Sinhala Focus Constructions from a Discourse-Syntactic Perspective

Hideki Kishimoto

Sinhala is a language in which a particle is utilized to mark focus. In Sinhala, focus is overtly marked by a focus particle appearing in clause internal position, but this particle is allowed to appear in clause-final scope position as well, in which case focus is not delimited. In this paper, I will argue that the focus particle located in focus-delimiting position is covertly raised to the scope position occupied by a clause-final focus particle, due to the fact that it also assumes the function of specifying scope for its focused constituent. Sinhala has two types of focus-marking constructions, which are distinguished according to whether or not focus particles have a discourse-function of adding an interrogative force to the clauses. On the basis of blocking effects observed for long distance A'-extraction (pseudo-clefting or scrambling) in focus constructions, it is suggested that an interrogative focus marker should be located in a higher operator position than a non-interrogative focus marker at LF.