

## Syntactic Analysis of Left Dislocation in Swahili

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### Abstract

*Left dislocation (LD) is a significant syntactic phenomenon in simple sentences across many languages. For instance, in the Luganda and Kuria languages, the left-dislocated elements are incorporated into the transitive verb through an object marker. In English, left-dislocated elements are often resumed by resumptive pronouns. However, in the Embosi language, left-dislocated elements are neither incorporated by an object marker nor resumed by resumptive pronouns. In Swahili, there have been limited studies on left dislocation. For example, Edelsten et al. (2013) and Ndumiwe (2023) note changes in arguments and non-argument word order related to left dislocation in Swahili. Moreover, a study by Kabasele (2012) focuses on comparing left dislocation between Swahili and Lingala, examining meaning, vacated site, and its structure. This paper aimed to conduct a syntactic analysis of left dislocation in Swahili, focusing on three key issues: (i) syntactic properties, (ii) types, and (iii) functions of left dislocation in the language. Data were collected from two oral narrative texts using the narration method. The selected narratives include "Mwanamalundi" and the "Mv. Bukoba" accident. The analysis utilised the modern version of the Minimalist Program, specifically the Phonetic Form Scrambling Theory proposed by Kidwai (1999, 2000). The findings reveal two types of left dislocation in Swahili: Clitic left dislocation and non-clitic left dislocation. Both types exhibit various syntactic properties, such as the presence of an intonation break between left-dislocated elements and subsequent parts of the sentence. The study reports that left dislocation does not alter subject-verb agreement, co-exists with transitive verbs, and changes word order. Lastly, left dislocation in Swahili serves to encode ex-situ focus, mostly argument focus. The displaced elements are situated before the verb or subject to facilitate focus. The findings carry theoretical implications for changes in word order and the structuring of information structure in Swahili.*

**Keywords:** *Focus, object marker, Swahili, left dislocation, resumptive pronouns.*

### 1 Introduction

Dislocation is a syntactic operation that allows an external argument of a predicate to be moved outside of its canonical position, typically to the clausal edge, where it is resumed by a pronoun within the core clause from which it originates (Fernández-Sánchez & Ott, 2020; Lambrecht, 2001) as shown in Example (1a-b) from German and Spanish.

- (1) a. Den Peter, den kenne ich gut.  
       the.ACC Peter him know I well  
       ‘**Peter**, I know him well.’ [German]
- b. Pedro lo vio en el parque a Juan.  
       Pedro him saw in the park DOM Juan  
       ‘We saw him at the park, **Juan**.’ [Spanish]

**Source:** Fernández-Sánchez & Ott (2020, p. 1)

In these constructions, the object or subject is moved from its natural position and placed outside of its canonical position. The moved elements are resumed by their respective pronouns within the core clause in which they originate. This syntactic movement is known as dislocation in linguistics.

The dislocation site varies depending on the canonical structure of the specific language. Some languages exhibit SVO Patterns, such as those found in many Bantu languages, English, and French (De Cat, 2002, 2007; Kayne, 1994; Vitale, 1981). Others utilise Verb-Subject-Object (VSO) patterns, as seen in languages such as Arusa, Arabic, Hebrew, and those of the Semitic family, and Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) patterns, as in Japanese, Korean, and Turkish (Andrason & Karan, 2017; Casetto, 1997; Rodman, 1997). Cross-linguistic studies have identified two primary types of dislocation: left dislocation and right dislocation (see Cechetto, 1999, for Romance languages; De Cat, 2002, 2007, for French; Aborobongui et al., 2014, for Embosi; Zeller, 2009; Calaire & Zeller, 2015, for Zulu; Westbury, 2016, for English; and Fernández-Sánchez & Ott, 2020, for German and Spanish). The following examples illustrate left and right dislocation in English and Zulu.

- (2) a. **My father**, he’s Armenian. [LD in English]  
       b. It is beautiful, **this painting**. [RD in English]  
       **Source:** Lambrecht (2001, p. 1051)
- (3) a. **UJohn** intombazana i-m-qabul-ile. [LD in Zulu]  
       John1a girl9 SA-OM1a-kiss-PERF  
       John, the girl kissed (him)’.  
       b. Ngi-ya-yi-thenga-a **i-moto** [RD in Zulu]  
       1SA-DJ-9OM-buy-FV AUG-9.car  
       ‘I bought (it), the car’.

**Source:** Zeller (2009, p.133); Zeller (2015, p.19)

This paper focuses specifically on left dislocation (LD) constructions in Swahili, which is characterised by an SVO structure. In SVO languages, left dislocation typically involves the syntactic movement of right-predicate elements to the left edge of the verb (Rodman, 1997; Westbury, 2016). Cross-linguistic studies suggest that various elements, such as objects, prepositional phrases, adjuncts, and pronouns, can undergo left dislocation in different languages (Van der Spuy, 1993; Zeller, 2009; Ranero, 2019). The dislocated elements may either precede the verb or the subject, depending on the presence of an overt or covert subject.

Variability in left dislocation constructions exists across languages, including differences in types, functions, resumption, number, and nature of dislocated elements. Languages such as Zulu, Italian, Greek, and English feature three types of left dislocation: Contrastive Left Dislocation (CLD),

Hanging Topic Left Dislocation (HTLD), and Clitic Left Dislocation (CLLD). In Luganda and Arusa, only CLLD and CLD types are present (Ranero, 2019; Andrason & Karan, 2017). These classifications depend on the presence or absence of overt or covert anaphoric co-indexation between the dislocated element and the resumptive pronoun in the predicate. In English, for instance, a vacated site is filled by overt or covert resumptive pronouns (Westbury, 2016), while languages like Luganda and Arusa employ clitic object markers incorporated within the verb (Andrason & Karan, 2017; Ranero, 2019). In contrast, the Embosi language lacks co-indexation between left-dislocated elements and resumptive pronouns or object markers (Aborobongui et al., 2014).

Studies indicate that various elements, including objects, prepositional phrases, adjuncts, and pronouns, can be left-dislocated across languages (Van der Spuy, 1993; Zeller, 2009; Ranero, 2019). The number of left-dislocated elements varies; for example, Zulu and Luganda allow two objects to be left dislocated, whereas only one object can be left dislocated in Arusa (Andrason & Karan, 2017). In some languages, such as Lingala, prepositional phrases and obliques can also undergo left dislocation (Kabasele, 2012). The functions of left dislocation also vary by language. For instance, in Zulu, English, and Luganda, left dislocation serves to mark topics within propositions, granting focus prominence to the dislocated elements (Zeller, 2009; Westbury, 2016; Ranero, 2019). In Arusa, left dislocation is explicitly employed to mark focus.

In Swahili, there have been limited studies on left dislocation. For example, Edelsten et al. (2013) note changes in word order related to left dislocation in Swahili. Additionally, Ndumiwe (2023) examines canonical changes resulting from left dislocation in Swahili. Moreover, the study by Kabasele (2012) focuses on comparing left dislocation between Swahili and Lingala, examining its meaning, vacated site, and structure. Hence, the status of syntactic properties, types, and functions of left dislocation in Swahili is unknown. In this regard, this study aimed to analyse the syntax of left dislocation in Swahili, focusing on its properties, types, and functions to bridge the existing gap.

## 2 Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by the Phonetic Form Scrambling Theory proposed by Kidwai (1999, 2000), a contemporary revision of Chomsky's (1995) minimalist program that addresses syntactic movement and the realisation of focus in free word order languages. The Phonetic Form Scrambling Theory (hereafter, PFS Theory) posits that restructuring of phonetic forms (sentences) is associated with focus encoding within propositions. The PFS Theory comprises three key tenets for analysing phonetic form scrambling: syntactic movements, feature checking, and the XP adjunction principle.

In terms of syntactic movements, the theory encompasses both left and right movements of sentence elements. According to Kidwai (2000), NPs can be moved from the left edge to the right edge of a verb, or vice versa. Figure 1 demonstrates.

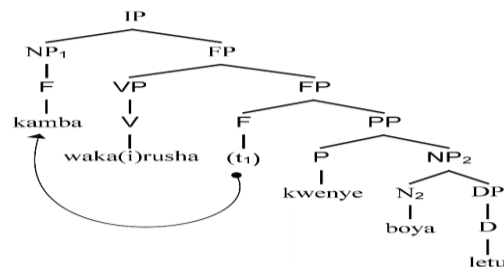
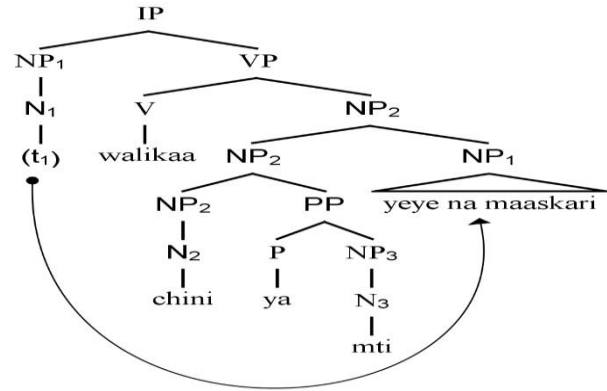


Figure 1: Left Movement in Swahili

As illustrated in Figure 1, the NP is relocated from the right edge of the verb to the left portion of the verb, representing a left movement in Swahili where specific sentence components are displaced to encode information structure. Similarly, in Figure 2, an NP is moved from the left edge of a verb to the right.



**Figure 2: Right Movement in Swahili**

Figure 2 shows that the NP *yeye na maaskari* ‘soldier and him’ have been relocated from the left edge of the verb to the right edge. Both movements (left and right) are governed by feature checking and the adjunction principle. The feature checking process marks the displaced elements within the verb using subject or object markers. For instance, in Figure 1, the left-moved element *kamba* ‘string’ is marked in the verb *waka{i}rusha* ‘they threw it’ by the object marker {-i-}, while the right-moved element *yeye na maaskari* is marked in the verb by the subject marker {wa-} in *walikaa* ‘they sat’. The adjunction principle allows moved elements to be attached to the sister or daughter nodes of tree structures. Thus, all tenets were utilised to analyse the findings of this study. The first tenets (syntactic movements) were used to analyse left-moved elements before the verb or subject. The second tenet (feature checking) was utilised to check agreements as a syntactic feature between the left-moved elements and the verb or vacated site. Lastly, the adjunction principle was utilised in attaching moved nodes to sister or daughter nodes of the left edge of tree structures (Figure 1-7).

### 3 Methodology

This study utilised two oral narratives: the "Mwanamalundi" folktale and the "Mv. Bukoba" accident. Two informants (one informant for each narrative) were selected through snowball sampling based on familiarity with the particular narrative and proficiency in the Swahili language. The researchers use local leaders from Mwakubilinga and Kirumba wards to recruit the narrators of "Mwanamalundi" folktale and the "Mv. Bukoba" accident, respectively. Two informants and narratives were deemed sufficient, as the researchers' intention was not to compare narratives or narrators, but to obtain oral narratives from which the Swahili sentence could be drawn. To determine the narrator's proficiency in the Swahili language, an oral placement test was administered to obtain the required informants.

The data collection method employed narration, during which the narratives were recorded by an audio tape recorder to obtain oral stories for transcription. Following transcription, the written text was analysed to extract left dislocation constructions. These constructions were subsequently evaluated for acceptability by four native speakers of Swahili. Data analysis utilised an analytical method known as componential analysis of narratives as proposed by Gimenez (2010). According

to Gimenez, componential analysis enables a detailed examination of the language structure within narratives, including free clauses, coordinate clauses, and subordinate clauses. The obtained data were presented in figures, along with explanations that align with the qualitative approach. Additionally, TreeForm Syntax Tree Drawing Software was used to create the tree diagram structure, illustrating sentence analysis.

#### 4 Findings and discussion

This study identified that left dislocation constructions in Swahili typically involve a single left-dislocated element. The dislocated element can be a noun (phrase), infinitive, or adverb, depending on its anaphoric co-indexation with the object marker incorporated within the verb. Left-dislocated elements in Swahili are positioned before the verb or subject, determined by the presence of a covert or overt subject, as shown in Example (4).

- (4) a. **Wizi wa ng'ombe,** Mwanamalundi a-li-u-kom-esh-a  
 14.theft of 9.cattle Mwanamalundi 1SMPST-OM-root-CAUS-FV  
 'Cattle rustling, Mwanamalundi abolished it.' [OSV]
- b. **haya ma-boya yote** ni-me-ya-fung-u-a mimi  
 these 6.buoy all 1SM-PF-OM-root-REV-FV I  
 'All these buoys, I have untied them.' [OVS]

Source: Field Data (2023)

In examples (4a) and (4b), the objects *wizi wa ng'ombe* 'cattle theft' and *haya ma-boya yote* 'all these buoys' are left dislocated before the subject and verb, respectively. The left-dislocated elements are incorporated within the verbs *aliukomesha* 'stopped it' and *nimeyafungua* 'released it', using the object markers {-u-} and {-ya-}, respectively. These object markers agree in number and noun class with the left dislocated objects; for instance, {-u-} corresponds to noun class 14, and {-ya-} corresponds to noun class 6 in Swahili.

##### 4.1 Properties of Swahili left dislocation constructions

Different constructs exist in left dislocation across various Bantu languages and others. The properties of left dislocation constructions in Swahili exhibit notable characteristics. Firstly, there are intonation breaks between left-dislocated elements and subsequent parts of the sentence. Left dislocated elements are separated from the other sentence elements by a prosodic break in conversation, indicated in writing by a comma as illustrated in Example (5).

- (5) a. **palepale,** u-le mti u-ka-kauk-a  
 immediately, AGR3.that 3.tree 3SM-NTM-root-FV  
 'Instantly, the tree dried up.'
- b. **abiria w-engine,** tu-li-wa-ach-a bandari ya Bukoba  
 2.passenger, AGR2.other 3SM-PST-OM-root-FV 9.port of 16.Bukoba  
 'Other passengers, we left them at the port of Bukoba.'

Source: Field Data (2023)

As shown in Example (5), left dislocated elements in Swahili must be separated by an intonation break, which provides prominence to the dislocated elements. In the gloss, a comma is employed to denote the break (pause) from the subsequent part of the sentence.

Secondly, the left dislocation in Swahili does not alter the subject-verb agreement on the verb. The subject marker on the verb remains constant even when the left dislocated object precedes the verb. However, Swahili's left dislocation retains the subject marking following left displacement, as seen in Example (6).

- (6) a. **ku-le**        **ki-siwa-ni**, wa-li-lal-a        chini    ya mi-ti yeye    na    mw-enzake  
 AGR16.that 7.island.LOC 2SM-PST-root-FV 16.under of 4.tree him and his fellow  
 'In the island, they slept under the trees, him and colleagues.'
- b. **i-le**        **mi-ti**, Mwanamalundi a-ka-i-sont-a        ki-dole.  
 AGR4.that 4.tree Mwanamalundi 1SM-NTM-OM-root-FV 7.finger  
 'Those trees, Mwanamalundi pointed at them with his finger.'
- c. **Mwanamalundi**, tu-li-m-heshim-u        sana hapa    Mwakubilinga.  
 Mwanamalundi 2SM-PST-OM-root-FV    alot here 16.Mwakubilinga  
 'Mwanamalundi, we respected him a lot at Mwakubilinga.'

**Source:** Field Data (2023)

As demonstrated in Example (6), different elements have been left dislocated before the verb (6a and 6c) or the subject (6b). These elements do not influence the subject-verb agreement on the verb. The agreement is determined by the overt or covert subject in these constructions. For example, in (6a), the agreement is controlled by the subject *yeye na mwenzake* 'him and his fellow,' positioned after the locative *chini ya miti* 'under the trees.' In Example (6b), the overt subject controls the agreement, while in Example (6c), the agreement is governed by an implied covert subject (omitted by the narrator). According to PFS Theory, agreement is one of the features checked after the scrambling of the phonetic forms, and the subject-verb agreement remains constant following the left displacement of different constituents in Swahili left dislocation.

Thirdly, left dislocation in Swahili features anaphoric co-indexation between left-dislocated objects and incorporated object markers within the verb. In Swahili, the incorporated affix belongs to the verb template, and it agrees with the number and noun class of the dislocated constituents. Thus, left-dislocated elements should typically be noun phrases. Each noun class in Swahili possesses its own object marker, which can be incorporated within the verb (Ndumiwe, 2023). Example (7) illustrates the correlation between left-dislocated elements and object markers incorporated in the verb.

- (7) a. **m-temi wa hapa**, wa-tu    wa-ke    wa-li-m-pelek-e-a        i-le        taarifa  
 1.chief of here 2.people AGR2.his 2SM-PST-OM-root-APPL-FV AGR2.that 9.information  
 'Chief of this place, his people gave him the information.'

- b. **ma-ziwa ma-bichi**, mama yake a-li-ya-tumi-a ku-ju-a uhai wake  
 6.milk 6.fresh 1.mother his 1SM-PST-OM-root-A-FV INF-root-FV 14.life his  
 ‘Fresh milk, his mother used it to foresee his life.’
- c. **‘pembeni mwa jiwe refu,** u-ka-ot-a  
 17.side of 5.stone tall 4SM-NTM-root-FV  
 m-ti u-na-o-it-w-a musubhata.’  
 3.tree 4SM-PRT-RM-root-PASS-FV 3.musubhata.  
 ‘Beside a high rock, grew up a tree called musubhata.’

**Source:** Field Data (2023)

In examples (7a) and (7b), object markers *{-m-}* and *{-ya-}* in the verbs *walimpelekea* ‘they sent to him’ and *aliyatumi* ‘she used it’ indicate anaphoric co-indexation with nouns from classes 1 and 6, respectively. However, Example (7c) does not exhibit an incorporated object marker for the left dislocated noun, as the left dislocated element belongs to noun class 17, which lacks anaphoric co-indexation with an object marker incorporated within the verb.

Fourthly, left dislocation in Swahili alters the SVO canonical structure. Word order typology across different languages is based on three functional constituents: Subject (S), Verb (V), and Object (O) (Kayne, 1994). These word orders form the canonical structures of specific languages. Swahili is recognised as an SVO canonical language (Vitale, 1981). However, left dislocation modifies this order into OSV or OVS structures, which depend on the presence or absence of additional syntactic operations. Within an OSV structure, the object occupies a position before the subject, while other constituents (the subject and verb) maintain their natural positions as shown in Example (4a), where the object *wizi wa ng’ombe* ‘cattle theft’ precedes the subject *Mwanamalundi*. In the OVS structure, right dislocation occurs, where the object is left dislocated while the subject is right dislocated: only the verb retains its natural position, as seen in Example (4b), where the object *haya maboya yote* ‘all these buoys’ precedes the verb while the subject *mimi* ‘I’ is positioned afterward.

Lastly, left dislocation in Swahili co-exists with transitive verbs. Transitive verbs require objects as predicate arguments. Various elements, such as prepositional phrases, adverbs, infinitives, or nouns (phrases), can be left dislocated across languages (Van der Spuy, 1993; Zeller, 2009; Ranero, 2019). In Swahili, the object is a key candidate for left dislocation when transitive verbs are involved. For instance, in Example (5b), the verb *tuliwaacha* ‘we left them’ necessitates an object; the left-dislocated object *abiria wengine* ‘other passengers’ is positioned before the verb. In contrast, with intransitive verbs, other constituents positioned on the right of the verb can be left dislocated, as shown in Example (5a), where the adverb *palepale* ‘immediately’ is left dislocated before the subject *ule mti* ‘that tree’ along with the intransitive verb *ukakauka* ‘dried up’.

## 4.2 Types of Swahili Left Dislocation Constructions

The study identified two main types of left dislocation in Swahili: clitic left dislocation (CLLD) and non-clitic left dislocation. Each type is further divided into subtypes. In clitic left dislocation, subtypes include patient, recipient, experiencer, and beneficiary LD. These subtypes are known as dislocated semantic roles functioning as objects. Non-clitic left dislocation encompasses locative, prepositional phrase, infinitive, and adverb LD. These subtypes are known as left dislocation of syntactic elements. These classifications depend on the presence or absence of co-reference with the object marker incorporated within the verb template.

#### 4.2.1 Clitic left dislocation

In CLLD, left-dislocated elements must be marked with an object marker that is incorporated within the verb. The object marker agrees with the number and noun class of the dislocated noun (phrase). This type specifically concerns object left dislocation.

##### *Patient LD*

Noun phrases with semantic roles of patients can undergo left dislocation. The constituents with patient roles reside in situ at the right edge of the verb (Mkude, 2005). LD in Swahili allows any constituent appearing in situ at the right edge to be left-dislocated. When a patient is left dislocated in Swahili, it should be marked with the incorporated object marker within the verb, as illustrated in Example (8).

- (8) a. **abiria**                      **w-engine**                      tu-li-wa-ach-a                      bandari    ya    Bukoba  
          2.passenger,    AGR2.other    2SM-PST-OM-root-FV    9.port       of    16.Bukoba  
          ‘Other passengers, we left them at the port of Bukoba.’
- b. **kamba,**                      tu-ka-i-fung-a                      ku-enye                      li-le                      boya  
          9. ‘rope’                      2SM-NTM-OM-root-FV    AGR18.to                      AGR5.that                      5.buoy  
          mimi na    mw-enzangu.’  
          me    and    2.fellow my  
          ‘The rope, we tied it to that buoy, me and my colleagues’.

**Source:** Field Data (2023)

In examples (8a) and (8b), *abiria wengine* ‘other passengers’ and *kamba* ‘rope’ serve as left dislocated patients. These patients are co-indexed with the respective object markers {-wa-} and {-i-} within the verbs *tuliwaacha* ‘we left them’ and *tukaifunga* ‘we tied it’. Such object markers agree with noun classes 2 and 9 in Swahili, revealing the derived noun (phrase). According to PFS Theory, agreement features are verified post-scrambling of the phonetic forms in left dislocation.

##### *Recipient LD*

In Swahili sentence structure, constituents with semantic roles of recipients typically occupy the right edge of the verb (Mkude, 2005). Any constituent positioned at the right edge of the verb can undergo left dislocation. Left-dislocated recipients must be marked with an object marker incorporated within the verb template, as shown in Example (9).

- (9) a. **m-temi wa hapa,** wa-tu    wa-ke    wa-li-m-pelek-e-a                      i-le                      taarifa  
          1.chief    of    here    2.people    AGR2.his    2SM-PST-OM-root-APPL-FV    AGR2.that    9.information  
          ‘Chief of this place, his people gave him the information.’
- b. **Mwanamalundi,** wa-fuasi                      wake    wa-li-m-poke-le-a                      pale  
          Mwanamalundi    2.followers                      his                      2SM-PST-OM-root-APPL-FV                      there  
          ‘Mwanamalundi, his followers received him from there.’

**Source:** Field Data (2023)



Both left dislocated recipients *mtemi wa hapa* and *Mwanamalundi* (a name) are marked by the object markers  $\{-m-\}$  and  $\{-m-\}$  in the verbs *walimpelekea* ‘they sent to him’ and *walimpokelea* ‘they received him’, respectively, indicating co-indexation with the left dislocated nouns. These object markers correspond to noun class 1 in Swahili. Following PFS Theory, the agreement features are verified post-scrambling of the phonetic forms.

### ***Experiencer LD***

Constituents with semantic roles of experiencers occupy the right edge of the verb in the Swahili sentence structure. In Swahili, these constituents can undergo left dislocation and may be positioned before the verb or subject based on the presence of covert subjects. Left dislocated experiencers should be marked within the verb template with an object marker, as shown in examples (10a) and (10b).

- (10) a. **Mwanamalundi**, tu-li-m-heshimu sana hapa Mwakubilinga.  
 Mwanamalundi 2SM-PST-OM-root-FV a lot here Mwakubilinga  
 ‘Mwanamalundi, we respected him a lot here at Mwakubilinga.’
- b. **abiria wengi**, ni-li-*wa*-on-a wa-ki-fi-a maji-ni  
 2.passengers many 1SM-PST-OM-root-FV 2SM-CM-root-FV water-LOC  
 kwa ku-kos-a m-saada  
 by INF-root-FV 3.rescue  
 ‘Many passengers, I saw them dying for lack of rescue.’

**Source:** Field Data (2023)

Example (10) illustrates left-dislocated experiencers, *Mwanamalundi* and *abiria wengi* ‘many passengers’. The object markers  $\{-m-\}$  and  $\{-wa-\}$  in the verbs *tulimuheshimu* ‘we respected him’ and *niliwaona* ‘I saw them’ indicate anaphoric co-indexation with the left dislocated elements. These markers correspond to noun classes 1 and 2, respectively. Under PFS Theory, agreement represents a feature checked following the scrambling of phonetic forms.

### ***Beneficiary LD***

Noun phrases with semantic roles of beneficiaries in Swahili are subject to left dislocation. Beneficiary nouns appear after the right edge of the verb before displacement. Following left dislocation, these elements occupy the left edge of the verb, appearing either before the verb or the subject. Left dislocated beneficiaries should incorporate an object marker within the verb, as illustrated in examples (11a) and (11b).

- (11) a. **mw-enz angu naye**, wa-li-m-vut-a m-kono  
 1. fellow my also 2SM-PST-OM-root-FV 3.hand  
 a-ka-ingi-a ndani ya m-tumbwi  
 1SM-PST-root-FV in of 3.canoe  
 ‘My fellow also, they pulled him into the canoe with his hand’.

- b. mimi **na w-enz-angu ku-enye li-le boya,**  
 me and 2.fellow my AGR18.to AGR5.that 5.buoy  
 wa-li-**tu**-vut-a kwa kamba  
 2SM-PST-OM-root-FV by 9.rope  
 ‘I and my fellows on that buoy, they pulled us by a rope.’

**Source:** Field Data (2023)

The left dislocated noun phrases *mwenzangu naye* and *mimi na wenzangu kwenye lile boya* are indicated with object markers {-m-} and {-tu-} in the verbs *walimvuta* ‘they pulled him’ and *walituvuta* ‘they pulled us’, respectively. The object markers correspond to noun class 1, from which the dislocated noun (phrase) is derived. Based on the principles of PFS Theory, agreement is evident in the features verified post-scrambling of the phonetic forms.

#### 4.2.2 Non-clitic Left Dislocation

In non-clitic left dislocation, left dislocated elements are not marked with object markers, but they can still be incorporated within the verb template. In this type and its subtypes, dislocated constituents may be either noun phrases (typically from noun classes 15-18 in Swahili) or other constituents that naturally occur at the right edge of verb arguments.

##### *Locatives LD*

In Swahili, locatives include nouns from noun classes 16-18 or other noun phrases denoting location or place. These locatives normally occur in situ at the right edge of the verb and can be left dislocated before the verb. However, left dislocated locatives do not influence subject-verb agreement, despite appearing before the verb, as shown in examples (12a) and (12b).

- (12) a. **Kemondo,** tu-li-wa-ach-a abiria wengi pia  
 16.Kemondo 2SM-PST-OM-root-FV 2.passengers many too  
 ‘Kemondo, we left many passengers too.’
- b. **ndani ya chumba chake,** ha-ku-ingi-a m-tu yeyote  
 in of 7.room his NEG.OM-root-FV 1.person anybody  
 ‘In his room, nobody entered.’

**Source:** Field Data (2023)

In examples (12a) and (12b), the locatives *Kemondo* and *ndani ya chumba chake* ‘in his room’ are left dislocated. Their natural positioning is at the right edge of the verb. The presence of locatives at the left edge indicates they have been displaced or inverted.

##### *Prepositional Phrase*

Prepositional phrases (PPs) typically reside at the right edge of the verb in Swahili. For emphasis, they can be moved from their natural positions to the left edge of the verb, prior to the subject. Left dislocated PPs do not function as subjects; the grammatical agreement remains governed by the overt or covert subject. Examples (13a) and (13b) illustrate this phenomenon.

- (13) a. **kwa bahati mbaya**, i-le kamba i-ka-kat-ik-a  
 for 9.bad luck, AGR9.that 9.rope 9SM-NTM-root-STV-FV  
 ‘Unfortunately, the rope broke up.’
- b. **kwa mbali**, tu-li-on-a meli ya Mv Klariasi  
 in distance 2SM-PST-root-FV 9.ship of Mv Klariasi  
 i-li-yo-kuwa i-ki-toke-a Ukerewe  
 9SM-PST-RM-be 9SM-CM-root-FV 16.Ukerewe  
 ‘In the distance, we saw MV Klariasi, which was coming from Ukerewe.’

**Source:** Field Data (2023)

In Example (13), the PPs *kwa bahati mbaya* and *kwa mbali* are moved from the right edge of the verb to the left for emphasis. With PFS Theory, agreement signifies a feature checked after scrambling of phonetic forms, while the subject-verb agreement is consistently governed by overt or covert subjects.

### ***Infinitives LD***

In Swahili, infinitives derive from verbs and are marked with the [ku-] inflexion prefix. Infinitives can occur either before or after the verb; when positioned pre-verbally, they serve as subjects and control grammatical agreement. Frequently, they appear post-verbally and can be left dislocated before the subject, as shown in examples (14a) and (14b).

- (14) a. **ku-fik-a kwake pale**, wa-tu wa-li-shangili-a sana  
 INF-arrive-FV him there 2.people 2SM-PST-root-FV too much  
 ‘On his arrival at that place, people celebrated too much.’
- b. **ku-ju-a safari yake**, Mwanamalundi a-li-mu-achi-a shoka mama yake  
 INF-know-FV 9.journey his Mwanamalundi 1SM-PST-OM.root-FV 5.axe 1.mother his  
 ‘To know his journey, Mwanamalundi left an axe with his mother.’

**Source:** Field Data (2023)

Examples 11a and 11b demonstrate that the infinitives *kufika kwake pale* and *kujua safari yake* can be left dislocated before the subject. Nonetheless, this displacement does not affect grammatical agreement. Following PFS Theory, the subject-verb agreement remains intact, as illustrated in both examples.

### ***Adverb LD***

Adverbs in Swahili can co-occur with adjectives, verbs, or other adverbs. A left-dislocated adverb in Swahili typically appears before the subject, emphasising the action performed within the utterance. This is evident in examples (15a) and (15b).

- (15) a. **taratibu**,      boya              letu      li-ka-anz-a              ku-sukum-w-a  
          slowly,      5.buoy              our      5SM-NTM-root-FV              INF-root-PASS-FV  
          ku-fuat-a              u-eleke-o      wa      u-pepo  
          INF-root-FV              15.direct-NS      of      14.wind  
          Slowly, our buoy began to be pushed towards the wind direction.'
- b. **palepale**,      u-le              mti      u-ka-kauk-a  
          immediately, AGR3.that      3.tree      3SM-NTM-root-FV  
          'Instantly, that tree dried up.'

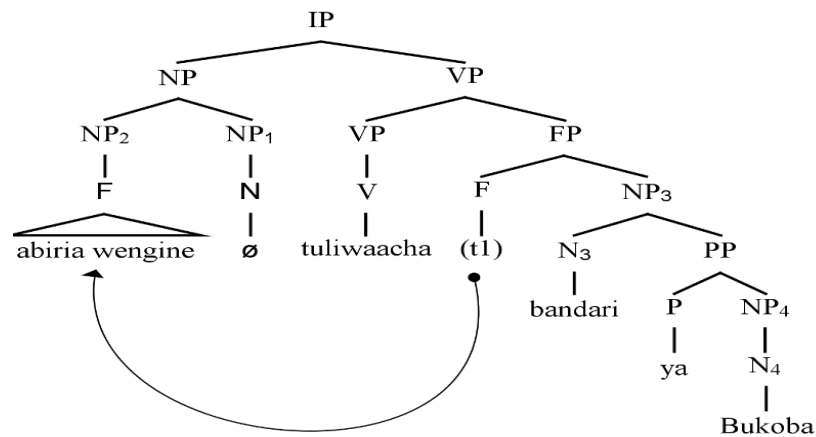
**Source:** Field Data (2023)

The adverbs *taratibu* and *palepale* are examples of left-dislocated adverbs placed before the subject. This movement does not trigger grammatical agreement on the verb; instead, the subjects retain control over the agreement. Under PFS Theory, the agreement is checked after the scrambling of phonetic forms, indicating that overt subjects continue to manage the subject-verb agreement observed in examples (15a) and (15b).

### 4.3 Function of Swahili Left Dislocation Constructions

Left dislocation in Swahili serves as a syntactic mechanism for ex-situ focus marking. Focus signifies the crucial part of an utterance or represents new information introduced within it. Focus can be used to highlight or emphasise elements within the utterance. Various constituents, ranging from entire sentences to sub-constituents or specific phrases, can occupy the focus area. In Swahili, left dislocation helps encode argument focus in ex-situ contexts. According to Krifka (2007), focus pertains to the section of an answer that aligns with the *wh*-part of a constituent question.

Left dislocated elements in Swahili embody a pragmatic function of focus. The displaced elements are situated before the verb or subject to facilitate focus, thereby interpreted as new, highlighted, or emphasised constituents within the proposition. Such focus marking is elucidated by PFS Theory, which demonstrates the movement of focal elements from the right edge of the verb to positions preceding the verb or subject within an utterance, as depicted in Figure 3.

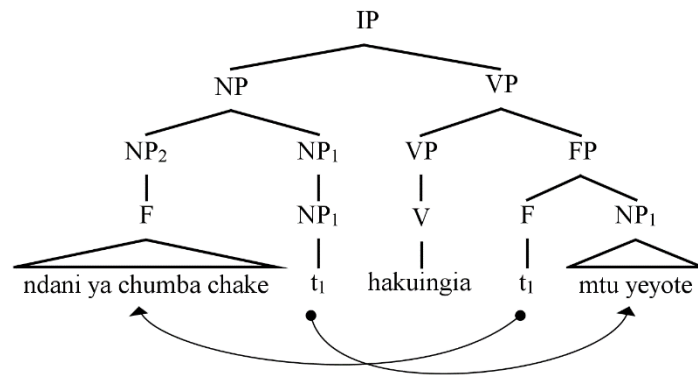


**Figure 3: Focus on Object Left Dislocation**

Figure 3 depicts the displacement of constituent *abiria wengine* from the right edge of the verb *tuliwaacha* and its relocation before the verb for the purpose of focus. The moved element signifies

new information in the utterance, such as the indication of passengers left at the port of Bukoba, answering the question: *nani waliachwa katika bandari ya Bukoba?* ‘Who were left at the port of Bukoba?’

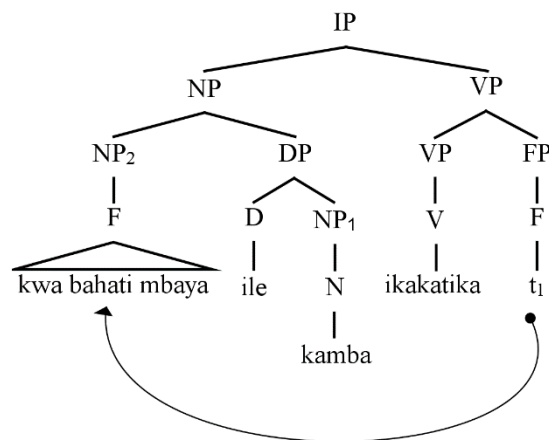
Moreover, in Swahili, locatives can be subjected to focus within left dislocation. Locatives are repositioned from the right edge of the verb to the left. This movement highlights them as focal information. PFS Theory illustrates the movement of locatives, which is then adjoined to the left part of a sister node, as shown in Figure 4.



**Figure 4: Focus on Locative Left Dislocation**

Figure 4 illustrates the movement of the locative *ndani ya chumba chake* from the right edge of the verb *hakuvingia* and its positioning at the left edge, performed to mark focus in the utterance.

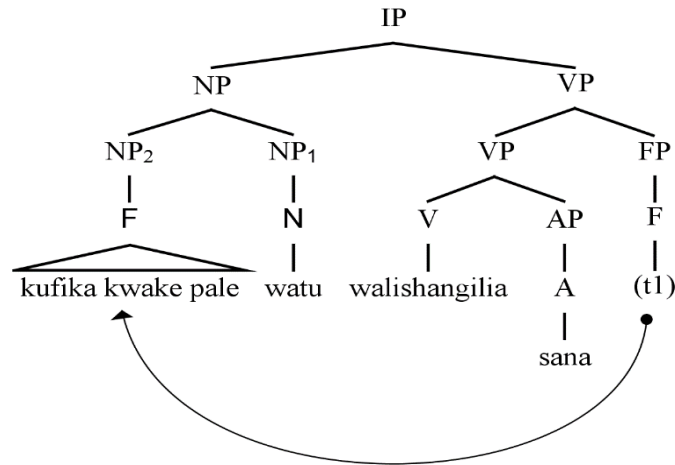
Furthermore, PFS Theory suggests the possibility of left-dislocating prepositional phrases by positioning them prior to the subject. The entirety of a PP can be moved from the right edge of the verb and placed before the subject, where it functions as emphasised information complementing the presupposed content. Figure 5 represents this analysis of PP left dislocation under PFS Theory.



**Figure 5: Focus on Prepositional Phrase Left Dislocation**

In Figure 5, the PP *kwa bahati mbaya* is shifted from the right edge of the verb to a position prior to the subject *ile kamba*. This movement exemplifies ex-situ placement for the PP in Swahili, achieved through left dislocation for the purpose of focusing.

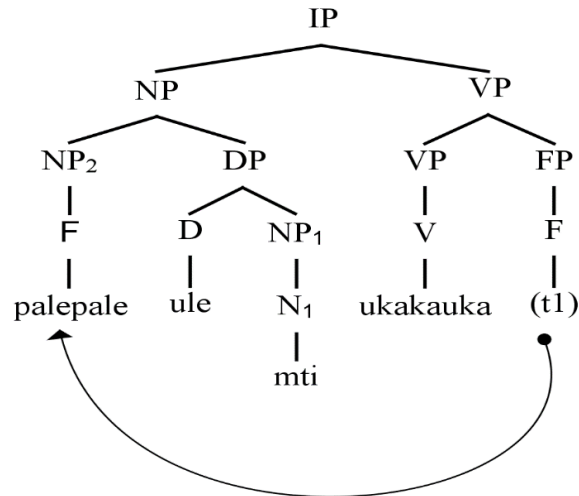
Additionally, PFS Theory signifies focus marking within infinitive left dislocation. Infinitives can be moved from the right edge of the verb and positioned before the subject to serve the function of focus. Left-dislocated infinitives are typically interpreted as highlighted information within the utterance, complementing the presupposed knowledge of the interlocutors. The displacement and positioning of infinitives prior to subjects are shown in Figure 6.



**Figure 6: Focus on Infinitive Left Dislocation**

Figure 6 illustrates the left dislocated infinitive *kufika kwake pale*, which is preposed via PFS Theory's prepositioning principle. The movement serves to indicate focus in Swahili utterances, as the relocated constituent is adjoined at the left node of the sister node preceding the subject *watu* 'people'.

Lastly, PFS Theory analyses focus positioning in adverb left dislocation. Adverbs are shifted from the right edge of the verb using prepositioning principles. The left dislocated adverb is interpreted as emphasised information in the utterance, highlighting the extent of action performed within the verb. Specifically, the adverb is left dislocated before the subject in the utterance, as demonstrated in Figure 7.



**Figure 7: Focus on Adverb Left Dislocation**

In Figure 7, the adverb *palepale* is displaced from the right edge of the verb and positioned after the subject *ule mti*. This movement adheres to the prepositioning and adjunction principle of PFS Theory. Thus, left-dislocated elements connect to the left edge of the sister node through sister adjunction principles. The placement before the subject represents ex-situ positioning for adverbs in Swahili, implemented for focusing purposes through left dislocation.

## 5 Conclusion and recommendation

This paper synthesises three principal findings related to left dislocation in Swahili. First, left dislocation represents a syntactic movement of constituents, maintaining the sentence's original meaning. While certain elements are repositioned from in situ to ex-situ, the sentence conveys equivalent meaning. The distinction between standard and inverted structures lies primarily in their information structure, where inverted structures convey new, highlighted, or emphasised information. Unlike other syntactic movements for focus, such as clefting, left dislocation in Swahili does not alter the type of sentence. Additionally, left dislocation in Swahili allows for any constituents present in situ at the right edge of the verb argument to be left dislocated. Notably, agents in Swahili cannot be left dislocated, as they typically occupy the left edge of the verb in their natural position. In instances with double objects, only one object (typically the direct object) can be left dislocated in Swahili. Lastly, Swahili has been classified as a non-resumptive language. This entails that there is no pronoun resumption of left-dislocated elements in the vacated site, a feature present in other languages, such as English and Zulu. In Swahili, left-dislocated elements utilise object markers incorporated within the verb. Therefore, Swahili employs a clitic object marker as in Luganda and Arusa. In cases of left dislocation of prepositional phrases, infinitives, locatives, and adverbs, there is often a bare object marking unless an object is left dislocated. Ultimately, the findings underscore the key characteristics and functions of left dislocation in Swahili, providing valuable contributions to the ongoing scholarly discourse on syntactic phenomena in Bantu languages. Furthermore, dislocation is subdivided into left and right dislocations as indicated in the introductory part. Overall, the current study examined the syntax of left dislocation in Swahili, focusing on its types, functions, and properties. Further studies can focus on right dislocation as the

counterpart mechanism of argument movement of simple sentence elements. This is because the status of left dislocation in Swahili complex and compound sentences is unknown. In some contexts, Swahili simple sentences with left-dislocated elements are used to construct complex and compound sentences. Other scholars can focus on this to bridge the existence gap. Again, the current study was limited to *argument* focus within left dislocation. Further researchers can highlight other types of focus, such as predicate focus and sentence focus with dislocation. Lastly, there are various mechanisms of moving sentence elements from one position to another, such as topicalization, preposing and postposing. The current study was limited to left dislocation. Other researchers and scholars can focus on these mechanisms by reflecting on the information structure.

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## Notes

### List of abbreviations:

1. PASS=Passive, 2. APPL= Applicative, 3. CAUS = Causative, 4. SM = Subject marker, 5. OM = Object marker, 6. FV = Final vowel, 7. REC = Reciprocal, 8. NTM= Narrative Tense Marker, 9. PRT = Present, 10. LOC = Locative, 11.INF = Infinitive, 12. RM = Relative marker, 13. STV = Stative, 14. NS = Nominalizer suffix, 15. IP = Inflectional phrase, 16. FP = Focus phrase, 17. PP = Prepositional phrase, 18. COP = Copula, 19. NP = Noun phrase, 20. VP = Verb phrase, 21. PF. = Present aspect, 22. REV = Reversive marker, 23.CM= Conditional marker, 24. SVO = Subject-Verb-Object. Numbers alongside the nouns indicate the noun class of a particular noun (Morphologically)