THE FOCUS SYSTEMS OF JIJIGA SOMALI

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to make a detailed description on the focus systems of Jijiga Somali; therefore, the focused area of the study was the Jijiga zone in the Somali regional state. To collect the data, five informants were selected from native speakers of the language using purposive sampling method. The data collecting instruments were elicitation, interview, focus group discussion and text recording. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive linguistics methodology. The data were written in three lines based on the principles of linguistics research, i.e. the first line is transcribed in International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), and in the second line glosses were given for each morpheme. Finally, in the third line, literal meanings were given. Then, the data were examined, tested, described and analyzed based on the various structures and the semantics they have.

In the result, four focus words (ajaa, waha, waa, baa) were identified, and these focus words are described as an obligatory syntactic units for the grammaticalness of the sentences. Based on their distributions in the main clauses, the focus words were classified in to verbal focus markers and nominal focus markers. In addition to those focus words, in this language; cleft constructions are used to show the focused constituent in sentences.

Finally it was concluded that Jijiga Somali is unique language in using focus words as an obligatory constituent in declarative main clauses. In other words, in Jijiga Somali focus words are both syntactic and semantic units. However, in various literatures, focus markers are understood as discourse units and they are optional syntactic units.

Keywords: Somali; Focus; Nominal Focus Words; Verbal Focus Words; Cleft Constructions

INTRODUCTION

Somali is one of the East Cushitic languages in the Afro-Asiatic phylum. It is sub grouped in the proto-eastern branch of lowland Cushitic languages. Somali is spoken in the lowland of Eastern Ethiopia (Somali region) and across Somalia, Djibouti, and Kenya. It is believed that Somali is influenced by Hebrew, Amharic and Arabic Languages (Bender, 1976, Skin 2006).

Somali language has five dialectal groups Lamberti (1984). His classification includes; Northern Somali dialects which spoken all over Northern Somalia, the Banadir dialects which spoken along the coast of Southern Somali, the Ashraf dialects which spoken in Mogadishu, the May dialects which are the medium of upper and lower Juba, and the Digil dialects which are scattered all over the May-speaking territory.

On the other hand, Ehret and Nuuh (1984) classified the language into five dialectal groups based on the patterns of cognate words in the vocabulary and the patterns of shared innovations. Their classification includes: Bayso Jiddu dialects, Somali II dialects, Somali III dialects, Somali IV dialects, and Benadir Northern dialects. Ehret and Nuuh didn’t show clearly where the dialects are spoken.
Somali is both the name of the people and of the language. In various literatures and in this study, the word Somali is used to refer both to the language and its speakers. At present, Somali has different official functions in Ethiopia – in the Somali Regional State. It is regional official language, a medium of instructions in primary schools and teachers training institutes; and it also serves as language of the courts and mass media in the Regional State.

The Somali Regional State is one of the Ethiopia’s largest Regional States. The Regional State has nine zones, and the capital of the region is Jijiga which is situated 633km far from Addis Ababa. According to the 2007 Ethiopian Population and Housing Census result, the population of Somali Regional State is 4,445,219. Among these 95.7 percent of the population constitutes the overwhelming majority of Somali ethnic group, and 95.9 percent of the population uses Somali language as mother tongue. According to the Census result, the entire Somali ethnic group and very few highlanders (Oromo, Gurage, Amhara, etc) are followers of Muslim religion.

As it is stated earlier, this study focuses on the description of the focus systems of Somali language. Though the language has various functions in the Somali Regional State, Somali is not well studied as compared to other Ethiopian languages. Many scholars (Saeed, 1993; Bell 1953; and others) have been described the grammar of Somali based on the “mahaatirri” dialect which is spoken outside Ethiopia. However in the language variety which is spoken in Ethiopia, researches are not yet done sufficiently. Preliminary works that found on Somali language which is spoken in Ethiopia are; the phonology of Harar Somali, the verb morphology of Dir Somali of the Ogaden, and the verb morphology of Jijiga Somali which have been done by the BA and MA students of Addis Ababa University. Regarding the focus systems of the language; Saeed, J. (1984); Lacarme J. (1999); and others have been tried to investigate the focus systems of Somali based on the language variety which is spoken in Somalia (outside Ethiopia). However, in the Ethiopia side, the focus systems and other aspects of the language are not yet studied sufficiently. Thus, the researcher wanted to conduct this research on the focus systems of Somali language to identify the focus words that occur in the clauses (sentences) of the language to narrow the gap in the understanding of Somali grammar.

Focus is the increment of information in a sentence which the speaker signals either structurally or contextually to the most important information. The increment of information may be anything from a specific lexical item to the entire sentence. Focus can be signaled by the focus words, word ordering, or by pitch and intonation. According to Taha (1990), focus is one of the clause internal pragmatic functions in any natural language.

Focus can be used to emphasize on new information, to signal a change of attention and to signal some other important meaning such as attitude. As stated in Miller (2006), focus has various purposes especially for speakers: such as; to highlight the information using the constituents, to introduce new information, to reintroduce information that has already been mentioned but dropped, and to shift the listeners attention to another topic of conversation, or to emphasize a piece of information.

The use of different types of focus correlates with different syntactic structures and with the focal accent falling in different places. In languages, constituents are made less salient or more salient, and they use different mechanisms to show the salient part. The importance of this increment is relative to the speaker’s understanding of the addressee’s pragmatic knowledge of the world. The speaker believes that the addressee needs this information in order to correct and reaffirm his present knowledge.

For Halliday (1967) focus is related to pitch and stress. In his analysis, pitch and stress used to signal focused informations. His account is very common in that pitch and stress contains at least one potential component in order to show emphasis or focus in the constituents. Accordingly, one information unit is realized as one tone group, and the numbers of the information unit in a given utterance reflect how the speaker has divided the message into blocks of information. Within each information unit the speaker selects a certain element as points of prominence within the message.
Like Halliday, Chafe (1976) regarded the pitch phenomena as of primary importance and the use of syntactic constructions as secondary. However, unlike Halliday, he has limited focus to contractiveness. For Halliday, contractiveness is only one property of focus in that new information can be cumulative to existing information or in contrast with it.

In addition to the above scholars, Vallduvi (1994), cited in Miller (2006) stated that focus is incorporated as new information handling model. According to him, sentences encode a logico-semantic proposition and an information packaging instructions.

With regard to pitch and tone, the concept of focus invoked in accounts of how a given speaker and listener shift attention from one entity to another in a given context. On the other hand, in linguistic structure, it has to do with the salience of entities, properties, relations, and discourse purposes and intentions.

In attentional structure (speech), the important concepts of focus are focus space and transition rule (Dik, 1980). Focus space is associated with entities that are mentioned explicitly. All the focus mechanisms that are mentioned earlier are relevant for focus spaces. As discourse is built up, speakers pass from one focus space to another. Thus, as a transition rule, time or place phrase is put in the first position of a clause and these phrases connect and contrast with the previous text.

The use of different types of focus correlates with different syntactic structures and with the focal accents falling on different places. In languages, constituents are made less salient or more salient, and they use different mechanisms to show the salient part. Thus, the researcher tried to give a full account on the focus systems of Jijiga Somali for the better understanding of the grammar of the Somali language.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**Design:** the purpose of this study was to give a detailed description of the focus systems of Jijiga Somali. To conduct the study the descriptive linguistics method was chosen; and to serve the purpose of the study elicitation, interview, group discussion, and text recording methods were implemented. According to Vaux B. & Cooper J. (2003) eliciting the actual linguistic data and text recording method are best ways to describe any natural language. Thus, using descriptive linguistic method the actual linguistic data have been described qualitatively.

**Sampling Techniques:** to carry out the study and to collect the data five native speakers of the language were selected using purposive sampling method. The selected informants were bilingual that they can speak both Amharic and Somali languages. The researcher aimed at bilinguals because word lists, phrases and texts to be elicited from native speakers of the language have been prepared in the contact language Amharic. So, to solve communication problems bilinguals were selected very carefully.

**Data gathering instruments:** to collect the data from native speakers of the language; elicitation, interview, text recording, and group discussion were used.

**Interview:** in descriptive linguistics research, the first step is preparing words or sentence paradigms to be elicited from native speakers of the language. Thus, the interview questions for this study were just word lists and sentence paradigms which were prepared in Amharic language. So, structured interview were used in order to get equivalent Somali words and sentences for the previously prepared paradigms. That means the informants were translated the given words, sentences, and phrases in to Somali. However, sometimes, while doing interview, the informants may not clear in some points or interview questions which are asked by the researcher. Therefore, to minimize such confusions, focus group discussions were applied. Finally text recording method was used to crosscheck the elicited data. Because the data which were elicited using interview and focus group discussions may lack clarity or details. So, to support the entire data and to crosscheck the elicited data, text recording method will be used.
Method of Data Analysis: The data gathered through interview, focus group discussion and text recording methods; firstly, it was transcribed using the IPA, and it was translated into English. Finally it was analyzed qualitatively based on the actual linguistic facts.

RESULTS

In this section the collected data are analyzed based on the principles of descriptive linguistics approach. The data obtained through elicitation, interview, focus group discussion and text recording instruments was cross checked and harmonized before the analysis started. The analyzed data was selected from the entire data, and were written in three lines. In the first line transcription was given using the IPA symbols, and in the second and third lines glosses and literal meanings were given respectively. Then, based on the linguistic phenomena that are found in the data, linguistic description (analysis) was given on the focus systems of the language.

Focus Words in Jijiga Somali

Different languages have different types of focus systems, and use different formal or syntactical strategies to differentiate them. Thus, Somali has its own focus systems and focalizing devices; and the systems are described by focus words or cleft constructions.

According to Dik (1989), cited in Taha (1990), in languages, new information may be introduced through the following focalizing devices. These are:

1. Prosodic or intonational prominence which involves extra stress, higher tone or emphatic accent.
2. Special constituent order which includes special positions for focus constituents in the linear order of the clause, and
3. Special focus marking particles which mark off the focus constituent from the rest of the clause.

Also in Somali, new information is conveyed through focus words and special word orderings. Thus, Somali uses /ajaa/, /baa/, /waха/, and /waa/ to show the focused constituents in the constructions. Of these focus words, /ajaa/ and /baa/ are used to show the focused nouns, adjectives, and adverbs; whereas /waха/ and /waa/ are used to show the focused verbs in the main clauses. Consider the following examples.

(1) a, abdi gaadi ajaa - uu soo iibsad –aj
A car Foc -3msg Con buy -pst
‘Abdi bought a CAR’

b, abdi waха – uu iibsad – ay gaadhi
A Foc – 3msg buy -pst car
‘Abdi BOUGHT a car’

As can be seen from the above data, the salient information is highlighted through the focus words /ajaa/ and /waха/. /ajaa/ in (1a) focalizes the noun /gaadi/ ‘car’ which carries the salient information in the given construction, and /waحة/ in (1b) focalizes the verb /iibsad/ ‘buy’. Usually, these kinds of focus markers are observed in wh-word questions and used to fill the information gap. For instance /gaadi/ ‘car’ in the above data fills the information gap to the question “What did Ali buy?” Similarly, the focus word /waحة/ in (b) above introduces new information about “What did Abdi done?” /waحة/ is a focus word for the verb /iibsad/. One new phenomenon to this focus word is that when the focus word /waحة/ is added to the predicate, the word order of the language changes from SOV to SVO. In (1b) above, /gaadi/ is the object of the sentence but it appears in the final position of the constituent
because of the focus word /waha/. /waha/ will not appear in the SOV word order (which is the word order of Jijiga Somali) as in (2) below.

(2) a,* abdi gaadhi waha – uu iibsad-ay
   A car Foc- 3msg buy -pst

   b, *nin –kii kubad waha-uu ściyaar – ay
   man -the ball Foc- Ags play -pst

The sentences in example (2) above are ungrammatical. Because verbs in SOV word order should take the focus word /waa/. The focus word /waha/ is used in SVO word order. Look at the examples below.

(3) a, abdi ściano waa - uu ściab -aj
   A milk Foc -3msg drink- pst
   ‘Abdi DRUNK milk’

   b, wiil –ki d‘ar ściusub waa - uu qab-aa
   boy -the cloth new Foc - 3msg wear -prt
   ‘The boy WEARS new cloth’

In (3) above verbs are focused by the focus word /waa/ that occurs usually in the declarative mood; and the function of /waa/ is to express ideas which the speaker believes, assumes, or knows that the hearer does not share with him or her. For instance, in (3a) above the person who DRUNK a milk is expressed to be Abdi; and in (3b) the person who WORE a new cloth is expressed to be the boy.

This kind of focus system can be considered as assertive focus, since assertive focus gives prominence to a part of an utterance without presuming any background knowledge on the part of the listener (Binyam, 2008).

As can be seen from the above description, the focus word /waa/ asserts the information expressed in (3a & b); and it occurs usually in SOV word order. If it appears in SVO word order the construction will be ungrammatical as in (4) below.

(4) a, *abdi waa - uu ściab - ajściano
   A Foc -3msg drink- pst milk

   b, *wiil – ki waa- uu qab -aadhar ściusub
   boy- the Foc -3msg wear -prt cloth new

In this language, in addition to verbs; nouns and adjectives also convey new information through focus words. Consider the examples below.

(5) a, abdi baa gaadi iibsad - ay
   A Foc car buy - pst
   ‘ABDI bought a car’

   b, abdi ajaa gaadhi iibsad - aj
   A Foc car buy -pst
   ‘ABDI bought a car’

   c, libaah - ii baa ali dil - aj
   lion–the Foc A kill -pst
In the above data the subject of the main clauses are emphasized by focus words. To show the prominence of these nouns, the focus word /baa/ or /ajaa/ were attached to the nouns interchangeably. The speakers of the language use one of the two focus words to introduce the new information to the hearer or addressee. Here, the focus words showed selection. That means, the focus words in (5 a&b) above are used to show the man who bought a car. In other words the focus word shows that it is ABDI who bought a car, not somebody else. Similarly, in (5c&d) the focus words showed that it is THE LION that killed Ali, and it is not another animal. This kind of focus system that shows selection among others is known as counter assertive (Taha, 1990).

In Jijiga Somali, when nouns are modified by adjectives, the focus words are attracted by adjectives as in the data below.

(6) a. nin –kii dheeर baa kubad ʕijaar - aj
   man -the tall Foc ball play -pst
   ‘The TALL man played foot ball’

b. gaadi wajn baa halka staag - aj
car big Foc there stop - Pst
   ‘The BIG car stopped there’

(7) a, *nin –kii ɗeer kubad ajaa - uu ʕijaar - aj
   man -the tall ball Foc - 3ms play - pst

b, *nin - kii baa ɗeer kubad ʕijaar - aj
   man - the Foc tall ball play -pst

The data above showed that when the subject noun or an object noun is modified by adjectives in sentences, the focus markers are added to the adjectives. In other words, if an adjective is part of the sentence, then the noun focus markers are automatically attached to it. However in the absence of adjectives, usually focus words are attached to the nouns in the main clauses. Consider the following examples below.

(8) a, maʕaalin - kii ʕeelaj baa -uu tag - aj
   teacher -the yesterday Foc - 3msg go -pst

The data presented in (7) above are ungrammatical. Because, the noun focus markers are not added to their appropriate places. Their appropriate places were just next to the adjective /ɗeer/ ‘tall’ in the sentences above. So, this phenomenon shows that if adjectives are part of sentences or declarative clauses, noun focus markers should be added to the adjectives.

Similarly, if an adverb occurs in sentences or main clauses, then the noun focus markers may added to it. Consider the following examples.
The teacher went YESTERDAY.

b. nin - kii ḏaqsu ajaa – uu tag - aj
man - the quickly Foc -3msg go -pst

‘The man went QUICKLY’

The above data shows that noun focus markers are attached to the adverbs. However, in a sentence, when both the noun and the verb are modified by adjectives and adverbs respectively, it is the more salient information that carries the focus element as in (9) below.

(9) a, nin – kii ḏeer ṭeelaj baa - uu tag - aj
man -the tall yesterday Foc -3msg go - pst

‘The tall man went YESTERDAY’

b. nin - kii ḏeer baa ṭeelaj tag - aj
man -the tall Foc yesterday go - pst

‘The TALL man went yesterday’

In such cases, when both adjectives and adverbs occur in a single sentence, the focus marker will fall on the one with more salient information. It depends on the speaker’s attitude. That means, it is not grammatically controlled. For instance, in (9a) above, the noun focus marker falls on the adverb; whereas in (9b), it falls on the adjectives depending on the speaker’s attitude.

In the analysis above, the noun focus markers (baa, ajaa) and the verbal focus marker /waa/ are used to show the prominence information in the sentences or in the main clauses. However, in addition to their discourse function, they are very important for the grammaticalness of the structures of the sentences. In Jijiga Somali, declarative clauses are constructed at least with one focus word obligatorily. i.e. there must be a noun focus word or verbal focus word in a declarative sentence; and this fact was observed in the entire data. Therefore, in Jijiga Somali, focus words are not only discourse units but also they are obligatorily syntactic units.

The Scope of Focus in Jijiga Somali

Scope is the question of whether the focus marker is assigned to the predicate as a whole or only to some constituents in the sentences or main clauses.

In Jijiga Somali, focus words can fall on the predicate as a whole or on some constituents of the sentence. When focus falls on the predicate as a whole, it concerns the illocutionary point of predication (Taha, 1990). Accordingly, if the predicate is presented as an assertion, then the focus will fall on the truth value of the predicate.

In Jijiga Somali, predicates that received a focus marker /waa/ are considered as focus marker for the truth value of the proposition. Because /waa/ is an assertive focus word that falls on the verbs of a sentence. Thus, in Jijiga Somali, the declarative sentences that received the focus word /waa/ on their verb are considered as examples of focused predicate as a whole.

Another phenomenon with regard to focus scope is that speakers of the language focalize only some of the constituents in a sentence. For instance, the nominal focus words (baa & ajaa) are used to show the prominence of some of the constituents in a sentence. Therefore, baa & ajaa are used as counter assertive focus markers.

Note that; in Jijiga Somali, focus words are in complementary distributions. That means the language didn’t allow the occurrence of more than one focus word in a single sentence or clause. If there appear more than one focus words in a sentence, the sentence will be ungrammatical. Consider the following examples below.
In the above data; (10a) is grammatical. However, the data from (10b – d) are ungrammatical. Because all of the sentences are constructed using two focuses.

The other worth mentioning point with regard to focus is that in this language declarative sentences are not uttered without focus words. Thus, in Jijiga Somali, focus words are not only a discourse unit but also they are a syntactic unit. Look at the conversations below.

(11) a, maʃaalin baa haage?
   teacher Foc Where
   ‘where is a TEACHER?’

b, klaas-ka waa – uu ku jir - aa
   class-the Foc -3msg in exist -prt
   ‘He is in the CLASS’

c, goorma waa – uu soo baah - aa
   when Foc -3msg CON out -prt
   ‘When does he COME back?’

d, iiminka waa – uu baah –i doon-aa
   now Foc -3msg out-Inf will -prt
   ‘He will COME now’

As can be seen from the conversations above, each of the utterances have received a focus word either on the nouns or on the verbs. However, commands or imperatives are not uttered with focus words. Consider the following examples:

(11) a, orood
   ‘run!’

b, jeeg
   ‘tell!’

c, tag
   ‘go!’

If we add a focus word /waa/ to these data, the imperative mood is changed in to declarative like the following:
The Unique Characteristics of the Focus Word /waa/

As discussed in the above sections, /waa/ is a verbal focus word which occurs in the declarative mood. In addition to this, /waa/ occurs with nominal predicates to show the prominence of the noun phrases. Consider the following examples.

(12) a. abdi waa maʕaalin ahaj
   Foc-3msg run- prt
   ‘Abdi is a TEACHER’

b. isagu waa abdi ahaj
   he Foc A be
   ‘He is ABDI’

c. ʕaarin – tii waa run ahaj
   issue - the Foc true be
   ‘The issue is TRUE’

In the above data, the focus word /waa/ appears with copula /ahaj/ ‘be’ to make the information more salient and grammatical. In similar constructions, when the focus word /waa/ is removed, and leave the copula /ahaj/ ‘be’ alone; the sentences will be ungrammatical. However, when we remove the copula and leave the focus word /waa/ without copula; then, the sentences will remain grammatical as the examples below.

(13) a. isagu waa askhaar
   He Foc Soldier
   ‘He is a SOLDIER’

b. *isagu askhaar ahaj
   he soldier be

In (13) above, (a) is grammatically correct, whereas (b) is incorrect. Because, in (13b) the focus word /waa/ is missed.

Crass et al. (2005), cited in Binyam (2008), stated that the functional overlap between copula and focus markers is a common phenomenon among many Ethiopian languages. However, in Jijiga Somali, this fact is not observed. Because, in this language, the focus word /waa/ can occur in zero copula constructions as in (13a) above, and with copula as in (12) above.

Word Ordering

Dik (1978) cited in Taha (1990) states that the basic ideas of constituent order are the result of three forces. Among these forces, the preference for assigning certain specific positions to certain constituent have topic or focus functions.
This principle implies that focused constituents could be placed in positions other than their linear syntactic positions for pragmatic reasons.

Similarly, in Jijiga Somali, word order variations other than the usual syntactic positions is used to show the prominence information in a sentence or clauses. Consider the following examples.

\[(14)\] a, ali dil -aj libaah - ii

A kill -pst LION - the

‘Ali killed the LION

b, wiil –kii jab – aj muuraa\textsuperscript{qi}id -ii

boy -the break –pst MIRRER - the

‘The boy broke the MIRROR’

According to Taha (1990), most discussions of constituent order explicitly or implicitly rely on the distinction between the unmarked order and the marked word order of constituents. Since Jijiga Somali is an SOV language, any word order other than this pattern is the marked one. Thus, in (14a &b) above the constituents that found in the final positions of the sentences are outside of the SOV pattern, representing the new information. That is, in (14a) ‘what Ali killed’ and in (14b) ‘what the boy broke’ were new information. Since, /libaah/ in (14a) and /muuraa\textsuperscript{qi}idi/ in (14b) are not part of the predication; the only pragmatic functions that are assigned to them are focus. Of course this phenomenon is not commonly used by the speakers, but, such kinds of constructions are grammatical.

**DISCUSSION**

The results of this study on the focus systems of Jijiga Somali exhibited similarities and differences with previous researches. (Saeed (1993) and Lecarme (1997). The finding of this study was revealed the focus systems of the language. That means, it explains how the Jijiga Somali showed the prominent information in sentences or main clauses. Thus, in the results of this research it is found that Jijiga Somali uses focus words and word ordering to show the new information in the constructions; and these focus words are classified in to nominal focus markers and verbal focus markers. The focus words are known as /baa/, /ajaa/, /waha/, and /waa/. Of these focus words, /baa/ and /ajaa/ are nominal focus markers; and /waha/ and /waa/ are verbal focus markers.

Similarly, Saeed (1993) and Lecarme (1997) identified those focus words in the same way. However, their analysis is different. Saeed (1993) stated /baa/ and /ajaa/ as nominal focus markers which are similar to the findings of this research. However, his description of the focus word /waa/ and /waha/ is very problematic. As to Saeed, /waa/ is a classifier that occurs with verbs and adverbs, and /waha/ is a nominal focus marker that occurs in the cleft constructions. However, the data in Jijiga Somali showed that /waa/ and /waha/ are purely verbal focus words.

Lecarme (1999) explained examined the focus words of Somali language in light of minimalist approach from the syntactic perspective. Thus, he stated /baa/ and /ajaa/ as nominal focus markers and /waa/ as verbal focus marker. In his analysis, he strongly argued that focus words in Somali did not have discourse functions; rather they are purely syntactic that are triggered by nominal case features. Accordingly, /waha/ is not considered as focus word; for him, it is an expletive case that shows subject – gender agreement in cleft constructions. But, the description that focus words are purely syntactic unit, and there is only one focus word in a clause is similar with this research.

**CONCLUSION**

In this study, the focus systems of Jijiga Somali were explained in detail. To carry out the study, data were collected from native speakers of the language, and it was analyzed qualitatively. In the results, four focus words and word ordering were identified as focalizing devices. Thus, The focus words are; /ajaa/, /baa/, /waha/, and /waa/. Of these focus words, /ajaa/ and /baa/ are used to show focused nouns,
adjectives, and adverbs; and /waха/ and /waa/ are used to show the focused verbs in the main clauses. In addition to this, it is indicated that in Jijiga Somali focus words have assertive and non-assertive functions. Thus, /waa/ is an assertive focus word that falls on the truth value of the predicate as a whole; and /баа/ and /ажаа/ are counter assertive focus words that focalize only some of the constituents in a clause.

Word order variation is used as one focus system to show new information in the language.

In jijiga somali, if the subject noun or object noun is modified by an adjective, then the noun focus words are attached to the adjective; and the same is true for adverbs.

In Jijiga Somali, focus words are in complimentary distribution. i.e. more than one focus word is not allowed in a clause.

In this language focus words are not only discourse units but also they are obligatorily syntactic units.

The verbal focus marker /waa/ is added to the nominal predicates with copula and without copula; and asserts the information in a noun phrase.

Regarding the distribution of focus words, noun focus markers usually occur following nouns, adjectives, and adverbs; and verbal focus markers occur preceding the verbs or the predicates of the sentences.

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