

Your name:

The UK Linguistics Olympiad 2020

Round 2



Problem 1. Taiwan Paiwan (20 marks)

Paiwan is a minority language in Taiwan/Republic of China, spoken by around 66,000 native speakers in the southern region of the island. One of the major components of Paiwan syntax is “focus”, which applies to the new piece of information that the sentence is conveying. In English, this can be represented by sentences like “It is **the dog** which the man likes”: in this example, **the dog** is focused.



Below are some sentences in Paiwan with their English translations. Sentence elements in **italics** are focused. (The digraph **dj** represents a single sound. The word **langedaen** in sentence 8 is actually **langedain**, but this was edited for the sake of simplicity.)

Paiwan	English
1. kanan nua uqałay tua kuka a quma nua tsakaw	The man eats the chicken in the thief's field .
2. qmałup tua vavuy a kuvatu	My dog hunts the pig.
3. djavisen nua tsemas a kukama	The spirit snatches my father .
4. sitarang nua uqałay a vuluq	The man protects (it) with the spear .
5. qałupen nua suvavuy i tua umaq a ałak nua vavaian	Your pig hunts the woman's child in the house.
6. kman tua kuka a tsemas	The spirit eats the chicken.
7. djavisan nua pulingaw tua vuluq a gadu	The shaman snatches the spear in the mountain .
8. langedaen nua sivitay a qaya-qayam	The soldier hears the bird .

Answer the questions on the next page on your answer sheet.

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Q1.1. How would you say these sentences in Paiwan?

9. The man protects the field with **the dog**.
10. Your shaman hunts my bird in **the spirit's mountain**.
11. **The woman** snatches the pig.

Now look at the following question-answer dialogues. The first answer has been translated for you.

Question	Answer
12. inu a tmarang a tsakaw?	tmarang a tsakaw i tua quma <i>The thief who protects (it) is in the field.</i>
13. anema a siqaʔup nua sukama tua watu?	siqaʔup nua kukama tua watu a kuvuluq
14. anema a sudjavisen?	kudjavisen a qaya-qayam nua vavaian
15. inu a kanan nua uqaʔay?	kanan nua uqaʔay a gadu

Q1.2. Based on these examples, translate the following responses into English, underlining focused elements, and saying what questions (in Paiwan) could have prompted them.

16. susitarang tua qaya-qayam nua pulingaw a tsemas
17. kanen nua uqaʔay a vavuy i tua gadu
18. kuqaʔupan tua suvatu a kuquma

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Solution and marking.

Scoring: (max 37)

- #9-11: 1 point for each correct element (separated by +) (max 11)
 - order of phrases does not matter, order within phrases DOES matter
- #16-18: (max 26)
 - 1 point for each correct English sentence element (max 12)
 - 1 point for each correct highlighting (max 3)
 - 1 point for each correct Paiwan sentence element (max 11)
 - insist on complete correctness within each element, e.g. no extra incorrect words (e.g. *who are ...*) and correct function (e.g. re subject/object)
 - accept minor errors unrelated to the data, e.g. *on* for *in*, or *protects* for *protect*, *a~the, is eating* for *eats*
 - No marks for focus if more than one element is underlined
 - Credit underlined elements even if the element itself is wrong (e.g. has the wrong function).

9	Paiwan	sitarang + nua uqaɬay + tua quma + a vatu (4)
10	Paiwan	qaɬupan + nua supulingaw + tua kuqaya-qayam + a gadu nua tsemas (4)
11	Paiwan	djmavis + tua vavuy + a vavaian (3)
16	English	You + protect + the shaman's bird + with <u>the spirit</u> . (4+1 = 5)
	Paiwan	anema + a kusitarang + tua qaya-qayam + nua pulingaw? (4) OR anema + a kusitarang + nua pulingaw + tua qaya-qayam?
17	English	The man + eats + <u>the pig</u> + in the mountain. (4+1 = 5)
	Paiwan	anema + a kanen + nua uqaɬay + i tua gadu? (4) OR anema + a kanen + i tua gadu + nua uqaɬay?
18	English	I + hunt + your dog + in <u>my field</u> . (4+1 = 5)
	Paiwan	inu + a suqaɬupan + tua kuvatu? (3)

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Commentary

Paiwan has 4 types of focus in a sentence: Agent Focus (AF), Patient Focus (PF), Referent Focus (RF) and Instrument Focus (IF). Depending on which element of a sentence is focused, the verb conjugates differently.

Agent – subject of transitive verb

Patient – object of transitive verb

Referent – location/time/beneficiary of action

Instrument – instrument/cause/motivation of action

The affixes are:

AF: **-m-** after initial consonant

PF: **-en**

RF: **-an**

IF: **si-**

The article of the noun phrase changes depending on whether it is focused or not:

a = focused element/equational construction marker (CM=)

tua = unfocused non-agent

nua = unfocused agent/genitive construction marker (CMgen)

CM= means that two elements are equal to each other or describe each other.

Another way that you could look at these constructions is that the verbal affixes are derivational morphemes that change the verb into a noun, i.e. **kan** = eat, **k-m-an** = the one who eats, **si-kan** = the thing with which one eats. In this instance, the agent becomes the ‘possessor’ of the new noun and so goes into the genitive case (**nua**).

Both these explanations describe the same data and either would lead to a correct interpretation.

Finally, there are also the prefixes **ku-** and **su-** which refer to the 1st and 2nd person singular respectively. When attached to nouns they indicate possession, and to verbs they indicate agency (although with the derivational theory, the verbs have become nouns anyway).