Complex pronouns in Wu Chinese: Focalization and topicalization

XUPING LI

9.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a case study of grammatical properties of complex pronouns in Wu Chinese, namely the Fuyang dialect, from both the synchronic and diachronic perspectives. We argue that the syntactic context for using complex pronouns is dependent on their information status as topic or focus. We make a distinction between stressed and unstressed complex pronouns: unstressed complex pronouns are restricted to topic positions, either primary or secondary, while stressed ones have no such restriction and can serve as contrastive topic or focus. We propose that complex pronouns in Fuyang Wu involve a 'syntactic reanalysis', being derived from the fusion of the copula and pronouns in cleft sentences and that the fused complex pronouns undergo a grammaticalization process from focalization to topicalization.

9.1.1 Pronominal paradigms in Sinitic languages

In most Sinitic languages, such as Standard Mandarin, there is only one paradigm of personal pronouns, which include singular and plural forms. The pronoun system in Mandarin Chinese is illustrated in Table 9.1.

Personal pronouns in Mandarin are not sensitive to case. There is no distinctive form for nominative, accusative, and genitive cases, etc. Putting it in a simpler way,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9.1. Personal pronouns in Standard Mandarin (普通話)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singul ar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plural</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Complex pronouns in Wu Chinese: Focalization and topicalization

the same pronoun form may play different syntactic roles, such as subject, object, possessor, etc. These uses are illustrated in (1).

(1) 他和我说，他见过你妹妹。

'The said to me, he saw your younger sister.'

However, in some central and northern Wu dialects, two different paradigms of personal pronouns exist, namely simple and complex pronouns (Z. Qian 1983; Z. Chen 1996; N. Qian 1999, among others). Specifically, complex pronouns are derived from simple pronouns by adding a prefix, such as the prefix /zəʔ/ in Shengxian Wu. The co-existence of dual paradigms of personal pronouns is mainly found in the Taihu Lake group of Northern Wu dialects. Table 9.2 illustrates the singular forms for the complex pronouns in the Shengxian, Huzhou, and Shaoxing dialects of Zhejiang Province as well as for dialects spoken in certain districts of Shanghai. For ease of exposition, we only show the singular complex pronouns in these dialects while the simple counterparts are not set out separately (that is, the elements that these prefixes attach to are none other than corresponding simple personal pronouns).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dialects</th>
<th>1SG</th>
<th>2SG</th>
<th>3SG</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shengxian Changle 嵊县长乐</td>
<td>zʔ-nə</td>
<td>zʔ-i</td>
<td>zʔ-i</td>
<td>Z. Qian 1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huzhou 湖州</td>
<td>zʔ-ŋ</td>
<td>zʔ-ŋ</td>
<td>zʔ-ŋ</td>
<td>Z. Chen 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaoxing 绍兴</td>
<td>zʔ-nə</td>
<td>zʔ-nə</td>
<td>zʔ-nə</td>
<td>Chen and Pan 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shanghai Nanhui Huinan 上海南汇南</td>
<td>zʔ-ŋ</td>
<td>zʔ-ŋ</td>
<td>zʔ-ŋ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shanghai Baoshan Chengxiang 上海宝山城厢</td>
<td>zəʔ-ŋ</td>
<td>zəʔ-ŋ</td>
<td>zəʔ-ŋ</td>
<td>N. Qian 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shanghai Songjiang 上海松江</td>
<td>zəʔ-ŋ</td>
<td>zəʔ-ŋ</td>
<td>zəʔ-ŋ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shanghai Fengxian 上海奉贤</td>
<td>zəʔ-ŋ</td>
<td>zəʔ-ŋ</td>
<td>zəʔ-ŋ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 The romanizations used in this chapter are the IPA for Wu dialects, and pinyin for Standard Mandarin, unless examples are being cited from other references which follow the original in this case.

2 According to the ‘Inventory of Pronouns in Wu dialects’ [Wuyu Rencheng Daici Biao 吴语人称代词表] provided on the website of the Wu Association [吴语论坛], this phenomenon is available in the dialects of the Linshao subgroup (临绍小片), the Tiaoxi subgroup (苕溪小片), and the Sujiahu subgroup (苏嘉沪小片), all belonging to the Taihu Lake group of Northern Wu.
This analysis examines the syntactic and semantic properties of complex pronouns in Wu, based on the data from the Fuyang dialect of Wu Chinese. In the Fuyang dialect, there are three different paradigms of personal pronouns, as shown in Table 9.3.

The monosyllabic personal pronouns in the first paradigm in Table 9.3 are simple personal pronouns in Fuyang Wu. The second and the third paradigms are complex personal pronouns, and they are derived from the first paradigm by prefixing /zaʔ/ and /ɦəʔ/ respectively. In this research, we contrast complex personal pronouns with simple pronouns, which we label ‘common personal pronouns’.

The term ‘emphatic pronouns’ usually refers to a particular paradigm of pronouns in certain languages that has ‘some kind of discourse prominence, typically either contrast and/or intensification’ (Siewierska 2004: 67). As will be shown below, in many cases, complex pronouns in Wu can only be used with the accompaniment of stress, which expresses contrastive meaning. In other words, it is obligatory for complex pronouns to have such emphatic uses, determined by stress, in certain contrastive contexts, as will be shown. However, common personal pronouns have no such requirement.

We are interested in the following questions concerning the distribution and grammatical properties of complex pronouns in Fuyang Wu:

(i) What are the factors affecting the distribution of stressed and non-stressed complex pronouns?

---

3 The Fuyang dialect (富阳方言) belongs to the Linshao group of Wu dialects [临绍小片]. It is spoken in the Fuyang county of Zhejiang Province and has about 620,000 native speakers. In the current research, we use the variant of Fuyang dialect spoken in the downtown area, as well as in Chunjiang Town and Lingqiao Town.
(ii) What are the semantic interpretations of complex pronouns? How should we understand their functions in terms of Siewierska’s ‘discourse prominence’ when they are interpreted emphatically?

(iii) Z. Chen (1996) proposes a phonological reconstruction whereby the $z$-type prefix before pronouns in Wu is derived from the morpheme $\text{是}/z\text{ɿ}/$, which can either be used as a copular verb ‘be’ or a demonstrative ‘this’ in early linguistic periods, such as in Middle Chinese (third–twelfth centuries). We are interested in the question of whether we are able to bring some syntactic/semantic evidence to bear on the synchronic perspective to decide upon the nature of this morpheme.

The remainder of the chapter will be organized as follows. Section 9.2 looks at when and how non-stressed complex pronouns are used. In particular, we will examine two different possibilities of generalizing the distribution of non-stressed complex pronouns. One concerns the subject and object asymmetry and the other is the correlation between complex pronouns and topic. In §9.3, we discuss the use of stressed complex pronouns. We will look at how phonetic stress helps to license complex pronouns in Fuyang Wu. Section 9.4 reexamines Z. Chen’s (1996) phonological reconstruction and we argue that it is more appropriate to treat the prefix in complex pronouns as being derived from the copula $\text{是}/z\text{ɿ}/$. In §9.5, we argue that complex pronouns in Fuyang Wu are reanalysed from the fusion of the copula and simple pronouns in cleft sentences. Section 9.6 concludes the chapter by summarizing the main claims we make.

9.2 Unstressed complex pronouns

In this section, we will investigate the question of how complex pronouns are different from common personal pronouns in terms of their syntactic distribution and function, without for the moment touching upon the issue of stress. We will investigate under what circumstances ‘common’ personal pronouns can or cannot be replaced by complex ones.

A preliminary study shows that the 2$^{nd}$ and the 3$^{rd}$ paradigms of personal pronouns in Fuyang Wu do not have any grammatical distinction and they are interchangeable with each other. We assume that the prefix /hɔʔ/ in the Fuyang dialect is a phonologically weakened form of the prefix /zəʔ/ via ‘debuccalization’. In the rest of the analysis, we do not further distinguish between the $z$-type and the $h$-type of complex pronouns and we will merely contrast common personal pronouns with complex ones. For ease of exposition, when representing the examples in

---

4 The debuccalization from /z/ to /h/ is a quite common phonological process in Wu dialects, such as Xuanzhou Wu (宣州片吴语) (Wang Jian: pers. comm.).
Chinese characters, we simply use /z/ and /h/ to stand for prefixes of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} and the 3\textsuperscript{rd} paradigms of personal pronouns respectively.

9.2.1 An illusory subject/object asymmetry

Common personal pronouns in the Fuyang dialect of Wu, that is, the first paradigm in Table 9.3, are able to appear in various syntactic positions, such as in the position of topic, subject and object.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{(2)} 你，娜妹子，拨我去叫伊声。
  \end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
  \item 2SG sister for 1SG go call 3SG call
  \end{itemize}

‘Your sister, could you please call her for me?’

For example, in (2), the pronoun \textit{n}\textsuperscript{313} ‘you’ acts as the subject of the clause, and the plural pronoun \textit{na}\textsuperscript{313} ‘your’ is a possessor of the head noun \textit{me}\textsuperscript{3434} ‘sister’ in the possessive phrase, which is co-referential with the pronoun in the object position, i.e. \textit{i}\textsuperscript{313} ‘her’. Moreover, in this clause, the first person pronoun \textit{ŋ}\textsuperscript{313} ‘I’ is also the object of the preposition \textit{pəʔ}\textsuperscript{51} ‘for’, which codes its beneficiary role.

Compared with common personal pronouns, unstressed complex pronouns in Fuyang Wu have a more restricted distribution. At first glance, unstressed complex pronouns can be used as subjects, as in (3), but they are not allowed in object positions, either as a canonical postverbal object (4) or as a preposed object marked by KE (5).\textsuperscript{5} On the contrary, common pronouns are allowed in all these three syntactic contexts from (3) to (5) without restriction.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{(3) Subject}
  \end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{tsəʔ}\textsuperscript{513}‘kan’\textsuperscript{33} (\textit{zəʔ}\textsuperscript{1}-) \textit{ia}\textsuperscript{313} \textit{tsə}\textsuperscript{34} \textit{n}\textsuperscript{i}\textsuperscript{313} \textit{pa}\textsuperscript{34} \textit{təʔ}\textsuperscript{34} \textit{34go}.
  \end{itemize}

morning PREF-3PL do religious service go SFP

‘They go to church in the morning.’

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{(4) Canonical Object: S-V-O}
  \end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{fə}\textsuperscript{34} \textit{təʔ}\textsuperscript{34} \textit{tan}\textsuperscript{513} (\textit{zəʔ}\textsuperscript{1}-)\textsuperscript{313} \textit{a}.
  \end{itemize}

NEG go beat PREF-3SG SFP

‘Don’t beat him.’

\textsuperscript{5} Note that the Fuyang dialect of Wu has S-V-O word order, but when the object is definite, it is preferable to prepose it to a preverbal position, as marked by /kʰzəʔ/. We call it a KE construction (Li and Bisang 2012).
Complex pronouns in Wu Chinese: Focalization and topicalization

(5) Preposed KE object: S-KE-V-O

我克(*z)你骂芒过吗?

\[ \begin{align*}
    &\text{ŋy}^{313} \ k^{h} \text{ŋ}^{51} \ (\text{z}^{21} \text{ŋ})^{313} \ m^{34} \ k^{34} \ \text{m}^{35}? \\
    &1\text{SG OM} \ \text{PREF-2SG} \ \text{scold} \ \text{EXP} \ Q\text{-PRT} \\
    &\text{‘Have I ever scolded you?’}
\end{align*} \]

From the stories and dialogues that we recorded in the Fuyang dialect, we found 25 sentences in which unstressed complex pronouns occurred. Among those 25 examples, 24 have complex pronouns occurring in the subject position and none of them is found in any object position. For the single exception, the complex pronoun is used as a possessor in a possessive phrase. Therefore, based on the representative examples from (3) to (5) and our statistics, it might initially appear that complex pronouns exhibit a subject/object asymmetry. However, the generalization about the correlation of unstressed complex pronouns with the subject role is immediately challenged by the following facts.

First, the generalization of subject/object asymmetry does not cover the use of complex pronouns as topic. As shown in (6), the complex pronoun \(\text{z}^{21} \text{ŋ}^{313}\) occupies two different syntactic positions in the sentence. In the first occurrence, \(\text{z}^{21} \text{ŋ}^{313}\) acts as the topic of the sentence, while in the second occurrence, it is the subject of the sentence. The subject constraint cannot explain the topic use of complex pronouns.

(6) Topic

\[ \begin{align*}
    &\text{z} \ - \ \text{我} \ \text{哦} , \ \text{z} \ - \ \text{我} \ \text{小时} \ \text{光} \ \text{蹲勒} \ \text{富阳} . \\
    &\text{z}^{21} \text{ŋ}^{313} \ \text{ŋ}^{313} \ \text{o} , \ \text{z}^{21} \text{ŋ}^{313} \ \text{ɕi}^{513} \text{z}^{35} \ \text{kuan}^{53} \ \text{tən}^{53} \ \text{tə}^{35} \ \text{fu}^{34} \ \text{ian}^{35} . \\
    &\text{PREF-1SG TOP PREP-1SG} \ \text{childhood live-PFV} \ \text{Fuyang} \\
    &\text{‘As for me, I lived in Fuyang in my childhood.’}
\end{align*} \]

Second, what is more problematic for the subject/object generalization is that while it is generally not acceptable to use complex pronouns in the postverbal object position or in the KE preverbal object position, as we saw in (4) and (5), it is nonetheless possible to use them in some other preposed object positions, such as in the sentence-initial position in (7a) or in the position between subject and predicate without an object marker, as in (7b).

(7) a. Object preposed into sentence initial position: O-S-V

\[ \begin{align*}
    &\text{z} \ - \ \text{你} , \ \text{我} \ \text{骂过芒} ? \\
    &\text{z}^{21} \text{ŋ}^{313} \ \text{ŋ}^{313} \ m^{34} \ k^{34} \ \text{m}^{35}? \\
    &\text{PREF-2SG 1SG scold-EXP Q-PRT} \\
    &\text{‘You, have I scolded you?’}
\end{align*} \]

---

6 We conducted a field trip to Fuyang City, Zhejiang Province in August 2011 and collected relevant data on emphatic pronouns in Fuyang Wu. We recorded three stories and dialogues in the Fuyang dialect. The collected data include a ten-minute dialogue between an eighty-nine-year-old woman and the author, and two five-minute stories told by two female speakers in their seventies.
b. Object preposed between Subject and VP without an object marker: S-O-V

我[z-你骂过芒？]

ŋx\textsuperscript{313} za\textsuperscript{111} ku\textsuperscript{34} man\textsuperscript{35}?  
1SG PREF-2SG scold-EXP Q-PRT  
‘Have I scolded you?’

Taking into account these two problems, we do not think it appropriate to characterize the distribution of complex pronouns in the Fuyang dialect by way of a contrast between subject and object. The use of complex pronouns is therefore not dependent on their syntactic status as being subjects or objects, although this may be seen to play a minor role.

In \S9.2.2, we will explore another possibility about the licensing of complex pronouns in Fuyang Wu, namely, the topic/focus asymmetry.

9.2.2 Complex pronouns as topics

In this section, we will examine whether or not the use of complex pronouns in Fuyang Wu is related to their information status, such as topics or foci.

Before proceeding, we adopt three basic assumptions concerning information structure in Wu Chinese:

(i) As in Mandarin, Wu Chinese (represented here by the Fuyang dialect) is a topic-prominent language, where the sentence-initial position is the default topic position. Syntactically, it can be represented as [TopP [IP]], appearing on the left-periphery of a sentence; and

(ii) Unlike in Mandarin, there is a secondary topic position between subject and the verb, i.e. between IP and VP, just as in other Wu dialects (Liu and Xu 1998 for Shanghai Wu; Hu, Pan, and Li 2003 for Ningbo Wu);

(iii) Similar to Mandarin, the sentence-final position is the (information) focus position in Wu (for Mandarin, see Xu 2004).

The notion of topic is understood from two perspectives: it codes what the sentence is talking about, while it typically expresses ‘old information’ (see Chafe 1976). Focus refers to a constituent within a sentence that is highlighted or emphasized by grammatical means. When talking about focus, a distinction between information focus and contrastive focus has to be made. Information focus is understood to be relational: it concerns the information predicated about the topic. Contrastive focus is referential: it concerns material which the speaker calls to the addressee’s attention, thereby often evoking a contrast with the other entities that might fill the same position (Kiss 1998, cf. Gundel and Fretheim 2003).

To start with, we make use of the question-answer pair as a diagnostic to find out what the information status of unstressed complex pronouns is when they are used
Complex pronouns in Wu Chinese: Focalization and topicalization

in those examples we collected from the recordings. Consider the examples in (8) and (9).

In example (8), the whole clause in B is the direct answer to the question, and the subject is part of the new information (focus) required by the question. In this case, it is infelicitous to use an unstressed complex pronoun in the subject position as a focused element (note: # marks an infelicitous sentence). Instead, a common pronoun can be used, such as ŋɤ313 ‘I’.

(8) Speaker A: 何尔行当?
Speaker A: koχ35 fæn35 tan513?
what matter
Speaker A: ‘What happened?’
Speaker B: #z 我被蛇咬勒一口。
Speaker B: #zəʔ1-ŋɤ313 pəʔ51 dzo35 ŋɤ313-lo iʔ1 kʰiʔ513.
PREF-1SG PASS snake bite-PFV one mouth
Speaker B: ‘I was bitten by a snake.’

In contrast, in (9), the individual under discussion in the context is first introduced in the preceding question by a simple pronoun in (9A). The use of the complex pronoun in (9B) is part of the answer to the question, but only the predicate in (9B) expresses new information. In other words, in (9B), the subject is a topic and the predicate makes a comment about it. Here, it is completely plausible to use an unstressed complex pronoun as the subject.

(9) Speaker A: 伊做咯?
Speaker A: i313 tso34 lo ?
zSG do PRT
Speaker A: ‘What happened to him?’
Speaker B: z 伊被蛇咬了一口。
Speaker B: zəʔ1-ŋɤ313 pəʔ51 dzo35 ŋɤ313-lo iʔ1 kʰiʔ513
PREF-1SG PASS snake bite-PFV one mouth
Speaker B: ‘He was bitten by a snake.’

The contrast between (8) and (9) suggests that unstressed complex pronouns cannot act as a direct answer to a question that expresses new information, as in (8). Put otherwise, unstressed complex pronouns in Fuyang Wu can only be topics but not foci, as is the case in (9).

We thus propose that the use of unstressed complex pronouns in Fuyang Wu is not restricted to subjects, while it is clearly dependent on their information status as topic but never as focus.

A complex pronoun is also possible in this case.
Our proposal that unstressed complex pronouns are topics makes the correct prediction that unstressed and non-contrastive complex pronouns cannot be used as objects, unless they serve the discourse function of (secondary) topics, but not that of foci.

Recall the examples in (4), (5), and (7). As we noted, unstressed complex pronouns are ruled out in default postverbal object positions, as in (4) or in the KE object-marking construction, as in (5). In contrast, when the object is preposed to a sentence-initial position or between the subject and the verb without the object marker, it is possible to use complex pronouns, as in (7). This puzzle is now ready for explanation.

We first account for the grammaticality of (7). With regard to example (7a), as assumed at the beginning of this section, the sentence-initial position is the default topic position in Chinese languages in general, and the complex pronoun in (7a) happens to fall precisely into this topic position. According to Xu and Liu (1999) and Hu et al. (2003), Wu Chinese is a language which is more topic-prominent than Mandarin, in which there is also a secondary topic or subtopic position between the VP and the IP. We assume that Fuyang Wu is no exception to this generalization. Accordingly, the preposed complex pronoun in (7b) is located in a secondary topic position.

An independent piece of evidence about the topic status of complex pronouns in (7) comes from the use of resumptive pronouns in Fuyang Wu. See (10) for an illustration.

(10) a. 我, 你, 骂过你芒?
\[ _principal 1\_SG\_PREF-2SG\_scold 2SG\_EXP Q-PART \]
\[ 'Me, have I scolded you?’ \]

b. (2) 你, 我骂过你芒?

\[ 2SG\_PREF-2SG\_scold 1SG\_EXP Q-PART \]
\[ 'You, have I scolded you?’ \]

When an object is preposed, it is possible to have a resumptive pronoun in the default object positions, as in (10a) and (10b). If we assume that topicalized elements are realized by movement from positions like subject and object, to the left-periphery of a sentence, then the resumptive pronoun can be seen as the overt realization of the trace left by the topicalized elements. Therefore, it further supports the claim that preposed elements in (7) are topics, even though there are no resumptive pronouns in either (7a) or (7b).

The ungrammaticality of the relevant examples in (4) and (5) is also explained by our generalization that unstressed complex pronouns can only be topics but not foci. Xu (2004), among others, claims that in (Mandarin) Chinese, the informational focus is restricted to a particular syntactic position, namely, the clause-final position. This observation is also applicable to the Fuyang dialect of Wu Chinese. Accordingly, the canonical postverbal object in the Fuyang dialect is a focus element. Therefore, in (4),
when an unstressed complex pronoun is used in a focus position, expectedly, it results in the ungrammaticality of the sentence.

In terms of (5), we suggest that the KE object-marking construction in the Fuyang dialect is a normal object position, parallel to the postverbal object position. This being the case, it is impossible to have a resumptive pronoun in the postverbal object position. As Li and Bisang (2012) have demonstrated, these two object positions are distinguished by the parameter of definiteness: the KE marked objects are realized by definite phrases, while postverbal objects can only be realized by indefinite phrases. However, no matter whether they are preposed and marked by KE or are located in a base-generated postverbal position, the object always acts as focus in Fuyang Wu. Given that an unstressed complex pronoun in (5) falls into a focus position, this explains why it is unacceptable.

To sum up, unstressed complex pronouns in the Fuyang dialect can only appear in topic positions, which crosscut the grammatical distinction of subject and object.

9.3 Stressed complex pronouns

In §9.2, we discussed the distributional constraints on the use of unstressed complex pronouns, with a brief comparison with common personal pronouns. In this section, we will turn our attention to stressed complex pronouns. What we mean by ‘stressed complex pronouns’ are those which bear a certain phonetic prominence. In Chinese, stress is realized via manipulation of phonetic primitives, such as pitch range and duration, which help to mark or realize contrastive topic or contrastive focus. In this respect, Xu (2004: 291) states that ‘(Mandarin) Chinese makes use of length and intensity rather than the rise and fall of pitch to indicate focus . . .’.

Stress is an important device in licensing complex pronouns in Fuyang Wu. As we will soon see, with the additional presence of the feature of stress, complex pronouns are not only able to appear in topic positions but also in focus positions. It is well known that stress can be used to express contrastiveness (Büring 2003). Consequently, stressed complex pronouns in Wu can function as contrastive topic and contrastive focus. We will discuss these two cases in turn.

Before proceeding, we would like to make two points that are worth a special mention with respect to the characteristics and function of stress in Chinese.

First, as reported in Xu (2004), ‘compared with European languages, it (Mandarin) uses more syntax and less phonology in focus realization’. Xu (2004: 291) states explicitly that in Mandarin, ‘even in a context where one of the constituents is clearly in focus, it need not always be stressed. In fact, when it takes the default focus position, stress is generally unnecessary. But it can be used for other purposes, for
instance, for contrastive purposes.\(^9\) We propose that this generalization also applies to the Fuyang dialect of Wu Chinese.

Second, the phonetic characteristics of stress may be different from each other when they fall on topicalized and focalized elements. For example, in her study on Shanghai Wu, Y. Chen (2009) shows that contrastive focus is realized with a magnified F₀ contour characteristic of the domain-initial lexical tone while contrastive topic is realized with the raising of the whole contour of the initial tone. In other words, ‘the effect of contrastive topic on F₀ realization is rather local and restricted to the contrastively topicalized noun only’, while focus shows ‘a much more global effect on F₀’ (Y. Chen 2009: 10). As will be shown soon, similar phonetic patterns may be found on stressed pronouns in Fuyang Wu.

9.3.1 **Stressed complex pronouns as contrastive topics**

We first consider the use of stressed complex pronouns as contrastive topics. A contrastive topic refers to an entity that the speaker wants to talk about and at the same time, due to its contrastiveness, it implies that there exist alternatives that the speaker may want to talk about too (Umbach 2001; see also Büring 1997).

One of the representative contexts in which contrastive topic is used is illustrated by the exchange in (11) (cf. Büring 1997, 2003).

(11) A: Tell me about John. Did he watch Harry Potter?  
B: I don’t know about John, but Mary watched Titanic.

The question by A is about John, but B’s reply is about Mary. Mary is therefore a topic that is interpreted contrastively. By uttering this sentence, B implicates that an alternative assertion regarding John cannot be made. A contrastive topic in English carries a certain accent, but a non-contrastive topic need not (Büring 2003).

We saw in §9.2 that unstressed complex pronouns are restricted to topic positions. However, complex pronouns in topic positions can also be given a certain phonetic prominence, which allows them to become stressed complex pronouns. Note that stressed complex pronouns in topic positions are characterized by the lengthening of the second syllable but not the first; that is, in the form of prefixed pronoun, only the pronoun is lengthened but not the prefix. As in Mandarin, stress in Wu expresses contrastiveness. Thus we claim that stressed complex pronouns in topic positions are contrastive topics.

\(^9\) According to Hartmann and Zimmermann (2009) (cf. Zimmermann 2008), the use of stress differs between intonational languages and tonal languages in general. They claim intonational languages obligatorily mark the existence of a contextually salient set of alternatives, i.e. focus, by using a pitch accent. As a result, every focus, contrastive or not, carries a pitch accent, often blurring the distinction between the two. In contrast, tonal languages, such as west Chadic languages, make use of pitch accent to express contrastiveness only.
Contrastive topics are possible both in complex sentences and in simple sentences, as will be illustrated in (13) and (14). Note that stressed elements are represented by bold and bracketed letters.

In complex sentences, such as coordinated sentences, the contrastive meaning is expressed by contrasting the individual referred to by the complex pronoun in one clause with some other individual(s), coded by nouns in another clause. Consider (12) and (13).

In (12), the speaker narrates the unfortunate events which happened to her and her husband, namely, that she was knocked down by a motorcycle, while her husband was robbed by a thief. These two events constitute a contrast.

In (13), the speaker first talks about her grandson having travelled around a great deal, and then she brings herself into the limelight by saying ‘I’ve also visited quite a few places’.

In simple sentences, the contrastive meaning is conveyed by contrasting the individual represented by a complex pronoun with some other individuals inferable from the context. Consider the example (14).

Example (14) means that he did not go on the travels organized by the Party Committee in the village, but his comrades and colleagues did, as inferred from the context. Thus, it is a contrast between his comrades and him.
These two groups of examples suggest that complex pronouns can be used contrastively when they are used as topics of the sentence. To achieve contrastiveness, phonetic stress is placed on the complex pronouns. Semantically, contrastive topics realized by complex pronouns usually relate the individual referred to by a complex pronoun to some other individual(s) in the discourse.

9.3.2 Stressed complex pronouns as contrastive focus

The conclusion we reached in §9.2 is that unstressed complex pronouns are not allowed in postverbal object positions nor in the KE object-marking construction, which we argued to both be focus positions. However, if we place stress onto this type of complex pronoun, it turns out that they become acceptable in these two cases. Note that when complex pronouns are emphasized in focus positions, both syllables of the complex pronouns are given expanded pitch range and lengthened. We will argue that stressed complex pronouns are found in contrastive focus. Compare (a) and (b) in examples (15) and (16).

(15) a. *伊伽讲：“伊欢喜 z 你”。
   "i313 ga313 kæn513 "i13 fiæn53 ci513 za313-n313."
   3SG say 3SG like  PREF-2SG
   ‘She said: ‘She likes you.’

   b. 伊伽讲：“伊欢喜[z 你]”。
   "i313 ga313 kæn513 "i13 fiæn53 ci513 [za313 n313]."
   3SG say 3SG like  PREF-2SG
   ‘She said: ‘She likes you.’

(16) a. *伊克 z 我 骂。
   "i313 k313 bi313 za313-n313 mo34.
   3SG OM  PREF-1SG scold
   ‘He rebuked me.’

   b. 伊克[z 我] 骂。
   "i313 k313 bi313 [za313 n313] mo34.
   3SG OM  PREF-1SG scold
   ‘He rebuked me.’

In (15a) and (16a), the object is realized by non-stressed complex pronouns. They are not acceptable. In contrast, in (15b) and (16b), when the complex pronouns are stressed, as indicated by bold letters in brackets, the sentences become grammatical. With stress, the pronouns express contrastive meaning. Example (15b) means that it is you that she likes and not somebody else. Example (16b) expresses that he rebuked even me.

10 The examples in (15) and (16) are not taken from our recordings but elicited during my field trip.
We argued earlier that postverbal objects and KE objects are information focus positions in Wu. Accordingly, we assume that with the accompaniment of stress, such stressed complex pronouns in these two positions are understood as contrastive focused elements. Moreover, as further supportive evidence, the examples in (15b) and (16b) can be treated in the same way as the canonical focus constructions in (17) and (18).

Examples in (17) represent two types of focus constructions, namely, the pseudo-cleft sentence (17a) and the cleft sentence, i.e. the $z\ldots ko$ construction, in (17b). In these two constructions, it is the element following the copula 是 $/z\ldots/$ that is focalized, granted that the copula is a focus marker. In both examples, stressed complex pronouns can be used.

(17) a. 哭格是[z-你]，笑格也是[z-你]。
$k\h uo\h ko \ z_1^{313} [z\alpha^1-n^{13}]$, $c_3^{313} ko \ ie^{13} z_1^{313} [z\alpha^1-n^{13}]$.
Cry MOD COP PREF-2SG laugh MOD also COP PREF-2SG
‘The one who cried is you and the one who laughed is also you.’

b. 只碗是[z-伊]敲破格。
$ts\alpha^1 uan^{13} z_1^{313} [z\alpha^1-i^{313}]$ $k_5^{13} h^{34} a^{34} ko$.
CL bowl COP PREF-3SG break PRT
‘It is he who broke the bowl.’

The examples in (18) show a different type of focus construction. The marker /la/ ‘even’ is a focus-sensitive particle, or a marker that has an association with focus. In this case, it is also possible to use stressed complex pronouns. Compare (18a) and (18b).

(18) a. *小王不认识 z-伊。
*$c_3^{513} uan^{35} f_5^{51} n_3^{34} dz\alpha^1 z_1^{313} - i^{13}$.
Xiao Wang NEG know PREF-3SG
‘Xiao Wang did not know him.’

b. 小王z-伊勒不认识。
$c_3^{513} uan^{35} z\alpha^1-i^{313} lo f_5^{51} n_3^{34} dzs\alpha^1$.
Xiao Wang PREF-3SG FOCUS NEG know
‘Xiao Wang didn’t even know him.’

The example in (18a) is a normal SVO sentence in Wu, which cannot take any unstressed complex pronouns as its object. In (18b), the object is preposed to a preverbal position between the subject and VP, and is marked by the focus-sensitive marker /la/ ‘even’. Example (18b) consequently uses the stressed complex pronoun, $/z\alpha^1-i/ ‘he’, to express the focus meaning that Xiao Wang did not even know him. Here, the complex pronoun is under the scope of the focus marker le and is thus a contrastive focus element.
In this subsection, we showed that stressed complex pronouns can be licensed in various focus positions to express contrastive meanings. These include the sentence-final position, such as objects in SVO sentences and in KE object-marking constructions, and significantly, special focus structures such as the cleft, pseudo-cleft, and \( /\lambda/ \) ‘even’ constructions. This shows that focus is indeed a syntacticized position in Fuyang Wu as well as being coded by stress.

In a combined conclusion to §9.2 and §9.3, the following recapitulation can be made:

a) Unstressed complex pronouns are restricted to just preverbal positions, more precisely to topic positions, including primary and secondary topics.

b) Stress is able to license complex pronouns in various syntactic positions, including even in focus positions. Given that stress in Wu expresses contrastiveness, stressed complex pronouns can serve as contrastive topics or contrastive foci respectively.

### 9.4 Decomposing complex pronouns

In this section, relying on Z. Chen’s (1996) assumption that the \( z \)-type prefix attached to pronouns in some Wu dialects is derived from the morpheme \( /z\i/ \), we look into the internal structure of complex pronouns in Wu.

We will address the question under what circumstances can \( /z\i/ \) and pronouns form complex pronouns as a single lexical item. We argue that complex pronouns are the result of the fusion of the pronoun and the sentence-initial copula \( /z\i/ \) in cleft sentences.

#### 9.4.1 Reconstructing the prefix \( /z\i\i/ \) as the morpheme \( /z\i/ \)

Z. Chen (1996) reconstructs the \( /z\/ \) type of pronominal prefix in Wu dialects to be the morpheme \( /z\i/ \). Recall Table 9.1. He argues that the prefixes in different Wu dialects all start with the voiced consonant \( /z\i/ \), which is the same as the initial of the morpheme \( shi \) \( /z\i/ \), which is phonetically \( /z\i\i/ \) in the Fuyang dialect, and that the shape of the prefix, such as \( /s\i\i/ \) in the Fuyang dialect, is the result of glottalization of the vowel \( /i/ \).\(^{11}\) Chen also states that, in the Shaoxing dialect, the pronominal prefix and the verbal copula \( shi \) have the same pronunciation, both of which are represented as \( /ze\i/ \).

Additionally, Z. Chen provides us with some historical data on the occurrence of \( /z\i/ \) with pronouns, which can be traced back to the (late) Tang dynasty or even earlier, such as in the \( D\u{101}nh\u{101}u\u{131}ng Bi\u{101}nw\u{131}n J\u{101} \) ‘Collection of Dun

\(^{11}\) According to ZhengZhang (1995), glottalization by \( /\i/ \) is a common phenomenon in Wu dialects.
Huang Transformation Texts’, (dated to the period from fifth to early eleventh century) and Zütang Ji, 《祖堂集》 ‘Collection From the Patriarchs’ Hall’, (written in the tenth century). Consider his examples in (19).

(19) a. 是我今日莫逃得此难。
   shì wǒ jīnrì mò táo dé cǐ nàn.
   It is me who cannot escape the disaster.
   From Hán Qínhu Huàb èn of the Dūnhuáng Biànwén Jí
   《敦煌变文集》之《韩擒虎话本》

b. 是渠不得知东西......
   shì qú bù dézhī dòngxi......
   It is he who does not know the things.
   From Cáo Shān Héshàng of the Zütang Jí Volume 8, p. 379
   《祖堂集》第八卷《曹山和尚》

In terms of the grammatical function of the prefix on pronouns, Z. Chen simply mentions that the use of a prefix before pronouns is to ‘highlight the deictic function’ of the pronouns. Later, due to the weakening of this function, they behave like normal pronouns. We know that in Middle Chinese (third–twelfth centuries), the morpheme 是 /zəʔ/ can either be a copula or a demonstrative (Wang 1937). Chen’s argument that /zaʔ/ has a deictic function commits him to the standpoint that /ζəʔ/ derives from the demonstrative /ζəʔ/ and not the copula /ζəʔ/.

We agree with Z. Chen’s phonological reconstruction that the prefix /ζəʔ/ is the morpheme 是 /ζəʔ/. However, we disagree with Chen’s argument that the prefix /ζəʔ/ has the same deictic function as a demonstrative. In the subsequent section, we will argue that the prefix /ζəʔ/ develops from the copula /ζəʔ/ and not from the demonstrative /ζəʔ/.

9.4.2 Deriving the prefix /ζəʔ/ from cleft sentences
In this subsection, we claim that complex pronouns in Fuyang Wu are reanalysed from the sentence-initial copula /ζəʔ/ combined with pronouns, when they are used in bare /ζəʔ/ cleft sentences.

We will make the assumption that cleft sentences in Wu work in a similar way to Mandarin Chinese. We now briefly introduce cleft sentences in Mandarin and their counterparts in Fuyang Wu.

Cheng (2008) and Paul and Whitman (2008) distinguish two types of cleft sentences in Mandarin: the shì...de cleft proper, as in (20a) and the sentence-initial bare shì cleft, as in (20b).
242  XuPing Li

(20) a. Xiǎowáng shì qù Shànhǎi chūhāi de.  
   ’It is to Shanghai that Xiao Wang goes on business.’

b. shì Xiǎowáng qù Shànhǎi chūhāi.  
   ’It is Xiao Wang who goes to Shanghai on business.’

These two types of cleft sentences differ in which elements are focused. On the one hand, both Cheng (2008) and Paul and Whitman (2008) point out that in the shì...de cleft, the element immediately following the copula shì is the focus element. For example, in (21a), it is the subject tà that bears focus; in (21b), the focused element is the prepositional phrase zài Běijīng ’in Beijing’; in (21c), what is focused is the verb phrase, xué yǔyánxué ’study linguistics’.

   ’It is he that studied linguistics in Beijing.’

b. tà shì [zài Běijīng] xué yǔyánxué de.  
   ’It is in Beijing that he studied linguistics.’

c. tà zài Běijīng shì [xué yǔyánxué] de.  
   ’It is linguistics that he studied in Beijing.’

On the other hand, Cheng (2008) claims that in the initial bare shì cleft, it is either the subject following shì that is focused, as in (22a) or the whole sentence that is focused, as in (22b).

(22) a. shì [tà] zài Běijīng xué yǔyánxué. [Narrow focus]  
   ’It is he that studied linguistics in Beijing.’

b. shì [tà zài Běijīng xué yǔyánxué]. [Broad focus]  
   ’It is the case that he studied linguistics in Beijing.’

When the subject is the focused element, it is called a narrow focus and when the whole sentence is focused, it is called a broad focus (Cheng 2008). Importantly, when the subject is focused, i.e. the narrow focus reading, it must have some intonational prominence. For broad focus, there is no stress needed.12

12 However, according to Paul and Whitman (2008), only (22a) has a focus reading, i.e. the subject is focalized and (22b) is considered to be a ‘propositional assertion’. Note that the difference between Cheng
Complex pronouns in Wu Chinese: Focalization and topicalization

If we go back to the examples of Middle Chinese discussed in Z. Chen (1996), such as those in (19), it is easy to see that all these examples start with the copula shì, which forms cleft sentences. However, there is no particle de at the end of the sentence. They, thus, behave like the initial bare shì cleft in (20b), and not the shì . . . de cleft as in (20a). Accordingly, the example in (19a) has the following two interpretations: a narrow focus reading in (23a) and a broad focus reading or propositional assertion in (23b).

(23) a. 是[我]今日莫逃得此難。
   shì [wǒ] jīnrì mò táo dé cǐ nàn.
   COP 1SG today NEG escape able DEM disaster
   ‘It is me who cannot escape the disaster.’

b. 是[我今日莫逃得此難]。
   shì [wǒ jīnrì mò táo dé cǐ nàn].
   COP 1SG today NEG escape able DEM disaster
   ‘It is the case that I cannot escape the disaster.’

In the Modern Fuyang dialect, it is possible to find the counterparts of both the bare shì clefts and the shì . . . de clefts. Given that the prefix to complex pronouns more likely develops from the bare copula clefts, we only introduce this type for the Fuyang dialect. In Modern Fuyang Wu, bare copula clefts are frequently used. They are formed by placing the copula /zɿ/ at the sentence initial position while there is no particle, such as /ko/, at the end of the sentence. One such example is given in (24a).

(24) a. 伽看来，是[伢勿好]。
   ga³¹³ kʰan³⁴ kʰ³⁵, ɿi³¹³ fəʔ⁵¹ fiɔ⁵¹³.
   this look come COP 3PL NEG good
   ‘It seems that it’s their fault.’

In the same vein, the example in (24a) can be interpreted with a narrow focus reading, as in (24b), and a broad focus reading or a propositional assertion, as in (24c). The element following the sentence-initial /zɿ/ always carries stress, expressing contrastiveness.

b. 伽看来，是[伢勿好, 不是[你勿好]。
   [Narrow focus]
   ga³¹³ kʰan³⁴ la³⁵, ɿi³¹³ [fəʔ⁵¹ fiɔ⁵¹³, fəʔ⁵¹ zi³¹³ [n³¹³] fəʔ⁵¹ fiɔ⁵¹³.
   This look come COP 3PL NEG good NEG COP 2SG NEG good
   ‘It seems that it’s their fault and not your fault.’

(2008) and Paul and Whitman (2008) in the details of their analyses of these two types of cleft sentences will not be of concern to us in this analysis.
c. 伽看来, 是[勿好]. 你妻难过。
[Broad focus] ga\textsuperscript{313} k\textsuperscript{b} an\textsuperscript{34} le\textsuperscript{35}, zi\textsuperscript{313} [ia\textsuperscript{313} fo\textsuperscript{51} ho\textsuperscript{513}], n\textsuperscript{313} fo\textsuperscript{34} nan\textsuperscript{35} ku\textsuperscript{34}.

This look come COP 3PL NEG good 2SG NEG sad

'It seems that it’s their fault. Don’t be sad.'

On the basis of the above arguments, we suggest that the prefix /zaʔ/ of the complex pronouns in the Fuyang dialect most likely comes from the sentence-initial copula /zi/ in cleft sentences.

9.5 Complex pronouns: From focalization to topicalization

In this section, we will address the two questions: (a) how is it syntactically possible that the copula followed by any of the pronouns allow them to be reanalysed into complex pronouns? (b) why are unstressed complex pronouns restricted to topic positions?

We assume that the frequent use of pronouns with the copula /zi/ in cleft sentences leads to the fusion of these two constituents into the single constituent of a complex complex pronoun. We hypothesize the following three-stage grammaticalization path which also involves morphologization whereby a copula verb develops into a prefix:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Stage I} & \quad \text{Stage II} & \quad \text{Stage III} \\
zi + \text{pronoun} & \quad zi - \text{pronoun} & \quad zaʔ - \text{pronoun}.
\end{align*}
\]

In the first stage, /zi/ is a copula in cleft sentences and it is juxtaposed to the pronoun linearly. In the second stage, /zi/ is used as a focus marker before the pronoun, while it still has the same pronunciation as for its copular use. In this stage, the early forms of the complex pronouns emerge. In the third stage, the complete decategorialization of the prefix /zi/ is achieved, whereby it loses all features of its former verbal status to become a true pronominal prefix or clitic to the complex pronoun it forms, which is, itself, not focus-sensitive any more. Phonological attrition is well known to accompany grammaticalization (see Heine and Kuteva 2005), a process which specifically involves morphologization in this case. The weakening of pronunciation of the prefix from /zi/ to /zaʔ/ is one of the parameters of grammaticalization. Now we will show how this grammaticalization process is syntactically possible.

Kiss (1998, 2008) points out that identificational focus, i.e. contrastive focus, is a structural focus. Furthermore, this identificational focus is syntactically dependent. For example, in Hungarian, the immediate position before the VP is the focus element. In English, this type of focus is expressed by cleft sentences. According to Kiss, contrastive focus appears on the left-periphery of a sentence. It is an XP occupying the Specifier position of a FocP. In the case of Mandarin cleft sentences,
it is agreed that the focus element appears on the left periphery of a sentence, though there is no agreement about the status of the copula in clefts, such as shì in Mandarin. We simply assume that cleft sentences have the following structure: [FocP [IP]].

Topic elements may appear on the left periphery of the sentence. As stated previously, Wu Chinese is a topic-prominent language, in which the sentence-initial position is the default topic position. We assume that there is an independent syntactic position for topic phrases. Namely, topic phrases occur in a position before the subject, i.e. [TopP [IP]].

(25) z-伊Topic哦，我叫伊过嘍。
\[zəʔ^{1-3}i^{33}Topic o n̥^{34}tɕio^{34} i^{33} ku^{34} die.\]
PREF-3SG Top 1SG call 3SG EXP PRT
‘As for him, I have asked him already.’

In addition, the topic element and the focus element can co-occur in the same sentence. The topic must precede the focus, not vice versa.

(26) z-伊Topic哦，是王老师Focus克伊骂。
\[zəʔ^{1-3}i^{33}Topic o z̬^{35}l̬^{3}si^{53}Focus kʰʃ^{51} i^{33} mo^{34}.\]
PREF-3SG Top COP Wang teacher OM 3SG scold
‘As for him, it is Mr. Wang who scolded him.’

We assume that there are two extra projections above IP, namely, TopP and FocP. They are arranged hierarchically as: [TopP [FocP [IP]]].

In the first stage, cleft sentences have simple pronouns as subject. They are preceded by the focus marker, namely, the verbal copula /z̬/. As the subject of the sentence, simple pronouns are located at [Spec, IP]. In this case, either the Specifier is focused, which leads to the narrow focus reading, or the whole IP is focused, which leads to the wide focus reading.

In the second stage, we assume that due to the fact that the copula and simple pronouns are adjacent to each other, they are fused into a single lexical item. This is the early form of complex pronouns. This fused form is basically a pronoun in nature, but it also inherits the focus-marking property of the copula. In other words, at the early stage, the fused form of copula + pronoun is also focus-sensitive. Syntactically, it is highly possible that the focus-sensitive complex pronouns are located in the FocP domain, say, [Spec FocP] for instance.

In terms of its interpretation, complex pronouns in the old Fuyang dialect were able to express ‘exhaustiveness’ in cleft sentences à la Kiss (1998). Kiss (1998: 245) argues that identificational focus is characterized as exhaustiveness: it ‘represents a
subset of the set of contextually or situationally given elements for which the predicate phrase can potentially hold; it is identified as the exhaustive subset of this set of which the predicate actually holds. Along this line, we assume that complex pronouns in (old) Fuyang Wu always presuppose an existential set which is referential, out of which a certain member is picked out to be contrasted with the rest.

However, in Modern Fuyang Wu, i.e. in the third stage, the prefix in the paradigms of complex pronouns is no longer a focus marker and complex pronouns in Fuyang are used independently of stress and also non-contrastively. It is also evidenced by the phonetic reduction from the copula /zə/ to the pronominal clitic /zaŋ/. In other words, complex pronouns have evolved from focalized elements to non-focalized elements in Modern Fuyang Wu. However, as we observed before, this particular kind of use is still syntactically restricted. They are only possible in topic positions.

We suggest that when complex pronouns are fully grammaticalized and they lose their focus-sensitivity, they can no longer stay in the focus position and have to be raised to a higher position than FocP, such as [Spec TopP].

To summarize so far, diachronically speaking, according to our hypothesis, unstressed complex pronouns develop from stressed ones in cleft sentences, where they are interpreted as contrastive focus elements at this early stage of their development. However, due to the de-focalization of complex pronouns, they are forced to leave the focus position to move to a higher position, such as, a topic position, where stress is lost. In contradistinction to this, when complex pronouns receive prosodic stress, they may on the other hand be re-employed in these focus positions, thus possibly beginning a new cycle.

9.6 Conclusion

This chapter argues that the seeming subject/object asymmetry of complex pronouns in Fuyang Wu is better re-cast as a distinction between topic and focus. In so doing, we made a distinction between stressed and unstressed complex pronouns: unstressed complex pronouns are available only in topic positions, while stressed complex pronouns are possible in both topic and focus positions, where they function as contrastive topics and contrastive focus elements respectively.

We also claimed that complex pronouns are derived from the fusion of the sentence-initial copula and pronouns in cleft constructions, which are characterized by ‘exhaustiveness’ à la Kiss (1998). We explained that the reason why (unstressed) complex pronouns are restricted to topic positions is that the loss of contrastiveness for these complex pronouns, due to the loss of stress after fusion of the copula and pronoun has occurred, leads to a further syntactic change which shifts them from a focus position to a topic position.
Acknowledgements

The data used in this chapter were mainly collected during a field trip conducted in Fuyang, Zhejiang Province, in August 2011 (the author himself is a native speaker of Fuyang Wu). I would like to express thanks to Hilary Chappell, Yiya Chen, Katia Chirkova, Alain Peyraube, and the SINOTYPE team members for providing constructive feedback when presenting earlier versions of this analysis. Special thanks goes to Hilary Chappell and YiYa Chen, who provided me with helpful written comments. Victor Pan also deserves a ‘thank you’ for discussing topic/focus issues with me on several occasions. I am solely responsible for any errors.