

## KAMBERA HAS NO PASSIVE\*

Marian Klammer

*Vrije Universiteit/HIL/Royal Academy of Arts and Sciences*

The passive construction does not seem to occur in a number of Central Malayo-Polynesian languages in Eastern Indonesia such as Leti, Rotinese and Kambera. In Kambera the functional equivalent of the passive voice in other languages is expressed by using two strategies. The first is a process of focusing/inversion where the syntactic status of the subject and object does not change, the pronominal marking and morphological shape of the verb remains the same, but the adjunct NP that is coreferent to the object is focused while the subject adjunct NP is defocused. The second strategy uses an object relativisation as a nominal predicate. I will argue that the latter structure resembles a 'canonical' passive most closely both in form and function and suggest a structural account of the insight that Kambera provides us with, namely that (object) relative structures are related to passive-like structures because a relative marker can be reanalysed as a passive morpheme.

### 1. Introduction

Voice distinctions like the active/passive one are a very significant feature of the Western Malayo-Polynesian languages. Strikingly, however, the passive construction does not seem to occur in a number of Central Malayo-Polynesian languages in Eastern Indonesia. Examples are Leti (Jonker 1932, Van Engelenhoven 1995) and Rotinese (Jonker 1915) both spoken in the Timor area, and Kambera, spoken on the island of Sumba.

The aim of the present paper is descriptive: I will discuss the formal strategies that Kambera, as one of the languages lacking a passive, employs as functional equivalents to the passive construction and/or verb form in other languages.

---

\* Kambera is spoken on the eastern part of the island of Sumba in Eastern Indonesia and has approximately 150,000 speakers. Klammer (1994) provides a detailed description of this language. I gratefully acknowledge the help of Umbu M. Maramba Hau during fieldworks from 1991-1994. Abbreviations (see also note 4 below): ART = article (*na* singular, *da* plural), CAU = causative, CNJ = conjunction, EMP = emphatic modality marker, IMPF = imperfective aspect marker, LOC = locative, NEG = negation, RM = relative marker.

One of the main functional motivations of the passive construction is to defocus the Agent (e.g. Shibatani 1985). In many languages this has the effect of reducing the valency of the verb. The standard structural account for this is to assume (in generative terms) that the external (AGENT) theta-role and structural (objective) case are absorbed by the passive morphology of the verb. Since surface subjects are obligatorily present in syntax, this will force the remaining NP, the PATIENT, to become the subject, i.e. the NP with the internal theta-role moves to subject position because the only way it can survive the case filter is by moving to a position where it can get (nominative) case.

Lacking both a syntactic construction and a morphological verb form for the passive, Kambera employs two other constructions to defocus an Agent or foreground a Patient. The first is to change the order of the NP constituents within a clause, a type of adjunct NP-inversion or focusing. An illustration is given in (1), where the distinction between the two sentences lies in the fact that the object NP *na lau* ‘the sarong’, postverbal in (1a), has ‘changed places’ with the subject NP *nyuna* ‘she’<sup>1</sup> in (1b) without a change in the morpho-syntactic form of the verbal cluster *na-tinu-nya*:

- (1) a. *Ka nyuna<sub>j</sub> na-<sub>j</sub> tinu -nya<sub>k</sub> na lau<sub>k</sub>*  
 CNJ she 3SN- weave -3SD ART sarong  
 ‘So that she weaves the sarong (lit. she she-weaves-it the sarong)’
- b. *Ka na lau<sub>k</sub> na-<sub>j</sub> tinu -nya<sub>k</sub> nyuna<sub>j</sub>*  
 CNJ ART sarong 3SN- weave -3SD she  
 ‘So that the sarong was woven (by her) (lit. the sarong she-weaves-it she)’

This focusing process is distinct from so-called topicalisation/left-dislocation in Kambera. The latter process involves moving arguments to non-argument positions at the periphery of the clause (cf. section 2 below), putting contrastive stress on the dislocated NP and an intonational break between the dislocated NP and the rest of the clause. In what follows I will use the term left-dislocation (not topicalisation) for this process, reserving the term ‘topic’ for the information status of an NP in discourse (cf. section 3 below).

The second construction used to background the subject and foreground the object is

---

<sup>1</sup> The third person singular pronoun and pronominal clitic have a male, female or neuter translation. Usually I will simply give the male form, unless the female form is contextually determined, as it is in (1) because only women weave sarongs on Sumba.

a relative construction as the nominal predicate of a matrix clause. Kambera has two types of relativisations: subject relativisations that are marked with the proclitic *ma-* and object relativisations marked with the proclitic *pa-*.<sup>2</sup> In object relativisations the object of the embedded verb is the head of the relativisation, the relativised noun that is the obligatorily missing argument (a ‘gap’) in the relative clause. More than focusing, it is the object relativisation that is functionally most related to a passive in other languages, as we will see below. An illustration of its use is given in (2):

- (2)      *Pa-*      *palu*      *-ka*  
             RM-      hit      -1sA  
             ‘I was hit (lit. (the one) hit (was) I)’

This paper is organised as follows. In section 2 I provide some basic information about Kambera sentence structure and about how the language marks subjects and objects on the verb. In section 3 I discuss how focusing is used to convey voice distinctions. Next, I will discuss how relativisations can be used as nominal predicates and thus be the functional equivalent to passives in other languages (section 4). I will conclude by drawing some general conclusions in section 5.

## 2. General information on the language

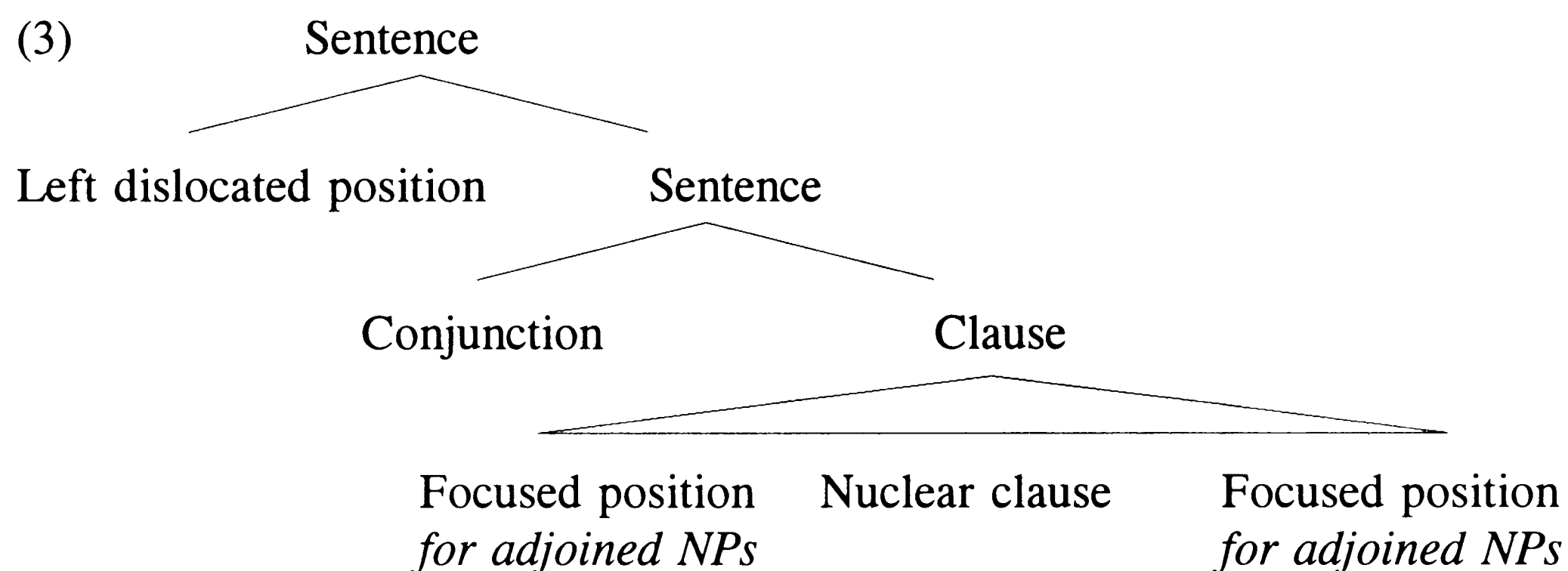
Kambera is a head-marking language (Nichols 1986) in the sense that it has rich marking on the head of the clause — the verb — of pronominal, aspectual and modal clitics. Definite verbal arguments are marked for person, number and case<sup>3</sup> by pronominal clitics on the verb. Definite NPs are crossreferenced on the verb, they are optional and can be used for disambiguation or emphasis. I assume that the pronominal clitics which crossreference these NPs have argument status while the coreferent NPs

---

<sup>2</sup> In what follows the notions ‘subject’ and ‘object’ are used as syntactic, not semantic, notions. The thematic content of the head of a subject relativisation may be AGENT, THEME or POSSESSOR, in an object relativisation it may be the PATIENT, RECIPIENT, BENEFICIARY, MALEFICIARY, GOAL that is relativised. Cf. Klammer 1994: 303-326.

<sup>3</sup> Abbreviations for pronominal elements: N=Nominative, G=Genitive, D=Dative, A=Accusative; 1s, 2s, 3s =first, second, third person singular; 1p, 2p, 3p = first, second, third person plural.

are adjuncts.<sup>4</sup> Kambera word order facts suggest that the verb forms one syntactic constituent together with its clitics and adverbs. I will use the term ‘nuclear clause’ to refer to this constituent. A nuclear clause may on its own constitute a complete sentence and is thus the core of every clause. If a clause contains (definite) NPs, I assume them to be adjoined to the nuclear clause. These adjunct NP positions are called ‘focused position’ in the diagram in (3). They are distinct from the ‘left-dislocated position’ because they are adjacent to the nuclear clause, within the scope of the conjunction, whereas the topicalised position is not:<sup>5</sup>



Sentence (1b) above had the definite NP *na lau* in focused position, following the conjunction *ka*. A focused NP does not necessarily get contrastive stress and is not separated from the nuclear clause by an intonational break or a pause. In contrast to this, consider sentences with left-dislocated NPs like (4)-(6):

---

<sup>4</sup> In this section and the next I will be concerned with definite subject and object NPs only and will not consider indefinite NPs. Definite subject and object NPs are always crossreferenced on the verb and can all be considered adjuncts. The grammatical status of indefinite arguments in Kambera is much less clear cut: indefinite subjects may or may not be crossreferenced in addition to being expressed by an NP. Indefinite objects are never crossreferenced. This, in addition to the restricted number of positions for indefinite NPs in the sentence, seems to suggest that most indefinite subject and object NPs have argument status, but the details are still unclear.

<sup>5</sup> In (3) the notion ‘sentence’ is roughly equivalent to CP, ‘clause’ to IP and ‘nuclear clause’ to VP (with subject, negation and aspectual markers).

- (4) *Nyuna<sub>j</sub> -ka na ma- mayilu -nya<sub>k</sub>*  
 he -PRF ART RM- be first -3SD  
 ‘(It was) he<sub>j</sub> who came before him<sub>k</sub>’
- (5) [*Yena tawuru mbiha*]<sub>NP<sub>j</sub></sub>, *ka u- ngàndi -ya<sub>j</sub> nú..*  
 this one ring be magic CNJ 2SN take -3SA DEI  
 ‘(About) this magic ring, you take it (with you)..’
- (6) [*Lai nyuda<sub>j</sub>*]<sub>PP</sub>, *i Yohani na- peka -nja<sub>j</sub> hukung*  
 LOC they ART John 3SN- preach -3pD law  
 ‘To them, John preached the law (lit. to them, John he preached them law)’

The left-dislocated NPs in these sentences are the pronominal subject *nyuna* in (4), the direct object NP *yena tawuru mbiha* in (5) and the prepositional phrase *lai nyuda* in (6). A left-dislocated constituent has contrastive stress and is separated from the clause by an intonation break (with or without an aspectual clitic, cf. perfective clitic *-ka* in (4)). Left dislocated NPs precede conjunctions, as the position of the NP preceding the conjunction *ka* in (5) shows.<sup>6</sup> Left-dislocations are distinct from cleft constructions because the latter always involve the use of the existential verbal element *jia*, as illustrated in (7):

- (7) *Jia -ya<sub>j</sub> [na tawuru mbiha]<sub>j</sub>*  
 EXIST -3SA ART ring be magic  
 ‘It is the magic ring (that)....’

Now that we have briefly considered the difference between the two types of position full NPs can occur in, namely focused positions and left-dislocations, we will turn to the structure of the Kambera nuclear clause, the core of every sentence. Consider (8):

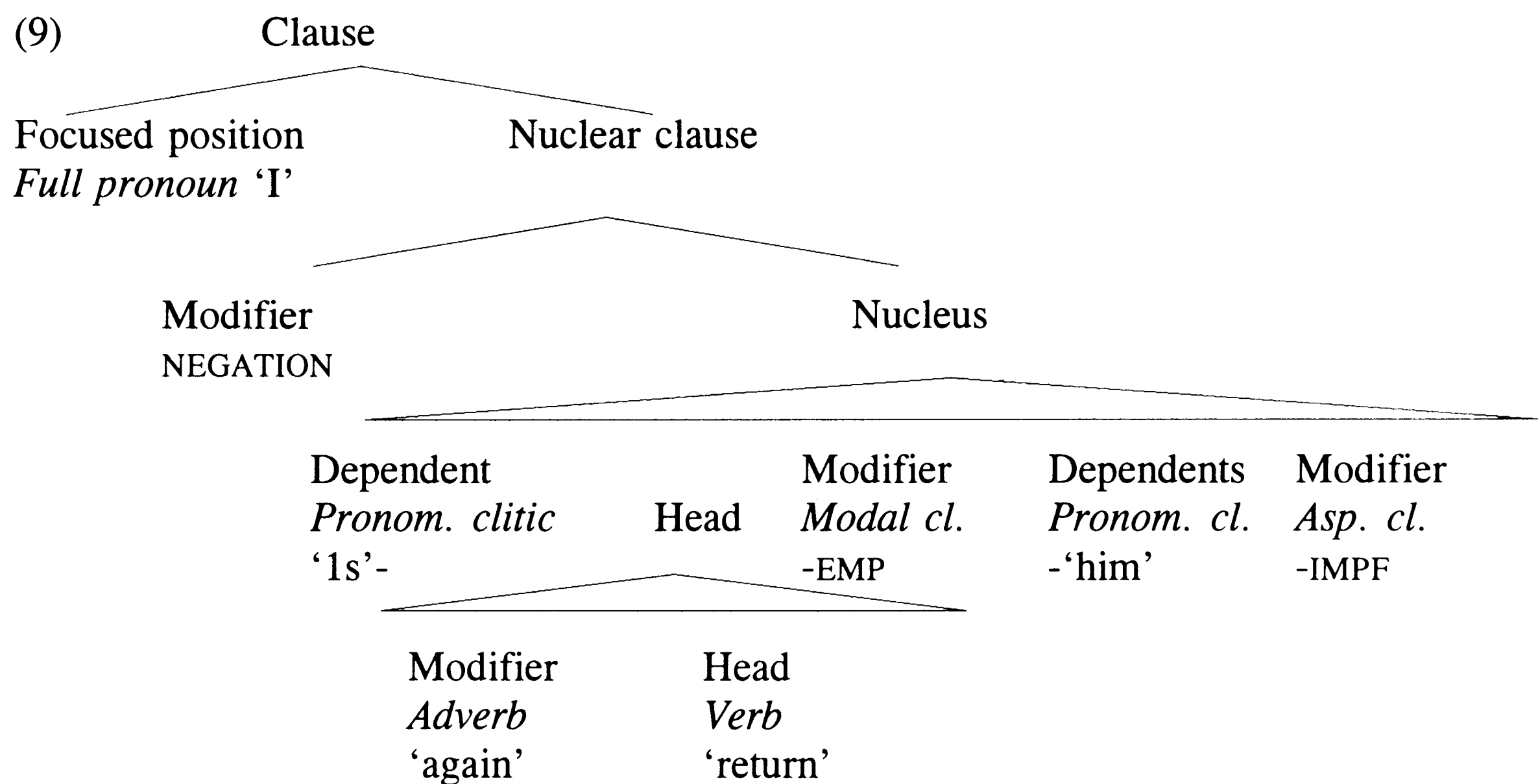
- (8) *Nyungga nda ku- hili beli -ma -nya -pa*  
 I NEG 1SN- again return -EMP -3SD -IMPF  
 ‘I am not going back to him again’

---

<sup>6</sup> The perfective aspect marker *-ka* and the conjunction *ka* have distinct structural and functional properties. Though their homophony may suggest a common ancestor form, synchronically they are distinct grammatical items.

In this sentence, the head of the clause is the verb *beli* ‘return’, which is modified by the adverb *hili* ‘again’. The (optional) subject NP *nyungga* ‘I’ is crossreferenced on the verb by the nominative proclitic *ku-*. Enclitics are the emphatic marker *-ma*, the pronominal object clitic *-nya* and the aspectual marker *-pa*.<sup>7</sup>

In (9) the structure of the nuclear clause in (8) is given. When we compare the diagram in (9) below to the one in (3) above, we observe again that crossreferenced (adjunct) NPs are not part of the nuclear clause. In (9) the crossreferenced pronoun *nyungga* ‘I’ occurs in sentence-initial focused position. It precedes the negation *nda*.



Let us now look at the pronominal clitics more closely. Kambera pronominal clitics are nominative, genitive, accusative or dative,<sup>8</sup> the clitic paradigms are listed in (10):

<sup>7</sup> Enclitics must appear in this order, i.e. modal-pronominal-aspectual. Apart from ordering restrictions like these, Kambera clitics are subject to other idiosyncratic restrictions as well, cf. Klammer (1994, 1996b).

<sup>8</sup> A verbal argument can also be marked with a combination of these clitics, cf. Klammer 1994; to appear; 1996a,b.

(10)		NOMINATIVE	ACCUSATIVE	DATIVE <sup>9</sup>	GENITIVE
	1s	ku-	-ka	-ngga	-nggu
	2s	(m)u-	-kau	-nggau	-mu
	3s	na-	-ya	-nya	-na
	1p(inc)	ta-	-ta	-nda	-nda
	1p(exc)	ma-	-kama	-nggama	-ma
	2p	(m)i-	-ka(m)i	-ngga(m)i	-mi
	3p	da-	-ha	-nja	-da

The morphological case labels for the clitic paradigms in (10) are not chosen arbitrarily: they relate the clitic to the most central or least marked syntactic/semantic properties of the verbal argument that it marks, which are as follows.

Nominative marks the subject of a transitive or intransitive verb. In (11) the verb *palu* ‘hit’ is transitive, the subject (*na tau wutu* ‘the big/fat man’) is marked on the verb with a nominative clitic, the object with an accusative. In (12), the verb *tambuta* ‘drop out’ is intransitive, the subject (*na ài* ‘the tree’) is marked on the verb with a nominative proclitic. The brackets indicate that the NPs are optional; the pronominal clitics are not optional.

- (11) (*Na tau wutu*) *na- palu -ka* (*nyungga*)  
 ART person be fat 3SN- hit -1SA I  
 ‘The big man hit me (lit. the big man he-hit-me I)’

- (12) (*Na ài*) *na- tambuta dangu amung*  
 ART tree 3SN- drop out with root  
 ‘That tree is uprooted (lit. that tree it is dropped out with root)’

In (13) the ditransitive (applicative) verb *kei(ng)* ‘buy X for Y’ has two object arguments. Its indirect object is crossreferenced on the verb with the dative clitic *-nja* while the direct object (*rí* ‘vegetable’) is not marked on the verb because it is indefinite.

---

<sup>9</sup> Superficially, it seems that the dative paradigm can be derived from the accusative by prenasalising the accusative form. In fact, this prenasalisation is neither a phonological nor a productive morphological process, evidence is given in Klammer 1994. Here I will just assume that the dative clitics in Kambera form indeed a separate paradigm with its own structural and functional properties.



- (13) (I Ama) na- kei -*nja* rí  
 ART father 3SN- buy -3pD vegetable  
 ‘Father buys vegetables for them (lit. Father he buys them vegetables)’

In most cases it is just the indirect object of a ditransitive verb that is marked on the verb. However, it is also possible to cliticize both the indirect object *and* the direct object — in that order — on the verb. This is illustrated in (14), where *-ngga* ‘me’ marks the indirect object, and *-nya* ‘it’ the direct object:<sup>10</sup>

- (14) (I Ama) na- kei -*ngga* -*nya*  
 ART father 3SN- buy -1SD -3SD  
 ‘Father buys it for me (lit. Father he buys me it)’

Finally, the genitive marks a nominal possessor, such as *-nggu* ‘my’ in (15):

- (15) Na uma -*nggu* (nyungga)  
 ART house -1sG I  
 ‘My house’

These are the most typical functions of the pronominal clitics. There are some additional functions which are, in a sense, derived from the basic uses as they have been discussed. Those that are relevant to the present discussion are the following. The genitive not only marks a nominal possessor, subjects of transitive and intransitive verbs can be marked with a genitive clitic, too. This is illustrated in (16), where the genitive clitic *-mu* ‘2sG’ marks the subject (semantic AGENT) of the transitive verb *pameti* ‘kill’, making the clause nominal. Kambera expresses the subject of a clause with a nominal predicate by an accusative clitic that is marked on the NP that functions

---

<sup>10</sup> Observe that the direct object is marked with a clitic from the dative paradigm here, whereas in (11) it was marked with an accusative; the latter being the unmarked way to mark a direct object, cf. (i):

- (i) Na- palu -ka  
 3SN- hit -1sA  
 ‘He hit me’

In (14) a dative clitic is used instead of an accusative because of the idiosyncratic Kambera restriction that the second postverbal slot in a clitic cluster may only be filled with a dative clitic.



as the nominal predicate. Kambera does not have an overt copular verb. This is illustrated by (17).

- (16) *Pa. meti -bia -mu -ngga*  
 CAU.kill -just -2sG -1sD  
 ‘(You) just kill me (i.e. I don’t care if you kill me)’

- (17) [*Tau mini*] *-ya*  
 person male -3sA  
 ‘He/it’s a man’

### 3. Voice effects through focusing/inversion

The diagrams (3) and (9) show that a conjunction is the initial element of a clause. Adjoined nominal constituents appear within the scope of the conjunction, outside the scope of the negation, in positions either preceding or following the nuclear clause. It is these adjoined NP-positions that I will be referring to in this section.

When an NP is focused in Kambera, this has effects that resemble the voice distinctions in other languages. This is illustrated by the sentences in (18). In (18a) the subject NP *na tau wutu* precedes the nuclear clause — the unmarked position for subject NPs. The object NP, following the nuclear clause, also occupies its unmarked position. In contrast to this, (18b) has reversed the order of the NPs: the object NP *nyungga* is fronted and the subject NP *na tau wutu* now follows the nuclear clause. Note again that the morphological marking on the verb does not change.

- (18) a. *Ba na tau wutu na- palu -ka nyungga*  
 CNJ ART person be fat 3sN- hit -1sA I  
 ‘The big man hit me (lit. the big man he-hit-me I)’
- b. *Ba nyungga na- palu -ka na tau wutu*  
 CNJ I 3sN- hit -1sA ART person be fat  
 ‘I was hit by a big man (lit. I he-hit-me a big man)’

If the function of a passive is to focus a Patient/logical object and defocus an Agent/logical subject, Kambera focusing as illustrated in (18b) is functionally similar to a passive construction in other languages. The basic position for (adjunct) subject NPs is the position preceding the nuclear clause, while the object NP basically follows it.

Reversing the order of the NPs results in an interpretation like a voice alternation where the object is focused and the subject defocused. However, Kambera word order facts are more complex than this, as shown in (19):

- (19) a. (*I Miri<sub>j</sub>*)      *na-j kataku -ya<sub>k</sub>*      (*na hamayang<sub>k</sub>*)  
          ART Lord      3SN- accept      -3SA      ART prayer  
          ‘The Lord accepted the prayer’
- b. *Na hamayang<sub>k</sub>*      *na-j kataku -ya<sub>k</sub>*      *i Miri<sub>j</sub>*  
          ART prayer      3SN- accept      -3SA      ART Lord  
          ‘The prayer was accepted by the Lord’
- c. *Na hamayang<sub>k</sub>*      (*i Miri<sub>j</sub>*)      *na-j kataku -ya<sub>k</sub>*  
          ART prayer      ART Lord      3SN- accept      -3SA  
          ‘The prayer was accepted (by the Lord)’
- d. *Na-j kataku -ya<sub>k</sub>*      *i Miri<sub>j</sub>*      (*na hamayang<sub>k</sub>*)  
          3SN- accept      -3SA      ART Lord      ART prayer  
          ‘The prayer/it was accepted by the Lord’

Sentence (19a) illustrates the basic constituent order. The subject NP *i Miri* ‘the Lord’, is not in focus and therefore precedes the nuclear clause. That is, if it occurs at all, because, as was mentioned above, full definite NPs that are crossreferenced on the verb are optionally used for disambiguation or emphasis (cf. the brackets in (19)).

It is a striking property of Kambera texts that in transitive sentences definite object NPs occur much more often than subject NPs, though grammatically both are possible. Indeed, in most transitive clauses a full subject NP does not occur at all. A possible explanation for this could be the ‘discourse topic’ status of the subject. Discourse topicality is determined by the information status of an NP in discourse (Foley and Van Valin 1985): if its referent is known, the NP is the topic; if it is new, it is not the topic.

In Kambera, as in many languages, the subject is considered the discourse topic. Thus being known from the context it does not need to be made explicit by an additional NP every time it occurs. An object NP, on the other hand, usually presents new information to the discourse so is much more often fully expressed.

Let us suppose, however, that a sentence has two full adjunct NPs, a subject and an object NP. The order of the NPs in sentence (19b) is the reverse of (19a). But such a reversal does not exhaust the possibilities, as the sentences (19c,d) show: NPs can also

*both* precede or *both* follow the nuclear clause. What, then, is the difference between (19c,d) and what determines the respective positions of these adjunct NPs?

In this respect it is relevant not only to consider whether the NP is the discourse topic, but also whether the NP is ‘in focus’, i.e. is particularly salient and/or contrastive compared to the other NP in the sentence. In (20) I summarise the information that Kambera texts provide. The ‘topic’/‘focus’ status of both subject and object NPs of simple transitive clauses is given on the left-hand side, the corresponding sentential position of the NPs is given on the right-hand side. Optionality of NPs is again indicated by brackets.

(20)	Topic	Focus	Sentential position of the NPs
a. Subject	+		
Object:	—		(NP <sub>S</sub> ) nuclear clause (NP <sub>O</sub> )
b. Subject:	—	—	
Object:	+	+	NP <sub>O</sub> nuclear clause NP <sub>S</sub>
c. Subject:	+	—	
Object:	—	+	NP <sub>O</sub> (NP <sub>S</sub> ) nuclear clause
d. Subject	+	+	
	—	+	nuclear clause NP <sub>S</sub> (NP <sub>O</sub> )
Object:	+	—	

In (20a) the unmarked word order is given. The subject is the discourse topic and neither the subject nor the object has particular saliency. Both adjunct NPs are optional, the subject NP precedes the nuclear clause, the object NP follows it.

The object is focused by moving the object NP to the position preceding the nuclear clause, as shown in (20b,c). When the focused object NP is *also* the discourse topic, the subject NP is defocused and follows the nuclear clause the verb, as in (20b). However, when the focused object NP is *not* the discourse topic, it is fronted while the subject NP stays in its place and is optional, as in (20c). A summary of (20d) is that the focused position for a subject NP is the one that follows the nuclear clause.

The observations made in this section can be summarized as follows. Kambera definite NPs are adjuncts and the inversion/focusing of NPs involves varying the order of adjunct NPs which is determined by discourse grammatical properties (topicality) and functional needs (focus). This has effects similar to the voice distinctions induced by passivization in other languages.

#### 4. Voice distinctions by relativisations

The second construction used to background the subject and foreground the object involves relativisations where the object of the embedded verb is the head of the relativisation. In other words, the relativised noun is the object argument that is obligatorily missing in the relative clause. The head noun of such a relativisation is the object of the embedded verb, as *na kabela* in (21) and *da tau* in (22):

- (21) [Na kabela [na pa- piti-na na tau nuna]], na<sub>j</sub>-ruhak  
 ART sword ART RM- take-3sG ART person that.one 3sN-be broken  
 ‘[The sword that was taken by that man]<sub>j</sub> it<sub>j</sub> is broken’
- (22) [Da tau [da pa- ita -nggu la anda]]  
 ART person ART RM- see -1sG LOC street  
 ‘The people I saw/that were seen by me on the street’

Among other things, these sentences show that the external syntax of Kambera relative clauses is nominal — they have the structural characteristics of nouns given in (23):

- (23) a. Relative clauses are coreferent to a pronominal clitic in the matrix clause (cf. *na-* in (21)).  
 b. Relative clauses can be marked for definiteness by the (definite) articles (singular *na* in (21), plural *da* in (22)).<sup>11</sup>  
 c. The subject of relative clauses is marked with a genitive enclitic (*-na* in (21), *-nggu* in (22)), parallel to the marking of nominal possessors (cf. (15) above).

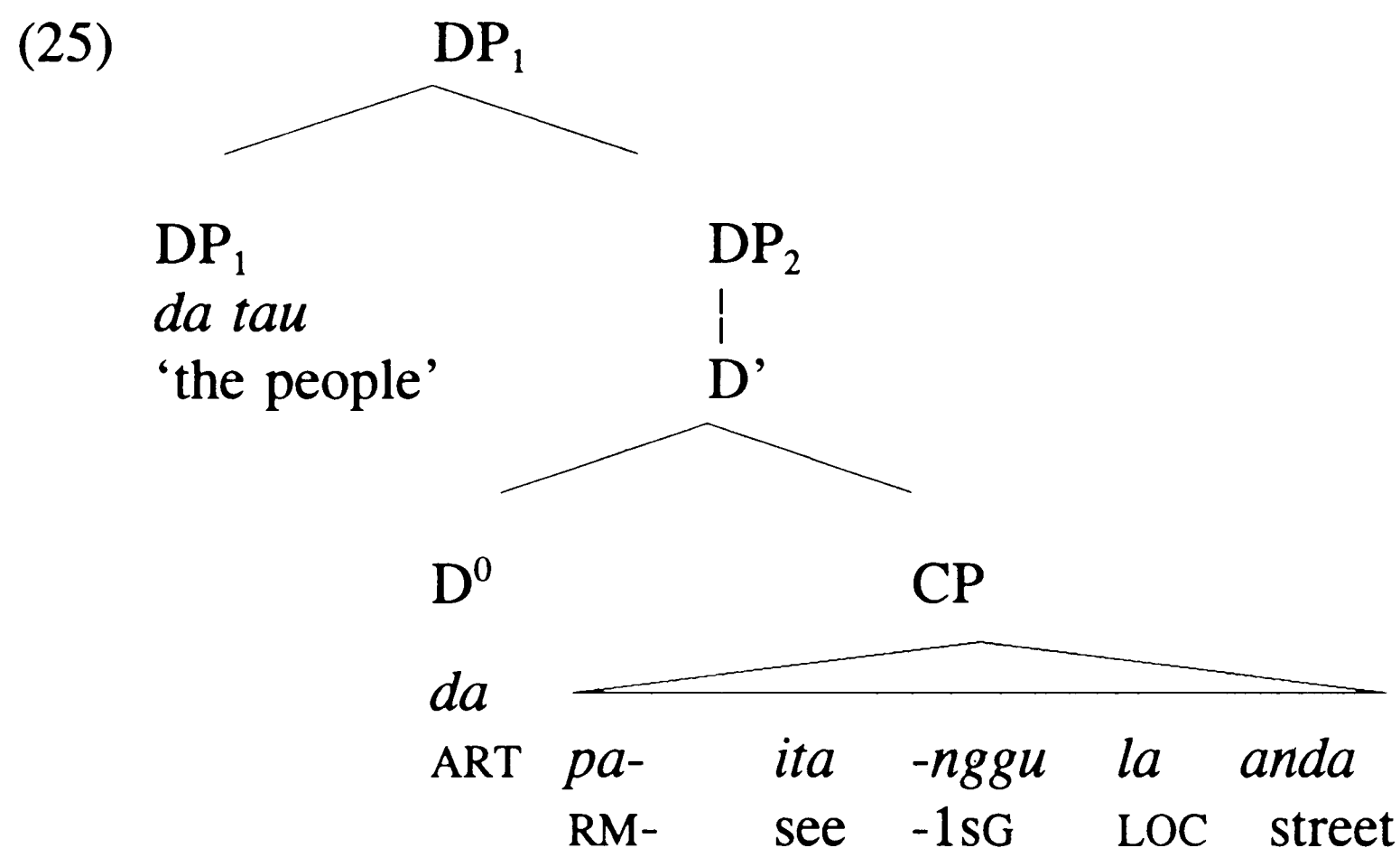
Note also that Kambera does not mark relative clauses as finite (vs. non-finite). The internal syntax of relative clauses is verbal: the lexical head is a verb, they may contain PPs like *la anda* ‘on the street’ in (22) and adverbs<sup>12</sup> like *hina* ‘recently’ in (24):

<sup>11</sup> Kambera does not have indefinite articles. Indefinite NPs are bare, as are indefinite relative clauses.

<sup>12</sup> There are reasons to distinguish a separate category for adverbs in Kambera (Klamer 1994:116-119). Adverbs only occur in verbal contexts.

- (24) [Na njara [pa- [hina kei -na]]]  
 ART horse RM- recently buy -3sG  
 'The horse which he recently bought'

Thus, we can represent a Kambera relative construction as in (25). The first nominal constituent (DP<sub>1</sub>) *da tau* 'the people' is the head of the relativisation. In apposition to this constituent, there is a second nominal constituent (DP<sub>2</sub>). This constituent consists of a functional head (D<sup>0</sup>) (which is the article *da* here) and a clausal complement (CP), which is here the relative clause *pa-ita-nggu la anda* 'that I saw on the street'.



The first and second DPs are considered to be in apposition instead of the second being embedded in the first, because in principle inversion of two DPs is possible. Given the limits of this paper I will just assume that (1) there are reasons to consider the relative marker *pa-* as a complementizer: the functional head of the relative clause (CP), i.e. a C (see also Klammer 1994:305-326) and (2) that relativisations in Kambera are nominal structures, even when they lack an article, as in (24), or when they are headless, as in (27):

- (26) a. Na pa- ngangu -na  
 ART RM- eat -3sG  
 'What he ate'

b. *Na pa- ita -nggu*  
 ART RM- see -1sG  
 'What I saw'

c. *Na pa- palu -na*  
 ART RM- hit -3sG  
 'What he hit'

d. *Na pa- bohu -nggu*  
 ART RM- steal -1sG  
 'What I stole'

Some headless relativisations are lexicalised as nouns with a specific interpretation, others are not, as shown in (27):

(27) *pa-ngangu* 'food (=entity eaten)'  
*pa-ita* 'vision (=entity/person seen)'  
*\*pa-palu* \*'entity/person hit'  
*\*pa-bohu* \*'entity stolen'

And, like nouns, headless relativisations can modify other nouns, as shown in (28a,b):

(28) a. *meu rumba*  
 cat grass 'wild cat'  
*uhu wei*  
 rice pig 'pig's fodder'

b. *tau pa- palu*  
 person RM- hit 'a hit person/a person who is hit'  
*ndui pa- bohu*  
 money RM- steal 'stolen money/money that is stolen'

If relativisations are nominal structures, we also expect to find them as nominal predicates. This is indeed the case. Above, it was mentioned that Kambera has no overt copula or other equivalent of the copular verb *be*. When a clause has a nominal predicate the predicate is simply juxtaposed to the subject. Subjects of nominal

predicates are expressed with an accusative clitic, as illustrated by (17) above.<sup>13</sup> The sentences in (29) below contain nominal predicates that consist of headless relativisations. In (29a) the matrix subject is marked by the clitic *-ka* '1sA'. This clitic is coreferent with the full NP *nyungga* (which is optional). The embedded subject is marked with a genitive enclitic *-na* '3sG'. (29b) is similar, except that here the embedded genitive subject is absent. This construction is stripped down further in (29c), a headless relativisation predicating the subject *-ka*.

- (29) a. *Nyungga<sub>j</sub> [pa- palu -na nyuna] -ka<sub>j</sub>*  
           I                  RM- hit -3sG he -1sA  
           'I (am) (the one) who was hit by him'
- b. *Nyungga<sub>j</sub> [pa- palu] -ka<sub>j</sub>*  
           I                  RM- hit -1sA  
           'I was hit (lit. I (am) (the one) hit)'
- c. *[Pa- palu] -ka*  
           RM- hit -1sA  
           'I was hit (lit. I (am) (the one) hit)'
- d. *Nyungga<sub>j</sub> [pa- palu la anda] -ka<sub>j</sub>*  
           I                  RM- hit LOC road -1sA  
           'I was hit on the road (lit. I (am) (the one) hit on the road)'

Apart from the semantic evidence, is there any structural reason to interpret an accusative clitic like *-ka* in (29c) as the subject of the matrix clause? After all, with its accusative case it is marked like an object. Couldn't it be marking the object of the embedded verb instead? Now consider (29d). The grammaticality of this sentence shows that *-ka* cannot be considered the object of the embedded transitive verb *palu* 'hit'. The embedded clause contains a PP that occurs *between* the verb and the clitic *-ka*. As a sentential adjunct, a PP can never occur between a verb and its object clitic

---

<sup>13</sup> In Kambera, a subject of a non-verbal predicate is marked with an accusative clitic. This is related to the fact that non-verbal predicates are descriptive predicates. With their non-active argument they resemble objects of transitive verbs and subjects of some intransitive verbs (cf. Klammer 1994:137-152).



In conclusion, sentences like (29a-d) show that the logical object of the nominalised embedded verb, in a sense, has ‘become’ the subject of the nominal predicate in the matrix clause. The matrix clause contains a nominal predicate which is made up of an object relativisation. The structure of e.g. (29c) can thus be represented as in (30):

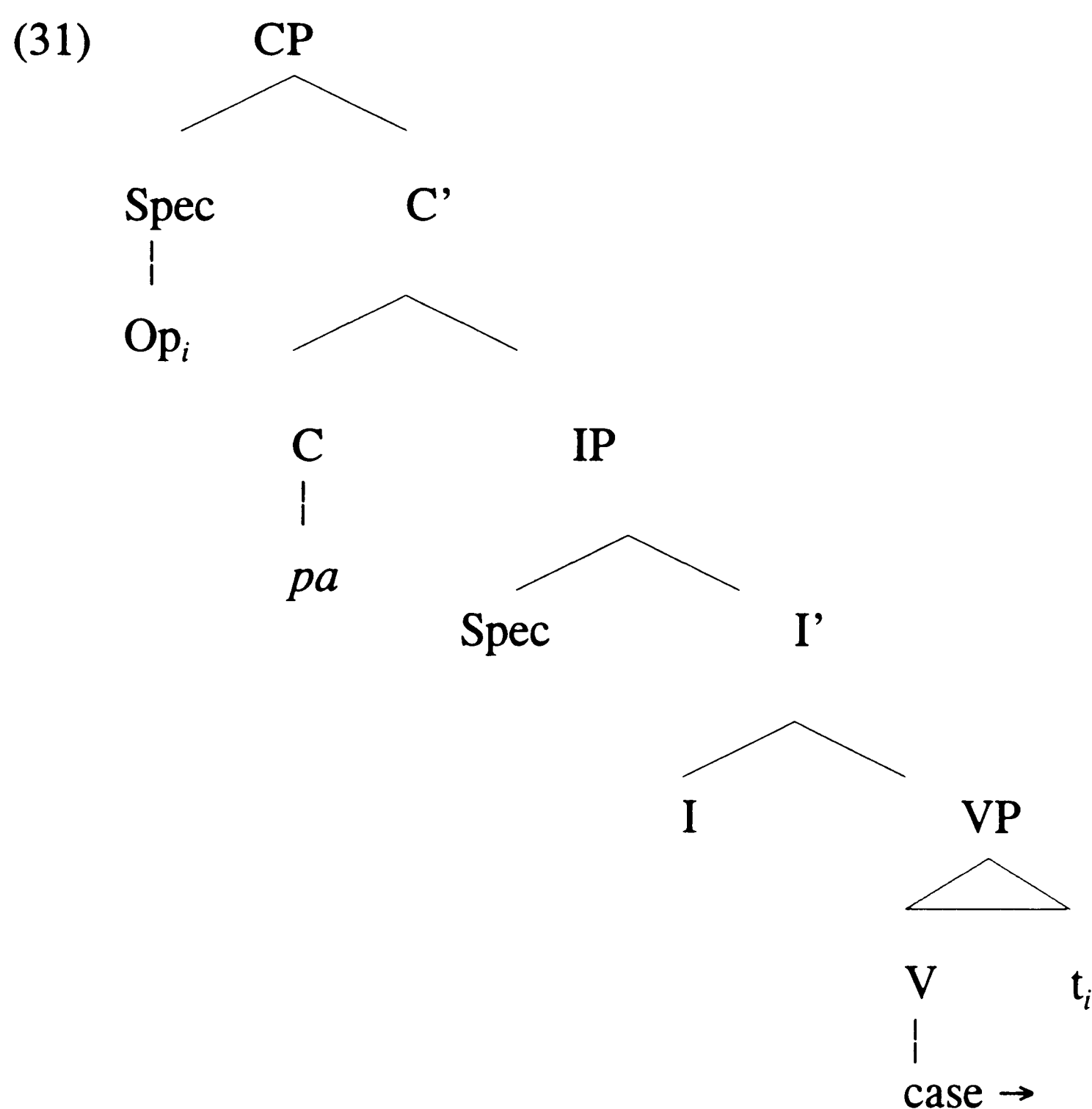
- What we observe is thus that the logical object of a verb that is embedded in a relative clause can eventually ‘become’ the grammatical subject of the matrix clause. In this respect, the use of relativisations as nominal predicates as it has been discussed in this section is more similar to a passive than the inversion/focusing discussed in section 3 above, because in the latter process the logical object does not ‘become’ a grammatical subject, whereas in the former construction it does.

In this paper I have discussed two strategies that Kambera uses to express the functional equivalent of the passive voice in other languages, i.e. putting the PATIENT/logical object in focus and defocus the AGENT/logical subject. The first strategy is a process of focusing/inversion where the syntactic status of the subject and object does not change, the pronominal marking and morphological shape of the verb remains the same but the adjunct NP coreferent to the object is focused while the subject adjunct NP is defocused. The second strategy is to use an object relativisation as a nominal predicate. This structure resembles a canonical passive most closely both in form and function. Both a canonical passive verb and a transitive verb in a Kambera object relativisation have a reduced valency compared to their base verb. They cannot have (or: no longer have) an overt object. In both structures, the logical object of the base verb has, in a sense, ‘become’ the syntactic subject in the derived structure. The insight that Kambera provides us with is that relative structures are at least functionally related to passive-

<sup>14</sup> Considering *-ka* as the object marker would also cause other descriptive/ analytical problems. If the construction *pa-palu-ka* were not an object gap relativisation — which it clearly *could* not be if it contained the object clitic *-ka* — how should the morpheme *pa-* that is attached to the verb *palu* then be analysed and described? What would it be if it were not the same morpheme as the morpheme *pa-* in all the other object relativisations?

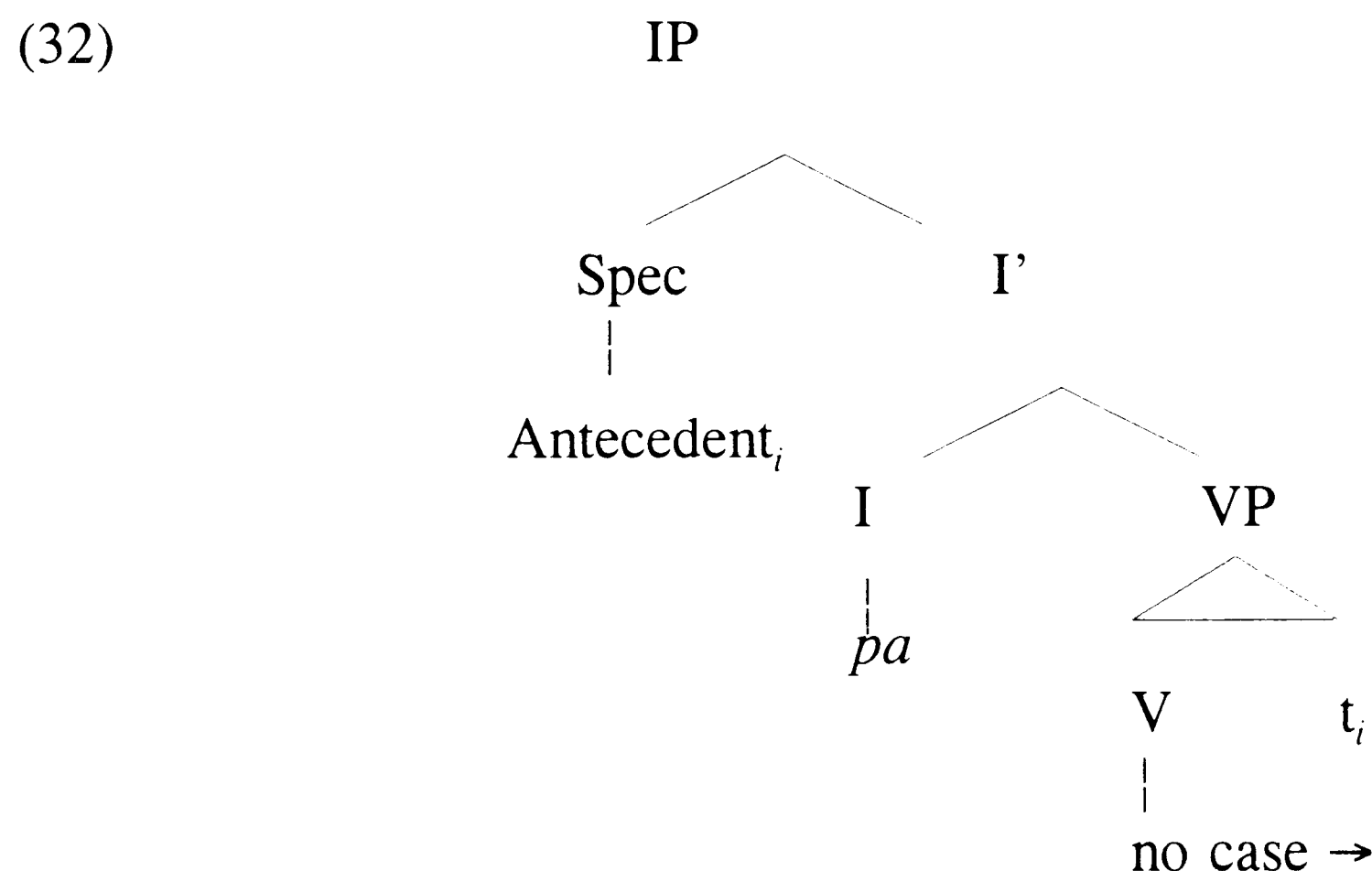
like structures. To account for this striking relatedness, I would like to suggest that relative constructions which function as nominal predicates are open to reinterpretation as passive structures in Kambera. This is particularly the case for simple ‘short’ relative clauses, such as the ones in (29) with no modifying phrases between the relative marker and the remainder of the sentence (an example of such a phrase is *hina* ‘recently’ in (24)). In what follows I will sketch a possible structural account of the observed reanalysis of the ‘short’ passives.<sup>15</sup>

Consider a structure for Kambera relatives in standard generative terms as in (31) where the relative morpheme *pa* is a complementizer (C). The relative clause contains a case-marked trace which has as its antecedent an empty operator in the non-argument position Spec CP:



<sup>15</sup> Thanks are due to Marcel den Dikken for discussion on this point and for suggesting this structural account of the reanalysis.

In 'short' relative constructions there is no overt evidence to interpret the morpheme *pa* as a complementizer (C) instead of an inflectional head (I), i.e. there is no overt evidence to build the structure in (31) with an IP that is empty. Because the evidence for the C-interpretation of *pa* is lacking, the morpheme can be reinterpreted as an inflectional head — a case-absorbing 'passive' affix of the verb (cf. Baker, Johnson and Roberts 1989 for arguments for the base-generation of the passive morpheme under I). As a result of the reanalysis, the whole interpretation of the structure changes. Since the 'passive' prefix now absorbs case, case can no longer be assigned to  $t_i$ . This has the result that the antecedent of  $t_i$  can no longer be in a non-argument position such as Spec-CP, but must be in a case-marked argument position such as Spec-IP. To make the Spec-IP position available, we need a functional I. To cater for this, *pa* gets a new status in the configuration, it is base-generated under I instead of C, resulting in the structure in (32):



After the reinterpretation of *pa* the CP projection has become superfluous and is removed.

Within the limits of this paper it is impossible to deal with the important details and consequences of an approach like this. But it suggests that a structural account of the insight that Kambera provides us with, namely that relative structures are related to passive-like structures because the relative marker *pa* can be reanalysed as a passive morpheme, is possible. In standard generative accounts of relative clauses and passives there is no hint of similarity between the two structures. Yet, given the Kambera facts described in this paper they seem to have more in common than we expect. Furthermore, *all* languages seem to employ relative structures and non-verbal

predicates while, apparently, a number of languages do *not* have specific passive verb forms or passive structures. Therefore it may very well be that the passive as it has been analysed in the literature is a language(-family) specific construction. What Kambera shows us is that an account of passive-like structures with universal claims *must* somehow be related to an account of relativisations in the world's languages.

## REFERENCES

- BAKER, M., K. JOHNSON & I. ROBERTS. 1989. 'Passive arguments raised'. *Linguistic Inquiry* 20:219-251.
- ENGELHOFEN, A. VAN. 1995. *A description of the Leti language (as spoken in Tutukei)*. Dissertation, Leiden University.
- FOLEY, W.A. AND R.D. VAN VALIN. 1985. 'Information packaging in the clause.' In: T. Shopen (ed). *Language typology and syntactic description*. Cambridge: C.U.P.
- JONKER, J.C.G. 1915. *Rottineesche spraakkunst*. Leiden: Brill.
- JONKER, J.C.G. 1932. *Lettineesche taalstudieën*. Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap LXX.
- KLAMER, M. 1994. *Kambera: a language of Eastern Indonesia*. [HIL Dissertations 11]. The Hague: Holland Academic Graphics.
- KLAMER, M. (to appear). 'Continuative aspect and the dative clitic in Kambera'. To appear in: Proceedings of the Second Austronesian Formal Linguistics Association (AFLA2), McGill University, Montréal.
- KLAMER, M. 1996. 'Kambera pronominal clitics and thematic roles'. Paper presented at the *Workshop on Inflection, 18. Jahrestagung DGfS*, Freiburg, Feb/March 1996.
- KLAMER, M. 1996. 'Optimal clitic placement in Kambera.' Paper presented at the *Third conference of the Austronesian Formal Linguistics Association (AFLA 3)*, UCLA, Los Angeles, April 1996.
- SHIBATANI, M. 1985. 'Passives and related constructions: a prototype analysis.' *Language* 61:821-848.

Vakgroep Taalkunde  
 Fac. der Letteren  
 Vrije Universiteit  
 P.o. Box 7161  
 1007 MC Amsterdam  
 The Netherlands  
 [klamerm@jet.let.vu.nl]