
Anti-pied-piping and focus marking mis-matches in Kasem (Gur/Mabia)

Daniel Aremu

Bielefeld University

danielsurd@gmail.com

Intro: Branan & Erlewine's (2023) proposal for Anti-pied-piping (APP) cases (i.e., cases where the marking of a semantic/logical focus is realized on a sub-constituent, cf. ex. 1) involves a leftmost requirement of particle/stress placement, which in turn skips elements that typologically avoid stress (e.g., indefinites and pronouns (FM = Focus Marking) (cf. Fanselow & Lenertová 2011).

- (1) a. [XP [YP]_{FM} X]_F b. [_{FocP} [XP]_{FMi} [_{Foc'} Foc [_{TP} [_{VP} ... _{ti}]_F]]]

Claims: This study examines languages that have not been carefully looked at, i.e., languages with morphosyntactic focus marking, where pitch accent is not used for focus. Using Kasem (Mabia/Gur, spoken in Ghana) as a case study, I show that (a) Kasem involves APP in VP focus (cf. ex. 2) and TP focus, and (b) unlike the prosodic focus marking languages (e.g., German and English), Kasem does not skip stress-avoiding elements for APP (cf. ex. 3).

- (2) a. Adam [_{VP} go [_{DP} chworo mo]]_F diim.
 Adam kill fowl FOC yesterday
b. [_{DP} Chworo mo]_i Adam [go _{ti}]_F diim.
 fowl FOC Adam kill yesterday

‘Adam SLAUGHTERED A FOWL yesterday.’

- (3) a. Adam [_{VP} go [_{DP} wojjo mo]]_F
 Adam kill something FOC
b. [_{DP} Wojjo mo]_i Adam [go _{ti}]_F
 something FOC Adam kill

‘Adam SLAUGHTERED SOMETHING.’

Similar to B&E, I show that in APP, the morphological focus marker *mo* is adjoined to the leftmost element of the logical focus. However, unlike B&E, I argue that the particle placement is conditioned by a requirement, which is based on the weak PIC. The choice of the version of PIC is conditioned by the timing issues associated with phasal spell-out in relation to (late) adjunction. APP (both by particle placement or by phrasal movement) in Kasem further opens the issue of whether grammatical focus marking is strictly a syntactic phenomenon or an interface one (cf. Rizzi 1997, a.o.).

References: • Branan, K. & M. Y. Erlewine (2023). Anti-pied-piping. *Language* 99 (3), 603–653. • Fanselow, G. & D. Lenertová (2011). Left peripheral focus: Mismatches between syntax and information structure. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 29, 169–209.