

Second Occurrence Focus in Wolof: Patterns and Consequences

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Introduction

In this talk:

- Second Occurrence Focus (SOF) in Wolof
- Why: how does SOF work in morphosyntactically focus marking languages?
- Bonus: inform the general theory of focus semantics, arguing that the potential to introduce alternatives ('be focal') is not contingent on marking *per se*.

SOF in English

Second Occurrence Focus – the basics

- (1) (Mary *only* SKIMMED the book.)
No, **JOHN** *only* SKIMMED the book.
- Two foci.
 - Focus-sensitive operators like *only* always associate with focus in English (see e.g. Beaver and Clark 2002)
 - The primary focus gets the nuclear pitch accent.
 - The SOF doesn't get an accent. But:

The SOF gets **phrasal stress**.

(see e.g. Rooth 1996; Beaver, Clark, et al. 2007)

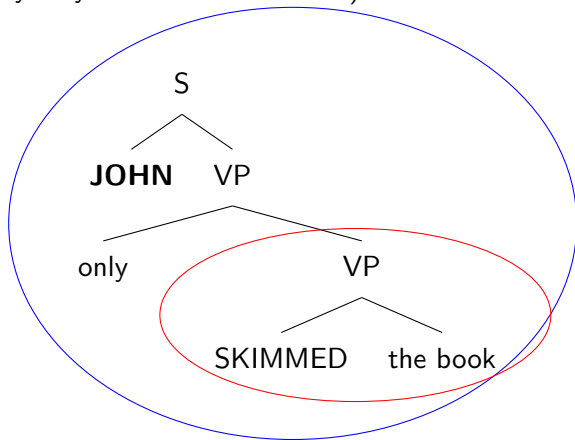
Domain Theory of Primacy + Focus Prominence

- The domain of the SOF is within the domain of the primary focus
- The focus has to be the prosodically most prominent element in its domain
- There can only be one nuclear pitch accent (NPA) per sentence in English
- That's how you get stress on primary focus *and* on SOF, but NPA only on primary focus
- SOF is marked “a bit” but still not like primary foci.

Lets look at it in a tree

(2) (Mary only SKIMMED the book)

No,



What about Second Occurrence in Wolof?

Some very quick info on Wolof:

- Morphosyntactically focus marking language
- Morpheme marks primary focus like the NPA marks the primary focus in English
- What do you do for SOF? Three options:
 1. You don't mark the SOF at all.
 2. You mark the two foci the same way.
 3. You mark SOF only a little bit (like English).

SOF in Wolof

Wolof: Introduction

- Atlantic, Niger-Congo
- Approx. 5 million speakers (Lewis 2016).
- Location: Senegal and the Gambia
- Basic word order: SVO (Diouf 2009)
- Focus is marked with 3 different Person-Aspect-Mood particles (Ngom 2003)
- The shape of the PAM particle indicates the focus type.

Focus marking in Wolof

- (3) a. **Maa-y** lekk jën
 SFOC.1SG-IPFV eat fish
 ‘I eat fish.’ Subject focus
- b. **Dama-y** lekk jën
 VFOC.1SG-IPFV eat fish
 ‘I **EAT** fish.’ Verb or VP focus
- c. Jën **laa-y** lekk
 fish CFOC.1SG-IPFV eat
 ‘I eat **FISH**.’ Complement focus

(McLaughlin 2004, p. 247)

Overview of focus markers

	Subject focus	Complement focus	Verb/VP focus
1SG	maa	laa	dama
2SG	yaa	nga	danga
3SG	moo	la	dafa
1PL	noo	lanu	danu
2PL	yeena	ngeen	dangeen
3PL	ñoó	lañu	dañu

Table: Focus markers in perfective aspect and indicative mood. (adapted from: Robert 2010, p. 238)

Same clause: SOF is not focus marked

If two foci are in the same clause, only one of them is focus marked – option [1] is possible!

- (4) a. Bul tiit, max yi garab rekk
 IMP.SG.NEG be.afraid termite DET plant only
lañu-y lekk.
 CFOC.3PL-IPFV eat
 'Don't worry, termites only eat **PLANTS**.'
- b. Déédéét, melantaan yi ñoo-y lekk garab
 no ant DET SFOC.3PL-IPFV eat plant
 rekk.
 only
 'No, **ANTS** only eat PLANTS.'

Multiple clauses: SOF is marked

If the SOF is in a different clause than the primary focus, they are both focus marked – option [2] is possible!

- (5) a. Jean nee na moom rekk **la** bëgg.
 Jean say 3SG.PFV 3SG.EMPH only 3SG.CFOC love
 'John said that he only loves **HER**.'
- b. Déédéét, Baboucar **moo** wax ne moom
 no B. 3SG.SFOC say COMP 3SG.EMPH
 rekk **la** bëgg.
 only 3SG.CFOC love.
 'No, **BABOUCAR** said that he only loves HER.'

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 'No, **BABOUCAR** said that he only loves HER.'

The domain of *rekk* 'only' is the embedded clause, in which clausal focus marking is possible within the background of the primary focus *Baboucar*.

But wait... does *rekk* 'only' need to associate with focus?

Do we know whether *rekk* 'only' associates with focus in Wolof?

We have two options:

1. There is no formal association of *rekk* 'only' with focus (and hence no focus on *garab* 'plant' in (4-b)).
2. *rekk* 'only' associates with focus, despite not being marked.

Can we distinguish between these options?

Weak pronouns

(6) Jean moom rekk la bëgg

J. 3SG.EMPH only CFOC.3SG love

'John only loves **HER**.'

(7) Intended: '**BABOUCAR** only loves HER.'

a. *Déédéét Baboucar moo moom rekk bëgg.

no B 3SG.SFOC 3SG.EMPH only love

b. #Déédéét, Baboucar moo ko bëgg rekk.

no B. 3SG.SFOC 3SG.O love only

'No, only **BABOUCAR** loves her.'

This *doesn't* mean: '**BABOUCAR** only loves HER.'

- Weak pronouns are inherently unfocused (in Germanic too, see von Stechow 1994; Rooth 1996).
- *rekk* 'only' cannot associate with a weak pronoun (*ko*) in Wolof.

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 'No, only **BABOUCAR** loves her.'
 This *doesn't* mean: '**BABOUCAR** only loves HER.'

If weak pronouns can't be focused, and *rekk* 'only' cannot associate with them, then *rekk* 'only' is sensitive to (non-) focus marking on its associate.

Interim summary

Focus is marked per clause in Wolof.

- If primary and SOF in the same clause: SOF is not focus marked (option [1]).
- Primary focus and SOF are in different clauses: SOF is focus marked (option [2]).
- 'Mark SOF just a little bit' doesn't seem to be possible in a morphosyntactically focus marking language (you couldn't use just some part of the morpheme) – option [3] is ruled out.

SOF in Wolof

Proposal: SOFs *do* introduce non-trivial alternatives, but they don't have to be focus marked. They just cannot occur on inherently unfocused material.

You can be focal (introduce alternatives) without being focus marked.

Let's get (a little) formal

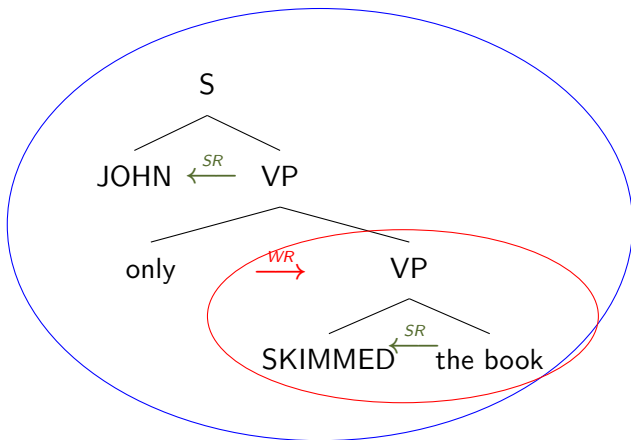
Differences between English and Wolof

- English marks SOF 'a little bit'
- Wolof either marks SOF exactly exactly like a primary focus, or not at all.
- How can we account for these different ways of expressing SOF with one formal theory?

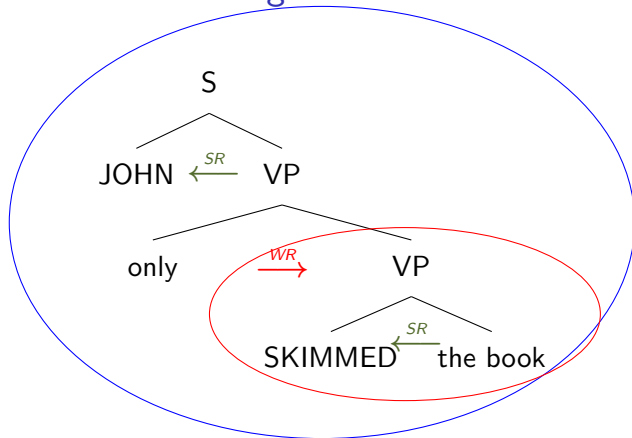
Introducing Unalternatives Restrictions

- (8) Focality: A node is focal iff you have to change it to get to the focus target.
- (9) A \xrightarrow{WR} B:
A can only be focal if B is.
- (10) A \xleftarrow{SR} B:
A is focal, B isn't.
- (11) A B:
Anything goes
- (12) a. skimmed \xrightarrow{WR} the BOOK b. SKIMMED \xleftarrow{SR} the book

English SOF



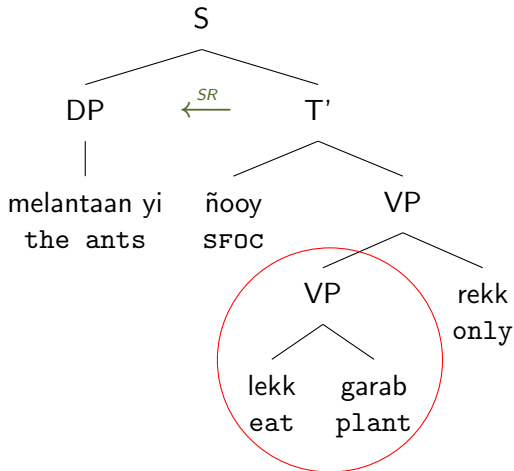
English SOF



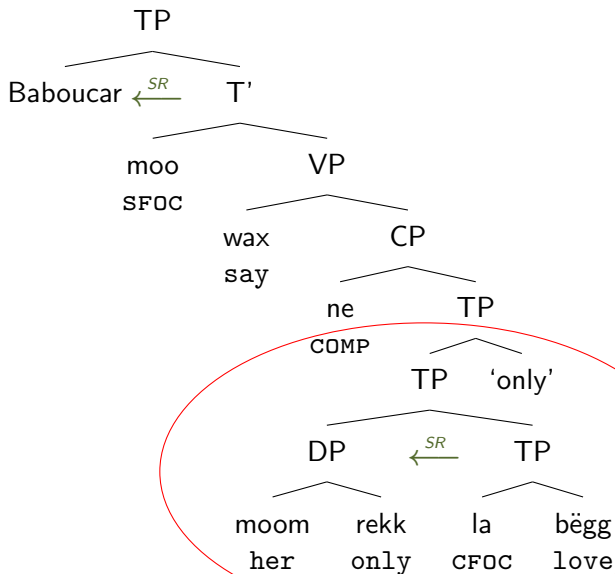
- Once the focus is retrieved (by *only*), you can reset the focus alternatives to the literal meaning. Then the lower focus is 'invisible' for restrictions higher up. (Rooth 1992; Büring 2013/2015; Büring 2015)

Wolof SOF

(13) (Termites only eat PLANTS)



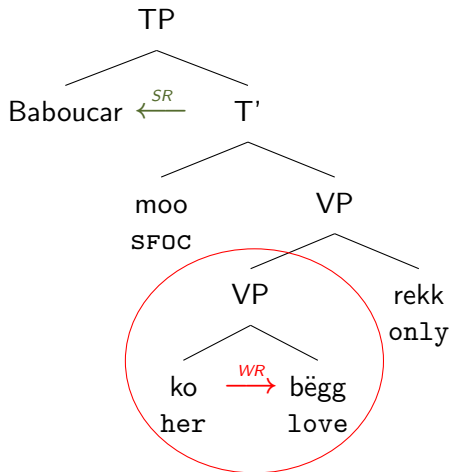
(14) (John said that he only loves HER.)



Weak pronouns

(15) (John only loves HER.)

#



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- Wolof, like English, may have an associated focus within the background of a primary focus (i.e. second occurrence focus).
 - Second occurrence focus is only restricted by restrictions below its operator.
 - Difference: Wolof marks focus once per clause, not, as English does, at each branching node.
 - So for English, SOF is restricted as strongly as the primary focus by metrical strength.
 - For Wolof, no restrictions apply beneath the one imposed by the clausal focus marking. Therefore, anything below can be focussed in a SOF smaller than a clause.
 - The only exception are elements that are non-focal by themselves, i.e. (at least) Weak Pronouns.

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Thank you!

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Here's a picture of a G.O.A.T.



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