

Emphatic Interpretations of Object Marking in Bantu Languages

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Abstract

This paper investigates emphatic interpretations of object marking in various Bantu languages. We focus on Lubukusu (spoken in Kenya) and Cinyungwe (spoken in Mozambique) in particular, but we also report initial evidence from other Bantu languages (mainly Tiriki, Wanga, and Ikalanga). In these languages, OM-doubling—the co-occurrence of an object marker with a lexical DP object—is infelicitous in neutral pragmatic contexts. However, we show that certain contexts make OM-doubling possible. In these contexts, OM-doubling constructions receive particular emphatic interpretations that are very different from interpretations of non-doubling object marking constructions. We identify at least four types of these interpretations: verum, mirativity, exhaustivity, and intensity. We show that emphatic interpretations of OM-doubling are widespread among Bantu languages, and we provide strategies for identifying and analyzing them. While this paper is primarily descriptive, we discuss a possible analysis of these interpretations as conventional implicatures, influenced by recent work on a similar range of emphatic interpretations arising from focus fronting in Indo-European languages.

1 Introduction

This paper explores the interpretation of object markers (OMs) in various Bantu languages.¹ We focus primarily on Lubukusu (E31c), which is spoken in western Kenya and eastern Uganda, and Cinyungwe (N43), which is spoken in Mozambique (Guthrie, 1948). We show that the co-occurrence of OMs with their corresponding DP objects (OM-doubling, i.e., clitic-doubling) is associated with a range of previously unreported emphatic interpretations.

These findings are impactful in multiple domains. First, we report novel data aggregated from ongoing projects to show that emphatic interpretations of OM-doubling are widespread and central to the nature of OM-doubling. Second, we show that Bantu OM-doubling replicates a range of emphatic interpretations that have been associated with focus fronting in Indo-European languages, suggesting that there is some cross-linguistic consistency in focus-associated emphatic interpretations. Finally, this project demonstrates the importance of accounting for these kinds of emphatic interpretations when analyzing OMs and related phenomena.

1.1 Object markers (OMs)

An object marker is a morpheme within the Bantu verb form that refers to an object in the sentence. Basic examples of object marking in Lubukusu and Cinyungwe are shown below in (1) and (2).

- | | | |
|-----|---|------------------|
| (1) | a. N-á-βon-a paapá.
1SG.SM-REM.PST-see-FV 1father
‘I saw father.’
b. N-á- mu -βon-a.
1SG.SM-REM.PST-1OM-see-FV
‘I saw him.’ (Sikuku et al., 2018, 366) | Lubukusu |
| (2) | a. Baba a-da-phik-a ci-mbamba.
1father 1SM-PST-cook-FV 7-beans
‘Father cooked beans.’
b. Baba a-da- ci -phik-a.
1father 1SM-PST-7OM-cook-FV
‘Father cooked them (beans).’ (Langa da Câmara et al., 2021, i) | Cinyungwe |

¹The Lubukusu data throughout this paper was provided by Justine Sikuku, Cinyungwe data by Crisófia Langa da Câmara, Tiriki data by Kelvin Alulu, Wanga data by Alfred Anangwe, and Ikalanga data by Rose Letsholo.

Bantu languages vary in terms of how many OMs can appear on the verb (Marlo, 2015; Marten et al., 2007). Lubukusu allows only a single OM. As (3) shows, either the structurally higher or lower object in a ditransitive can be represented with an object marker, but not both—regardless of the order of the OMs.

- (3) a. N-á-a wéékésá síi-tabu. **Lubukusu**
 1SG.SM-REM.PST-give.FV 1Wekesa 7.7-book
 ‘I gave Wekesa the book.’
 b. N-á-(mu-) a síi-tabu.
 1SG.SM-REM.PST-1OM-give.FV 7.7-book
 ‘I gave him the book.’
 c. N-á-(si-) a wéékésá.
 1SG.SM-REM.PST-7OM-give.FV 1Wekesa
 ‘I gave it to Wekesa.’
 d. *N-á-(mu-) (si-) a.
 1SG.SM-REM.PST-1OM-7OM-give.FV
 Attempted: ‘I gave it to him.’
 e. *N-á-(si-) (mu-) a.
 1SG.SM-REM.PST-7OM-1OM-give.FV
 Attempted: ‘I gave it to him.’ (Sikuku et al., 2018, 406)

In Cinyungwe too, only one OM is permitted on the verb, as shown in (4). However, Cinyungwe is also more restrictive than Lubukusu: in a pragmatically neutral context, only the structurally higher object (in this case, *akazi* ‘women’) can be acceptably represented with an object marker.²

- (4) a. Kapenu a-ndza-gas-ir-a a-kazi moto. **Cinyungwe**
 Kapenu 1SM-FUT-start.fire-APPL-FV 2-women 3.fire
 ‘Kapenu will start fire for the women.’
 b. Kapenu a-ndza-(wa-) -gas-ir-a moto.
 Kapenu 1SM-FUT-2OM-start.fire-APPL-FV 3.fire
 ‘Kapenu will start fire for them.’
 c. #Kapenu a-ndza-(wu-) -gas-ir-a a-kazi.
 Kapenu 1SM-FUT-3OM-start.fire-APPL-FV 2-women
 ‘Kapenu will start it for the women.’
 d. *Kapenu a-ndza-(wu-) (wa-) gas-ir-a.
 Kapenu 1SM-FUT-3OM-2OM-start.fire-APPL-FV
 Attempted: ‘Kapenu will start it for them.’ (Langa da Câmara et al., 2021, iii)

We present these patterns not only to illustrate that multiple OMs on a verb are ungrammatical in Lubukusu and Cinyungwe, but also to provide examples of (non-doubling) OMs behaving like pronouns. As we show in later sections, however, the range of interpretations of object marking is much broader than these initial examples suggest. Specifically, various emphatic interpretations arise from OM-doubling constructions in both languages, which are introduced in §1.2.

1.2 OM-doubling

Some Bantu languages allow OM-doubling, where an OM co-occurs with its corresponding lexical DP object. This type of co-occurrence is not unique to the Bantu language family; clitic doubling has also been identified in, for

²Note that (4c) is infelicitous but not ungrammatical; in a context where the structurally higher object is focused, this sentence is acceptable.

example, Spanish (Anagnostopoulou, 2017), Amharic (Kramer, 2014), Inuktitut (Yuan, 2019), and Greek (Philippaki-Warbuton et al., 2004). The possibility of doubling is a potential diagnostic for whether OMs/clitics in a particular language are incorporated pronouns or agreement morphemes (Kramer, 2014; Baker and Kramer, 2018; Sikuku and Diercks, 2021). This is because, if an OM is a pronoun, it is an object of the verb; it arose not through agreement but through movement and incorporation into the verb form. Therefore, the OM should be in complementary distribution with an *in situ* lexical DP object.³

In Lubukusu and Cinyungwe, OM-doubling is typically infelicitous in neutral pragmatic contexts, unless there is a prosodic break (,) between the verb and the OM-doubled object. This prosodic break is often analyzed as signaling that the object is outside vP (Cheng and Downing, 2009; Zeller, 2015; Sikuku et al., 2018; Langa da Câmara et al., 2021). This suggests that OM-doubling where the doubled object is *in situ* is impossible in neutral pragmatic contexts in both languages. (5) and (6) below are examples of OM-doubling in Lubukusu and Cinyungwe with a prosodic break.

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| <p>(5) N-á-ki- bon-a , ée-m-bwa .
 1SG.SM-REM.PST-9OM-see-FV 9-dog
 ‘I saw it, the dog.’ (Sikuku et al., 2018, 368)</p> | Lubukusu |
| <p>(6) Baba a-da-ci- phik-a , ci-mbamba .
 1father 1SM-PST-7OM-cook-FV 7-beans
 Approximately: ‘Father cooked beans.’ (Langa da Câmara et al., 2021, ii)</p> | Cinyungwe |

However, certain pragmatic contexts make OM-doubling without a prosodic break possible in both languages. OM-doubling in these contexts is associated with various emphatic interpretations. In monotransitive constructions, these emphatic interpretations often (though not exclusively) apply to the whole predicate, not a single element, as shown in (7) and (8) below.

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| <p>(7) N-aa-βu- l-íílé βúu-suma .
 1SG.SM-PST-14OM-eat-PFV 14.14-ugali
 ‘I DID eat the ugali!’ (Sikuku et al., 2018, 360)</p> | Lubukusu |
| <p>(8) Baba a-da-ci- phik-a ci-mbamba dzulo.
 1father 1SM-PST-7OM-cook-FV 7-beans yesterday
 ‘Father really/certainly COOKED THE BEANS YESTERDAY.’ (Langa da Câmara et al., 2021, v)</p> | Cinyungwe |

Importantly, emphatic interpretations are required for OM-doubling without a prosodic break to be licit. In neutral discourse contexts, OM-doubling constructions such as (7) and (8) are unacceptable in both Lubukusu and Cinyungwe.

1.3 A roadmap of this paper

The goal of this paper is to outline our ongoing realization about the role that emphatic/expressive interpretations play in the grammar of object marking constructions in Bantu languages. We restrict ourselves to a descriptive-analytical discussion for the most part, leaving a more abstract and formal analysis for another time. There is a broad range of emphatic interpretations of OM-doubling. These interpretations include verum (emphatic confirmation that information is true), mirativity (expression of surprise toward information), reprimands (emphasis that information is obvious), exhaustivity (emphasis that only one element is relevant), and intensity (emphasis on amount or extent).

In §2, we review previous work on focus-associated emphatic interpretations similar to the ones we are observing with Bantu object marking, focusing in particular on work on Romance and Indo-European focus fronting. In §3, we include a second brief literature review addressing previous work on interpretations of OM-doubling in

³A pronominal incorporation analysis does not, however, predict that an OM cannot appear in a sentence with a DP object that has been dislocated out of the vP.

Bantu languages. In §4, we present verum interpretations of OM-doubling that we have observed in Lubukusu and Cinyungwe. §5, §6, and §7 do the same for mirative, exhaustive, and intensity interpretations, respectively. §8 presents initial evidence of emphatic interpretations in additional Bantu languages: Tiriki, Wanga, Ikalanga, Rukiga, and Zulu. In §9, we offer suggestions for identifying and analyzing emphatic interpretations of object marking. §10 outlines a potential analysis of the patterns discussed in this paper, based on conventional implicatures, and concludes.

2 Focus-associated emphatic interpretations in previous work

This work is heavily influenced by recent work on emphatic interpretations of focus fronting (FF), or the movement of a focused constituent to a position at the left periphery of the sentence, in Romance and Indo-European languages (Cruschina, 2012, 2019a,b, 2021; Bianchi et al., 2016, 2015). FF in Spanish and Italian is often linked with contrastive focus, whereas non-contrastive focus is expected to appear postverbally. This pattern is shown below for Italian, where (9) is an example of postverbal new information focus (considered non-contrastive) and (10) is an example of the fronting of corrective focus (considered contrastive).

- (9) A: Che cosa avete visto ieri allo zoo? Italian
 what have.2PL seen yesterday at-the zoo
 ‘What did you see yesterday at the zoo?’
 B: Abbiamo visto **un tigre**.
 have.1PL seen a tiger
 ‘We saw a tiger.’ (Cruschina, 2021, 6)
- (10) A: Martina, tuo padre mi ha detto che avete visto un leone ieri allo zoo. Italian
 ‘Martina, your father told me that you saw a lion yesterday at the zoo.’
 B: **Un tigre** abbiamo visto, non un leone.
 a tiger have.1PL seen not a lion
 ‘We saw a tiger, not a lion.’ (Cruschina, 2021, 6–7)

In contrast to this view of FF as related to a contrastive/non-contrastive dichotomy, Cruschina (2021) observes that some studies have reported instances of FF with non-contrastively focused constituents. He therefore argues against a binary distinction between contrastive and non-contrastive focus; instead, all types of focus involve contrast to varying degrees. He identifies several types of focus ranging from lowest to highest contrast: information focus, exhaustive focus (a subtype of information focus), mirative focus, and corrective focus. According to Cruschina (2021), languages are more likely to permit FF with types of focus with a higher degree of contrast.

The table in (11) shows the availability of different types of emphatic interpretations of FF in certain languages, as identified by Cruschina (2021). Most relevant for our purposes is the observation that a range of emphatic interpretations—similar to the ones we are finding with OM-doubling in Bantu languages—arises from FF in a different family of languages. In the remainder of this section, we provide an overview of these interpretations of FF in the languages in (11).

- (11) Availability of focus fronting with different types of focus (Cruschina, 2021)

	information focus	exhaustive focus	mirative focus	corrective focus
French			✓	
Italian/Spanish			✓	✓
Hungarian		✓	✓	✓
Sicilian/Sardinian	✓		✓	✓

The first type of focus listed in the table, information focus, involves contrasting new information with “a contextually open set” (Cruschina, 2021, 5). Cruschina discusses information focus in the context of answers to *wh*-questions. Among the languages under consideration, only Sicilian and Sardinian permit FF with information focus. (12) is an

example of information focus fronting in Sicilian. (See (9) above for an example of postverbal information focus in Italian, a language that does not permit FF in this context.)

- (12) A: Unni ti nni jisti airi sira? **Sicilian**
 where you there.from went.2SG yesterday evening
 ‘Where did you go last night?’
 B: **Au cinema** jivu.
 to-the cinema went.1SG
 ‘I went to the cinema.’ (Cruschina, 2016, 605)

Exhaustive focus, a subtype of information focus, involves an additional layer of meaning: the exclusion of any alternatives. Hungarian, but none of the other languages in (11), permits exhaustive readings of focus fronting, as shown in (13) below.

- (13) Mary **egy kalapot** nézett ki magának. **Hungarian**
 Mary a hat.ACC pick.PST.3SG out herself.ACC
 ‘It was (only) a hat that Mary picked for herself.’ (É. Kiss, 1998, 249)

The third type of focus listed in (11) is mirative focus, which emphasizes information that is “particularly surprising or unexpected” compared to a set of likelier alternatives (Cruschina, 2021, 9). Cruschina identifies FF with this type of focus in each of the languages under study; an example from French is provided in (14).

- (14) **Trois heures** il avait de retard, le train! **French**
 three hours it had of delay the train
 ‘The train was delayed by three hours!’ (Abeillé et al., 2008, 2361)

Although mirative focus is typically associated with information being surprising to a speaker, there is evidence of mirative meanings having a broader range; crosslinguistically, they sometimes overlap with reprimand meanings (Aikhenvald, 2012; Trotzke, 2017; Frey, 2010; Cruschina, 2021). There are several different ways to think about reprimand interpretations. First, they can be understood as instances where a proposition is considered surprising or unexpected from the addressee’s perspective rather than the speaker’s perspective. This is consistent with Aikhenvald (2012)’s observation that each type of mirative meaning (shown in (15)) “can be defined with respect to (a) the speaker, (b) the audience (or addressee), or (c) the main character” (Aikhenvald, 2012, 473).

- (15) Range of mirative meanings (Aikhenvald, 2012, 473)
 a. sudden discovery, sudden revelation or realization;
 b. surprise;
 c. unprepared mind;
 d. counterexpectation;
 e. new information.

Reprimands can also be understood as instances where, from a speaker’s perspective, a proposition is particularly (or even most) likely out of a set of alternatives. As Trotzke (2017) explains, when a speaker uses a marked word order—for instance, fronting—to “state the obvious,” the emphatic interpretation “often has a reprimand character” (Trotzke, 2017, 34). An example of a reprimand reading from German is shown in (16). (16a) uses the standard word order and has a neutral interpretation; (16b) uses a fronting construction, resulting in an interpretation that this answer is obvious, because sleeping is an expected activity at night.

- (16) Was hast Du heute Nacht gemacht? **German**
 ‘What did you do last night?’
 a. Ich babe geSCHLAfen.
 I have slept.

- b. GeSCHLAFenhab ich! Was denn sonst? (‘What else?’)
(Frey, 2010, 1426); paraphrases are Trotzke’s (2017, 34)

A third way of thinking about reprimands is that, like standard mirativity, they convey the speaker’s surprise; however, this surprise is directed not at the information itself but at the fact that the addressee does not already know the information. In this paper, we treat reprimands as a subtype of mirativity, based on intuitions from the authors who are native speakers of Bantu languages that this is the case, as well as on the fact that reprimand interpretations, like surprise mirative interpretations, depend on a ranking of alternative propositions based on expectedness.

The final type of focus listed in the table in (11), corrective focus, involves explicitly contrasting the focused constituent with an alternative (Cruschina, 2021, 5). Cruschina (2021) identifies FF with corrective focus in each of the languages in (11) except for French. (17) below shows an example of corrective focus fronting in Spanish. The possibility of continuing the sentence by negating the alternative (*y no peras* ‘and not pears’) provides further evidence for its corrective interpretation.

- (17) **Manzanas** compró Pedro (y no peras). **Spanish**
apples bought.3sg Pedro and not pears
‘Pedro bought apples (and not pears).’ (Zubizarreta, 1999, 4239)

Cruschina (2021) proposes that the types of focus described above are introduced through conventional implicatures. Conventional implicatures are distinct from conversational implicatures in that they are semantic, not pragmatic—i.e., they are a “conventional” meaning. We discuss conventional implicatures in more detail in §9 and §10.

3 Previous work on interpretations of OM-doubling

This section provides a brief overview of previous work on the interpretative effects of OM-doubling in Bantu languages. In particular, we mention the interaction of OM-doubling with conjoint and disjoint patterns in §3.1 and the interaction of OM-doubling with givenness and topicality in §3.2.

3.1 Conjoint/disjoint patterns and OM-doubling

Conjoint and disjoint verb forms, which are present in many Bantu languages, mark the closeness of the relationship between a verb and the material that follows it (if any). The conjoint form indicates that this relationship is close, whereas the disjoint form indicates that it is less close or that there is no postverbal material (van der Wal and Hyman, 2017, 2).

Examples of conjoint/disjoint patterns from Kinyarwanda are shown in (18). In Kinyarwanda, the (unmarked) conjoint form is used when certain constituents follow the verb, such as an object, as in (18a), or an adjunct, as in (18c). The disjoint form is used when nothing follows the verb, as in (18b), or when the constituent that follows the verb has been moved and follows a prosodic break, as in (18d).

- (18) a. A-ba-áana ba-á-nyó-ye a-ma-tá. **Kinyarwanda**
AUG-2-child 2SM-REM-drink-PFV AUG-6-milk
‘The children drank milk.’ (Ngoboka and Zeller, 2017, 368)
b. A-ba-áana ba-á-ra-nyó-ye.
AUG-2-child 2SM-REM-DJ-drink-PFV
‘The children drank.’ (Ngoboka and Zeller, 2017, 370)
c. A-ba-áarimú ba-á-kór-ye néézá.
AUG-2-teacher 2SM-REM-work-PFV well
‘The teachers worked well.’ (Ngoboka and Zeller, 2017, 373)
d. A-ba-áarimú ba-á-ra-kó-ye *(,) ejó.
AUG-2-teacher 2SM-REM-DJ-work-PFV yesterday
‘Teachers worked, yesterday.’ (Ngoboka and Zeller, 2017, 372)

Conjoint and disjoint forms are often linked with focus. [Güldemann \(2003\)](#) notes that formally marked (disjoint) verb forms place emphasis on the positive truth value, which we analyze as verum emphasis in this paper. By contrast, formally unmarked (conjoint) verb forms place emphasis on the postverbal constituent.

In addition, and related to the connection between conjoint/disjoint forms and whether or not there is postverbal material inside νP , conjoint and disjoint forms often interact with object marking. In Zulu, for example, the conjoint form appears in a sentence like (19a) without an object marker, but the disjoint form is required in an OM-doubling sentence like (19b). This disjoint pattern is typically analyzed as the dislocation of the OM-doubled object out of νP , which is a focus domain in Zulu ([Van der Spuy, 1993](#); [Buell, 2005, 2006](#); [Halpert, 2016, 2017](#); [Zeller, 2012](#)). Similar patterns occur in many other Bantu languages that show conjoint/disjoint distinctions, including Tswana ([Creissels, 1996](#)) and Kinyarwanda ([Ngoboka and Zeller, 2017](#)).

- (19) a. Ngi-theng-a le moto. Zulu
 1SG.SM-buy-FV 9DEM 9.car
 ‘I’m buying this car.’
 b. Ngi-*(ya)-(yi)-theng-a le (moto).
 1SG.SM-DJ-OM9-buy-FV 9DEM 9.car
 ‘I’m buying (it) this car.’ ([Zeller, 2012, 222](#))

3.2 Givenness/topicality and OM-doubling

OM-doubling has also been linked to givenness and topicality. [Bax and Diercks \(2012\)](#) conclude that OM-doubling in Manyika Shona “is only felicitous in contexts where the object receives a non-focus interpretation” ([Bax and Diercks, 2012, 191](#)). For example, OM-doubling in (20b) is acceptable, because the context—the question in (20a)—makes the object *bhuku* ‘book’ familiar (and thus non-focused) information.

- (20) a. Tendai w-aka-ite-nyi nge bhuku? Manyika Shona
 1Tendai 1SM-PST-do-what with 5book
 ‘What did Tendai do with the book?’
 b. Tendai w-aka-(ri)-werenga (bhuku) nekukasika.
 1Tendai 1SM-PST-5OM-read 5book quickly
 ‘Tendai read the (particular) book quickly.’ ([Bax and Diercks, 2012, 191](#))

However, the same OM-doubling sentence is infelicitous in a context where the doubled object is focused. In (21), the focused constituent is the νP , which the doubled object falls within.

- (21) a. Tendai w-aka-ite-nyi? Manyika Shona
 1Tendai 1SM-PST-do-what
 ‘What did Tendai do?’
 b. Tendai w-aka-(#ri)-werenga (bhuku) nekukasika.
 1Tendai 1SM-PST-5OM-read 5book quickly
 ‘Tendai read the (particular) book quickly.’ ([Bax and Diercks, 2012, 191](#))

A similar pattern exists in Zulu. Focused phrases must appear within νP in Zulu, and as mentioned in §3.1, Zulu conjoint and disjoint patterns suggest that OM-doubled objects move out of νP . It follows that focused phrases cannot be OM-doubled in Zulu, and (22) shows that this is the case; the focused *wh*-phrase *iphi ingoma* ‘which song’ cannot be OM-doubled. [Zeller \(2015\)](#) analyzes the doubled object’s dislocation as the result of an Agree relation triggered by an anti-focus feature.

- (22) a. U-cul-e i-phi i-n-goma?] $_{\nu P}$ Zulu
 2SM-sing-PST 9-which AUG-9-song
 ‘Which song did you sing?’

- b. *U-[yi] cul-ile]_{VP} [i-phi i-n-goma] ?
 2SM-9OM-sing-PST 9-which AUG-9-song
 (Buell, 2008, 5)

Additionally, Mursell (2018) notes that OM-doubling in Swahili is usually unacceptable if the object to be doubled is modified by *pekee* ‘only’ and therefore part of the sentence’s focus. In (23), for instance, OM-doubling is possible in (23a), but (23b) is most natural without an object marker.⁴

- (23) a. Ni-na-[ki] penda [kipindi hiki] . Swahili
 1SG.S-PRS.PROG-7.OM-like 7.series 7.this
 ‘I like this series.’
 b. Ni-na-penda ku-angalia kipiki hiki pekee.
 1SG.S-PRS.PROG-like INF-watch 7.series 7.this only
 ‘I like watching only this series.’ (Mursell, 2018, 433)

However, if an object is a left peripheral topic, OM-doubling is obligatory. In left-topicalization, the object is dislocated to the left periphery and is interpreted as an aboutness topic. In (24), *maneo haya* ‘these words’ is a left peripheral topic, and object marking is required.

- (24) [Maneo haya] a-li-[ya] sema kwa sauti kubwa. Rosa a-li-*(ya)-sikia. Swahili
 6.words these 1.S-PST-6.OM-say with 9.voice 9.big Rosa 1.S-PST-6.OM-hear
 ‘He said the words loudly. Rosa heard them.’ (Seidl and Dimitriadis, 1997, 376)

Based on these and other patterns, Mursell (2018) proposes that OM-doubling in Swahili arises from agreement between a topic head at the periphery of vP and an object with a givenness feature.

4 Verum interpretations of Bantu object marking

The first type of emphatic interpretation of OM-doubling we address is verum. Cruschina (2021) does not include verum as a possible interpretation of focus fronting, but as we will demonstrate, verum interpretations of OM-doubling in Bantu languages are common. Verum-like meanings are often translated into English with the adverb *really* or emphatic *do*, as shown in (25).⁵

- (25) Alex DID eat my cookies!! English

They often involve a context where listeners are expressing doubt or disagreement and where a speaker is making a move to end a conversation or settle an issue (Sikuku et al., 2018; Gutzmann and Castroviejo Miró, 2011; Gutzmann et al., 2020). These interpretations are also often intuitively connected to speaker certainty/confidence.

4.1 Verum interpretations in Lubukusu

As noted in §1.2, OM-doubling is often judged unacceptable in Lubukusu, but Sikuku et al. (2018) found that verum contexts make doubling acceptable. (However, these are not the only contexts that facilitate OM-doubling in Lubukusu, contrary to the presumption in Sikuku et al. 2018; see §5.) Without an appropriate discourse context, OM-doubling sounds extremely infelicitous in Lubukusu, to the point of being ungrammatical. In a neutral context, it is often interpreted as unnecessarily argumentative, as if the speaker thinks the listener disagrees with them.

One example of a verum interpretation of OM-doubling in Lubukusu is that OM-doubling can be used to address listener doubt, as shown in (26).

⁴Mursell (2018) explains that OM-doubling in sentences like (23b) is exceptionally possible in “contrastive focus contexts.” Mursell’s (2018) approach to contrast is similar to Cruschina’s 2021 definition of corrective focus.

⁵We address the extent to which Bantu verum-like meanings are translatable into English in §10.

- (26) A: Lionéeli a-l-iilé kú-mú-chéele kwéeli? **Lubukusu**
 1Leonell 1SM-eat-PFV 3-3-rice really
 ‘Did Lionell really eat the rice?’
 B: Lionéeli a-(kú-) l-iile (kú-mú-chéele) .
 1Leonell 1SM-3OM-eat-PFV 3-3-rice
 ‘Lionell DID eat the rice.’ (Sikuku et al., 2018, 378–9)

OM-doubling in Lubukusu can also be used to address listener denial, as shown in (27) below.

- (27) A: Wéékésá se-k-aa-nyw-ééle ká-ma-lwá tá. **Lubukusu**
 1Wekesa NEG-1SM-PST-drink-PFV 6-6-beer NEG
 ‘Wekesa didn’t drink the beer.’
 B: Wéékésá k-aa-(ká-) nyw-ééle (ká-ma-lwá) !
 1Wekesa 1SM-PST-6OM-drink-PFV 6-6-beer
 ‘Wekesa DID drink the beer!’ (Sikuku et al., 2018, 383)

Additionally, OM-doubling in Lubukusu can be used as a move to end a conversation. This can be illustrated by (26) and (27) above. It would be largely infelicitous for the disagreements in these exchanges to continue after (26B) and (27B), because the second speaker’s use of OM-doubling is intended to settle the issue.

Another example of OM-doubling used as a move to end a conversation is shown below in the biblical story of Peter denying Jesus three times. In this particular context, OM-doubling is unacceptable in Peter’s first and second denials (28c and 29c) but is very natural in (30c), his third and final denial. When it occurs, it is a discourse move to end discussion on the issue. In principle, OM-doubling could be available in (29c), but it would then be infelicitous for the questioning to continue, because the use of OM-doubling is meant to settle the issue once and for all.

- (28) a. Bá-báá-ndú b-á-reeb-a pétero, “o-mány-ile ó-muu-ndu yu-no?” **Lubukusu**
 2-2-people 2SM-REM-PST-ask-FV 1Peter 2SG.SM-know-PFV 1-1-person 1-DEM
 ‘So people asked Peter, “Do you know this person?”’
 b. Pétero k-á-chiib-a, “see-mú-many-ile tá.”
 1Peter 2SM-REM-PST-answer-FV NEG.1SG.SM-1OM-know-PFV NEG
 ‘Peter answered, “I don’t know him.”’
 c. #“see-(mú-) many-ile (ó-muu-nd’u-yú) tá.”
 NEG.1SG.SM-1OM-know-PFV 1-1-person 1-DEM NEG
 ‘I DON’T know this person.’
- (29) a. B-á-mu-réeb-a luundi, “o-mány-ile ó-muu-ndu yu-no?”
 SM-REM-PST-1OM-ask-FV again 2SG.SM-know-PFV 1-1-person 1-DEM
 ‘They asked him again, “Do you know this person?”’
 b. Pétero k-á-chiib-a, “see-mú-many-ile tá.”
 1Peter 2SM-REM-PST-answer-FV NEG.1SG.SM-1OM-know-PFV NEG
 ‘Peter answered, “I don’t know him.”’
 c. #“see-(mú-) many-ile (ó-muu-nd’u-yú) tá.”
 NEG.1SG.SM-1OM-know-PFV 1-1-person 1-DEM NEG
 ‘I DON’T know this person.’
- (30) a. B-á-mu-réeb-a lw-á xáátaru, “o-mány-ile ó-muu-ndu yu-no?”
 2SM-REM-PST-1OM-ask-FV 11-ASSOC three 2SG.SM-know-PFV 1-1-person 1-DEM
 ‘They asked him a third time, “Do you know this person?”’

- b. Pétero k-á-chiib-a, “see-mú-many-ile tá.”
 1Peter 2SM-REM-PST-answer-FV NEG.1SG.SM-1OM-know-PFV NEG
 ‘Peter answered, “I don’t know him.”’
- c. “see-(mú-) many-ile (ó-muu-nd’u-yú) tá.”
 NEG.1SG.SM-1OM-know-PFV 1-1-person 1-DEM NEG
 ‘I DON’T know this person.’ (Sikuku et al., 2018, 380)

OM-doubling in Lubukusu can also be used to express speaker confidence even when affirming a previously mentioned proposition, as in (31) below.

- (31) A: Wéékésá se-k-aa-nyw-ééle ká-ma-lwá tá.
 1Wekesa NEG-1SM-PST-drink-PFV 6-6-beer NEG
 ‘Wekesa didn’t drink the beer.’
- B: Yéé, wéékésá se-k-aa-(ká-) nyw-ééle (ká-ma-lwá) tá.
 yes, 1Wekesa NEG-1SM-PST-6OM-drink-PFV 6-6-beer NEG
 (In agreement) ‘Yes, Wekesa didn’t drink the beer.’ (Sikuku et al., 2018, 383)

4.2 Verum interpretations in Cinyungwe

A common translation of verum interpretations in Cinyungwe is ‘I know what I’m talking about.’ OM-doubling in Cinyungwe, as in Lubukusu, is consistent with several diagnostics for verum meaning. The OM-doubling sentence in (33) is an appropriate response to each of the sentences in (32) but not out of the blue.

- (32) a. Father certainly didn’t cook the beans.
 b. Did Father really cook the beans?
 c. Father cooked the beans.

- (33) Baba a-da-(ci-) phik-a (ci-mbamba).
 1father 1SM-PST-7OM-cook-FV 7-beans
 ‘Father really/certainly cooked the beans.’

Cinyungwe

- Out of the blue: #
- In response to (32a): ✓ *Addressing listener denial*
- In response to (32b): ✓ *Addressing listener doubt*
- In response to (32c): ✓ *Affirmation of preceding truth value*

By contrast, a non-doubling version of the sentence is marginal or unacceptable in response to listener denial or doubt. It is acceptable out of the blue and as an affirmation of a previous assertion (but, in the latter context, communicates only agreement, not an additional layer of speaker certainty like the OM-doubling version of the sentence).

- (34) Baba a-da-phik-a ci-mbamba.
 1father 1SM-PST-cook-FV 7-beans
 ‘Father cooked the beans.’

Cinyungwe

- Out of the blue: ✓
- In response to (32a): ?? *Addressing listener denial*
- In response to (32b): # *Addressing listener doubt*
- In response to (32c): ✓ *Affirmation of preceding truth value*

Notably, as Langa da Câmara et al. (2021) show, object movement in Cinyungwe can appear independently of OM-doubling, and its interpretative effects are distinct from those of OM-doubling. A possible analysis is that movement is linked to corrective focus while OM-doubling is linked to verum (among other emphatic interpretations). A sentence with both OM-doubling and object movement results in a combination of these interpretations. In the following

example, only the final sentence (35B2) has an ending-the-conversation interpretation (one of the effects of verum) in addition to the corrective focus on *mafigu* ‘bananas’ (i.e., Kapenu bought mother bananas, not maize).

- (35) A1: Kapenu a-gul-ir-a mayi ci-manga.
 1Kapenu 1SM.PST-buy-APPL-FV 1mother 7-maize
 ‘Kapenu bought mother maize.’
- B1: Neye, Kapenu a-(#mu)- gul-ir-a **ma-figu** , (mayi) .
 no 1Kapenu 1SM.PST-(#1OM)-buy-APPL-FV 6-bananas 1mother
 ‘No, Kapenu bought mother BANANAS.’
- A2: Neye, Kapenu a-gu-lir-a **ci-manga** , mayi.
 no 1Kapenu 1SM.PST-buy-APPL-FV 7-maize 1mother
 ‘No, Kapenu bought mother MAIZE.’
- B2: Neye, Kapenu a-(mu)- gul-ir-a **ma-figu** , (mayi) .
 no 1Kapenu 1SM.PST-1OM-buy-APPL-FV 6-bananas 1mother
 ‘No, Kapenu really did buy mother BANANAS!’ (Langa da Câmara et al., 2021, xiv)

In (35B1), the sense is that it would be too argumentative or aggressive to OM-double the object at this point in the conversation. Speaker A has not proven themselves to be recalcitrant; they merely need a correction, and the focus interpretation generated by movement is sufficient. In (35A2), however, once Speaker A shows they are unwilling to assent to Speaker B’s assertion, the OM-doubling construction in (35B2) becomes very natural.

5 Mirative interpretations of Bantu object marking

As noted in §2, Cruschina (2021) includes mirativity as one of the conventional implicatures associated with focus fronting in Indo-European languages. Mirative interpretations convey that information is unexpected, surprising, or noteworthy (i.e., less likely than some alternative (Bianchi et al., 2016)). Mirativity may also include reprimand readings, which appear to have the opposite interpretation: that information is the most expected of potential alternatives (Aikhenvald, 2012; Trotzke, 2017; Frey, 2010; Cruschina, 2021).

5.1 Mirative interpretations in Lubukusu

OM-doubling in Lubukusu can be used without a verum interpretation or context to convey that a situation is surprising, as shown in (36) below.

- (36) a. *Context: Nafula loves milk and always drinks a lot of it.* **Lubukusu**
 Nafula a-(ka-) nyw-a-**kho** (ka-ma-bele) !
 1Nafula 1SM.PST-6OM-drink-FV-KHO 6-6-milk
 ‘Nafula drank milk JUST A LITTLE BIT!’ (Sikuku and Diercks, 2021, 271)
- b. *Context: Ugali is a staple food and culturally foundational. It is never wasted.*
 Wafula a-(bu-) mwat-a (bu-suma) !
 1Wafula 1SM-14OM-throw.out-FV 14-ugali
 ‘Wafula THREW OUT THE UGALI!’ (Sikuku and Diercks, 2021, 272)

However, if the situation is made expected (due to the context), OM-doubling is unacceptable without a verum interpretation:

- (37) a. *Context: A sick person is expected to lose their appetite, and this person already ate only a little yesterday.*
 Luno, o-mu-lwaale a-(#bu-) l-ile-kho (bu-suma) .
 today 1-1-sick.person 1SM-14OM-eat-PFV-KHO 14-ugali
 ‘Today, the sick person ate ugali (a little).’ (unacceptable without verum)
 (Sikuku and Diercks, 2021, 271)

- b. Context: *Wafula has been throwing out the ugali almost every day because his friends are not eating it.*
 Wafula a-#bu-mwat-a bu-suma luundi.
 1Wafula 1SM-14OM-throw.out-FV 14-ugali again
 ‘Wafula THREW OUT the ugali again.’ (*unacceptable without verum*)
 (Sikuku and Diercks, 2021, 272)

Mirative emphasis can fall on a particular constituent within the verb phrase, marking it as less likely than some alternative.

- (38) Context: *The beans were very tough and dry and were clearly going to require a lot of cooking to be edible.*

- A: W-a-teekh-a ka-ma-kanda **o-rieena**?
 2SG.SM-PST-cook-FV 6-6-beans 2SG-how
 ‘How did you cook the beans?’
 B: N-a-ka-teekh-a ka-ma-kanda **bwaangu**.
 1SG.SM-PST-6OM-cook-FV 6-6-beans quickly
 ‘I cooked the beans QUICKLY.’ (Sikuku and Diercks, 2021, 292)

Mirative emphasis can also fall on the whole sentence, if the proposition is surprising in its entirety. A mirative reading was available for (39) in March 2020, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Notably, (39) is a much less felicitous sentence presently.

- (39) Coronavirus e-li khe-e-ba-tiil-a ba-andu na ba-andu. **Lubukusu**
 Coronavirus 9-be PROG-9SM-2OM-catch-FV 2-person CONJ 2-person
 ‘Coronavirus is infecting all sorts of people!’ (Sikuku and Diercks, 2021, 302)

As discussed in §2, mirative meanings sometimes overlap with reprimand meanings, and this appears to be the case in Lubukusu.⁶ For example, OM-doubling is acceptable in (40), where the proposition may be unexpected from the addressee’s perspective, but from the speaker’s perspective, it is the most likely of the potential alternatives. The speaker may still be surprised, however—about the fact that they have been asked an obvious question.

- (40) Context: *I come home and there is dinner on the table. I ask, “Where did Wekesa cook the beans?”*
 Wekesa a-a-ka-tekh-el-a ka-ma-kanda **mu-chikoni**.
 1Wekesa 1SM-PST-6OM-cook-APPL-FV 6-6-beans 18-kitchen
 ‘Obviously, Wekesa cooked the beans IN THE KITCHEN.’

5.2 Mirative interpretations in Cinyungwe

OM-doubling in Cinyungwe can be used to convey that a situation is significant or surprising, i.e., that there is something ‘more’ going on than was originally stated. In (41B) below, this interpretation persists even without the modifier *mazinji* ‘many’.

- (41) A: Siriza a-da-dy-a ma-figu. **Cinyungwe**
 1Siriza 1SG-PERF-eat-FV 6-bananas
 ‘Siriza ate bananas.’
 B: Inde, tsono Siriza a-da-ma-dy-a ma-figu (ma-zinji).
 yes but 1Siriza 1SG-PERF-6OM-eat-FV 6-bananas 6-many
 ‘Yes, but Siriza ate MANY bananas.’

However, when an event is no longer noteworthy or unexpected, OM-doubling is unacceptable without a verum interpretation.

⁶For a brief discussion of why we approach reprimands as a subtype of mirativity, see §10.3.

- (42) *Context: Every time Siriza visits her grandmother, she eats many, many bananas, and always gets a stomach ache from eating so much. The most recent time this happened, someone said:*

Tani mu-n'dziw-a kale Siriza a-da-(#ma-) dy-a pomwe ma-figu ma-zinji .
as you-know-FV already 1Siriza 1SG-PERF-6OM-eat-FV again 6-bananas 6-many

'As you already know, Siriza ate many bananas again.' (OM-doubling unacceptable without verum)

As in Lubukusu, mirative emphasis in Cinyungwe can fall on a particular constituent within the verb phrase. For example, in most contexts with new information focus, non-doubling constructions are most natural. However, if the context makes the new information surprising or noteworthy as in (43), OM-doubling becomes natural.

- (43) *Context: The beans typically take a long time to cook, so it is surprising if they were cooked quickly.*

A: W-a-phik-a tani ci-mbamba?

2SG-PERF-cook-FV how 7-beans

'How did you cook the beans?'

B: Nd-a-ci- phik-a ci-mbamba mwakankulumize.

1SG-PERF-7OM-cook-FV 7-beans quickly

'I really cooked the beans QUICKLY.'

Mirative emphasis can also fall on an entire sentence, resulting in an interpretation that the whole event is unexpected.

- (44) *Context: A young man has married an older woman and brought her to see his family. His family is shocked and asks the young man the following question in front of his new wife.*

U-da-mu- lowol-a n-kazi umweyi?

2SG-PST-1OM-marry-FV 1-woman already

'You already married this woman?'

Also as in Lubukusu, mirative interpretations in Cinyungwe appear to include reprimand readings in addition to surprise readings. OM-doubling can be used to express a speaker's surprise at someone else's doubt or lack of knowledge. For example, in (45) below, the speaker finds the news that Siriza wrote the letter to be expected, even obvious, but the addressee, Siriza's father, does not. The speaker uses OM-doubling to reprimand the addressee for their doubt.

- (45) *Context: Siriza has started going to school. She is still learning to write small sentences, but the teacher always tells her mother that she is smart. Her parents decide to test her skills and ask her to write a letter. Siriza's father is not confident about her skills, but Siriza gets the top score. Her mother says:*

Nd-a-kuwuz-a canyi ine? Siriza a-da-li- kwani-a ku-nemba tsamba !

1SG-PERF-say-FV what I Siriza 1SG-PERF-5OM-did-FV 15-write 5.letter

'What did I tell you? Siriza wrote the letter!'

6 Exhaustive interpretations of Bantu object marking

Exhaustivity emphasizes that among a set of possible elements, only one is relevant, and is therefore often translated as 'only' in English (É. Kiss, 2009). Cruschina (2021) includes exhaustivity as one of the conventional implicatures associated with focus fronting in Indo-European languages (along with mirativity and others).

6.1 Exhaustive interpretations in Cinyungwe

So far, we have only encountered exhaustive interpretations of OM-doubling in Cinyungwe in a particular configuration of benefactive applicatives. In a benefactive applicative, OM-doubling the theme (the structurally lower object) places exhaustive emphasis on the recipient. In (46) below, the exhaustive interpretation persists even without *basi* 'only'. This interpretation seems distinct from verum, as this sentence could not be used in a verum context.

- (46) Baba a-da-ci-phik-ir-a Semo (basi) ci-mbamba mwakankulumize.
 1father 1SM-PST-7OM-cook-APPL-FV 1Semo only 7-beans quickly
 ‘Father cooked beans quickly for ONLY SEMO.’ (Langa da Câmara et al., 2021, xxiii)

However, verum interpretations can complicate diagnostics for exhaustivity. This is because many diagnostics for exhaustivity involve continuations that are ruled out by exhaustive readings—but verum sentences are moves by the speaker to end discussion, so adding continuations sounds infelicitous regardless.⁷ That said, as far as we can tell, exhaustive readings of OM-doubling only appear in the configuration noted in (46). At the time of writing, it is still unclear to us why exhaustive interpretations are limited to this very particular syntactic context.

6.2 Exhaustive interpretations in Lubukusu

To the best of our knowledge, exhaustive interpretations do not independently arise from OM-doubling in Lubukusu (in contrast to Cinyungwe). They can, however, appear as part of a mirative interpretation, i.e., if an exhaustive reading would be surprising or noteworthy. For example, (47) below has several possible emphatic interpretations that can include exhaustivity, but an exhaustive interpretation cannot arise independently of a mirative interpretation.

- (47) Ba-ba-ana ba-ba-kul-il-a ba-b-ebusi chi-ngubo. **Lubukusu**
 2-2-children 2SM-2OM-buy-APPL-FV 2-2-parents 10-clothes
 ‘The children bought the parents clothes.’
Available interpretations:
- OK: The children have never done this before. (mirative, not exhaustive)
 - OK: The children are so selfish that they only consider their parents and not other people. (mirative and exhaustive)
 - # statement of fact that clothes were purchased for only the parents (exhaustive, not mirative)

7 Intensity interpretations of Bantu object marking

Recently, we have observed a fourth distinct emphatic interpretation of OM-doubling: intensity, or emphasis that an amount is very large. This meaning is similar to ‘a lot’ or ‘many’ in English.

7.1 Intensity interpretations in Lubukusu

In addition to verum and mirative interpretations, OM-doubling in Lubukusu can be used to emphasise a large amount. For example, (48) below has a range of possible interpretations, which largely depend on the context in which it is uttered. Our focus here is on the final interpretation, intensity. This reading does not need to be contrary to expectation (as with mirative emphasis) or a confirmation of the event as a whole (verum). It simply emphasizes the amount of beer Wekesa drank.

- (48) Wekesa a-ka-nywa kamalwa . **Lubukusu**
 1Wekesa 1SM.PST-6OM-drink 6beer
 ‘Wekesa drank beer.’
Available interpretations:
- The sentence is an emphatic confirmation of the act. (verum)
 - It is a well-known fact that Wekesa does not drink, so seeing him drink is surprising. (mirative surprise)
 - It is a well-known fact that Wekesa is a drunkard, so any doubt is met with this sentence. (mirative reprimand)
 - The sentence expresses the sheer amount of alcohol consumed. (intensity)

⁷For examples of exhaustivity diagnostics, see §9.

It is reasonable to ask if the intensity reading is an independent interpretation or if it depends on an additional layer of meaning, such as an emotive or judgmental interpretation, which would be readily accessible in the context of someone drinking a great deal of alcohol. This does not appear to be the case, based on the possibility of an intensity reading of (49) below.

- (49) *Context: The speaker and addressee both know the amount of rice Maisha can consume if left unchecked.*

Maisha a-(ku-)lya (ku-mu-chele) .
 1Maisha 1SM-PST-3OM-eat 3-3-rice
 ‘Maisha ate (a lot of) rice.’

7.2 Intensity interpretations in Cinyungwe

Intensity interpretations of OM-doubling are also available in Cinyungwe. In an appropriate context, the OM-doubling sentence in (50) can receive an intensity reading.

- (50) *Context: Semo, who is not walking well, arrives home with his friend. Someone asks what happened, and Semo’s friend responds:*

Semo a-da-(li-)mw-a (bwadwa) .
 Semo 1SM-PST.PERF-5OM-drink-FV 5.beer
 ‘Semo drank (an extraordinary amount of) beer.’

However, it is unclear if intensity readings can arise completely independently of other emphatic interpretations, as appears to be possible in Lubukusu. In a sentence with the object *madzi* ‘water’ instead of *bwadwa* ‘beer,’ a more extensive pragmatic context is required for the intensity reading to arise.

- (51) *Context: Semo and his friend walked a long way to visit his grandmother. Along the way, they saw streams that they knew were unsafe to drink from. However, Semo was so thirsty that he drank from the stream anyway. Upon arriving, Semo feels sick, and his friend says the following sentence:*

Semo a-da-(ma-)mw-a (madzi) .
 Semo 1SM-PST.PERF-6OM-drink-FV 6.water
 ‘Semo drank (a lot of) water.’ (i.e., I am impressed by the amount of water he was drinking)

This may indicate that the intensity reading in Cinyungwe requires an extra layer of emotive content which is inherent when discussing beer but not when discussing water, but research is still underway.

8 Initial evidence from additional languages

This section presents initial evidence of emphatic interpretations of OM-doubling from five additional languages: Tiriki, Wanga, Ikalanga, Rukiga, and Zulu. For Lubukusu and Cinyungwe, although research is still ongoing and our syntactic and semantic analyses are not fully developed, we have a relatively clear sense of the different emphatic interpretations that arise from different syntactic configurations. For the languages in this section, the interpretations and corresponding configurations are much less clear, but some of this research is underway (e.g., [Colantes and Letsholo, 2022](#)).

8.1 Tiriki

Tiriki (JE413) is a Bantu language spoken in western Kenya and eastern Uganda. OM-doubling in Tiriki is only acceptable in neutral discourse contexts if the doubled object appears after a prosodic break, as shown in (52). The doubled object then receives an afterthought reading. However, other specific contexts can facilitate OM-doubling without this prosodic break.

- (52) A-(mu-) lol-i ??(,) (Ø-raisi). Tiriki
 1SM-1OM-see-FV.PST 1-president
 ‘He saw him, the president.’ (Liu, 2019, 2)

8.1.1 Verum interpretations

OM-doubling in Tiriki can be used to address listener doubt, a verum context. In (53A1), the OM-doubling version of the sentence is unacceptable, as previously shown in (52). However, in (53A2), after the addressee has questioned whether the event happened, OM-doubling without a prosodic break becomes acceptable.

- (53) Q1: Shina shi-kholekh-ang-a? Tiriki
 what 7SM-happen-PROG-FV
 ‘What’s happening?’
 A1: A-(??mu-) lol-i (Ø-raisi).
 1SM-1OM-see-FV.PST 1-president
 ‘He saw the president.’
 Q2: Toto?
 really
 ‘Really?’
 A2: A-(mu-) lol-i (Ø-raisi).
 1SM-1OM-see-FV.PST 1-president
 ‘He DID see the president!’ (Liu, 2019, 9)

8.1.2 Mirative interpretations

OM-doubling can also be used to emphasize that information is surprising or noteworthy, according to ongoing work by the Franco Liu and Kelvin Alulu. For example, in (54), the context makes the fact that Alulu ate ugali surprising.

- (54) *Context: Alulu has been sick and therefore hasn’t been eating anything. Today, Ebby reported with excitement:*
 Alulu a-(vu-) lil-e (vu-shuma) !
 Alulu 1SM-14OM-eat-FV.PST 14-ugali
 ‘Alulu ate ugali!’

Additionally, while (54) appears to be an example of emphasis on the vP or sentence as a whole, mirative emphasis can also fall on a smaller constituent, such as the manner adverbial in (55).

- (55) *Context: Michael is germophobic. But today, when Ebby put away his dishes after he finished eating ugali for dinner, she didn’t see any used utensils. Seeing the confusion on her face, Vusu commented:*
 Mikayili a-(vu-) lachil-e (vu-shuma) **na mi-khono**!
 Michael 1SM-14OM-eat-FV.PST 14-ugali with 6-hand
 ‘Michael ate ugali with hands!’

8.2 Wanga

Wanga (E32a) is a Bantu language spoken in Kenya. OM-doubling sentences in Wanga, as in the languages previously discussed, have different emphatic interpretations from non-doubling sentences. (56a) below has a neutral interpretation and is acceptable out of the blue, whereas (56b) is infelicitous out of the blue.

- (56) a. A-ba-na ba-tesh-ere o-mu-chele mungolobe. Wanga
 2-2-children 2SM-cook-PFV 3-3-rice yesterday
 ‘The children cooked rice yesterday.’

- b. #A-ba-na ba-ku- tesh-ere o-mu-chele mungolobe.
 2-2-children 2SM-3OM-cook-PFV 3-3-rice yesterday
 ‘The children cooked rice yesterday.’ (OM-doubling infelicitous out of the blue)

8.2.1 Verum and exhaustive interpretations

With appropriate pragmatic contexts, the available interpretations of an OM-doubling sentence such as (57), repeated from (56b) above, include both verum and exhaustive readings. This sentence can be used in an argument (a verum context), in response to listener denial. It can also be used to express that the cooked food was only rice (an exhaustive context). In both cases, the emphatic interpretation falls on the OM-doubled object itself.

- (57) A-ba-na ba-ku- tesh-ere o-mu-chele mungolobe. Wanga
 2-2-children 2SM-3OM-cook-PFV 3-3-rice yesterday
 ‘The children cooked the rice yesterday.’
Available interpretations:
- Another speaker claimed that it was not rice that the children cooked. (verum)
 - The children only cooked rice, not something else. (exhaustive)

8.2.2 Mirative interpretations

If the same OM-doubling sentence is used in response to a temporal question, as in (58) below, an exhaustive interpretation is still available. However, in this context, mirative interpretations are also available. The mirative emphasis can fall on the temporal adverb or on the verb phrase in general. (58A) can be used to express surprise that the children cooked the rice yesterday in particular (rather than another day) or that they cooked the rice at all.

- (58) Q: A-ba-na ba-tesh-ere o-mu-chele liina? Wanga
 2-2-children 2SM-cook-PFV 3-3-rice when
 ‘When did the children cook the rice?’
 A: A-ba-na ba-ku- tesh-ere o-mu-chele mungolobe.
 2-2-children 2SM-3OM-cook-PFV 3-3-rice yesterday
 ‘The children cooked the rice yesterday.’
Available interpretations:
- The children were busy yesterday and were not expected to finish their chores.
 - The children are very young (and therefore unlikely to cook rice).

8.3 Ikalanga

Ikalanga (S16) is a Bantu language spoken in Zimbabwe and Botswana. OM-doubling is possible in Ikalanga, provided that (a) there is an appropriate pragmatic context and (b) the OM-doubled object is moved outside vP. This object dislocation is indicated by a prosodic break. An example of OM-doubling in Ikalanga is shown in (59b). In response to the question in (59), two possible responses are a non-doubling construction without object movement (59a) or an OM-doubling construction with object movement (59b). (For details about the interpretation of (59b), see §8.3.4.)

- (59) W-aka-bon-a bana ibabaje be ikwele tshipi ya-ka pinda? Ikalanga
 SM1-PST-see-FV 2.child 2.DEM ASSC 7.school last week
 ‘Did you see those students last week?’
 a. A, nd-aka-bon-a bana ibabaje madekwe.
 no 1SM.SG-PST-see-FV 2.children 2.DEM yesterday
 ‘No, I saw those children yesterday.’

- b. A, nd-aka-ba- bon-a madekwe , bana ibabaje .
 no 1SM.SG-PST-2OM-see-FV **yesterday** 2.children 2.DEM
 ‘No, I saw those children YESTERDAY.’ (Colantes and Letsholo, 2022)

8.3.1 Verum interpretations

OM-doubling in Ikalanga can be used to address listener denial or doubt but is infelicitous out of the blue, consistent with verum interpretations.

- (60) a. Nchidzi didn’t drink the beer.
 b. Did Nchidzi really drink the beer?

- (61) Nchidzi w-a-gu- ngw-a , busukwa . **Ikalanga**
 Nchidzi 1SM-PST-14OM-drink-FV 14.beer
 ‘Nchidzi did drink it, the beer.’
 • Out of the blue: #
 • In response to (60a): ✓
 • In response to (60b): ✓
 (Colantes and Letsholo, 2022)

8.3.2 Mirative interpretations

A mirative interpretation of OM-doubling is also available in Ikalanga. (62) can be used to express surprise that the children ate the beans slowly rather than quickly. Here, the mirative emphasis appears to fall on the manner adverb *kabunako* ‘quickly.’

- (62) *Context: The beans were very tough, very dry, and were clearly going to require a lot of cooking to be edible.*
 Nd-a-dzi- bid-is-a **kabunako** , nyemba .
 1SM-10OM-cook-CAUS-FV quickly 10.beans
 ‘I cooked them QUICKLY, the beans.’ (Colantes and Letsholo, 2022)

In situations where an entire proposition is surprising, as in (63), doubling is less natural but not infelicitous.

- (63) *Context: The children hate okra and normally never ever eat it. This time, though, they do eat it.*
 ?Bana ba-ka-li- j-a ngebunya , delele .
 2.child 2SM-PST-5OM-eat-FV slowly 5.okra
 ‘The children ate the okra slowly.’ (Colantes and Letsholo, 2022)

8.3.3 Exhaustive interpretations

Exhaustive focus on a temporal adverb can facilitate OM-doubling in Ikalanga, as shown in (64). However, we have not yet determined if exhaustive readings are available without the word *koga* ‘only’.

- (64) Nd-aka-ba- bon-a **madekwe koga** , bana ibabaje . **Ikalanga**
 1SM.SG-PST-2OM-see-FV yesterday only 2.child 2.those
 ‘I saw those children ONLY YESTERDAY.’ (i.e., not any other day) (Colantes and Letsholo, 2022)

8.3.4 Corrective interpretations

Corrective focus on a temporal adverb can also facilitate OM-doubling in Ikalanga, as shown in (65), which is partially repeated from (59).

- (65) Q: W-aka-bon-a bana ibabaje be ikwele tshipi ya-ka pinda? Ikalanga
 SM1-PST-see-FV 2.child 2.DEM ASSC 7.school last week
 ‘Did you see those students last week?’
 A: A, nd-aka-(ba-) bon-a **madekwe**, (bana ibabaje).
 no 1SM.SG-PST-2OM-see-FV yesterday 2.children 2.DEM
 ‘No, I saw those children YESTERDAY.’ (Colantes and Letsholo, 2022)

8.4 Rukiga

In Rukiga (JE14), which is spoken in Uganda, OM-doubling appears to be linked to mirative and verum interpretations, as shown below in (66).

- (66) Mbiine y-aa-(ka-) teer-a (a-ka-ruuru). Rukiga
 1.Mbiine 1SG.SUBJ-N.PST-12OM-vote-FV AUG-12-vote
 ‘Mbiine voted.’ (Allen Asimwe, personal communication)
Available interpretations:
 • It is true, Mbiine voted.
 • Surprisingly, Mbiine voted. (He had vowed not to vote.)

Additionally, OM-doubling in Rukiga can appear in a sentence with the particle -o, a mirative marker. (67) is an OM-doubling sentence with this particle, and a range of emphatic interpretations are available. (The intonation may vary depending on the interpretation.)

- (67) Taata yaa-(bi-) teek-a (e-bi-himba) by-o! Rukiga
 1.Father 1SG.SBJ-8OM-cook-FV AUG-8-bean 8-MIR
 ‘Father cooked the beans.’ (Allen Asimwe, personal communication)
Available interpretations:
 • Father was not expected to cook the beans.
 • Indeed, father cooked the beans.
 • The beans were not properly cooked (ironically disapproving or even disappointed in the manner in which the beans were cooked).

8.5 Zulu

Zulu (S42) is one of the better-researched Bantu languages with regard to object marking (Adams, 2010; Buell, 2005, 2006; Cheng and Downing, 2009; Halpert, 2012; Van der Spuy, 1993; Zeller, 2012, 2014, 2015). In general, however, there has not been extensive discussion in the literature with regard to the types of emphasis we discuss in this paper. One exception is double right dislocation constructions, which are instances of both objects in a ditransitive moving outside vP. The objects can appear in either order, and the recipient is OM-doubled. Zeller (2015) reports that these constructions have verum-like interpretations. This is in contrast to other OM-doubling constructions, for which similar emphatic interpretations are not reported. (68) is an example of a double right dislocation construction. Note that both sentences in (68) include disjoint verb forms, which, as mentioned in §3.1, are required in OM-doubling constructions in Zulu.

- (68) a. Ngi-ya-(m-) theng-el-a (u-Sipho) u-bisi. Zulu
 1S-DIS-1.OM-buy-APPL-FV AUG-1a.Sipho AUG-11.milk
 ‘I AM buying milk for Sipho.’
 b. Ngi-ya-(m-) theng-el-a u-bisi (u-Sipho). Zulu
 1S-DIS-1.OM-buy-APPL-FV AUG-11.milk AUG-1a.Sipho
 ‘I AM buying milk for Sipho.’ (Zeller, 2015, 23)

9 Diagnosing emphatic interpretations

In this section, we offer several diagnostics to aid in identifying certain emphatic interpretations we discuss in this paper. Additionally, although this paper is primarily descriptive, in our ongoing work we are attempting to analyze OM-doubling constructions and their emphatic interpretations more formally, potentially as conventional implicatures. Therefore, we also include two important conventional implicature diagnostics in this section.

9.1 Identifying exhaustivity

There are a variety of diagnostics to distinguish exhaustivity from other types of emphasis, and we include two here. These examples come from [Hartmann and Zimmermann \(2007\)](#), who analyze the Hausa particle *nee/cee* as an exhaustivity marker. The first diagnostic, shown in (69), is the addition of an *also*-phrase. In Hausa, this addition is infelicitous if *nee/cee* follows a focused constituent in the sentence, because the focused constituent is interpreted exhaustively.

(69) also-phrase exhaustivity diagnostic

- A: Wàa ya daawoo dàgà Kano? Hausa
 who 3SG.REL.PERF return from Kano
 ‘Who returned from Kano?’
- B: #Musa nèe ya daawoo dàgà Kano dà kuma Haliimà cee ya daawoo dàgà Kano.
 Musa EXH 3SG.REL.PERF return from Kano and also Halima EXH 3SG.REL.PERF return from Kano
 ‘MUSA returned from Kano and HALIMA, too, returned from Kano.’
 ([Hartmann and Zimmermann, 2007](#), 252)

The second diagnostic is a mention-some environment. As (70) shows, *nee/cee* cannot follow the focused constituent in (70B) because the context has already established that multiple people passed the exam, not just Umaru.

(70) mention-some exhaustivity diagnostic

- Context: Speaker A knows that many students passed last year’s exam, but not which ones.*
- A: Kaa san wad’andà sukà ci jaĩrābāwaa? Hausa
 you know who.PL 3PL.REL.PERF eat exam
 ‘Do you know who passed the exam?’
- B: Ĩ, dàgà ciki Ûmarù #nee/ maa ya ci jaĩrābāwaa.
 yes from among Umaru EXH also 3PL.REL.PERF eat exam
 ‘Yes, among them UMARU passed the exam.’ ([Hartmann and Zimmermann, 2007](#), 253)

9.2 Identifying mirativity

Mirative meanings can be identified by setting up pragmatic contexts in which the information in a sentence will be unexpected, surprising, significant, or otherwise noteworthy to the addressee. Since this interpretation arises from the comparison of the uttered proposition with less likely one(s), one way of visualizing mirativity is to rank the alternatives based on their expectedness. A ranking of alternative propositions for the situation in (71) is shown in (72). The alternatives must have the same background content (i.e., Gabriel and Mary went somewhere on their honeymoon) but different focused information (i.e., where they went); this focus-background structure is shown in (73).

- (71) ¿Sabes qué?! ¡A las Maldivas fueron de luna de miel! Spanish
 know.PRS.2SG what to the Maldives go.PST.3PL of moon of honey
 ‘Guess what?! TO THE MALDIVES they went on honeymoon!’ ([Cruschina, 2019a](#), 138)

- (72) $[\lambda x. \text{went}(\text{gabriel}, \text{mary}, x)]$
 { p_1 Fueron *a Madrid* de luna de miel
 p_2 Fueron *a Roma* de luna de miel
 p_3 Fueron *a París* de luna de miel
 p_4 Fueron *a las Maldivas* de luna de miel
 ...
 p_n Fueron *al Polo Norte* de luna de miel }
 | - - focus - - |
 (Cruschina, 2019a, 140)

- (73) ¡**A las Maldivas** fueron de luna de miel!
 | - - - focus - - - | | - - - background - - - |
 (Cruschina, 2019a, 140)

There are two additional points to note here. First, it is not necessary for the miratively focused constituent to be the least likely in the set, simply for it to be less likely than at least one alternative. Second, according to Cruschina (2019a), these alternatives refer to the speaker and addressee’s knowledge; therefore, they are highly context-dependent and even person-dependent, and they do not need to be stated explicitly in the conversation.

We include additional diagnostics for mirativity identified by Cruschina (2019a) in §9.3.2 rather than here, because these diagnostics are also tests for conventional implicatures.

9.3 Identifying conventional implicatures

In ongoing work, we are investigating whether the emphatic readings facilitated by OM-doubling in Bantu languages are introduced through conventional implicatures. Unlike conversational implicatures, conventional implicatures are entailed (semantic), not context-dependent (pragmatic) meanings (Potts, 2005). This means that a speaker is committed to a conventional implicature and cannot deny it. Therefore, speaker non-deniability can be used as a diagnostic for conventional implicatures—but this can also be said of other entailed meanings (i.e., at-issue entailments and conventional presuppositions).

To illustrate this property, consider (74) and (75) below. In (74), the speaker’s use of the word *damn* creates a conventional implicature about their negative attitude toward the at-issue content of their utterance. It would be infelicitous (and contradictory) for the speaker to attempt to deny this implicated meaning. By contrast, in (75), the speaker can felicitously deny the conversational implicature that arises from their utterance.

- (74) a. The damn cat went out in the rain. English
 conventional implicature: The speaker feels negatively about the cat or the situation (the fact that it went out in the rain).
 b. #The damn cat went out in the rain, but I have no problem with that.
- (75) a. Mike has three tasks he forgot about. English
 conversational implicature: He has exactly three, not more.
 b. Mike has three tasks he forgot about... hey, let’s be honest, he has at least ten!
 (adapted from Potts 2005)

Another important property of conventional implicatures is multidimensionality. A conventional implicature occupies a different dimension of meaning from at-issue meaning. It can therefore be challenged by an addressee separately from the at-issue meaning. (Often, however, addressing the conventional implicature dimension is more complicated than addressing the at-issue dimension.) A conventional implicature can also be infelicitously used without making the entire sentence (including the at-issue meaning) false. This is, naturally, not true of at-issue entailments, nor is it true of conventional presuppositions.

For example, in (76), if Speaker B denies A’s statement with simple negation, as in (76B1), this is interpreted as negating the at-issue content of (76A), not the conventional implicature. However, Speaker B can challenge the conventional implicature independently, even while agreeing with the at-issue meaning, as (76B2) shows.

(76) A: The damn cat went out in the rain. **English**
 conventional implicature: The speaker feels negatively about the cat or the situation (the fact that it went out in the rain).

B1: No, that's not true!

- ✓It's not true that the cat went out in the rain.
- #It's not true that you feel negatively about that.

B2: Yes, but don't pretend to be annoyed, I know you think it's funny when she does that.

For comparison, consider the at-issue entailment in (77). Speaker B's response can be interpreted as challenging the at-issue entailment as well as the proposition in its original form. Multidimensionality does not arise from sentences with only at-issue content.

(77) A: I broke your teapot. **English**
 at-issue entailment: Your teapot broke.

B: No, that's not true!

- ✓It's not true that you broke my teapot. (e.g., 'That's not true, Hannah broke it.')
- ✓It's not true that my teapot broke. (e.g., 'That's not true, I just used it and it was fine.')

(adapted from Kroeger 2019)

In this subsection, we apply non-deniability and multidimensionality diagnostics to OM-doubling constructions with verum and mirative interpretations in Lubukusu and Cinyungwe.

9.3.1 Verum multidimensionality

In Lubukusu, if an addressee challenges a sentence that includes a verum interpretation, this challenge is interpreted as applying to the at-issue meaning, not the emphatic meaning. This is illustrated by (78), where the verum interpretation is left unchallenged, suggesting it occupies a different dimension of meaning from the proposition that Wekesa read the book.

(78) A: Wéékésá k-á-(si-) sóm-a (síi-taβu) ! **Lubukusu**
 1Wekesa 1SM-REM.PST-7OM-read-FV 7.7-book
 (In an appropriate context) 'Wekesa DID read the book!'
 B: Se-βú-lí βúú-ŋálí tá!
 NEG-14SM-be 14.14-truth NEG
 'That's not true!'

- ✓It's not true that Wekesa read the book.
- #It's not true that you are certain of that.

 (Sikuku et al., 2018, 391)

The same pattern appears in Cinyungwe; in (79), the second speaker's accusation is interpreted as applying only to the at-issue content of the first speaker's utterance, not the emphatic verum meaning.

(79) A: Baba a-da-(ci-) phik-a (ci-mbamba) . **Cinyungwe**
 1father 1SM-PST-7OM-cook-FV 7-beans
 (In an appropriate context) 'Father really/certainly cooked the beans.'
 B: U-ku-nam-a!
 2SG-PRS-lie-FV
 'You're lying!'

- ✓You're lying about Father cooking the beans.
- #You're lying about being certain of that.

9.3.2 Mirative non-deniability and multidimensionality

Cruschina (2019a) uses non-deniability and multidimensionality to identify mirative interpretations of focus fronting in Spanish. (80a), for example, in addition to communicating the fact that the couple went to the Maldives on their honeymoon, conveys the speaker's surprise about the honeymoon location. Therefore, the speaker cannot felicitously continue with (80b) or (80c), because these continuations contradict their surprise.

(80) non-deniability mirative diagnostic

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| <p>a. ¿Sabes qué?! ¡A las Maldivas fueron de luna de miel!
 know.PRS.2SG what to the Maldives go.PST.3PL of moon of honey
 'Guess what?! To the Maldives they went on honeymoon!'</p> <p>b. #pero no es nada extraño...
 but not be.PRS.3SG nothing strange
 'but that's not strange...'</p> <p>c. #pero eso no me sorprende...
 but that not me.CL surprise.PRS.3SG
 'but that doesn't surprise me...' (Cruschina, 2019a, 138)</p> | <p>Spanish</p> |
|---|-----------------------|

However, an addressee can challenge the mirative meaning independently from the at-issue meaning, as shown in (81). A second speaker can reply with (81B) to challenge the at-issue content of (81A) or with (81C) to directly challenge its mirative content instead.

(81) multidimensionality mirative diagnostic

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| <p>A: ¿Sabes qué?! ¡A las Maldivas fueron de luna de miel!
 know.PRS.2SG what to the Maldives go.PST.3PL of moon of honey
 'Guess what?! To the Maldives they went on honeymoon!'</p> <p>B: ¡Te equivocas! ¡No es verdad!
 REFL be-wrong.PRS.2SG not be.PRS.3SG truth
 'You're wrong! That's not true!'</p> <p>C: ¡No es nada extraño!
 not be.PRS.3SG nothing strange
 'There's nothing strange about it!' (Cruschina, 2019a, 138)</p> | <p>Spanish</p> |
|--|-----------------------|

Each of these tests can be applied to Lubukusu and Cinyungwe. In Lubukusu, the mirative aspect of a sentence's meaning cannot be denied by the speaker; the speaker is committed to the mirative content. The first part of (82) below conveys that it is particularly significant that the event happened yesterday, perhaps because the children waited a long time for it. Therefore, the continuations in (82a) and (82b) are infelicitous.

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| <p>(82) Ba-ba-ana b-a-mu- bon-a o-mwa-limu likolooba ...
 2-2-children 2SM-PST-1OM-see-FV 1-1-teacher yesterday
 'The children saw the teacher YESTERDAY.' (Finally! They had been waiting a long time.)</p> <p>a. #... nekakhali li-li-eneli se-li-li li-keni ta.
 but 5-5-that.one NEG-5SM-be 5-news NEG
 '... but that's not news.'</p> <p>b. #... nekakhali li-li-eneli se-li-sindusy-a ta.
 but 5-5-that.one NEG-5SM-startle-FV NEG
 '... but that doesn't surprise me.' (Sikuku and Diercks, 2021, 290)</p> | <p>Lubukusu</p> |
|---|------------------------|

The mirative meaning can, however, be challenged by the addressee separately from the at-issue meaning (suggesting multidimensionality). In (83), Speaker B implicitly accepts the at-issue content from (83A) but challenges the mirative content, saying that it is in fact expected.

- (83) A: Ba-ba-ana b-a-(mu) bon-a (o-mwa-limu) likolooba. Lubukusu
 2-2-children 2SM-PST-1OM-see-FV 1-1-teacher yesterday
 ‘The children saw the teacher YESTERDAY.’
 B: ... nekakhali li-li-eneli se-li-li li-keni ta! E-ch-aang-a e-ndalo e-yo buli li-chuma.
 but 5-5-that.one NEG-5SM-be 5-news NEG 1SM.come-HAB-FV 9-day 9-this every 5-week
 ‘... but that’s not news! She comes that day every week.’ (Sikuku and Diercks, 2021, 291)

Mirative interpretations are also non-deniable and multidimensional in Cinyungwe. For example, the speaker of (84) could not continue with (84a) or (84b) because they would contradict the mirative meaning.

- (84) Context: A young man has married an older woman and brought her to see his family. His family is shocked and asks the young man the following question in front of his new wife.
 U-da-(mu) lowol-a (n-kazi) umweyi?
 2SG.SM-PST-1OM-marry-FV 1-woman already
 ‘You already married this woman?’
 a. #... tsono palibe mi-lando.
 but there.is.no 4-problem
 ‘... but there is no problem with that.’
 b. #... tsono palibe ca-ku-dabw-is-a.
 but there.is.no 7-PRS-surprise-CAUS-FV
 ‘... but there is nothing to be surprised about.’

However, the listener can question or deny the mirative meaning independently. In response to the question in (84), the young man could respond with (85) to question the mirative content but not the at-issue content (the fact that he married the woman).

- (85) Ca-ku-dabw-is-a ni cani? Cinyungwe
 7SM-PRS-surprise-CAUS-FV COP what
 ‘What is surprising about that?’

10 Conclusions

The table in (86) summarizes the range of emphatic interpretations that we are finding with OM-doubling across Bantu languages. Further investigation is needed on the pragmatic and syntactic contexts in which these interpretations arise. Additionally, the syntactic analysis of the OM-doubling constructions that generate these readings is a work in progress in each language. However, Sikuku and Diercks (2021) attempt to do this for Lubukusu and Langa da Câmara et al. (2021) attempt to do this for Cinyungwe, and work is ongoing in Tiriki, Wanga, and Ikalanga.

- (86) Availability of OM-doubling with different types of emphasis in Bantu languages

	intensity	exhaustive	mirative surprise	mirative reprimand	verum
Lubukusu	✓	*	✓	✓	✓
Cinyungwe	?	* / ✓ ⁸	✓	✓	✓
Tiriki	tbd	tbd	✓	tbd	✓
Wanga	tbd	✓	✓	tbd	✓
Ikalanga	tbd	tbd	✓	tbd	✓

In this section, we discuss a potential analysis of these emphatic interpretations as conventional implicatures, the limitations of understanding them through translation, and possible relationships between different types of emphasis.

⁸Exhaustive interpretations only occur in very limited circumstances.

10.1 Potential analysis: Conventional implicatures

As previously mentioned, we are currently investigating whether the emphatic interpretations of Bantu OM-doubling that we discuss in this paper are introduced through conventional implicatures, an analysis that builds on work by [Cruschina \(2019a,b, 2021\)](#) on emphatic readings of Romance and Indo-European focus fronting.

Recall from §9.3 that conventional implicatures are distinctive from other types of meaning in several ways. They are entailments, which means that they are semantic, not pragmatic, and therefore not context-dependent in the same way as conversational implicatures (i.e., the interpretations of OM-doubling constructions arise from the constructions themselves and are relatively restricted). Their status as entailments also means that a speaker is committed to the content of a conventional implicature and cannot felicitously deny it. However, conventional implicatures are also a separate “dimension” of meaning that is not part of the asserted at-issue content. This makes them distinct from at-issue entailments. An addressee can challenge or accept a conventional implicature independently of the at-issue meaning of the sentence. This multidimensionality is key to understanding conventional implicatures.

In §9.3, we presented some initial evidence in support of a multidimensional approach along the lines of conventional implicatures, but more work is necessary to formalize it. For example, we are applying additional diagnostics for conventional implicatures and expressive meanings to develop a more precise analysis of the emphatic interpretations we have observed ([Potts, 2005, 2012](#); [Gutzmann, 2019](#)).

10.2 Interpretations of OM-doubling in translation

As mentioned in §4, verum meanings are often translated with English emphatic *do*. One example from Lubukusu is shown in (87).

- (87) N-aa-βu- l-ílé βúu-suma . Lubukusu
 1SG.SM-PST-14OM-eat-PFV 14.14-ugali
 ‘I DID eat the ugali!’ ([Sikuku et al., 2018](#), 360)

However, the contexts of verum interpretations in Bantu languages appear to be broader than those of emphatic *do*; English emphatic *do* has a narrower semantic range. As a result, linguists who are native speakers of Bantu languages sometimes use emphatic *do* to translate OM-doubling constructions in contexts where emphatic *do* is not available for native American/British English speakers.

For example, when discussing the Lubukusu example in (88), Justine Sikuku was surprised that English emphatic *do* was not an acceptable translation. His intuition was that the interpretation of (88) was very similar to emphatic interpretations of other OM-doubling constructions, many of which are well-translated with emphatic *do*.

- (88) *Context: Wafula is lying on the couch, clearly bloated with a bulging belly, napping somewhat uncomfortably. On seeing the scene someone could ask, “what’s going on with him?” which could be answered:*
 Wafula a-bu- ly-a bu-suma .
 1Wafula 1SM-14OM-eat-FV 14-ugali
 ‘Wafula ate ugali.’ (carries some sense of ‘Wafula shouldn’t have eaten, because look at what it’s gotten him, but here we are!’) ([Sikuku and Diercks, 2021](#), 263)

Similarly, Rose Letsholo initially translated the Ikalanga exchange in (89), in which the object is OM-doubled in both the question and answer, as ‘How DID the children eat the okra? The children DID eat the okra slowly.’

- (89) Q: Bana baka-li- -ja chini , delele ? Ikalanga
 C2-child SM.C2-PST-OM.C5-eat-FV how C5.okra
 ‘How did the children eat the okra?’ (*unacceptable out of the blue*)

A: Bana b-aka-(li-)j-a ngebunya, (delele).
 C2-child SM.C2-PST-OM.C5-eat-FV slowly c5.okra
 ‘The children ate it slowly, the okra.’

Neither (88) nor (89) can be felicitously expressed with emphatic *do* in mainstream varieties of American and British English. These examples show that, although there is overlap between emphatic contexts for Bantu OM-doubling and English emphatic *do* (e.g., argument contexts), this overlap is not complete. It is therefore important for research on emphatic interpretations of OM-doubling to establish clear pragmatic contexts and avoid over-relying on translations.

10.3 Relationships between different types of emphasis

A major question for our research is whether the different emphatic interpretations are related, analytically speaking (i.e., whether they are instances of the same phenomena or distinct phenomena). This section explores several possible areas of overlap we are currently investigating.

10.3.1 Mirativity and reprimands

In this paper, as stated in §2, we approach (standard) mirativity and reprimands as different subtypes of mirative interpretations: mirative surprise and mirative reprimands. Recall that there are (at least) three ways to view reprimands:

- emphasis that information is more expected than an alternative (or the most expected) (Trotzke, 2017)
- emphasis that information is surprising or unexpected to someone other than the speaker (Aikhenvald, 2012)
- emphasis that an addressee’s lack of knowledge or belief is surprising to the speaker

At present, our best sense is that the third perspective is most consistent with the intuitions of Justine Sikuku, Crisófia Langa da Câmara, and Rose Letsholo—that reprimands are simply a different type of surprise, e.g., a speaker’s surprise that they are being asked an obvious question or a speaker’s surprise at an addressee’s doubt. This perspective is also consistent with an analysis of mirative interpretations of OM-doubling as conventional implicatures, because one property of conventional implicatures is speaker-orientation.

10.3.2 Verum and reprimands

Reprimand readings can appear very similar to verum readings, to the point that we have considered analyzing verum as an instance of mirative reprimand. Both interpretations often arise in contexts where an addressee is doubting a speaker. However, examples like (90) suggest that reprimands and verum are non-identical. While reprimands involve information being well-known or obvious from the speaker’s perspective, this is not required with verum interpretations. Verum emphasises a speaker’s confidence in the truth of a proposition, but the speaker does not necessarily believe the information should be obvious to others. The existence of these two interpretations suggests that verum and (mirative) reprimands are distinct categories of emphasis, and we are currently attempting to tease them apart more clearly.

(90) Wekesa a-(ka-)nywa (kamalwa). Lubukusu
 1Wekesa 1SM.PST-6OM-drink 6beer

‘Wekesa drank beer.’

Available interpretations:

- The sentence is an emphatic confirmation of the act. (verum)
- It is a well-known fact that Wekesa is a drunkard, so any doubt is met with this sentence. (mirative reprimand)

10.3.3 Verum and exhaustivity

In Lubukusu, the focus particle *busa* has two different meanings depending on its position in the sentence. In a structurally low position, it receives an exhaustive reading and can be translated as ‘only.’ In a structurally high

position, it receives a verum-like reading and can be translated as ‘indeed.’ In (91) below, *busa* is only acceptable sentence-initially or sentence-finally.

- (91) a. Wangila a-a-nyw-a e-chayi **busa**. Lubukusu
 1Wangila 1SM-PST-drink-FV 9-tea only
 ‘Wangila merely drank/took tea.’
 b. ?Wangila a-a-nyw-a **busa** e-chayi.
 c. *Wangila **busa** a-a-nyw-a e-chayi.
 d. **Busa** Wangila a-a-nyw-a e-chayi.
 **‘Wangila merely drank/took tea.’
 OK: ‘Indeed Wangila drank tea.’
 (Wasike and Diercks, 2016)

A similar pattern exists in Cinyungwe with the particle *basi*. The particle is interpreted exhaustively in both (92a) and (92c), albeit applied to different DPs. However, in (92b) and (92d), it receives very different emphatic interpretations. Crisófia Langa da Câmara’s intuition is that only (92d) could accurately be translated using the English word ‘indeed.’

- (92) a. Siriza a-da-dy-a ma-figu **basi**. Cinyungwe
 Siriza 1SG-PERF-eat-FV 6-bananas only
 ‘Siriza ate only bananas.’ (i.e., she didn’t eat anything else)
 b. Siriza a-da-dy-a **basi** ma-figu.
 ‘Siriza ate bananas.’
Available interpretation: Siriza ate a lot of bananas even though she knew she shouldn’t, and she had a stomachache. Even with her stomachache, she kept eating bananas.
 c. Siriza **basi** a-da-dy-a ma-figu.
 ‘Only Siriza ate bananas.’ (i.e., no one else ate bananas)
 d. **Basi** Siriza a-da-dy-a ma-figu.
 ‘Siriza ate bananas.’
Available interpretation: The speaker hid the bananas, but Siriza loves bananas so much that she found them by smell! Upon seeing that the bananas have been eaten, the speaker knows it was Siriza and says, ‘Oh, it’s happening again, Siriza ate bananas.’

One possible interpretation of these patterns is that verum readings could be a type of exhaustivity applied structurally high. In other words, verum could be an instance of exhaustive emphasis that excludes all alternative propositions, rather than alternatives to a specific constituent in the sentence. However, further research is needed.

11 Acknowledgments

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This project collects and organizes a discussion that is occurring in parallel in multiple distinct projects on object marking in different languages. Justine Sikuku and Michael Diercks have a long-standing project on object marking in Bukusu, including a manuscript-in-development that all of the Bukusu data here are drawn from (Sikuku and Diercks, 2021). Crisófia Langa da Câmara (and collaborators) has an ongoing project on object marking and object properties in Cinyungwe, which includes an initial syntactic analysis (Langa da Câmara et al., 2021) and which is currently being extended into concerns of interpretation: those results are presented here. Rose Letsholo, Madelyn Colantes, and Michael Diercks are applying these same analytical questions to Ikalanga currently, and Franco Liu is currently working on the same in Tiriki, connected to Diercks’ ongoing work on Luyia syntax (which also includes Logoori and Wanga).

There are many authors here, so please allow us to clarify our contributions. The first author (Lippard) is a participant in the parallel projects and was the lead author for compiling relevant information from each of the above projects into this format, writing and presenting the talk this paper developed from, and writing this manuscript (for the current draft, she wrote the entire manuscript, with feedback/input from the various coauthors). Sikuku is responsible for the Bukusu data and analytical work, together with Diercks. Langa da Câmara is responsible for the Cinyungwe data and analytical work, which was done collaboratively with Colantes, Lippard, and Diercks. Liu is the primary researcher on Tiriki, and research on Tiriki object marking and verb phrase structure is ongoing. Diercks is a primary investigator involved in all of these projects except Tiriki (where he is consulting/advising).

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