Verb Semantics, Focus Type and Split O in Tsou

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Starosta (2001) first observed that it is very rare to find a verb in Western Austronesian languages that has forms for all the focus slots. Viewing 'focus construction' as an argument-enhancing applicative strategy, S. Huang (To appear) builds on Starosta's observation, and demonstrates that non-agent focus constructions (NAF) in Formosan languages exhibit a split O phenomenon: Nominative NPs in NAF clauses are expressed in three grammatically distinct ways: some must be expressed as the nominative NPs of the patient focus construction (PF), others as the nominative NPS of the locative focus construction (LF), still others as the nominative NPs of the referential focus construction (RF). Moreover, all of the thematic roles of the nominative NPS in these NAF clauses derive ultimately from spatial notions.

In this paper, we offer further evidence to show that Tsou is a (nearly) perfect split O language. Analyses of the thematic roles of the NPs in our data suggest that lexical verb semantics largely define acceptable focus forms (Table 1). Table 2 identifies the thematic roles associated with the nominative NPs of the various verb types. The nominative NP of a PF clause encodes a patient Object; that of a LF clause an abstract location or goal; and that of a BF clause a transported theme, a beneficiary or, occasionally, an instrument. Nominative NPs in LF clauses encode physical locations only when these occur as embedded clauses. Nominative NPs in BF clauses are used to encode the semantic role of instrument only sporadically, the usual strategy being to use the verb *boemi* 'use.AF' to introduce an instrument in a separate clause.

The low transitive clauses (types (5)(6)(7)(8)(9)(10)(11)) show three patterns of grammatical organization. In types (5)(6)(9), only PF forms are acceptable and their nominative NPs refer to stimulus, utterance content or spatial ground. In types (7) and (8), the O argument is a goal, and thus is realized as the nominative NP in an LF clause. In types (10) and (11), the O argument refers to an object of sociative action or a stimulus/cause and therefore is realized as a nominative noun in BF clauses.

It is of considerable theoretical interest to observe that in types (5)(8)(9), the BF verbs are used to refer to location/goal and thus have encroached upon the traditional domain of LF clauses. Note that it is also in BF verbs where native speakers frequently disagree over their correct usage or the specific forms they take, suggesting that the syntax and

semantics of BF clauses are undergoing linguistic changes. Moreover, Tsou also has its usual quota of lexicalized verb forms, with some focus forms having specific lexical meaning (e.g. *spʉi* in other data (b) and others showing defective distribution (*ieni* and *tingisi* in (c, d)). All these suggest a strong frequency effect functioning in the development of Tsou verbs.

APPENDIX

Table I Verb types and acceptable focus forms in Tsou

Verb type	AF	PF	LF	BF
(1) Activity (i)	ˇ	ˇ	(ˇ)	ˇ
(2) Activity (ii)	ˇ	--	ˇ	ˇ
(3) Placement	ˇ	ˇ	ˇ	ˇ
(4) Ditransitive	ˇ	--	ˇ	ˇ
(5) Emotion	ˇ	ˇ	--	(ˇ)
(6) Utterance	ˇ	ˇ	--	(ˇ)
(7) Perception and cognition	ˇ	--	ˇ	--
(8) Motion (i)	ˇ	--	ˇ	(ˇ)
(9) Motion (ii)	ˇ	ˇ	(ˇ)	(ˇ)
(10) Collective action	ˇ	--	--	ˇ
(11) Emotion (ii)	ˇ	--	--	ˇ

Table 2 Verb types and the thematic roles of nominative NPs

	Nom NP in PF clause	Nom NP in LF clause	Nom NP in BF clause	Examples PF, LF, PF/BF, LF/BF, PF/LF/BF
(1)Activity (i)	Patient	(Location)	Benefactee/ Instrument / Transported Theme	*aнt'иca / aнtucneni* 'raise; take care of',' *opcoca / opcocneni* 'kill'
(2)Activity (ii)	--	Goal	Beneficiary	*p'ecihi / p'ecihneni* 'step on', *tvici/ tvicineni* 'weed'
(3)Placement	Patient	Source/ Goal	Beneficiary/ Instruments	*sia / sii / siineni* 'put', *teapha/ teaphi/ teaphineni* 'fill in'
(4)Ditransitive	--	Recipient (Indirect Object)	Transported Theme (Direct object)	*fii / fiineni* 'give', *pa'cohivi/ pa'cohivneni* 'teach'
(5)Emotion (i)	Stimulus	--	(Stimulus)	*coveoza / coveozneni* 'feel pity for', *ta'kuv'a / ta'kuv'eni* 'worry about'
(6)Utterance	Utterance	--	(Benefactee)	*eainca* 'say', *pasunaenva / psunaenveni* 'sing'
(7)Perception and cognition	--	Percept	--	*aiti* 'see', *e'hongi* 'smell'
(8)Motion (i)	--	Source/ Goal / Ground	(Source/Goal)	*sиc'иhi* 'arrive at', *capi* 'climb',
(9)Motion (ii)	Ground	(Ground)	(Ground)	*sucaefiza / sucaefizi/ sucaefzneni* 'pass by', *mooveia* 'return'
(10)Collective action	--	--	Object of Sociative Action	*eupteuluneni* 'meet with', *noteuyununeni* 'be a company with'
(11)Emotion (ii)	--	--	Stimulus	*kaebneni* 'happy for', *congoneni* 'pain for'

OTHER DATA

a. *taluɐ* PF 'to recall; to remember'
(cf. *tmalu* AF 'hear'; *talui* LF 'hear')
b. *spui* LF 'to hold sb. in contempt for poor hunting skills'
(cf. *smupeu* AF 'to count')
c. *ieni* BF 'based on' (no relevant AF, PF or LF verb form)
d. *tingisi* LF 'cry over st.' (no relevant AF,PF or BF form)

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