

Focus in Baga Pukur (Atlantic)

Preliminary data

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Outline for Section 1

Introduction

Metadata
Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References
Term focus
Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus
Object focus
Oblique focus
Verb focus
Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

1. Introduction

1.1 Metadata

1.2 Phonological basics

2. Focus in Atlantic languages: an overview

2.1 References

2.2 Term focus

2.3 Verb focus

3. Focus in Baga Pukur

3.1 Subject focus

3.2 Object focus

3.3 Oblique focus

3.4 Verb focus

3.5 Pervasiveness

4. Summary

Baga Pukur within Atlantic

(Segerer and Pozdniakov *forthcoming*)

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

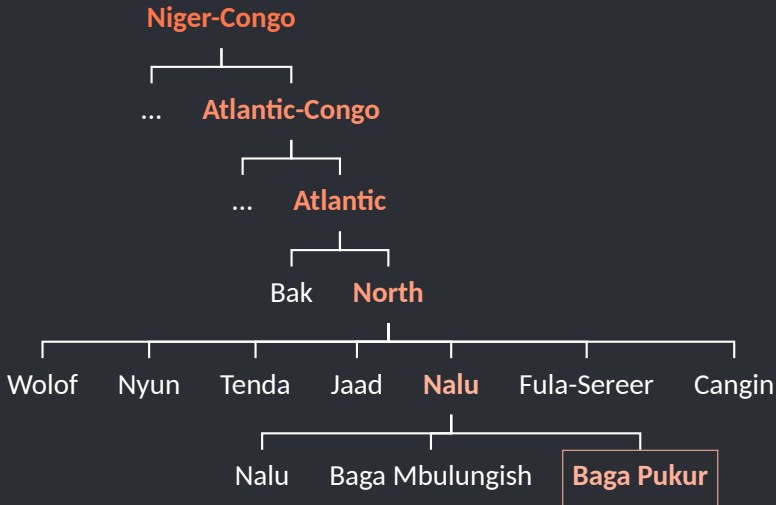
Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References



Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

- A few hundred speakers in 2 villages (= 2 dialects) of coastal Guinea

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

- A few hundred speakers in 2 villages (= 2 dialects) of coastal Guinea
- Previously undescribed, critically endangered (status 7 ‘shifting’ on Lewis and Simons (2010)’s scale), bilingualism with Soso (Mande)

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

- A few hundred speakers in 2 villages (= 2 dialects) of coastal Guinea
- Previously undescribed, critically endangered (status 7 ‘shifting’ on Lewis and Simons (2010)’s scale), bilingualism with Soso (Mande)
- Author’s field data collected during 2 field trips (3,5 months)

Phonological basics

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic languages: an overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

- Tonal

Phonological basics

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

- Tonal
- No voicing contrast (all consonants transcribed as voiceless)

Outline for Section 2

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

**Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview**

References

Term focus

Verb focus

**Focus in Baga
Pukur**

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

1. Introduction

1.1 Metadata

1.2 Phonological basics

2. Focus in Atlantic languages: an overview

2.1 References

2.2 Term focus

2.3 Verb focus

3. Focus in Baga Pukur

3.1 Subject focus

3.2 Object focus

3.3 Oblique focus

3.4 Verb focus

3.5 Pervasiveness

4. Summary

References

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Overview Based on Creissels (2021) updating Robert (2010).

Term focus in Atlantic

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic languages: an overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Term focus in Atlantic

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Focus position for **objects** and **obliques**:

Almost exclusively **clause-initial**.

Term focus in Atlantic

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Focalization strategies:

- **Only movement to clause-initial position: rare**

Term focus in Atlantic

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Focalization strategies:

- **Only movement to clause-initial position:** rare
- **Cleft constructions:** rarely systematic

Term focus in Atlantic

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Focalization strategies:

- **Only movement to clause-initial position:** rare
- **Cleft constructions:** rarely systematic
- **Focus markers:** widespread

Term focus in Atlantic

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Focalization strategies:

- **Only movement to clause-initial position:** rare
- **Cleft constructions:** rarely systematic
- **Focus markers:** widespread
- **Special verb inflection:** widespread, non-exclusive

Term focus in Atlantic

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Focalization strategies:

- **Only movement to clause-initial position:** rare
- **Cleft constructions:** rarely systematic
- **Focus markers:** widespread
- **Special verb inflection:** widespread, non-exclusive
 - ✓ Specific to focus constructions

Term focus in Atlantic

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Focalization strategies:

- **Only movement to clause-initial position:** rare
- **Cleft constructions:** rarely systematic
- **Focus markers:** widespread
- **Special verb inflection:** widespread, non-exclusive
 - ✓ Specific to focus constructions
 - ✓ Shared by relative clause constructions

Term focus in Atlantic

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Focalization strategies:

- **Only movement to clause-initial position:** rare
- **Cleft constructions:** rarely systematic
- **Focus markers:** widespread
- **Special verb inflection:** widespread, non-exclusive
 - ✓ Specific to focus constructions
 - ✓ Shared by relative clause constructions
 - ✓ Limited to subject focalization

Term focus in Atlantic

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Focalization strategies:

- **Only movement to clause-initial position:** rare
- **Cleft constructions:** rarely systematic
- **Focus markers:** widespread
- **Special verb inflection:** widespread, non-exclusive
 - ✓ Specific to focus constructions
 - ✓ Shared by relative clause constructions
 - ✓ Limited to subject focalization
 - ✓ Same special inflection for all types of term focus

Term focus in Atlantic

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Focalization strategies:

- **Only movement to clause-initial position:** rare
- **Cleft constructions:** rarely systematic
- **Focus markers:** widespread
- **Special verb inflection:** widespread, non-exclusive
 - ✓ Specific to focus constructions
 - ✓ Shared by relative clause constructions
 - ✓ Limited to subject focalization
 - ✓ Same special inflection for all types of term focus
 - ✓ Bipartite distinction subject vs. object / oblique focus

Term focus in Atlantic

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Focalization strategies:

- **Only movement to clause-initial position:** rare
- **Cleft constructions:** rarely systematic
- **Focus markers:** widespread
- **Special verb inflection:** widespread, non-exclusive
 - ✓ Specific to focus constructions
 - ✓ Shared by relative clause constructions
 - ✓ Limited to subject focalization
 - ✓ Same special inflection for all types of term focus
 - ✓ Bipartite distinction subject vs. object / oblique focus
 - ✓ Tripartite distinction subject vs. object vs. oblique focus

Term focus in Atlantic

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic languages: an overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

NB: In some Atlantic languages, the focalization of obliques requires converting them into objects (applicativization).

Verb focus in Atlantic

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic languages: an overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Atlantic particularity: grammaticalized verb focalization

Verb focus in Atlantic

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Atlantic particularity: grammaticalized verb focalization

What is verb focus?

ex. 1 Did you **boil** it or did you **fry** it?

ex. 2 – Why are you exhausted? – I **have been running**.

Verb focus

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Verb focalization strategies:

- Term focus construction applied to a form cognate with the predicate verb

Verb focus

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Verb focalization strategies:

- Term focus construction applied to a form cognate with the predicate verb

e.g. *It's eating that he ate* → 'he ATE'

Verb focus

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Verb focalization strategies:

- Term focus construction applied to a form cognate with the predicate verb
- Special verb inflection

Outline for Section 3

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

1. Introduction
 - 1.1 Metadata
 - 1.2 Phonological basics
2. Focus in Atlantic languages: an overview
 - 2.1 References
 - 2.2 Term focus
 - 2.3 Verb focus
3. Focus in Baga Pukur
 - 3.1 Subject focus
 - 3.2 Object focus
 - 3.3 Oblique focus
 - 3.4 Verb focus
 - 3.5 Pervasiveness
4. Summary

Subject focus

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic languages: an overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Subject focus

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

- (1) a. *pātl = káŋ* *fá-kà-wál-ǎ* *táplā fàl.*
elder=1 SG.POSS PF-PST-be-SUFF first child
'My elder sister is the first child.' [Bn]

Subject focus

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

- (1) a. *pātl = káŋ* *fá-kà-wál-ǎ* *táplā fàl*.
elder=1 SG.POSS PF-PST-be-SUFF first child
'My elder sister is the first child.' [Bn]
- b. *pātl = káŋ* *á-wál-ǎ* *táplā fàl*
elder=1 SG.POSS INF-be-SUFF first child
'It's my elder sister who is the first child.' [Bn]

Subject focus

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

- (2) a. *é-nā-yìn-npě̀l* *pú-kǔ̀t?*
2SG.SBJ-UNACC-3PL.OBJ-tell PL-Pukur
'Do you speak Pukur to them?' [Bn]

Subject focus

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

- (2) a. *é-nā-yìn-npě́l* *pú-kǔt?*
2SG.SBJ-UNACC-3PL.OBJ-tell PL-Pukur
'Do you speak Pukur to them?' [Bn]
- b. *ɲéɲ* *á-nā-méɲ-pé́l*
2SG.EMPH INF-UNACC-1SG.OBJ-speak
súl *pú-kùt.*
mouth PL-Pukur
'It's you who speaks Pukur to me.' [Mb]

Subject focus

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

- (3) a. *á-f̄ā-ká-kā-f̄ât.*
3SG.SBJ-PF-3SG.OBJ-PST-carve
'(S)he carved it.' [Mb]

Subject focus

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

- (3) a. *á-f̄ā-ká-kā-f̄āt.*
3SG.SBJ-PF-3SG.OBJ-PST-carve
'(S)he carved it.' [Mb]
- b. *mán á-f̄át yánpàŋ.*
3SG.EMPH INF-carve Nimba
'It's (s)he who carved the Nimba.' [Mb]

Subject focus

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Subject relative clause:

- (4) *é-fā-tàp* \emptyset -*lópǒn* *ānâ-ǎm* [*á-táp*
2 SG-PF-stand VN-look cow-DIST INF-stand
 \emptyset -*sápàŋ*].
VN-pass
'You are looking at the passing cow.' [Bn]

Subject focus

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Summary of subject focalization strategies:

- Infinitive inflection shared by subject relative clauses
- Emphatic pronoun series (if subject expressed by pronoun)
- Null aspect verb form replaces perfect (shared by relative clauses)

Object focus

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic languages: an overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Object focus

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

- (5) a. *ā-fá-táp* *n-túl* *pójnòk.*
3SG.SBJ-PF-stand VN-cook cassava
'(S)he's cooking cassava.' [Mb]

Object focus

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

- (5) a. *ā-fá-táp* *n-túl* *pójnòk*.
3SG.SBJ-PF-stand VN-cook cassava
'(S)he's cooking cassava.' [Mb]
- b. *pājónók* *pá-tàp* *n-tùl*
cassava 3SG.FOC-stand VN-cook
'I's cassava that (s)he's cooking.' [Mb]

Object focus

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

- (6) a. *n-fá-cép* *n-tì = là.*
1 SG-PF-break SG-wood=IN
'I have broken a stick.' [Mb]
- b. *n-tí* *n-cép = là*
SG-wood 1 SG.SBJ-break=IN
'It's a stick that I have broken.' [Mb]

Object focus

Other usage of the 3sg.foc pronoun + null aspect instead of perfect verb form

Object relative clause:

- (7) a. \emptyset -*fá-lǎ* *émō = nkàŋ*.
1 SG-PF-take property=1 SG.POSS
'I took mine.' [Bn]
- b. *mánkū-ǎm* *pá-lǎ*.
mango-DIST 3 SG.FOC-take
'The mango that (s)he took.' [Bn]

Object focus

Other usage of the 3sg.foc pronoun + null aspect instead of perfect verb form

Temporal subordinate clauses:

- (8) *nán* *é-ŋ-kā-cúŋŷl* *hánj*
 thus 2SG.SBJ-UNACC-3SG.OBJ-cook until
 pó-sùm.
 3SG.FOC-be_tasty
 ‘That’s how you cook it until it’s good.’ [Bn]

Object focus

Other usage of the 3sg.foc pronoun + null aspect instead of perfect verb form

Temporal subordinate clauses:

- (9) *npé* *pá-cè* *átǔn*,
 when 3SG.FOC-come+PST in_town
pā-ŋ-ká-lá *mâw*.
 1PL.SBJ-UNACC-3SG.OBJ-give rice
 ‘When (s)he comes to the village, we will give him/her
 rice.’ [Bn]

Object focus

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Summary of object focalization strategies:

- Object moved to clause-initial position
- Null aspect verb form replaces perfect (shared by relative and temporal subordinate clauses)
- Special bound 3sg subject pronoun (shared by relative and temporal subordinate clauses)

Oblique focus

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic languages: an overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Oblique focus

- (10) a. *kōnkó* = à.
room=IN
'In the room.' [Bn]

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Oblique focus

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

- (10) a. *kōnkó = à.*
room=IN
'In the room.' [Bn]
- b. *kōnkó = ǎm pá-āŋ-pál = à.*
room=DIST 3SG.FOC-UNACC-enter=IN
'The room that (s)he will enter.' [Bn]

Oblique focus

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

- (10) a. *kōnkó* = à.
room=IN
'In the room.' [Bn]
- b. *kōnkó* = ǎm pá-āŋ-pál = à.
room=DIST 3SG.FOC-UNACC-enter=IN
'The room that (s)he will enter.' [Bn]
- c. *mán* Ø-nūŋ-pōŋ
3SG.EMPH 1SG.SBJ-UNACC-lay_down
mâl = là.
rice=IN
'This is where I put the rice.' [lit. 'this is it I put the
rice in' [Mb]

Oblique focus

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Summary of oblique focalization strategies:

- Same as object focalization
- Applicativization if oblique composed with clitic(s): clitics moved to right of VP (behavior shared by oblique relative clauses)

Verb focus

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic languages: an overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Verb focus

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Intransitive verb with pronominal subject:

- (11) a. *n-fá-wìŋ.*
1 SG-PF-get_tired
'I'm tired.' [Mb]
- b. *∅-wìŋ* *à-wìŋ.*
1 SG-get_tired INF-get_tired
'I'm tired.' [as answer to question like 'Why are you
not working?'] [Mb]

Verb focus

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Intransitive verb with pronominal subject:

- (11) a. *n-fá-wìŋ.*
1 SG-PF-get_tired
'I'm tired.' [Mb]
- b. *∅-wìŋ* *à-wìŋ.*
1 SG-get_tired INF-get_tired
'I'm tired.' [as answer to question like 'Why are you
not working?'] [Mb]

→ Strategy found cross-linguistically that reflects the **double statement** implied by any focalization (Robert 1993: 20)

Verb focus

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Intransitive verb with nominal subject:

(12) a. *ālāpól táp mō-lò.*

body stand 1SG.OBJ-eat

‘My body is hurting me.’ [Mb]

b. *ālāpól á-táp mō-lò.*

body INF-stand 1SG.OBJ-eat

‘My body is hurting me.’ [as answer to question like
‘What’s going on?'] [lit. ‘**It’s my body that is hurting
me**’] [Mb]

Verb focus

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Transitive verb:

(13) *fàl* *n-táp* *n-pòk-òt.*
child 1SG-stand VN-wash-TR

‘I am washing [my] child’ [as answer to question like
‘What are you doing?’] [lit. ‘**it’s [my] child that I am wash-
ing**’] [Mb]

Verb focus

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Transfer of emphasis (from subject/object to verb)

- was analyzed in detail for Wolof (subject → verb) by Robert (1993; 2000)
- is cross-linguistically common (Robert 1993)
- is probably not the only grammaticalized way of focalizing transitive verbs and intransitive verbs with nominal subject in Baga Pukur (further investigation needed)

Pervasiveness of focus constructions

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic languages: an overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Pervasiveness of focus constructions

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

(14) *npé* *pó-wānkāl* *npēl* *étālă*, *mán*
when 1 PL.SBJ-scrape salt 3 SG.EMPH

pá-nā-yésākă, *mán*

1 PL.SBJ-UNACC-carry 3 SG.EMPH

pá-nāη-tūl, *mán*

1 PL.SBJ-UNACC-cook 3 SG.EMPH

pá-nāη-köḡ [...]

1 PL.SBJ-UNACC-sell

‘When we scrape salt at Etala, it’s what we carry, what we cook, what we sell.’ [Bn]

Pervasiveness of focus constructions

Topicalization of focalized terms

- (15) a. *ēsíàw mán Ø-mū-ŋ nōmòŋ.*
today 3SG.EMPH 1SG.SBJ-EP-go there
'It's today that I went there.' [lit. 'today, it's when I
went there'] [Mb]

Pervasiveness of focus constructions

Topicalization of focalized terms

- (15) a. *ēsiàw mán Ø-mū-ŋ nōmòŋ.*
today 3SG.EMPH 1SG.SBJ-EP-go there
'It's today that I went there.' [lit. 'today, it's when I
went there'] [Mb]
- b. *kóséŋ pá-tāp*
the_day_after_tomorrow 3SG.FOC-stand
n-cà.
VN-come
'It's the day after tomorrow that (s)he is coming.'
[Bn]

Pervasiveness of focus constructions

Topicalization of focalized terms

- (16) *npé yú fâŋ páŋ-ǎ,*
when rainy_season too find-ANTICAUS
ākéŋ-ǎm mán wó-nā-lùk.
fish-DIST 3SG.EMPH 2PL.SBJ-UNACC-catch
'When the rainy season comes, you fish [lit. 'that fish,
it's what you catch.'],' [Bn]

Outline for Section 4

1. Introduction
 - 1.1 Metadata
 - 1.2 Phonological basics
2. Focus in Atlantic languages: an overview
 - 2.1 References
 - 2.2 Term focus
 - 2.3 Verb focus
3. Focus in Baga Pukur
 - 3.1 Subject focus
 - 3.2 Object focus
 - 3.3 Oblique focus
 - 3.4 Verb focus
 - 3.5 Pervasiveness
4. Summary

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Summary

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Term focalization strategies:

- **Only movement to clause-initial position:** rare
- **Cleft constructions:** rarely systematic
- **Focus markers:** widespread
- **Special verb inflection:** widespread, non-exclusive
 - ✓ Specific to focus constructions
 - ✓ Shared by relative clause constructions
 - ✓ Limited to subject focalization
 - ✓ Same special inflection for all types of term focus
 - ✓ Bipartite distinction subject vs. object / oblique focus
 - ✓ Tripartite distinction subject vs. object vs. oblique focus

Summary

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Term focalization strategies:

- ~~Only~~ movement to clause-initial position: rare
- ~~Cleft constructions: rarely systematic~~
- ~~Focus markers: widespread~~
- **Special verb inflection:** widespread, non-exclusive
 - ✓ ~~Specific to focus constructions~~
 - ✓ **shared by relative clause constructions**
 - ✓ ~~Limited to subject focalization~~
 - ✓ ~~Same special inflection for all types of term focus~~
 - ✓ **Bipartite distinction subject vs. object / oblique focus**
 - ✓ ~~Tripartite distinction subject vs. object vs. oblique focus~~

Summary

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Verb focalization strategies:

- Term focus construction applied to a form cognate with the predicate verb
- Special verb inflection

Summary

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Verb focalization strategies:

- ~~Term focus construction applied to a form cognate with the predicate verb~~
- **Special verb inflection**
 - ✓ that involves adding an uninflected form cognate with the inflected verb, but *not* focalizing it

Summary

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Verb focalization strategies:

- ~~Term focus construction applied to a form cognate with the predicate verb~~
- **Special verb inflection**
 - ✓ that involves adding an uninflected form cognate with the inflected verb, but *not* focalizing it
- **focalization of subject / object transferred on verb**

Summary

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic languages: an overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Exact pragmatic values of Atlantic focus constructions AND topicalized focalization are still to be determined. **Is it really focus?**

Glossary

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic languages: an overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

1pl 1st person plural

1sg 1st person singular

2pl 2nd person plural

2sg 2nd person singular

3pl 3rd person plural

3sg 3rd person singular

anticaus anticausative

dist distal

emph emphatic

pronoun

ep epenthetic segment

foc focus

in illocative

inf infinitive

obj object

pf perfect

pl plural

poss possessive

pst past

sbj subject

sg singular

suff suffix

tr transitive

unacc unaccomplished

vn verbal noun

Bibliography

TEX, L^AT_EX, and Beamer

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview

References

Term focus

Verb focus

Focus in Baga
Pukur

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

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**Focus in Baga
Pukur**

N. Rochant

Introduction

Metadata

Phonological basics

**Focus in Atlantic
languages: an
overview**

References

Term focus

Verb focus

**Focus in Baga
Pukur**

Subject focus

Object focus

Oblique focus

Verb focus

Pervasiveness

Summary

Glossary

References

Thank you!

