

TOPIC IN ZULGO

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The particle *ká* in Zulgo is anomalous in terms of the traditional notions which would distinguish topicalization from subordination. Topicalization typically concerns phrasal categories while subordination typically concerns clausal categories. However, in Zulgo the particle *ká*, which is clearly used to mark a topicalized phrasal element, can also be used to mark clausal elements which at first glance appear to be cases of subordination. Close consideration of these clausal cases suggests that in fact these are also cases of topicalization. This conclusion is based on the notion of what constitutes a "reasonable topic". Zulgo has extended the notion of topicalization across the syntactic categorial boundaries to include constructions which would in other languages be marked by subordinating markers. In fact, Zulgo is extremely free in the types of structures which it permits to serve as topics.

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to present the function of the particle *ká* in Zulgo¹ syntax and discourse, and to demonstrate that *ká* is best treated as a unitary lexical item with a single generalized use, namely, that of a topic marker. The alternative is to treat *ká* as two lexical items with two distinct uses, one as a topic marker and the other as a marker of subordination.

In every case where *ká* is used, it marks a separate block of informa-

¹Zulgo is a Matakam language of the Central or Biu-Mandara Group of Chadic languages. It is spoken by approximately 18,000 speakers and is located north and west of Meri in the Department of Margui-Wandalá in the Northern Province of Cameroon. The research for this study was made possible by permission from the General Delegation for Scientific and Technical Research, Cameroon. We would also like to thank Ayouba Lawarum who provided his intuition as to the proper use of *ká*. We would also like to thank Russell Schuh for his helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper. He pointed out to us that in Schuh [1972] he came to the same conclusions arrived at in this study with regard to a similar particle in the Chadic language Ngizim. In Ngizim this particular particle was used with both topicalized NP's and "backgrounding" clauses.

tion from that which follows. It is phonologically invariant and is always followed by pause. The pause will be indicated in the examples with a comma.

The problem with determining whether *ká* is one or two lexical items derives from the fact that the block of information set off by *ká* is not always the same in terms of its syntactic category, and its function as a syntactic particle seems to vary, at least superficially, according to the category. Consider the following two sentences.²

(1) *màkés áahá ká, ká-sàs tsalaká*
 woman this TOP, she-cut firewood

'as for this woman, she cut firewood'

(2) *a-vel-á à kàra-yá ká, a-zlé-á kálá ngár àà húd*
 he-runs-GEM away dog-EGR SUB, he-takes-GEM child his on belly

'as he runs away from the dog, he carries his child on his belly'

In (1), the NP 'this woman' has been set off by *ká* from the remainder of the sentence. The NP functions as the topic³ and *ká* functions as the "topic marker" (TOP). By contrast, in (2) the full clause 'he runs away from the dog' is set off by *ká*. In this case the clause seems to function as a subordinate clause, with *ká* functioning as the marker of subordination (SUB). The question which arises is whether these two uses of *ká* actually represent two separate *ká*'s, or whether the clause in the second case is actually functioning as a topic, consequently giving *ká* a unitary function as a topic marker.

The presentation in this study consists of two sections. Section 2 concerns the syntax of *ká* as a topic marker in simple sentences. Section 3 concerns the syntax of *ká* as a topic marker in complex sentences. In this latter case, the possibility of treating *ká* in complex sentences as a marker

²The following abbreviations are used in this paper: TOP "topic", GEM "general event mood", EGR "egressive action", SUB "subordinator", FOC "focus", PL "plural", and DER "derivational morpheme for deriving human agentive nouns". Tone is marked as follows: ' for high tone, ` for low tone, with mid tone left unmarked.

³Note that we use "topic" instead of Dik's terms "theme" because of its general use in the literature (cf. Li and Thompson [1976] and Hoskinson [1975], for example).

of subordination, either in terms of backgrounded new information or temporal subordination, is discussed. The conclusion is that rather than having a dual function, *ká* has the single function of a topic marker. This conclusion is arrived at by appealing to the notion of what constitutes a "reasonable topic" in a given discourse genre.

2. *ká* and the Simple Sentence: Marker of Topic

The function of *ká* in relation to a simple sentence is to mark "topic". The category "topic" is here taken as one of the universal pragmatic functions. It can be defined along lines proposed by Dik [1978:19] even though he uses the term "theme" instead of "topic":

- (3) Topic: The Topic specifies the universe of discourse with respect to which the subsequent predication is presented as relevant.

De Groot [1980] argues that the structural term "subsequent" should be deleted, at least in the case of Hungarian, thus making the definition a strictly pragmatic one. But whether one defines it purely pragmatically, or both pragmatically and syntactically, is not crucial to Zulgo.

Note that the notion of "topic" is distinct from that of "focus", which can be defined as follows (cf. Dik [1978]):

- (4) Focus: The Focus presents what is relatively the most important or salient information in the given setting.

Sentence (1) cannot be formally confused with an example of focus in Zulgo, since the focus marker is distinct from the topic marker. The basic focus marker is *ná...ya*. This formal distinction can be seen first in interrogative word questions, where the interrogative word can be considered the marked focus of the sentence. In such questions, the interrogative word co-occurs with *ná...ya* as in (5a) but cannot co-occur with *ká* as shown by the ungrammatical (5b):

- (5) a. *weké ná á-zlá síngwè ya*
 who FOC he-took money FOC
 'who took the money?' = 'who is the one who took the money?'
- b. **weké ká, á-zlá síngwè ya*

Furthermore, in answers to a question like that in (5a), *ná...ya* is required as shown in (6a) while *ká* is prohibited as shown by (6b).

- (6) a. *mékele ná á-zlá síngwè ya*
 Mekele FOC he-took money FOC
 'it was Mekele who took the money'
- b. **mékele ká a-zlá síngwè ya*

Even though sentence (6b) is ungrammatical as a focus construction, it is acceptable as a topical construction. As such, it would be translated as 'as for Mekele, he took it'. On the other hand, (5b) would not be acceptable in any context, whether as a focused or topicalized constituent.

Since topic and focus have different pragmatic functions within discourse, they are used independently of each other. In fact, topic and focus may optionally co-occur. Consider the example in (7).

- (7) *mékélé ká, ngát ná á-zlá síngwè ya*
 Mekele TOP, he FOC he-took money FOC
 'as for Mekele, it is he who took the money'

'As for Mekele' serves as the topic, and 'he' as the focus in (7), but both have the same referent.

Turning to the question of how a sentence with a topic is derived, it is assumed that Dik [1978:133] is right when he argues that the "topic" (his "theme") cannot be analyzed as an extracted constituent from the predication. Instead, any sentence which has a topic reflects the following schema (as proposed by Dik):

- (8) (x_i) Topic, Predication

This schema suggests that the presence of a "topic" constituent does not obligatorily have an effect on the following "predication" as would be suggested in an analysis involving extraction. The expected effect in an extraction process would be either the absence of the topicalized constituent in the predication, or the presence of a special anaphoric pronoun to refer to the extracted, topicalized constituent. Neither of these effects are obligatorily found in Zulgo topicalization although they are commonly found in certain topical construction types.

Dik [1978:133] argues that an extraction analysis is especially untenable in cases involving sentences like that in (9) where the topic 'Paris' cannot in any way be said to have been extracted from the following predication.

(9) As for Paris, the Eiffel Tower is really spectacular.

Even though the topical constructions discussed in sections 2.1 and 2.2 lend themselves to an extraction analysis, those in sections 2.3 and 2.4 do not. Since all topical constructions are pragmatically equivalent, it is assumed that they should share a common syntactic derivation if at all possible. For this reason, the non-extraction analysis given in (8) will be assumed to hold in this study although some comments will be made along the way concerning the transformational, extraction analysis.

Note that according to (8) Dik specifies the topic (or "theme") as a term (x_1) and the following constituent as a "Predication". However, during the course of this paper Dik's "Predication" will more commonly be referred to as the "comment". It will be seen in sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 that this schema holds in general for Zulgo. However, in Zulgo the topic may also be a partial predication, with the remaining part of the predication serving as the comment. In addition, the predication or comment which follows the topic may be a simple "term", a fact which can be taken as a parallelism to certain stative sentences in Zulgo. This variation in the topic and following predication will be discussed in section 2.4.

2.1. ká with a single, non-verbal constituent. The basic, unmarked word order in Zulgo is given in (10).

(10) S V O $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{IO} \\ \text{LOC} \end{array} \right\}$

The grammatical relations in (10) are nuclear terms and may be followed by non-nuclear obliques, such as Time, Instrument, Comitative, and so on. For non-verbal clauses, the constituents, at least for this presentation, include the Subject, Predicate nominal, and Location.⁴

⁴Functional Grammar claims that three functions in stative clauses are actually "zero" semantic functions. Since it is difficult to refer to zero func-

In the following examples, pairs of sentences are given. The first sentence is a simple sentence, the second is the sentence with the topic. The purpose in having such pairs is to show the way in which a given grammatical relation in the simple sentence may also serve as the topic in the other sentence.

SUBJECT

- (11) a. *màkés áahá á-sàs tsalaká*
 woman this she-cut firewood
 'this woman cut firewood'
- b. *màkés áahá ká, ká-sàs tsalaká*
 woman this TOP, she-cut firewood
 'as for this woman, she cut firewood'

In (11b) the subject of (11a) serves as the topic. The fact that the topic 'this woman' is also the subject of the following predication is indicated by the subject prefix on the verb which must agree with the subject NP if there is one. (The change from *á-* to *ká-* as the verb prefix is not relevant to the point being made.)

DIRECT OBJECT

- (12) a. *wélè áahá á-gàzì kálá gà*
 man this he-hit child my
 'this man hit my child'
- b. *kélá gà ká, wélè áahá á-gàzì ngát*
 child my TOP, man this he-hit him
 'as for my child, this hit him'

In (12b) the DO of (12a) has been made the topic, and the position of the topic in the predication is indicated by the independent pronoun *ngát* 'him, her'. However, if the direct object is not human, then there is zero anaphora as in (13b).

- (13) a. *mékele á-zlá síngwè*
 Mekele he-took money
 'Mekele took the money'

tions, the terms "subject", "predicate nominal", and "location" are used.

- b. síngwè ká, mékele á-zlá
 money TOP, Mekele he-took
 'as for the money, Mekele took it'

Turning to indirect objects, we find the following:

INDIRECT OBJECT

- (14) a. hanáwà á-vól síngwè á èbay áta
 Hanawa he-gave money to chief that
 'Hanawa gave money to that chief'
- b. èbay áta ká, hanáwà á-vól-ár síngwè
 chief that TOP, Hanawa he-gave-to:him money
 'as for that chief, Hanawa gave him money'
- c. *á èbay áta ká, hanáwà á-vól-ár síngwè
 'as for to the chief, Hanawa gave him money'

In (14b) the object of the preposition á 'to' of (14a) has been made the topic. In (14a) this NP is the indirect object, and the fact that it would have the same relation in the predication which follows the topic in (14b) is indicated by the beneficiary verbal suffix -ár 'to him' as seen in (14b). Note that according to (14c) it is not possible to have the preposition as part of the topic.

LOCATION

- (15) a. gà awák áta té-dá á dídwìn gà
 PL goat that they-went to stable my
 'those goats went into my stable'
- b. dídwìn gà ká, gà awák áta tàá-dá-ádəm
 stable my TOP, PL goat that they-went into:it
 'as for my stable, those goats went into it'
- c. *á dídwìn gà ká, gà awák áta tàá-dá-ádəm
 'as for in my stable, those goats went into it'

As with the indirect object, the NP in the locative prepositional phrase in (15a) can be made the topic as in (15b), but the preposition cannot be made part of the topic as indicated by (15c). When this NP is the topic, its locative relation in the following predication is indicated by the verbal suffix

-áǎm 'into it' as seen in (15b).

TIME

- (16) a. hanáwà á-mà-ra ndávaná
Hanawa he-went:back-EGR yesterday
'hanawa came back yesterday'
- b. ndávaná ká, hanáwà á-mà-ra
yesterday TOP, hanawa he-went:back-EGR
'as for yesterday, Hanawa came back'

Note that there is no anaphoric pronoun or pronominal affix in (16b) in the place of the time phrase 'yesterday'.

INSTRUMENT

- (17) a. hanáwà á-dá ndá mútà áta
Hanawa he-went with car that
'Hanawa went with that car'
- b. mútà áta ká, hanáwà ká-dá dər
car that TOP, Hanawa he-went with:it
'as for that car, Hanawa went with it'
- c. ndá mútà áta ká, hanáwà ká-dá dər
with car that TOP, Hanawa he-went with:it
'as for with that car, Hanawa went with it'

In the case of an oblique functioning as an instrument, not only may the NP object of the preposition ndá 'with' serve as the topic as in (17b), but also the entire prepositional phrase as in (17c). Note that the anaphoric pronoun dər 'with it' is used in the position of the instrumental phrase in both (17b) and (17c).

COMITATIVE

- (18) a. mékele á-val ndá gà kəra áta
Mekele he-ran with PL dog that
'Mekele ran carrying that dog' (or 'those dogs')
- b. kəra áta ká, mékele ká-val dər
dog that TOP, Mekele he-ran with:it
'as for that dog, Mekele ran carrying it' (or 'dogs/them')

- c. *ndá gà kàra áta ká, mékele ká-val dár
 with PL dog that TOP, Mekele he-ran with:it
 'as for with the dog, Mekele ran with it'

By contrast, to the instrumental oblique in (18), the comitative oblique can only have the NP object of *ndá* 'with' as the topic, as seen in (18b). The preposition cannot be part of the topic, as indicated by the ungrammatical (18c). Note that as with the instrumental, the anaphoric pronoun in (18b) is *dér* 'with it'.

Turning to equational sentences with two terms, the following correspondences are found.

SUBJECT

- (19) a. ngát àbay 'he is chief'
 he chief
 b. ngát ká, àbay 'as for him, he is chief'
 he TOP, chief

PREDICATE NOMINAL

- (20) a. wélè áahá malá akél 'this man is a thief'
 man this DER theft
 b. malá akél ká, wélè áahá 'as for the thief, it is this man'
 DER thief TOP, man this

As demonstrated in (19) and (20), either the subject or the predicate nominal of an equational sentence can serve as the topic, with the other term serving as the comment. In both cases, the topic and comment are terms, thus requiring a further specification in the schema in (8). This further specification is given in the schema in (21).

- (21) (x_i)Topic, { Predication }
 { (x_i) }

LOCATION

- (22) a. yam áà péték 'the dress is wet'
 water at dress
 b. péték ká, yam ihár 'as for the dress, it is wet'
 dress TOP, water at:it
 c. *áà péték ká, yam ihár 'as for on the dress, it is wet'

In the case of equational sentences in which there is both a subject and a location, not only can the subject serve as the topic, but also as the location as in (22b). In this case, the following predication has the anaphoric pronoun *ihér* 'at it' specifying the location. However, the preposition cannot serve as part of the topic, as indicated by the ungrammatical (22c).

The examples of topical constructions in this section, with their left-dislocated topics and anaphoric pronouns and pronominal affixes lend themselves to an analysis involving simple extraction in the same way that one might conceive of the head NP of a relative clause as being extracted from the relative clause. However, the examples in section 2.2 provide evidence that such a simple extraction analysis would be untenable in the case of Zulgo.

2.2. ká with a compound, non-verbal constituent. In section 2.1 examples were given of only one NP co-occurring with the topic marker *ká*. However, it is possible to have two or more NP's as part of the topic. Consider the following set of sentences:

- (23) a. *hanáwà á-vál síngwè á èbay áta*
Hanawa he-gave money to chief that
'Hanawa gave money to that chief'
- b. *gà hanáwà nda èbay áta ká, hanáwà (k)á-vál-ár síngwe*
PL Hanawa with chief that TOP, Hanawa he-gave-to:him money
'as for Hanawa and that chief, Hanawa gave him money'
- c. *hanáwà nda gà síngwè ká, á-vál á èbay áta*
Hanawa with PL money TOP, he-gave to chief that
'as for Hanawa and the money, he gave it to the chief'
- d. **hanáwà nda síngwè nda èbay áta ká, (hanáwà) á-vál-ár*
Hanawa with money with chief that TOP, Hanawa he-gave-to:him
'as for Hanawa, the money and the chief, (Hanawa) gave it to him'
- e. *iká màgàr gà hanáwà ndá gà mékele ndá gà èbay áta ká,*
on middle PL Hanawa with PL Mekele with PL chief that TOP,
hanáwà á-vál-ár mékele
Hanawa he-gave-to:him Mekele
'as for among Hanawa, Mekele and that chief, Hanawa gave Mekele to him'

Note that at this point, the NP's of a topic differ from those which function as the head of a relative clause. With a relative clause, the two or three NP's of a coordinate NP could only function within the relative clause as a coordinate NP with one grammatical relation within that clause. However, in the case of a topic, the coordinate NP's in (23b), (23c), (23d), and (23e) each serve as a different grammatical relation within the following predication. For example, in (23b), *hanáwà* serves as the subject and *èbay áta* 'that chief' serves as the indirect object. As the head of a relative clause, both of these NP's would have to serve as a coordinate subject, or indirect object, or so on. This lack of parallelism with relative clauses and the fact that multiple NP's may occur as part of the topic make a simple extraction analysis untenable since there would be no way to guarantee a different identification of grammatical relations from that involved in the extraction of an NP from a relative clause.

Note that (23e) is given to demonstrate that it is possible to have three NP's topicalized, each with a different grammatical function in the following predication. Sentence (23d) is given since it forms part of the paradigm of (23a) through (23c), but it is unacceptable as a topical construction for reasons not yet clear.

2.3. ká with a single, verbal constituent. In sections 2.1 and 2.2 non-verbal constituents were given as the topical constituents. In this section, it will be shown that the verb of the following predication can also serve as the topic. Consider the examples in (24).

- (24) a. *géné a-dé-á tsà*
Gene he-go-GEM not
'Gene is not going'
- b. *mé-dé áta ká, géné a-dé-á tsà*
NOM-go that TOP, Gene he-go-GEM not
'as for that going, Gene is not going'
- c. **a-dé-á ká, géné a-dé-á tsà*
'as for he is going, Gene is not going'
- d. **mé-dé áta ká, géné tsà*
'as for that going, Gene did not'

In the examples in (24), (24a) is the simple sentence to which the topical construction in (24b) corresponds. In (24b), the topic actually consists of an NP in the form of the nominalized verb root *mé-dé* 'going' and the demonstrative *áta* 'that'. As an NP, this topic does not differ from the examples in section 2.1 and 2.2. However, as a nominalized verb it does differ. Whereas it was possible to conceive of NP's in the constructions in 2.1 as being simply extracted from the following predication, and the examples in 2.2 as being extracted by a complex process of co-indexing, it is not possible in the case of (24b). First, the process would not be simple in that the verb would not only have to be extracted, but also nominalized. (24c) demonstrates that this verb root cannot optionally occur as an inflected form in the topic. However, secondly, the verb shows no evidence of having been extracted. In fact, the following predication must have the identical verb root to that used to form the nominalized verb in the topic. There cannot be a pro-verb or a zero anaphoric form, as indicated by the ungrammatical (24d). This fact indicates that the topic cannot be conceived of simply as an extracted constituent from the preceding clause since nothing has been extracted. Instead, in this case the topicalized verb could only be accounted for by a copying rule which states that if the topic is a verb, then the verb root must be identical to the root in the predication. Thus, it is seen that in contrast to a simple analysis of topicalization in Zulgo along the lines proposed by Dik's schema in (8) in which the topic is generated independently of the following predication, a transformational analysis requires at least a complex extraction rule plus a copying rule to account for all of the constructions seen in 2.1 and 2.2.

2.4. *ká* with a predication, the comment as a term. In sections 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 the topic was an NP and the construction which followed the topic was either a full predication, an NP, or PP. In this section, it will be seen that the topic can also be a predication, even though a partial one, and the following construction an NP or PP. In this case, the schema in (21) might be further specified as follows:

$$(25) \left\{ \begin{array}{c} (x_1) \\ \text{Predication} \end{array} \right\} \text{Topic,} \left\{ \begin{array}{c} (x_1) \\ \text{Predication} \end{array} \right\}$$

The schema in (25) formalizes the possibilities of $(x_i)_{\text{Topic}}$, Predication and $(x_i)_{\text{Topic}}$, (x_i) as topic-comment constructions as seen in 2.1 through 2.3, and also for the Predication_{Topic}, (x_i) topic-comment construction seen in the present section. In addition, this formula predicts a topical construction of the following form: Predication_{Topic}, Predication. In fact, the topical constructions presented in this section act as a transitional construction between the original formulation in (8) and the full formulation in (25), which predicts the construction type Predication_{Topic}, Predication. The presence of such a construction type will be discussed in section 3.0.

It should be repeated that the predication which does occur as the topic in the construction Predication_{Topic}, (x_i) presented in this section is incomplete in that an argument of the verb occurs as the comment but without a cataphoric pronoun to replace it in the topical predication. This incompleteness is different from the Predication_{Topic}, Predication of section 3.0.

In order to demonstrate this type of topical structure, examples will be given for each grammatical relation as in 2.1, but this time the NP will serve as the comment rather than as the topic. The exemplary sentences used here are generally those also used in section 2.1.

SUBJECT

- (26) a. *màkés áahá á-sàs tsalaká*
 woman this she-cut firewood
 'this woman cut firewood'
- b. *ná á-sàs tsalaká ká, màkés áahá*
 the:one she-cut firewood TOP, woman this
 'as for the one (who) cut firewood, (it was) this woman'

DIRECT OBJECT

- (27) a. *wélè áahá á-gèzI kélá gà*
 man this he-hit child my
 'this man hit my child'
- b. *wélè áahá á-gèzI ká, kélá gà*
 man this he-hit TOP, child my
 'as for (who) this man hit, (it was) my child'

INDIRECT OBJECT

- (28) a. hanáwà á-vá| síngwè á àbay áta
 Hanawa he-gave money to chief that
 'Hanawa gave money to that chief'
- b. hanáwà á-vá| síngwè ká, á àbay áta
 Hanawa he-gave money TOP, to chief that
 'as for (who) Hanawa gave the money (to), (it was) that chief'

In (26) through (28), the subject, direct object, and indirect object have been shown as the comment. In the case of the subject in (26b), there is a cataphoric subject pronoun ná in the topic. However, in the case of the objects in (27b) and (28b) there is no cataphoric pronoun in the topic. In each case, the topic seems to be formed on the surface by the insertion of the ká topic marker in the simple sentence after the verb. This also is the case with the obliques as seen in the following examples.

LOCATION

- (29) a. gà awák áta tó-dá á dídwin ga
 PL goat that they-went into stable my
 'those goats went into my stable'
- b. gà awák áta tó-dá ká, á dídwin ga
 PL goat that they-went TOP, into stable my
 'as for (where) those goats went, (it was) into my stable'

TIME

- (30) a. hanáwà á-mà-ra ndáyaná
 Hanawa he-went:back-EGR yesterday
 'Hanawa came back yesterday'
- b. hanáwà á-mà-ra ká, ndáyaná
 Hanawa he-went:back-EGR TOP, yesterday
 'as for (when) Hanawa went back, (it was) yesterday'

INSTRUMENT

- (31) a. hanáwà á-dá ndá mútà áta
 Hanawa he-went with car that
 'Hanawa went with that car'
- b. hanáwà á-dá ká, ndá mútà áta
 Hanawa he-went TOP, with car that

'as for (what) Hanawa went (with), (it was) with that car'

COMITATIVE

- (32) a. *mékele á-vál ndá gà kəra áta*
 Mekele he-ran with PL dog that
 'Mekele ran with that dog'
- b. *mékele á-vál ká, ndá gà kəra áta*
 Mekele he-ran TOP, with PL dog that
 'as for (with whom) Mekele ran, (it was) with that dog'

In the examples in (26) through (32) one of the arguments of the predication in the topic occurs as the comment. However, it is possible to have more than one argument of the predication in the comment. Consider the examples in (33).

- (33) a. *mékele á-səkám awák í kwàskwà*
 Mekele he-bought goat in market
 'Mekele bought a goat in the market'
- b. *mékele á-səkám awák ká, í kwàskwà*
 'as for (where) Mekele bought a goat, (it was) in the market'
- c. *mékele á-səkám ká, awák í kwàskwà*
 'as for (what and where) Mekele bought (something), (it was) a goat in the market'

In (33c), both the direct object and locative oblique are in the comment. Thus, the comment can actually have two (or more) terms, but these terms as a comment form neither a coordinate construction nor a predication. They are simply a string of terms. At this point, it appears that an extraction analysis would be overwhelmed by the complexity and variety of constructions which may serve as the topic of a sentence.

2.5. Summary of the topical *ká* construction in Zulgo. On the basis of the examples given in sections 2.1 through 2.4, the following syntactic generalizations of the topical *ká* can be made.

a. The surface coding of topic in Zulgo always involves sentence-initial position, giving a construction TOPIC-COMMENT. The topic is set off from the comment by the particle *ká* plus a pause. This TOPIC-COMMENT structure con-

forms to what Li and Thompson [1976:465] claim is a language universal, namely, that topics must occur in sentence-initial position because it is inherent in the serialization of information within a discourse that what is being talked about (the "topic") must be introduced before something can be said about it (the "comment").

b. Prepositional phrases cannot serve as topical material, but the NP object of the preposition may. The only exception is in the case of the instrumental where the preposition may optionally occur.

c. When the topic is an NP and it has a grammatical relation in the following predication, that relation is indicated by either an anaphoric pronoun or pronominal affix (except in the case of a non-human direct object and temporal NP's in which case there is zero anaphora).

d. When the topic is a predication, only the subject as comment is marked by a cataphoric pronoun in the topic.

e. When the verb occurs as the only element in the topic, the verb is nominalized, and the same verb root obligatorily appears in the comment as the main, inflected verb.

f. It is unlikely that a transformational account can be given for all of the constructions in 2.1 through 2.4. However, the TOPIC-COMMENT structure can be derived straightforwardly from the schema in (25). This schema provides for the co-occurrence of a predication in both the topic and the comment. Such a construction with *ká* will be presented in the next section 3.0. Structurally speaking, the forms in section 3.0 will be in complementary distribution with those in section 2.0, even though functionally the possibility of a different use remains to be discussed.

g. It should be noted that in all the examples in section 2.0 there are collocational restrictions on what occurs in the topic and the comment. The topical NP's in sections 2.1 and 2.2 collocated with the verb in the predication, and the nominalized verbs in 2.3 were the same as the verb in the following predication. Finally, the NP's which served as the comment in 2.4 collocated with the verb in the topic. However, a collocation restriction is not obligatory for a TOPIC-COMMENT construction in Zulgo as can be seen in the following (34). The general restriction is not a syntactic or semantic one, but

a pragmatic one in that the topic must bear some relationship to the following comment in the real world which the speaker and addressee share in common. In the real world of the Zulgo, the brewing of beer and millet have an obvious relationship to each other.

- (34) mé-dè gùzum ká, kí-ndzìk-éra-á daw-á
 NOM-cook beer TOP, you-bring-EGR-GEM millet-EGR
 'as for brewing beer, you bring along millet'

3. ká as an Interclausal Marker of Topical Information

In section 2, examples were given of *ká* topical constructions which followed the schema in (25). The possible combinations specified by that schema are given in (35).

- (35) a. (x_i) *ká* , Predication
 b. (x_i) *ká* , (x_i)
 c. Predication *ká* , (x_i)
 d. *Predication *ká* , Predication

Of these combinations, only (35d) was not exemplified in section 2.

However, it is possible to have a *ká* construction of the form in (35d) which, being in complementary distribution with patterns (35a-c), fills out the incomplete paradigm of section 2. Structurally, the predication preceding *ká* in a construction with the form of (35d) is always sentence initial as was the case in the topical constructions in 2, but functionally the role of this predication is not, at least at first glance, transparently topical. Consider the following examples:

- (36) a. á-yáhá i gá, (amá) á-ngát tsà
 he-looked:for in house, (but) he-found not
 'he was looking for (it) in the house, (but) he did not find (it)'
 b. á-yáhá i gá ká, (amá) á-ngát tsà
 he-looked:for in house TOP, (but) he-found not
 'when he had looked for (it) in the house, he did not find (it)'

In (36a) two clauses are juxtaposed which have an implied concessive-counterspective relationship to each other. However, this relationship may be made explicit with the conjunction *amá* 'but'. The first clause may also be

marked by *ká* as in (36b). In this case, the relationship between the two clauses does not appear to be paratactic. Instead, the first clause seems to take on a temporal, subordinate role to the second. In addition, the sentence (36b) was taken from a text in which the first clause states new information, along the lines of (37).

(37) Hanawa went to get the goat for the chief. When he looked in the house *ká*, he did not find it.

So one might ask, does *ká* serve as a subordinate marker for temporal relations or as a subordinate marker for backgrounding new information, or is it neither, serving instead as a topic marker?

ká is clearly not a marker for backgrounding new information when it occurs in constructions like (34d). Such constructions are frequent in narrative and procedural discourse⁵ where they commonly are used as links between sentences. Consider the following examples in (38) and (39).

(38) *á-dá á dala á máyàhà wìdze*
he-went to field to looking:for handle

'he went to the field to look for some handles'

á-dá á dala kìnèhe ká, aká-lé àà mánàhà gùrùv
he-went to field now TOP, he-come:across at ripe wild:figs

'as he was going to the field *ká*, he came across some ripe wild figs'

(39) ...*kí-lívé-á tèv gá. kàá-lívé ká, kí-dzeh-á gá.*
...you-measure:out-GEM place house. you-measure:out TOP, you-start house.

'...you measure out the house plan. When you measured it out *ká*, you start building the house'

In (38), the *ká* clause reiterates part of the previous sentence, namely that 'the man went to the field', thus linking the second sentence to the first.

In (39), the *ká* clause reiterates the fact that 'you measure out the house plan', again linking the second sentence to the first. In both cases, the information in the *ká* clause is not new.

Having shown that the *ká* clause is not sensitive to either new or old

⁵For a discussion of the typology of discourse genres used here, see Longacre [1976:199-206].

information, it is still possible to think of these clauses as marking a temporal relation as indicated by the use of 'as' and 'when' in the English translations. However, this temporal relation seems to be an artifact of the inherent nature of narrative and procedural discourse: namely, that in such discourse genres each specified non-backgrounded situation is in a temporal, sequential order with regard to any preceding or following situation. The logic of such discourse genres is chronological. Thus, the translation of such sequences will reflect this inherent temporal order. However, such an inherent temporal order is not found in expository discourse, where the logic is thematic or topical rather than chronological. Consider the following examples of the use of *ká* in expository discourse.

- (40) ...amá aká-ngát á kera ká, a-vel-á hínne....
 ...but he-sees to dog TOP, he-running:off-GEM much
 '...but as for it seeing a dog, he runs off fast...'
- (41) ì-zla ká, áfábà á-tsehín àà ìye
 I-took TOP, because she-appealed at me
 'as for (why) I took (her), (it is) because I liked her'

In (40) the speaker is discussing the various behavior patterns of a monkey. The invited translation of (40) does not primarily involve a temporal relation between the two clauses although one could translate it as 'when he sees a dog, he runs off fast'. Instead, the relation is a causal one, explaining the monkey's reaction to seeing a dog. One could just as well translate as 'he sees a dog, so he runs off'. The sentence in (41) is an even clearer example. Here there is no possibility for the first clause to be in a subordinate temporal relation to the second one. One could not translate this sentence in the expository discourse from which it is taken as 'when I took her, she appealed to me'. Instead, the true sequence of events is the other way around. What is of concern here is again the causal relation between the two clauses. Thus, it can be concluded that *ká* does not behave as a subordinating temporal marker either.

So what is *ká* in these constructions? The answer is that it is a topic marker just as it was in sections 2.1 through 2.4. Every instance of a *ká* clause in these constructions satisfies the notion of "topic" given in (3),

namely, that the topic specifies the universe of discourse with respect to which the rest of the sentence is presented as relevant. The notion of "relevant" here means that the topic shares something in common with the comment within the real world of the speaker and addressee. Thus, any two items which share something in common in such a world may reasonably serve in a TOPIC-COMMENT structure.

It may be concluded that *ká* is a single lexical unit with a single syntactic use and a single pragmatic function. Syntactically, the *ká* phrase or clause is always sentence-initial, with the *ká* morpheme at the end of the phrase or clause. Functionally, it always marks the topic.

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