



LONG DISTANCE DEPENDENCIES IN SINHALA:  
THE SYNTAX OF FOCUS AND WH QUESTIONS

A Dissertation

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This dissertation presents a modular syntactic analysis of Sinhala focus and Wh-questions. It is argued that Sinhala has two types of focus: one involving a biclausal structure parallel to clefting in English, and one which focuses an element in a monoclausal structure by morphologically marking the focused constituent. What is common to both types of focus, it is argued, is that both types involve S-Structure movement of an abstract operator which uniquely binds the focus.

Wh-questions, except those with quantifier Wh-phrases such as *kiidenek* 'how many', *koccora* 'how much', etc. are necessarily focused in Sinhala. Focus Wh-questions show properties of both focus and Wh-movement. Non-focused Wh-questions, on the other hand, show only the properties of Wh-movement, thus distinguishing focus movement from Wh-movement. Thus, the dissertation studies the independent syntactic properties of focus and Wh-questions and the interaction of the two.

The main claims of the analysis are the following: (i) focus and Wh-phrases in this language remain in-situ at S-Structure and are subject to LF raising. (ii) Additionally, there is a covert focus movement, which involves moving an abstract operator at S-Structure and which induces Subjacency effects. (iii) LF raising of either focus or Wh is not subject to

Subjacency. The presence of Subjacency effects in focus and focused-Wh-questions and their absence in non-focused-Wh-questions and regular quantifier raising (QR) cases strengthen the argument.

The organization of the dissertation is as follows: chapter I presents the basic issues and the theoretical framework assumed here. Chapter II gives a brief survey of Sinhala syntax aiming to familiarize the reader with the basic facts of Sinhala. Chapter III develops an analysis of the structure of regular i.e., non-focused, sentences along the lines of Pollock (1988) and Chomsky (1988). Chapter IV deals with the syntax of non-Wh focus sentences in Sinhala. Chapter V discusses the Syntax of Wh-questions in Sinhala. Some consequences of the present analysis of focus and Wh-questions are addressed in chapter VI.

Finally, there are four appendices: the first two include brief discussions of the typology of focus and Wh-in-situ respectively. The next two investigate three other long-distance dependencies: relativization, topicalization and left dislocation constructions in Sinhala in the light of the proposed analysis of focus and Wh-questions advanced in the preceding chapters.