

Focus-aspect polysemy in Kimaragang

Kimaragang (Dusunic; NE Borneo) has an unusually rich inventory of focus particles, all of which occupy the same “rank” in the 2P clitic cluster. Several of these also have aspectual uses, including three which have cognates in other WMP languages. This comparative evidence suggests that the aspectual senses are older; the focus-marking uses are innovations. In this paper I provide a preliminary sketch of the focus meaning associated with each particle, in particular when they mark the focused constituent in a (pseudo)cleft. I suggest that for at least two of these particles, the innovative, focus-marking senses can be seen as lexicalizations of a pragmatic extension in which aspect markers were used as speech act modifiers.

No particle is required in Kimaragang cleft sentences, as illustrated in (1a-b; focused constituents are italicized). However, it is fairly common for the focused constituent in a cleft to host a focus particle. The two most common of these, *no* and *po*, in their aspectual uses, indicate (roughly) completive vs. non-completive (or continuative) aspect respectively (cf. *na* vs. *pa* in Tagalog and other Philippine languages). As a focus marker, *no* induces an EXHAUSTIVE LISTING reading (2a): the referent of the clefted NP is the only one, among the currently relevant alternatives, of whom the proposition is true. The use of *po*, on the other hand, triggers an INCLUSIVE FOCUS reading (2b): the referent of the clefted NP is among those of whom the proposition is true.

- (1) a. *I=koniab* ot pinonutuwan dialo di=paray.
 NOM=yesterday NOM CIRC V:PST:pound 3SG ACC=rice
 ‘It was yesterday that he pounded the rice.’
- b. Okon.ko’ *ikaw* ot loow-on.
 NEG 2SG.NOM NOM OV-call
 ‘It isn’t you that is being called.’
- (2) a. Kanas *no* ot ko-kogop dot=logop ot=niyuw.
 wild pig FOC NOM NVOL.AV-bite ACC=old/dry NOM=coconut
 ‘It is (only) wild pigs that can crunch a dry coconut (with their teeth).’
- b. Ikaw *po* o mamayuk diti tanak.
 2SG.NOM FOC NOM AV:TR:baby.swing this child
 ‘(Now) you be the one to rock/swing the baby.’ (i.e., ‘Now it is your turn to...’)

The contrast between *no* and *po* is seen more clearly when the cleft is negated. Because clefts involve a nominal predicate, they can only be negated using the wide-scope nominal negation marker *okon*. When the focused constituent is marked with *no*, what is denied is specifically the exhaustive reading as seen in (3a). The base proposition (in this case that Jim stole your buffalo) is not negated. With *po*, however, by negating the inclusive reading, the base proposition (‘Jim stole your buffalo’) is also understood to be negated (3b). For this reason, the most common particle in negated clefts is *po*.

- (3) a. Okon.ko’ i=Jim *no* o minanakaw di=karabaw nu.
 NEG NOM=Jim FOC NOM AV:PAST:steal ACC=buffalo 2SG.GEN
 ‘It wasn’t only Jim who stole your buffalo(es).’ [Jim did steal, but he wasn’t alone]
- b. Okon.ko’ i=Jim *po* o minanakaw di=karabaw nu.
 NEG NOM=Jim FOC NOM AV:PAST:steal ACC=buffalo 2SG.GEN
 ‘It wasn’t Jim who stole your buffalo(es).’ [Jim did not steal, it was someone else]

(Clefts with either particle trigger an existential presupposition. It would be anomalous to continue either of these sentences by saying, “In fact, your buffaloes weren’t even stolen.”) How might these focus readings be derived from more basic aspectual meanings? The FOCUS of a sentence can be defined as the portion that answers the current Question Under Discussion (QUD), whether this question is explicit or implied (Roberts 1996; Riester 2015). The QUD itself (plus context) determines a set of relevant alternatives which are potential answers to the question. When an aspectual particle is embedded in the focused portion of a cleft construction (typically a noun phrase), it does not take scope over any event description which can be evaluated as either complete or incomplete. In this context, a coerced reading arises in which the aspectual particle is interpreted as an illocutionary modifier that evaluates the answer provided for the QUD: completive *no* indicates that a complete answer has been given, while continuative *po* indicates only that the current utterance contributes to the answer.

A third fairly common focus particle is *nogi*, apparently cognate with Malay *lagi*. As a focus marker, *nogi* indicates that the focused alternative is unexpected, mistaken, inappropriate, or noteworthy for some other reason (4a-b). We might refer to this pattern as COUNTER-EXPECTATION focus. A similar usage is reported for *lagi* in Indonesian (Echols & Shadily 1992: 322) and Cebuano (Wolff 1968: 17). Like *lagi* in those languages, *nogi* also has a fairly broad range of other, non-focus uses, but in all three languages the core uses seem to involve surpassing some salient boundary: subsequent action, greater degree, addition, repetition, etc. A tentative hypothesis concerning counterexpectation focus might be that when *nogi* is embedded in the focused portion of a cleft construction, it indicates that the answer contributed lies outside the stereotypical set of relevant alternatives for the current QUD.

(4) a. It=gampa *nogi* ot pinomutus dialo di=tanak do=punti.
 NOM=bush.knife FOC NOM IV:TR:extract 3SG ACC=child GEN=banana
 ‘It was a bush knife that he used to dig out the banana stump that had sprouted.’
 (unexpected, because a bush knife is too small to dig out a banana stump)

b. (Pogidu sino tu’ milom) ikaw *nogi* ot otimpaduk ko’ ilot tasu.
 2SG.NOM FOC NOM NVOL.OV.hurl or that.NOM dog
 ‘(Get out of there or else) you will be the one that gets speared instead of the dog.’

The other particles in this position class also occur in clefts, but not as often. *Nopo*, in its focus uses, seems to mark EXCLUSIVE focus. Like the English focus-sensitive adverbial *only* (Coppock & Beaver 2014), the focus particle *nopo* seems to have both a “complement exclusion” reading (‘nothing other than’; 5a), and a “rank-order” reading (‘merely’; ‘no more than’; 5b). The clitic =*i*’ is primarily used to mark emphatic predicate focus (as seen in 5a), especially VERUM or polarity focus; but it does occasionally occur within the focused element of a cleft, in which case it seems to mark CONTRASTIVE focus.

(5) a. Kobobos=*i*’ bala’ay ong tampasuk *nopo* ot akanon monikid suwab bo.
 boring=EMPH PRCL if cassava EXCL NOM eat.OV every morning PRCL
 ‘It gets really boring/tiresome if you eat nothing but cassava every morning.’

b. Gibang *nopo* ot pongoduntung ku dialo aaba no.
 left EXCL NOM IV.punch 1SG.GEN 3SG fall COMPL
 ‘I only hit him with my left hand and he collapsed.’ (or: ‘Even if I only... he would...’)