Significant correction: On p. 104, the gloss given for Yorùbá the left-hand example in (53a) i.e. without the pluralizer àwọ should not include the definite plural 'the dogs'. The excluded reading is in fact available in a similar example of Mandarin, as reported on p. 29 of R. Yang [2001] Common nouns, classifiers & quantification in Chinese (Dissertation, Rutgers University, New Jersey), but the two examples are nonparallel: the Mandarin crucially lacks a sortal classifier which arguably corresponds to little *n*, and in the Yorùbá example the notional noun has a closed-class prefix which again arguably corresponds to little *n*. The interpretive difference disproves any structural equation between the bare noun root of Chinese and the minimal free form of Yorùbá; the latter is structurally a bare singular as discussed below, and allows a plural reading if either indefinite or inanimate, as preciently noticed by Welmers [1973] African Language Structures (University of California Press, Berlekey), p. 220.
Object Positions in Benue-Kwa

Papers from a workshop at Leiden University, June 1994

edited by
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Aspectual Licensing
and Object Shift

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1. What causes nonfinite OV in Kwa and Kru?

OV constructions abound in Niger-Congo, but they aren’t uniformly distributed across the family. FINITE OV (S O V-Tense) is restricted to Izôn (Williamson 1965); AUXILIATED OV (S Aux O V) predominates in Mandekan (Koopman 1992, Zribi-Hertz & Hanne 1994, Hutchison 1995) and Kru (§3 info), and occurs sporadically across Kwa (§2); in most Kwa examples, the ‘verb’ is a bound quasi-nominal. CONTROLLED OV, i.e. in a biclausal structure, also employs a bound nominalisation strategy. The commonest OV type in Kwa is a free GERUND formed by reduplication.1

In principle, any one of these OV types could be either archaic or innovative. Both Givón (1979) and Williamson (1986) reconstruct finite OV to proto-Niger Congo, but this is unpersuasive if finite OV occurs in only one Niger-Congo language (Izôn). Accepting that the separation of Mandekan is older than that of Izôn (Welmers 1973, Williamson 1989), finite OV would have to have been independently lost several times, which is less probable than its having been innovated once.


§2 gives a synchronic analysis of Gbôc OV via object shift from underlying VO, and extends the same mechanism to Igbó and Yorùbá. The proposal, that object shift is aspectually conditioned, is framed in a configurational approach to event composition (Verkuyl 1972, 1993): in a durative (nonterminative) sentence, object preposing is motivated by a principle—call it SCOPOPHOBIA—that forces an object out of the verb’s c-command domain (§3). The specific trigger of object shift varies: in Gbôc, it is a progressive Aux (but not always) or a closed set of matrix control verbs; in Standard Igbó and Yorùbá, only control verbs trigger OV; nonstandard Igbó and Yorùbá varieties have future and perfective OV constructions respectively, but not OV progressives.

The question of whether the aspectual trigger of object shift is semantic or morphological poses itself insistent only for Kru (§4). Kru is the second gap in Heine’s account; he may have assumed that Kru OV phenomena are comparable to those in Kwa, but available descriptions suggest otherwise. Koopman’s (1984) verb-movement analysis sets up [S Aux O V] in complementary distribution with [S O V t], but there remains the fact that Auxes occur in both OV and VO contexts. Koopman herself records apparent instances of [S Aux O V], and finds scant evidence for underlying OV which is not theory-internal in character. This situation opens the door to a reanalysis of Kru as underlyingly VO, plus object shift. While a V-movement analysis expects the VO examples to form a natural class based on the absence of Aux, an object shift analysis predicts that OV examples should have something in common, namely durativity. For the latter view, it is encouraging that Marchese (1981) explicitly ties the Kru Aux/non-Aux distinction to aspect.

2 This account answers Williamson’s objection to an underlying VO analysis of Kwa.
2. OV as object shift in Kwa

In Kwa, OV formations with the distribution of ordinary argument DPs—free gerunds—are morphologically distinct from those arising in a sentential domain. The latter are always bound, with two variants: as the complement of Aux—auxiliated OV (cf. Tesnière 1939, Déchaine 1993, p. 473)—and as the complement of a control verb, controlled OV, i.e. in a biclausal structure (Awóyale 1983):

(2) OV formations

bound (gerunds)

monoclausal biclausal (auxiliated) (controlled)

The bound/free OV distinction is respected in Gbè (§2.1). It holds weakly in Standard Yorùbà and Standard Ègbò, which lack auxiliated OV altogether, but substantively in nonstandard varieties (§§2.2-2.3) as well as in Nùpè (§2.4) and western Kwa (§2.5). This bifurcation undermines Heine’s equation of [OV] with [Poss-N], but it also shows that the OV syntax of Kwa is more than a historical boneyard.

2.1. Gbè

Heine (1980) recap’s the standard view of Ègbò OV, due to Westermann (1930), that pronominal objects of deverbal expressions are Genitive, whether free as in (3) or bound as in (4), hence the agentive, gerundive, progressive and possessive constructions are all noun phrases.

(3) a. mi-à ʃó-ì
   1P-DEF beat-AGT
   ‘she who beats us’

b. mi-à ʃó-ò
   1P-DEF beat-H
   ‘our being beaten’

(4) a. È lè [mi-à ʃó-nì]
   3S AUX 1P-DEF  eat-AGR
   ‘he/she is eating’

b. È lè [mi-à ʃó-gé]
   3S AUX 1P-DEF beat-AGR
   ‘she is about to beat us’

However, Westermann himself (pp. 49, 58ff.) analyzes mi-à as a clitic plus definite article, which is not patently Genitive, and further describes it as the form used in compounds (5a) and nonpossessive appositions (5b). In a real possessive phrase, by contrast, mi-à—like any ordinary DP—needs the overt Genitive marker ʃ-ù, (5c). It would thus be safer to characterise mi-à as neither nominative nor accusative.

(5) a. mi-à wò
   1P-DEF PL
   ‘I’

b. mi-à Ètò-à wò
   1P-DEF DEF PL
   ‘we the Ètò’

c. mi-à ʃ(f)cè xò
   1P-DEF GEN house
   ‘our house’

In (Gèn) Mínà, related to the root ‘factative’ (null Tense) sentence in (6), Hounguès (1996) describes the progressive constructions in (7). Morphosyntactic features of the three different variants are listed to the right.

(6) Mù dì nù.
   1S eat thing
   ‘I ate, I had a meal’

(7) a. Mù le dì nù.
   1S AUX-H eat thing
   (no object shift)
   ‘I am/was eating’

b. Mù le nù dì-à.
   1S AUX thing eat-AGR
   (no segmental AGR suffix)
   object shift to the left of V

Mínà progresses show the following possibilities: auxiliation without object shift, (7a); auxiliation with object shift, (7b); gerundive with object shift (7c).

Note that the bracketed constituent in (7c) is identical to the free gerund in (8): there is reduplication, suffixal H-tone and object shift.

(8) nù dì-à (2)
   1S AUX thing eat-2 EAT-LOC
   ‘(the) eating/food’

This parallel is consistent with an analysis of (7c) where the bracketed material is the complement of locative jì, lit. ‘I am at the eating’. The categorical identity of jì as P or N (AmeKà 1995) is beside the fact that a phrasal PP projection intervenes between the gerund and the Aux:

'Cf. Froggy went a-courtin’ and I’m a-workin’ on the railroad, where a-V-ing is said to be a Middle English reduction of a PP at or on V-ing (Barber 1993, p. 163).
In contrast to (7b), neither [H qü ni] in (7a) nor [ni qü-ç] in (7b) are free forms. These data conform to the split between free (gerundive) and bound (auxiliated) OV in the typological tree in (2).

In F-n, Kinyalolo (1992, 1997) finds a contrast between auxiliated OV, optionally including irrealis ni, (10), and a free OV gerund which is reduplicated except in the presence of overt irrealis or habitual aspect or negation.

An alternative to analyzing these gerunds as nominalised clauses is to treat them as nominalised VPs (Fabb 1992a). Within a categorial framework that dispenses with the feature [\{\}] (Décâine, 1993, Wunderlich 1995) where V is simply defined as non-nominal, it becomes X-bar theoretically possible for a VP to be directly selected by D (Hoenguls 1996). Descriptively, it seems that F-n gerunds have no

Kinyalolo argues that if IR/R/AB/NEG\# are phrasal heads in a Pollockian exploded IP, then the bracketed strings in (10)-(11) must contain full clauses. But alternatively these heads might be adverb-like X\#-adjuncts (Décâine, 1992, 1995). Furthermore, it’s unclear how a sentential analysis of gerunds could bear on the complementarity of these items with reduplication, as in (11).  

8Kinyalolo (1992) leaves we ungrammed in da Kru (1991) and Kinyalolo (1997) labels it FOC. Fabb (1990) follows Kagei (1989) in calling it a location noun comparable to Mina f it. The bracketed material in (10) can be shifted (Kinyalolo 1992, p. 45), reminiscent of Achebe’s (1978a) analysis, but it is still not a free nominal since it can’t occupy an A-position.

9And a fourth item to ‘previously’, which cannot be glossed as. Perhaps the list is longer.

10Similarly, the non-compound of D-n is glossed by Collins (1995:64, cf. Lewis 1991) as ‘future’ and assumed to occupy a Tense-like position. Its multiple occurrence is taken to indicate IP-level coordination. This follows only if there is no other source for multi-event readings, and commits us to positing IP-level coordination in examples like the following:

(i) John read the comics and the sports section. coordinate objects
(ii) Mary went to the movies and out to a fancy restaurant. coordinate PP
(iii) Mark and Maddie both show up at the birthday party. coordinate subjects

To avoid such a redundancy, we can adopt an apsectual view of evenhood, cf. Décâine (1997).

syntactic H tone (apart from the optional, final 3\#), but ëë and Mina gerunds do have an obligatory H tone, which could be associated with the D position. A related effect is that F-n gerund reduplication can be blocked. These properties are expressed in (12):

(12) a. 

b. 

(12) comes with some ancillary assumptions. Relevant to the present discussion is Décâine’s distinction between referential and non-referential categories, e.g. N, D, V, T versus Asp:

(13) 

\[ \begin{array}{ccc} 
\text{N} & \text{D} & \text{V} \\
\text{[Functional]} & + & + \\
\text{[Referential]} & + & + \\
\end{array} \]
ASPECTUAL LICENSING AND OBJECT SHIFT

Comparing optionality of object shift in the Mînà progressive contrasts to its exceptionlessness in gerunds in all three Gbè varieties, the motivation for movement seems to reflect a categorial difference. If gerundive object shift is Case-driven, something else must trigger progressive object shift. Comparing Mînà (7a) with the other progressives in the three Gbè varieties, object shift correlates with morphological (affixal) content in Asp. This points to aspect itself as the movement trigger. It is also striking that a Mînà intransitive verb reduplicates just where object shift would otherwise occur (Hounguès 1996), i.e. in (15b) but not (15c):

(15) a. Mû yi.
   1s leave
   'I left'

b. Mû le yi (*yiı)
   1s AUX-H leave leave
   'I was leaving'

c. Mû le yi-ı (yiı-ı)
   1s AUX leave-leave-AGR
   'stylistic variant of (15b)

This too is not easily understood as a Case effect, but one can generalize from to (7) to (15) if intransitives project an XP complement (Hale & Keyser 1993, Hale et al. 1995). There are two possible implementations: implicit object (16a) or light verb, (16b).

(16) a. VP
   b. VP

From either source, object shift (plus V-to-Asp) would yield the effect of reduplication by disturbing in situ identification of the empty node, thereby triggering resumptive-like doubling of the overt lexical content:

(17) a. VP
   b. VP

In a possessive DP, assuming the representation in (9) supra, head-movement to D+ is forced by the strong Spec-head agreement that Fukui (1986) posits in such structures.

To maximize parallelism with (12a), (12b) has the adverb in the V-incorporation slot, (14a), or else to check it off by overt object shift (14b), but both operations are not conjointly necessary.

In a possessive DP, assuming the representation in (9) supra, head-movement to D0 is forced by the strong Spec-head agreement that Fukui (1986) posits in such structures.

Wunderlich (1995) has the mirror image of this feature, called [Dependent].

For some reason, AsP cannot itself be the complement of D, even though the proposal in (12) is that VP can be (cf. Abney 1987, p. 195). Intuitively, no selection is possible between categories that are too ‘similar’, since this would be akin to categorial recursion.

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It remains to ask how Míná’s two nonlocative progressives—shifted and nonshifted—differ semantically. No interpretive difference has been found with a referential object, but with an quantified object, a scopal contrast emerges. If shifted, the indefinite mu de ‘a lone thing’ loses its in situ negative polarity reading: 18

(18) a. Nyé mú lè ñu ñu ñu ñu. Míná
1S NEG AUX-H eat thing one NEG.AGR
‘I am/was not eating anything’
b. Nyé mú lè ñu ñu ñu ñu. ñu. 1S NEG AUX thing one eat AGR NEG.AGR
‘I am/was not eating a (certain) thing’
‘There is a thing that I am/was not eating’

A precise account of this difference depends on the structure of the right-edge, negative agreement item 19. Observe that the landing site of the object has wide scope with respect to negation, even though the shifted position is still to the right of NEG. One way to understand this is if, as suggested for Fùn gerunds in (10)-(11), Míná NEG is an X0-adjunct and not a phrasal head. 17 As such, would govern the complement of V in (18a), but not a Spec position above V, yielding the reading of (18b). 18

Now, if shifting a nonfererential object takes it out of the scope of NEG, one can ask if shifting a referential object is analogous. This possibility gains interest from the preceding considerations, inasmuch as referential object shift in the progressive construction is otherwise unmotivated.

Fabb (1990) also cites Fùn OV phrases with neither V reduplication nor a final particle. These examples occur after aspectual control verbs like ‘start’ and ‘stop’ (19a), cf. Freed (1979), and also after the verb ‘know’ in the sense of ‘know how to VP’ (19b). 19

(19) a. Òn be/gb× xo dσ. Fùn
1S start/stop word say
‘I started/stopped speaking’
b. Ë nyö nu ni bió. 3S know thing all do
‘S/he knows how to do everything’

The point is that these configurations contain no morphosyntactic triggers for movement, so the only available trigger is semantic.

18These data have been kindly provided by D. Hounguès.
17Relevant to this proposal is the linear order of NEG (before Aux, presumably in Tense) and the form of the pronominal subject: a bare verb or an Aux is preceded by a clinic (15), while NEG is preceded by an independent pronoun (18). Neither property is expected if NEG is a phrasal head, but both are plausibly related to the status of NEG as an syntactic adjunct.
19Technically, NEG adjoined to T would not c-command either object position, and it is c-command that licenses polarity. However, Déchaine (1995, pp. 146-49) argues that negative polarity is epiphenomenal in Kwa, and that Kwa NEG is simply a predicate operator.
20According to Fabb (1990), this is not the only way to say ‘know how to VP’ in Fùn.

2.2. Yorúbá

Although Standard Yorúbá lacks finite or auxiliated OV, it does have a counterpart to Fùn semantic biclausal OV: controlled OV with a bound verb, (20). An OV gerund formed by reduplication is also possible, (21). 20

(20) a. Ó kọ [iwé é-kà]. Std. Yorúbá
3S learn book NOM-read
‘S/he learned (how) to read’
b. Sàlà ma [iǹ kún].
3S AGR know house NOM-paint
‘S/he knows how to paint houses’

(21) Ó kọ [iwé ki-kà].
3S learn book NOM-read
‘S/he learned the art of reading’

Object shift is optional in the complement of nonaspectual control verbs like ‘want’, (22); the shifted gerund is correspondingly ambiguous between control, non-control and monoclusal readings, (23). 21

(22) a. Mo fè è-hun aσ. Std. Yorúbá
1S want NOM-weave cloth
‘I want to weave [some] cloth’
b. Mo fè àσ ǹ-hun. 1S want cloth NOM-weave
‘I want to weave [some] cloth’

(23) Mo fè àσ hì-hun. 1S want cloth NOM-weave
‘I want to weave [some] cloth’
‘I want [some] cloth-weaving to occur’
‘I want [some] woven cloth’

Another candidate for semantic object shift is the event relative (24), distinguished from an object relative (25) by object doubling. By hypothesis, reconstructing the object to its A-position blocks the event reading; perhaps doubling forces object wide scope with respect to V.

20Data from Abraham (1958: xxvif.), Awioyèlayè (1974, 1983, p.c.), ‘W. Afiinbòló (p.c.). The bracketed form in (20a) cannot occupy an A-position, but that in (21a) can:

(i) ‘[iwé é-kà] i-wi mi. book NOM-read-AGR please 1S
(ii) [iwé ki-kà] à wi mi. book NOM-read-AGR please 1S
‘I like reading’

A long tradition—from Bowen (1858) to Awoòbalòyì (1978b)—derives (20a) from (21) by consonant deletion (cf. Afiinbòló & Ovelïrin 1975). This threatens the typology in (2) by reducing the bound/free distinction to phonology. But Awioyèlayè objects to a C-to-D deletion analysis of (20a) because it is not synonymous with (21a). Bound/free forms also coexist in raising contexts, (iii). Unless the mi in (iv) is pure phonology, this pair does not challenge (2). 21

(iii) ǹkà ǹyì sì è-in. (iv) lò yì sì ni ìrō-
ground this be easy NOM-hoe
ground this be easy at NOM-hoe
‘This soil is easy to hoe’
‘This soil is easy hoeing’

languages and posits a nullativized event nominalization; for different views see Koopman (1984) and Manfredi (1993).

If the relativized item in (24) is the noun ‘drum’ and the syntactic nominalization beating’. If the relativized item in (24) is the

Though Standard Yorùbá doesn’t have auxiliated OV, Òwọrọ-Yorùbá does, in the perfective (Oyetùnlá 1992b, p. 33):23

(26) a. Sùbú ú jí è sù ɣẹm. 

Sùbú has eaten that yam/those yams

b. Mò tì sò o. 

I have watched her/him/it

(27) a. Sùbú ó mí i sù tìbè jé. 

Sùbú has eaten that yam/those yams

b. Mò ó mí i so. 

I have watched her/him/it

2.3. Igbo

Standard Igbo has no finite or auxiliated OV, but does have controlled OV. Compare infinitive-VO and nominalised-OV complements:24

(28) a. Ò kàzhútì m àgbà àgbà. 

S/he taught me to ride a bike

b. Ò kàzhútì m àgbà àgbà. 

S/he taught me to ride a bike

That object shift is optional in some contexts suggests it is not Case-driven. This is confirmed by the fact that the shifted object optionally appears in the Genitive, yielding a marked reading of expert knowledge:25

(30) a. Ò mìrì ą gbìgì à-gbà. 

3s know-PERF iron NOM-move 

S/he knows how to ride a bike

b. ?? Ò mìrì ą gbìgì àgbà. 

3s know-PERF INF-move iron 

S/he knows how to ride a bike

b. ? Ò mìrì ą gbìgì àgbà. 

3s know-PERF INF-move iron 

Object shift is usually obligatory with control verbs, (32), but it is exceptionally optional with a nonreferential object such as àkwà in the light VP kwa àkwà ‘to sew/perform the action of sewing’, (33).

(32) a. ?? Ò mìrì ą kwa bìbì. 

3s know-PERF INF-sew blouse 

b. Ò mìrì ą kwa bìbì a-kwa. 

3s know-PERF blouse NOM-sew 

S/he knows how to sew blouses

(33) a. Ò mìrì ą kwa a-kwa. 

3s know-PERF INF-sew cloth 

S/he knows how to sew

b. Ò mìrì ą kwa bìbì a-kwa. 

3s know-PERF blouse NOM-sew 

S/he knows how to sew

23Cf. Baiñgboye (1992). Collins (1994a) reports similar patterns in Gbô, Igbo and other Kwa languages and posits a null fact head (cf. Kiryakovsky & Kiparsky 1971). But null fact poses two related problems: the necessity of wh-movement just in Kwa languages; the unavailability of the null fact structure in English. Both stipulations can be dropped if Kwa but not English independently has access to an event-structure mechanism of object shift (the hypothesis of this paper). Unfortunately, object shift doesn’t explain why, in Yorùbá, a relativised subject can get a fact/event reading comparable to (24), as in the following (Baiñgboye 1975, p. 205):

(i) [Ôrì mì tí ó kí] à gbì ą gbì. 

friend in REL 3s die FOC NEG allow COMP 1s come

‘It was [my friend’s having died] that prevented me from coming’

Ó. Awoyàliyi (p. c.) notes that the form ìì is accidentally ambiguous between the lexical noun ‘drum’ and the syntactic nominalization ‘beating’. If the relativized item in (24) is the latter, the chain is more complex. An open question is the base-generated position of the relativized event nominalization; for different views see Koopman (1984) and Manfredi (1993).

24If Òwọrọ is not an Aux, (27a-b) might be serial constructions with an initial ‘take’ verb —cf. mì ‘take hold of (in one hand)’— and resultant semantics (‘The yams got eaten’).

25Gbìsì has data from P. Ikhùni; in the Leiden workshop, E. Ezi and R-J. Anyanwà agreed that similar contrasts hold in their dialects, hence I dare to call them Standard.
In (35), the source of Genitive case is the Aspect-marked matrix verb (§5.3.1 infra), making it an ECM construction. Since object shift applies independently of ECM, this confirms that object shift is not Case-driven.

The verb that follows all these shifted objects occurs in a bound form. Such bound forms freely follow any direct object (36), but they are marginal after a Genitive-marked object (37).

(36) a. Œ rì-ri ji.  
35 eat-ASP eat  
'S/he ate yam'

b. Œ rì-ri ji e-ri.26  
35 eat-ASP eat NOM-eat  
'S/he ate yam as expected'

(37) a. Œ rì-ele ji.  
35 eat-PERF yam.GEN  
'S/he has eaten yam'

b. Œ rì-ele ji e-ri.27  
35 eat-PERF yam.GEN NOM-eat  
['S/he ate yam as expected']

The contrast between marginal (37b) and well-formed (35) confirms that the ECM pattern in (35) arises in a bi-clausal structure.

Although Standard Êgbò lacks auxiliated OV, some areas of southern Êgbò have an (epistemic or deontic) obligative future construction in auxiliated OV, as in Ávù-Igbo (38a), or Echiè-Igbo (39a). The bound, VP-final item has a marked presupposition.28 The nominalised verb in the ordinary VO future, is also bound, cf. (38b), (39b).

(38) a. Œ gù [rin ahù] n-ri.29  
35 AUX food that NOM-eat  
'S/he must (certainly) eat that food'

b. Œ gù e-ri [rin ahù].  
35 AUX NOM-eat food that  
'S/he is going to eat that food' (Emè stable 1981, p. 198)

(39) a. Œ gù akhù a-tà.  
35 AUX palm.kernel NOM-chew[GEN]30  
'S/he must (certainly) chew palm kernels'

b. Œ gù a-tà akhù.  
35 AUX NOM-chew palm.kernel.GEN  
'S/he is going to chew palm kernels' (Ndumele 1993, p. 73)

26The presuppositional effect of sentence-final e-ri recalls the Fin 'clausal determiner' i (Lefebvre 1992, DeGraff 1994).
27This judgement reflects discussion with E. N. Emè stable and P. A. Nwakwu, 21/3/86.
28Perhaps similar to the bound, VP-final item in the past tense sentence in (36b).
29Nearby Òkĩrè has the construction just with pronominal objects (Emè stable 1981, p. 127). The same n- prefix may also occur in the imperative form ìyì ìì 'Come, let's be going!'
30The H-downstepped H tone on the nominalised verb, if accurate, might indicate Genitive.
what is traditionally called an imperfective construction (44c).

(44) a. *Ápi (ó) Უàn Yāpí. *Ák̀yè
   3S see
   ‘Apì saw Yàpì’

b. *Ápi o Უàn Yāpí. 3S,IRR see
   ‘Apì will see Yàpì’

c. *Ápi ẁ Yāpí Უàn. 3S,ANIM.IMPERF see
   ‘Apì sees Yàpì’

Ábè has VO in non-control environments:

(45) a. M̀ dì s̀kà. Ábè
   1S eat rice
   ‘I ate rice’ / ‘I have eaten rice’

b. M̀ ỳ c̀ dì s̀kà. 1S NEG eat rice
   ‘I didn’t eat rice’ / ‘I haven’t eaten rice’

c. M̀ c̀ dì s̀kà. 1S IMPF eat rice
   ‘I habitually ate/eat rice’ / ‘I’m in the process of eating rice’

d. M̀ à dì s̀kà. 1S FUT eat rice
   ‘I’m going to eat rice’

Control verbs like ‘begin’, ‘want’, ‘intend’ and ‘like’ take OV (Tellier 1986, N’Guessan & Manfredi 1989), but the OV complement of such verbs has overt nominalisation only in a negative context:

(46) a. M̀ dì ̀ s̀kà d̀ j. Ábè
   1S begin rice eat
   ‘I (have) started to eat rice’

b. M̀ ỳ c̀ dì ̀ s̀kà d̀ j. 1S NEG begin rice eat- NOM
   ‘I didn’t start to eat rice’ / ‘I haven’t started to eat rice’

Given morphosyntactic evidence for V-to-Infl in Ábè (Manfredi 1988), the case for object shift rests on whether there is some property shared by all verbs that take OV complements in (46). If all and only control verbs take OV, then either Tellier is correct that Ábè VPs are underway head-final, or else object shift in biclausal structures is obligatory ECM.

35N. P. N. N’Guessan (p.c.) reports that the traditional term for this overt nominalisation is what is traditionally called an imperfective construction (44c).

36Tellier (1986) gives examples with the matrix verb yì a ‘intend’, but doesn’t mark tone and hence may not have distinguished the two kinds of nonfinite OV in (46). When I checked her examples, it emerged that yì a takes a bare verb in its complement, i.e. it goes with (46a). As it happens, Tellier did find an aspectually-based ordering difference in control complements, related not to the object alone but to the semantic content of the embedded V: ‘learn to catch’ has the opposite order from ‘start catching’, cf. (i) vs. (ii).
3. Scopophobia in compositional eventology

My proposal regarding the trigger of object shift is that the object of any semantically durative sentence is scopophobic, where **semantically durative** means strictly lacking a terminative reading (i.e. not just aspectually ambiguous). Clearly there are durative sentences that lack overt object shift in various constructions and languages, but this isn’t unexpected. Either the sentence has at least one terminative reading, or else object shift may be covert (masked by further head movement) or else blocked by some other factor such as the content of the object’s D0 position. I’ll cleave to this route but won’t get very far very fast.

Verkuyl (1972) held that aspect (in the traditional sense of *Aktionsart* or the *Vendler classes*) is not lexical but rather compositional on the surface syntax of objects. Abney’s DP helped Verkuyl (1994) refine this claim in terms of interactions between nominal and verbal functional projections. Verkuyl’s type-logic eschews events as semantic primitives; events arise as a product of dynamicity (temporal quantification) located in T (49), plus object cardinality (atemporal quantification) located in D (50). To calculate an aspectual class of events, both quantificational types are conjointly required, (51).

(49)  
\[ \text{TP} = t \]
\[ \text{Spec} \]
\[ <<<<<<, t, t, t, t > = \text{T} \]
\[ \text{VP} = <<<<<<, t, t, t > > \]

(50)  
\[ \text{DP} = <<<<<<, t, t, t, t, t > > \]
\[ \text{Spec} \]
\[ <<g, t, t, t, t, t, t > = D \]
\[ \text{NP} = <g, t, t > (\text{unbounded set}) \]

35Judgements from ‘Y. 
36When verbs that refer to a state or a quality, such as ‘to be’, ‘to have’, ‘to be able’ or ‘to receive’ are followed by a noun, the noun is often plural. This is a case of scopophobia. In some languages, the noun is always plural, regardless of the number of the subject. In other languages, the noun may be singular or plural, depending on the context. For example, in English, ‘The dog ate the apple’ is grammatically correct, but ‘The dog ate the apples’ may be more common. This phenomenon is often referred to as scopophobia.

This recalls object shift in durative/nonterminative sentences. If terminativity is “the property of a sentence to pertain to a bounded temporal entity” (Verkuyl 1994, cf. Krifka 1989, Stechow 1996), then duratives include not just progressives but also habituals, negatives (*I didn’t eat the apple for an hour*) and other statives, plus irrealis futures.

(53a) shows that cardinality and definiteness are underspecified for a bare noun object in the scope of V.35 This has implications for the understanding of object shift. A VP-internal object forces composition of a terminative event, consistent with the construal of (52)-(53) as completed aspectual readings. A terminative reading is obtained by removing the object from the verb’s scope:

\[ \text{NP} = \text{NP’} \]
\[ \text{Spec} \]
\[ \text{VP} = \text{VP’} \]

Now for some typology. There is a direct relation between aspect composition in Verkuyl’s sense and the content of T and D. This relation has been obscured by the fact that null (referential) T and D aren’t allowed in the languages that most semanticists study; but it is transparent in languages that allow T and D to be null. In Kwa languages D isn’t, and T is the past reference of eventive (52a) and the nonpast reference of noneventive (52b). Welmers (1973) dubbed this default tense ‘factative’. An overt deictic modifier overrides the strict requirement of articles (or bare plurals) on count nouns in Germanic and Romance mask these effects. Perhaps the Slavic option of bare count nouns is linked to morphologised aspect and the *Aktionsart*/aspect dichotomy (Verkuyl 1994, pp. 10-12). In Romance, object shift excludes “specific time reference” and gives a “property” reading (Potma 1993, p. 182).
That’s why the object must move. So why can it move, i.e. why is Spec of AsP (or AgrP) an ok landing site? If null D needs to be identified by licensed via Spec-head agreement:

\[
\text{(54) a. } T \quad [\text{vp V DP }] \\
\text{b. } T \quad DP_i \quad [\text{vp V t_i }] 
\]

That’s why the object must move. So why can it move, i.e. why is Spec of AsP (or AgrP) an ok landing site? If null D needs to be identified by licensed via Spec-head agreement:

\[
\text{(55) } T \quad [\text{AsP } DP_i \quad \text{Asp}[\text{vp V t_i }]] 
\]

Verkuyl’s framework accommodates scopophobic object shift because it computes aspect upwards in the tree from the VP to the clausal domain, through the mediation of the object DP. Such a computation is readily performed in the AsP projection, which has nominal properties and is located above VP but below T.

Before retracing our steps through Kwa to look for masked scopophobia in line with the above considerations, it would be encouraging to find aspectual motivation for OV effects in at least one other branch of Niger-Congo, and there is at least a prima facie case for this in Kru.

4. OVert scopophobia in Kru

Heine (1980) tacitly assumes a VO analysis of Kru; in fact there was no alternative before Koopman (1984) posited verb-raising from underlying OV as the source of surface VO in Vátá. Koopman adopted what from the perspective of the day was the null hypothesis: VO in Kru is V2. Inasmuch as \( \text{Vz} \) is a consistent finite OV language, we expect it to pattern with other finite OV systems such as Turkish and Japanese. Similarly, inasmuch as auxiliated OV in Vátá is non-finite OV, we might expect it to resemble root-controlled OV systems such as Dutch and German. In Germanic V2, a lexically filled root-level functional head blocks VO, making OV the elsewhere case.6 However, the distribution of VO vs. OV is harder to capture in Kru, where V2 operates at the nonroot level (any tensed clause), and the list of tense-like elements that block V2 in a given Kru language is apparently arbitrary. Moreover, Kru-internal evidence for other head-final lexical projections (like PP) is equivocal at best. It is thus worth considering VO as the elsewhere case with OV derived by object shift.

4.1. Vátá

Koopman’s (1984) Vátá examples of VO and OV are collected below, divided between affirmative and negative cases.

These facts are equally consistent with object shift as they are with V2. (56a), auxless and unequivocally nondurative, is VO. Progressive (56b) is also VO, but the vocalic suffix suggests the operation of V-to-I, hence V could have raised past a shifted object.39 Irrealis/future (57a) and perfective (57b), both OV, recall \( \text{Avu}-\text{Igbo} \) and \( \text{Owor}o-\text{Yoruba} \) respectively. If irrealis and perfective were the only cases of OV, then “V2 unless there’s an Aux” would be the straightforward generalisation. However, the negative examples in (58) and (59) all have Auxes, though they take VO and OV respectively. What about aspect? The apparent difference between negative VO (58) and negative OV (59) is irrealis vs. realis, at any rate it isn’t non-Aux vs. Aux. Another problem for verb raising is the source of the L tone on the phrase-final verbs in (59b,c), since this element also occurs in the root, null Tense VO form (56a). The V2 account assumes that in (56a) the verb has raised, while in (58) it has remained in its base position.40

The latter problem, namely the occurrence of derived tone on phrase-final verbs, recurs when we turn from auxiliated OV to other parts of the typology in (2), namely gerund and controlled OV as in (60). These forms

6Since den Besten’s original analysis (1977), the exact category that blocks V2 has remained a matter of debate. Zwart (1993) discusses some problems with the idea of a tensed Comp.
are preceded in Kwa. Again inconveniently for the idea of lexical OV, note the phrase-final L of the gerund in (60a).

(60) a. Kofi ni [sáá ì-ì] Váţá
   ‘Kofi’s rice eating’
   1s FUT for rice eat for leave
   ‘I will go eat rice’

4.2. Neyo

The indeterminate status of negation as affix or Aux, and the utility of the aspectual view, are further illustrated by Neyo, a near neighbor of Váţá. Neyo has two negative forms, one VO, the other OV:41

(61) Ne mana dii-no. Néyó
   15.NEG drink raphia-wine
   ‘I don’t drink raphia wine’

(62) a. E ne fe ka. Néyó
   1s NEG strength have
   ‘I am not strong’

b. …ma ne wa yo la.
   but 15.NEG PAST child bring
   ‘…but I didn’t bring the child’

To maintain the complementarity between [S V O] and [S Aux O V] required for V2, requires that the negative morpheme is an Aux in (62) but not in (61). The question is whether this distinction is learnable. One might think that pro-drop Neg is not an Aux; this would explain the VO order of (61). But then the OV order in (62b) must be due to the presence of the wa, i.e. we are forced to say that wa is an Aux (relevant evidence lacking in the source). Non-pro-drop Neg in (62a), by contrast, must count as Aux all by itself, hence OV. The problem is how to tell—Independent of surface word order (that which we wish to explain)—whether a token of negative ne is an auxiliary or not.

On this point, Marchese is convinced that the criterion is aspectual:

A sentence-second particle…is used to negate imperfective sentences and an auxiliary [is] used to negate perfective sentences. (Marchese 1982, p. 5)

In other words, Marchese predicts that a version of (61) meaning ‘I didn’t drink raphia-wine’ will be OV (hopefully, whether or not there is a wa around). If so, then aux-hood is just a diacritic for sentential aspect, bringing the Kru VO/OV distinction into line with that of Kwa: objects in the scope of V allow terminative aspect; objects outside the scope of V express durative aspect.

41Data from Thomann (1905), cited by Marchese (1982, p. 5f), sporadic tonemarking.

4.3. Déwoin

As Welmers (1977) reports, this westernmost Kru language has OV order in the perfective, progressive and future as well as in all negative forms:

(63)a. ō pé só. Déwoín
   35 cook meat
   ‘S/he cooked meat’
   b. ō ná só pi ná. Déwoín
   35 PERF cook meat
   ‘S/he has cooked meat’

(64)a. ō ná só pi. Déwoín
   35 PERF cook meat
   ‘S/he has cooked meat’
   b. ō ní só pi ná. Déwoín
   35 HAB cook meat
   ‘S/he (usually) cooks meat’
   c. ō wë pé só pi. Déwoín
   35 OBLIG cook meat
   ‘S/he ought to cook meat.’
   d. ō ḟ̣̣̣́ só pi… Déwoín
   35 IRR go meat cook-NOM go
   ‘S/he’s going to cook meat’

(65)a. ō sè só pi. Déwoín
   35 NEG meat cook
   ‘S/he didn’t cook meat’
   b. ō ní só pi ná ní. Déwoín
   35 NEG meat cook
   ‘S/he hasn’t cooked meat’
   c. ō sè só pi ná ni. Déwoín
   35 NEG meat cook
   ‘S/he isn’t cooking meat’
   d. ō sè só pi… Déwoín
   35 IRR POT meat cook
   ‘When/if s/he does cook meat…’

Welmers anticipates Koopman’s verb-second analysis with his rule of ‘object-third’:

The object appears immediately after the first ‘verb’ in a sentence, whether that is the ‘main’…verb or an auxiliary (Welmers 1977, p. 346).

Just as in Váţá, everything hinges on how—other than word order—we know that sè, ná and ní are Auxes, but ni and wè aren’t. Furthermore, as Welmers recognises, a rule of object placement that counts material from the beginning of the sentence has little to say about the phrase-final items that appear in the progressive and future, and especially about apparent doubling of the future auxiliary (64c).42 As before, the case for object shift rests on these, and on the aspectual grab-bag of OV examples—what Verkuyl calls “the durative garbage can”.

42Perhaps the rising pitch on the second token of ‘go’ is caused by the preceding, affixed tone.

43Misgivings on this point may be why Welmers uncharacteristically declines to give morpheme glosses, contrasting perhaps too much that it is impossible to attach “particularly meaningful label[s]” to the post-verb “construction markers”, namely the crucial phrase-final elements (1977, pp. 346f).
5. Covert scopophobia in Benue-Kwa

If the landing site of object-shift is Spec of AsP (67a), then the presence of independently motivated V-to-I (67b) will allow some instances of surface VO to display the durative semantics of overtly scopophobic examples.

(67) a. [AsP DP; Asp [vp V ti ]]  
    b. [ TP ... Vj [AsP DP; Aspj [vp tj ti ]] ]

In this way, scopophobia may still characterise examples where overt object shift is lacking: definiteness restrictions in Akan double objects (§5.1); the Genitive case assigned by denominal verbs in Yorùbá (§5.2) and perfective verbs in Igbo (§5.3); the absolute sentence-final position of the Igbo bound verb complement (§5.4); a range of aspectual readings of Igbo -rV inflection (§5.5); the inherent durativity of focus and the complementarity of focused and nonfocused aspects in Èfik-Ibibio (§5.6).

5.1. Definiteness restrictions in Akan double objects

As noticed by Christaller (1875) and remarked upon ever after (Stewart 1963, Lord 1982, Sâkâh & Èzé 1997), a double object Theme in Akan cannot bear the definite article nô (68a); the relevant meaning is conveyed by a serial construction (69a).44 The definite article being homophonous with animate 3S, a double-pronoun double object is also out, as is the null object counterpart denoting inanimate 3S, cf. (68b) vs. (69b). Only an indefinite theme works in both structures, (68c, 69c).45

(68) a. °dz-fen-in me síká no.  
    3S-Past 1S money the
    Akan

(69) a. °z-fen-in me nô.  
    3S-Past me no
    Akan

b. °z-fen-in me nô.  
    3S-Past me no
    Akan

c. °z-fen-in abofrá nô síká.  
    3S-Past child the money
    °s/he lent the child money

(69) a. °b-fen-in nô fen-in me.  
    3S-Past money the lend-Past 1S
    °s/he lent the money to me'

5.2. Genitive objects of Yorùbá denominal verbs

Yorùbá polysyllabic verbs fall into two sets: true V-V compounds like ré-je 'cheat' (literally 'cut-eat') whose accusative object appears between the two components (Awòbùlùyí 1969), and relatively unanalyzable forms like gbågbã 'forget' whose object is morphologically Genitive (Èlìmèlech 1982).

(70) a. Mo ré je.  
    1S cut 3S eat
    Yorùbá

b. Mo gbågbã e rë.  
    1S forget GEN 3S
    Yorùbá

Despite its inability to assign accusative, many speakers view gbågbã as a V-V compound, albeit with obscure semantics (implausibly, gbó 'take' and gbó 'perish'). But other non-splitting polysyllables have no such source e.g. pàtákì 'be important' which optionally appears with the light verb je 'do', (71a). The causative form of pàtákì takes a Genitive object, (71b).

(71) a. Ò (se) pàtákì.  
    3S do important
    Yorùbá

b. Mo pàtákì i rë.  
    1S important GEN 3S
    Yorùbá

In contrast to gbågbã, pàtákì can be focus-clefted like any other noun, i.e. without morphological nominalisation (reduplication):

(72) a. Gbó-gbågbã ni mo gbågbã e rë.  
    NOM-forget FOC 1S forget GEN 3S
    Yorùbá

b. (Pi)-pàtákì ni ivi.  
    NOM-important FOC this
    Yorùbá

44Thus Akan presumably lacks the definiteness effects described for Yorùbá in §3. Akan differs from (most of) the rest of Kwa in marking animacy obligatorily; one consequence is the complete absence of logophoric effects (Manfredi 1995, pp. 108f).

45The definiteness of the Goal is apparently irrelevant, although one wonders if a double object construction would be possible with Theme and Goal both indefinite.
A simple account of the Genitive property plus the failure to reduplicate would assign a polysyllabic V to the category of nominal predictor, which for concreteness we call A/N. This accords with a categorial redundancy: every Yoruba noun has a prefix, and no noun is a bare CV (Stahlke 1976). As a predicate, A/N requires a V-shell, forming either a simplex light verb (73a) or a causative structure (73b). For Hale & Keyser (1993), successful pronunciation of such structures entails conflation/head movement of the overt root A/N to the null V position(s). The object corresponds to the DP in the Spec of the lower VP in (73b). When must this DP be Genitive?

(73a) V* Pred AN

Suppose that A/N is stative inherently, not just as an effect of syntactic configuration, whether A/N is a pure property (intransitive pataki) or a resultative (gbibic and transitive pataki). For transitives, the question is why Accusative is unavailable. It’s incorrect to say that a category of lexical roots (A/N) is unable to assign Accusative: monosyllabic Vs like sán ‘rinse clean’ and yò ‘(s)melt’, with hypothetically identical structure, successfully assign Accusative once conflation yields a lexical item of the category V. A difference could be that, for CV roots, the position labeled Pred is simply null (74a), whereas polysyllables start out in Pred, whence they conflate to the higher V. In effect, (73b) is the pre-Spellout version of (74b).

(74a) V* VP

something prevents DP from being realised as a direct object just if the root which ends up in the upper V is polysyllabic. A relevant difference between the two structures in (74) is that DP is within the scope of A/N in

(74b) V* VP

the Genitive precursor (74b), but not in the Accusative precursor (74a). But (74b) is by hypothesis a scopophobic environment: a DP is within the scope of a durative V. It seems reasonable that object shift is not an option in (74b), because that would require nominalization but A/N is already nominal. The remaining possibility is adjunction, yielding Genitive.

Consistent with this way of looking at the problem is another class of causatives, whose cause is either Accusative (75a) or Genitive (75b):48

(75) a. Mo dà à ni àmì. Yoruba
   1s affect 3s CASE annoyance
   ‘I annoyed her/him’

b. Mo d[j] àmì u rì. 1s affect annoyance GEN 3s
   ‘I annoyed her/him’

This ‘annoy’ combines two overt lexical positions, a V filled by a CV dà as in (74a) and an A/N Pred filled by a prefixed item àmì as in (74b). In the Genitive realisation, the string dà àmì is reduced by one a, which could be evidence for the conflation of A/N. More generally, (75) teaches us that the two Case strategies correlate with the two lexicalisation patterns.

5.3. Genitive objects of Igbo progressive and perfective verbs

The object of a null-tense finite verb or an infinitive appears with citation tone; durative aspects take Genitive, realised totally (Williams 1976).

(76) a. Õ gbù-ru ànù. Igbo
   3s cut-ASP animal
   ‘S/he killed [some] animal’

b. ì-gbù ànù
   INF-cut animal
   ‘to kill an animal/animals’

(77) a. Õ gbù-ole ànù.
   3s cut-PERF animal GEN
   ‘S/he has killed [some] animal’

b. Õ nà e-gbù ànù.
   3s DUR NOM-cut animal GEN
   ‘S/he is killing [some] animal’ (all dialects which have the nà auxiliary)
   ‘S/he is killing [some] animal’ (Northern dialects only)

48If Akin uses serial verbs as another recourse to achieve the aspectual effect of fronting without nominalization, this route seems not to be available in Yoruba:

(i) Õ gbù u ọtù (*gbi) gbìgbì.
   3s age REL 3sue 3s forget
   ‘S/he became old to the point of forgetting’

(ii) Õ gbù ọtù ìyà ọtù (*gbi) gbìgbì.
   3s age reach place GEN that 3s use 3s forget
   ‘S/he became old to the point that s/he forgot’

Both sentences lack an object-sharing interpretation, whether or not the object clitic is overt.

48Example provided by Ô. Awobuluyi (p.c.). On the Case-assigner ní, see Oyelaran (1993).
The presence of Genitive case on objects of durative verbs is consistent with covert object shift, as outlined immediately above for Yorùbá.

(78) shows that even a non-Genitive object takes wide existential scope (‘Regarding that corn...’) unless the subject is definite/D-linked, (78b). This correlates with aspect: a terminative (Verkuyl’s +SQA) interpretation of the root -rV ‘chew’ as ‘eat up by chewing’ is lacking with a bare noun subject in (78a); the remaining option is the non-terminative reading, which we render as ‘gnaw on’. Terminative -rV becomes available alongside non-terminative -s only if the subject is definite/D-linked as in (78b). Correspondingly, the object is denied wide existential scope (topichood).

5.4. The sentence-final position of the Igbọ bound verb complement

Every Igbọ sentence with a null-tense, finite verb has the possibility of ending with the same bound, nominalised verb already seen in OV control (causative) eventive verbs, spellout of XP is optional (81b), occurring just if the shifted object is presupposed. The fact that the notional object NP of eventives can’t occur in a detransitive structure—confirmed by the ungrammaticality of (80b)—is consistent with the idea that the object has shifted outside the scope of the verb, rendering the VP-level structure syntactically intransitive.

(81) a. T
   b. TP

Comment is needed on the appearance of -rV inflection as the phonetic realization of different, underlyingly null functional head positions: T in (81a), Asp in (81b). The list is longer: -rV is also the Igbọ pronunciation of whatever head licenses applicatives. As Welmers & Welmers (1968) recognized, -rV is not a contentful morpheme but a morphological default like English -s, whose interpretation is wholly dictated by context. As an illustration, consider next some of its aspectual and temporal properties.

5.5. Aspectual effects of Igbọ -rV inflection

Igbọ displays a temporal-cum-aspectual difference between transitive and intransitive alternants of certain null-tense sentences: the transitives are terminative and past (82), the intransitivess durative and nonpast (83).⁴⁹

(82) a. Ŭ shi-rì ańu (n’okhù). Igbọ 
   ‘S/he cooked meat [by boiling it]’ (past)
   b. Ŭ kị-ụt-rì na ćbele n’oist. 
   ‘S/he hung [a] calabash in [the] tree’ (past)

(83) a. Âmụ shi-rì n’okhù. 
   meat boil-ASP on fire
   ‘Meat is cooking [in a pot]’ (nonpast)
   b. Âmụ kwịr-rì n’anụya ćkhù. 
   meat hang-ASP in eye fire.GEN
   ‘There is [some] meat hanging in the chimney’ (nonpast)

⁴⁹Example (83a), and my noticing its nonpast-ness, are both due to Nwíchukwu (1987).
This is consistent with aspectually-driven object shift. In (82), the object is in the scope of V and so contributes to terminative construal (+SQA). In (83), the object is outside the scope of V, hence terminativity fails. The verbs in (82) and (83) all bear default inflection in the form of the -rV suffix, consisting of [r] plus a copy of the vowel of the verb stem.

In general, -rV is obligatory in finite contexts in the absence of overt aspect like perfective or progressive, but there a restricted set of contexts where it fails to appear. For example, an inherently stative verb like ìbí 'inhabit' has a nonpast reading and denotes a property when bare (84a) and it has a past, stage-level reading when overtly inflected (84b).

(84) a. Ìnyù bò (nå) Boston. 
    1P dwell in 'We reside in Boston'

     b. Ìnyù bò-ri (na) Boston (åf™ abµ©).
    1P dwell-ASP in 'We lived (two years) in Boston' [i.e. we no longer do]

This contrast fits with the preceding ones if there is a null ‘existential object’ within the scope of the verb in (84b) but not in (84a).

The pair of examples in (85) is aspectually parallel to (84), but there is no correlated tense effect: both sentences in (85) are nonpast.

(85) a. ÂdºhÁ nwã re egºho.
     have-ASP V-ASP beauty one.of male
     'Adha is rich'

     b. ÂdºhÁ nwº-e-re egºho.
     have-ASP money
     'Adha has some money on her'

As a bare stem, nwã ‘have’ denotes an individual-level property; with -rV it is stage-level, with implicit spatio-temporal reference. So why is there no event and hence no past tense in (85b)? If contingent possession entails temporal predication (Déchaine et al. 1995), the spatiotemporal content of the null object in (86b) is not interpretable a second time over for +SQA, even though it may sit within the verb scope. This is another way of saying that nwã is no verb at all.

A different context where default inflection is absent when if a relation of inalienable possession holds between subject and object, (86). If wide object scope correlates in general with the absence of -rV inflection, then it is enough to notice that the body-part locatum (nìti ‘ear’) is not referentially distinct from the surface subject (Ô ‘she/he’), from which it inherits wide scope: ‘having an earring on’ is a property of the subject.

(87) Ô kwiw oºa nìti.
     3S hang ring ear.GEN
     'S/he has an earring/earrings on' (nonpast)

The preceding lgbo examples suggest that temporal quantification correlates with V-to-T, and atemporal quantification with object shift. If V doesn’t get to T—evidenced by a bare V stem—there is (overt or covert) object shift, with corresponding durativity in the form of non-past construal. If there is rV inflection (V-to-T), there is no object shift, and concomitant terminativity manifests itself either as a past tense or a spatio-temporally bounded (i.e. stage-level) construal, (86b).

V-to-T is also sensitive to the cardinality of the subject. A bare verb stem is incompatible with a rigid designator (proper name), (87a), but with a bare noun it yields a generic proposition, i.e. durative aspect, (88a). Thus with the predicate mú mmá ‘be good’ the subject Ìzé requires default inflection (87b). No such restriction applies to a bare count noun subject like ùhºhára ‘star apple’ (88a), with which -rV inflection licenses implicit spatio-temporal reference, as reflected in the interpretation of (89b).51

(87) a. *Ìzé mú mmá (níké nwoké).
    V beauty one.of male
     'S/he has bought (a) goat' 'S/he was buying (a) goat'

b. ìzé mú-ra mmá (níké nwoké).
     -ASP beauty one.of male
     'Eze is handsome (beautiful in a virile way)'

(88) a. Êdhºhára mú mmá.
     star.apple V beauty
     'Adha has some money on her'

b. Êdhºhára (trees or fruit) are good in general

5.6. The inherent durativity of focus in ÊÌk–Ìbibio

In Lower Cross, VP focus has nonterminative aspectual entailment (Urúa 1997), and triggers derived tones on verb roots. In Ìbibio (Essien 1983, 1987, 1990), dép ‘buy’ keeps its lexical H tone in terminative contexts like the imperative, perfective and simple past (89), but becomes L in the present and past progressive and HL in the future progressive, (90).52

(89) a. Dép ebot!
     buy goat
     'Buy (a) goat’

     HAGR-PAST buy goat HAGR-PAST buy goat
     'She has bought (a) goat' 'She was buying (a) goat'

     HAGR-PAST buy goat HAGR-FUT buy goat
     'She bought (a) goat' 'She will be buying (a) goat'

51The judgements in (87) - (88) are due to U. Ìbíònú.
52See Cook (1989) for similar effects in ÊÌk.
A first task is to understand the origin of derived L in the nonterminative VPs. If it diagnoses V-movement to a higher functional head, this would help an analysis of the progressive examples which attributes to them masked object shift.

Next, compare the aspectual paradigm to that of argument focus. Just as progressive and nonprogressive sentences use different tense auxiliaries, complementary auxes are used in sentences with and without NP-focus:

\[(91a) \text{Imé a-má káp.} \quad (92a) \text{Imé à-ké káp. Hibi} \]
\[\text{AGR-PAST hear} \quad \text{HLAGR-PAST hear} \]
\[\text{‘Imé heard’} \quad \text{‘It was Imé who heard’} \]
\[\text{b. Imé a-yá káp. b. Imé a-di káp.} \quad \text{AGR-FUT hear HLAGR-FUT hear} \]
\[\text{‘Ime will hear’} \quad \text{‘It is Imé who will hear’} \]

The two paradigms are evidently related in terms of auxiliary selection: progressive goes with NP-focus, while nonprogressive resembles nonfocus. Past progressive \(ké\) (90b) also occurs in the past tense with NP-focus (92a), while the past nonprogressive and nonfocus counterparts have \(má\) (or its allomorph \(má\)). Future progressive \(dí\) (90c) also occurs in future NP-focus sentences (92b). Furthermore, \(dí\) occurs in the future negative (Essien 1990: 83); this distribution follows from Verkuyl’s view that negative sentences are inherently durative.

Why the link between NP-focus and VP-durativity? By hypothesis, object shift is driven by the need to move the object out of the scope of V, so it surfaces as a bound verb, i.e. the stativity of (93b) may be due to the lack of a lexioco-semantic event within the scope of \(ap\), which is then forced to occupy Tense, hence it can only be construed as future.

6. Conclusion: aspect as scope

I have tried to show that scopophobic object shift characterises auxiliated and control OV across Kwa and Kru, and that the same mechanism permits a structural analysis of several other aspect-sensitive processes, which were analyzed as involving covert object shift.


In Òwére (Éniémanjó 1981) there is a difference of linear order: the suffix \(ga\) marks progressive, while the auxiliary \(ga\) marks future.

These phenomena indirectly support the preceding claims about the role of scope in aspectual interpretation. Òwére–Ígbo has overt V-to-Asp, e.g. suffixal -\(ga\). If V remains in situ it surfaces as a bound verb, \(ga\) can’t combine with the verb as Asp, but it can occur in T, yielding a future or irrealis reading, i.e. a non-terminative proposition. Haitian by contrast lacks overt object shift as well as V-to-Asp. Progressive \(ap\) is restricted to eventive verbs, suggesting either that either covert object shift or covert movement to Asp has applied. Stative predicates are inherently durative, so \(ap\) is uninterpretable as Asp, i.e. the stativity of (93b) may be due to the lack of a lexioco-semantic event within the scope of \(ap\), which is then forced to occupy Tense, hence it can only be construed as future.

7. References


