

On argument focus in Kanuri

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In Kanuri, a Saharan language, which has the basic word order Subject-Object-Verb, so far little attention has been paid to the analysis of pragmatic functions. In this paper I will take a closer look at the various strategies of argument focus realization in Kanuri. The assertion in argument focus constructions has the purpose of establishing a relation between an argument and an open proposition. Kanuri has at its disposal different strategies to realize argument focus. Among these strategies is the use of special verb forms, NP marking in terms of NP status markers, the use of focus sensitive particles and the displacement of the focussed argument. There is some variation as to which type of argument can be focussed by which strategie(s), e.g. special verb forms can only be used with focussed subjects and focussed direct objects. The paper will have a closer look at the interplay of the various strategies of focus realization in Kanuri, and it will also address the issue of classification of focus sensitive particles, i.e. can focus sensitive particles be distinguished from other categories.