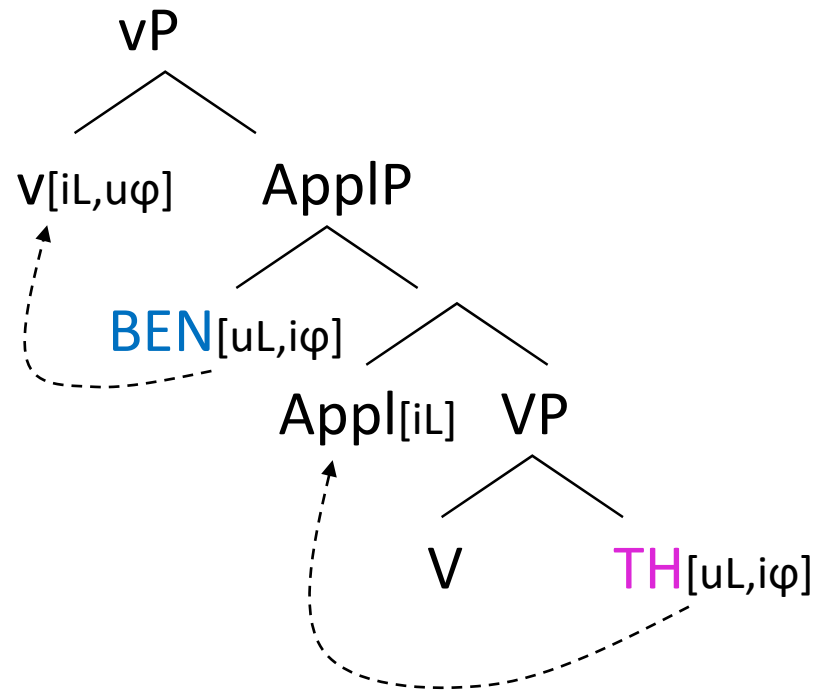
- Case as activity feature (Chomsky 2000)
- Case as just another u/iF (Carstens 2016)

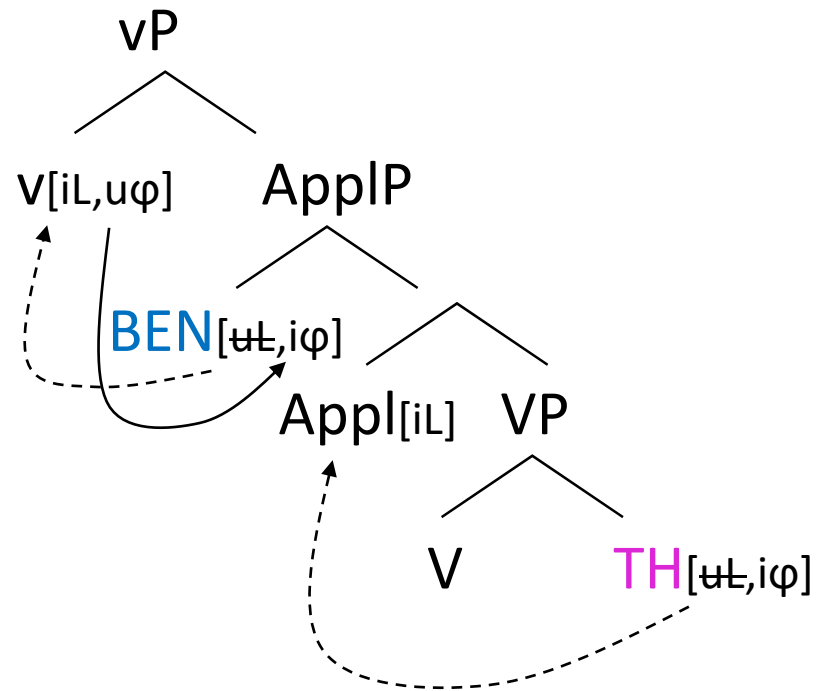
Does Bantu have Case/Vergnaud Licensing?

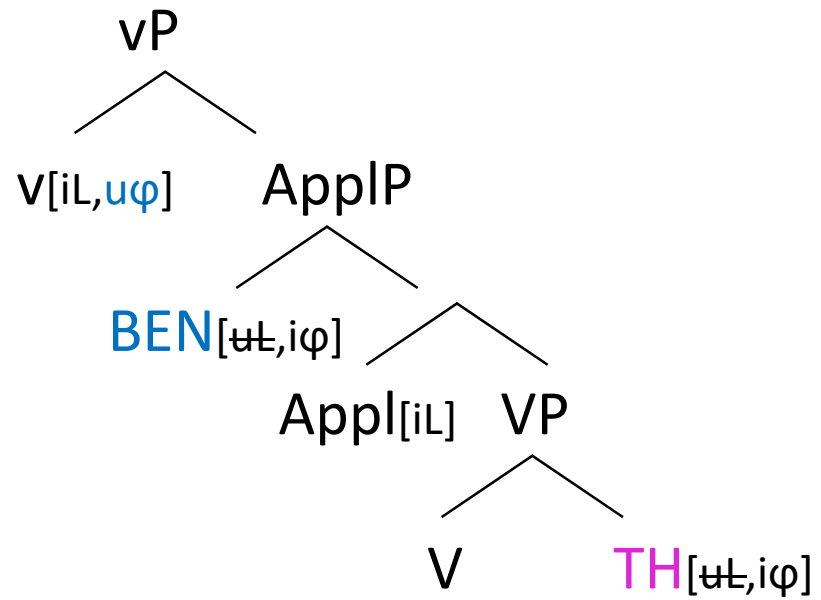
- Diercks (2012): no
- Van der Wal (2015), Sheehan & Van der Wal (2018): some
- Halpert (2015): partly

BUT DPs need to somehow connect to the clause and be licensed!

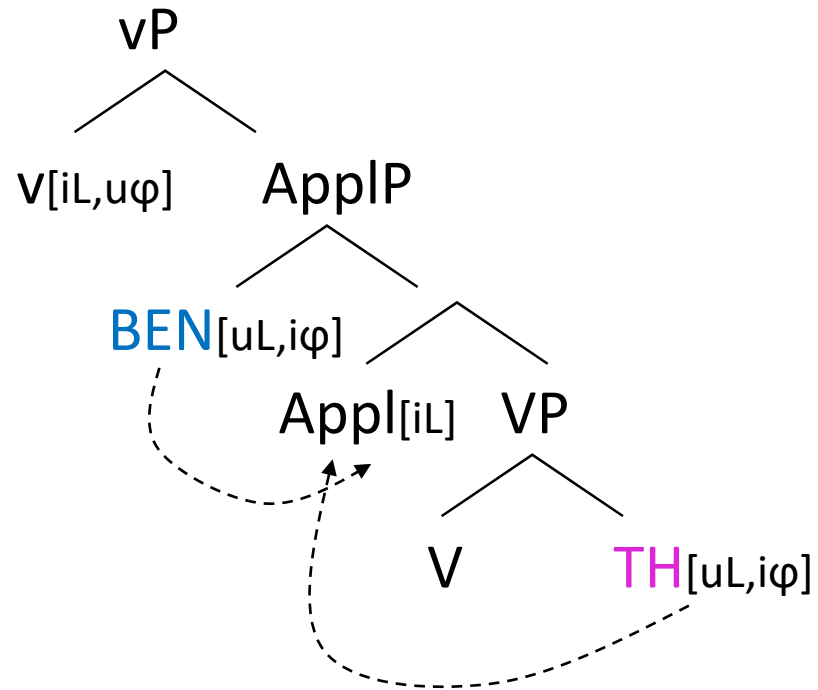
(BaSIS project: could this be IS-based licensing?)



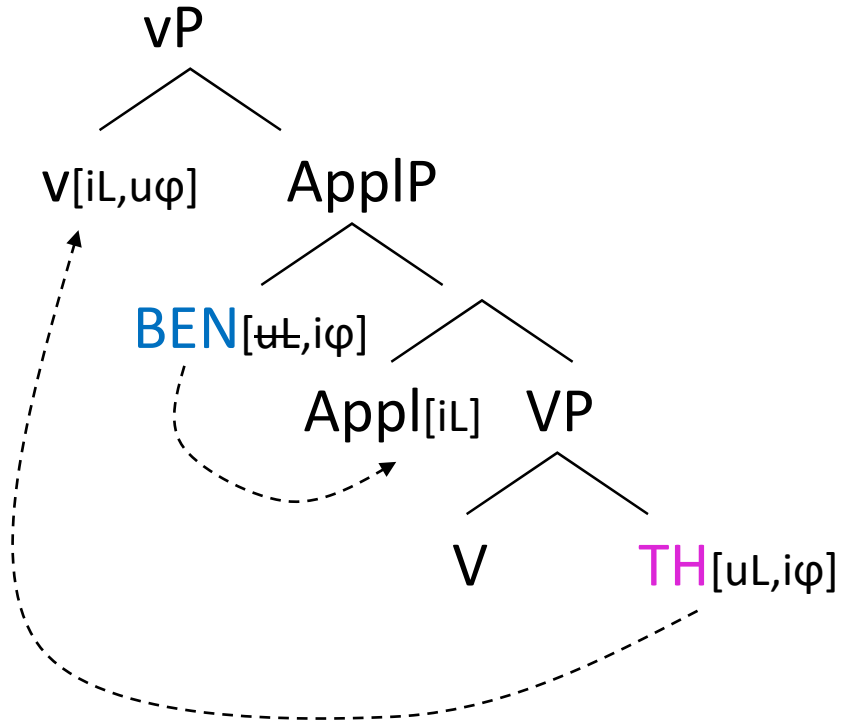




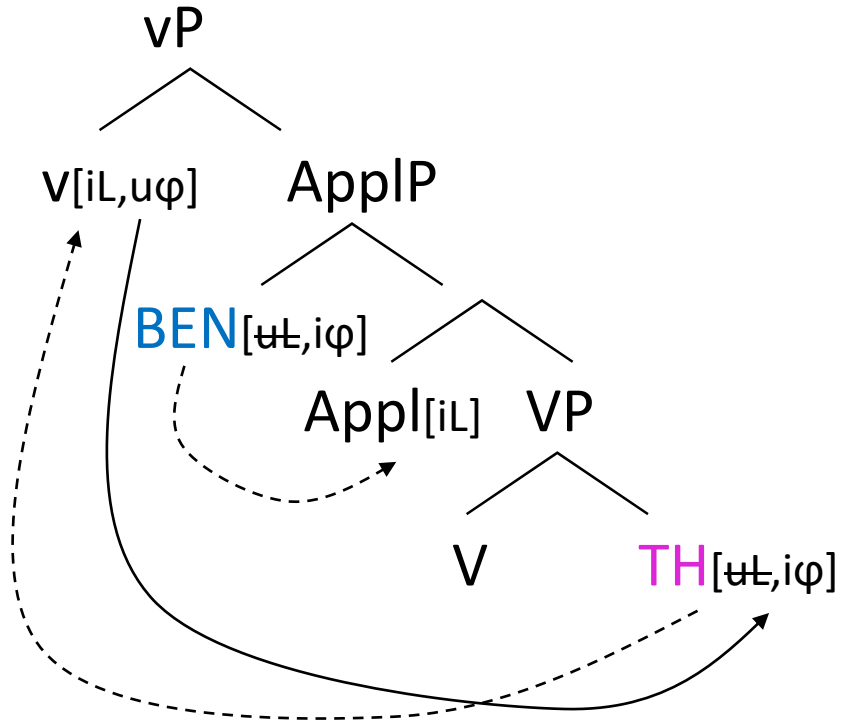
Chibua ko-**w**-eng'a iwana ipfitabu.
 1.Chibua 1SM-2OM-give 2.children 8.books



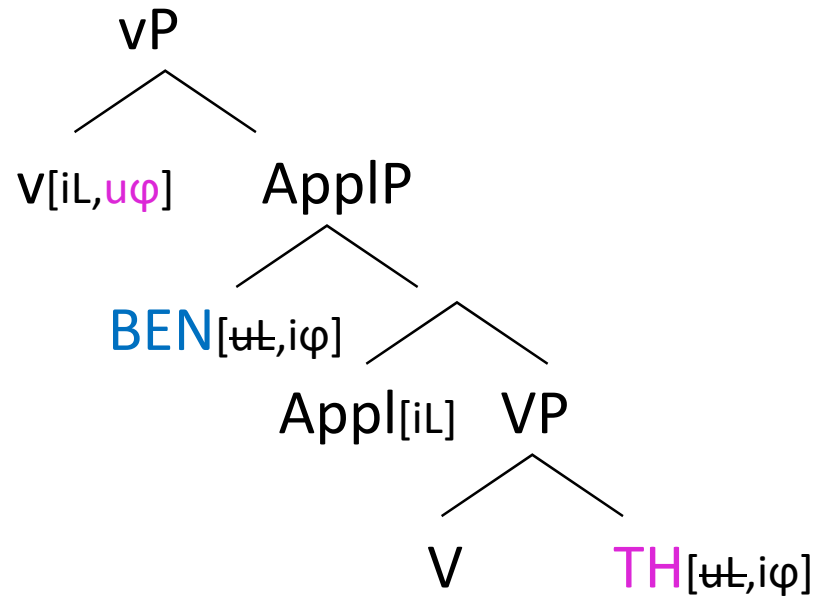
Chibua ko-**pf**-eng'a iwana ipfitabu.
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Chibua ko-**pf**-eng'a iwana ipfitabu.
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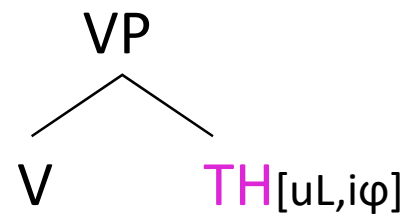
Chibua ko-**pf**-eng'a iwana ipfitabu.
 1.Chibua 1SM-8OM-give 2.children 8.books

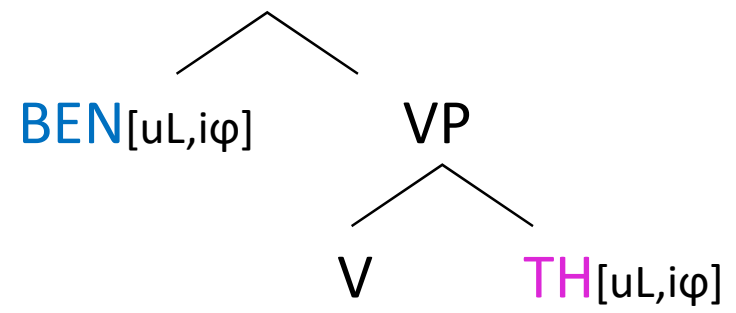


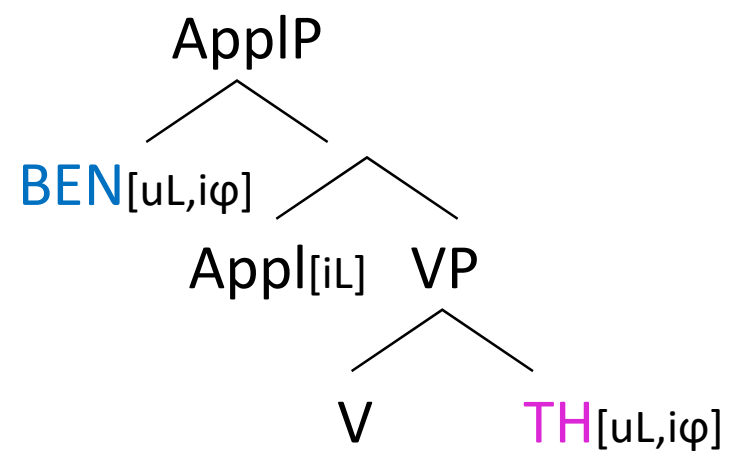
Chibua ko-**pf**-eng'a iwana ipfitabu.
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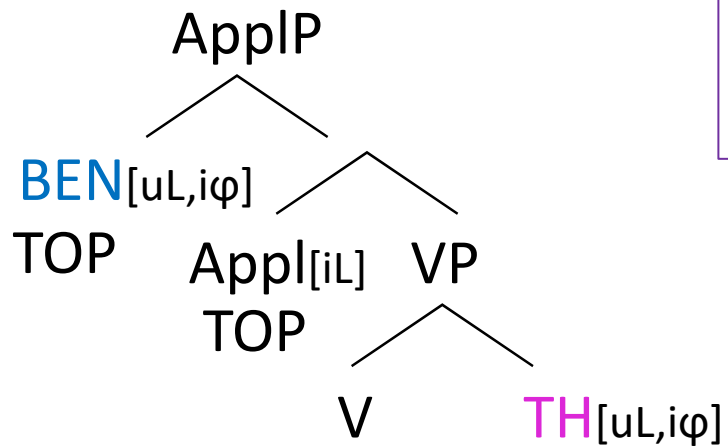
Haddican & Holmberg (2012, 2014, 2018)

Locality: How come **Why?** Theme is not licensed by Appl?
 How come agreement with the Theme is not blocked?

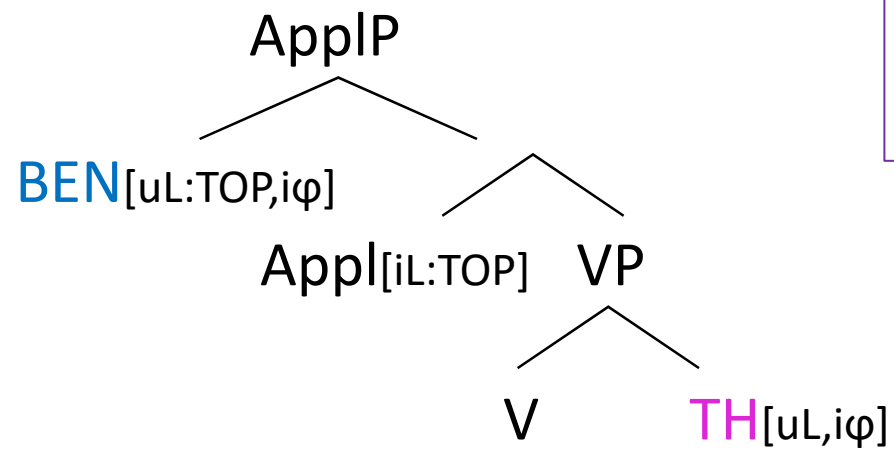








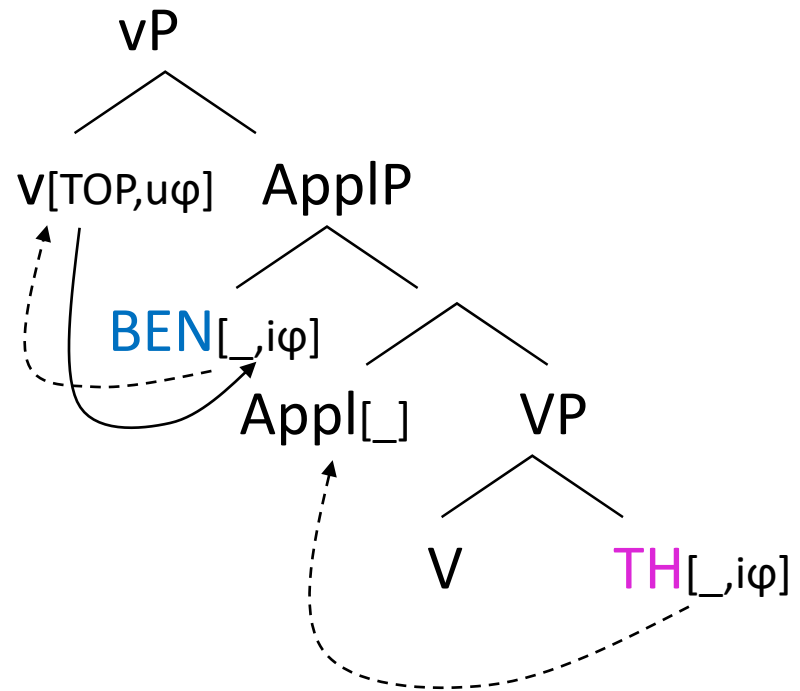
The features and feature values that Appl can license are restricted to the same (or fewer) as those of the argument introduced in its specifier.



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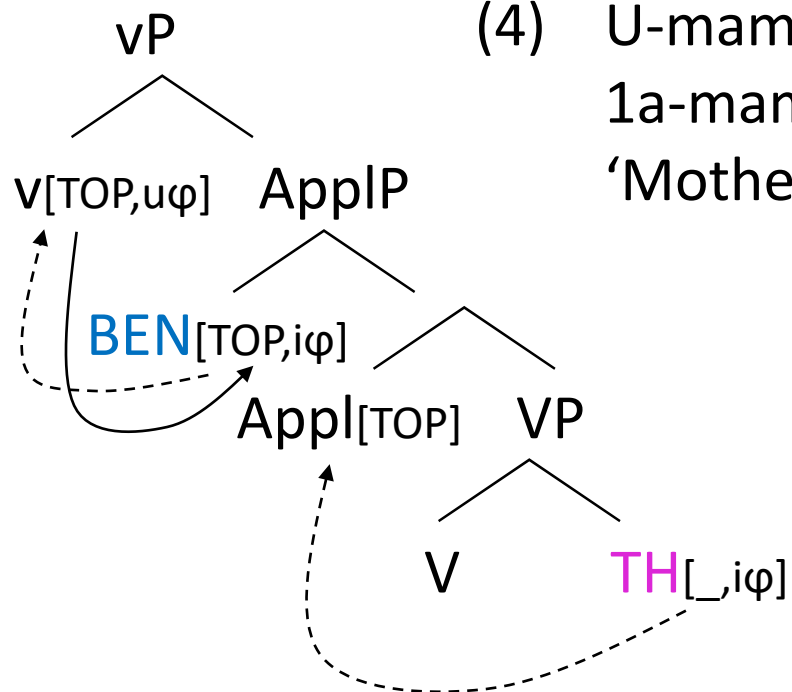
Appl $[iL: _]$ licenses $[uL: _]$

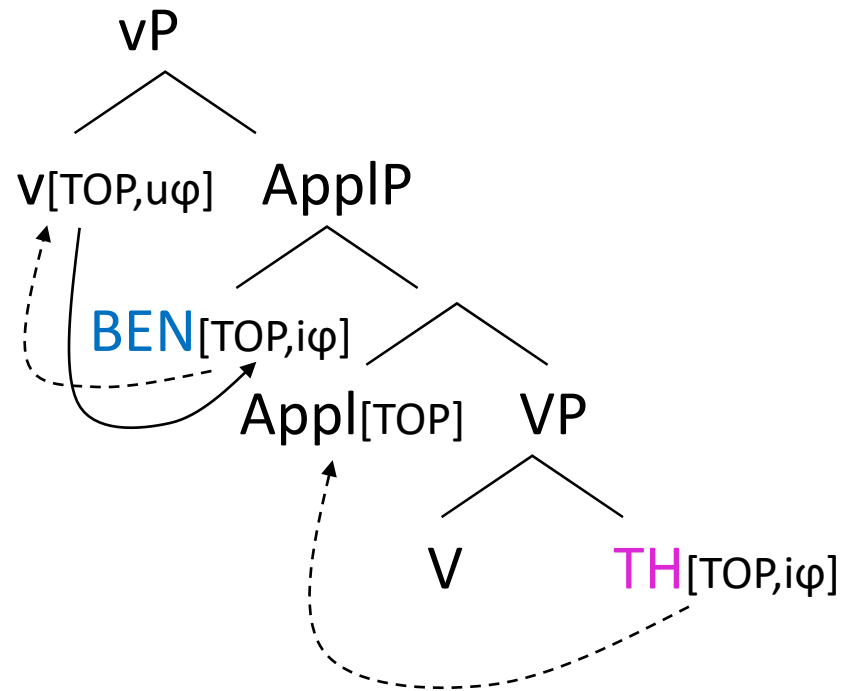
Appl $[iL: TOP]$ licenses $[uL: _]$ and $[uL: TOP]$



Zulu (Adams 2010: 11)

(4) U-mama u-ba-nik-e ϕ -pro_i in-cwadi (aba-ntwana_i).
 1a-mama 1SM-2OM-give-PFV 9-book 2-children
 'Mother gave them a book (the children).'





Zulu (Adams 2010 via Zeller 2012: 224, 225)

- (5) a. Ngi-ya-**m**-theng-el-a **u-Sipho** **u-bisi**.
1SG.SM-PRS.DJ-1OM-buy-APPL-FV 1a-Sipho 11-milk
'I am buying milk for Sipho.'
- b. *Ngi-ya-**u**-theng-el-a **u-Sipho** **u-bisi**.
1SG.SM-PRS.DJ-11OM-buy-APPL-FV 1a-Sipho 11-milk
'I am buying milk for Sipho.'

Zulu (Adams 2010: 11)

(6) U-mama u-*yi*-nik-e

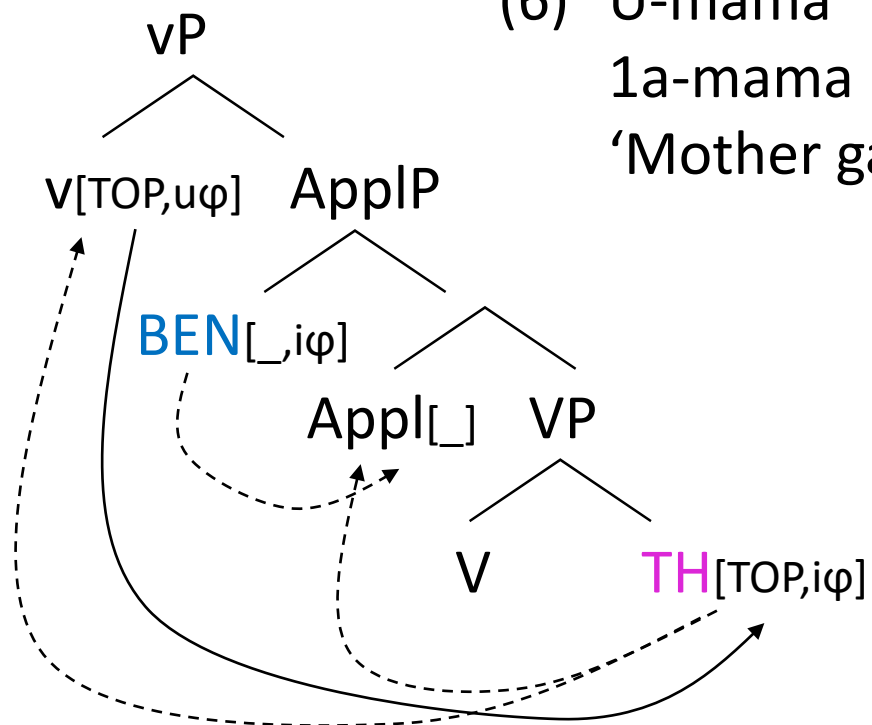
aba-ntwana *ϕ-pro_i* (in-cwadi_i).

1a-mama 1SM-9OM-give-PFV

2-children

9-book

‘Mother gave the children it (a book).’



Summary Flexible Licensing Appl:

The theme is licensed by Appl, and the Benefactive by *v* (where *v* agrees with BEN), *unless* the Benefactive is less topical than the Theme, in which case the Benefactive is licensed by Appl and the Theme by *v* (where *v* agrees with TH).

➤ Parameter between symmetric and asymmetric object marking

<i>(v agrees with)</i>	TH []	TH [TOP]
BEN []	BEN	TH
BEN [TOP]	BEN	BEN

Consequences:

- *v* agrees with the more topical of two objects
- In a passive, BEN or TH is not licensed by *v* but by T
 - passives are indeed associated with topicality
 - prediction that symmetric object marking = symmetric passive

Luganda (JE15, Ssekiryango 2006: 67, 72)

- (8) a. Maama a-wa-dde taata ssente.
1.mother 1SM-give-PFV 1.father 10.money
'Mother has given father money.'
- b. Maama a-mu-wa-dde ssente.
1.mother 1SM-1OM-give-PFV 10.money.
'Mother has given him money.'
- c. Maama a-zi-wa-dde taata.
1.mother 1SM-10OM-give-PFV 1.father
'Mother has given it father.'
- (9) a. Taata a-wer-eddw-a ssente.
1.father 1SM-give-PASS-FV money
'Father has been given money.'
- b. Ssente zi-wer-eddw-a taata.
10.money 10SM-give-PASS-FV 1.father
'The money has been given to father.'

Broader point:

topicality can determine nominal licensing
and thereby influence agreement (and word order) in the A-domain



Subject Inversion

Kinyarwanda (Ngoboka 2016: 356)

(7) a. **Abáana** nti-**ba**-nywá **inzogá**.
2.children NEG-2SM-drink 9.alcohol
'Children don't drink alcohol.'

b. **Inzogá** nti-**zi**-nywá **abáana**.
9.alcohol NEG-9SM-drink 2.children
'Alcohol does not drink children.'
'It's the children who do not drink alcohol.'

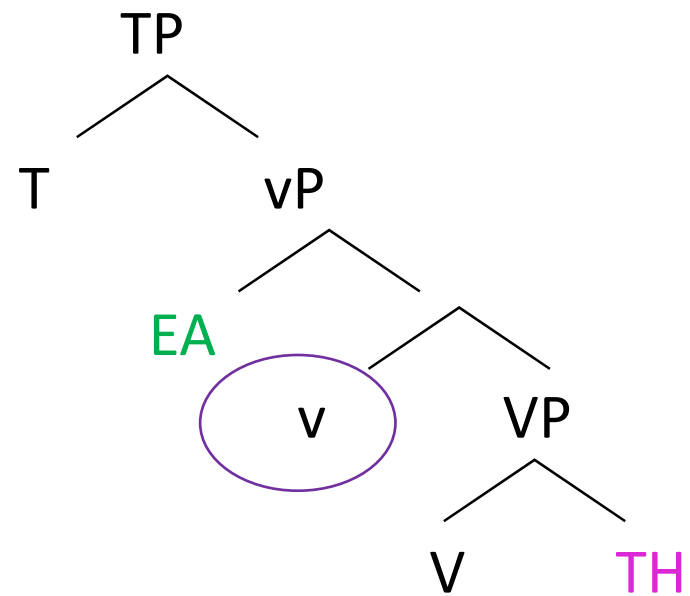
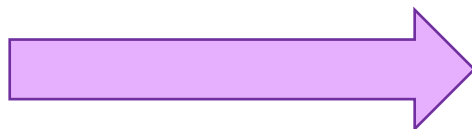
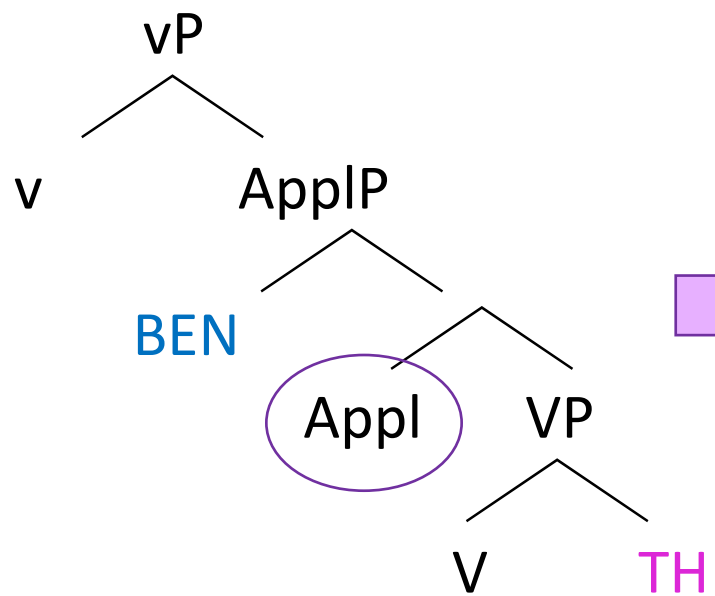
Rukiga (JE14)

- (8) A-ha-ru-tindo ha-a-raaba=h' é-mótoka.
AUG-16-11-bridge 16SM-N.PST-PASS=16 AUG-10.car
'On the bridge have passed cars.'

Kĩĩtharaka (E54)

(There was an accident on the road and...)

- (9) Í gũkúíré mũntû.
ni kũ-ku-ire mũ-ntû
F 17SM-die-PFV 1-person
'Somebody died.'

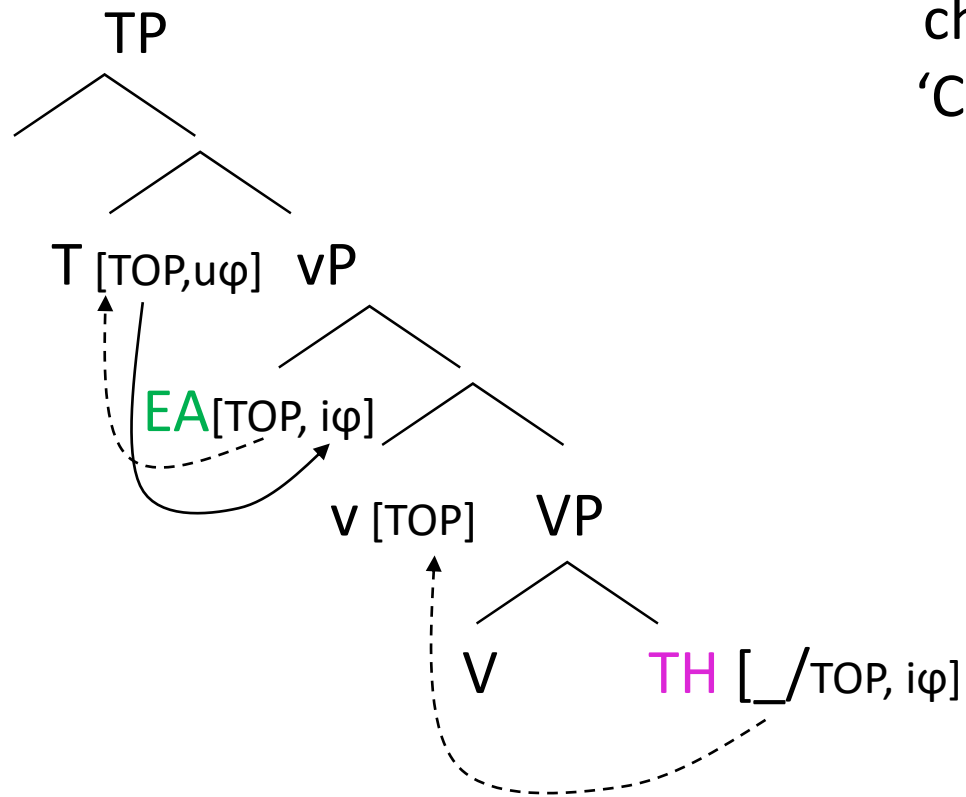


Kinyarwanda (Ngoboka 2016: 356)

(7a) Abáana nti-ba-nywá inzogá.

children NEG-they-drink alcohol

‘Children do not drink alcohol.’

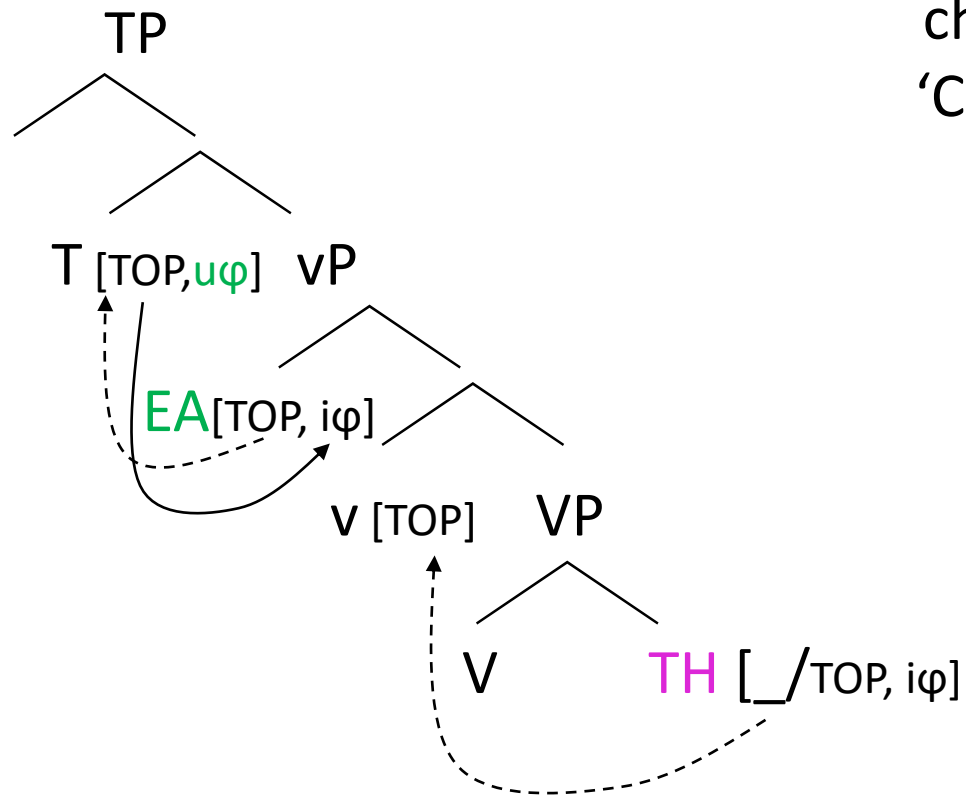


Kinyarwanda (Ngoboka 2016: 356)

(7a) Abáana nti-ba-nywá inzogá.

children NEG-they-drink alcohol

‘Children do not drink alcohol.’

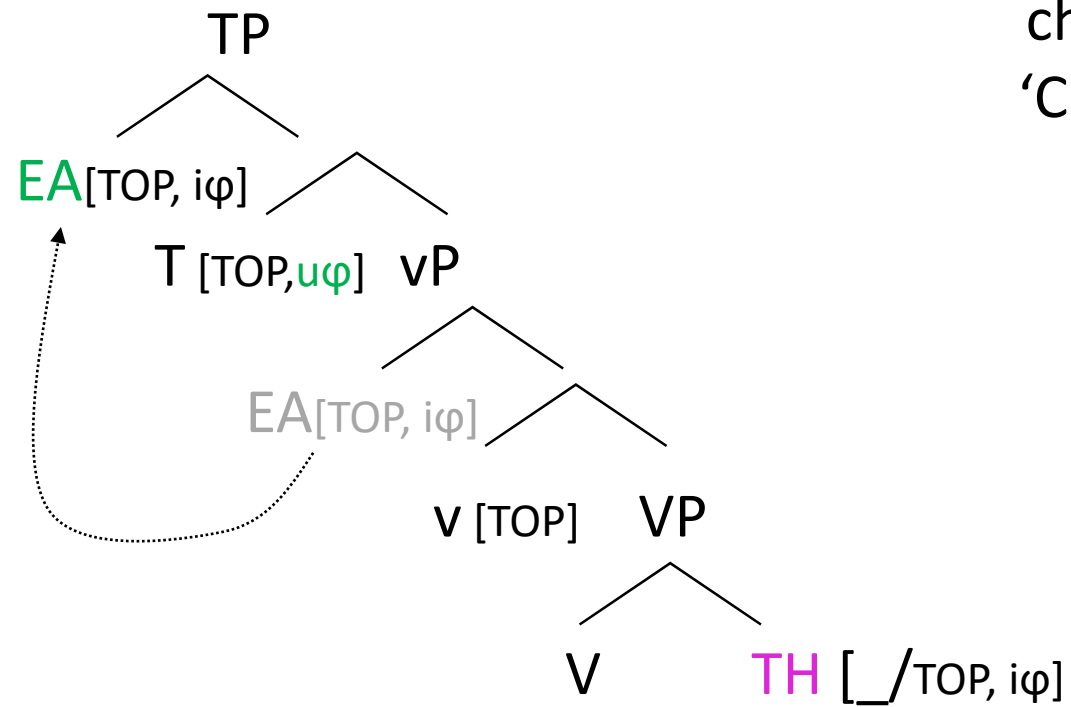


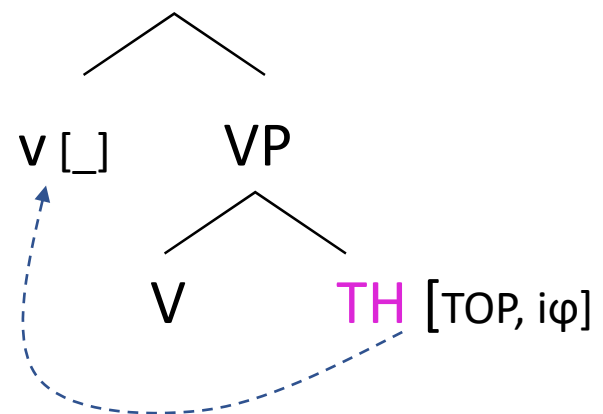
Kinyarwanda (Ngoboka 2016: 356)

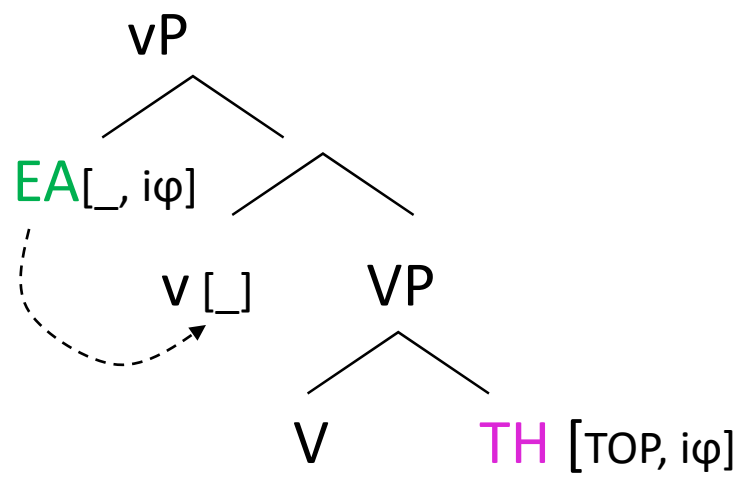
(7a) Abáana nti-ba-nywá inzogá.

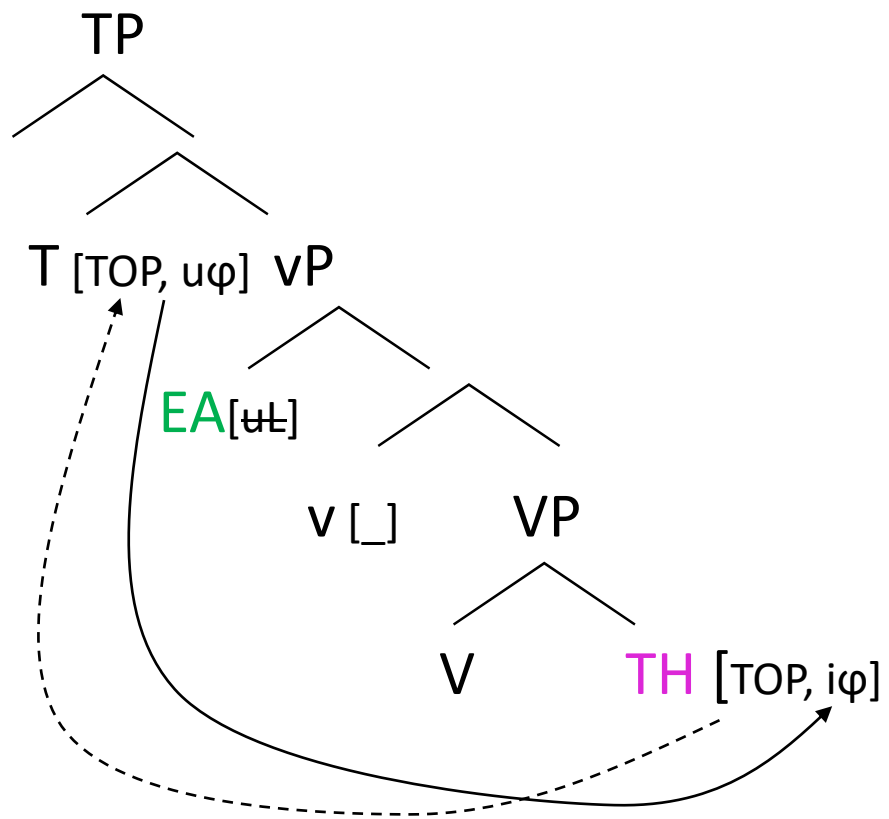
children NEG-they-drink alcohol

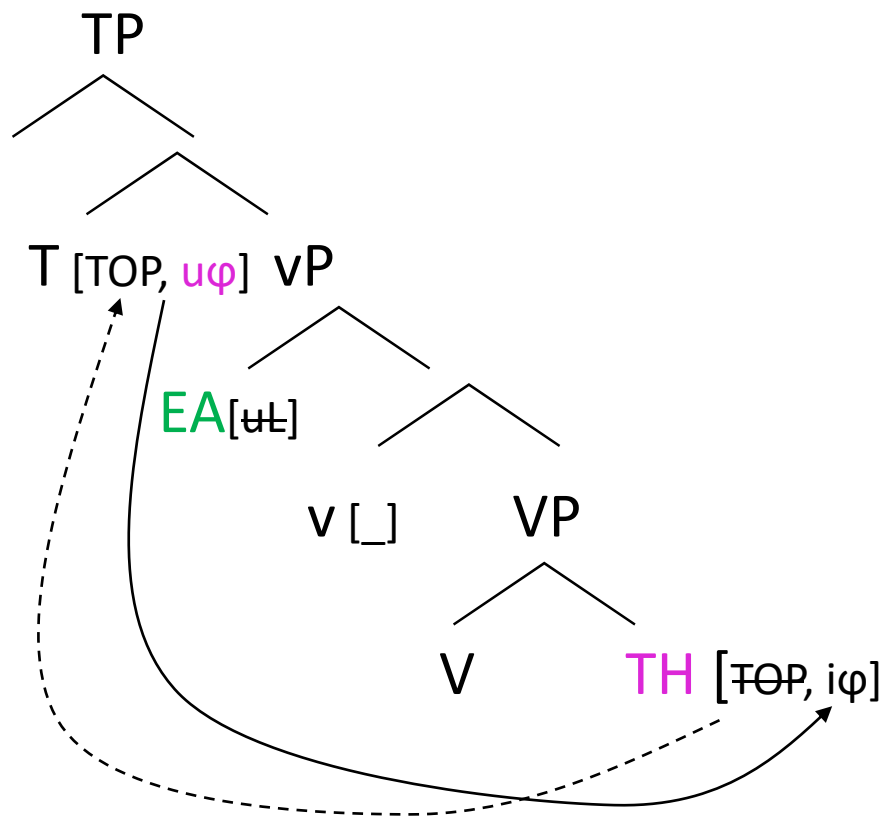
‘Children do not drink alcohol.’











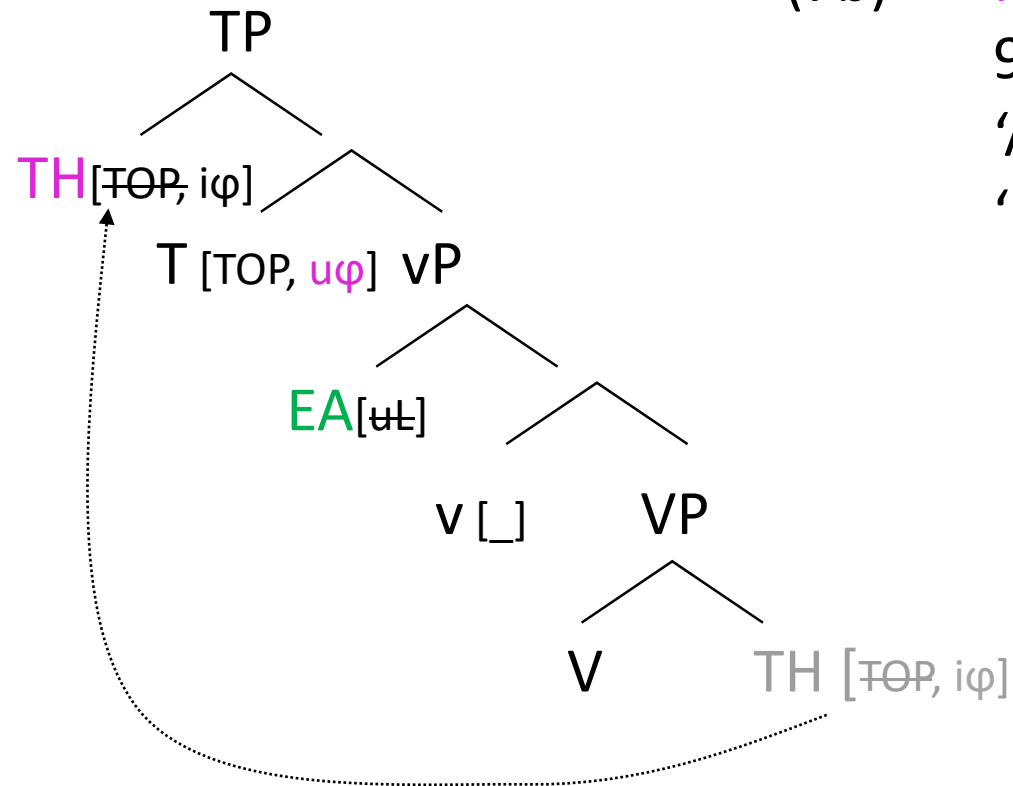
Kinyarwanda (Ngoboka 2016:356)

(7b) *Inzogá* nti-*zi*-nywá *abána*.

9.alcohol NEG-9SM-drink 2.children

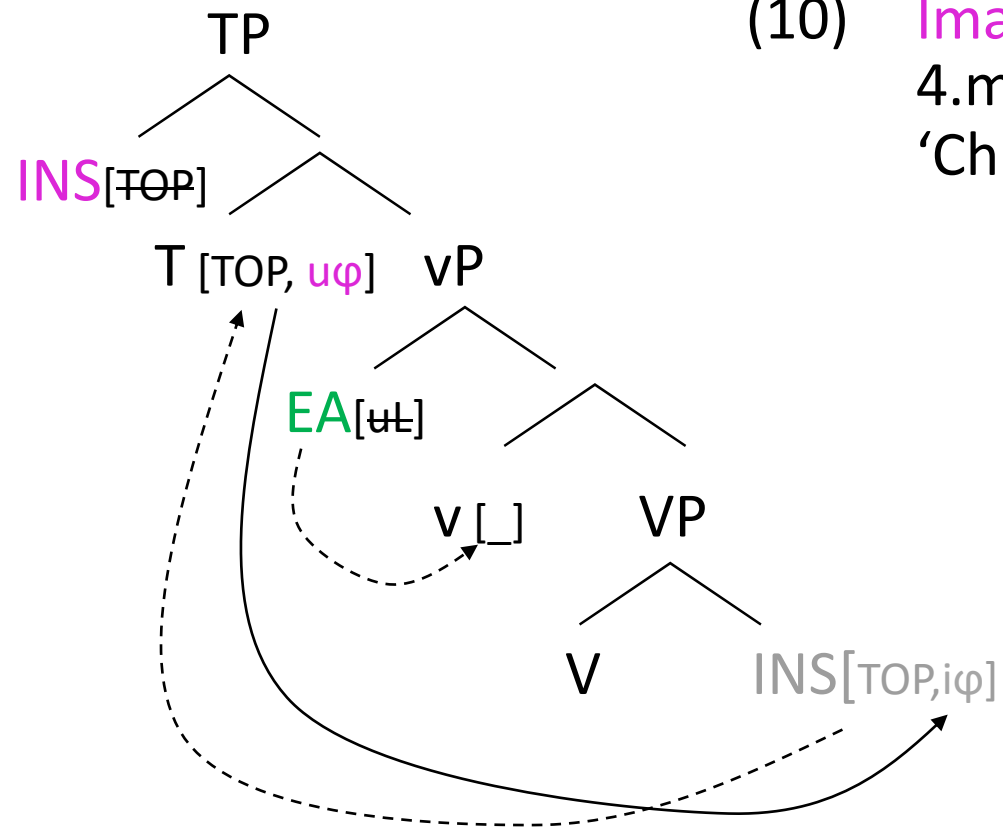
‘Alcohol does not drink children.’

‘It’s the children who do not drink alcohol.’



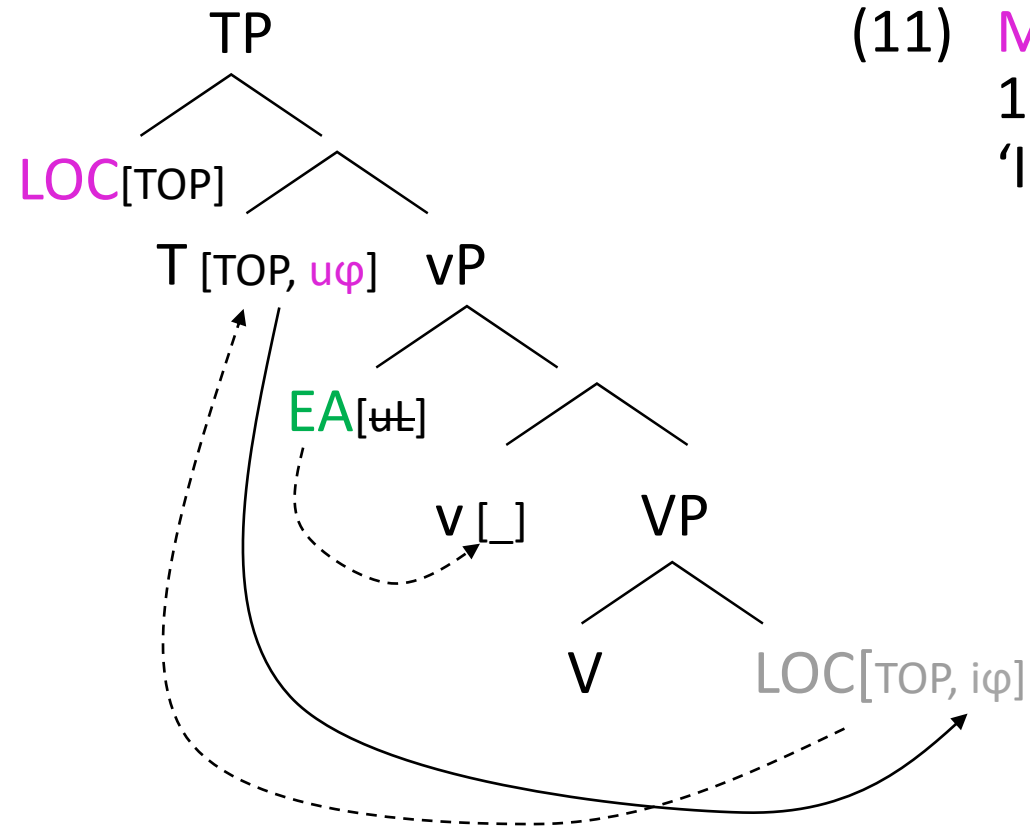
Instrument Inversion (Swati, Thwala 2006)

- (10) **Imali** i-dlala **bantfwana** ka-Gates.
 4.money 4sM -play 2.children LOC-Gates
 'Children play with money at Bill Gates' home.'



Locative Inversion (Otjiherero, Marten 2006)

- (11) *M-òn-djúwó mw-á hìtí é-rùngà.*
 18-9-house 18SM-PAST enter 5-thief
 'Into the house entered a/the thief.'



EA is low

Northern Sotho (S32, Zerbian 2006:127, 171, adapted)

- (12) a. Ó-a-šó:ma | mo:-nna. | *right-dislocated S*
1SM -PRS.DJ-work 1-man
'He is working, the man.'
- b. Go-fihla mo:-nna. | *subject inversion*
17sM -arrive 1-man
lit. 'There arrives a man.'

Zulu (S42, Zeller 2012: 139)

- (13) A-ku-hlek-i muntu.
NEG-17SM-laugh-NEG 1.person
'No one is laughing.'

Copi (S61, database Nhantumbo & van der Wal)

- (14) Ku-yâ:-fa t-otse tí-tshu:na.
17SM -NEG-die-FV 10-all 10-mosquitos
'Not all mosquitoes died.' (but some did)

Pre-V is in A position

Zulu (S42, Zeller 2013: 1113)

- (15) **Lezi** **zin-dlu** **zi-bonakal-a** sengathi **zi-hlal-a**
10.DEM 10-house 10SM-seem-FV COMP 10SM-stay-FV
a-ba-ntu **aba-dala.**
AUG-2-person 2.ADJ-old
'Old people seem to live in these houses.'
lit. 'These houses seem that they live old people.'

Kirundi (JD62, Ndayiragije 1999: 420)

(16) a. **Abáana** **ba**-á-riko **ba**-soma igitabo.
2.children 2SM-PST-be 2SM-read.IPFV 7.book
'Children were reading a book.'

b. **Igitabo** **ki**-á-riko **ki**-soma abáana.
7.book 7SM-PST-be 7SM-read.IPFV 2.children
'Children (not adults) were reading a book.'

c. **Igitabo** **ki**-á-riko **ki**-som-**w**-a na abáana.
7.book 7SM-PST-be 7SM-read-PASS-IPFV by 2.children
'The book was being read by children.'

Kirundi (JD62, Ernest Nshemezimana, personal communication)

(17) a. [U-mw-anditsi w-éése]_i a-kund-a [i-gi-tabo c-íiwé_{i/j}].

AUG-1-writer 1-every 1SM-like-FV AUG-7-book 7-POSS.1

‘Every writer_i likes his_{j/i} book.’

b. [I-gi-tabo c-íiwé_{j/*i}] gi-kund-w-a n’ [ú-mw-anditsi w-éése]_i.

AUG-7-book 7-POSS.1 7SM-like-PASS-FV by AUG-1-writer 1-every

‘His book_{j/*i} is liked by every writer_i.’

c. [I-gi-tabo c-íiwé_{j/*i}] gi-kund-a [u-mw-anditsi w-éése]_i.

AUG-7-book 7-POSS.1 7SM-like-FV AUG-1-writer 1-every

‘His book_{j/*i} *every writer_i* likes.’

Summary Flexible Licensing v:

- v licenses downward unless the external argument is less topical than the internal argument
- T licenses and agrees with the other (more topical) argument (and moves it)

➤ Parameter th/loc/ins inversion or not = flexible licensing v = sensitivity topicality

	TH/LOC/INS [_]	TH/LOC/INS [TOP]
EA [_]	EA	TH/LOC/INS
EA [TOP]	EA	EA

- The postverbal 'subject' is always non-topical (and may be focal)
- The preverbal element is always topical
- Passives of subject inversion impossible > true!
- Subject inversion disallows object marking > true!

Low FocP

- Does not capture the underspecification in narrow focus andthetic S in intransitive inversion
- Does not explain the lack of object marking
- Still needs licensing of EA/S

High TopP

- Does not account for lack of reconstruction
- Does not predict hyperraising and passivisation
- Does not directly predict subject marking

Broader point:

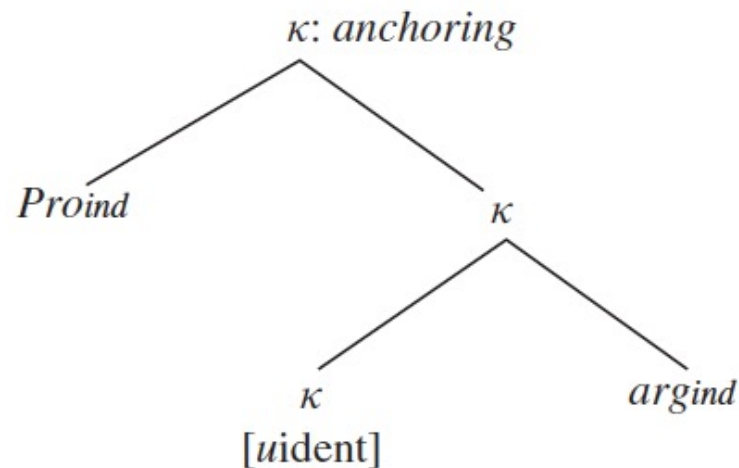
topicality can determine nominal licensing
and thereby influence agreement and word order in the A-domain



The bigger
picture

- We need a more flexible view on licensing (no rigid ‘abstract Case’)
- Can we see licensing more generally as the need for DPs to connect to the clausal spine? (Wiltschko 2003, 2014; Sheehan & Van der Wal 2016, 2018)
- Can DPs be licensed just as ‘topic’?

Nominal anchoring



We can capture Bantu variation as properties of heads:

- Asymmetric vs. symmetric object marking
Parameter: Appl [uL] sensitive to topicality or not
- Variation in subject inversion
Parameter: v [uL] sensitive to topicality or not

Ergo:

- Languages can have a grammaticalised topic feature
- This can be an A feature
- Not all languages (need to) have a grammaticalised topic feature

Strong Modularity

Narrow syntactic operations cannot be influenced by information-structural factors / No discourse notion can be encoded by formal features

(Chomsky 2008, Berwick & Chomsky 2011, Fanselow 2006, Fanselow & Lenertová 2011, Horvath 2010)

Strong Uniformity

All languages share the same set of grammatical features, and every language overtly manifests these features.

(Miyagawa 2010: 12)

A WIN situation: Languages have What Is Needed

Biberauer's (2011, 2017b, 2018ab, 2019) neo-emergentist model of grammar; Wiltschko's (2014, 2021) Universal Spine hypothesis



Thank you!

<https://bantusyntaxinformationstructure.com/>

ROBERTS (2010) DEFECTIVE GOAL

Agree

- Probe with $u\phi$ features
- Goal with $i\phi$

Defective Goal: ϕ P

Chain \rightarrow spell out on Probe

