DISCOURSE STRATEGIES IN PULAAR: THE USE OF FOCUS


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This paper uses the concept of discourse cohesion as a basis
for looking at certain sentence emphasis patterns in Pulaar
(Fula). In particular, four patterns of focus are examined,
first syntactically and then pragmatically. Focus in Pulaar
can be divided according to clefting and pseudo-clefting pat-
terns for subject and non-subject focus. These four patterns
are discussed in depth. Then, I suggest that the idea of
discourse connectedness provides a model for explaining the
choice of a focus pattern in a given environment. Examples
of this are drawn from a transcription of~the story of
*Gelaajo Ham Bodeejo*, performed by Mammadu Ñon Giise, a griot
from northern Senegal.


1.   Introduction

     Linguistic literature in recent years has been full of references to

the pragmatic concept of sentence emphasis. This paper looks at the feature

of [+focus] in Pulaar[1] as one special type of sentence emphasis in that lan-

guage. Drawing from theoretical work in pragmatics, functional sentence

perspective, and discourse analysis, I will move from a discussion of the

shape of non-verb focus in Pulaar to a discussion of the use of focus in a

Pulaar text.[2] Language is viewed as a text-forming, cohesive phenomenon in

which certain features, emphasis being one of them, must be studied in a

context or environment. I will discuss first the syntactic rules (insertion

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     [1]Pulaar is a language of the West Atlantic branch of Niger-Congo. It
is spoken throughout the West African sahel. It is known as Fulfulde in all
dialects spoken from Mali eastward. (In the literature it is most commonly
referred to as "Fula", "Fulani", or "Peul".) The particular dialect under
consideration here is that of the Haalpulaar'en (or "Toucouleur") in
northern Senegal.

     [2]This article is based upon research carried out in Senegal from 1976-
1981 for a doctoral dissertation. The text examples which are used in this
paper come from a transcription of the narrative of *Gelaajo Ham Bodeejo*.
This text, of roughly 500 lines, is included in the appendix of the disser-
tation. (See bibliography.)

rules, deletion rules, movement rules, copying rules, etc.) which mark
the feature of focus in Pulaar.  And then I will discuss some of the
semantic implications of and pragmatic reasons for the use of emphasis,
and for the choice of one emphatic pattern over another in a given con-
text.  Throughout I am indebted to the distinction which Givón [1979:32]
draws between "categorial" rules and "strategy" rules.  According to
him:

> "The human communicator is not a deterministic user of an
> autonomous, subconscious grammar as Chomsky would have us
> believe.  Rather, he makes *communicative choices*.  He uses
> rules of grammar for a communicative effect."

The following discussion should bring out both the categorial rules of
focus in Pulaar, and some of the strategy "rules" (or reasons) for its
use.  We will look at both the shape or form of non-verb focus, as well
as the possible rules governing the choice to use or not to use focus.
And when it is used, we will examine the factors determining the choice
of one focus pattern from four possibilities.

2.    The Shape of Focus

Semantically, I am taking "focus" to mean a sentence which has a *marked
assertion* which contrasts with its *presupposition*.  In Pulaar, focus can
first be divided into two types:  verb focus and non-verb focus.  Verb focus
is achieved through the use of a special set of suffixes replacing the
tense-aspect-mood markers, and will not be considered here.  Non-verb focus
is achieved through the addition of the focusing particle  ko [3] to a

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[3]The particle  ko  carries a very heavy load in this particular dia-
lect.  (It is interesting to note that it has dropped many or most of these
functions in the eastern dialects, including its function as a marker of
emphasis or focus.)  Among its most important functions are:  1) as the
copula joining two nominals in a relationship of equivalency, identity,
location, or role, 2) as the "presentative" marker ('it is...') followed
by a nominal, 3) as the relative pronominal equivalent to the English
'what', 4) as the interrogative question word equivalent to "what?",
5) as the complementizer before an S-complement.  It can also take several
idiomatic roles and meanings.

neutral sentence[4] with the incumbent morpho-syntactic changes which accompany  ko  insertion.  The use of the emphatic particle  ko  activates three additional focus features, which may be optional or obligatory.  These include:  1) a change in the neutral SVO word order (optional), 2) the use of the relative (dependent or consecutive) verb form (obligatory), and 3) a non-clitic pronoun or NP from the independent series of pronominals (either emphatic, deictic, or referential) when the NP is in focus (obligatory).

There are four patterns of  ko  insertion, two being used for subject focus and two for non-subject focus.  As we shall see, these result in two cleft patterns and two pseudo-cleft patterns, distinguished in Pulaar by the position of  ko  and/or the focused NP.  These four patterns are variants of a neutral sentence.  If we take the following neutral SVO sentence:

```
(1)   a.   a         walii        mo            'you helped him'
           you       have-helped  him
           S         V            O
           clitic
```

it can be permuted in the following four ways:

PATTERN 1 - <u>Subject focus through clefting</u>

```
(1)   b.   ko     aan      walii    mo      'it is you who helped him'
           it-is  you      help     him
           FOCUS  S        V        O
                  emphatic relative
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This sentence pattern could be formulated as follows.  (The parentheses indicate something which is syntactically, though not pragmatically, optional.  The forms which the pronominal and verb may take are listed below each symbol.  The X represented all non-subjects.)

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[4]The following discussion is based upon the assumption that there is a distinction between a neutral sentence and a sentence with a morpho-syntactic marker for emphasis.  I take the following two features as indicative of a neutral sentence pattern in Pulaar: 1) that it take the word order (Ad)SVO(Ad), and 2) that at least the first verb takes as its tense-aspect-mood marker or suffix an independent morpheme, rather than a consecutive or relative form.

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PATTERN 1:  (  ko  )  S_____V_____(X)
                       emphatic        relative
                       deictic
                       referential
                       nominal
```

PATTERN 2 - <u>Subject focus through pseudo-clefting</u>

```
(1)  c.  mo        walli    mo  ko     aan      'the one who helped him was you'
         he-who     help     him it-is  you
         S COPY     V        O   FOCUS  S
         REL PRO    relative      emphatic
```

Expressed in a formula, we get:

```
PATTERN 2:  S_____V_____(X)  ko  S_____
               relative copy  relative          emphatic
               pronoun                          deictic
                                                referential
                                                nominal
```
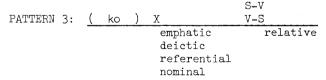
PATTERN 3 - <u>Non-subject focus through clefting</u>

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(1)  d.  ko     kaŋko    mballu    -ɗaa     'it is he whom you helped'
         it-is  him      help      you
         FOCUS  O        V         S
                emphatic relative  postposed clitic
```

The formula for this pattern is a bit more complex because the order of sub-
ject and verb depends upon the person, a regular feature in the relative
verb forms. Basically, first and second person subject clitics follow the
verb, while the third person clitics precede. This fact is indicated by the
symbol $\frac{S-V}{V-S}$ .

```
                                           S-V
PATTERN 3:  (  ko  )  X_____V-S_____
                       emphatic        relative
                       deictic
                       referential
                       nominal
```

PATTERN 4 - <u>Non-subject focus through pseudo-clefting</u>

```
(1)  e.  mballu    -ɗaa            ko     kaŋko    'whom you helped was him'
         help       you            it-is  him
         V          S              FOCUS  O
         relative   postposed clitic      emphatic
```

Or we can formulate this pattern as:

```
           S-V
PATTERN 4: V-S            ko  X
                relative       emphatic
                               deictic
                               referential
                               nominal
```

These four patterns illustrate the four primary syntactic forms which focus
can take. In order to correctly interpret the above patterns, notice the
following features. First, the concept of non-verb focus hinges upon the
introduction of the particle  ko  into the neutral sentence. However, ko
in S-initial position is optional syntactically and may be deleted. In a
focused sentence,  ko  deletion has no impact upon the syntax of the
sentence itself. The syntactic adjustments related to the use of  ko  as
a particle of emphasis remain (i.e. a focused pronominal cannot be a clitic
and the verb must take the relative form). Whether or not it is deleted
seems to be a communicative choice, not a syntactic one. Statistically,
ko  is deleted in a minority of cases, and usually in a context where
several focused sentences follow one upon the other, the first one using
ko  while the others delete it.

However,  ko  deletion does not apply to anything but S-initial posi-
tion. Within the sentence,  ko  must appear. For example:

(2)  a.  ko aan walli mo        'it is you who helped him'

     b.  Ø  aan walli mo        'it is you who helped him'

     c.  mballu-ɗaa ko kaŋko    'who you helped was him'

     d.  *mballu-ɗaa Ø  kaŋko

The final example in the series is incorrect because  ko  in that position
cannot be deleted. To generalize, one could say that  ko  is *optional in
cleft sentences, but obligatory in pseudo-clefts.*

Secondly, for the non-verb focus patterns, the relevant NP's can be
divided into subject (marked by S) and non-subject (marked by X). That is
we can talk about patterns of subject focus and patterns of non-subject
focus. And any NP in the sentence may be focused upon in both a cleft

(S-initial) and pseudo-cleft (S-final) pattern.

Third, the word order of the subject and verb in a focus sentence depends upon person. This is marked by the patterns $\frac{\text{S-V}}{\text{V-S}}$ . Whenever the relative verb form is used, it is marked by a combination of verbal suffixes and the position (and form) of the subject clitic. In a relative or dependent verb form, the first and second person subject clitics follow the verb. However, the third person clitics, as well as the first person plural exclusive pronoun, precede it.

Fourth, a clitic pronoun can never be the NP in focus. The NP in focus must be either a full nominal, or one of the three independent forms--the emphatic, deictic, or referential pronouns. These pronominal forms can function similarly to full nominals in a variety of syntactic environments in Pulaar, focusing being one of them.

Finally, notice that pattern 2 depends upon a pronominal copy which holds the place of the focused subject, now shifted to S-final position. The copy is a relative pronoun. This particular pattern is used very rarely, perhaps because shifting the focused NP out of S-initial position into S-final position is not congruent with the function of focus. Focusing and S-initial position seem to be features which support each other. When it is a S-final non-subject which is focused upon, it can be left in it normal S-final position, or it can be frontshifted to S-initial position. But to consciously shift an S-initial subject into S-final position when it is the NP in focus, as a pragmatically ambiguous operation, requires an additional syntactic rule of pronominal copying. The place of the backshifted subject must be held by a pronominal copy of the subject, which now appears in S-final (or pseudo-cleft) position. As was already mentioned, this strategy for focusing is very rarely used in spontaneous speech.

The features relevant to non-verb focus in Pulaar can be summarized in Table 1. Patterns 1 and 2 have in common the fact that they both focus upon subjects, while 3 and 4 focus upon non-subjects. However, patterns 1 and 3 are similar in that they are both clefting patterns, whereas 2 and 4 are pseudo-clefts.

Table 1.  Non-verb focus in Pulaar

| | Pattern 1 | Pattern 2 | Pattern 3 | Pattern 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ko  in S-initial position | X | | X | |
| clefting pattern | X | | X | |
| ko  in S-final position | | X | | X |
| pseudo-clefting pattern | | X | | X |
| optional  ko  deletion | X | | X | |
| subject focused | X | X | | |
| non-subject focused | | | X | X |
| relative verb form used | X | X | X | X |
| non-clitic pronominal in focus position | X | X | X | X |
| word order changed | | X | X | |
| frontshifting change | | | X | |
| backshifting change | | X | | |
| pronominal place-holder | | X | | |
| asserted NP is S-initial | X | | X | |
| asserted NP is S-final | | X | | X |

The feature of [+focus] as discussed above has been captured by the *rule of* ko *insertion*.  That rule states that any NP of a sentence may be brought into focus through the addition of the focusing particle  ko  , plus some combination of the following three "rules":

(i)    a movement rule:    It is common to find the focused non-subject pro-
moted to S-initial position (PATTERN 3).  It is
less common but still possible to find a focused
subject demoted to S-final position (PATTERN 2.)
In that case, a special pronominal copying rule
also applies.

(ii)   a deletion rule:    Whenever  ko  occurs in S-initial position it may
                           optionally be deleted.  Rules for the application
                           of this feature are probably pragmatic, rather
                           than syntactic.  This applies to PATTERN 1 and
                           PATTERN 3.  Any application of rule (1) or rule
                           (3) that applied before  ko  was deleted is main-
                           tained.

(iii)  an agreement rule:  The use of  ko  calls for two types of agreement
                           rules:  a) the use of the relative verb form, and
                           b) the use of a non-clitic pronoun in focused
                           position (either a full nominal or an independent
                           pronoun).

The application of these rules is summarized in the following table.

Table 2.  Rule application

|  | Movement rule | Deletion rule | Agreement rules | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  | verb / | pronoun |
| Pattern 1: (subject) (cleft) |  | X | X | X |
| Pattern 2: (subject) (pseudo-cleft) | X (plus pronoun copy) |  | X | X |
| Pattern 3: (non-subject) (cleft) | X | X | X | X |
| Pattern 4: (non-subject) (pseudo-cleft) |  |  | X | X |

The differing degrees of syntactic complexity between the four patterns
become evident in this last chart.  But it also should be clear that each
pattern depends upon the manipulation of the same basic features.  Only
pattern 2, a statistically uncommon pattern, makes use of an additional
syntactic operation.

3.   The Pragmatic Features Governing the Choice of [+focus]

     The above discussion has been primarily interested in the syntactic
features of focus.  According to the definition quoted earlier by Givón

[1979], these were largely *categorial rules*--the 100% rules applied for grammatical "correctness". However, the question of *strategy rules* also came up. For example, the question of optional  ko  deletion was left to possible pragmatic factors.

In this section, I will take up the question of pragmatic features by trying to determine what differentiates between the two possible patterns of non-subject focus.[5]  In other words, when would one choose pattern 3, and when pattern 4 in a discourse situation?  What I should like to determine is the distributional range of the two following sentences:

PATTERN 3:  ko kaŋko mballu-ɗaa    'it is *he* whom you helped'

and:

PATTERN 4:  mballu-ɗaa ko kaŋko    'whom you helped was *he*'

Both have focus marked by  ko  . Both focus upon the non-subject--in this case the object  mo  (him/her) represented here by the emphatic pronoun kaŋko  .  But I would like to suggest that their distribution within a text would not be the same.

Too much of the literature on focus (and topic) has been confused by attempts at a static, "semantic" definition of the focused NP as the "new" or "unknown" element being asserted in an uncontextualized sentence.  This has led to definitions of the following sort:

> "While *theme* is the given point of departure, *focus* is new
> information in the sense that it is textually and situation-
> ally nonderivable, nonanaphoric, although not necessarily
> factually new information" (Justus [1976:219].)

or:

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[5]Theoretically, one should be able to draw the same distributions between patterns 1 and 2, differentiating the patterns of subject focus. However, after transcribing several hundred pages of various texts, I did not find a sufficient number of sentences using pattern 2 (which "demotes" the focused NP to S-final position) to draw any conclusions. And the text of *Gelaajo Ham Boɗeejo*, which provides the basis of evidence for this paper, does not use this pattern even once.

> "I use 'topic' to refer to a major consituent...that is
> usually in sentence-initial position, and that expresses
> known, given information...In contrast, I use 'focus' to
> refer to a major constituent carrying new information..."
> (McIntosh [n.d.:19]).

There seems to be some confusion over the idea of focus as being "new" and
therefore "nonderivable". As we shall see shortly, focus in Pulaar may be
derivable from either what precedes or what follows, depending upon whether
it is a cleft or a pseudo-cleft pattern.

     If we use the new/old information model, we immediately run into diffi-
culties on the level of discourse. A focus sentence is not an entity in
isolation with something in it presupposed and something else asserted, as
so many of these definitions limited to the intrinsic value of the focused
NP would have us assume. A focus sentence is one which is *marked* as having
a *special discourse function*. The reason for choosing to use focus cer-
tainly has more to do with the needs of the discourse and the communicative
choices open to the speaker than this static portrayal of its component
parts would have us believe. After all, sentence emphasis is a preeminently
contextualized phenomenon. It occurs within a larger context to meet the
needs of that context--or more precisely, the needs of communicating within
a speech context.

     It seems to me that the pragmatic value of a focus sentence is less
adequately defined by emphasizing the supposed nature (new/old, thematic/
rhematic, known/unknown) of the focused NP itself, than by visualing the
environment in which the two types of focus patterns (cleft or pseudo-cleft)
can occur, and marking the *connections* between them. Hetzron [1975:348]
comes to the point with this simple definition:

> "With Jesperson [1924:145] I feel that the "new information"
> is not always contained in the predicate (this term being
> used here in a sense equivalent to 'rheme'), but it is
> always inherent in the *connexion* of the two elements - the
> fact that these two elements are put together. At issue is
> not the novelty of the element, but what the speaker intends
> to build up in the discourse."

In this section, we are talking less about categorial rules and more about

strategy rules for effective communication.  That is, rules or generaliza-
tions which can help to predict and understand communication choices when a
language is actually in use.  And generally speaking, with strategy rules we
are probably always talking about "degrees of adequacy", rather than any
grammatical absolutes measured as "correct" or "incorrect".  The first
definitions offered above I find inadequate to a number of situations when
reading a Pulaar text.  Whereas I find a much higher degree of adequacy--a
higher degree of predictability and a less complicated model for describing--
in the following definition offered by Hetzron [1975:364]:

> "Both constructions, cleft and cataphora [or pseudo-cleft]
> are instances of focusing (*mise en relief*) which elevate
> the communicational importance of an element above the
> level of the rest of the sentence.  Yet the motivation for
> such focusing may be varied.  When an element is focused
> because it fills a gap in previous knowledge, it is brought
> *forward* in a cleft construction or another type of emphatic
> construction.  When the focusing is necessary for paving
> the way for later use of the same element in the discourse
> or for a pragmatic reaction, the cataphoric construction
> that moves the focused element to the *end* of the sentence
> is created."

That is to say, there is a relationship implied and established by a focus
construction.  That relationship may either go backwards or forwards in the
discourse.  It is that *relationship* which is the essence of a focus con-
struction.  It is that relationship which determines the choice, in English,
between an *it*-cleft and a *WH*-pseudo-cleft (see Prince [1978]).  And as we
shall see, in Pulaar it is that relationship which determines the choice
between pattern 3 and pattern 4.

In fact, I would like to present a simple hypothesis about the use of
these two patterns which is related to the *position* of the asserted NP.  It
is simply this:  that in Pulaar an asserted NP is brought forward in the
sentence when it is "connected" to something which has preceded it in the
discourse, whereas the asserted element is postposed if it is connected to
something which is still to come.  *Frontshifting* or *backshifting* are simply
factors in the larger *backward* or *forward connection*.

This very simple model for explaining the choice may, of course, be

elaborated upon with more "semantic" explanations.  Obviously, when the con-
nection runs between the focus sentence and something which follows in the
discourse, the focus sentence *in its entirety* is probably introducing some-
thing new which is now picked up upon in the following discourse.  Thus the
definitions "new", or "theme", or even "introduction" could be tacked onto
this focused sentence.  And when the focus sentence comes in final position
after a flow of discourse, connecting the focused piece with what has pre-
ceded, the entire focus sentence could be called "old" or "given", or even
a "summary" of what came before.  But these definitions must consider the
total focus sentence and its environment, not simply the focused NP in an
isolated sentence.  Only then can these kinds of definitions and explana-
tions of the focus function have a place.

   Throughout the Pulaar narratives which I have transcribed to date, the
forwards or backwards connection is generally marked by either:  a) direct
repetition of a lexical item, b) duplication of a given semantic range by
two lexically distinct items, or c) pronominalization.  These clear and
easily observed syntactic features therefore become the primary means for
identifying the direction of the connection; and thereby for explaining
the choice between a cleft and a pseudo-cleft pattern.  (Other features
may of course exist to mark connection.  However, the three markers listed
above account for all the data collected so far.)  Taking the text of
*Gelaajo Ham Bodeejo*[6] as a basis for testing the above hypothesis, I found
that there was 100% correlation between the placement of  ko  (and/or
the focused NP) and the direction of a clear connection with the other
elements in the discourse for the thirty examples of non-subject focus
occurring in the text.  That is, as a model it explained and predicted
the phenomenon every time.

   In the following example from the story of Gelaajo, the focus sentence

_____

   [6]This text, recited by Mammadu Ñon Giise, a griot from northern Sene-
gal (Hoore Fonde), is included at the end of my doctoral dissertation.  It
is roughly 500 lines in length, and includes numerous examples of focus in
operation.

(using the particle  ko  [7]) comes second.  This sentence is an example of
frontshifted non-subject focus (pattern 3).  The placement of  ko  within
the focused sentence is to the left.  And the connection between the
focused sentence and the larger discourse is also to the left, marked in
this case by repetition.

(3)  Sabu    o  wi'ii  ko     o  hirataa       mi  laarat  golle makko.
     because he said   that   he isn't-jealous I   look-at deeds his
              PERF.  COMP.      NEG.IMPERF.        IMPERF.

     Ko    silsil golle    makko yeewan   -mi.
     it-is reality of-deeds his   look-for I
     FOCUS OBJECT                 RELATIVE SUBJECT
                                  IMPERFECT

     'Because he said that he isn't/wouldn't be jealous, I am going to check
     on his actions.  It is the reality of his actions (not just his words)
     which I am going to examine.'

The connection between these two sentences is indicated through repetition.
Notice the direct repetition of  golle makko  'his deeds, actions', which
establishes a clear link between the sentences.  Secondly, the semantically
similar idea of 'to look at, examine' is given in two lexically distinct
verbs,  yeewa  and  laarat  .  The connection between the first non-focused
sentence and the second sentence with the focused element in initial posi-
tion is made twice; once through word-for-word repetition and once through
the repetition of a semantic idea.

   In the following example which illustrates the same set of relation-
ships, all of the elements occur within one sentence which has two clauses.
The second clause is a focus construction.  Using pattern 3 again, it fronts
an S-final non-subject to S-initial position.

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[7]Notice that the first  ko  in (3) is the complementizer, not the
focus particle.

(4)  Faɗo pii-  maa-mi adan, ko    ŋgoo piino-ɗaa Gelaajo.
     shoe hit   you I  first it-is that hit   you Gelaajo
         RELA. O   S          FOCUS I.O. RELA. S    D.O.
         PERF.                          PERF.

'(The) shoe (which) I hit you (with) first, it is *that* (with which) you had hit Gelaajo.'

This time, the connection is made both through repetition and pronominalization. The verb  fi'a  (realized in both cases in the form  pii-  ) meaning 'to hit' is repeated. Secondly, the nominal  faɗo  'shoe' from the first clause is pronominally copied by the concordant class pronoun ŋgoo  in the deictic form. The focused or asserted NP is brought forward, and the connection is drawn between the focus sentence and what has preceded, as my hypothesis would have predicted.

In contrast, postponing the focused element is due to a connection between the focus sentence and something which follows in the discourse. Once again, there are several clear examples in the text of *Gelaajo Ham Boɗeejo* which use direct repetition and pronominalization to mark this feature.

(5)  O  yontaa    ko   to debbo jeewo to.  O  raaŋani     suudu
     he is-due-at it-is at wife  first the  he draw-towards room
     S            FOCUS COMPLEMENT

     debbo   jeewo o.
     of-wife first the

'Where he is due is at his first wife's (room). He drew near his first wife's room.'

This passage introduces completely new material within the text where it occurs. Up to this point, the narrator has been concerned with the exploits of Gelaajo in a far-off village. Suddenly, he now introduces Gelaajo in his own home. Semantically, the focused sentence provides a certain amount of new material in a new setting, which makes what follows comprehensible. It introduces something new through a focus construction with the  ko clause in S-final position. The repeated element shared by these two sentences is  debbo jeewo o  'the first wife'. The focused non-subject NP remains to the right in the sentence, and it is connected by this repetition

to a sentence on the right.

   One final example of this rightward connection appears in the text
sentence:

(6) Ŋgarnoo-mi ko    yoptaade.        Mi yoptiima    paɗe ɗe.
    came    I  it-is to-get-revenge  I  got-revenge shoes the
    RELA.   S  FOCUS COMPLEMENT        S  PERF.
    PERF.

   'What I came (for) is revenge.  I have avenged (the slap across the
   face with) the shoes.'

Here we find the idea of  yoptoo  'to get revenge, to avenge' repeated,
once in the infinitive form and once in the perfect.  Focus is to the right
within the sentence, as is the discourse connection.

   Marking the focus on the right in the above example connects it to
what follows (on the right as well).  That describes the inter-sentence
relationships which we are observing here.  Semantically, we can perhaps
say now that the focused sentence is being used to introduce new materials
into the narrative.  The idea of revenge, which is the focused element, is
mentioned here for the first time.  However, while this might explain the
"why" of focus, it does not explain why this particular pattern of focus
is used, rather than another.  The explanation involving discourse con-
nectedness (*cohesion*) does explain the choice of pseudo-clefting over
clefting.

4.   Conclusions

   This paper has considered some of the basic features of focus, as one
type of sentence emphasis, in Pulaar.  It began with a look at four of the
primary sentence patterns which can be identified syntactically as focus
patterns.  Each involved the introduction of the focusing particle  ko  .
It became evident that the position of  ko  (or the focused clause in the
case of  ko  deletion) is relevant to the interpretation of the patterns as
cleft or pseudo-cleft.  Both types of pattern can be applied to any NP in
the sentence, but the NP's can be grouped as either subjects or non-subjects.
   Secondly, I suggested an hypothesis which might account for the distri-

butional differences between the two common forms of non-subject focus
patterns, one a cleft pattern and the other a pseudo-cleft. The hypothesis
is simple:  that a focused sentence is one which expresses *connections in
discourse*, and that the type of focus sentence chosen depends upon the
*direction* of the connection and the sentence-internal *position* of the  ko
clause.  A focused NP in S-initial position is mirrored by a connection
branching to the left.  And a focused element in final position signals
connections to the right.  The semantic interpretations of these syntactic
features may include readings such as "new", "old", "given", etc.  But the
model of connection is much simpler to use.  Secondly, these semantic
definitions must apply to the entire focus sentence and its role in the
discourse, not simply to the component parts of the focus construction.
Finally, these definitions may be able to explain the feature of [+focus]
in the sentence, but they are not adequate for explaining the choice
between a clefting pattern (patterns 1 and 3) and a pseudo-clefting pattern
(patterns 2 and 4).

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