

**From copula to focus, vice versa, or neither?
Information structure and non-verbal predication in Mano**

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1. Introduction

Among the treasures that Mande languages have offered to linguistic typology are non-verbal predications: both typological peculiarities of individual constructions (Creissels 2022) and the remarkable diversity and originality of systems of non-verbal predication in individual languages (Vydrin 2020).

This paper contributes to the discussion of Mande non-verbal predication by describing the system of Mano, a South Mande language spoken in Guinea and Liberia (ISO-639 code: mev). The data is drawn primarily from the Maa dialect of the language spoken around Nzérékoré. The main analytical question that I address concerns the relationship between non-verbal predication and focus marking. Let's consider the following examples:

Identifying construction in Mano

- (1) *Gààzù dōó wē lé nó wē.*
mirror one DEM ATT¹ just DEM
'It is the same mirror' [MOC]

Focus construction in Mano

- (2) *Wìì lé mā zē ē.*
animal ATT 1SG.PST>3SG kill DEM
'[I did not hit a person,] it is an animal that I killed.' [MOC]

The examples (1–2) include the same marker, *lé*, in different functions: a function of identifying a non-verbal predicator in (1) and serving as a focus marker in (2). In this paper, I argue that focus meaning arises as a pragmatic interpretation of identify-

¹ ATT stands for attention management. The function of attention management is not discussed in this paper. See Section 4 for a discussion of the glosses.

ing or presentative constructions with non-verbal predicators under particular contextual conditions. As a result, focus markers may not need to be distinguished as a syntactic and semantic class separate from non-verbal predicators. This discussion aims to shed light on the synchronic and diachronic interaction between focus marking and non-verbal predication in Mande.

The data in this paper are a mix of elicited (marked as [el.]), semi-naturalistic (continuous recordings of an experiment with visual stimuli, marked with [reflexive experiment]); the exact stimuli are given in the Appendix) and naturalistic data, coming from a corpus of narratives, conversations and religious ceremonies [MOC]. In one case, the published translation of the New Testament was also used (UBS 1978).

I begin by introducing non-verbal predication in Section 2. Section 2.2 describes non-verbal predication with PPMs, Section 2.3 discusses the verb *kē* ‘to be’ and Section 2.4 introduces non-verbal predication with negative copulas. In Section 3, I focus on presentative and identifying predicators. I discuss basic constructions with these markers in Section 3.1 and different syntactic extensions, including those with a clause, which, in some contexts, receive a focal reading, in Section 3.2. I discuss the findings in Section 4, where I place the Mano data in a broader typological and theoretical context.

2. Non-verbal predication in Mano

2.1 General remarks

Following Hengeveld (2011), I define non-verbal predication as predication where the predicative value is expressed by an element whose default use is not predicative and which is therefore not a verb. Such elements are most commonly referential or adverbial expressions. In addition to the predicative part, non-verbal predication usually includes another element — an argument. Non-verbal predication also typically includes supporting predicative elements. **Copulas**, in Hengeveld’s terminology, are defined as supporting predicative elements that are semantically empty and whose main function is to enable a non-verbal predicate to fulfill its function. If a supporting predicative element can, in a different context, also combine with a verb and/or is not semantically empty but has an additional verbal or temporal/aspectual/modal meaning, the term “copula” does not apply. Instead, the predicator is ascribed to a broader class of auxiliaries.

Mano shows several different strategies for non-verbal predication constructions. Different types of Mano non-verbal predications involve different types of predicative elements. The most prominent type — and the most frequent, also covering most of the semantic classes of non-verbal predication — are constructions involving elements which, in the Mandeist tradition, are called pronominal predicative markers, or

PPMs (Vydrin 2020).² These elements form a central part of a finite construction, expressing tense, aspect, modality and polarity, but also function as a site of subject indexation. Constructions with PPMs of the existential series, which form the bulk of non-verbal predication in Mano, are addressed in Section 2.2. For non-stative aspects and non-present tenses, other PPMs are used in combination with the verb *kē* ‘to be’ (Section 2.3). The Mano negative copula *wó* is addressed in Section 2.4.

In addition to the aforementioned types, another cross-linguistically common type of non-verbal predication includes predications with an argument and **no other predicative part besides the supporting predicative element** (ex. 1).³ The most central functions of such predication are referent identification and ostensive presentation. The predicative elements are ascribed to the class of predicative demonstratives (Killian 2022). Such predications, addressed in Section 3, comprise the main subject of this paper.

2.2 Non-verbal predication with existential PPMs

The Mano series of existential predicative markers can be used in verbal and in non-verbal predications. The word order in Mano verbal predications is Subj-PPM-V,

² In Valentin Vydrin’s terms, PPMs are defined as elements which occur only in verbal predications. If an element can occur in both verbal and non-verbal predications, as existential auxiliaries in Mano, it is not ascribed to the class of PPMs but to the class of bifunctional auxiliaries (Vydrin 2020). To avoid postulating a part of speech with only one series of elements, I depart from this taxonomy and define existential auxiliaries as PPMs.

³ According to Denis Creissels (2022, p.c.), they are semantically similar to either referential identity or to class-membership constructions, depending on the type of predication involved. The NP in such constructions should be analyzed as the predicate (the predicated class or the identical referent), while the argument (what is being identified) is absent. Although such analysis is very plausible from a semantic point of view, it runs into a difficulty. In the presentative constructions, the NP preceding the predicator should be considered as its argument. Crucially, presentative and identifying constructions in Mano (and in some other languages as well; Killian 2022) share the same predicators and the difference between the two interpretations is not always easy to draw, especially in the case of invisible and abstract referents (see ex. 31). Thus, if we were to adopt Creissels’ syntactic analysis, we would have to deal with a marker included in two dramatically different syntactic structures with still highly compatible and often ambiguous interpretations. Because the fuzzy boundary between presentative and identifying functions, especially in the focus reading, is a central object of this paper (see Section 3.2.1), I prefer to adopt the same analysis for both these constructions by treating the NP preceding the predicator as an argument, while recognizing that for identifying constructions, postulating an implicit argument instead has its advantages. I leave it for future studies to propose a syntactic analysis of identifying constructions which would address both the problem of the implicit argument and the proximity between identifying and presentative constructions.

where Subj is the subject, PPM is the pronominal predicative marker and V is the verb. (In transitive verbal clauses, there is another obligatory element, namely, the direct object in the position between the PPM and the verb.) Similarly, in non-verbal predications with PPMs, the word order is Subj-PPM-PRED, where PRED is the non-verbal predicative element. The subject NP is optional, so the subject may be expressed solely by the person-number index on the PPM. In a typical non-verbal predication describing a situation in the present (as in *I am a teacher*), the PPM series used is the existential one. Table 1 below lists all the PPMs of that series. The second row gives portmanteau forms merged with a 3SG pronoun.

	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
Basic series	<i>ḡ</i>	<i>ī</i>	<i>lē</i>	<i>kō</i>	<i>kā</i>	<i>ō</i>
Portmanteau series (merged with 3SG pronoun)	<i>māā</i>	<i>ḡāā</i>	<i>lāā</i>	<i>kōāā</i>	<i>kāā</i>	<i>wāā</i>

Table 1. Existential PPM series

The PPM construction is used for most non-verbal predications types, including those involving referential identity, class membership, attribution and possession, but also existential predication and location, discussed below. In attribution and class-membership constructions, the predicate is expressed by a postpositional phrase with the postposition *ká* ‘with.’

Referential identity

- (3) *Gḡ wē lē ḡ dē ká.*
 man:H DEM 3SG.EX 1SG husband with
 ‘This man is my husband.’ [el.]

Class-membership

- (4) *Sèé lē kàlámóḡ ká*
 Se 3SG.EX teacher with
 ‘Se is a teacher.’ [el.]

Attribution

- (5) *Gḡānéé vò ḡ tíkpe.*
 cat PL 3PL.EX small
 ‘Cats are small.’ [el.]

Possessive

- (6) *Gḡānéé vò ḡ kèlè.*
 cat PL 3PL.EX 1SG hand
 ‘I have cats’ (etymologically: cats are in my hand). [el.]

Constructions solely predicating the existence of a referent (existential predications, dubbed as “hyparctic” predication in Haspelmath (2022)), use the existential PPM in combination with the particle *bē* ‘EX.’

Existential predication

(7) *Bīē vò ò bē.*

elephant PL 3PL.EX EX

‘Elephants exist.’ [el.]

(8) *Lē bē kō dàāmì móòḡwòmò.*

3SG.EX EX 1PL owner because.of

‘[People’s body is not for the sin, but] it exists for our Lord.’ (UBS 1978: Mano New Testament, Col 6:13)

Location is usually expressed via adverbs, including demonstrative locative adverbs (*zēē* ‘here,’ *dū* ‘there’), postpositional phrases, or nouns in a special locative form, all following an existential PPM.

Location

(9) *À lòkó fòtòò séḡ séḡ lē zēē.*

3SG mother photo all all 3SG.EX here

‘Her mother’s photos are all here.’ [MOC]

(10) *Ī kēì.*

2SG.EX house.LOC

‘You are in the room.’ [el.]

Thetic locational constructions where a referent is introduced at the same time as its location is being specified (existential constructions, in terms of Haspelmath 2022, or presentative locative constructions, in terms of Hengeveld 2011) are expressed the same way as locational construction.⁴

(11) *Mīā ò zēē.*

person.PL 3PL.EX here

‘There are people here.’ [MOC]

To conclude the discussion of constructions with existential PPMs, locational non-verbal predications have given rise to durative constructions. Indeed, durative constructions consist of the existential PPM and the main verb in the infinitive form with the suffix *-pèlè*, which derives from the noun *pélé* ‘place’ in the low-tone construct form.

⁴ As discussed by Creissels (2019), this is a typical feature of the languages of the Sudanic Belt.

Durative construction

- (12) *Cèe_ Jùú lē ló-pèlè ò!*
 Prop.N 3SG.EX go-INF INJ

‘Ce Jules is leaving, oh!’ (lit. “Ce Jules is at the place of going”) [MOC]

2.3 Non-verbal predication with the verb *kē* ‘to be, to become’

The previous section described basic non-verbal predications in the stative present, all involving the PPMs of the existential series.

Class-membership constructions (and other constructions with a non-verbal predicative element) can also be used in other tenses and aspects. In that case, the verb *kē* ‘to be, to become’ is used as the supporting predicator in the respective aspectual and temporal construction, such as the stative past (13), perfect (14) or imperfective present (15).

Stative Past

- (13) *Á dàā ē kē dōmì ká.*
 3SG father 3SG.PST be chief with
 ‘His father was a chief.’ [MOC]

Perfect

- (14) *Á dàā āà kē dōmì ká.*
 3SG father 3SG.PRF be chief with
 ‘His father has become a chief.’ [el.]

Imperfective present

- (15) *Á dàā lēè kē dōmì ká*
 3SG father 3SG.IPFV be:IPFV chief with
 ‘His father is becoming a chief.’ [el.]

As I will show in the next section, negative constructions in stative present are expressed with the copula *wó*. In other tenses and aspects, negative constructions are expressed with the verb *kē* in the respective tense and aspect form. The example below illustrating the stative past is formed with the 3SG negative PPM *lèé* and the negative particle *gbā*.

Negative stative past

- (16) *Á gí lèé gbā kē à mò*
 3SG stomach 3SG.NEG NEG be 3SG on
 ‘She wasn’t pregnant (lit.: her stomach wasn’t on her).’ [MOC]

2.4. Negative non-verbal predication with the copula *wó*

All types of non-verbal predication (including location) discussed thus far use the same strategy for negation in the stative present, namely, the negative copula *wó*. The

examples below illustrate negative referential identity, class membership, attribution, possession, existential predication and location, respectively. The word order is invariably Subj-*wó*-PRED, where PRED is the main predicative element.

Negative referential identity

- (17) *Gǒ wē wó ĩ dē ká.*
 man:H DEM COP.NEG 1SG husband with
 ‘This man is not my husband.’ [el.]

Negative class membership

- (18) *Sèé wó kàlámò ká.*
 PropN COP.NEG teacher with
 ‘Se is not a teacher.’ [el.]

Negative attribution

- (19) *Gǒānéé vò wó tíkpé.*
 cat PL COP.NEG small
 ‘Cats are not small.’ [el.]

Negative possession

- (20) *Gǒānéé vò wó ĩ kèlè.*
 cat PL COP.NEG 1SG hand
 ‘I don’t have cats’ (etymologically: cats aren’t in my hand). [el.]

Negative existential predication

- (21) *Bīē vò wó bē.*
 elephant PL COP.NEG EX
 ‘Elephants do not exist.’ [el.]

Negative location

- (22) *Bī wó kèl.*
 2SG.EMPH COP.NEG house.LOC
 ‘You are not in the room.’ [el.]

The copula *wó* can also be used in negative identifying constructions. In that case, a postpositional phrase *à ká* is used with a 3SG pronoun, making the construction structurally equivalent to referential identity or class-membership constructions. The singular pronoun is used even with plural referents (23b), which is why it should be interpreted as semantically empty.

Negative identifying construction

- (23a) *Ī lēkè wáá ká, ĩ né lē.*
 1SG younger.sibling COP.NEG>3SG with 1SG.POSS child IDENT

‘It is not my younger sibling, it is my child.’ [MOC]

(23b) *Ī lókòò nì wáá ká.*
 1SG mother PL COP.NEG>3SG with

‘It is not our mother and others with her.’ [MOC]

3. Non-verbal predications with other predicators

I finally turn to the main subject of this paper – non-verbal predications with predicators. Mano has five predicators: one negative (*wó*), used in negative non-verbal predications discussed in the previous section, and four affirmative (*lē*, *lé*, *wó* and *gè*), used in identification and presentative constructions. The latter four predicators do not serve to introduce a non-verbal predicative part. There appear only in very limited contexts where the predicators do not combine with any other element than their arguments (see Section 3.2.2 on class-membership constructions with *lé* and *wó*). For this reason, only the negative predicator *wó* can be considered a true copula in the sense of Hengeveld (2011). For the other four markers, I prefer the term “predicator.”

3.1. Basic constructions with predicators

Mano predicators are typically used without a predicative NP or adverbial phrase, with only one argument, although in some cases, a locative adjunct can be used. They are restricted to the present tense. The word order is Subj-Predicator.

The predicators *wó* and *gè* are used in deictic presentation constructions. *Gè* derives from the verb *gè* ‘to see’ and is typically used to refer to visible referents.

Predicator *gè*: basic presentative function

(24) *Dìì dōó gè, b̄ū wélé b̄òò dōó gè.*
 cow one PRES.VIS rice bone bag one PRES.VIS

‘Here is one cow, here is one bag of rice.’ [MOC]

Gè can also be accompanied by the existential particle *bē*. The semantic contribution of *bē* is not clear. Similarly to the existential predication with the PPM and the particle *bē* (ex. 7), the construction “Subj *gè bē*” can imply that the existence of the referent denoted by the argument of the predicator *gè* is predicated at the same time as the referent is presented (25), but this is not always the case (26). Note that the constructions with *gè* (26a) and with *gè bē* (26b) are synonymous.

Predicator *gè* + existential particle *bē*

(25) *Lēē ī gbē gè bē.*
 woman 2SG son PRES.VIS EX

‘[When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother,] Woman, here is your son.’ [MOC, spontaneous translation of John 19:26]

Predicator *gɛ̀* + existential particle *bɛ̀*

(26a) *Pèé là sɔ́ gɛ̀.*
 PropN 3SG.POSS clothing PRES.VIS

(26b) *Pèé là sɔ́ gɛ̀ bɛ̀.*
 PropN 3SG.POSS clothing PRES.VIS EX
 ‘Here is Pe’s clothing’ [el.]

Gɛ̀ can also cataphorically refer to the forthcoming discourse, which can also be treated as a token of metaphorical presentation of discourse.

Predicator *gɛ̀*: cataphoric reference to discourse

(27) *Pé ē kē lé bò gɔ́ zò wáá gé ā*
 thing:H 3SG.PST do then goat man heart NEG.COP>3SG stomach DEM
yē gɛ̀.
 3SG.EMPH PRES.VIS

(An introduction to a folktale) Here is the reason why the goat does not have a heart in his stomach’ (lit.: the thing that did so that the goat’s heart isn’t in his stomach, here it is). [MOC]

Gɛ̀ can optionally take a locative adjunct.

Predicator *gɛ̀*: locative adjunct

(28) *Mīā gɛ̀ zèē ō gó kwíi pàà.*
 person.PL PRES.VIS here 3PL.PST leave European at
 ‘These people here (lit.: here are people here), they came from Europe’ [el.]

Gɛ̀ can combine, without any additional meaning, with a marker coinciding in form with the demonstrative *bɛ̀*, but it does not combine with *yā*. The existential particle *bɛ̀* is preferred to the demonstrative *bɛ̀* in elicitation, so it is likely that *bɛ̀* is actually a phonetic variant of *bɛ̀* in this context.

(29) *??Pèé là sɔ́ gɛ̀ bɛ̀.*
 Pe 3SG.POSS clothing PRES.VIS EX?
 ‘Here is Pe’s clothing.’ [el.]

Turning to the next presentative predicator, *wɔ́*, it can introduce visible (32) or out-of-sight referents (30), as well as refer to discourse (31).

Predicator *wɔ́*

(30) *Nɛ̀npà kpɔ́à yē wɔ́ yā.*
 PropN trace 3SG.EMPH PRES DEM

‘The remains of Neinpa (a name of a village), here they are’ [MOC]

Predicator *wó*

(31) *Pé ē kē lé bò gō zò*
 thing:H 3SG.PST do then goat man heart

wáá gé ā yē wó ǎ.
 NEG.COP>3SG stomach DEM 3SG.EMPH PRES DEM

(A conclusion to a folktale.) ‘That is the reason why the goat does not have a heart in his stomach’ (lit.: the thing that did so that the goat’s heart isn’t in his stomach, that’s it). [el.]

Wó is obligatorily followed by a demonstrative (*wē~bē* or *yā~ā*). Thus, the presentative predicator *wó* (32) can be distinguished from the negative predicator *wó* (33), which does not combine with a demonstrative. Example (32) also illustrates that the affirmative *wó* can take a locative adjunct.

(32) *Líà wáá mǎ yā.*
 blood PRES>3SG on DEM
 ‘Here is blood on her’ [MOC]

(33) *Líà wáá mǎ.*
 blood COP.NEG>3SG on
 ‘There is no blood on her’ [el.]

The predicators *lē* and *lé* are used primarily for identification of non-visible (34) and abstract referents (36), as well as of discourse referents (35), but both can be used for presentation of visible referents as well (37), and thus have the presentative function.

Lē always occurs in a clause-final position and does not combine with demonstratives or locative adjuncts. *Lē* is a homonym of the 3SG existential PPM, but can be distinguished from it because it can combine with arguments of all persons and numbers without changing its form (e.g., its use with 1SG in 34 and 3SG in 35; compare the use of PPMs with subjects of different persons and numbers in ex. 9–11 above).

Predicator *lē*

(34) *Mā lē.*
 1SG.EMPH IDENT
 ‘It is me’ [MOC].

Predicator *lē*

(35) *Wálà léwè lē.*
 God speech IDENT

‘(This is) the word of the Lord (lit: It is the speech of God, said after the end of readings in church).’ [el.]

Predicator *lē*

- (36) *Dwó lé ē nū ā ká ā yē lē.*
 problem ATT 3SG.PST come 3SG with DEM 3SG.EMPH IDENT
 ‘The problem that he brought, that’s it.’ [MOC]

Lē is the most common predicator in answers to the questions of the type ‘What/Who is it?’.

Predicator *lē*

- (37) *Pèé là sō lē.*
 Pe 3SG.POSS cloth IDENT
 ‘[What is it (pointing)?] It is Pe’s piece of clothing.’ [el.]

Lē can occur in focal contexts, as illustrated by example (23) repeated below.

Predicator *lē*: focal context

- (38) *Ī lēkè wáá ká, ñ né lē.*
 1SG younger.sibling COP.NEG>3SG with 1SG.POSS child IDENT
 ‘It is not my younger sibling, it is my child.’ [MOC]

Lē is also used in resultative constructions where the argument of the predicator is a non-finite predication with a gerund. Such usage can also be considered an extension of an identifying construction, where what is identified is a state of affairs rather than a referent. In this function, *lē* can combine with a postpositional phrase expressing the verbal argument.

Predicator *lē*: resultative construction

- (39) *Ī zò dō-ò lē à mò.*
 1SG heart install-GER IDENT 3SG on
 ‘I believe in it (lit.: my heart is laid on it).’ [MOC]

The marker *lé* never occurs in a clause-final position and requires another element after it. Most commonly, it is a demonstrative: *wē~bē* or *yā~ā*. *Lé* can also have the variants *né* (in a nasal context), *té*⁵ or a floating high tone. *Lé* can be used with visible referents (40), but it is more common with invisible and abstract referents (41).

Predicator *lé*

- (40) *Ī kónó lé wē.*
 2SG food ATT DEM
 ‘Here is your food.’ [MOC]

⁵ It is not entirely clear whether *té* is a variant of *lé* or a separate morpheme with largely overlapping functions.

Predicator *lé*

- (41) *Dwó té mǎē mǎà gè à mǎ ǎ*
 problem ATT 1SG.EMPH 1SG.PRF>3SG see 3SG on DEM
yē lé ā.
 3SG.EMPH ATT DEM

‘That’s the way I see the problem (lit.: the problem that I have seen, this is it).’
 [MOC]

The predicator *lé* can also be used with the existential particle *ǎē*.

Predicator *lé + ǎē*

- (42) *Kálá à kē sèlè diè lé ǎē.*
 but 3SG do village:CSTR real ATT EX

‘[Lying, we do it a lot,] but it is the real village of liars’ (lit.: real village of doing it). [el.]

Lé also combines with *ǎē* in questions of the type ‘What is it?’. In the two examples below, *né* is a variant of *lé* used in a nasal context (after *mē* ‘what’) and *wē* is a variant of *ǎē*:

Predicator *lé + ǎē*

- (43a) *Mē né wē?*
 what ATT EX

‘What is it?’ [el.]

- (43b) *Dēñ lé wē?*
 who ATT EX

‘Who is it?’ [el.]

In most affirmative examples encountered, the construction Subj *lé ǎē* occurs within a comparison clause.

Predicator *lé + ǎē*

- (44) *Íñ lō kē-è lè zī nó pēkúlú kpáá lé ǎē.*
 1SG.IPFV go:IPFV be-GER like way just iron bare ATT EX

‘[If love has finished in my life,] I will become just like bare iron’ (lit.: I will become like, it is iron). [MOC, oral translation from French of 1 Corinthians 13:1]

The three examples with *lé ǎē* above demonstrate that the existence of the referent, the argument of the construction, is not necessarily predicated: in (42), the speaker discusses the very village where he is located, whose existence is common ground for everybody present during the discussion; in (44), the argument is a non-referential, generic noun. In (43), in the question, the existence of the referent which

the question seeks to identify must be part of the common ground of the interlocutors in order for the question to be felicitous. Thus, the semantic contribution of *bē* in the construction Subj *lé bē* is not clear and is not related to predicating existence, similarly to the aforementioned construction Subj *gè bē*.

Lé can also combine with locative adjuncts.

Predicator *lé* + locative adjunct

- (45) *Gààzù láá kèlè wē.*
 mirror ATT>3SG hand DEM

‘[A: This one is a photographer.] B: That is a mirror in her hand (meaning: it is not a photograph, it is a mirror).’ [reflexive experiment, stimulus 1]

Finally, *lé* can combine with the interjection *ò*, with a mirative-like meaning.

Predicator *lé* + interjection *ò*

- (46) *Ìhǵǵè Marie gbē lé ò.*
 isn’t.it Marie son ATT INJ

‘Isn’t it, it’s a son of Mary (how unusual for such a man to be of such a modest upbringing)!’ [MOC]

To summarize this section, I have discussed simple constructions with the predicators *wó*, *gè*, *lē* and *lé*. All these predicators have the function of referent presentation and all but *gè* can also serve to identify referents. However, *wó* more frequently occurs with visible referents and therefore is more compatible with the presentative function, while *lé* and *lē* are more compatible with the identifying function (we will see in Section 4, however, that these two functions are not easy to distinguish). Some of the predicators can combine with locative adjuncts, demonstratives, and the existential particle *bē*. Some of these combinations are obligatory. Table 2 summarizes the possible combinations.

	Locative adjunct	<i>bē</i> (existential particle)	Demonstrative
<i>lē</i>	no	no	no
<i>wó</i>	yes	no	yes, obligatory
<i>lé</i>	yes	yes, especially in comparison constructions (obligatory presence of <i>bē</i> or another final element after <i>lé</i>)	yes (obligatory presence of a demonstrative or another final element after <i>lé</i>)
<i>gè</i>	yes	yes	?no (only <i>bē</i> , likely a variant of <i>bē</i>)

Table 2. Possible combinations of predicators with demonstratives, existential particle *bē* and locative adjuncts

3.2. Extensions of constructions with predicators

3.2.1. Extension with a clause and focus meaning

All predicators, with the exception of $l\bar{e}$, can occur in a construction where the predicator is followed by a clause. Consider the following example:

$g\bar{e}$ + clause: presentative reading

(47) \bar{O} $l\bar{e}$ $l\bar{e}$ $l\bar{e}\bar{\eta}$.

3PL mouth ATT probably

\bar{O} $l\bar{e}$ $g\bar{e}$ \bar{o} $p\bar{e}l\bar{e}$ $y\bar{i}$.

3PL mouth PRES.VIS 3PL.SBJV>3SG wash:IPFV there

‘[The thing that they are doing,] it is probably their mouth, here is their mouth, they are washing it.’ [reflexive experiment, stimulus 2]

Example (47) illustrates a sequence of two presentative/identifying constructions, one with the predicator $l\bar{e}$, another with the predicator $g\bar{e}$, extended with a clause. The argument of the predicators is the NP \bar{o} $l\bar{e}$ ‘their mouth.’ The example is taken from a continuous recording of an experiment with visual stimuli where the participants are asked to describe a set of pictures. The function of the constructions is thus identification through visual presentation. Example (47) is a description of a group of children washing their mouths. Note the PPM \bar{o} used in the clause. \bar{O} belongs to the subjunctive PPM series, which never occurs in main clauses. In the main clause, for the same aspectual meaning (imperfective), an PPM of the imperfective series ($\bar{o}\bar{o}$ 3PL.IPFV) is used; see ex. (15) illustrating imperfective in a main clause.

The following example illustrates a construction where $g\bar{e}$ is followed by $w\bar{e}$ (a variant of $\bar{b}\bar{e}$) with an intervening clause. While basic presentative constructions can have the form of Subj – $g\bar{e}$, constructions Subj – clause – $g\bar{e}$ always have a final element, very frequently, $\bar{b}\bar{e}\sim w\bar{e}$, but it can be also $y\bar{i}$ ‘there,’ as in (47) above. It is possible that other elements can also occur in this position, but they have not been attested yet.

$g\bar{e}$ + clause + $\bar{b}\bar{e}$: presentative and focal readings

(48) $Y\bar{e}$ $g\bar{e}$ \bar{a} $b\bar{i}\bar{i}$ $l\bar{e}$ $g\bar{a}\bar{d}\bar{a}\bar{z}\bar{u}$ $w\bar{e}$ $y\bar{i}$ $w\bar{e}$.

3SG.EMPH PRES.VIS 3SG image 3SG.EX mirror DEM in EX

‘[A woman is holding a mirror. Her friend that is behind her,] here is her image in the mirror.’ [reflexive experiment, stimulus 3]

The argument of the presentative $g\bar{e}$ in example (48) stands out as one alternative picked among other alternatives. Indeed, the speaker is trying to explain what a visual stimulus intends to depict: a woman looking at another woman behind her through a mirror. Thus, in addition to being presented with $g\bar{e}$, the referent is interpretable as

contrastive focus: it is the woman behind the woman with the mirror that the latter sees. The focalization is done by means of a cleft-like construction with *gè*, consisting, as is typical of clefts (Lambrecht 2001), of a non-verbal predication ('here it is'), which can potentially stand on its own (see Section 3.1), and an ensuing clause, in this case, also non-verbal ('her image is in the mirror').

wó + clause: presentative reading

- (49) *Lée tóō ō là ηwū kē yē wó*
 woman:H DEM.VIS 3PL.PST 3SG.POSS head do 3SG.EMPH PRES
è ē diè gè gààzù yí wē.
 3SG.SBJV 3SG.REFL INT see:IPFV mirror in DEM

'This woman, she has been braided, here she is, she is looking at herself in the mirror.' [reflexive experiment, stimulus 4]

Similarly to (47–48), (49) is another example of a visual presentation of a referent, this time with the predicator *wó*. The referent is first introduced by a NP with a proximal exophoric demonstrative, *lée tóō* 'this woman.' The entire construction is concluded by the demonstrative *wē* — as discussed earlier, *wó* is always accompanied by a demonstrative. Note that the subjunctive PPM is used here as well (*è*, a 3SG form).

Examples (47–49) illustrate clear cases of ostensive demonstration, where the construction accompanying a presentation of a visible referent is extended by a clause. The context of the activity which the utterances are part of — a description of visual stimuli — and the speakers' pointing gestures support this interpretation. Consider example (50), by contrast.

wó + clause:thetic reading

- (50) *Sálámá wó ē kē à là ā.*
 chance PRES 3SG.PST be 3SG on DEM

'(A group of women is discussing another woman who almost lost her child in an accident.) She was lucky (lit.: this is a chance, it was on her).'

Here, the referent introduced by *wó* is an abstract notion (*sálámá* 'chance'). As we saw in Section 3.1, *wó* can indeed be used to introduce invisible and abstract referents. Yet, the utterance does not function as an extended presentation of *sálámá*. Instead, the best interpretation is that of sentence focus where the subject is focalized. The focalization is done by means of a cleft-like construction with *wó*, consisting, again, of a non-verbal main clause (lit. 'this is a chance') and a dependent clause (lit. 'it was on her'). Supporting the interpretation in terms of sentence focus, the translation that my consultant offered was *c'est qu'elle avait la chance* 'It is that she was

lucky,’ where *c’est que* ‘it is that’ serves to introduce an explanation. This is a typical function of sentence-focus utterances, and subject focalization is also a typical way of expressing sentence-focus (Vydrina 2020).

Many examples with *wó* can yield a sentence-focus interpretation. Consider, for instance, the following:

wó + clause: presentative and thetic readings

- (51) *Car wó è lō ā.*
 truck[FR] PRES 3SG.SBJV go:IPFV DEM
 ‘Here is a truck passing’ [MOC]

Here, the speaker is drawing attention to a passing truck. It is not a referent alone, but a referent in action that is presented. Thus, it is an all-new, completely out-of-the-blue description of a situation, which is compatible with both a sentence focus and a presentative interpretation.

Let’s now consider examples with the predicator *lé*. Example (52) illustrates a case of referent presentation extended by a clause.

lé + clause: presentative reading

- (52) *Lée té⁶ wē téà wē*
 woman ATT DEM bowl DEM
yē lé ā yà là né ηwíí ā.
 3SG.EMPH ATT 3SG.PST>3SG put 3SG.POSS child head DEM

‘This woman, this bowl, it is it (that) she put on her child’s head.’ [reflexive experiment, stimulus 5]

The context for example 52 is the same as above—it is a description of visual stimuli. Here, several referents are introduced: a woman, her child and a bowl that she is putting on the child’s head. In configuring his response, the participant first introduces the woman by saying *lée té wē* (as noted above, *té* is a variant of *lé*). Furthermore, the speaker introduces the bowl just with a demonstrative, followed by a 3SG pronoun referring to the bowl, followed by *lé* and a clause: ‘this bowl, it is it that she put on her child’s head.’ Both times the speaker points to the referent in question, so *lé* is used for referent presentation. The following example illustrates a similar pattern.

⁶ This usage of *té*, which is likely a variant of *lé*, is not covered by the present paper. Here, *té* is used in a construction NP *té* DEM. Similarly to the construction examined in Section 3.1, *lé* (and, more specifically, its variant *té*) is used to identify the referent. The broader function of this construction in discourse, however, is not identification as a separate predication, but drawing attention to a referent. Such attention-drawing can be accompanied by a pointing gesture.

lé + clause: presentative reading and focal reading

- (53) *Photo wē yē lé à zǝǝ à lèē āā.*
 photo DEM 3SG.EMPH ATT 3SG.SBJV>3SG show:IPFV 3SG to DEM

‘[A: This man has drawn a picture of the woman, what is he doing now? – I think that] Here’s the photo he is showing/this photo, it is it (that) he is showing.’ [MOC]

Here, the speaker first introduces an NP referring to a photo, followed by a 3SG pronoun referring to the bowl, followed by *lé* and a clause. In addition to the presentative interpretation, supported by pointing gestures, another interpretation is possible: that of, once again, sentence focus marked through a cleft-like construction involving a non-verbal predication. As Vydrina (2020) demonstrated for Kakabe, in utterances with highly topical subjects—in the case of (52) and (53), subjects are expressed by 3SG pronouns—the focus marking conveying sentence focus can be placed not on the subject (as in 50) but on the direct object.

The following example, taken from a similar elicitation setting (see example 48 and the description of the context), involves a contrast; therefore, a focal function—this time, contrastive argument focus—is a central part of the function of the utterance.

lé + clause: focal reading

- (54) *Mí té dǝá à mǝǝ wē*
 man:H ATT stand>GER>with 3SG behind DEM
yē lé à bíí lē gǝǝzù yí ā.
 3SG.EMPH ATT 3SG shadow 3SG.EX mirror in DEM

‘The person who is standing behind her, it is HER IMAGE in the mirror (lit.: it is her (such that) her image is in the mirror)’ [reflexive experiment, stimulus 3]

The stimulus picture offered to the speaker in 54 depicts a woman who is holding a mirror with a reflection of a woman’s head; it is not the woman herself who is reflected, but another woman behind her. Example (54) offers this corrected interpretation. Example (2) above (repeated below) also illustrates contrastive object focus.

lé + clause: focal reading

- (55) *Wù lé mā zē ē.*
 animal ATT 1SG.PST>3SG kill DEM

‘[I did not hit a person,] it is an animal that I killed.’ [MOC]

The preceding context (‘I did not hit a person’) clearly introduces a referent to which the focalized constituent (‘animal’) offers an alternative, which warrants a contrastive focal interpretation.

Finally, the following example shows that *lé* and *wó* can be used interchangeably in a focal context.

lé/wó + clause: focal reading

(56a) *Ká té dɔ́á wē mā lé*
house ATT stand>GER>with DEM 1SG.EMPH ATT
mā dɔ́ ɔ́. Dḕɲ lé ā dɔ́?
1SG.PST>3SG build DEM who ATT 3SG.PST>3SG build

A: ‘The house which is standing there, it is me who built it. Who built it?’

(56b) *Mā wó ɲ tá̀g pié dɔ́ yā kèè?*
1SG.PST>3SG PRES 1SG.PST ground towards build DEM isn’t.it

B: ‘It is me (lit.: here is me) who built the site up, isn’t it?’ [MOC]

The example is taken from a recording of several children riding in a car in an unfamiliar city and discussing what they see around them. In (56), they see a building and playfully claim ownership of it: first a boy in (56a), and then a girl in (56b). The boy does so with *lé*, and the girl with *wó*. The referents in the example are first person pronouns (‘it is me who built...’), which are discourse-given and do not require identification per se, but can appear as one alternative among a possible set and, for this reason, can be interpreted as focused. The focal reading was indeed suggested by my language consultant, who translated both examples with a cleft construction: *c’est moi qui...* (‘It is me who...’).

To summarize this section, we have seen that non-verbal clauses with predicators *gè* and especially *wó* and *lé* can be extended by a finite clause. The clause has signs of syntactic dependency: the imperfective PPM is not used there and is replaced by the subjunctive PPM, which does not occur in main clauses. Crucially, I have shown that some utterances where a presentative/identifying construction with *wó* or *lé* is extended by a clause can have a focal interpretation: either as argument focus, or, through formal marking of an argument, sentence focus. This observation will be discussed in Section 4.

3.2.2. Extension with a comitative PP and argument-predicate reversal

The predicators *lé* and *wó* can occasionally take an argument, expressed by a NP with a comitative postposition *ká*, the same as the one used in constructions of referential identity and class membership. Such constructions are used to put into correspondence two referential expressions, just like referential identity and class membership constructions formed with the existential PPMs (described in Section 2.2). Constructions with the predicators *lé* and *wó* differ from constructions with the existential PPMs; in the case of the former, the NP referring to a given referent about which the predication is made is put in the postpositional phrase, while the NP referring to the

semantic class of the referent (in case of class membership) or an identical referring expression is put in the position of the argument of the predicator. These examples are thus similar, but not identical, to argument-predicate reversal constructions found in several other Mande languages (Creissels 2022).⁷ Let's consider the following example:

lé: argument-predicate reversal in a class-membership construction

- (57) *Kō líà lé ī ká.*
 1PL blood ATT 2SG with
 'You are OUR BLOOD.' [MOC]

The example is taken from a folk story. Here, deceased parents are coming to their son in a dream, complaining that he did not properly organize their funeral, but nevertheless offering help. The point of the utterance is to communicate that the man is their child, despite his wrongdoings. The semantic predicate of the class-membership construction is *kō líà* 'our kin (lit.: our blood),' which is put in the position of the argument of *lé*, while the semantic argument of the construction which refers to the addressee is put in the postpositional phrase, *ī ká*. Crucially, *kō líà* 'our blood, our kin' and *ī* 'you' are not in the referential identity relation, as the speakers have more kin than their son.

In the next example, which illustrates a construction that is ambiguous in terms of class membership and referential identity, the argument similarly bears an additional emphasis — this time, through contrast.

lé: argument-predicate reversal and contrastive focus

- (58) *Kō bēḡ tòḡpié mià lé kō ká.*
 1PL.EMPH too PropN person.PL:CSTR ATT 1PL with
 '[The joking relationship is between us and the Maa people.] As for us, we are the TONPIE PEOPLE.' [MOC]

Here, the argument of the construction, *tòḡpié mià* 'the Tonpie people,' a clan name, is in contrast with the name of another clan introduced in the previous clause, *màá* 'the Maa people.' The clan name is the semantic predicate of the construction, while the semantic argument is the first person plural pronoun put in the PP position. It is not clear what the scope of 'we' is here, whether it refers to the entire group of people who call themselves Tonpie or just a subgroup — such as residents of the vil-

⁷ The crucial difference is that in the sense used by Creissels, true argument-predicate reversal constructions are only class-membership constructions. I use the term "argument-predicate reversal" for all constructions where the semantic predicate is put in the syntactic position of the argument, be it class-membership, referential identity constructions or that are ambiguous in terms of the two reading.

lage where the discussion takes place. Therefore, there is ambiguity between referential identity and class membership. Crucially, however, in (58), unlike (57), the argument-predicate reversal is connected to a more specific focal reading – contrastive focus.

Let's turn to the next example, this time with *wó*.

wó: argument-predicate reversal and contrastive focus

(59) *Kē kòṣlèē pèèlē wáá nó.*
 isn't.it young.mother two PRES>3SG>with just

‘It is two young mothers here, isn't it?’ [reflexive experiment, stimulus 6]

The example is taken from the context of an experiment with visual stimuli. The picture that the respondent is describing represents an activity sequence: a woman is putting her child on her back, including the beginning stage of the activity, where she is attaching the cloth, and the end stage, where the cloth is attached. The respondent mistakenly identified the picture as representing two women, not one. Yet the existence of the other alternative (that the picture represents something else than two women) is presupposed and conveyed by the tag question marker, ‘isn't it.’ The NP ‘two young women,’ the semantic predicate of the class-membership construction, is put in the position of the argument of the predicator, while the PP is filled with a 3SG pronoun. Note here that the presentative function is combined with the function of predicating class membership and a contrastive value.

However, not all attested examples with *lé* have the order of the argument and the predicate reversed, the semantic argument being put in the postpositional phrase and the semantic predicate in the position of the argument of the predicator. Below, the predicate is in its syntactic place in the postpositional phrase.

lé: referential identity construction without argument-predicate reversal

(60) *Yē lé kā ká bē.*
 3SG.EMPH ATT 2PL with DEM

‘[They said: who is your mother and your father? He said:] It is you!’ [MOC]

Example (60) is not a class-membership construction, but rather a referential identity construction, where both NPs have the same referents (both the 3SG pronoun *yē* and the 2PL pronoun *kā* refer to the speaker's mother and father). The motivation for using *lé* instead of an existential PPM, which is the default option for referential identity constructions, is not in this case related to the argument-predicate reversal. Example (60) serves as an answer to, and thus structurally mirrors, the question given in (61), in which the NP that refers to the argument of *lé* in (60) is also put in the position of the argument of *lé*, and the same for the NP in the PP. Note also that the question word in (61) is put in the PP. The motivation for the order in the question is

explained in the next section. In short, it is related to the additional (almost exasperated) attention which the speakers draw to the referent, ‘your mother and your father.’

lé: referential identity construction in a question

- (61) *Ī lèē wà ī dàā lé dēṅ ká?*
 2SG mother 3PL.IP 2SG father ATT who with
 ‘Your mother and your father is who?’ [MOC]

3.2.3. Question

As pointed out in Section 3.1, *lé* (and especially its variant *né*) can be used in questions. It can be used in yes–no questions, as in (62), which closely resembles utterances with focal interpretation:

lé: Y/N question

- (62) *Dwánà lé bà gèē ā?*
 truth ATT 3SG.IPFV>3SG say:IPFV DEM
 ‘It is truth that you are saying?’ [MOC]

Lé can also be used in wh-questions, typically following the left-extraposed question word (*exsitu*). All questions to subjects are *exsitu*.

lé: *ex-situ* wh-question

- (63) *Dēṅ lé è bēī é pá ē*
 who ATT 3SG.IPFV be.able:IPFV 3SG.CONJ touch 3SG.REFL
zì mò?
 POSS.INT on

‘Who can give an example about himself? (lit.: who can touch for himself?)’ [MOC]

Note that the following example with a question to the subject ends with *wē* (*bē*).

lé: *ex-situ* wh-question

- (64) *Tíé gǐǐ kpēē lé à yà-à lē lūú wē mò wē?*
 fire smell which ATT 3SG sit-GER IDENT bush DEM on EX
 ‘What kind of smell of fire is spread (lit. put) in the bush?’ [MOC]

Example (64) is structurally like the construction with Subj *lé bē* discussed in (42), except that there is a clause between *lé* and *bē* and there is a question word in the subject NP (*kpēē* ‘which, what kind of’) and, therefore, the utterance functions as a question.

Question words, such as *dēṅ* ‘who,’ can also be put in situ, as in (66). In that case, *lé* is not used.

In-situ wh-question

- (65) *Ká gbùmɔ̄ nɔ̄ dēɲ̄ lèē?*
 1PL.CONJ help give who to
 ‘You help whom?’ [MOC]

Consider finally a pair of referential-identity constructions framed as questions. Note that the question word, *dēɲ̄* ‘who,’ can be put in the PP (66b) and in the subject position (66a). The former case is an example of an in-situ question and the latter of an ex-situ question.

lé: ex-situ and in-situ wh-questions

- (66a) *Ī lèē wà ĩ dàā lé dēɲ̄ ká?*
 2SG mother 3PL.IP 2SG father ATT who with
 ‘Your mother and your father is who?’ [MOC]
- (66b) *Dēɲ̄ lé ĩ lèē wà ĩ dàā ká?*
 who ATT 2SG mother 3PL.IP 2SG father with
 ‘Who is your mother and your father?’ [el.]

Example (66a) is taken from a narrative. The speakers are parents of a misbehaving man who appear to him in his dream, since he does not honor them enough. It goes without saying for the Mano that disrespect to parents is one of the greatest sins that a person can commit. Thus, (66a) is not a simple question about the identity of one’s parents; in fact, it is a rhetorical question. This is what motivates the extra attention that is drawn to the referent, the usage of *lé* and the argument-predicate reversal, whereby the NP ‘your mother and your father’ is put in the position of the subject of *lé* and the question word in the PP.

4. Discussion: interaction between non-verbal predication and focus

While the main subject of this paper concerns non-verbal identifying and presentative constructions (and their syntactic and pragmatic extensions), they have been put in the context of the overall strategies of non-verbal predication in Mano. It turns out that the identifying and presentative constructions formed with an invariable predicator constitute a marginal syntactic type among other non-verbal strategies. Indeed, most types of non-verbal constructions are formed with an PPM (in the stative present) or with an PPM and the verb *kē* ‘to be’ (in other tenses and aspects). Negative non-verbal predications (including identifying ones) are formed with the predicator *wɔ̄*, which, in contrast to identifying and presentative predicators, obligatorily takes not only an argument but also a NP, a PP, an adverb or another element fulfilling the role of a non-verbal predicative part. The small share of non-verbal predications expressed through copulas and other predicators (only negative constructions

and class-membership and referential identity constructions with argument-argument reversal) is quite remarkable, compared to other Mande languages. For example, although non-verbal predication through PPMs is also a common strategy in Eastern Dan, it still uses copulas in locative and possessive predications. Manding languages, by contrast, rely exclusively on copulas in non-verbal predication (see example 67 from Mandinka below). It is also worth noting that non-verbal constructions are another area where Mano predication is strongly asymmetrical, in the sense that not all affirmative constructions have a negative counterpart (there is no negative presentative) and also in terms of constructional asymmetry: affirmative constructions are based either on PPMs or on predicators, while negative constructions are based on a copula. For details about asymmetry in the Mano negation system, see Khachaturyan (forthc.), on (a)symmetry in negation from a typological perspective, see Miestamo (2005).

My discussion of identifying and presentative predicators, the main object of this paper, is based on the seminal publication by Killian (2022). Killian's paper introduces predicative demonstratives as a separate typological class. Predicative demonstratives are often, but not always, part of demonstrative paradigms and have morphological parallels to other demonstratives in a language. Crucially, predicative demonstratives fulfill the syntactic function of a predicative center and occur most centrally in identifying and presentative constructions. Because of the syntactic and semantic function of the predicators in Mano, I consider them instances of predicative demonstratives, despite the fact that there is no morphological connection to adnominal demonstratives.⁸

According to Killian's (2022: 14) definition, presentative demonstratives "introduce and verbally highlight a referent in the environment or discourse in the canonical demonstrative sense, directing the addressee's attention to the object." By contrast, "demonstrative identifiers are used for identifying, presenting, or indicating a referent." Crucially, as Killian acknowledges, identifiers frequently overlap with presentatives in terms of usage; this echoes a similar observation by Diessel (1999: 79). In general, identification and presentation as functions are difficult to differentiate. Many of the examples discussed in Section 3 come from recordings of elicitation sessions with visual stimuli, where the participants were asked to describe a set of pictures; while doing so, they were orienting to, identifying and at the same time presenting (often with a pointing gesture) different objects on the pictures. The differ-

⁸ Or, rather, the connection between predicative and adnominal demonstratives is not paradigmatic but diachronic in nature: the exophoric demonstrative *tóō* likely derives from fusion between the predicator *té* (a variant of *lé*) and the demonstrative *wē*.

ence between identifying and presentative uses in these data was thus not very clear. Key parameters could be the discourse status of the referent (new or given) and its physical properties (visible, invisible, abstract), where new and visible referents are more compatible with the presentative function of the demonstrative. More semantic work to distinguish between the presentative and identifying functions is needed, however. While this is beyond the scope of the present paper, in a preliminary fashion I can define the core functions of the Mano predicators in the following way. Because *gè* refers almost exclusively to discourse-new and visible referents, I gloss it as PRES.VIS, ‘visible presentative.’ *Wó* also tends to occur with visible and discourse-new referents, but it can also combine with invisible referents, which is why it is glossed just as PRES, ‘presentative.’ *Lē*, by contrast, is used for identification but also in derived functions, such as resultative ones. Therefore, the gloss is IDENT. *Lé* has the broadest functionality of all, having both presentative and identifying functions, but also a broader non-predicative function of attention-drawing, which is not discussed in the present paper. Its gloss is thus ATT.

Interestingly, Killian observes that presentative demonstratives, unlike identifiers, may have a distributional restriction, namely, that they may not occur in focus constructions (2022: 20). Yet both the presentative *wó* and *gè* and the identifying *lé* have been attested in constructions with focal readings. Moreover, an ostensive presentation of a referent, as in the context of description of visual stimuli, does not exclude a focal reading, which indicates that the restriction that Killian observed in some languages in his sample is not supported by the Mano data.

Another typological observation concerns the position of presentative predicators: in Mano (and, likely, in Mande more generally), they systematically occur in the clause-final position, while cross-linguistically they favor the clause-initial position, like in French, English or Russian: *voici une pomme* / *вот яблоко* ‘**here is** an apple’ (Killian 2022: 12).

Next, I would like to turn to the argument-predicate reversal in class-membership constructions. A recent article by Creissels dedicated to the topic offers an insightful discussion of such constructions in Mande languages. Creissels (2002) suggests a connection between word order and information structure in that the neutral word order is Argument–Predicate, and whenever the predicate comes first, it is motivated by a particular information-structural configuration: the argument-first order corresponds to the neutral topic-comment information packaging, while the predicate-first order corresponds to a comment-afterthought packaging.⁹

⁹ Unfortunately, Creissels does not offer a sufficient explanation why he treats the PP *Làamini tí* in (67b) as an afterthought, as a non-fully integrated constituent: whether such an interpretation

The discussion of Mandinka data is particularly revealing in that regard. Indeed, in Mandinka, while both orders are possible, the predicate is consistently marked with the focus marking *lè*, which indicates its consistent status as the comment (or part of the constituent in focus). Thus, according to Creissels, in an example with argument-predicate reversal (67b), the argument of the copula *mú*, which is the semantic predicate of the non-verbal predication, has focus marking, while the constituent belonging to the PP has the information status of an afterthought and does not have focus marking.

Argument-predicate reversal in Mandinka

(67a) *Làamínì mú màndìnkôo lè tí.*
 PropN COP Mandinka.D FOC as

‘Laamin is

Mandinka.’

(67b) *Màndìnkôo lè mú Làamínì tí.*
 Mandinka.D FOC COP PropN as

‘He is Mandinka, Laamin that is.’ (Creissels 2022)

In both Mano and Mandinka, constituent order in class-membership constructions can be inverted. In Mano, the neutral argument-predicate order occurs in the construction with an existential PPM (Subject – PPM – predicated semantic class or identical referent), while use of the marker *lé* as a predicator is usually associated with the reverse order (predicated semantic class or identical referent – *lé* – semantic argument). As shown in Section 3.1, *lé* can also be used in constructions with focal interpretations. Similarly, in Mandinka, the marker *lé* that is used with the constituent to the left of the predicator in the construction with reverse order can be used to express focus *stricto sensu*.

In both Mandinka and Mano, however, the marker which elsewhere can give rise to a focal interpretation does not necessarily yield that in class-membership constructions. Thus, in Mandinka, the focus marker is an obligatory part of the predicate and does not convey contrast and other focus-related meanings. Similarly, while some of the Mano examples of argument-predicate reversal, such as in (58), do indeed involve a contrastive focus interpretation of the argument of *lé*, the focal interpretation is not compatible with all examples, such as (61), where the argument of the PP is an in-situ question word. While in-situ wh-questions do not have to be focused (Aboh 2007), they cannot be afterthoughts. Moreover, some examples with *lé* do not involve argu-

emerges on a residual basis, from the fact that what appears to be new, focal information is put in the beginning of the utterance and whatever is added thereafter should *a fortiori* be treated as afterthought, or because there is independent evidence for such treatment. Such independent evidence could be provided by prosodic effects (Kalbertodt, Primus & Schumacher 2015).

ment-predicate reversal, such as in (60), where the argument of the PP is the semantic predicate of a referential identity construction.

The following pair of examples shows even more clearly that in Mano the inverse order is actually not connected to focus *per se*, and that focus is marked differently. Consider the first example.

Argument-predicate reversal: not a focal reading

- (68) *Mouchoir* *lé* *mí* *tó̄* *ká* *ā*.
 handkerchief[FR] ATT person:H DEM.VIS with DEM
 ‘It is a handkerchief, this thing (lit.: this person).’

Here, the semantic argument of the class membership construction is referred to by a NP with an exophoric demonstrative *tó̄* and the predicate is *mouchoir* ‘handkerchief.’ The example was translated by my language consultant as *Cet autre est un mouchoir* ‘this other one is a handkerchief’ where ‘this other one’ is a translation of *tó̄*, used in exophoric reference to objects that require a redirection of the addressee’s attention (see Khachaturyan 2020).

Now consider a slightly modified version of the example with addition of the existential PPM:

Class membership construction with focalization

- (69) *Mouchoir* *lé* *lē* *mí* *tó̄* *ká* *ā*.
 handkerchief ATT 3SG.EX person:H DEM.VIS with DEM
 ‘It is a handkerchief, this one (and the other one is not).’

This time, as my consultant explained, “tu fais le choix entre deux qui ne sont pas tous des mouchoirs, c’est cet autre qui est le mouchoir” (‘you make a choice between two [objects] that are not all handkerchiefs, and it is this other one which is a handkerchief’). In other words, only (69), and not (68), clearly has a (contrastive) focal interpretation. The function of *lé* in (68) is not of focus, but of referent identification.

The discussion of argument-predicate reversal which is irreducible to information packaging prepares us for the discussion of the status of information packaging and focus marking and the relationship between focus marking and non-verbal predication in Mano. It has been established in the literature that non-verbal predicators in Mande languages are prone to co-occur with focus marking within identification construction, as in the following example from Guinean Mandinka.

Identifying construction in Guinean Maninka

- (70) *Ò* *lè* *yé*.
 that FOC COP
 ‘That’s it’ (Vydrin 2020: 89)

In the next example, the copula *yé* is omitted, so the focus marker is reinterpreted as a predicative element.

Identifying construction in Guinean Maninka

- (71) *Kó dúman-nen` nè.*
 matter good-DIM\D FOC
 ‘It’s a good matter’ (Vydrin 2020: 89)

Thus, the example above illustrates a common tendency in Mande, namely, that copulas, especially those used in identification constructions, often originate from focus marking.

In addition, in Mande, and especially in South Mande (see a comprehensive review by Kuznetsova 2023), there is often a homonymy between copulas and focus markers at the synchronic level. The following two examples illustrate this tendency in Guro with the marker *lē*: (72) is an identifying construction and (73) is a construction with subject focus, which is formed similarly to a cleft construction, with a non-verbal identification construction as a main clause and a finite verbal clause as dependent clause.

Guro

- (72) *Kǒ lē.*
 house IDENT
 ‘It is a house.’ (Kuznetsova 2023: 232)
- (73) *Yú jē lè vǒ q̄ b̄q̄ b̄ē.*
Yú jē lē è vǒ q̄ b̄q̄ b̄ē.
 REF.CTR disease IDENT>3SG.SBJ penetrate\PFV 1SG on DEF
 ‘It is THAT disease which attacked me (lit.: it is that diseases, it attacked me).’
 (Kuznetsova 2023: 245)

Thus, in Guro, a marker used in focus constructions derives from the identifying copula. In Guinean Maninka, in contrast, a focus marker acquires functions of a non-verbal predicator. The two types of development illustrate the grammaticalization paths COP > FOC and FOC > COP suggested by Creissels (2022, citing Idiatov p.c.).

The Mano data shows however that the focal meaning does not characterize particular kinds of syntactic *constructions*. Indeed, the same types of structures with Subj – *lé* (or *wó*) – clause – DEM can have functions that are compatible with a predicative reading of *lé* and *wó* (as an identifier or a presentative predicator, especially when the referent is discourse new and/or is being pointed to), with a focal reading (when the referent of Subj represents a choice among available alternatives) or both. Both interpretations are particularly common in ostensive demonstration, when what is being demonstrated is an activity, rather than a referent. The systematic co-

occurrence of a focal and a non-focal readings make it difficult to single out a distinct focus construction, let alone a focus marker. Therefore, there is no form-meaning correspondence between a focus construction and a focal meaning. Overall, the interpretation — in terms of focus as well — derives from the property of the referent and from the discourse context, rather than from formal marking and especially the choice of construction. The focal interpretation is not proper to a particular focus construction but rather is a result of *cooptation* (Mauri & Sansò 2011) of a construction with a broader meaning of attention drawing. Thus, instead of choosing between the two grammaticalization paths (COP > FOC and FOC > COP), I claim that *lé* and *wó* function, depending on context, as non-verbal predicators or as focus markers.

By deriving a focal interpretation from another function, not related primarily to information packaging, I follow the bottom-up approach to information structure suggested by Matic and Wedgwood (2013) and Ozerov (2018). Connecting the information-structural uses of the markers *lé* and *wó* to other uses helps better understand their function in communication, which is irreducible to the rigid categories of information structure concentrated on information update. That the primary function of the markers under discussion is interactional, rather than strictly semantic or information-structural, is also compatible with Killian's observation that predicative demonstratives fulfill a discourse function that is irreducible to just predicating identity or referent presentation: they “organize and frame chunks of text, such as signaling the opening or closing of texts, or recapitulating referents,” they are also used for indicating a speaker's belief or attitude towards an idea” (Killian 2022: 7). Finally, should we decide to ascribe to *lé* and *wó* distinct statuses as focus markers, we would end up needing to explain why a language needs two focus markers, instead of one. Instead, adopting the logic of cooptation and communicative deployment of grammatical markers, we can see how two markers with different core values (presentation for *wó* and identification for *lé*) can end up having a substantial area of functional overlap, in particular in their capacity to express focus.

The last remark concerns the type of data used for this paper. Most of the examples are taken from a naturalistic corpus which includes, in addition to narrative data, data still quite rarely used in Mande studies: spontaneous interactions. Continuous recordings of picture-based elicitation sessions, which provide semi-spontaneous data on picture descriptions, have also been shown to be of great use. It is not impossible that the differences in analysis of information structure markers which I sketched in this section arise not only from different conceptual foundations (such as a tendency to treat information structure as a distinct category). Instead, it is plausible that by using comparable types of data, scholars of other Mande languages will arrive at similar analytical conclusions as those discussed in this paper.

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Abbreviations

1 – first person	INJ – interjection
2 – second person	INT – intensifier
3 – third person	IP – inclusory pronoun
ATT – attention-managing marker	IPFV – imperfective
CONJ – conjunctive	JNT – conjoint
COP – copula	LOC – locative
CSTR – construct form	MOC – Mano Oral Corpus
CTR – contrastive	NEG – negative
D – determiner	PFV – perfective
DEF – definite	PL – plural
DEM – demonstrative	POSS – possessive
DIM – diminutive	PPM – pronominal predicative marker
EL. – elicited	PRES – presentative
EX – existential	PRF – perfect
EMPH – emphatic	PropN – proper noun
EX – existential	PST – past
FOC – focus	REF – referential
FR – French	REFL – reflexive
GER – gerund	SBJ – subject
H – high tone	SBJV – subjunctive
IDENT – identifier	SG – singular
INF – infinitive	VIS – visual

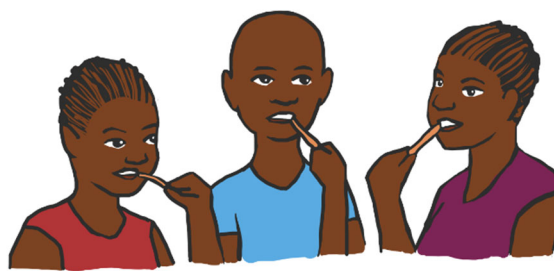
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Appendix. Visual stimuli used in the study.

The stimuli are given in the order they appear in the paper. The author of the stimuli is Matilda Carbo.



Stimulus 1 *regarder_se*. See example 45.

Stimulus 2, *brosser_dents_pl*. See example 47.

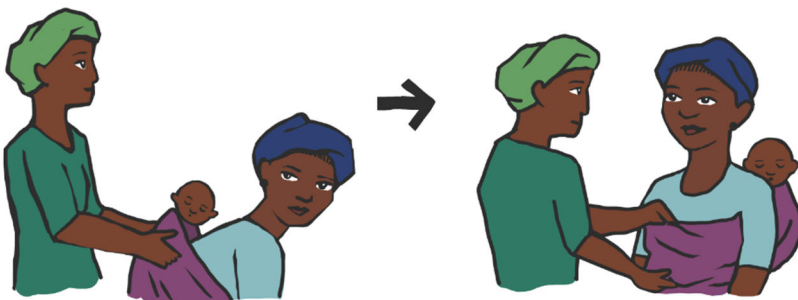


Stimulus 3, *regarder*. See examples 48 and 54.

Stimulus 4, *montrer_maitresse*. See example 49.



Stimulus 5, *bol*. See example 52.



Stimulus 6, *mettre_enfant*. See example 59.

Maria Khachaturyan

From copula to focus, vice versa, or neither?

Information structure and non-verbal predication in Mano

This paper studies the system of non-verbal predication of Mano, a South Mande language, based on primary data, including elicited utterances and a corpus of spontaneous speech. The main analytical question that I address concerns the relationship between non-verbal predication and focus marking. I argue that in Mano, the focus meaning arises as a pragmatic interpretation of identifying or presentative constructions with non-verbal predicators under particular contextual conditions. As a result, focus markers may not need to be distinguished as a syntactic and semantic class separate from non-verbal predicators. This discussion aims to shed light on the origin and interactional function of focus marking in Mande.

Keywords: focus, non-verbal predication, predicative demonstratives, Mano, interaction, pragmatic cooptation

Maria Khachaturyan

De la copule vers le focus, ou le vice-versa, ou ni l'un ni l'autre ?

La structure informationnelle et la prédication non-verbale en mano

Cet article étudie le système de prédication non-verbale du mano, une langue mandé-sud, basé sur des données de première main incluant des données élicitées et un corpus de discours spontané. La principale question analytique que j'aborde concerne la relation entre la prédication non-verbale et le marquage du focus. Je soutiens qu'en mano, la valeur de focus émerge comme une interprétation pragmatique de constructions non-verbales identificatrices ou présentatives dans des conditions contextuelles particulières. En conséquence, il peut ne pas être nécessaire de distinguer les marqueurs de focalisation en tant que classe syntaxique et sémantique distincte des prédicateurs non-verbaux. Cette discussion vise à éclairer l'origine et la fonction interactionnelle du focus dans les langues mandé.

Mots clés : focus, prédication non-verbale, démonstratifs prédictifs, Mano, interaction, cooptation pragmatique

Мария Леонидовна Хачатурьян

Показатель фокуса из копулы? Наоборот? Ни то, ни другое?

Информационная структура и неглагольная предикация в mano

В данной статье анализируется система неглагольной предикации в mano (южные манде). Анализ основывается на полевых данных, включая

элицитированные примеры и примеры из спонтанного корпуса. Основной вопрос статьи касается отношения между неглагольной предикацией и маркированием фокуса. В статье утверждается, что значение фокуса является прагматической интерпретацией неглагольных конструкций идентификации или презентации, появляющейся при определенных контекстных условиях. Из этого делается вывод о необязательности постулирования показателей фокуса как семантического и синтаксического класса, отличного от неглагольных предикаторов. Данная дискуссия ставит своей целью прояснить интеракционное происхождение показателей фокуса в языках манде.

Ключевые слова: фокус, неглагольная предикация, предикативные демонстративы, мано, интеракция, прагматическая кооптация