Head-marked term focus

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1. Intro

- ReCoS project (Rethinking Comparative Syntax): new perspective on Principles and Parameters, where parametric variation is due to languages varying in whether they have certain features and where those features are active.
- Assume the Borer-Chomsky Conjecture (Baker 2008:3), or Lexical Parameterization Hypothesis (Manzini and Wexler 1987):

   (1) All parameters of variation are attributable to differences in the features of particular items (e.g. the functional heads) in the lexicon.

- How does that work for variation in (the expression of) focus?

- Focus in syntax under BCC means presence of [Foc] feature → syntactically active formal feature, which has uninterpretable [uFoc] on a probing head and matching [iFoc] on a phrasal goal.
- This talk only considers 'term focus': focus on anything but the verb/predicate.
- Presupposes that focus is present in syntax… This is not so easy: focus effects can be 'superficial' (cf. Berwick and Chomsky 2008), but this is not the case for all languages. Indications for presence in syntax can be: truth-conditional effects, interaction with other syntactic processes (tense/aspect, negation, intervention effects etc.), consistent mapping between focus interpretation and marking.
- Morphology can also be seen as indication of [Foc], if morphology spells out features.

Gungbe (Ghana, Aboh 2004: 8)
 (19) a. [[àkwékwè] wè] Kòfí xɔ̀
          banana   FOC Kofi buy
        'Kofi bought BANANA(s)'

- But not just morphological marking on the focused XP itself; 'term focus' can also be marked on the verb:

Makonde (Tanzania, Bantu P20, Kraal 2005:235, glosses added)
(2) a. CJ   tu-va-yangata vayéeni|
             1PL-2-help   2.guests
             'we help THE GUESTS'

    b. DJ   tu-**na**-va-yangaáta| vayeéni|
             1PL-PRES.DJ-2-help 2.guests
             'we help the guests'

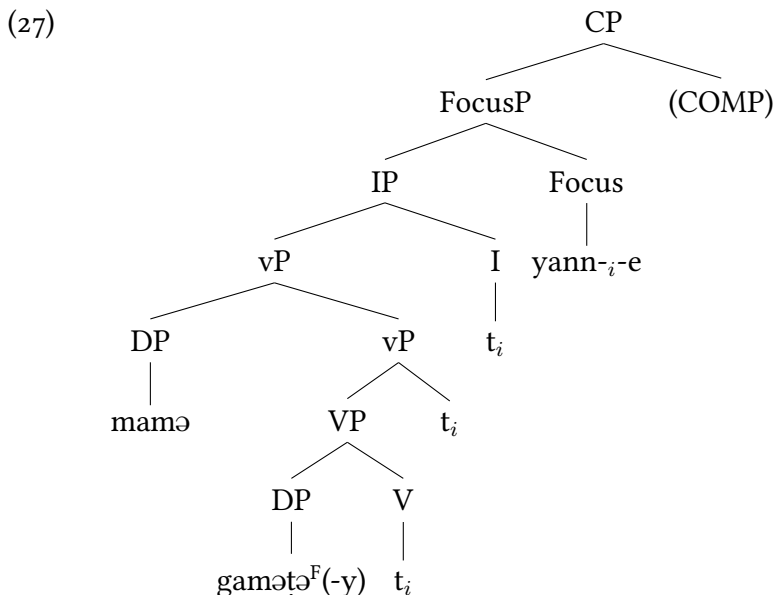- How can this head-marked term focus be modeled with [Foc] features?

2. FocP

2.1. Modern Colloquial Sinhala
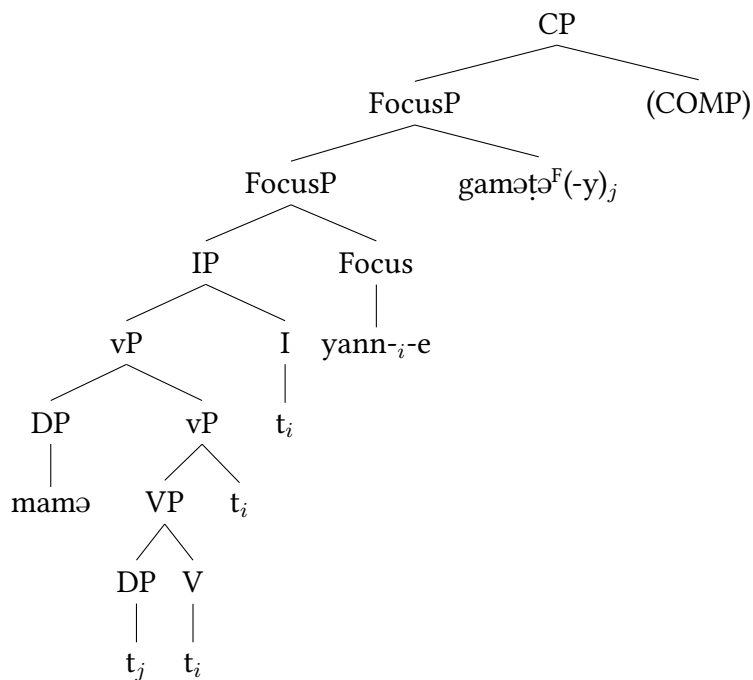Sri Lanka, Indo-Aryan (Slade 2011)

- Focus marked on the verb by final inflectional vowel -a (neutral and predicate focus) vs. -e (focus on 'constituent'), as in examples (1a) vs (26a).
- Focused XP also marked, by intonation and optional particle (default = –y/tamay, but other particles available too).
- Focused XP is flexible in position.
- Slade (2011) proposes that verbal suffix -e is the realisation of a Foc head to which the verb head-moves, as in (27). This head probes as finds the focused XP in its c-command domain.
- The flexible position is accounted for by having optional movement to specFocP (see 28), or in other words optional overt/covert movement. Unknown (to me at least) what the difference in interpretation is.

Slade (2011: 63, 64)

(1) a. mamə gamətə   yanna
         I.NOM village-DAT go.PRES.A
         'I go to the village.'

(26) a. mamə gamətə^F(-y)   yanne
         I   village^F.DAT(-EMPH) go.PRES.E
         'It is to the village I go.'

     b. mamə yanne   gamətə^F(-y)
         I   go.PRES.E village^F.DAT(-EMPH)

(27)

(28)

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                              CP
                         ┌─────┴──────┐
                      FocusP        (COMP)
                   ┌─────┴────────┐
                FocusP      gamǝṭǝ^F(-y)_j
              ┌────┴─────┐
             IP        Focus
          ┌──┴──┐        │
         vP     I     yann-_i-e
      ┌───┴──┐  │
     DP     vP  t_i
      │   ┌──┴──┐
    mamǝ VP    t_i
        ┌─┴─┐
       DP   V
        │   │
       t_j  t_i
```

2.2. Kirundi
Burundi, Bantu JD62

- Verbal morphology shows not only distinction in tense/aspect, negation etc, but also focus on the following elements: the 'conjoint-disjoint alternation'.
- The conjoint form in Kirundi does not have -ra- and indicates that a following element is in focus; the disjoint form is used when no focus follows.
- Ndayiragije (1999) proposes a lower Foc head with a right-branching specifier: the head probes, finds a focus and agrees, and moves it to the specifier.
- The focus XP can be the patient (15b), an adverb (15a), or the agent (23a)
- It will always end up in final position → a discourse-configurational effect.
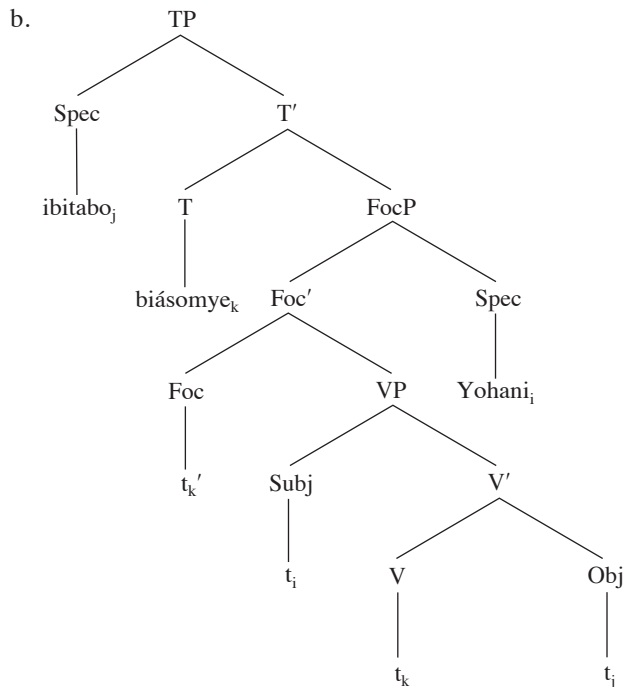
Ndayiragije (1999: 406)
(5) a. Abâna ba-á-*ra*-nyôye   amatá.   SVO
       children 3P-PST-F-drink:PERF milk
       'Children drank milk.'
    b. Abâna ba-á-(*ra)-nyôye   amatá.   SVO (Focus = Obj)
       children 3P-PST-(F)-drink:PERF milk
       'Children drank milk (not water).'
    c. Abâna ba-á-(*ra)-nyôye   iki?   SVO (*wh* = Obj)
       children 3P-PST-(F)-drink:PERF what
       'What did children drink?'

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(15) a. Yohani a-á-oógeje   néezá imiduga.   (Focus = Obj)
        John   3S-PST-wash:PERF well   cars
        'John washed cars well (not trucks).'
     b. Yohani a-á-oógeje   imiduga néezá.   (Focus = Adverb)
        John   3S-PST-wash:PERF cars   well
        'John washed cars well (not badly).'

Ndayiragije (1999: 415)

(23) a. Ibitabo bi-á-somye   Yohani.   OVS
        books 3P-PST-read:PERF John
        'John (not Peter) read the books.'

    b.

```
                        TP
                  _____|_____
               Spec           T′
                |        _____|_____
            ibitabo_j   T            FocP
                        |        _____|_____
                   biásomye_k  Foc′         Spec
                            ____|____          |
                          Foc       VP      Yohani_i
                           |     ____|____
                          t_k′  Subj       V′
                                 |      ____|____
                                t_i    V         Obj
                                       |          |
                                      t_k        t_j
```

For Sinhala and Kirundi there are two options to account for the variation in verbal morphology:

   A. FocP is only there when there is (Sinhala) or isn't (Kirundi) term focus, and if FocP is present it always spells out as its respective morphology;

   B. FocP is always there, and its form depends on what goal this probe finds: if it does not find a [+Foc] goal it takes a deafult and spells out as -a (Sinhala) or -ra- (Kirundi); if it does find a [+Foc] goal it spells out as –e (Sinhala) or zero (Kirundi). This crucially needs to allow probing/agreement to fail without crashing the derivation (Preminger 2009, in press).

3. Less transparent head-marked term focus (but still FocP)

• Makhuwa also has conjoint-disjoint alternation, but it does not have a simple -ra- morpheme:

Makhuwa (N. Mozambique, Bantu P31, van der Wal 2009, 2011)

(3)   CJ   ki-**n**-lépá epapheló   DJ   ki-**náá**-lépa   'I write (a letter)'

            ki-lep-**alé** epapheló   k-**oo**-lépa   'I have written (a letter)'

            k-**aa**-lépá epapheló   k-**aánáa**-lépa   'I wrote (a letter)'

            k-**aa**-lep-**álé** epapheló   k-**aahí**-lépa   'I had written (a letter)'

Furthermore: no final focus but Immediate After Verb focus position (cf. Watters 1979), where IAV means after the *conjoint* form. There is no evidence for movement or extraposition of objects.

(4)   a.   CJ   ni-m-váhá   maatsí enúni
                    1PL-PRES.CJ-give 6.water 10.birds
                    'we give the birds *water*'

b.　CJ　ni-m-váhá　　　enuní　maátsi
　　　　1PL-PRES.CJ-give　10.birds　6.water
　　　　'we give the *birds* water'

(5)　a.　CJ　Maríyá　o-m-vanh-é　　　　　[Apútáálá　paáhí]　ekamítsa
　　　　　　1.Maria　1SM-1OM-give-PERF.CJ　1.Abdallah　only　9.shirt
　　　　　　'Maria gave only Abdallah a shirt'

　　　b.　CJ　* Maríyá　o-m-vanh-é　　　　　[ekamitsá]　[Apútáálá　paáhi]
　　　　　　 1.Maria　1SM-1OM-give-PERF.CJ　9.shirt　　　1.Abdallah　only
　　　　　　int. 'Maria gave only Abdallah a shirt'

- Assuming a position of FocP around TP like above, Foc head probes, and unlike Kirundi the DP needs to be specified not just privative [Foc] but two values [-Foc] and [+Foc]:
  - if first DP it sees is [+Foc] it will take value [+Foc] → spell-out = conjoint
  - if first DP is [-Foc], it will take value [-Foc] → spell-out = disjoint
- This means that:
  - the Foc head, wherever it is, is spelled out at once together with the rest of verbal morphology (assuming DM and phasal spell-out this should be possible);
  - difference Sinhala/Rundi/Makhuwa is in movement trigger on Foc head: respectively optional, obligatory, absent;
  - under relativized minimality only the highest DP in post-conjoint IAV can be (and will be) in focus.
- However, assuming UTAH and VISH, the highest DP will always be the external argument (EA, subject)! Sinhala and Kirundi: a nonfocus DP has no Foc feature and will be skipped as goal. Makhuwa: more problematic, as subject never focused in IAV but needs cleft. So a DP can be specified [+/- Foc], or remain unspecified with EA always being unspecified (why? inherent topicality?).
- Alternative 1: no UTAH, but initial merge of arguments is flexible and Foc DP merges higher (but why?).
- Alternative 2: variation in height of FocP, which in Makhuwa is lower than vP. The Foc DP does move to its specifier, ending up in a structurally determined IAV (Van der Wal 2006).

Interlude: intransitives
What happens in these scenarios if the verb is intransitive?
  - scenario 1: subject is [Foc] and stays post-verbal, valuation is [Foc] and verb spells out as conjoint form (and see above trouble for subject focus)
  - scenario 2: an adverb is [Foc] –idem as option 1 (see (6))
  - scenario 3: if no suitable goal is found (because S is not specified for focus and there are no objects), the default will be [-Foc], which spells out as disjoint

Ha (Tanzania, Bantu J66, Harjula 2004:167)
(6)　a.　CJ　ba-rima　　　ibiharagi
　　　　　　2-cultivate　beans
　　　　　　'they cultivate beans'

　　　b.　CJ　ba-rima　　　kwa　　　Tunguhore
　　　　　　2-cultivate　17.CONN　Tunguhore
　　　　　　'they cultivate at Tunguhore's'

4. Indirect morphological marking (and unlikely FocP)
'Same' conjoint-disjoint alternation found in Zulu:

Zulu (South Africa, Bantu S42, Buell 2006: 10)
Present tense
(7) a. CJ Ba-cul-a   ingoma.
             2SM-sing-FS 9.song
             'They sing a song, they are singing a song.'

     b. DJ Ba-**ya**-cul-a.
             2SM-DJ-sing-FS
             'They sing, they are singing.'

- Difference with Sinhala/Kirundi/Makhuwa: no clear exclusive/constrastive focus reading after conjoint form, but underspecified as either non-topical or narrow focus. Especially clear in subject inversion:

(8)   Ku- cula   a- bafana.
         17SM-sing.CJ DET- 2.boys
         a. 'The BOYS are singing.'
         b. 'There are boys singing.'
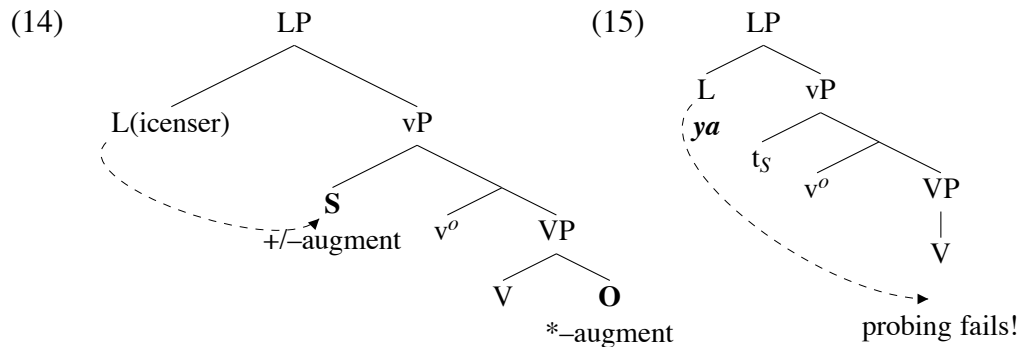   (Buell 2006:13)

- Conjoint form is also found before 'unfocussable' elements. Matengo conjoint-disjoint alternation has 'unpaired' tenses: simple present tense is only conjoint, which means that it needs a following element. But a dummy is enough to license the conjoint form: this is the strategy for intransitive predicates. IAV is filled either with a cognate object or with the infinitive of that verb, following a dummy auxiliary:

Matengo (SW Tanzania, Bantu N13, Yoneda 2009)
(9) a. CJ   n-henga   lihengu
              1SG.SM-work   5.work
              'I worked (work) today'

     b. CJ   * n-henga
              1SG-work

(10) a. CJ   Maria   ju-tenda   ku-pomulela
              1.Maria 1SM-do   15-rest
              'Maria is resting'

     b. CJ   * Maria ju-pomulel-a

- Which DP has the [Foc] feature in a presentational construction (8) or 'dummy conjoint' (9)?
- If there is a Foc head, it spells out as conjoint whether it finds a [-Foc] DP or [+Foc] DP or even an unspecified DP, as long as there is an overt following element.
- Morphology in these languages is NOT sensitive directly to focus, but rather to constituency (Buell 2006).
- So either
     1. the probe does not have a semantic specification here, or
     2. we account for it in a representational model.

- **Option 1** has been proposed for Zulu by Halpert (2012, to appear), who posits a L(icenser)P above vP. This probes its c-command domain, and spells out as disjoint if it does not find anything.

(14)

LP
- L(icenser) --- vP
  - S +/–augment
  - v^o --- VP
    - V --- O *–augment

(15)

LP
- L *ya* --- vP
  - t_S
  - v^o --- VP --- V

probing fails!

- However, Halpert has to assume counter cyclic probing (referring to Holmberg and Hróarsdóttir 2004), i.e. LP only probes after movement out of the vP: "movement of an element bleeds probing of that element, yielding a pattern that appears to hold only on the surface".

(20) **Nominals that leave *vP* trigger disjoint morphology**

a. uSipho$_i$ u- **ya**- pheka
   1Sipho 1s- YA- cook

   'Sipho is cooking.'

b. iqanda$_k$ uSipho$_i$ u-**ya**-li-pheka   t$_i$ t$_k$
   5egg   1Sipho 1S-YA-5O-cook

   'As for the egg, Sipho is cooking it.'

(21) **Appearance of disjoint morphology**

Step 1: SUBJ moves   Step 2: L fails to find a target

SUBJ ...
- LP
  - L --- vP
    - <SUBJ> v^o --- VP --- V^0

SUBJ ...
- LP
  - L *ya* --- vP
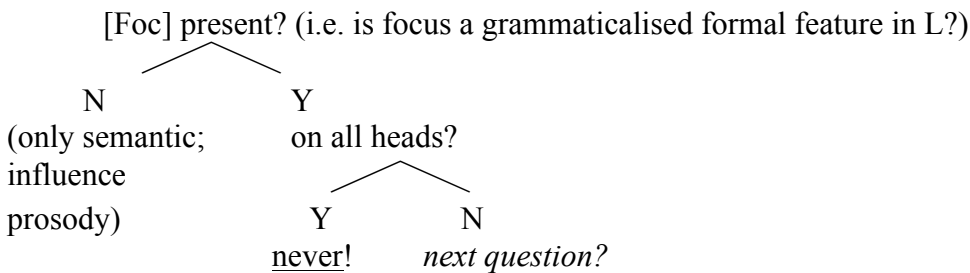   - <SUBJ> v^o --- VP --- V^0
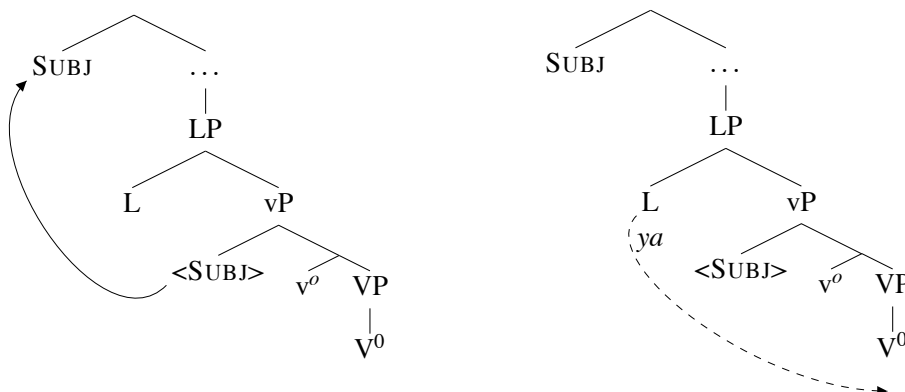
- **Option 2** is pursued for Zulu by Cheng and Downing (2012) to account for the IAV position.[1] They argue that in Zulu the focus DP is in-situ (not in specFocP).
- Assuming that
  A. Focus must be in prominent position (cf. Samek-Lodovici 2005),
  B. crosslinguistically, prominence is defined with reference to the highest phrase within a minimal verbal domain (Kratzer & Selkirk 2007),
  Cheng and Downing propose an Optimality Theoretic analysis of the IAV position with constraints mapping syntactic structure, phonological phrase boundaries and information structure.
- The conjoint-disjoint morphology would be determined on the basis of the representation after various movements (see Halpert's counter-cyclic timing to derive 'only surface'!): if an overt element is present within vP → conjoint; if V is final in vP → disjoint.

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[1] See also a general account in e.g. Slioussar (2007), as applied in van der Wal (2009), Reinhart 2006, and papers in Neeleman & Kucerova (2012), Neeleman & Vermeulen (2012).

- Buell (2006: 29): "The analysis also suggests revisiting other languages, such as Rundi, in which the correlation between the conjoint/disjoint alternation seems more clear-cut, to determine whether their alternations, too, could be accounted for without direct reference to focus."

5. Discussion
- Similarly looking focus strategies can be very different underlyingly and may require a different model (derivational/representational, or syntax-internal/interface-based).
- Relation with Case? (Halpert 2012, to appear)
- How can we account for the fact that the conjoint-disjoint morphological marking is only present in a restricted number of tenses?
- Variation possibly found in
    - whether Foc is grammaticalised at all
    - whether it is a. forms its own head ('feature scattering') or b. a subfeature of another head
    - for a: how high/low this projection is, and whether it also has a movement trigger (EPP feature)
    - for b: which heads have the feature → this can even be set with respect to other features, e.g. not all T heads have [Foc] but only [basicT]/[unmarked mood]/?
- If [Foc] is a subfeature, perhaps all languages have an "LP", which in some languages (Sinhala/Kirundi/Makhuwa) has [uFoc] and in some it does not.
- How can this be modeled in ReCoS terms? (see Ian Roberts' talk tomorrow)

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        [Foc] present? (i.e. is focus a grammaticalised formal feature in L?)

        N                   Y
(only semantic;       on all heads?
influence
prosody)              Y        N
                    never!   next question?
```

- Other languages with HMTF: Yom (Gur, Fiedler ms.), Chin (Tibeto-Burman, Osborne 1975) and the puzzling Mbuun:

Mbuun (DRC, Bantu B87, Bostoen & Mundeke 2012)
- Subject marker for class 1 (not other classes) varies with focus
- Information structure also influences word order: basic SVO, object focus SOV, subject focus & passive OSV, adjunct focus in-situ SVO

Table 1: The behaviour of Class 1 subject markers

	past/perfect(ive)[7]	Other tenses/aspects
no argument focus	ká-	á-
object focus	ká-	ká-
non-object focus	á-	á-

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(24a)   mpfúm   ná   ká-wó-ból?   S O V
         president who SM_1-PST-hit
         'Whom did the president hit?'

(24b)   mpfúm   ná   á-wó-ból?   O S V
         president who SM_1-PST-hit
         'Who hit the president?'

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(20a)   mpfúm   á-ker-loon   bú-l
         president SM_1-FUT-repair NP_{14}-country
         'The president will rebuild the country.'

(20b)   bá-ná   ká-ker-bú-loonne?
         NP_2-who SM_1-FUT-OM_{14}-repair.APPL
         '**For whom** will he rebuild it?'

(20c)   á-mpúr   ká-ker-bú-loonne.
         NP_2-poor SM_1-FUT-OM_{14}-repair.APPL
         'He will rebuild it **for the poor**.'

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