

Problem 5. Kavalan (25 marks)

Different languages use different strategies to focus on particular words in the sentence. For example, English speakers change their tone of voice to emphasize a particular word: *Mary drank the water* and *Mary drank the water* have different meanings. You can even extract the subject for extra emphasis: *Mary, she drank the water*. Other languages have different strategies.

Kavalan is a critically endangered language spoken in Taiwan. As of 2000 it only had 24 remaining speakers, most of whom were elderly. Below are some sentences in Kavalan in a simplified transcription, along with their English translations. Focused words or phrases are underlined.

qasirr ya tiapzangawcia	<i><u>That crab</u> is fast.</i>
tmaytaiku tu rrutung	<i><u>I</u> see the monkey.</i>
qananti na sunisku ya liuqay qamasimna	<i>My child begins to eat <u>his rotten sour orange</u>.</i>
ipirisu ni	<i>Do you hear?</i>
ipiransu ya taquzay lamuku	<i>You hear <u>my sleeping village</u>.</i>
tikiskisku tu tarreb ya sarriqsu	<i>I cut the box with <u>your knife</u>.</i>
tmataktiina tu rasung ta buqankuan	<i><u>He</u> begins to dig the well in my sand.</i>
qman tu kitutay taquq ya wasucia ta Kalinkuan	<i><u>That dog</u> eats the small chicken in Hualien.</i>
liuq ya qamasim	<i>The <u>sour orange</u> is rotten.</i>
tipukunti na suniscia tu taquq ya tunun	<i>That child begins to hit the chicken with <u>the stick</u>.</i>
tatakan na wasuku ya rasung	<i>My dog digs <u>the well</u>.</i>
tmutun tu krisiwcia ya tazungan ni	<i>Does <u>the woman</u> burn that money?</i>
rrasaansu ya rrutungcia ni	<i>Do you buy <u>that monkey</u>?</i>
taytaannati ya busarray wasuta	<i>He begins to see <u>our white dog</u>.</i>
busarr ya buqan ta Taypakan ni	<i>Is <u>the sand</u> white in Taipei?</i>
titaytasu tu kitutay lamu ya matasu	<i>You see the small village with <u>your eyes</u>.</i>

Q 5.1 Translate the following sentences into English, indicating the focused words or phrases by underlining:

1. **taquz ya rrutungna**
2. **tutunan na tazungan ya Taypak ni**
3. **tirrasana tu tatakay taquqku ya krisiwta**
4. **kmiskistiita tu kitutay qamasim ta lamuciaan**

Q 5.2 Translate the following sentences into Kavalan:

5. *Am I small?*
6. *His eating child hears your fast dog.*
7. *Does our crab begin to sleep in that box?*
8. *We begin to dig the well with my knife.*
9. *You begin to see that monkey in the well.*

Q 5.3 Explain your solution.

Problem 5. Kavalan Answers

5.1	1. <i><u>His monkey</u> is sleeping / sleeps.</i>
	2. <i>Does the woman burn <u>Taipei</u>?</i>
	3. <i>He buys my digging chicken with <u>our money</u>.</i>
	4. <i><u>We</u> begin to cut the small sour orange in that village.</i>
5.2	5. kitutiku ni [2]
	6. ipiran + na qanay sunisna + ya qasirray wasusu [4]
	7. taquzti + ya tiapzangawta + ta tarrebciaan + ni [4]
	8. titataktati + tu rasung + ya sarriqku [4]
	9. tmaytatiisu + tu rrutungcia + ta rasungan [4]

Q 5.1 Max 12. 3 pts if correct; 2 pts with one mistake; 1 pt if either all noun phrases are correct or the verb phrase is correct, and the correct syntactic argument is focused (even if the translation of the argument is incorrect). Question marking is considered part of the verb phrase.

Q 5.2 Max 18. 1 pt for each noun phrase in the correct order; 2 pts for the verb phrase (including final **ni**), or 1 pt with one mistake.

Q 5.3 Max 30. 6 for describing the syntax; 11 for describing the structure of noun phrases; 13 for describing the structure of verbs.

Problem 5. Kavalan Commentary

UnF = Unfocused, S = Subject, O = Object, V = Verb. Note that instrumental clauses (*with X*) only appear focused in this problem, and locatives only appear unfocused.

1. V + [na] UnF.S + [tu] UnF.O + [ya] Focus + [ta] Locative-[an] + [ni = Question]
2. Art + [Adj-[ay]] + [Noun-[Person]-[cia = that]] NB: Any verb can be used as an adjective.
3. Intransitive verbs focus the only argument. Transitive verbs mark the focus:
 - **-m-** (inserted after the first consonant): subject focus;
 - **-an** (suffix): object focus;
 - **ti-** (prefix): instrumental focus.
4. Person/number markers are attached to the end of the verb (to mark subject) or noun (to mark possession).
 - **-ku** = I, **-su** = you, **-na** = he, **-ta** = we;
 - If the subject is focused, these are preceded by **-i-** and its position is moved after the inceptive marker*.
5. Inceptive marker: **-ti** (*begin to*). This appears after the focus and unfocused person markers, but before the focused person markers.

References and further reading:

- Li, P. J. K., Tsuchida, S. (2006). *Kavalan dictionary*. Institute of Linguistics, Academia Sinica.