1 Introduction

Two distinctions in focus:

**SIZE:** narrow vs. broad

**TYPE:** informational vs. identificational

* Information Focus (INFO): new, non-presupposed information (Kiss 1998: 246)

* Identificational Focus (ID): contrastive and/or exhaustive information (Kiss 1998: 267)

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<th>NARROW</th>
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<td>e.g. prosodic stress (1a)</td>
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(1)  
a. - Who likes avocado?  
   - [PHAEDRA] likes avocado.

b. - What happened?  
   - [My PLATE broke.]

(2)  

'S ann do Cheann-Phàdruig a chaidh e, agus 's ann do Fraserburgh a
is it to Peterhead that went he and is it to Fraserburgh that
chaidh ise.
went she
It was to Peterhead he went, and she went to Fraserburgh.  
GL:275

CLAIM: Broad ID focus is conveyed by the Scottish Gaelic PROPOSITIONAL CLEFT (PC), (3), which uses cleft morphosyntax (bolded) while lacking a clefted constituent

(3)  
an àite dha biadh a thoirt sios chun a’ chait,  
'S ANN a [chaidh e as a dhèidh leis an fhorc fhèòir.]

an àite dha biadh a thoirt sios chun a’ chait, ‘s ann a chaidh e
instead of food to take down to the cat is it that went he
as a dhèidh leis an fhorc fhèòir.
after him with the hayfork
Instead of taking food down to the cat, he went after him with the hayfork.  
GL:271

GOALS:

1 Argue that the PC has both broad and identificational focus

2 Develop a formal analysis of the PC’s pragmatic meaning
2 The Question Under Discussion (QUD) Framework

- The goal of discourse is to determine which world we are in by reducing the set of possible worlds (the Context Set) to a singleton set.
- Utterances are moves which help to achieve this goal by answering the Big Question “What is the way things are?” (Roberts 1996: 6)
  - Assertions reduce the Context Set by adding to the Common Ground (set of accepted propositions).
  - Questions introduce sub-goals and partition the Common Ground.
  - Questions are organized in a stack, and have a hierarchical relation
    * the current QUD a sub-question of a previous one
    * once a QUD is answered, it is removed from the stack

2.1 Focus in the QUD

2.1.1 (Narrow) Focus

- Focus presupposes CONGRUENCE to the current QUD

(4) Move $\beta$ is congruent to a question $?\alpha$ iff its focal alternatives $\parallel \beta \parallel$ are the Q-alternatives determined by $?\alpha$, i.e. iff $\parallel \beta \parallel = Q\text{-alt}(\alpha)$ (Roberts 1996: 24)

(5) The focus alternative set corresponding to a constituent $\beta$, $\parallel \beta \parallel$, is the set of all interpretations obtained by replacing all the F-marked (focused) constituents in $\beta$ with variables, and then interpreting the result relative to each member of the set of all assignment functions which vary at most in the values they assign to those variables. (Roberts 1996: 23)

- The QUD which an utterance answers is reconstructible from its focal structure

Because of this, focus utterances may:

i. Directly ADDRESS the current QUD, or

ii. Indicate a STRATEGY to answer the QUD

- ID Focus in the QUD:
  - Contrast arises through interpretive constraints on the information structure of the discourse (Roberts 1996: 40)
  - Corrective focus arises when the interlocuter addresses a different QUD (Roberts 1996: 34)
2.1.2 Broad Focus

- Sentence Focus (SF) conveys all-new information (Lambrecht 1994) and is characterized by a lack of focal structure (Lambrecht 2000).
- This lack of a focal structure means that SF utterances are congruent only to the Big Question.
- Thus the felicity of SF utterances
  - in discourse-initial contexts, and
  - as answers to questions requiring all-new answers (e.g. “What happened?”) (Leonetti and Escandell-Vidal 2009: 185).

2.1.3 Summary

⇒ Narrow focus utterances are congruent to the QUD
  Broad focus utterances are not congruent to the QUD
⇒ ID focus arises in particular discourse configurations
  INFO focus is relatively unmarked
3 The Propositional Cleft

3.1 Type of Focus: Identificational [+contrastive]

The PC occurs in contrastive contexts:

i. Contrastive:

(6) “An do ghlac thu duine an raoir, Eoghainn?”
“Did you catch anyone last night, Eoin?”

“Cha do ghlac. Chan fhaca duine an donas a riamh— ’s ann a bhios e ’ga fhaireachdainn.”

“Cha do ghlac. Chan fhaca duine an donas a riamh ’s ann a bhios e no not saw person the devil ever is it that will-be he ’ga fhaireachdainn.”

feeling-him

“No. Nobody ever saw the devil: he only feels him.”

ii. Corrective:

(7) “D` e a` ch` eaird a bhios againn an seo?” dh`fhaighnich Manawydan.
“What craft will we take here?” asked Manawydan.

“C` eaird sam bith a thogras tu as na `s aithne dhut,” thuirt Pryderi.
“Whatever craft you have knowledge of” said Pryderi

“Chan e,” ars’ esan, “S ann a dh’fheuchas sinn c`eaird na greusachd.”

“Chan e,” ars’ esan, “S ann a dh’fheuchas sinn c`eaird na greusachd.
no said he is it that will-try we craft of-the cobbler

“No,” he said, “We’ll go for the craft of the cobbler.”

iii. Counter-presuppositional:

(8) Thugadh boireannaich a-steach a choimhead as deaghaidh an leanaibh ’s a mh`thair. AM: 23
Women were brought in to watch after the child and his mother.

Ach ’s ann a chaidil na boireannaich.

Ach ’s ann a chaidil na boireannaich
but is it that slept the women

But the women slept.
iv. Emphatic:

(9) *Chaidh e agus fuair e each, agus chuir e buideal uisge-bheatha, air gach toabh do’ n each, ann an sacht,
he went and he got a horse, and he put a keg of whisky on each side of the horse in a sack,

’s chaidh e seach na saighdearan leis, ’s e mar gu ’m bitheadh e a’ fuireachd am falach orra.
and he went past the soldiers with it, as though he were hiding from them.

Shaoil na saighdearan gum b’ ann a thug se rudaiginn air falbh orra,
Shaoil thought that is it that took he something away on-them

‘The soldiers thought that it was so, that he had taken something away from them’.

⇒ The PC conveys ID focus

3.2 Size of Focus: Broad

Contrast may fall on any element:

- Proposition:

“Pryderi,” said Manawydan, “those men want to kill us.

“Cha leig sinn a leas dad fhulang o na slaightirean ud. Bheir sinn ionnsaigh orra ’s marbhaidh sinn iad.”
“We don’t need to suffer a thing from those rogues. We will attack them and kill them.”

“Cha toir idir,” arsa Manawydan, “Chluinneadh Caswallon ’s a dhaoine mu dheidhinn sin, ’s chuireadh sin crioich oirnne. [‘S ann a th`eid sinn gu baile eile.’]
“Not at all,” arsa Manawydan, “Caswallon and his men would hear about that, and would put an end ot us. [We will go to another town.”

No at-all said Manawydan would-hear Caswallon and his men
mu dheidhinn sin, ’s chuireadh sin crioich oirnne. ‘S ann a th`eid sinn gu about that and would-put that end on-us is it that will-go we to baile eile.”

‘Ch toir idir,” arsa Manawydan, “Chluinneadh Caswallon ’s a dhaoine

We will go to another town.”
• Sub-part of Proposition:
  - Verbs/predicates:

(11) an àite dha biadh a thoirt sìos chun a’ chait, ‘s ann a chaidh e as a dhèidh leis an fhorc fheòir.

Instead of taking food down to the cat, he went after him with the hayfork.

(12) Ciod thuige dh’ith thu na pàircean?
By whom did you eat the fields?

Cha mhis’ a dh’ith eud idir, ‘s ann a dh’ith na caoraich eud.

It was not I that ate them at all; it was the sheep that ate them.

(13) “A Dhia m’anam” arsa mise “an ann a staigh an seo a tha i tighinn?”
“O Lord” I said, “Is it in here that it’s coming?”

“O, cha n-ann,” ars ise, “’s ann a thà i dol dha’n rùm eile.”

“O, no,” she said, “It’s going to another room.”

(14) Aig toiseach an t-subhachais an deaghaidh na cuirm,
At the start of the entertainment after the feast, they saw a tall young princely man with reddish-blond hair coming in.
⇒ Focus does not consistently fall on a subpart of the utterance

- Initially puzzling: no apparent size of focus
- This apparent range of size is best understood if the PC conveys broad ID focus
  - The PC is not congruent to the QUD (§3.3 below)
  - Broad ID focus involves manipulation of the discourse structure: the PC revises the QUD, and the range of contrast seen above derives the revised QUD.

3.3 Lack of Congruence to the Current QUD

The PC instead has two effects on the discourse:

i. Re-evoke a Super-Question:

(15) “Dè a’ chèaird a bhios againn an seo?” dh’fhaighnich Manawydan.
     “[What craft will we take here?]” asked Manawydan.

     “Cèaird sam bith a thogras tu as na ’s aithne dhut,” thuirt Pryderi.
     “Whatever [craft you have knowledge of]” said Pryderi

     “Chan e,” ars’ esan, “S ann a dh’fheuchas sinn cèaird na greusachd.”
     “No,” he said, “We’ll go for the craft of the cobbler.”

(16) “A Dhia m’anam” arsa mise “an ann a staigh an seo a tha i tighinn?”
     “O Lord,” I said, “[Is it in here that she’s coming?]’

     “O, cha n-ann,” ars ise, “S ann a tha i dol dha’n rùm eile.”
     “Oh no” said she is it that is she going to.the room other

     “O, no,” she said, “She’s going to another room.”
ii. **Revise the Current QUD:**

(17) “Ciod thuige dh’ith thu na pàircean?”
   “[By whom did you eat the fields?]”

   “Cha mhis’ a dh’ith eud idir, ’s ann a dh’ith na caoraich eud.”
   *Cha mhis’ a dh’ith eud idir, ’s ann a dh’ith na caoraich eud.*
   not me that ate them at.all is it that ate the sheep them
   “It was not I that ate them at all; it was the sheep that ate them.”

(18) “An do ghlac thu duine an raoir, Eoghainn?”
   “[Did you catch anyone last night, Eoghan?]”

   “Cha do ghlac. Chan fhaca duine an donas a riamh— ’s ann a bhios e ’ga fhaireachdainn.”
   *Cha do ghlac. Chan fhaca duine an donas a riamh ’s ann a bhios e*
   no not saw person the devil ever is it that will-be he
   ’ga fhaireachdainn.”
   feeling-him
   “No. Nobody ever saw the devil: he only feels him.”

(19) “Dè ’n rud a dh’ fheumas sibh d’éanamh an thoiseach leis a’ chlòimh?”
   “[What is the first thing you must do with the wool?]”

   *O, well, ’s e snìomh na clòimhe, snìomh agus càrdadh na clòimhe, ’s e sin a’ cheud obair a*
   *thathas a’ dèanamh a thaobh a’ chlò- mhòir idir.*
   O, well, it’s spinning the wool, spinning and carding the wool, that’s the very first work that is
   to be done concerning the tweed.

   *Ach tha an diugh— ’s ann a thathas a’ dèanamh an obair sin anns na muilnean.”*
   *Ach tha an diugh ‘s ann a thathas a’ dèanamh an obair sin anns na muilnean*
   but is today is it that is done that work in the mills
   “But today that work is done in the mills.”

3.4 **Summary: the Pragmatic Function of the PC**

- The PC conveys broad ID focus
- The PC does not address the current QUD directly but instead either answers a previous QUD or
introduces a new one.
3.5 Analysis

- What does it mean for the PC to convey broad ID focus?
  
  The PC is used to REVISE or REJECT the current QUD

- The focal structure within the relative clause introduces the new QUD.

- Typology of Assertions:
  - ADDRESS: the utterance accepts and answers the QUD; QUD is removed from the stack and the previous QUD becomes current.
    \[
    Q
    \uparrow
    \checkmark QUD
    \]
  - STRATEGY: the utterance accepts the QUD and introduces a sub-question to help answer it; this sub-question becomes current.
    \[
    \checkmark QUD
    \downarrow
    q
    \]
  - REJECT: the utterance rejects the strategy indicated by the QUD; QUD is removed from the stack and the previous QUD becomes current.
    \[
    Q
    \uparrow
    \not\checkmark QUD
    \]
  - REVISE: the utterance rejects the strategy indicated by the QUD; QUD is removed from the stack and a new one is introduced.
    \[
    \not\checkmark QUD \Rightarrow Q
    \]

- This analysis derives discourse restrictions of the PC:
  - the PC cannot occur discourse-initially
  - and it cannot felicitously be used as an answer to a question of any kind

4 Conclusions & Final Thoughts

- The PC is an example of broad ID focus:
  
<table>
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<th>broad</th>
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<td>INFO e.g. stress</td>
<td>SF</td>
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- Existence of broad ID focus supports Kiss’s (1998) claim that there are two distinct types of focus
• Broad focus utterances have no focal structure and so cannot be congruent to the QUD
  Broad INFO $\rightarrow$ defaults to the Big Question
  Broad ID $\rightarrow$ changes the QUD
    – However, in order to change the QUD, the utterance must have some focal structure
    – The cleft morphosyntax of the PC satisfies this dual requirement for broad ID focus:
      * The lack of a clefted constituent signals the lack of focal structure relevant to the QUD
      * No restrictions on the information structure of the relative clause, providing the means to change the QUD
• The PC supports Lambrecht’s claim that focus is relational
  – But this relation is more abstract for broad focus than the usual focus vs. background relation
• The PC can also be used as a narrative device (cf. (14) above), but this is perhaps expected if the PC is a pragmatic device (cf. Informative-Presupposition clefts (Prince 1978))
• There are striking similarities between the PC and discourse particles (especially German, see Rojas-Esponda (2014a) and Rojas-Esponda (2014b))
• ID focus may be exhaustive, but it is not clear that the PC can be, or what this would look like at the clausal level
Gaelic Sources


References


