Focus Resumption in Somali*

Andrew Hedding
Linguistics at Santa Cruz
March 10th, 2018

1 Introduction


(1) **RESUMPTIVE GENERALIZATION**
In many languages, topics antecede an associated pronoun/clitic and foci do not.

− Regarded as cross-linguistic robust by Neeleman and Van de Koot (2016)
− Apparent in Italian (2), English (3), and many other languages.\(^1\)\(^2\)

(2) a. \([Il tuo libro]_T, *(lo) ho comprato\)
   DEF 2SG.POSS book *(it) have.1SG bought
   ‘[Your book] \(_T\), I bought it.’

b. \([Il tuo libro]_F *(lo) ho comprato, (non il suo)\)
   DEF 2SG.POSS book *(it) have.1SG bought NEG DEF 3SG.POSS
   ‘[Your book] \(_F\) I bought, (not his).’

   [Rizzi (1997):289-290]

(3) a. *As for [Ursula]_T, *(she) became a famous writer.*
b. *It was [Ursula]_F who *(she) became a famous writer.*

---

\(^*\)Many thanks to Maziar Toosarvandani, Ivy Sichel, and Ryan Bennett for many hours of illuminating discussion. Their probing questions, constructive criticism, and valuable suggestions substantially improved the quality of this project. Thanks as well to Judith Aissen, Nico Baier, Donka Farkas, Boris Harizanov, Lisa Hofmann, Nick Kalivoda, Jim McCloskey, Erik Zyman, an audience at the Smircle Reading Group at Stanford University, and the participants of the 290 Research Seminar for many interesting conversations and helpful recommendations at various points in the development of this project which improved *(it) immensely. All remaining errors are my own.

\(^1\)Here and throughout, I use boldface type to indicate a pronoun and its associated DP. Abbreviations used in the glosses are as follow: \(ACC\)=Accusative, \(C=\)Complementizer, \(COP=\)Copula, \(DAT=\)Dative, \(DEF=\)Definite, \(EXC=\)Exclusive, \(F=\)Feminine, \(FOC=\)Focus, \(FUT=\)Future, \(GEN=\)Genitive, \(INC=\)Inclusive, \(INDEF=\)Indefinite, \(M=\)Masculine \(NEG=\)Negation, \(NOM=\)Nominative, \(PA=\)Partial Agreement, \(PL=\)Plural, \(POL:NEG=\)Negative Polarity, \(POL:POS=\)Positive Polarity, \(PREP=\)Preposition, \(PROG=\)Progressive, \(PST=\)Past, \(SCL=\)Subject Clitic, \(SG=\)Singular. Glosses have been adapted for consistency and clarity.

\(^2\)Examples are given in Somali orthography. This deviates from IPA in the following ways: \(y=[j]\), \(dh=[d]\), \(j=[f]\) or \([\emptyset]\), \(sh=[f]\), \(kh=[x]\), \(x=[h]\), \(c=[y]\).`=[?]`.
A similar restriction applies in Somali main clauses:

(4) a. \([\text{Cali}]_T \ [\text{lacagt-ii}]_F \ b=*(uu) \ \text{nink-ii} \ \text{siinaya}
\)
\hspace{1cm} Cali \ money-DEF FOC=3SG.M man-DEF give.FUT.3SG.M
\hspace{1cm} \text{‘[Cali]_F will give the man [the money]_F.’}

b. \([\text{Cali}]_F \ baa(=*uu) \ \text{nin-kii} \ \text{lacag-tii} \ \text{siinaya}
\)
\hspace{1cm} Cali \ FOC \ man-DEF money-DEF give.FUT.3SG.M(PA)
\hspace{1cm} \text{‘[Cali]_F will give the man the money.’}

[Saeed (1984):9]

Many previous analyses of this contrast rely on semantic differences between topic and focus:

(i)  — Focus is quantificational and must strongly bind a syntactic variable.
      — Clitics do not qualify as syntactic variables (Rizzi 1997 and Cinque 1990)

(ii) — Topics are specific.
      — Pronouns are required to induce the requisite specificity effects. (Arregi 2003, Callegari 2017)

* Both appeal to the semantic properties of pronouns, but (i) relies on a semantic restriction;
(ii) on a semantic requirement. They are independent.

In Somali, focus fronting out of an embedded subject triggers resumption in the embedded clause:

(5) \([\text{Cali}]_F \ b=aan \ \text{sheegay} \ [CP \ \text{in}=uu \ \text{buug qoray} \ ]
\)
\hspace{1cm} Cali \ FOC=1SG say.PST \ C=3SG.M book write.PST
\hspace{1cm} \text{‘I said that [Cali]_F wrote a book.’}

[Svolacchia et al. (1995):89]

— This fact casts doubt on (i) as a plausible analysis for (4).
  ○ No reason to expect that a semantic restriction on focus would be clause-bounded.

I propose an alternative hypothesis:

**Syntactic Hypothesis:** Topics and foci enter into different syntactic dependencies, based on their relative position within the clause. In some languages, this causes them to differ with respect to resumption.

— Based on another cross-linguistic generalization (Rizzi 1997, Neeleman and Van de Koot 2016):

(6) **STRUCTURAL GENERALIZATION**
Topics appear in a structurally higher position than foci.
I argue that:

− Because topics are higher than focus, movement to that position violates syntactic constraints.

    * All CPs are islands for extraction in Somali.

− Therefore: **there is no fundamental incompatibility between focus and resumption** (Following Skopeteas et al 2017, Drubig and Schaffer 2001; pace Neeleman and Van de Koot 2016)

Roadmap:

− In §2: I will outline the basic facts of Somali syntax.

− In §3: I will discuss the distribution of subject clitics and present an analysis of the difference between topic and focus.

− In §4: I will introduce the facts of object clitics and sketch a potential analysis to account for their distribution.

− In §5: I will conclude.

2 Background

Focus particles—*baa* and *ayaa*—follow an XP bearing narrow focus and are obligatory when introducing new information (Saeed 1999).

− If the subject and object are neither a topic nor a focus, they appear after the focus particle, before the verb:

(7) \[
\text{[Shaley]}_F \quad \text{baa} \quad \text{Cali} \quad \text{Xamar} \quad \text{tegay} \\
\text{yesterday} \quad \text{FOC} \text{ Cali } \text{ Xamar } \text{ go.PST.3SG.M} \\
\text{‘Cali went to Xamar [yesterday]$_F$’} \\
\text{[Antinucci (1980):14]}
\]

− Focused constituents immediately precede the focus particle:\(^3\)

(8) \[
\text{Q: } [Y]_F \text{-àa } yimi? \\
\text{who-FOC come.PST.3SG.M} \\
\text{‘[Who]$_F$ came?’}
\]

\[
\text{A: } [\text{Cali}]_F \text{ bàà } \text{yimí} \\
\text{Cali } \text{ FOC come.PST.3SG.M}
\]

\(^3\)As shown in (8), wh-words are also focused in Somali. Wh-words display the same patterns as other focused constituents.
‘[Cali]$_F$ came.’

[Saeed (1999):192]

– Topics appear in the far left-periphery.

(9) $[\text{Fáarax}]_T$ $[bùuggáas]_F$ $b=$àn $sìiyey$

Fáarax book-that FOC=1SG give.PST


[Saeed (1993):9]

– Subject clitics attach to the focus particle

(10) Subject Clitic Pronouns

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$1\text{SG}$</td>
<td>=aan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$2\text{SG}$</td>
<td>=aad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3\text{SG.M}$</td>
<td>=uu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3\text{SG.F}$</td>
<td>=ay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1\text{PL.INC}$</td>
<td>=aaunu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1\text{PL.EXC}$</td>
<td>=aynu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$2\text{PL}$</td>
<td>=aydin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3\text{PL}$</td>
<td>=ay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(11)

A sketch of the Somali clause with focus

(12) (Topic) $[\text{Focus}]$ FOC=SCL subject object V
3 The Proposal

In this section, I make the following claims:

− Somali employs resumption as a last-resort operation if and only if extraction with a gap is impossible.
− Topics are external to the main clause, and thus must be doubled by a clitic.
− Focus cannot bind a resumptive in the matrix clause because a gap is possible.

3.1 Distribution of Clitics in Topic/Focus Clauses

If the subject is topicalized, it must be doubled by a clitic (repeated from 4a):

(13) \[\text{Cali}_T [\text{lacagt-ii}]_F b=*(uu) nink-ii siinayaa\]
Cali money-DEF FOC=3SG.M man-DEF give.FUT.3SG.M
‘[Cali]_T will give the man [the money]_F.’

[Saeed (1984):9]

If the matrix subject is focused, however, it can’t be doubled by a clitic (repeated from 4b):

(14) \([\text{Cali}]_F baa(*b=uu) nin-kii lacag-tii siinaya\]
Cali FOC man-DEF money-DEF give.FUT.3SG.M(PA)
‘[Cali]_F will give the man the money.’

[Saeed (1984):9]

This restriction does not apply to foci that originate in embedded clauses—they must be doubled by a clitic which attaches to the embedding complementizer (repeated from 5):

(15) \([\text{Cali}]_F b=aan sheegay [CP in=uu buug qoray ]\]
Cali FOC=1SG say.PST c=3SG.M book write.PST
‘I said that [Cali]_F wrote a book.’

[Svolacchia et al. (1995):89]

(16) Summary of Subject Clitic Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position of DP</th>
<th>Main Clause</th>
<th>Embedded Clause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Obligatory</td>
<td>Obligatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Ungrammatical</td>
<td>Obligatory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So:

− Foci behave like topics, except when they originate in the highest subject position.
− Somali violates the RESUMPTIVE GENERALIZATION—foci can antecede resumptive pronouns in the language.
3.2 Resumption

I assume that resumptive pronouns:

– Are regular pronouns;
– Are inserted as a last resort when a gap would be ungrammatical (Shlonsky 1992, Sichel 2014).

(17) The tail of a movement chain is realized as a null copy when possible; a pronoun is possible only if a null copy is impossible.

[Adapted from Sichel (2014):678]

Like many languages (McCloskey 2007), resumptive pronouns ameliorate island violations in Somali:

(18) a. [Qoraa-gée]_{F} ay=aad jecésjajay biugga *(uu) qoray?
    writer-which FOC-2SG like.PRES.2SG book-3SG.M write.PST.3SG.M
    ‘[Which author]_{F} do you like the book he wrote?’

    [Lecarme (1999):292]

b. [Gabadh-ee]_{F} ay=ay j walaalahay, akhristeen buuga *(ay) keentay?
girl-which FOC=3PL brothers-my read.PST.3PL book-the 3SG.F bring.PST.3SG.F
    ‘[Which girl]_{F} did my brothers read the book which she brought?’

    [Svolacchia et al. (1995):88]

In fact: all long-distance wh-movement triggers resumption in the embedded clause, obligatorily.4

(19) a. [Nin-kee]_{F} b=aad sheegtay in=uu ku caayey
    man-which FOC=2SG report.PST.2SG C=3SG.M 2SG insult.PST.3SG
    ‘[Which man]_{F} did you say insulted you?’

    [Stoyanova (2008):80]

b. [Max]_{F}=aad doonaysaa in=ay dhacaan
    what.FOC=2SG think.PROG.2SG C=3PL happen.PRES.3PL
    ‘[What]_{F} do you think will happen?’

    [Mereu (1999):236]

I interpret this fact to indicate that embedded clauses are islands for extraction in Somali, as is the case in Russian (Comrie 1973).5

---

4In (19b) the focus particle baa is phonologically coalesced with the wh-word maxay ‘what’. See Saeed (1999) section 3.3.2 for discussion.
5This is suggested as a possible analysis, in slightly different terms, by Svolacchia et al. (1995)
Movement of an embedded subject to a focus position in the main clause triggers a resumptive pronoun.

- I argue this is due to an island constraint preventing a trace from appearing in the embedded position.

### 3.3 Topicalization

Like embedded foci, I argue that topics undergo resumption to avoid violations of syntactic constraints:

- They are moved across a CP boundary to left-dislocated position.
- Consistent with movement analyses of Clitic Left Dislocation (Cinque 1977, Sportiche 1996, Vat 1997)

Evidence for movement:

- Subject in topic position display case-connectivity.\(^6\)

\[(21) \ [\text{Niman-kaas-u}]_F [\text{hilib}]_F b\text{-}ay \ cunayaan\]
  \[
  \text{men-those-NOM meat FOC-3PL eat-PROG} \quad \text{‘Those men are eating [meat]}_F\text{’}
  \]

[Frascarelli (1999):207]

\(^6\)Somali has default accusative case (Lecarme 1999).
Here, I argue that topics in Somali surface outside the main clause (cf. Aissen 1992)

- Supported by the phonological evidence—topics are separated from the clause by a prosodic break, unlike foci (Frascarelli and Puglielli 2009)

I argue that all CPs are islands for extraction in the language.

- This correctly predicts that resumption should be obligatory with topics.

I assume that FOC is the highest instantiation of the CP (Lecarme 1999)

(22) a.  

\begin{center}
\[\text{TOP} \rightarrow \text{DP} \rightarrow \text{CP} \rightarrow \text{FOC}\]
\end{center}

b.  

\begin{center}
\[\text{TOP} \rightarrow \text{CP} \rightarrow \text{DP} \rightarrow \text{FOC}\]
\end{center}

- Unifies topic and focus resumption as one phenomenon in Somali

- Doesn’t preclude the possibility that topics may also be doubled for semantic reasons (in Somali or other languages).

4 Main Clause Objects

The analysis in §3 makes a prediction:

- Resumption should be impossible in object position of main clauses.

- A gap should be possible, therefore preferred.

* This is not supported by the data.

Somali has overt local person object clitics, which must resume a 1st or 2nd person object in focus:

(23) Axmed [\textit{adiga}]_F b=ùu ku arkay
    Axmed 2SG  FOC=3SG 2SG see.PST.3SG
    ‘Axmed saw [you]_F’

[Saeed (1999):167]

7See also Harizanov and Mikkelsen (2018) for a similar proposal to account for left-dislocated VP in Danish.
In many languages, resumptive pronouns obviate WCO effects (McCloskey 2007), indicating that null 3rd person object clitics are present in the language:  

\[(24) \; Y_{i\_aa} \; hooyad\_iis_{i} \; \emptyset_{i} \; jeceshahay? \]

who-FOC mother-his 3SG.M loves

‘Who_{i} does his_{i} mother love?’

[Svolacchia et al. (1995):88]

Like in many languages resumptives are prohibited only in the highest subject position (Highest Subject Restriction).  

- Somali requires resumptives in all positions, except the highest subject position (like Palestinian Arabic, Shlonsky 1992).
  
  * Further support for the claim that there is is no incompatibility between focus and resumption.

- Assuming resumption is a last-resort operation:
  
  * what prohibits a gap in main clause object position?

One potential analysis (following Shlonsky 1992):

- The subject acts as an intervener between the focus particle and the object.

- This creates a Relativized Minimality effect (Rizzi 1990)

\[(25) \]

\[
\text{Puzzle: What feature can trigger movement to the specifier of FOC such that a non-focused subject acts as an intervener?}
\]

Subjects can also be focus fronted in broad focus contexts:

---

8Null 3rd person object clitics is a common feature of Cushitic languages (Frascarelli 2010)

9See e.g., on Irish: McCloskey (1990); on Hebrew and Palestinian Arabic: Shlonsky (1992), a.o.
(26) **Q:** Max-àa dhacáy?
   what-FOC happen.PST
   ‘What happened?’

   **A:** Cali baa dhintay shaley.
   Cali FOC died yesterday
   ‘[Cali died yesterday]$_F$.’

   [Saeed (1999) pg. 241]

   So, movement to the focus position can target subjects, even if they do not bear a [FOC].

   This suggests that the subject may act as an intervener between the focus particle and main clause objects, triggering resumption.

   * I leave further exploration of this question for future research.

5 **Conclusion**

In this talk, I have tried to establish two things:

- DPs must bind resumptive pronouns in Somali when syntactic constraints would make a gap ungrammatical.
  - Movement of an embedded subject to the focus position and movement of any subject to the topic position crosses a CP boundary.
  - Movement of a main clause direct object violates relativized minimality.

- When the matrix subject is focused, no pronoun surfaces because there is no constraint prohibiting movement from that position to the focus position, thus a gap is preferred (HSR).

If this analysis is correct:

- It indicates that the **RESUMPTIVE GENERALIZATION** in (1) may be partially due to syntactic constraints.

- It implies that there is no fundamental incompatibility between focus and resumption.

5 **Conclusion**

References


A Clitic Doubling

A.1 Non-focus Declaratives

In Somali declarative sentences without focus, one of two particles appears, depending on the polarity of the sentence.

(27) a. *Baabuur-kii waa yimi.*
    truck-the POL:POS come.3SG.PST
    ‘The truck came.’

b. *Baabuur-kii ma iman.*
    truck-the POL:NEG come.3SG.PST:NEG
    ‘The truck did not come.’

[Saeed (1984):172]

Clitics which double the subject are optional in non-focus declarative sentences. When they appear, they attach to the polarity particle:

(28) a. *Cali w= (uu) yimid*
    Cali POL:POS-3SG.M come.3SG.PST
    ‘Cali came.’

b. *Cali Maryam w= (uu) arkay*
    Cali Maryam POL:POS-3SG.M see.PST.3SG.M
    ‘Cali saw Maryam.’

[Saeed (1999):186]


Only clitics can intervene between the polarity particle and the verb:

(29) *Waa (*DP) =ay (*DP) i= sugaysaa*
    POL:POS =3SG.F 1SG= wait.PROG.3SG.F
    ‘She is waiting for me.’

[Svolacchia and Puglielli (1999):113]

Non-clitic DPs must move to a higher position in the clause:

(30)
A sketch of the Somali declarative clause

(31) \[(subject) (object) \text{POL}=(\text{SCL}) \text{ V}\]

Focus particles are in complementary distribution with the polarity particles.

(32) *Cali baa waa yimi.
    Cali FOC POL:POS came
    Intended: [Cali]$_F$ came.

[Saeed (1984):162]

- I assume \textit{waa} and \textit{baa} are in different syntactic positions, based on distributional evidence (Following Saeed 1999, Frascarelli and Puglielli 2007; pace Lecarme 1999, Andrzejewski 1975)\textsuperscript{10}.

* Unlike the polarity particles \textit{waa} or \textit{ma}, DPs can intervene between \textit{baa} and the verb. (cf. 7)

(33)

\[
\text{TOPP} \quad \text{FOCP} \quad \text{FOC}' \quad baa \quad \text{TP} \quad \text{DP} \quad \text{T}' \\
\quad \text{T} \quad \text{VP} \quad \langle \text{DP} \rangle \\
\quad \text{V}' \\
\quad \text{VP}
\]

- \textit{waa} appears in a lower position than \textit{baa}.

A.2 Optional Clitics

So far:

- We have analyzed positions in which resumption is required or ungrammatical.
- However, recall from §2 that clitic pronouns are sometimes optional in Somali.

In this section, I argue:

\textsuperscript{10}Nothing in the analysis presented here is dependent on the characterization of \textit{waa} as a polarity particle. It is enough to simply show that it does not appear in the same syntactic position as \textit{baa}. See Hedding (2017) for more detailed argumentation that \textit{waa} patterns with \textit{ma} and thus appears to be a type of polarity particle. I leave for future research the precise formulation of the constraint that prohibits the focus and polarity particles from cooccurring and will assume here that it is due to a selectional requirement of the focus particle (see e.g. Frascarelli 2010a for a possible analysis).
DPs in Spec-TP are optionally doubled by a clitic.

These pronouns are not resumptives, but arise from Clitic Doubling.

R-expression (non-pronominal DP) subjects that are not topics nor foci can be optionally doubled by a clitic (repeated from 28a):

\[(34)\]
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a. } & \text{ \{moos\}_{F} b=\langle uu \rangle \text{ wiilk-ii cunayaa} } \\
& \text{ banana } \text{ FOC(=3SG.M) boy-the eat.PROG.3SG.M} \\
& \text{ 'The boy is eating [a banana]\text{]}' }
\end{align*}
\]

[Svolacchia et al. (1995):68]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{b. } & \text{ Cali } w=\langle \text{\texttt{uu}} \rangle \text{ yimid} } \\
& \text{ Cali POL:POS=(3SG.M) come.3SG.PST} \\
& \text{ 'Cali came.' }
\end{align*}
\]

[Svolacchia and Puglielli (1999):112]

\[(35)\] Position of Optional Clitic Doubling

**Focus clause:** \[\{XP\}_{F} baa \text{ DP V}\]**

**Non-focus clause:** \[\text{DP waa V}\]

Here, I argue that:

– The clitic and associate are merged as a complex DP.
– The associate DP undergoes A-movement to Spec-TP.
– The clitic undergoes movement to the polarity or focus particle to be licensed.

\[(36)\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a. } & \text{ FOC } \text{ moos } \text{ FOC' } \\
& \text{ FOC } \text{ b-\langle uu \rangle } \text{ wiilkii } \text{ TP } \text{ T' } \\
& \text{ PRES } \text{ T } \text{ vP } \text{ DP } \text{ vP } \text{ VP } \text{ yimi } \\
& \text{ D } \text{ DP } \text{ D } \text{ DP } \text{ D } \text{ VP } \text{ \{Cali\}} \\
& \text{ \{wiilkii\} \{moos\} cunayaa }
\end{align*}
\]

If the subject is a pronoun following the focus particle, it must be doubled by a clitic:
(37) \[moos\]_{F} b=*(aan) anigu cunay
banana  FOC=1SG 1SG  eat,PST.1SG
‘I ate [a banana]_{F}

[Svolacchia et al. (1995):68]

– Doubling pronouns is often obligatory cross-linguistically (Anagnostopoulou 2006).

So, a clitic can doubles the highest subject, but:

– Doubling is optional;
– It arises from a distinct syntactic derivation.

Though the phonological form is the same:

– It is not a resumptive pronoun;
– Therefore not subject to the HSR;
– Not subject to the economy restrictions of resumptives.