

2. Cleft constructions

+ Definition: a cleft construction (CC) is a complex sentence structure consisting of a matrix clause headed by a copula and a relative or relative-like clause whose relativized argument is co-indexed with the predicative argument of the copula. Taken together, the matrix and the relative express a logically simple proposition, which can also be expressed in the form of a single clause without a change in truth conditions (Lambrecht 2001: 467).

+ The English proposition [I LIKE CHAMPAGNE] is expressed in four different ways in example (3)

- (3a) a canonical clause and (3b-3d) are clefted constructions

- all the sentences communicate the same propositional content but have different pragmatic context

- (3)
- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| a. I like CHAMPAGNE. | canonical clause |
| b. It is CHAMPAGNE that I like. | It cleft |
| c. What I like is CHAMPAGNE. | WH cleft |
| d. CHAMPAGNE is what I like. | Reverse WH cleft (Lambrecht 2001: 467) |

+ **Basic questions**

- Gamo has three “clefted” constructions

- What are the formal properties of these constructions?
- What are their functions?

3. Cleft constructions in Gamo

+ A prototypical clefted construction in Gamo looks like example (4)

- (4)
- | | | | |
|--------------|--------------------|---------|-------------|
| C'enča-ppe | y-iida-i | taa | iša |
| Chencha-from | come-PFV.REL-M.NOM | 1S.POSS | brother.ABS |
- The one who came from Chencha is MY BROTHER.

+ characteristics of the constructions

- the constructions have two parts

- a subordinate clause composed of a nominalized headless relative clause
- a matrix clause (an identificational clause) optionally followed by the focus marker *-kko*

3.1. Parts of cleft constructions

3.1.1. Subordinate clause

+ Cleft constructions formally look like relative clauses in the language.

- the only difference between the two constructions is the presence of the nominative marker (-i) in cleft constructions
- compare example (5) and (6)


(5) {Who did you see on the street?}
 tambo uy-iza adde-z-a be?-adis
 tobacco.ABS drink-IPFV.REL man-M.DEF-M.ACC see-IPFV.1S.DECL
 I saw the man who is smoking tobacco.

(6) {Who is smoking, the girl or the man?}
 tambo uy-iza-i adde-z-a.
 tobacco.ABS drink-IPFV.REL-M.NOM man-M.DEF-M.ACC
 The one who is smoking tobacco is THE MAN.

+ The nominative case marker (-i) agrees in gender with the noun in the matrix clause. If the noun is masculine, -i is attached to the relative verb (as in 6 above). If it is feminine, -ra is attached to the relative verb (see example 7 and 8)

- The construction is schematized as:

[[(NP) REL] - CASE^{head}]^{NP} [NP.ABS (-kko)]



(7) ee seate wots-ida-r-a ize
 yes watch.ABS put-PFV.REL-F.REL.NOML-M.ACC 3FS.ABS
 Yes, it is HER who put the watch down. (The one who put the watch down is HER)

(8) k'ase d-iza-r-a issi wogolo-a s'ala.
 in.turn exist-IPFV.REL-F.REL.NOML-M.ACC INDF boat-ABS only
 And again, there is ONLY ONE BOAT. (And, what is there is ONLY ONE BOAT.)

3.1.2. Matrix clause

- + Matrix clause is composed of an identificational clause (zero copula).
- it appears in its predication form (absolute, oblique, or accusative) and it can optionally be marked by the focus marker (-kko).

(9) {What is this?}
 kutto-(kko).
 chicken-FOC
 It is a chicken.

- (10) {Did you sell the SHEEP?}
 tani baiz-ida-i kutto-(kko).
 1S.NOM sell-PFV.REL-M.NOM chicken-FOC
 What I sold is a CHICKEN.

+ *-kko* is a focus marker, not a copula; the copula is expressed as zero in Gamo

3.2. Constructions identified

+ the two parts can be rearranged to create the following three constructions

- i) [Relative clause]-i [matrix clause] (-kko) > Pseudo-cleft constructions
- ii) [matrix clause]-kko [Relative clause]-i > Cleft constructions
- iii) [XP] [matrix clause]-kko [Relative clause]-i > Complex construction

Note: The [XP] in (iii) is any constituent that is not part of the fronted matrix clause. The XP in such clauses often acts as a dislocated topic.

+ *-kko* is optional in pseudo-cleft constructions (example 11), whereas it is obligatory in clefts (example 12)

- (11) {Who hit you}
 tana šoc'c-ida-i na?a-(kko)
 1S.ACC hit-PFV.REL-M.NOM boy-FOC
 The one who hit me is THE BOY

- (12) {Who hit you?
 na?a-kko tana šoc'cidai
 boy-FOC 1S.ACC hit-PFV.REL-M.NOM
 It IS THE BOY who hit me.

+ The third construction is a mixture of a cleft and a dislocation construction

- The construction in (13) implies that the woman only hit John.

- (13) {The lady hit Kevin and John. NO, ..}
 mac'c'asi-a yohannise-kko šoc'-ida-i
 woman-F.NOM PN-FOC hit-PFV.REL-M.NOM
 The woman (TOPIC), it is JOHN that she hit. (Not anyone else.)

- in (17) the informant was shown a set of pictures that portray different people performing different activities. Then he was asked the question given below
- the question is an information question; the context was marked as contrastive (selection)

(17) {What is the man pulling, a table or a chair?}

adde-i gooč-iza-i t'arap'eza
 man-M.NOM pull-IPFV.REL-M.NOM table.ABS
 The man is pulling A TABLE. {What the man is pulling is A TABLE.}

+ Pseudo-clefts can also be used to put focus on clauses, see example (18) and (19)

(18) {The mice are worried about the cat...}

hanna iita gawarai-a nuna oikk-iza-i, iza
 this.F.ACC be.bad cat-F.NOM 1P.ACC catch-IPFV.REL-M.NOM 3FS.NOM
 sall-ada yi-šin siyett-enna giša-s-a
 slink-PFV.SS.ANT.3FS come-SIM.DS hear-IPFV.NEG.3MS be-for-PRED
 The reason why this evil cat catches us IS BECAUSE WE DON'T HEAR WHEN IT IS COMES SLINKING.

(19) [hessa giš ta ha?i intena g-iza-i]^{BG} haita

here REAS 1S now you.? say-IPFV.REL-M.NOM these.M.OBL
 asa-t-a agg-ite bočč-oppo-ite
 man-M.P-M.ACC leave-2P.IMP touch-NEG.IMP-2.IMP

What I say to you now is “Leave these people alone! Do not touch them!”

3.3.1.2. Pseudo-cleft with the focus marker (-kko)

+ The order between the matrix and the dependent clause is the same with the construction in (3.3.1.1.)

- but the focus marker (-kko) is attached to the matrix (identification) clause
- It has more an identification reading, emphasis on the identification
- the construction can be schematized

[DEPENDENT CLAUSE] [MATRIX CLAUSE (-kko)]
 [BACKGROUND] [FOCUS]

- it is used for all contrastive term focus types

(20) {From what do we get rain?}

ira nuu demm-iza-i haattsa-ppe-kko
 rain.ABS 1P.NOM find-IPFV.REL-M.NOM water-from-FOC
 We get rain from WATER. (Lit. What we get rain from is water.)

(21) {You have seen him. And...}
 haʔi nena-ra haas-iza-i iza-kko!
 now 2S.ACC-with talk-IPFV.REL-M.NOM 3MS.ACC-FOC
 Now, the one who is talking to you is HIM.

+ this construction has the reading “you do not know; but this is the case”
 - They are used to mark contrastive term focus in the sense of correction

- Example (22) is taken from a text about a stolen watch
- There were different assumptions as to who stole the watch
- By using this sentence, the speaker asserts that the man stole the watch
- He is contrasted with other referents in the context.

(22) {I believe he took the watch.}
 seatei-o ekk-ida-i iza-kko
 watch-F.ACC take-PFV.REL-M.NOM 3MS.ACC-FOC
 Now, it IS HIM who took the watch.

(23) {What is that around the dog’s neck?}
 kana k’ood’e bolla d-iza-i sansalate-kko.
 dog.OBL neck.OBL on exist-IPFV.REL-M.NOM chain-FOC
 What is around the dog’s neck is A CHAIN (What else could it be?).

- + This construction can also be used to markthetic utterances.
- when used forthetic utterances, the scope of *-kko* ranges over the entire clause, as in (24)
- context is very important for its interpretation

(24) {John 6: 63: The preceding context is unclear.}
 asa-s deʔo imm-iza-i s’oossa ayana-kko!
 person-for life.VN give-IPFV.REL-M.NOM God.OBL spirit-FOC
 It is THE SPIRIT OF GOD that gives life to people.

3.3.2. Cleft construction

- + Cleft is the reverse of Pseudo-cleft constructions.
- The matrix clause precedes the dependent clause
- The focus marker (*-kko*) must be attached to the constituent in the matrix clause
- It is schematized as:

[MATRX CLAUSE(-kko)] [DEP. CLAUSE]
 [FOCUS] [BACKGROUND]

- “clefts” compared “pseudo-clefts” are rare and more marked
- it is used to mark term-focus, verb phrase focus and SoA focus
- a set of pictures with different people performing different activities were shown to the informant
- corrective subject focus

(25) {I do not think the boy is swimming?}
 naʔa-kko yaaʔe bolla d-iza-i
 child-FOC swim.VN on exist-IPFV.REL-NOM
 It IS THE BOY who is swimming.

+ contrastive subject focus

(26) {I think David died, not Samuel}
 Samela-kko haik’k’-ida-i
 PN-FOC die-PFV.REL-M.NOM
 It IS (indeed) SAMUEL who has died.

+ This is used for counter-assumption (corrective) term focus marking.

- in (27) the verb in focus is in its infinitive form
- it conveys assertive focus on the lexical meaning of the verb
- there was a group of young people who were having lunch on the street. And there was another person who wanted to join them and he spoke to one of them. The others asked the one who was talking to the newcomer what he wanted, to which he replied (26)

(27) {What did he want?}
 [V-INF] [SUBJ V-REL]^{DEPC}
 m-ana-kko izi koy-ida-i
 eat-IRR-FOC 3MS.NOM want-REL.PFV-M.NOM
 He wanted TO EAT. (It is EATING that he wanted.)

+ It can be used to mark adverbial focus

- in (28) the converb in focus (marked by same subject anterior perfect form) is a manner adverb. It expresses how they escaped the attack.
- There was a fight in a soccer stadium and the police men were beating the fans. The father of one of the fans asked his son how they escaped the fight, to which he gave (27) as an answer.

(28) {How did you escape the fight?}
 wos's'-idi-kko nu att-ida-i
 run-SS.ANT.PFV.1P-FOC 1P escape-PFV.REL-M.NOM
 It is by RUNNING that we escaped (the fight).

- + the construction can also be used to mark TV (Truth Value) focus
- there was a picture displaying a man carrying a table and the informant was asked if the table was heavy or not. He gave (29) as an answer.

(29) {A: Do you think the table is heavy?}
 iza dees's'-in-kko wotts-idi sugo
 3MS.ABS be.heavy-DS.SIM-FOC put-PFV.SS.ANT.3MS push.VN
 doomm-ida-i
 begin-PFV.REL-M.NOM
 (Yes, it is heavy.) It IS (precisely) because it is heavy that he put (it) down and started pushing (it).

Note:

- TV is a focus domain of predicate-centered focus (PCF)
- it is a question of affirming or rejecting a proposition,
- in TV the whole proposition is confirmed or rejected not part of it.

3.3.3. Cleft plus dislocation

- + This is the third construction in Gamo
- + Marksthetic where the scope ranges over the entire utterance
- Not enough examples to tell what it marks

(30) taa iša iza-kko wod'd'-ida-i
 1S.POSS brother.ABS 3MS.ACC-FOC kill-PFV.REL-M.NOM
 My brother, it is HIM who killed (him). (Taylor 1994:97)

Summary

- + In Gamo, compared to pseudo-clefts, clefts are rare and also highly marked.
- the main difference between the two constructions is the word order between the nominalized relative clause and matrix clause
- + compared to English clefts
- First, in English, clefts are unmarked and pseudo-clefts are marked. In Gamo, the reverse is true.
- Second, Gamo has no pivot in cleft constructions

- Third, in Gamo, converbs can be clefted, which is interesting
- + the function of pseudo-cleft and cleft constructions is “to single out one particular element of the sentence and very often, by directing attention to it and bring it, as it were, into focus, to mark a contrast” (Jespersen, quoted in Lambrecht 2001: 466)
- The pseudo-cleft and clefts they do more than what is presented in the above quote.
- + there is a form and function correlation in terms of scope and communicative point
 - > scope: pseudo-cleft is used for term focus and clause focus
 - cleft: is used for term focus, verb phrase focus and PCF (SoA and TV)
 - > communicative point:
 - pseudo-cleft is used for information focus and (non-corrective, selectional) contrast
 - cleft mainly used for counter-assumption corrective focus (contrast)
- Subjects are more marked than other term focus constituents.
- Correction is more marked information focus.

Abbreviations

1	first person	MC	matrix clause
2	second person	NEG	negative
3	third person	NOM	nominative
ABS	absolutive	OBJ	object
ACC	accusative	P	plural
ADD	additive	PASS	passive
ANT	anterior	PERF	perfect
CONV	converb	PN	proper name
COP	copula	POP	postposition
DECL	declarative	PRED	predicate
DEF	definite	REL	relative clause
DEPC	dependent clause	SIM	simultaneous
DS	different subject	SS	same subject
F	feminine	SUBJ	subject
IRR	irrealis	VN	verbal noun
IPFV	imperfective		
LOC	locative		
M	masculine		

References

- Comrie, Bernard. 1998. Rethinking the typology of relative clauses. *Language Design* 1: 59-86.
- Dik, Simon C. 1997. *The Theory of Functional Grammar, Part 1: The Structure of the Clause*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Fiedler, Ines, Katharina Hartmann, Brigitte Reineke, Anne Schwarz & Malte Zimmermann. 2010. Subject focus in West African languages. In Malte Zimmermann & Caroline Féry (eds.), *Information structure: Theoretical, typological, and experimental perspectives*, 234-257. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Güldemann, Tom. 2003. Present progressive vis-à-vis predication focus in Bantu. *Studies in Language* 27:323-60.
- Güldemann, Tom. 2009. *Predicate-centered focus types: a sample-based typological study in African languages*. Project proposal application to the German Research Foundation (unpublished).
- Güldemann, Tom. 2010. (Preposed) Verb Doubling and Predicate Centred focus. Berlin: Humboldt University.
- Hayward, Richard J. 1994. "A Preliminary Analysis of the Behaviour of Pitch in Gamo". In: *Proceedings of the Eleventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*. Ed. by Bahru Zewde, Richard Pankhurst, and Taddese Beyene. Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University, pp. 241–261.
- Hayward, Richard J. & Chabo, Eshetu. 2014. *Gamo-English-Amharic Dictionary. With an Introductory Grammar of Gamo*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Hirut Wolde Mariam. 2004. 'Gamo: A dialect variant or a group with its own dialect?'. In: Yochi Tsuge (ed.), *Cushitic Omotic studies*, Kanazawa, Japan: Kanazawa University: 67-78.
- Hompó, Éva. 1990. 'Grammatical Relations in Gamo: A Pilot Sketch.' In: R.J. Hayward (ed.), *Omotic Language Studies*. London: SOAS: 356-4054.
- Jordan, Linda. 2009. *A study of Shara and related Ometo speech varieties*. Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics, Master's Thesis.
- König, Christa. 2008. The marked-nominative languages of Africa. In: Bernd Heine and Derek Nurse (eds.), *A Linguistic Geography of Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 251-271.
- Lambrecht, Knud. 2001. A framework for the analysis of cleft constructions. *Linguistics* 39(3).463-516.
- Lewis, M. Paul, Gary F. Simons & Charles D. Fennig (eds.). 2016. *Ethnologue: Languages of the world, eighteenth edition*. Dallas, Texas: SIL International. <http://www.ethnologue.com>.
- Taylor, Nicholas. 1994. *Gamo syntax*. London: University of London, Doctoral Dissertation.

