

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

EXPLORING CLEFT SENTENCES AND OTHER ASPECTS OF SHUGHNI SYNTAX

Shughni, an under-documented language spoken in Tajikistan and Afghanistan, exhibits most syntactic constructions without deep-to-surface-level transformations, thus creating utterances (including questions) in-situ. However, a unique sentence type—the cleft construction—utilizes movement to front an element that receives primary focus. These Shughni clefts are analogous to the English constructions like “It is the man whom I saw,” derived from the simple declarative statement “I saw the man.” This paper discusses the parameters within which these clefts can occur and posits a unified explanation for the presence of these anomalous sentences in a language that resists movement. Moreover, this sentence pattern in Shughni is falling out of use among speakers of the younger generation, as the language continues to drift toward a system completely lacking in movement; therefore, preservation of this form, which seems to be special in its kind among the world’s languages, is all the more urgent.

KEYWORDS: Shughni, Syntax, Cleft Sentences, Focus Movement, In-situ

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EXPLORING CLEFT SENTENCES
AND OTHER ASPECTS OF SHUGHNI SYNTAX

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The Graduate School
University of Kentucky

2009

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AND OTHER ASPECTS OF SHUGHNI SYNTAX

THESIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the
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at the University of Kentucky

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2009

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1. Introduction

1.1 Studying Shughni: Introducing the Language

Yā woft is both the theme of this project and its antithesis. This Shughni phrase meaning ‘she knits’ unites these two opposing concepts. This experience has been an act of pulling together various theories, pieces of data, and hunches to craft the following argument and provide an explanation for each of the parts of the puzzling Shughni cleft sentences, which are the focal point of this thesis. Alternatively, for a group of linguists at the University of Kentucky (UK) who commenced full-time work on the Shughni Language Documentation Project during the summer of 2008, the process of uncovering the meaning and correct third-person singular present tense form of the verb ‘to knit’ has been an act of untying, unraveling, and investigating the complexities of the Shughni verb system. We began with the present stem *waf-*, cited as ‘weave’ in Nawata (1979: 17), the first grammar of the Shughni language published in English; however, our consultants immediately insisted that this verb be interpreted as ‘knit.’ Much later, we found that *waf-* is one of the few Shughni verbs that shows a vowel alternation in the third person, so one would use *yu waft* for ‘he knits’ but *yā woft* for ‘she knits.’

This anecdote serves not only to provide a sense of the weaving and unweaving that goes into fieldwork and language documentation but also to show the link between the English and Shughni languages. The present stem *waf-*, with either interpretation but more clearly as ‘weave’, is an English cognate. This discovery is fascinating but not unheard of, given that both languages belong to the Indo-European family. Shughni is an Eastern Iranian language spoken in the Pamir Mountain region of Tajikistan and neighboring areas of Afghanistan. According to *Ethnologue*, Shughni speakers number

about 60,000, with 40,000 in Tajikistan and 20,000 in Afghanistan. At this point in time, Shughni is only mildly endangered, especially in comparison to other related languages of the region (including Rushani, Bartangi, Sarikoli, Oroshori, and Yazgulyami), in part because of its popular status as the lingua franca of the area where all these Pamirian languages are spoken. Although 40,000 Shughni speakers live in Tajikistan, it is not an official language. All matters of government, media, commerce, and education are conducted in either Russian or Tajik, which has resulted in some degree of endangerment. Children learn Shughni in the home as their first language and use the language there or in social circles; they begin learning Tajik when they attend primary school. Thus, Tajik citizens are multilingual; it is not uncommon to be fluent in Tajik, Russian, and Shughni as well as proficient in English, Persian, or other languages. While Shughni speakers have developed unofficial writing systems to communicate with one another in letters or email, the language has little-to-no written tradition in the form of literature or legal documents.

1.2 The Shughni Language Documentation Project

Preliminary work on Shughni at UK began during the spring semester of 2007 when Gulnoro Mirzovafoeva, a visiting scholar under the auspices of the Junior Faculty Development Program (JFDP), served as the language consultant for Dr. Gregory Stump's Grammatical Analysis class. Intense analysis and documentation commenced during a month-long collaborative workshop in July 2008, for which Gulnoro returned to Kentucky with her two colleagues, Muqbilsho Alamshoev and Shohnazar Mirzoev. All three of these informants are language scholars at Khorog State University in Khorog, Tajikistan. Members of the team from UK included four Linguistics faculty, one

graduate student, and several undergraduates as well as faculty from Computer Science, Geography, and Anthropology. Elicitations took place daily: large-group consultations in the morning and one-on-one meetings in the afternoon. We conducted the morning sessions in three languages—English, Russian, and Shughni—with the main conversation translated from Russian to English and English to Russian and with side discussions in Shughni among the native speakers. Five months later, in the spring of 2009, another JFDP scholar Shahlo Nekushoeva, who is also a teacher and linguist at Khorog State University, came to UK and provided us with more data and unerring assistance on the project. Producing a reference grammar of Shughni, and perhaps a dictionary, in addition to fostering an on-going network of communication between Khorog and Kentucky are the ultimate goals of the project.

The Shughni language is under-documented, particularly in terms of scholarship published in English. Aside from the work we have been conducting, two grammars of the language exist, one written in English (Nawata 1979), the other in Tajik (Bakhtibekov 1979). Nawata's grammar, which was compiled from consultations with one informant from the Shughni-speaking region of Afghanistan, is not a comprehensive grammar but consists mainly of the verb system, specifically sample stems and how to form various tenses. It is likely that differences between Nawata's study and ours relate to the variation between Tajik-Shughni and Afghani-Shughni. Conversely, Bakhtibekov's Tajik grammar of the Shughni language contains a more descriptive overview of several facets of the language, including the function of the parts of speech with specific emphasis on the verb system and a syntax section on the basic types of Shughni sentences

and the order of words within them. Neither work includes a thorough account of phonetics or phonology.

1.3 Shughni in Transition

Although our number of direct informants at this point is small, the native speakers provided us with a diverse sample, especially in terms of two demographic features: age and location of hometown. For the first, Muqbilsho and Shohnazar represent an older generation, while Gulnoro speaks for the younger generation. Additionally, Shahlo fits into a liminal category, exhibiting speech qualities of both groups. As for the second, Shohnazar and Gulnoro (and later Shahlo) all live in Khorog, so we casually dubbed them “the city speakers.” On the other hand, Muqbilsho—“the village speaker”—hails from a mountain village. We observed several differences between the representative speech communities of city and village as well as those of older versus younger citizens. For example, Muqbilsho and Gulnoro did not agree on the use of *-en* as a plural causative suffix. In general, a causative construction is produced by altering the vowel in the present stem. Thus, the present stem of *riwāz* ‘fly’ becomes *riwēz* ‘to cause to fly’ or ‘to make to fly’; however, if the object of the causative is plural, *-en* may be added to the stem, as in *riwāz-en*. Gulnoro and her peers do not use this plural suffix. Instead, they create all causatives in the same, singular way. More simply, the two generations of speakers at our workshop expressed phonological variations for particular verbs: *vind* ‘bind’ (older) versus *vīs* ‘bind’ (younger).

Differences like these are pertinent to my study because each currently-existing generation uses the contrastive emphasis cleft, which I will describe shortly, to varying degrees. When I first spoke individually to Shahlo about these cleft constructions, she

told me that this sentence type is a mark of an older person’s speech. She continued to say that while she does hear utterances like this among the Shughni people and can understand their meaning, she is unlikely to use one in her everyday conversations. Moreover, Shahlo explained that if she were to tell a story to her young nieces and nephews and include one of these clefts, they would think her speech strange and silly. For instance, if she said *Wi-yi tu-yum rimod* ‘It is him whom I sent’ in order to emphasize the object in *Wuz-um wi rimod* ‘I sent him,’ the children would find the statement implausible and ungrammatical. Although Shahlo and those in her age range find these sentences grammatical, they employ an alternative method to capture contrastive emphasis in an utterance. Below in (1) are two examples of how Shughni’s method for creating cleft sentences is evolving:

- (1) a. Yidi tu-yi Shahlo-ra Gulnoro lûd.
 It is tu-yi Shahlo-to Gulnoro tell.past
 It is to Shahlo that Gulnoro told.
- b. Yidi tu yika soz idi bulbul-en lûv-en.
 It is tu dem. that song comp. that nightingale.pl sing.pres.-3pl.subj.agr.pres.
 ‘It is that song that the nightingales sing.’

Comparing these sentences with the cleft *Wi-yi tu-yum rimod* ‘It is him whom I sent’ mentioned above seems to be a tall order because the new structure in (1) buries the common elements. On the one hand, the traditional cleft fronts a determiner phrase (DP)—in this case the object—for emphasis; on the other, the emphasized DP appears to originate in the object position of a main clause. Furthermore, an expletive subject

appears in the main clause to achieve the literal translation ‘It is.’ Therefore, the movement that is quintessential to the traditional cleft becomes obsolete in the newly-crafted version. (We will reencounter these sentences as traditional clefts in section 4.4.1.) Additionally, notice that the morphemes I gloss only as *-yi* and *tu-* appear in both new and old clefts, though their positions change. These puzzling, non-lexical pieces of the utterances as well as the movement that occurs in the traditional cleft are the focus of section 4 of this paper. I will explore at length the function of and motivation behind these components and search for a unified rationale for their presence in a single construction. But first, a small amount of background information is necessary. Section 2 addresses the basic word order for declarative statements in the Shughni language and discusses a few typological traits that we can expect to see, given this order. In addition, section 3, on question-formation, investigates the general absence of movement in the language, thus highlighting the uniqueness of the traditional cleft sentence and possibly why it is being lost. These clefts may fill a gap in our understanding of human language because they illustrate how focus movement can be exhibited both syntactically and morphologically, so documenting and preserving them before they become extinct is all the more urgent.

2. Shughni Word Order

2.1 Subject-Object-Verb

The basic word order for simple declarative sentences is subject-object-verb (SOV). Example (2) illustrates this pattern:

- (2) a. Tāt sir-en rinuḅt.
father secret-pl. forget.present
‘Father forgets secrets.’
- b. Wuz-um dev ṽirīb-en wīřat.
1sg.subj.-1sg.subj.agr.past dem.those sock-pl. knit.past perfect
‘I had knitted those socks.’
- c. Sodiq-i ṽāc wīnt.
Sodiq-3sg.subj.agr.past girl see.past
‘Sodiq saw the girl.’

As these sentences reveal, the subject appears in the first slot, the object in the second, followed by the verb in the third. Of course, depending on the nature of the verb, an object may not be a necessary argument. Pakhalina (1969: 48)¹ reiterates this pattern of words, also noting that variation in the placement of subject and object is characteristic of different dialects in the Pamir region. Next, (3) compares the word order of Shughni to that of English and Irish, an SVO language and VSO language, respectively.

- (3) **S** **O** **V** (Shughni)
a. Žow woḅ xīrt.
cow grass eat.present
‘The cow eats grass.’
- S** **V** **O** (English)
b. Plants need water.
‘Plants need water.’

¹ Pakhalina’s book on Pamirian languages is written in Russian. Special thanks to Jeanmarie Rouhier-Willoughby who translated for me the section on word order.

	V		S		O	
c.	Phóg		Máire		an lucharachán.	(Irish)
	kiss.past		Mary		the leprechaun	
	'Mary kissed the leprechaun.'					(Carnie 2007: 243 (1))

The differences among these three sentence structures extend to other elements of the language, including how heads relate to their dependents and how constituents align in a tree. The following section takes the notion of headedness (Tallerman 1998: 150-151; Millar 2007) and applies it to Shughni in order to evaluate its adherence to the characteristics of the right-headed SOV order.

2.2 A Brief Syntactic Typology of Shughni

Hawkins (1983) distills Joseph Greenberg's universal tendencies and implications to account for only those dealing with word order. I will address two of them with reference to Shughni in this subsection: 1) "When the descriptive adjective precedes the noun, with overwhelmingly more than chance frequency, the demonstrative and the numeral do likewise;" and 2) "In languages with dominant order SOV, an inflected auxiliary always follows the main verb" (Hawkins 1983: 20-21). Before tackling the former, it is essential to illustrate the initial subordinating part of the statement.

Following the expectation for right-headedness that heads of phrases will appear to the right of (that is, precede) their modifiers, Shughni adjectives do precede the nouns they modify. Here are a several examples of noun phrases with specifying adjective phrases:

- (4) a. tāng pũnd
narrow road
- b. bašānd bũt
good boot

- | | | | |
|------------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| c. baq (f.) | čibũd (f.) | d. buq (m.) | amak (m.) |
| big (f.) | bird (f.) | big (m.) | uncle (paternal) (m.) |
| e. zalik (f.) | yaxenen (f.) | f. zulik (m.) | kud (m.) |
| small/young (f.) | sisters (f.) | small (m.) | dog (m.) |

These examples reveal not only the placement of the adjective in relation to the noun but also the nature of some adjectives to agree in gender with the nouns they describe. (4c-d) reveal the masculine/feminine alternation with respect to ‘big’; likewise, (4e-f) reveal the same distinction for the adjective ‘small/young’. Note also the correspondence between /a/ and feminine and /u/ and masculine in (4c-f). This vowel change applies broadly to numerous other adjectives in the language. With the tendency regarding adjective behavior to undergird the discussion, we can now turn to the remainder of the universal—pre-nominal placement of demonstratives and numerals. The data in (5) illustrate the position of these elements:

- | | | | |
|-----------|-------------|----------|-------------------|
| (5) a. di | kor | b. dam | gũl |
| | that work | | this pool |
| c. dev | řirĩben | d. dam | samolyot |
| | those socks | | this airplane |
| e. yĩw | kitob | f. cavor | bulbulen |
| | one book | | four nightingales |

In each of these instances, the demonstrative or numeral (i.e., determiner in the minimalist syntax framework) comes before the noun just as the adjective did, thus confirming Greenberg’s generalization.

The latter universal tendency involves complex verbs where the auxiliary appears after the main verb. All complex verbs in Shughni that I have discovered so far include a conjugated form of either *čidow* ‘to do’ or *sidow* ‘to become’, which aids in creating passive constructions. Some complex verbs that contain *čidow* are *jēt čūd* ‘invite’ (past), *bōwar kiǰt* ‘believe’ (present), and *xarīd čūd* ‘buy’ (past). These auxiliaries that follow the main verb are inflected for tense—interestingly enough, the present form exhibits suppletion—and in the case of *kiǰt*, the auxiliary is present and inflected for person and number as well, albeit with the null marker for third singular. (6) shows more examples of *čidow* complex verbs used in context.

- (6) a. Mu-rd-en šarob dakt čūd.
 me-to-3pl.subj.agr.past alcohol give did
 ‘They gave me alcohol (because I ordered it).’
- b. Tu-t mu dis řoř čūd.
 you-2sg.subj.agr.past me really scare did
 ‘You really scared me.’

All of these complex verbs both in the example and given in the text above conform to Greenberg’s universal. *Sidow* is not as clear-cut, though. Consider the examples in (7) below:

- (7) a. Wev awoz-en řuđř-ak sut.
 their voice-pl audible.perf.-passive become.past
 ‘Their voices became audible.’

- b. Čiden-en mizǰ-ak sat.
house-pl build.perf.-passive become.past
‘Houses were built.’
- c. Awqot na sudǰ xūǰǰ-ak.
lunch not become.perf eat.perf.-passive
‘Lunch has not been eaten.’
- d. Awqot xūǰǰ-ak sudǰ.
lunch eat.perf.-passive become.perf
‘Lunch has been eaten.’
- e. Woǰ na sudǰ ciǰǰ-ak.
grass not become.perf. cut.perf.-passive
‘The grass has not been cut.’
- f. Woǰ ciǰǰ-ak sudǰ.
grass cut.perf.-passive become.perf.
‘The grass has been cut.’

In (7a-b), the auxiliary succeeds the main verb, fulfilling our expectations, but (7c) and (7e) disrupt the pattern. It appears that, since all passives are created using the perfect form of the verb plus the passive morpheme *-ak*, the Shughni speaker differentiates between a negative interpretation and the affirmative by switching the position and tense of the auxiliary. Alternatively, (7d) and (7f) maintain the previously-noted, canonical pattern. The desire to highlight negation by placing the form of ‘to be’ in front of the main verb explains the variation yet, at the same time, causes an unexpected response to

the language tendency because the auxiliary should follow the verb. Even considering this complication, Shughni appears to be fairly harmonious in terms of its word-order typology. But, this is not entirely the case. SOV languages typically use postpositions (Millar 2007); however, Shughni has a small but strong preposition base in addition to its postpositions. Likewise, one would expect case-marking to be present (Millar 2007), but Shughni has lost most of its case inflections with only an occasional dative or directionality marker remaining.

3. Shughni Question Formation

3.1 Question Words and Wh-Questions

Unlike English, Shughni forms questions in-situ with no transformation of the deep structure. Watanabe (2003) suggests that *wh*-in-situ languages are not uniform in the qualities that allow them to function in this way; however, she and others still search for an underlying motivation that will account for all cases. Since this section serves to show the absence of movement in the Shughni language in an descriptive overview², it will not attempt to posit any deep connections among *wh*-in-situ languages. Although the language does not exhibit *wh*-movement, it has a very rich inventory of interrogative pronouns including the following: *čāy* (who), *či* (whom), *čīz* (what), *čīr* (why), *čidūm* (what kind, which), *ca* (what kind), *cūnd* (how many), *carāng* (how, what kind of), *kāy* (where), *cago* (when, to what extent), and *cameđ* (when, on what day). These words double as relative pronouns by taking a relative meaning in the appropriate context. Speakers use intonation to differentiate between relative and interrogative meanings. Moreover, several of these question-words have overlapping meaning (like ‘what kind’),

² Example (7) gestures toward the fact that passive constructions are created in-situ as well. The passive-forming particle *-ak* which attaches to the perfect stem of the verb provides the strongest evidence for this claim. When this particle can adjust the meaning of the sentence to PASSIVE, no movement is necessary.

each one appropriate to a specific situation, but the semantic differences are beyond the purview of this study. Instead, I will examine a few of these interrogative pronouns in sample questions.

- (8) a. Čāy yat?
 Who came?
- b. Čidûm toyd?
 Which one left (fem.)?
- c. Ca-yat na sut?
 how-2sg.subj.agr.past not go
 ‘How could you not go?’
- d. yāc čî-yi rimod?
 girl whom-3sg.subj.agr.past sent
 ‘Whom did the girl send?’

Questions (8a-b) both contain verbs that must be construed as intransitive, thus interrogative pronouns *čāy* and *čidûm* that appear in the first position to reveal a sense of unknowing and replace subject DPs. These examples alone do not provide evidence that Shughni questions are formed in-situ because the movement of the subject-substituting question-word to a higher node in the clause would still result in the same word order. (8d) offers better support. Without doubt, ‘the girl’ (3sg) is the subject of the utterance, not only because of its initial position but also because of the third-person singular agreement marking that appears on the interrogative. In Shughni past tense utterances, agreement clitics typically attach themselves to the first constituent, while in the present

tense, agreement affixes are realized on the verb. It is clear that neither of these options has manifested in (8d). (8c) also shows a subject-agreement marker attaching to the question word, but the circumstances are different. In that case, the agreement marker is, for one, acting like a second-position clitic; also, the subject here is non-lexical, so that the marker can stand in for the subject DP itself. I cannot definitively determine why this alternation is happening, but it does appear to be an acceptable variation. At any rate, in (8d) the interrogative object pronoun *čī* ‘whom’ resides in the second DP position, conforming to the traditional word order and offering support for the proposition that questions are base-generated and not motivated to move for any reason.

Example (9), which contains questions made from a verb that requires two arguments, continues to address these issues.

- | | | | |
|--------|------------------------|------------------------------------|----------|
| (9) a. | Čāy-i ³ | mantu | xūd? |
| | who-3sg.subj.agr.past | a savory, steamed pastry-like food | eat.past |
| | ‘Who ate mantu?’ | | |
| b. | Zebo-yi | čīz | xūd? |
| | Zebo-3sg.subj.agr.past | what | eat.past |
| | ‘What did Zebo eat?’ | | |

In (9a), the actor performing the eating is the entity in question, while in (9b) the object being eaten is the unknown. This pair reveals how the placement of the question-word changes, depending on what is being asked, further indicating that these interrogatives originate in these positions. Both questions in (9) include a subject agreement marker

³ *-i* is the underlying form of *-yi*. The latter serves as a surface-level phonological variation, in which /y/ appears between vowels, functioning as a buffer.

that behaves like a Wackernagel clitic, attaching to the first word in the sentence, as we observed in (8c). The appearance of these subject-agreement morphemes as the second item is more justified in (9), though, because in both situations the grammatical subject is the first word in the sentence. The present tense version of (9a), *Čāy mantu xīrt*, maintains expectations as to where the agreement should appear: a null marker for third-person singular attached to the verb. Additionally, (10) contains an indirect question for the purpose of comparing its formation with that of the overt ones discussed above.

- (10) Zebo na-fāmt Murod-i čīz zoǔt.
 Zebo not-know.3sg.present Murod-3sg.subj.agr.past what buy.past
 ‘Zebo wonders what Murod bought.’

The interrogative pronoun *čiz* ‘what’ takes the same form and function as it does in direct questions; moreover, it originates in a node after the subject of the embedded clause in keeping with the behavior of question-words throughout the Shughni language but contrary to the behavior of their counterparts in English. Finally, to reiterate the in-situ characteristic of these questions, Figure 1 displays a tree of (9b):

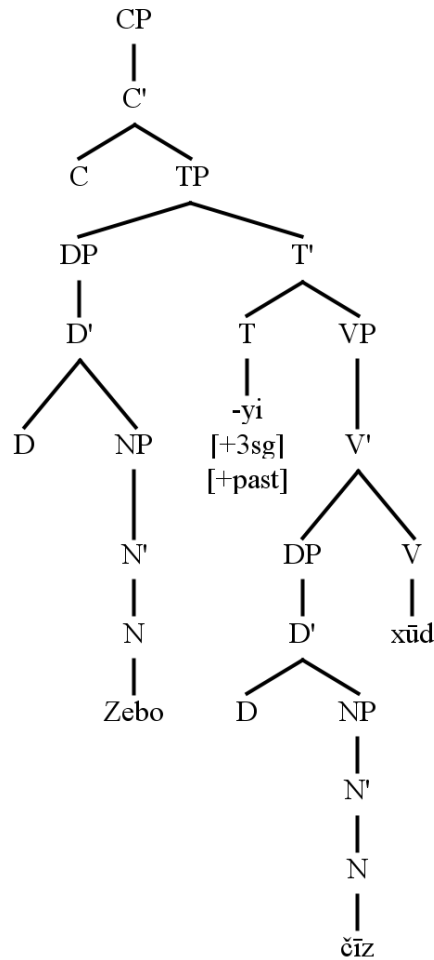


Figure 1: Object Question 'What did Zebo eat?'

3.2 Using Particles to Create Yes/No Questions

Thus far, we have looked only at questions and their respective pronouns that elicit a full- content answer. This section explores briefly Shughni’s method of employing particles that attach to the end of the verb to create simple yes/no questions. Watanabe (2003: 213) explains that particles can enable in-situ question-formation because these morphs explicitly indicate that the clause is a question. Here is an example of one such utterance that uses the particle *–(y)o*, given in Bakhtibekov (1979: 85)⁴: *Tar*

⁴ Bakhtibekov wrote his grammar in Tajik. Special thanks to Shahlo Nekushoeva who translated the syntax section from Tajik into Russian and Darya Bukhtoyarova who then translated it from Russian into English.

tu čīd sāvām-o? ‘Should we go to your house?’. In this instance, no interrogative pronoun appears—even though *čīd* ‘house’ does resemble one—but the particle in the final syllable classifies the sentence as such. Another particle *-a*, which adds a sense of regret or admiration, functions like *-(y)o*: *Mardum cow tayor čūd-a?* ‘Did people finish harvesting?’ (Bakhtibekov 1979: 85). Notice the presence of the past tense auxiliary *čūd* ‘did’; this word alone cannot denote a question, but the particle fulfills the intended meaning of the sentence. A third particle *-nā* expresses doubt, as in *Xīr nūst-nā?* ‘Did the sun really set?’ (Bakhtibekov 1979: 85). Most interestingly, the placement of *-nā* in relation to the verb is crucial to the interpretation of the question; it must be a suffix. If it were to appear as a prefix, it would negate the verb and produce a declarative statement like ‘The sun did not set,’ thus reiterating the importance of morpheme order. These particles function similarly to the passive morpheme *-ak*, and both pieces of morphology allow in-situ constructions in Shughni.

4. Cleft Sentences in Shughni

4.1 Background

As we have seen in section 2, the basic word order for simple declarative sentences in Shughni is SOV, as in *xušrūy soz lūvd* ‘The beautiful girl sings a song,’ where *xušrūy* means ‘beautiful girl’, *soz* means ‘song’, and *lūvd* is the present stem of the verb for ‘to sing/tell’ (plus *-d* as subject agreement marker) used idiomatically in this example as, literally, ‘to tell a song.’ The dearth of movement in the Shughni language also merits reiteration. Apart from the occasional mobile adverb phrase, Shughni constituents remain in-situ. This tendency makes the presence of cleft sentences especially unique. At this point in the analysis, the term *cleft* applies broadly, including

b. Mu-yi	tu-yi	lũd.	(Cleft)
1sg.obj.-yi	tu-PRO.3sg.subj.agr.past	tell.past	
‘It is me whom he told.’			
c. *Mu-yi	tu	lũd.	(Cleft)
1sg.obj.-3sg.subj.agr.past	tu	tell.past	

As these sample utterances demonstrate, Shughni pronouns—like their counterparts in English—are case-marked. While these pronouns signal either nominative or accusative case, nearly all case-marking has evolved out of the language, appearing only occasionally in phrases indicating directionality. Notably though, in (11b) the object pronoun has been promoted⁶ to a position in front of the subject. Its new slot allows for the special interpretation of (11a) in which the object is privileged over the subject. In order for this promotion to be possible, the object must move to a landing site that is higher on the tree than the home of the subject. The Shughni language is also pro-drop, meaning that the overt subject in a clause may be eliminated as long as the agreement marker can supply the necessary grammatical information. *Yu* does not appear in (11b) because its presence is redundant; instead, the second *-yi* denotes the sentence’s subject. The first *-yi*, on the other hand, resembles a second-position clitic whose purpose is difficult to determine at this point. Moreover, (11c) is ungrammatical because the puzzling *-yi* is missing, and the subject agreement marker has usurped its expected place in the cleft. Illuminating the function of this morpheme is one of the major goals of this analysis. In formulating a hypothesis for the position and role of each of these elements,

⁶ Tallerman (1998: 21-22) uses the terms “promotion” and “demotion” to indicate the respective process that a word or clause may undergo. These titles function effectively when it is necessary to talk about movement or focus in general terms.

let us first consider how an unmarked sentence in the basic word order would appear in a tree.

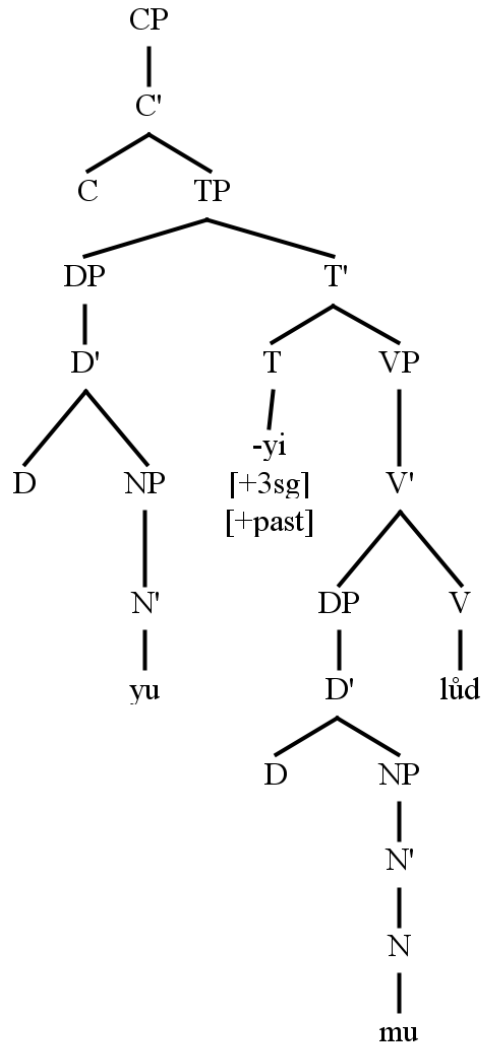


Figure 2: Basic Word Order 'He told me.'

The cleft version of Figure 2 cannot be a simple sentence. Nonetheless, the formation of an embedded sentence reveals the function of the other mysterious piece of morphology. The *tu-* may serve as a complementizer, signaling the presence of an upcoming finite, embedded clause. Native speakers insist that *-i* and *tu-* must come as a pair in this situation; omitting either of the two with the intention of forming a cleft

construction results in ungrammaticality, as we saw in (11c). Thus, the explanation for *-i* must take into account the relationship between these two particles as well as why they consistently attach themselves to the same pieces of the cleft— *-i* linking itself to the first element and *tu* appearing before the past tense subject agreement. Both of these enigmatic morphs appear in the treed version of (11b):

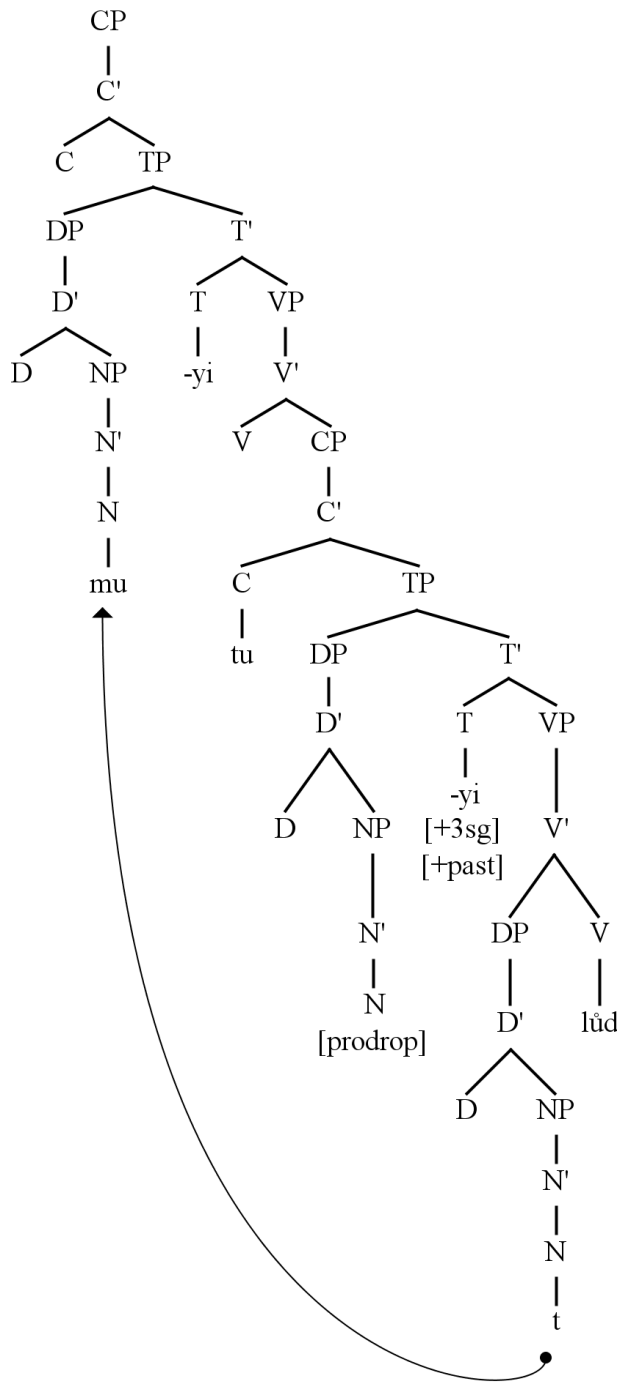


Figure 3: Object Cleft 'It is me whom he told.'

Recall that Shughni's pro-drop characteristic allows the overt subject agreement marker to fill the role of the subject itself. Therefore, this morpheme can provide the subject-content to ensure that the embedded clause meets the EPP. This, however, is secondary

in comparison to the movement of *mu* from the complement of embedded V to the specifier of main clause T. One can posit a rationale for this transformation in light of word order: the cleft sentence exhibits a word order alternation, thus the components of the utterance must have undergone movement in order to produce the surface structure variation that Shughni speakers vocalize. But, this argument is a bit tautological, by claiming that all movements are motivated by the linguists' desire to map the language users' behavior to patterns of the norm. Nevertheless, before challenging this claim, more description of the characteristics of the words and morphemes that may undergo clefting is necessary.

4.3 Other Parameters Exhibited in Clefts

In addition to appearances of various persons in the Shughni cleft sentences, these constructions also exist for several other grammatical parameters including case, number, tense, and transitivity. According to the corpus of sentences solicited from the informants, the method for creating clefts is productive—any verb plus its arguments may have a clefted variation. For example, a declarative statement and its cleft counterpart, both incorporating a present tense verb, are listed below in (12a) and (12b):

- (12) a. Māš wev wīn-am
 1pl.subj. 3pl.obj. see.present-1pl.agr. present
 ‘We see them.’
- b. Wev-i tu wīn-am
 3pl.obj.-i tu see.present-1pl.agr. present
 ‘It is them whom we see / are seeing.’

The most striking difference between past and present constructions in the Shughni language is the placement of the subject-agreement marker. In the past tense, subject agreement materializes on the subject itself—provided that the subject sits in the first position—as we have seen previously or possibly, but less commonly, on the verb. However, the present tense is more fixed; speakers must form it by attaching the agreement marker to the verb. The form of the verb stem also denotes tense. Compare the verbs shown in (12) with their past tense counterpart in the following cleft sentence: *Wev-i tu-yam wīnt*. Nawata (1979) describes the formation of the past tense in which *-t/d* is added to the present stem with a vocalic change in select verbs. The verb ‘to see’ follows the simplest of past-formation patterns: *-t* attaches to the present stem. The relationship between the past/present distinction and the cleft formation is important for two reasons: 1) to show how clefting is not limited to a certain tense, and 2) to illustrate the way in which tense does not affect the position of special features necessary for clefting in Shughni. Subject-agreement morphemes have multiple realizations, but *-i* and *tu-* exhibit the same behavior in all cleft circumstances.

Example (12) also demonstrates the use of plural pronouns in a cleft construction. The feature “number” can take the values PLURAL and SINGULAR with words from both of these categories serving as the clefted element. *Wev*, for instance, represents third-person plural, and *mu* the first-person singular. The appearance of both singular and plural pronouns at the front of the cleft sentence is nothing out of the ordinary and, in fact, should be expected. However, the way in which the moved component of the utterance manifests case is more interesting and allows for a deeper route into the analysis of the enigmatic cleft morphemes *-i* and *tu-*. Here, I present only the basic data in terms of

case; section 4.4.1 will utilize the realization of case to help determine the function of the unique parts of the cleft and justify movement. Consider the group of sentences featured in (13).

- | | | | | | |
|------|----|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| (13) | a. | Wāḏ-en | lūd. | (Non-cleft) | |
| | | 3pl.nom.-3pl.abs.agr.past | tell.past | | |
| | | ‘They told.’ | | | |
| | b. | Yu-yi | wev | lūd. | (Non-cleft) |
| | | 3sg.nom.-3sg.abs.agr.past | 3pl.acc. | tell.past | |
| | | ‘He told them.’ | | | |
| | c. | Wāḏ-i | tama ⁷ -yen | lūd. | (Cleft) |
| | | 3pl.nom.-i | tama-3pl.acc.agr.past | tell.past | |
| | | ‘It is they who told.’ | | | |
| | d. | wev-i | tu-yi | lūd. | (Cleft) |
| | | 3pl.acc.-i | tu-3sg.nom.agr.past | tell.past | |
| | | ‘It is them whom he told.’ | | | |

Up to this point, we have seen only transitive sentences that are transformed into clefts, for which objects (or words in the oblique case) sit in the first position. Example (13), though, shows a cleft sentence formed from an intransitive (13a). In (13c), the subject of the main clause *wāḏ* retains its absolutive case because this sentence is also intransitive. Its juxtaposition to *wev* in (13d), formed from a transitive verb, creates a morphological minimal pair, in which all features except case are equal. Given the placement in a tree of the first element in a cleft sentence—specifier of main clause T—the appearance of an oblique in this slot is the anomaly. It moves to this position, if for no other reason, to

⁷ The presence of *tu* verses *tama* in this position will be discussed in section 4.5.

satisfy the EPP. This phenomenon figures into the testing and limiting of options for how to name the process that is occurring in the Shughni cleft. The position in the tree where the verb's arguments check case will contribute to an explanation for movement in these utterances. Even though it seems at this point that a fronted DP has already received case in the embedded clause, it is undeniable that finite T in the main clause also possesses a nominative case feature to assign. We are faced with a subjacency violation when the promoted phrase does not check this case. The undergirding reason as to why the clefted element does not check case is a crucial factor in our ultimate understanding of Shughni clefts and a characteristic that the final analysis must be able to support.

With this complication set aside for the time being, the discussion of case now allows us to revisit the aforementioned notion that movement in the cleft sentence exists only to justify a variation in the basic word order. Weak as it is, this claim quickly proves untenable in light of example (13c), where the word order remains S(O)V even though movement to a higher clause (as evinced by the presence of *-i* and *tama-*) has occurred. Likewise, the pair of sentences in (14) is intransitive. The grouping is similar to that in (11) and (12), containing both a simple declarative statement and its clefted alternative.

- | | | | |
|------|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| (14) | a. Wuz-um | tūyd. | (Non-cleft) |
| | 1sg.abs.-1sg.abs.agr.past | go.past | |
| | ‘I went.’ | | |
| | b. Wuz-i | tu-yum | tūyd. (Cleft) |
| | 1sg.abs.-i | tu-1sg.abs.agr.past | go.past |
| | ‘It is I who went.’ | | |

In both of these statements, the subject appears in the first position, but in (b) the subject has risen to a higher clause, for the presence of *tu* indicates a finite clause, according to my previous assessment. Again, the S(O)V word order remains constant in these variations, but movement still occurs in order to accommodate the special morphemes that surface in (b). The following trees present a side-by-side comparison of these related utterances.

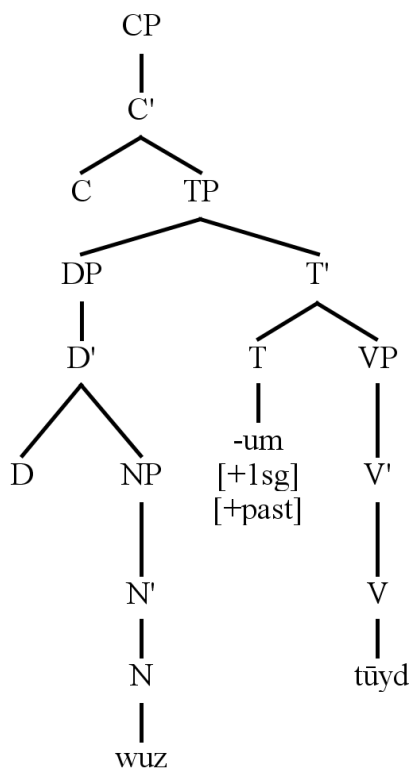


Figure 4: Basic Word Order 'I went.'

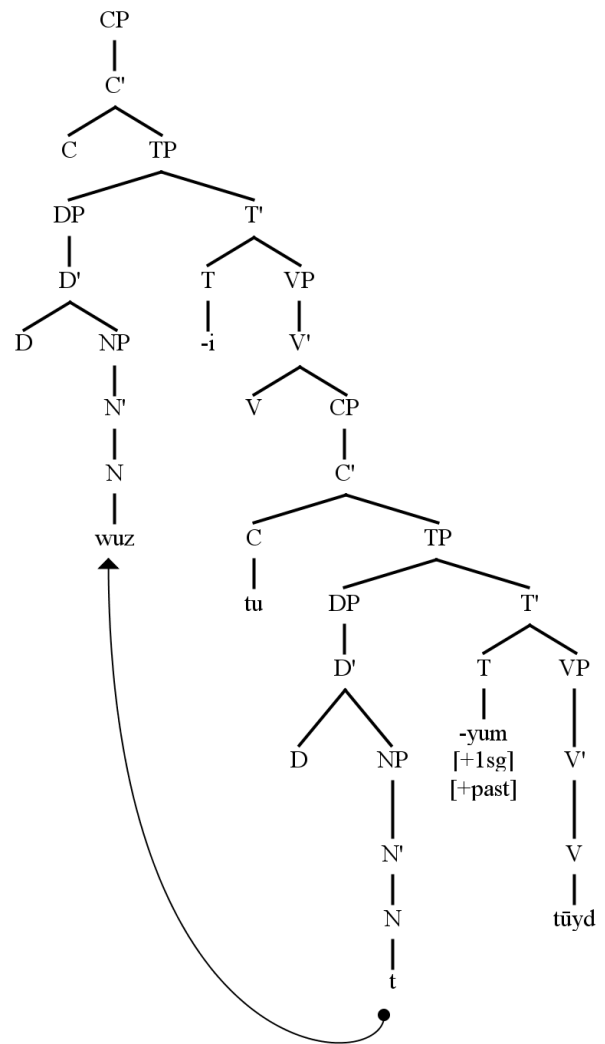


Figure 5: Cleft 'It is I who went.'

The movement of subject *wuz* from the specifier of one T to the specifier of a higher T seems completely vacuous, especially if order of the primary constituents is the concern. In the simple declarative statement *Wuz-um tūyd*, the subject naturally receives emphasis because of its role as actor and external argument; it carries a sort of innate specialness as a result of being the first phrase in the utterance. Harries-Delisle (1978) reiterates this point. Therefore, its clefting seems unnecessary. This same phenomenon is also occurring in the final type of sentence that warrants discussion—the transitive sentence with a promoted subject. Example (15) illustrates a traditional transitive sentence (15a) as well as a clefted version that fronts the subject (15b).

- (15) a. Māš-am wi jêt čūd⁸. (Non-cleft)
 1pl.subj.-1pl.subj.agr.past 3sg.obj. invite.past
 ‘We invited him.’
- b. Māš-i tama-yam wi jêt čūd. (Cleft)
 1pl.subj.-i tama-1pl.subj.agr.past 3sg.obj. invite.past
 ‘It is we who invited him.’

Note the difference between sentence (15b) above and transitive sentences with clefted objects in (11b) and (13d). (15b) requires an extra slot for the object, and more importantly, it requires full realization of both the subject pronoun and the subject-agreement morpheme. Typical procedures for pro-dropping cannot intervene in this

⁸ *Jêt čūd* is a complex verb in which *čūd*, meaning ‘did’ (past tense of *čidow* ‘to do’) functions as a helping verb. The Shughni language has several verbs that are formed in this way. Because Shughni speakers do not seem to conceive of these verbs as having a translation with two words, similar to the English construction ‘did ____’, and because my argument does not deal specifically with verb phrases in Shughni, I will not attempt to provide a “tree” analysis of this construction. Instead, I will consider *jêt čūd* to behave like a single word that sits in the node V.

circumstance because actual, non-trace evidence of the grammatical subject must appear in both clauses of the utterance. For this reason, the subject cleft of a transitive sentence does not follow the same compact pattern of other clefts that front objects or that stem from intransitive verbs. Figure 6 uses a tree to illuminate the complexity of this kind of cleft.

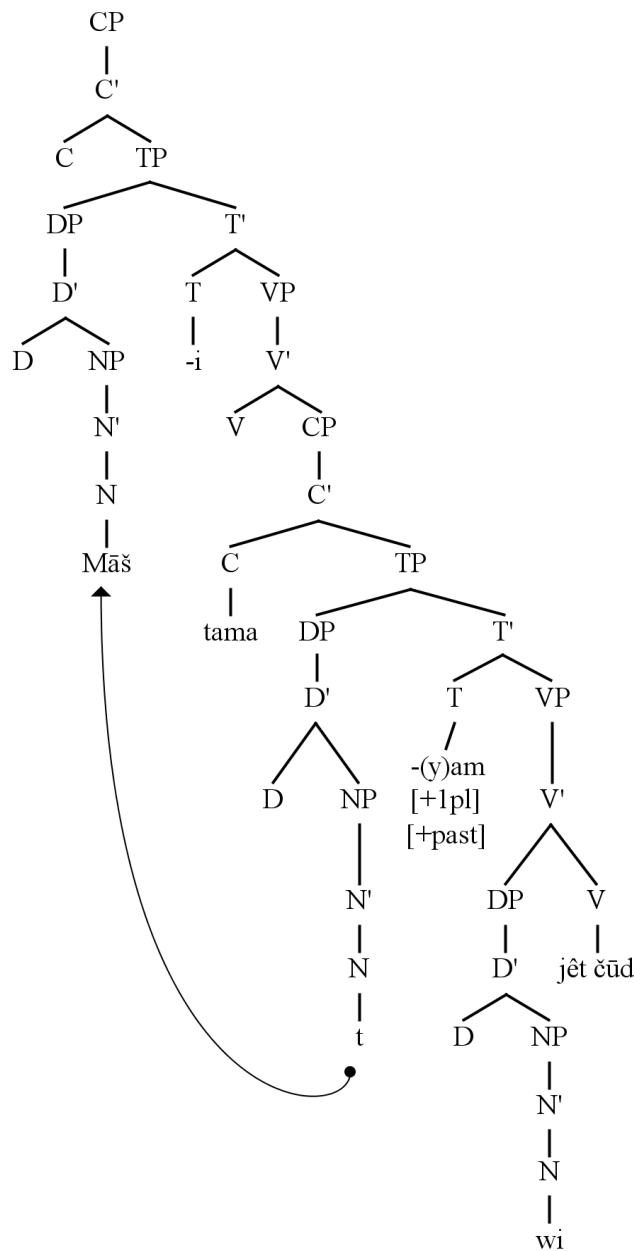


Figure 6: Transitive Sentence with Subject Clefting 'It is we who invited him.'

In terms of the movement and its motivation, this sentence is similar to the one in Figure 5. For both, the justifications for the transformation—as they stand now—cannot suffice. Semantically, these sentences intend to place emphasis on the subject by giving it its own special position; the Shughni speaker desires to differentiate between ‘It is **we** who invited him,’ for instance, and ‘It is [**anyone else**] who invited him.’ The notions that the subject can gain emphasis either by nature of its initial position or by a prosodic stress in the speaker’s voice are not satisfactory in explaining the phenomenon of clefting as it is used in Shughni because these characteristics hold true for the non-clefts as well. Thus, an explanatory account that can motivate and substantiate all variations of the Shughni cleft sentences, including the specially-functioning morphemes *-i* and *tu/tama-*, is in order. The next section will explore several possibilities for this clefting phenomenon that occurs in Shughni with the hope that the theories and patterns presented in each of them can explain the Shughni issue in different ways and that I, then, can pull from each of them to provide a plausible justification of the clefts in question.

4.4 Comparing Shughni Clefts to Other Types of Fronting and DP Movement Processes

This section will examine the morphosyntactic processes of object shift, scrambling, extraposition / stranding, and topicalization. It will function much like a literature review, providing theoretical background and accounts of how and for what purpose clefting manifests itself in other languages. As their names suggest, some of these processes cannot possibly supply a comprehensive explanation of the Shughni phenomenon, but they can potentially account for individual aspects of these unique Shughni sentences. Some goals of this part of the analysis are to find constructions in

other languages that resemble or function in a similar manner as the Shughni cleft and to give a more precise name than “clefting” to this process.

4.4.1 *Object Shift and Scrambling*

In light of my earlier discussion of Shughni subject shift, a process called “object shift” will obviously not be able to solve the Shughni cleft; however, the full behavior of the objects in these constructions remains unexplained, so the object shift theory may prove useful. Vikner (2006: 394-395, 405) outlines the syntactic properties that characterize object shift. First, this process moves a DP leftward; furthermore, it moves a DP from a position inside VP to a position outside of VP but within the same clause. The first of these properties does not pose a problem for what we have already seen in the analysis of Shughni, and in fact, it augments the previously-delineated claims pertaining to Shughni object (and subject) movement. On the other hand, the presence of the morpheme *tu-* in the cleft sentences seems to prevent Shughni from meeting this criteria for object shift. I intend to explain in full the function of this morpheme in section 4.5, but because of its position between arguments, it seems to serve as a complementizer, whose function is to signal a finite, embedded clause. And, from this clause, an object (or subject) moves to join *-i* in a newly-created main clause. Another property, as presented in Vikner (2006), that is troublesome to an explanation of Shughni clefts deals with verb movement. He argues that verb movement from V to T precedes object shift. This crucial detail reveals that object shift applies most readily to verb-raising languages as a means for repositioning an object after a verb has skipped over it.

More examples of Shughni cleft sentences can provide further support that the phenomenon in this language is not object shift. According to Vikner (2006: 394), in

Scandinavian languages other than Icelandic, only pronouns can undergo object shift. Given the sentences showing the evolving method for creating clefts that was presented in the introduction, it would seem as though Shughni does not fit this pattern for object shifting. The data in example (16) below confirm this assumption. Object movement in Shughni can involve lexical, non-pronominal DPs.

(16) a. Soz-i tama bulbul-en lúv-en.
 song-i tama nightingale-pl. sing.present-3pl.present.subj.agr.

‘It is a song that the nightingales sing.’

b. Shahlo-ra-yi tu-yi Gulnoro lúd.
 Shahlo-to-yi tu-3sg.past.subj.agr. Gulnoro tell.past

‘It is Shahlo whom Gulnoro told.’

c. Shahlo-yi tama-yen molim-ēn žīwǰ⁹.
 Shahlo-yi tama-3pl.subj.agr.present teacher-pl. love.present

‘It is Shahlo whom the teachers love.’

d. Kud-i tu-yi Ahmed wīnt.
 dog-i tu-3sg.past.subj.agr. Ahmed see.past

‘It is the dog that Ahmed saw.’

Although Nekushoeva reiterates her unlikelihood to use this kind of cleft to convey the information in (16), she maintains the grammaticality of the statements. One aspect of these sentences is troublesome: in past tense constructions, the subject agreement clitic appears before the subject itself. Notice this trend in (16b), (16c), and (16d). This poses

⁹ Žīwǰ ‘love’ is a special verb in Shughni. In both past and present tense, it appears in its perfect tense form. (The *-wǰ* ending denotes perfect.) Even though it carries a present tense meaning here, it behaves as if it were +past, with the agreement marker not attaching to the end of the verb.

a difficulty when reconciling the word order in a tree. I suspect that these sentences, elicited from a middle generation speaker, show Shughni in the midst of a transition. The similarity between the placement of the agreement marker in these sentences and those noted in (1) seems to indicate the fusion of the traditional cleft and the new cleft in the speaker's mind. Sentence (16a), though, which is present tense, does not pose the same problem. There, the subject-agreement affix lowers to the verb as it does when marking pronominal DPs in present tense utterances.

Nevertheless, considering the various parameters and types of DPs that can comprise a cleft sentence in Shughni and the limitations inherent in object shifting, another phenomenon—scrambling—provides more adequate explanation of this construction. Like object shift, scrambling moves a DP leftward from a position inside of VP to a position outside of VP (Vikner 2006; Thráinsson 2003), but it does not restrict itself solely to DPs or the movement within the clause boundary, as Vikner (2006) has recently attested. Thráinsson (2003: 154-155) explains that, when used broadly, “scrambling” refers to word order variation. The recent literature, though, has lent the term a more specialized meaning relating to the “ ‘fronting’ (or ‘raising’) of constituents like objects, indirect objects, and even PPs.” Moreover, scrambling, unlike object shift, does not require VP movement (Vikner 2006). A noteworthy example of this syntactic process in which a non-pronominal DP moves from the complement of V in an embedded clause to a position between the subject and main verb in a higher clause appears in Russian:

(17) Vy posylku_i videli [kak zapakovali t_i]. (Russian)
you parcel saw how (they) wrapped

‘You saw how they wrapped the parcel.’

(Vikner 2006: 405, his (48); originally Müller 1995: 128, his (71b))

Although this construction does not raise the embedded object to the utmost left position or match semantically with the Shughni cleft, it merits mentioning in light of the political and social relationship between Russian and Shughni. While native speakers would deem a Shughni sentence modeled after (17) ungrammatical because of the landing site of the embedded object, one should not disregard the impact of Russian on Shughni.

One fundamental set of differences between object shift and scrambling has relevance to determining the behavior of Shughni constituents in the cleft sentence: the criteria for A-movement versus that for A-bar-movement. Thráinsson (2003: 172-174) sets forth these criteria, explaining them in terms of their relationship to either object shift or scrambling. A-movement rules, which characterize object shift, are typically clause-bounded and involve a landing-site that has an argument (i.e., a theta role) to give away. Conversely, A-bar-movement rules, which pertain to scrambling, extend beyond originating clauses and provide a landing-site that does not assign an argument. Vikner (2006: 403) adds to this description by presenting these movements in terms of case-checking: A-movement is movement into a case-marked position, while A-bar is movement out of one. These opposing theories apply to Shughni in several ways, all culminating to prove that Shughni cleft subjects and objects *do not* move to check case. The anomalous cleft transformation in Shughni best adheres to the framework of A-bar

and not simply because of its broad similarities to scrambling. First, recall Figure 6. Shughni subject or object movement cannot be clause-bound for two reasons: 1) given the extra morphemes that exist within the cleft (which must be plotted somewhere), the fronted DP has no home in which to land if it is restricted to its deep-structure clause; 2) the function of *tu/tama* as complementizers, a role on which I will elaborate in section 4.5, precludes the possibility of a landing-site within the originating clause because this word seems to separate two clauses. Movement to the left of *tu/tama* places the constituent outside of its original clause boundary. Furthermore, Shughni DPs that undergo movement are assigned both theta-role and case in their deep-structure positions, in accordance with the general assumptions undergirding this feature checking as presented in Carnie (2007). The verb in all of these clefts distributes theta-roles, subject DP and object DP (when object is applicable), and assigns accusative case to the object before any movement occurs. Similarly, the subject DP checks nominative case in the specifier position of embedded clause T, all before any movement outside of the clause takes place. This discourse is extraneous background information if I fail to reemphasize the point that case-marking or case-checking does not motivate these DP movements that we observe in the Shughni cleft sentence. A more plausible explanation will be unearthed, beginning in part in the next section.

4.4.2 *Extrapolation and Stranding*

Since object and subject movement in the Shughni language cannot be captured with the theories of object shift and scrambling, consideration of another approach—extrapolation—is in order. Extrapolation produces an English sentence like ‘It is obvious that John is a fool’ from its canonically-positioned counterpart ‘That John is a fool is

obvious' (Baltin 2006: 237). Of the examples we have studied thus far, this extraposed utterance most closely resembles the Shughni clefts, especially in terms of the creation of an embedded sentence. However, the construction of the extraposed sentence does not compare to that of the Shughni cleft. Baltin (2006: 237-238, 244) continues to explain this process as a rightward movement that opposes leftward ones like *wh*-movement in English (and clefting in Shughni). Instead of fronting or promoting the AP 'obvious', extraposition demotes the original main clause and fulfills the EPP for the new main clause with an expletive 'It'. This is clearly not the case in Shughni, where DPs must travel leftward in order to cross the special morphemes and appear in the first position; moreover, extraposition deals with moving clauses, not phrases, as in the example above. The rightward direction also limits movement to within its clause under a principle that Baltin (2006: 244) calls the Right Roof Constraint.

Thus, linguists have reanalyzed extraposition to account more thoroughly for English transformations; in particular, the reanalysis known as stranding suffices to illuminate partially the movement in the Shughni cleft. Stranding generates extraposed constituents in the position in which they ultimately reside and then moves the host—the phrase which the extraposed component modifies—to the left, in essence “stranding” the modifier (Baltin 2006: 256). So, in a Shughni cleft like *wuz-i tu-yum tūyd* 'It is I who left', *tu-yum tūyd* 'who [agreement marker] left' functions as a the extraposed element and *wuz* 'I' as the host, which is moved leftward. If the phenomenon occurring in the Shughni cleft were extraposition, it would read in the order **tu-yum tūyd wuz* and would translate as 'the one who left is I.' Since this construction violates all semblance of syntactic rules in Shughni, stranding is more likely to be the key. Baltin (2006: 239)

further shows that hosts can come in a variety of forms, not just subjects. Thus, an object cleft like *mu-yi tama-yen lūd* ‘It is me whom they told’ features *mu* as the host and *tama-yen lūd* as the stranded modifier. Although stranding can account for movement and the presence of a complementizer in the Shughni cleft, it cannot determine a role for the morpheme *-i*. However, it is important to note that extraposition or stranding of a basic-word-order sentence allows one constituent to be emphasized semantically over the others.

4.4.3 Topicalization

Emphasis remains central to this section as well, for topicalization refers to the process of placing a constituent in the sentence-initial position for this purpose (Xu 2006: 138; Tallerman 1998: 160). English examples of topicalization can cover a wide range of phrase-types and semantic associations, including ‘That it is Friday, I like’ and ‘In the meantime, John will prepare for his exam.’ Xu (2006) focuses on Asian languages for his study of topicalization; these languages are interestingly relevant to the study of Shughni because they employ a special topic morpheme to denote a topicalized constituent. Here are two examples from Korean cited in Xu (2006: 138 (1), 140 (10)):

- (18) a. **Ku totwuk-un** nay-ka cap-ass-ta. (Korean)
 the thief-TOP I-subj. catch-past-declarative
 ‘This thief, I caught.’
- b. **Pihengki-nin** 747-ka khi-ta.
 Airplane-TOP 747-subj. big-declarative
 ‘Airplanes (topic), the 747 is big.’

Notice the two topic morphemes that I have bolded. Although Korean uses different marking depending of the function of the topic¹⁰, these morphemes could potentially correspond to the *-i* in the Shughni cleft. Clearly, the instance in (18b) differs greatly from any Shughni clefting that we have seen, for topic there indicates a mutual issue of concern among speakers in the discourse but does not attempt to connect itself to the remainder of the utterance in any kind of hierarchical constituent structure. Nonetheless, the semantic relationship between these sentences and those appearing in Shughni deserves recognition, especially given Korean topic morphemes' potential ability to reconcile the mysterious *-i* in Shughni. Under the terms of topicalization, the Shughni cleft would result when a DP moves to the initial position and checks a [+topic] feature in *-i*. One problematic aspect of this scenario, though, lies in the fact that topicalized DPs do not tend to necessitate complementizers and embedded sentences. The four syntactic theories explored in this section allow us to motivate individual components of the Shughni cleft sentence, yet none of them has provided a wholly-universal solution. But before presenting a single, unifying analysis, I will provide extensive discussion of the perplexing morphemes *-i* and *tu/tama*.

4.5 Complementizer Agreement—*Shughni tu and tama*

Thus far, I have maintained the assumption that Shughni clefts are composed of two clauses—one main and one embedded. One fact in support of this claim is simply that if all elements of the cleft came together in one clause, there would not be enough heads to accommodate them. Second, interpretations of the clefts indicate two TPs both containing, of course, a VP and an DP (or at least a trace of one). Finally, the partnership

¹⁰ It appears that Korean topic morphemes may alternate based on whether the topic is moved to the initial position or whether the topic is generated there. This alternation or the purpose for it does not strongly affect the potential link between Korean and Shughni topic markers.

between *-i* and *tu/tama*, which cannot be severed if the speaker wants a grammatical cleft to result, produces two complementary roles: 1) one morpheme instigates or facilitates movement, 2) while the other signals the newly-embeddedness of the clause from which the moved phrase originated. This section will examine the morpheme, *tu/tama*, that serves as the complementizer by comparing its behavior to other complementizers in the world's languages.

The first note of importance regarding this morpheme lies in its form; Shughni exhibits a sort of syncretism when assigning *tu* and *tama* to the complementizer role. These words already represent the second person subject pronouns, *tu* for singular and *tama* for plural. I cannot give nor does the literature provide a strong answer for why this phenomenon occurs; it seems that the Shughni language has borrowed internally when a need for a new complementizer arose. This dilemma may be easily solvable if we were able to study the evolution of “Old” Shughni into its present form, but we have no concrete way to obtain this data. Furthermore, the ubiquitous “that” in English also serves dual duty as both complementizer and demonstrative. This matter aside, the alternation of *tu* and *tama* complementizers, allomorphs of the same morpheme, requires some attention. Listed below are a few sentences that exhibit this alternation:

- (19) a. *Wāḏ-i* **tu**-yen *lūd.*
 3pl.subj.-i tu-3pl.subj.agr.past tell.past
 ‘It is they who told.’
- b. *Wāḏ-i* **tama**-yen *lūd.*
 3pl.subj.-i tama-3pl.subj.agr.past tell.past
 ‘It is they who told.’

- c. *Maš¹¹-yi **tama-yi** jêt čūd.
 1pl.obj.-yi tama-3sg.subj.agr.past invite.past
 *‘It is we whom he invited.’
- d. Tu-yi **tu-t** tūyd.
 2sg.subj.-yi tu-2sg.subj.agr.past tell.past
 ‘It is you who told.’
- e. yāc-i **tu-yi** lūd.
 girl (3sg)-i tu-3sg.subj.agr.past sing.past
 ‘It is the girl who sang.’

Example (19) reveals how the complementizer agrees in number with the subject of the utterance. Significantly, in the past tense, *tu* or *tama* attaches to the DP or subject-agreement marker with which it agrees. Agreement occurs in the present as well, but because of Shughni’s convention for forming this tense, agreement markers attach to the verb instead. Moreover, as (19a-b) illustrate, either *tu* or *tama* can be used with a plural subject, but only *tu*—as the ungrammaticality in (19c) indicates—can apply for the singular.

Like the Shughni language, complementizer agreement appears in West Flemish. Belletti (2003) explains that complementizers in this language carry an inflection that marks agreement with the subject of the embedded sentence. (20) gives examples of various forms that this agreement morpheme can take (Belletti 2003: 495 (36 e-f)).

¹¹ In terms of its subject/nominative case pronouns and its object/accusative case pronouns, Shughni displays syncretism in second-singular, second-plural, and first-plural. *Maš* means both ‘we’ and ‘us.’

- (20) a. Kpeinzen **dan-k** (ik) morgen goan. (West Flemish)
 I think that-I (I) tomorrow go.
- b. Kpeinzen **da-se** (zie) morgen goat.
 I think that-she (she) tomorrow goes.

As noted above, West Flemish complementizers go one step beyond their counterpart in Shughni, agreeing with the subject in both person and number while Shughni complementizers agree in number only. Like Shughni though, subjects in West Flemish also agree with the finite verb. Another interesting facet of the Shughni complementizers *tu* and *tama* relates to their exceptional presence in cleft sentences. As far as I can deduce from the data gathered from native speakers, these complementizers do not function as such in any other type of sentence in the language. Nevertheless, Shughni does possess several other complementizers that appear in various contexts:

- (21) a. Murd **disga** divest wuz-um kasal.
 1sg.dat. to me like this seem I-am sick
 ‘It seems to me that I am sick.’
- b. Yā-yi lūd **idi**¹² maš-am dēr yat.
 She-3sg.subj.agr.past said that We-1pl.subj.agr.past late were
 ‘She said that we were late.’
- c. Yu čorik bōwar kiřt ya řiniki wi řīwř.
 masc.concrete man believe do (that) fem.concrete woman him loves.
 ‘The man believes that the woman loves him.’

¹² *Idi* is remarkably similar to the expletive *yidi* in (1). Perhaps these two forms are links in the diachronic history of finite clause marking in Shughni.

(21a) reveals the complementizer *disga*, meaning ‘like this’, while (21b) illustrates the use of another complementizer *idi* ‘that’. (21c) shows an instance of the null complementizer, an element of the sentence that may either be optional or never generated in the first place. Likewise, Welsh uses a similar method to construct sentences comparable to the Shughni cleft. Roberts (2003: 128) reports, “Welsh has a focussing [sic] strategy which allows exactly one XP to be fronted over the verb . . . when embedded, clauses with a fronted focussed XP are preceded by one of a special class of complementizers.” For instance, the sentence *Dywedais i mai [’r dynion a werthith y ci]*, where *a* is the commonplace complementizer and *mai* the distinctive one, and where brackets denote the embedded clause, translates as ‘I said that it’s the men who will sell the dog’ (Roberts 2003: 128). Although the Welsh example goes one step further to embed an already-clefted sentence, the link between the type of construction and the use of special complementizers in Welsh and Shughni is noteworthy.

4.6 A Few Points Regarding *-i*

Like *tu* and *tama*, *-i* also represents syncretism in Shughni. The morpheme *-i* denotes some feature in cleft sentences in addition to serving as the third-singular past subject-agreement clitic in the intransitive active or transitive and the second-singular present subject agreement clitic. Upon first analysis, this perplexing morpheme in its role within the cleft seems as though it could have several possible functions. For one, it could serve as a copula, a morpheme that connects two components, particularly noun or adjective phrases, in a sentence (Millar 2007; Tallerman 1998: 43). An example from English, ‘The car is red,’ reveals the verb BE as the link between the noun phrase ‘car’ and the adjective phrase ‘red.’ If the Shughni cleft *-i* were a copula, it would illustrate a

relationship between the fronted noun phrase and the complementizer phrase that comprises the remainder of the sentence. However, in other aspects of the Shughni language, no copula surfaces. Consider the sentences *Tu-t molim* ‘You are a teacher,’ and *Mu virond-en-en-at yaxen-en zulik* ‘My brothers and sisters are young.’ In these instances, the subject agreement markers—*-t* and *-en*, respectively—suffice to convey the information inherent in BE. Furthermore, in languages where a copula is not overtly realized in a declarative statement, it is a logical extension for cleft sentences to be formed without one (Harries-Delisle 1978: 425).

Another possibility for *-i* involves case-marking. Payne (1980), a seminal study of the languages of the Pamir region, discusses each of these languages with regard to their shifting case systems, arguing that each bears various degrees of evidence of a once-ergative system. As stated previously, Shughni is mostly devoid of case. The language has evolved from an ergative-absolutive model, which singles out the subject of a transitive sentence into a double-oblique transition stage before settling as the nominative-accusative system that exists today. Shughni has lost the double-oblique (both ergative and accusative) system for marking transitive sentences (Payne 1980: 169). Given what we can observe about Shughni clefts, none of these case systems actually supports the presence of *-i* because all promoted elements, including transitive subjects and objects as well as intransitive subjects, precede this same morpheme. If any case model applied, it would be the neutral system—as Payne (1980: 148) describes—where all arguments receive the same marking. Since neither copula nor case is the answer, we must return to the broad view of the cleft itself. The goal and function of this sentence type continue to be emphasis of a particular constituent over another. Therefore, in light

of the close approximation of the Shughni cleft that topicalization offers us, let us explore the option of *-i* as a focus marker.

4.7 Focus Movement—The Unifier

4.7.1 Application to Shughni

Of the theories or explanations posited thus far for the appearance and function of the elements in the Shughni cleft, none can account for all three of puzzling aspects, namely the presence of the morpheme *-i* and the morpheme *tu/tama* and the rationale for movement. However, focus movement, specifically for the purpose of realizing a focus feature, unifies each of these elements. Szendrői (2006: 273-274) argues that focused constituents are displaced from their original positions in a sentence via movement. She expounds further on three trends for thinking about this movement and its motivation—the focus realization as similar to case assignment, focus movement as analogous to *wh*-movement, and finally the “focus-to-accent” view where focus is attached to the constituent bearing prosodic prominence. I propose that, even though Shughni does not pattern itself directly after any the aforementioned schemas, the language’s cleft constructions are all instances of focus movement. Under this hypothesis, *-i* is the overt morphological realization of the focus feature, the desire or necessity to check this feature motivates the movement of either subject or objects DPs, and *tu/tama* serves as a complementizer to indicate that the clause from which the constituent moved is both newly-embedded and finite (see Roberts 2003). Two related questions now arise: 1) at what node in the structure does *-i* sit, and 2) what is the landing site for the moved DP? Studying more closely the approach in which *wh*-movement correlates with focus movement will lead us toward answers to these questions.

4.7.2 *Shughni Focus Movement Akin to Wh-Movement*

Needless to say, this analogy is odd considering the fact that Shughni is a *wh*-in-situ language, as discussed in section 3. However, given the formation of the cleft sentence by way of leftward movement, it is clear that focusing does not occur in-situ. Ironically, Shughni focus movement resembles the process of *wh*-movement in languages, like English, where question words do not remain in their place of origin. The presence of [+wh] triggers the movement of a DP to check this feature; the same motivation is true of focus movement (Karimi 2003). This scenario is interesting in light of what we know about the evolution of the Shughni language and its dearth of movement. As shown in section 1, native speakers of the younger generation have begun to form clefts in a literal way that elides movement. Since Shughni focus clefts are a trademark of the conservative language, perhaps question formation has changed in a similar manner, leaving behind only a remnant of its essence in the cleft.

The syntacticians who are proponents of this view of focus movement argue that both the focus- and *wh*-criteria must be licensed in a specifier-head relationship (Szendrői 2006; Rizzi 1997). Thus, in Shughni the focus morpheme *-i* would occupy the head of a phrase, while the moved element would land in the specifier position of said phrase. Moreover, according to Rizzi (1997), topicalization is compatible with the *wh*-criterion (i.e. both can occur in a given utterance), but focus and *wh* must exist in complementary distribution. His examples from Italian illustrate the notion that a topic may precede a *wh*-question but that foci cannot appear in a sentence where *wh*-movement has already taken place (Rizzi 1997: 291)¹³. Under this schema, the tree presented, for instance, in

¹³ Rizzi (1997) thoroughly delineates the differences between topic and focus. While they are fascinating, discussing them here would deviate too far from the point of my argument.

Figure 6 on p. 29 could remain as it is with only the simple addition of a [+focus] feature in T. However, the focus movement construction goes a step beyond to determine whether [+focus] originates in T and remains there permanently or whether it moves from T to C, as in Basque. T to C raising is not ultimately applicable to Shughni, so I will not examine it here; nevertheless an example from Basque reveals another key difference from Shughni focus:

- (22) a. Jonek liburua irakurri du. (Basque)
 John book read has
 ‘John has read the book.’
- b. JONEK du liburua irakurri.
 ‘It is John that has read the book.’ (Szendrői 2006: 60)

While this pair of utterances exhibits a movement of the auxiliary as well as the focused DP, it does not contain an overt realization of [+focus] as is the case in Shughni.

A final option of which Rizzi (1997) and Roberts (2003) are advocates, and which is highly plausible here, always considers focus a complementizer. Roberts (2003: 126-127) discusses three types of complementizers—Force, Focus, and Finite. The function of Focus has already been introduced; the most common complementizers in English (and the Shughni *tu/tama*) that denote an inflected embedded clause are Finite. Finally, Force is “associated with clausal typing” and does not play a role in Shughni clefts. Thus, having established the position of Focus, we can construct a reanalyzed version of a transitive sentence with a clefted object, similar to the tree in Figure 3. As Figure 7 below indicates, the focus feature *-i* sits in the complementizer head of the main clause,

while *tu* heads the embedded sentence. The DP *mu*, which originates as a complement to lower V, first moves to the specifier of T in the main clause to satisfy the EPP then travels to its final landing-site—specifier of main clause C—where it checks [+focus] and becomes the focused element of the utterance. This unified theory of the Shughni cleft sentence justifies the presence of all three of the distinctive components. Furthermore, it brings together two of the methods the world’s languages employ to focus constituents: a morphological marking and a syntactic construction that indicates the discourse function, both of which are assessed in Szendrői (2006). In addition, let us take a look at how this framework accommodates Shughni focus sentences with non-pronominal DPs. Figure 8 depicts a tree of one such utterance.

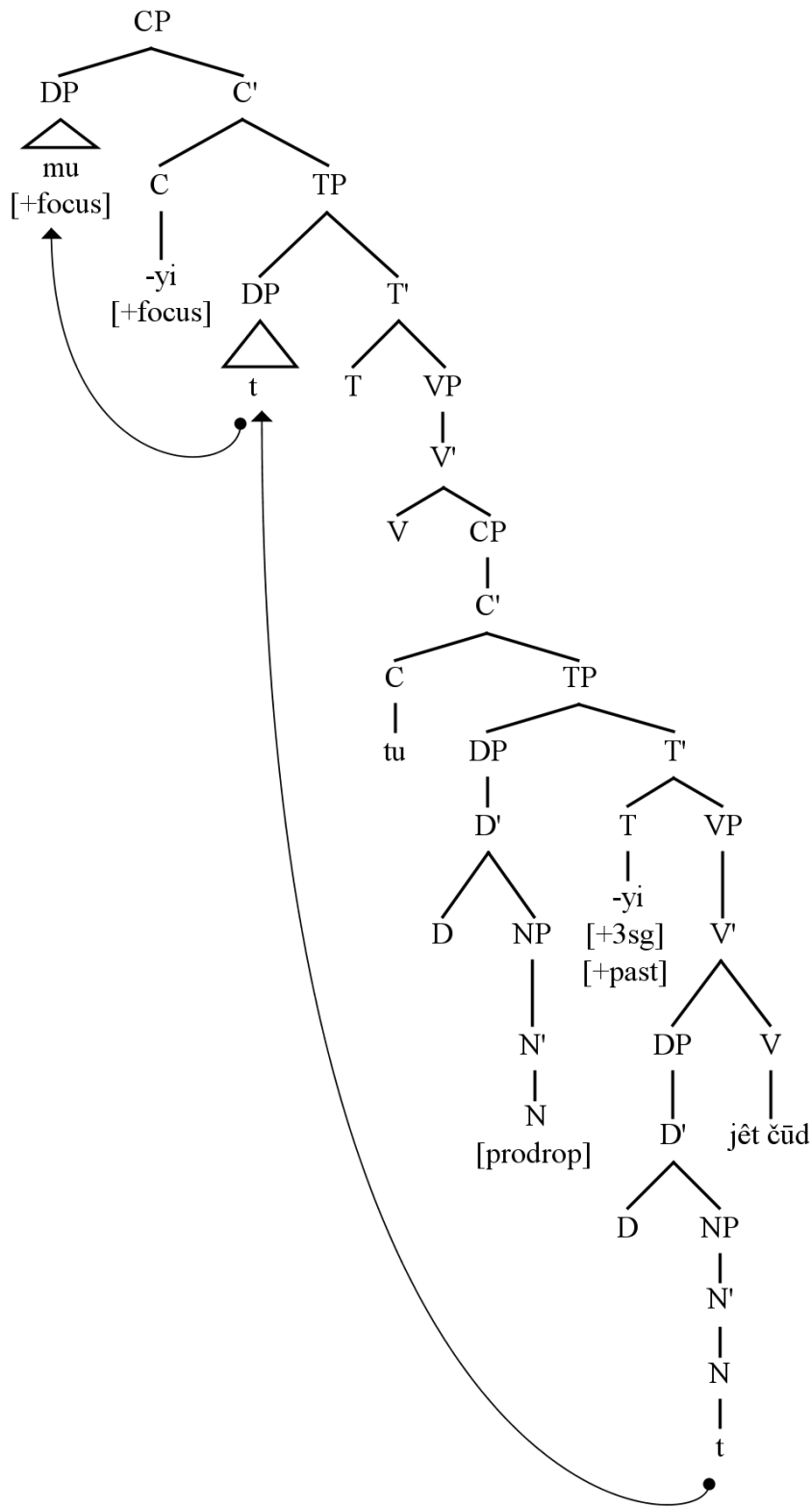


Figure 7: Object Movement Focus Reanalysis 'It is me whom he invited.'

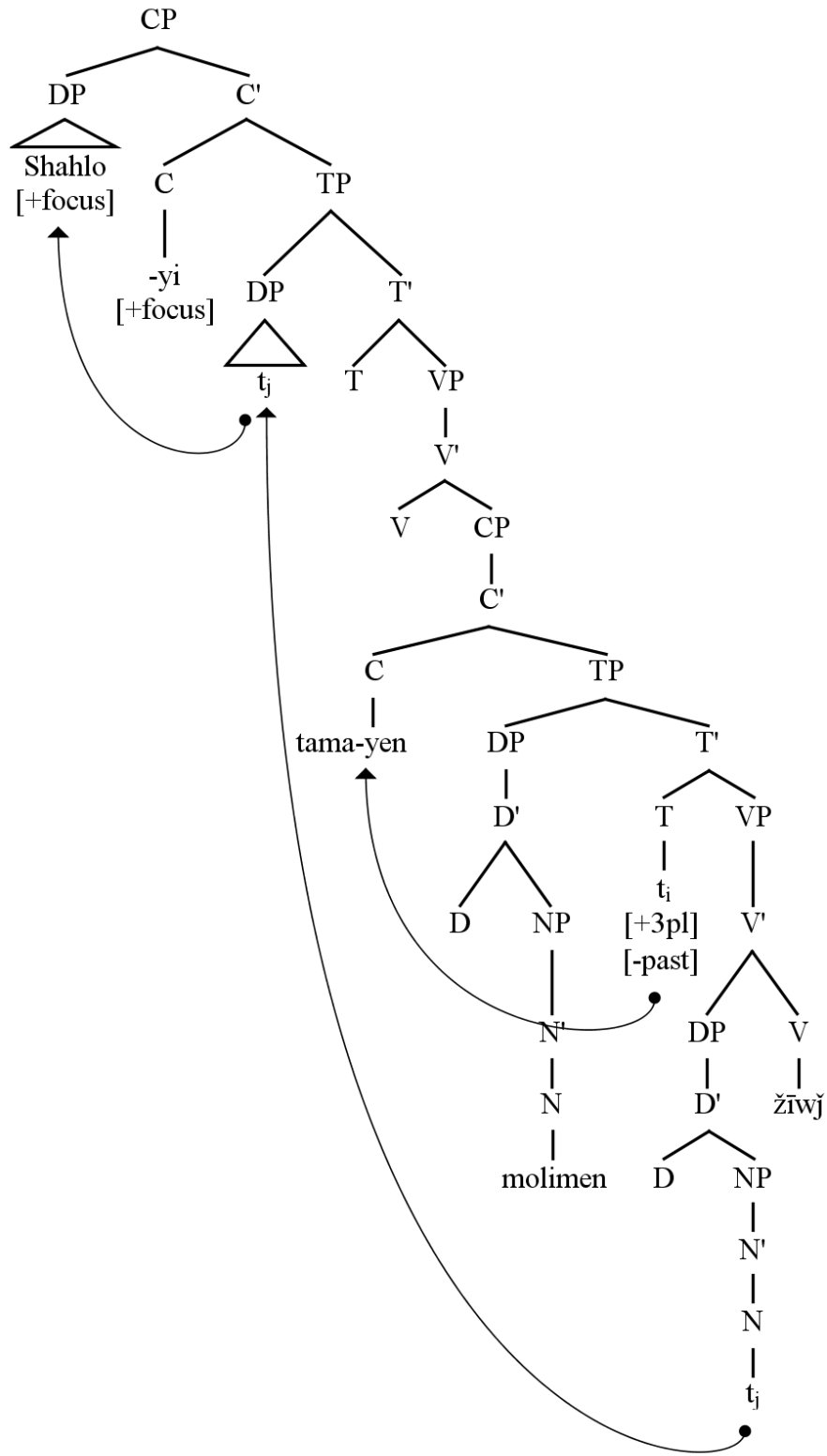


Figure 8: Focus Movement 'It is Shahlo whom the teachers love.'

In addition to illustrating all the processes apparent in Figure 7, Figure 8 shows how one might reconcile the unexpected placement of a subject-agreement morpheme that appears immediately after the complementizer as T to C movement. Further study is necessary to provide a more solid explanation of this phenomenon.

4.7.3 An Alternate Conception of the Focus Complementizer

Rizzi (1997) argues that while Focus, along with its counterparts Force and Finite, is a complementizer, it is not realized in a CP but as the head of its own Focus phrase.

The figure below reproduces the representation of this phrase as it appears in Rizzi (1997: 287 (6)):

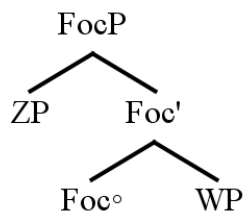


Figure 9: The Focus Phrase

In this diagram, ZP is the focused element, and WP is the presupposition or the part of the utterance that is already known and, hence, unemphasized. Specifically, as they relate to Shughni, ZP is the fronted DP and WP, the remainder of the clause that becomes embedded. Szendrői (2006: 298) claims, “It would be a strong support for Rizzi’s line of thinking if a language with an overt Focus head could be identified.” She then mentions that Somali produces inconclusive evidence on this count. The Somali data that Szendrői presents reveal the use of overt morphological affixes to, presumably, denote focus.

Example (23) gives condensed version of this data:

- (23) a. Cali-**baa** moos cunay. (Somali)
 Ali-subj.focus banana ate
 ‘Ali ate a banana.’
- b. Cali MOOS-**buu** cunay.
 ‘Ali ate a banana (obj. focus on ‘banana’).
 (Szendrői 2006: 312 (84); my emphasis)

From this data, it is unclear whether movement is taking place. If so, the movement is more covert than in Shughni and occurs over a shorter distance. Also unclear, as Szendrői notes, is whether the so-called focus markers are attached to the emphasized DP, or whether they are dependent on V. Likewise, linguists believe that the focused DPs may not necessarily be the full focus of the utterances (Szendrői 2006: 313-314). Shughni, on the other hand, is not subject to either of these indeterminacies. For one, native speakers insist that the sentence-initial constituent is the primary focus of the utterance, regardless of its canonical position in the basic word order. Furthermore, the presence of the second complementizer in the Shughni focus construction seems to impede the reliance of *-i* on the verb. The fact that the complementizers *-i* and *tu/tama* come as an inseparable pair provides continued support for Rizzi’s structure in Figure 9. That said, let us consider one final reanalysis of the hierarchical composition of the Shughni focus cleft for the sentence originally depicted in Figure 8.

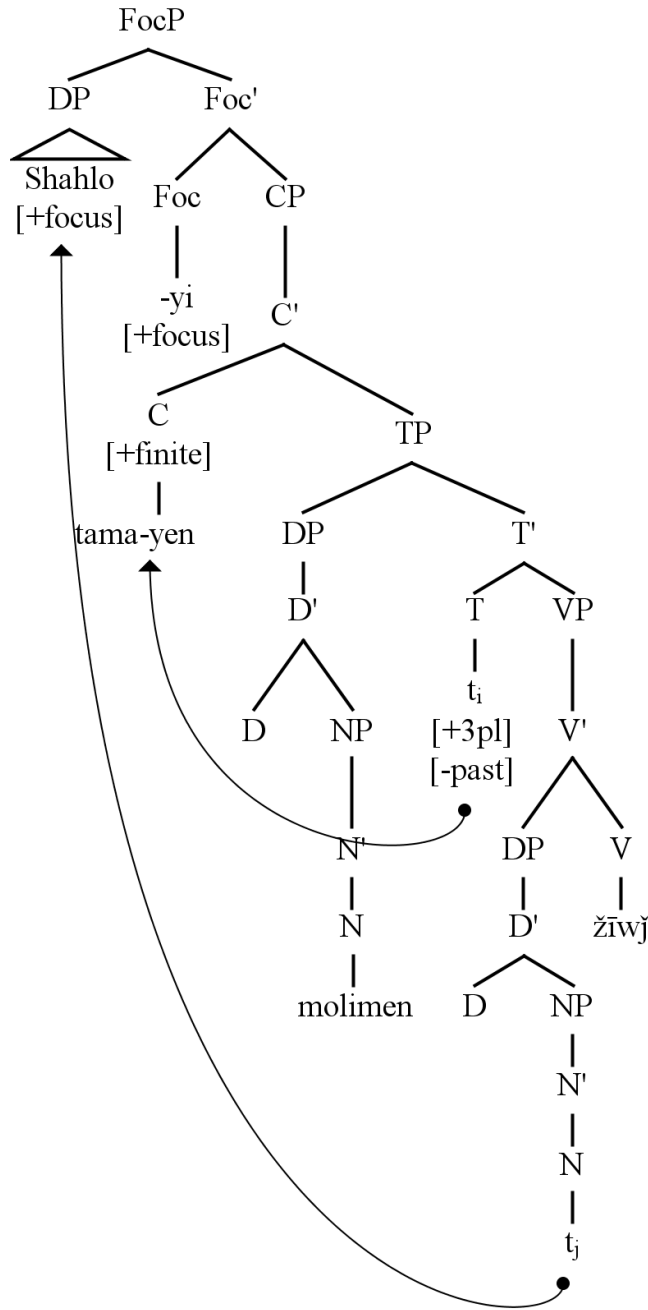


Figure 10: Unified Focus Movement ‘It is Shahlo whom the teachers love.’

This succinct display of focus movement eliminates the main clause-embedded clause distinction. Instead, a series of complementizers introduce the focused element and precede the presupposition. Therefore, the necessity for the object DP to make an intermediate stop in its movement in order to fulfill the EPP is also eliminated. Likewise,

the subjacency violation, regarding the absence of case assignment from main clause T, is resolved. This final representation contains only one clause, thus only one T and only one chance for case assignment, which plays out as expected. Case-checking does not motivate DP movement in the Shughni cleft. Moreover, in this analysis, which seems to be the most applicable and most economical of those presented in this paper, the complementizer *tu/tama* is not signaling an embedded sentence but indicating that the following clause is declarative and finite.

4.7.4 A Final Word on Shughni Focus

I have geared all data thus far toward an analysis of focus marking in *-i-plus-tu* cleft sentences; however, evidence also exists for focus movement in a simpler cleft. The following sentence appears in Bakhtibekov (1979: 87):

- (24) Samad-i Fozil qiw̄t tar xu čīd
 Samad-i Fozil invite.past to his house
 ‘Fozil invited Samad to his house’

He provides an additional literal word-by-word translation ‘Samad, Fozil invited to his house.’ Most interestingly, *-i* appears once again outside of its context as an agreement marker, reiterating its function as the overt focus head. The interpretation of this utterance not as ‘It is Samad whom Fozil invited to his house’ but as ‘Fozil invited Samad to his house,’ maintains the traditional word order is also telling because the Shughni version of this construction closely resembles topicalization. This further suggests that only the combination of the complementizer duo *-i* and *tu/tama* can create the specific focus interpretation. Bakhtibekov (1979) comments only briefly on this

phenomenon, saying that the Shughni subject almost always sits in the sentence-initial position, but sometimes it comes after an object or adverbial modifier. He does not attribute this occurrence to movement, though. All this considered, the multiplicitous role of *-i* in Shughni as well as that of *tu* and *tama* serves to illuminate many facets of the language.

5. Conclusion

The Shughni cleft sentence is a dying form whose preservation may enable linguists to understand the universal workings of this language as well as those of focus movement. This theory applied to the clefts has several positive outcomes. First, it unifies both the transformation of either subject or object DP and the role of special morphemes, while assigning them non-arbitrary functions. Second, if *-i* can serve as an overt manifestation of the focus feature (and all signs point to this conclusion), then Shughni provides the focus head that Rizzi (1997) needs to solidify his theory of the left periphery. Moreover, his analysis of the way in which complementizers can stack, arranging themselves hierarchically, accounts for the presence of Shughni *tu/tama* in a less cumbersome manner than my original hypothesis about two separate TPs. While cleft *tu/tama* exhibits both formal and functional evidence for its role as a complementizer, its inseparable relationship to the cleft *-i* strengthens Rizzi's claim. And last, considering that one explanation of focus movement conceives of the process as operating in a parallel manner to *wh*-movement, Shughni's in-situ structure is absolutely mind-boggling. But perhaps the language-change drift that is, as we speak, overtaking the cleft sentence has already performed a similar procedure on Shughni questions. As the oldest living generation passes away so too will these unique constructions. The

language's unwritten status will make it difficult to investigate past patterns of question formation, but maybe an areal study of related languages could illuminate this issue.

Another topic that warrants continued research is the impact of a third argument (that is, an indirect object) on the structure of the Shughni cleft. It seems likely that these phrases could be fronted and focused as well, but would this occurrence fit into focus clefting schema established in this paper? At the very least, if continuing under the minimalist system, one would have to expand VP to accommodate the extra object. A more worthwhile extension of this project would deal at length with the type of focus construction in Bakhtibekov (1979) that I mentioned in passing in section 4.7.4. The presence of the same morphological focus feature outside of the framework of the *-i-* plus-*tu* cleft is very interesting. In the example above, a phrase still undergoes movement to check the focus feature. It is highly plausible, though, that the Shughni focus morpheme could go the way of the yes/no-question and passive particles, thus creating another in-situ feature.

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