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“Predicate-centered focus (PCF) marking in Gamo”

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1 Introduction

1.1 Classification of Gamo

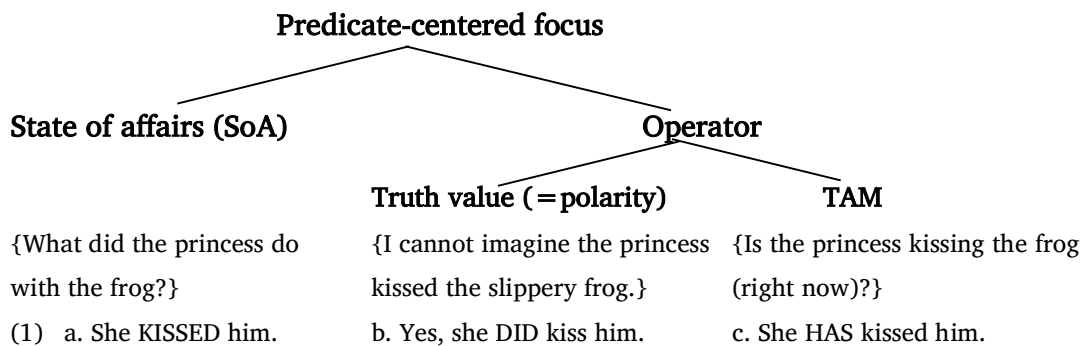
- Spoken in South-western Ethiopia
- Ethnologue no.- ISO 639-3 (Lewis 2014)
- Afro-Asiatic > Omotic > Ometo > Northern Ometo > Gamo
(Fleming: 1976 and Bender: 1976, 2000, 2003)
- more than one million speakers

1.2 Theoretical preliminaries

- Functional approach by Dik (1997: 326)

Focus “that information which is relatively the most important or salient in the given communicative setting and considered by S [speaker] to be most essential for A [addressee] to integrate into his pragmatic information” (Dik 1997: 326).

- Term focus (subject, object, adverbial) vs. predicate-centered focus (state-of-affairs, polarity, tense/aspect/mood)
- predicate-centered focus has scope over the predicate of an utterance or part of it



Basic subclassification of predicate-centered focus types (Güldemann 2009)

1.3 Grammatical features of Gamo

- Fusional language
- portmanteau morphemes are the norm
- Nouns inflect for case, number and gender
- The case markers mark case and gender

Case	Masculine	Feminine
Nominative	-i	-a
Accusative	-a	-o
Oblique	-a	-i

Table 1: primary case markers in Gamo

- Subjects trigger agreement but not objects
- Verb agreement patterns
- The outer agreement encodes all persons/number explicitly
- Inner agreement: very limited (an unintuitive) coding; all plural + 3MS is *-i* and everything else *-a*
- Pattern 1: Stem + inner.AGR + PFV + outer.AGR + DECL

1S	stem- <i>a-i</i>	1P	stem- <i>i-o</i>
2S	stem- <i>a-a</i>	2P/Pol	stem- <i>i-et</i>
3MS	stem- <i>i-e</i>	3P/Pol	stem- <i>i-a</i>
3FS	stem- <i>a-u</i>	(Hayward & Chabo 2014: 212)	

Table 2: perfective agreement pattern

- For the sake of presentation, this form is given here as in (2)

(2) be?-ides
 see.PFV.3MS.DECL
 He saw/has seen.

- In pattern 2, the agreement marker is roughly (but not exactly) a phonological fusion of inner agreement + outer agreement
- Pattern 2: Stem + AGR + DECL

1S	stem- <i>ai-</i>	1P	stem- <i>oo-</i>
2S	stem- <i>aa-ss-a</i>	2P/Pol	stem- <i>eet-</i>
3MS	stem- <i>ee-</i>	3P/Pol	stem- <i>ette-</i>
3FS	stem- <i>au-</i>		

Table 3: imperfective agreement pattern (Hayward & Chabo 2014: 212)

- For the sake of presentation, this form is given here as in (3)

(3) be?-ees
 see-IPFV.3MS.DECL
 He sees.

- Basic word order SOV
- Transitive clause

(4) C'abo be aay-o dos-ees
 PN LOG mother-F.ACC like-IPFV.3MS.DECL
 Chabo loves his mother.

- Intransitive clause

(5) ira-i bukk-iis.
 rain-M.NOM beat.down-PFV.3MS.DECL
 (The) rain has fallen. (Henok, f.n.)

- Gamo is a pronoun dropping language

(6) aay-a aa??in-a demm-abeekku.
 mother-F.NOM tomato-M.ACC find-IPFV.NEG.3FS
 She didn't find it. The mother didn't find a tomato. TV

(7) {Did the mother get tomato?}
 demm-abeekku.
 find -IPFV.NEG.3FS
 She DID NOT find.

- The language morphologically identifies three aspects: perfective, imperfective and irrealis
- in the main clause, perfective is marked by *-d*, irrealis by *-ana*, and imperfective is not marked

(8) miizi šamm-ides
 cow.ABS buy-PFV.3MS.DECL
 He bought a cow.

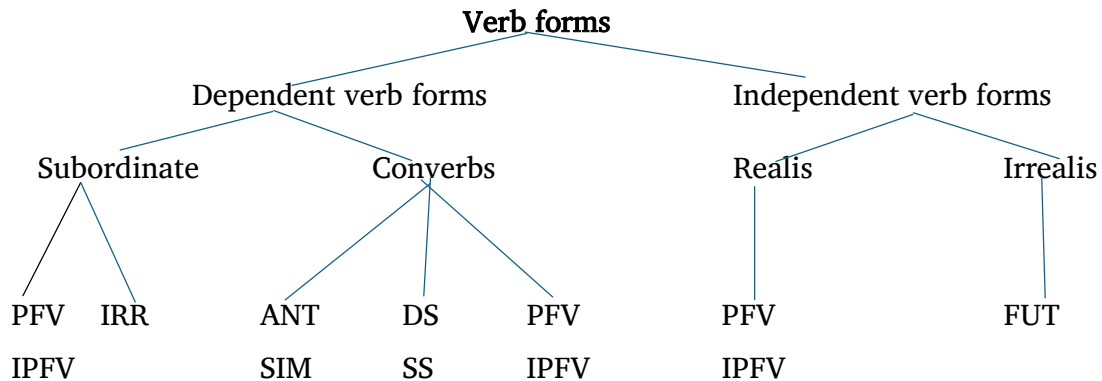
(9) miizi šamm-ees
 cow.ABS buy-IPFV.3MS.DECL
 He is buying a cow.

(10) miizi šamm-ana
 cow.ABS buy-IRR
 He will buy a cow.

- in subordinate clauses, perfective is marked by *-d*, irrealis by *-ana*, and imperfective by *-iza*

(11) giya b-iida asa-t-i y-aana
 market.ABS go-PFV.REL person-P-M.NOM come-IRR.3P
 Those people who went to the market came back.

(12) mitts-a aipe-o mas'-iza adde-i
 tree-M.OBL eye-F.ACC pick-IPFV.REL man-M.NOM
 yangara-ra-ppe duge wod'd'-iis
 ladder-with-from downward descend-PFV.3MS.DECL
 The man who was picking the fruits (lit. 'eye of tree') climbed down the ladder.



1.4 Independent (finite) verbs

- Finite verbs in Gamo inflect for gender, person, number, aspect and mood.
- The language identifies three sentence mood types: declarative, interrogative and imperative
- Each of the sentence mood types has its own different agreement paradigm for affirmative and negative polarity
- Each polarity type has a different agreement pattern for perfective and imperfective aspects

- certain categories are represented by two competing paradigms. The choice of which paradigm is conditioned either syntactically or pragmatically, or both.

2 Predicate-centered focus marking (PCF) in Gamo

2.1 Unmarked constructions

- All types of predicate-centered focus can be expressed by the canonical clause without morphological or syntactic marking
- The constructions listed below are used to encode unmarked PCF construction

“State-of-affairs, i.e. verb focus (SoA focus)

(13) {What is he doing to the tree?}

izi mitts-a-z-a k’ans’-ees
 3MS.NOM tree-M.OBL-M.DEF-M.ACC cut-IPFV.3MS.DECL

He is CUTTING the tree. (Henok, f.n)

Truth value focus

(14) {Is the man jumping?}

ee gupp-ees
 yes jump-IPFV.3MS.DECL

Yes, he JUMPS. (Henok, f.n)

Corrective TAM focus

(15) Bro b-ees
 PRT go-3MS-DECL

{Did Taye go to the market?} No, he WILL go.

2.2 Marked constructions

2.2.1 Irrealis (future) verb

- Irrealis (future) have two contending paradigms forms
- These are verb forms that express unfulfilled actions including future actions

2.2.1.1. Form

	Irrealis A	Irrealis B	
	Invariant	inflected for subject	
1S	beʔ-ana	beʔ-andis	I will see.
2S	beʔ-ana	beʔ-andassa	You will see.
3MS	beʔ-ana	beʔ-andes	He will see.
3FS	beʔ-ana	beʔ-andus	She will see.
1P	beʔ-ana	beʔ-andos	We will see.
2P	beʔ-ana	beʔ-andeta	You will see.
3P	beʔ-ana	beʔ-andettes	They will see.

Table 4: The two irrealis verb paradigms

Irrealis 1

-ana

- The most common form: does not show formal variation for number or gender
- It is identical with the irrealis subordinate form
- Plain future

Irrealis 2

-andes

- Inflects for person and number

(16) izi wonto tunga b-aana¹
 3MS.NOM tomorrow addis.ababa go-IRR
 Tomorrow, he will go to Addis Ababa. (Henok, f.n)

(17) izi wonto tunga b-aandes
 3MS.NOM tomorrow addis.ababa go-IRR
 Tomorrow, he will go to Addis Ababa. (Henok, f.n)

2.2.1.2 Function

Irrealis 1

- The *-ana* form encodes the unmarked PCF focus

¹ The vowel length is a result of a phonological process (*b-ana > b-aana)

TAM focus

- (18) {Did you eat lunch?}
bro m-aana
PRT eat-IRR.
(I have not eaten yet, but yes...) I WILL eat. (Henok, f.n)

TAM focus (neutral)

- (19) {Context}
ista k'oppa-i asa-ppe gidi-kko d'ay-ana
3P.POSS idea-M.NOM man-from be-COND disappear-IRR
If their idea is from man, (it) will disappear. (Henok, f.n)

Polarity focus (counter assumption?)

- (20) ai koy-ada waass-ai? nee agg-eenna
what want-SS.ANT.PFV.2S shout-IPFV.2S.INTR 2S.SUBJ stop-IPFV.NEG.2S
is's's-iko šoc'-ana!
refuse-COND hit-IRR
Why are you barking? If you don't stop, I will HIT (you). (Henok, f.n)

- The above examples are assertive focus forms
- Irrealis 2 cannot be used in these contexts; it is grammatical but the pragmatics of the sentence is going to be off
- In the above utterances, except for giving information, there is no strong commitment to the propositional content of the utterance

Irrealis 2

- Emphatic future
- The speaker is sure that the event will take place and gives assurance about that
- The reading is between assurance and PCF. You will surely see the miracle of God
- A means of expressing certainty in the truth value (TV) of the proposition to be true or become to be true.

TV focus

- (21) ne amman-iza gid-ikko S'oossa bončo be?-andasa
2S believe-IPFV.REL be-COND god.OBL bless.VNO see-IRR.DECL
If you believe, you SHALL see the miracle of God.

(22) guye-ppe k'asse ne er-andasa
 after-from again 2S.NOM know-IRR.2S.DECL
 {What I am doing now, you may not understand. But after a while} you WILL
 know (for sure).

- The following example is taken from a story about a cat and rats. The cat eats the rats all the time. One day, they had a meeting about how to avoid the cat. The rats said they could not hear the cat because he was so quiet. One of the rats said “Let us tie a bell on its neck, so we can hear it coming”.

(23) giir-iza miišš-i giir-išin
 kling-IPFV.REL thing-M.NOM kling-IPFV.DS.SIM
 iza y-iza-iss-a siy-andos.
 3MS.GEN come-IPFV.REL-M.NOML-M.ACC hear-IRR.1P.DECL
 When the bell makes a noise, we WILL HEAR his (the cat's) coming.

(24) hessa-ppe wos's'-idi-kka att-andos
 here-from run-PFV.SS.ANT.1P-ADD escape-IRR.1P.DECL
 After that we SHALL run away and escape.

- (25) is taken from a story about a frog that was travelling through the world. She was excited and amazed by its nature. Then she asked the lion, ‘Are you an elephant?’, to which the lion replied “I am not. Continue traveling, you will see so many wonders”.

(25) hamuttsa gujj-a! bro daro med'etettsa s'eell-andasa
 walk.VN add-2S.IMP PRT many creation see-IRR.2S
 Continue (your) walking! You WILL SURELY see many more creations. (Henok, f.n)

2.2.2 The morphological marker *-kko*

- It attested in all Ometo languages either as an equative copula or a focus marker
- a polyfunctional morpheme
- it serves as a focus marker, conditional marker and auxiliary (Hompó 1990: 390, Hirut 1999: 123, and Hayward & Chabo 2014)
- it is used to mark PCF focus

TAM focus

(26) {Did she eat or is she going to?}
 ha?i bro manna-kko
 now PRT eat.IRR-FOC
 She IS GOING to eat now (though she hasn't eaten yet). (Henok, f.n)

- polarity focus marker
- example (27) is taken from the Bible
- in the story the high priest is talking to the apostles regarding preaching in the name of Jesus. They had been told before not to preach in His name, but they kept on preaching. Here the high priest is stressing that they had been told not to use this name or preach in his name.
- the particle is attached to the finite verb after the sentence type marker (here, DECL -s in -idos)

Operator/Polarity focus

(27) haa suntsa-n inte tamars-onta mala inte-s
 this.M name-in 2P.SUBJ teach-DEP.NEG COMP 2P.OBJ-for
 loʔitsts-i yoot-idos-kko-šin
 make.good.CAUS-IPFV.SS.ANT.1P tell-PFV.1P.DECL-FOC-PST
 {And they brought the apostles before the high priest. He told them:} “We DID tell you not to teach in this name...” (Henok, f.n)

- example (28) is taken from another story. In the story, there is a woman that wants to prepare tomato sauce. She sends her eldest son to the market to bring tomatoes, but he comes back empty-handed. Then the informant was asked if the mother is going to send the boy again to the market, to which he gave example (28) as an answer.
- -kko is attached to the finite verb after the negative agreement marker and marks

Polarity focus

(28) akkay naʔa-i oge er-enna giša-s
 no child-M.NOM road.ABS know-IPFV.NEG.3MS be-for
 naʔʔanttso yedd-ukku-kko
 for.second.time release-IPFV.NEG.3FS-FOC
 Since the boy doesn't know the way, she WILL NOT send him again. (Henok, f.n)

- in example (29), -kko attached to the affirmative interjection “yes” in the clause
- it has scope over the entire utterance
- such constructions mark confirmation polarity focus
- example (29) is elicited using a picture which displays a woman hitting a man. After the was shown to the informant, the question was asked ‘Is the woman hitting the man?’

Polarity focus

- (29) {Is the woman hitting the man?}
ee-kko, mac'c'asi-a add-a šoc'-aus
yes-FOC woman-F.NOM man-M.ACC hit-IPFV.3MS.DECL
YES, the woman is hitting the man. (Henok, f.n)

2.2.3 “Cleft-like” constructions

- these are ‘cleft-like’ constructions
- a verbal noun followed by a focus marker is placed in sentence initial position followed by a copy of the same verb in the background clause
- syntactically, the fronted verbal noun functions as a typical noun
- the copy of the preposed verb in the background clause is in a relative verb form,
- such constructions are used to mark contrastive SoA focus

SoA focus

- (30) {Is the man pushing the table?}
suggo-kko izi sug-iza-i
pull.VN-FOC 3MS.NOM pull-IPFV.REL-M.DEF
(No,) he is PULLING.
(Lit. It is PULLING that he pulls.) (Henok, f.n)

- “cleft-like” constructions are also used for TV focus marking

Polarity focus

- (31) {Do you think the table is heavy? yes it will be heavy.}
iza dees's'-in-kko wotts-idi sugo
3MS.ACC be.heavy-DS.ANT-FOC put-PFV.SS.ANT.3MS push.VN
doomm-ida-i.
begin-PFV.REL-M.NOM
It IS because it is heavy that he wanted to pull (the table)

2.2.4 Verb doubling constructions

- this is a non-clefting verb doubling construction in which a less assertive (verbal noun) copy of a finite verb is preposed to sentence initial position and is followed by a fully inflected finite verb form of the same verb
- the preposed verbal noun serves as a topic of the utterance in the sense of “X-ing, he X-ed”

- these constructions are used to mark corrective SoA focus (32)/(33) and truth value focus (34)
- both examples are elicited by using the focus translation task

Corrective SoA focus

(32) {Did she hit him?}
 goodo good-adus
 chase.VN chase-PFV.3FS.DECL (Henok, f.n)
 (No,) she CHASED him away.

Corrective SoA focus

(33) Adde-i na?-a sugettsa sug-ees.
 man-M.NOM boy-M.ACC pull.VN pull-IPFV.3MS.DECL
 {Is the man pushing the boy?} ‘The man is PULLING the man.’
 Lit. ‘The man PULLS pulling the man.’

Truth value focus

(34) {They didn’t steal it. Did they?}
 kaiso kais-ibeetenna
 steal.VN steal-PFV.3P.NEG
 They DID NOT steal. (Henok, f.n)

2.2.5 Intensifying constructions

- These constructions are used for intensifying the magnitude of the action of the verb
- The word *adda* “truly” comes in the preverbal position
- The construction is used to mark polarity focus

SoA focus

(35) iza hup’p’e-ppe kopiya-i ekket-ida giša-s
 3FS.NOM head-from hat-M.NOM take.PASS-PFV.REL be-for
 adda mičis-ides
 truly miserable.CAUS-PFV.3MS.DECL
 His hat being blown off his head, he left miserable

Polarity focus

(36) {The boy is limping.}
 adda k’ohett-iis.
 truly hurt.PASS-IPFV.3MS.DECL
 He is HURT (He is truly hurt).

3 Summary

- Observation why Irrealis 1 and Irrealis 2 have different form and pragmatic reading
Compared to the IRR1, IRR2 is reinforced with an auxiliary that has fused with the verb over time and has evolved to become a single form (univerbated). The form can be schematized as IRR 1 + AUX. That is why there are two agreement slots, the internal and outer agreement. Remnants of that pattern are still visible in limited contexts of operator focus.
- *adda* “truly” has scope over the entire proposition. It is simply an adverb which expresses the high degree of the action expressed by the finite verb
- Strategies
- In Gamo, it can often happen that PCF has no formal mark at all, neither via word order nor via some special verb form – only context
- form-function correlation
 - formally unmarked (canonical clause) > assertive focus
 - formally marked constructions > contrastive predicate-centered focus
- tendency: plain assertion is unmarked, contrast is marked
- IRR 1 is used for assertive and contrastive focus types
- IRR 2 is used for more emphatic contexts
- There are also two perfective paradigms, but I have not discussed the difference between them because: a) it is not fully clear to me
 - b) the second perfective paradigm (PFV 2) is quite complex formally
- The morpheme *-kko* seems a polyfunctional morpheme; its function depends on the construction it is part of
- initial focus position marks SoA and TV focus
- non-final in-situ doubling is used for SoA focus
- “cleft-like” construction marks contrastive; it is used both for state-of-affairs focus and term focus
- The rest are exclusively used for predicate-centered focus

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Abbreviations

ACC	accusative	NOML	nominalization
ADD	additive	P	plural
ANT	anterior	PASS	passive
COM	comitative	PFV	perfective
COMP	complementizer	POL	polite
COND	conditional	PRT	particle

CONV	converb	REL	relative
COP	copula	S	singular
DECL	declarative	SS	same subject
DEF	definite	TV	truth value
DS	different subject		
F	feminine		
FOC	focus		
IPFV	imperfective		
M	masculine		
NEG	negative		
NOM	nominative		