On the use of idioms for testing focus

Jenneke van der Wal – draft March 2020

1. Introduction

A generally accepted definition of focus is that it triggers a set of alternatives (Rooth 1985, 1996; Krifka 2008), and asserts that the predicate is true for the referent mentioned. For example, focussing the object in 'I drank TEA' triggers a set of alternatives for 'tea' {coffee, lemonade, gin, …} and asserts that out of those alternatives, my drinking it is true for tea. An immediate prediction of this definition is that it should be impossible to focus referents that cannot trigger alternatives.

A particular class of such unfocussable items are parts of idioms. Since their idiomatic meaning is taken to be non-compositional, no alternatives are available for each part of the idiom *in the idiomatic reading*. Instead, when alternatives are generated, these will only refer to the literal meaning and not the idiomatic one. To illustrate, consider the English idiom 'to lose one's marbles', meaning 'to go crazy'. Focusing one part in a cleft, or by intonation, results in the loss of the idiomatic meaning:

(1)   a.   They lost their marbles = They went crazy
       b.   They lost THEIR marbles =/= They went crazy
       c.   They LOST their marbles =/= They went crazy
       d.   It's their marbles that they lost =/= They went crazy

Focussing the marbles, like in the cleft in (1d), triggers alternative items they might have lost, like a scarf or a toy. This prevents the object 'marbles' from being interpreted as part of the idiom together with the verb.

Considering these properties, we can use idioms as tests for focus constructions. If a linguistic strategy that is suspected to encode focus can be felicitously used with an idiom, it shows that the strategy is not a dedicated marker of focus on the affected phrase. Instead, it may be that such a marked construction is underspecified for broad or narrow focus, or that it is not a dedicated focus strategy at all. Fanselow and Lenertová (2011) show for German that a subpart of the focus can be fronted, even if this fronted element is part of an idiom and does not have any meaning by itself, such as *Garaus* in (2).

German (Fanselow and Lenertová 2011: 176)
(2)   [Den   GARaus]ᵢ hat er   ihr   tᵢ gemacht.
       the.ACC *garaus*   has he   her.DAT made
       'He killed her.'

They therefore conclude that this 'subpart of focus fronting' is not a focus construction and the movement to the initial position in German cannot be motivated by focus features.

In this paper, my first aim is to illustrate how idioms have been and can be used to diagnose focus in Bantu languages, and what the consequences are for analysis. To that aim, Section 2 shows how idioms can help distinguish two types of

the conjoint/disjoint alternation, Section 3 illustrates how the idiomatic reading is dependent on the presence of the augment, and Section 4 shows idioms in cleft constructions. A second aim is to show that there is a type of idiom that escapes the generalisation that (parts of) idioms cannot be focused, and to explain why this may be the case. This is discussed and amply illustrated in Section 5.

2. Conjoint/disjoint typology

A specific trait of some southern Bantu languages is the pairing of conjugational categories called 'conjoint' (CJ) and 'disjoint' (DJ). These verb forms are said to encode the same tense/aspect semantics, but differ in their relation with what follows the verb. The Makhuwa example in (3) shows three characteristics of the alternation (see Van der Wal 2017 for further information):
1. the morphology of the inflected verb differs for the CJ and DJ form;
2. the CJ verb form cannot appear sentence-finally;
3. and there is a difference in interpretation of the element following the verb.

Makhuwa (P31, Van der Wal 2011: 1735)
(3) CJ   Nthíyáná   o-c-aalé   nramá.
          1.woman   1SM-eat-PERF.CJ 3.rice
          'The woman ate *rice.*'

      DJ   Nthíyáná   o-hoó-cá   (nráma).
          1.woman   1SM-PERF.DJ-eat 3.rice
          'The woman ate (rice).'

For Makhuwa, I have shown that the choice between the CJ or DJ verb form is dependent on focus, specifically that the CJ verb form expresses exclusive focus on the element directly following the verb (Van der Wal 2011) – in (3a) the object 'rice' is focused, to the exclusion of other possible alternatives that may have been eaten. However, especially for the southern Bantu languages that have the CJ/DJ alternation, it has often been observed that the CJ and DJ verb form "may in certain contexts differ in meaning but for the most part are used in different syntactical positions" (Ziervogel and Mabuza 1976:174 on Swati). Van der Spuy (1993) and others after him analyse the CJ/DJ alternation as determined purely by *constituency*: when the verb is final in the vP constituent, it takes the DJ form; when it is not final, i.e. when some element follows within the vP, the verb takes a CJ form. Buell (2005) shows this in a range of circumstances, one of which is illustrated in (4): despite the fact that the adverb *kahle* 'well' is not in focus (as can be deduced from the preceding clause), the verb ngicula 'I sing' takes the cj form. Following Van der Spuy, Buell argues that this is because *kahle* is phrased in the same constituent as the verb, and the verb form in Zulu is determined purely by whether the verb is constituent-final or not.

Zulu (S42, Buell 2005: 64, 66)
(4) CJ   A-ngi-dans-i   kahle,   kodwa   ngi-cul-a   kahle.
          NEG-1SG.SM-dance-FV   well   but   1SG.SM-sing-FV   well
          'I don't dance well, but I sing well.'

This suggests two types of alternation: focus-based and constituency-based (Van der Wal 2017). One of the diagnostics to distinguish a focus-based from a constituency-based alternation is how idioms behave. If the CJ form encodes focus on the following element, idioms involving an object should not retain their idiomatic reading. In contrast, if only constituency plays a role, then the CJ form is expected to be licensed irrespective of the interpretation of what follows the verb. Therefore, in a language with a constituency-based alternation, the idiom should be acceptable with a CJ form. This is borne out in contrasting data from four languages: on the one hand, Matengo and Kirundi require the DJ form for an idiomatic reading and do not allow the CJ form (i.e. focus-based), as shown in (5) and (6) respectively.

Matengo (N13, Yoneda 2017: 437)
(5)   CJ   ju-a-som-aje   mwikindamba.
              1SM-PST-read-CJ   18LOC.7.hut
              *'He didn't have a formal education.'
              lit. 'He studied in a HUT. / He STUDIED IN A HUT.'

       DJ   ju-a-som-iti   mwikindamba.
              1SM-PST-read-PF   18LOC.7.hut
              'He didn't have formal education.'
              lit. 'He studied in a hut.'

Kirundi (JD62, Bostoen & Nshemezimana 2017: 410)
(6) Q: Nooné yaamaze gushika?
    A: Oya aracáakúba igoónzi.

    nooné [a-a-a-mar-ye   ku-shik-a]^FOC
    so   1SM-NPST-DJ-finish-PERF   15-arrive-FV
    oya   [a-ra-cáa-kúb-a   i-ø-goónzi]^FOC
    no   1SM-DJ-PERS-tremble-IPFV   AUG-5-convulsion
    Q: 'So, HAS he ALREADY PASSED AWAY?'
    A: 'No, he IS STILL IN AGONY.' (*Gikenye,* theatre*, 1970s)

Bostoen & Nshemezimana (2017: 410) note that "The nominal constituent *igoónzi* 'convulsion' is obligatorily post-verbal and is never focused on its own. It cannot be preceded by a conjoint verb, which would mean that the post-verbal element is either specifically focused or more salient than the verb within the comment".

      On the other hand, Zulu and Changana happily use a CJ form with an idiomatic reading, as illustrated in (7) and (8), respectively. This shows that the conjoint verb form in these languages does not encode focus on the postverbal element, as hence we can diagnose these alternations as constituency-based.

Zulu (S42, Claire Halpert p.c.)
(7)   CJ   Ilanga li-khipha   umkhovu   e-tshe-ni.
              5.sun 5SM-extract.CJ 1.zombie LOC-9.stone-LOC

'It's really hot.'
lit. 'The sun brings the zombie out of the stone'

Changana (S53, database Simango and Van der Wal)
(8) CJ   Ko:ndlo   rí-phukw-é   ncê:le
           5.rat   5SM-fail-PFV.CJ   9.hole
           'The thief was caught.'
           lit. 'The rat failed (to reach) the hole.'

     DJ   Ko:ndlo   rí-phukw-ílé   nce:le.
           5.rat   5SM-fail-PFV.DJ   9.hole
           'The thief was caught.'
           lit. 'The rat failed (to reach) the hole.'

The unfocussability of parts of idioms has here helped to identify the defining factor for the choice of verb form: postverbal focus or the constituent-final position of the verb.

3. Augmentless nouns

A second focus strategy concerns two forms of the noun. In Luganda, nouns can appear with or without an augment (initial vowel):

Luganda (JE15)
(9)   a-ba-ana   _-ba-ana
       AUG-2-children   2-children

       o-mu-sajja   _-mu-sajja
       aug-1-man   1-man

Following a negative verb, the augment is always absent, but after an affirmative verb, there is a choice to be made. Hyman and Katamba (1993) and Van der Wal & Namyalo (2016) show that nouns that lack the augment are in exclusive focus in an affirmative clause. As predicted by this analysis, it is impossible to omit the augment on the object-part of an idiom, as in (10b).

Luganda (JE15, database Namyalo & Van der Wal)
(10) a.   E-my-aaka   gy-aa-li   gi-mu-wubidde   a-ka-taambaala.
          AUG-4-years 4SM-PAST-be   4SM-1OM-wave.PERF   AUG-12-handkerchief
          'He is very old.'
          lit. 'The years waved a handkerchief at him.'

     b.   #E-my-aaka gy-aa-li   gi-mu-wubidde   _-kataambaala.
          AUG-4-years 4SM-PAST-be   4SM-1OM-wave.PERF   12-handkerchief
          *'He is very old.'
          lit. 'The years waved a handkerchief at him.'

Additionally we may note that the idiomatic reading is present when the object, as part of the idiom, occupies the position immediately after the verb, which can be said to be a focus position (Van der Wal and Namyalo 2016). The postverbal position indicates a rather underspecified type of focus, however, also allowing focus projection to the VP or the whole clause. This can be seen in (11), where the two continuations in a. and b. indicate that the scope of focus can be the verb-adjacent (augmentless) object or the VP, respectively.

Luganda (Namyalo and Van der Wal database)
(11)   Y-a-yérá   nnyúmba   y-okká…
        1SM-PAST-sweep   9.house   9-only
        'She only swept the house…

        a.   … sí   ki-yûngu.
                NEG.COP 7-kitchen
                … not the kitchen.'

        b.   … te-y-a-yóza   e-b-intú.
                NEG-1SM-PAST-wash   AUG-8-things
                … she didn't do the dishes.'

As soon as the whole idiom is in the scope of focus, alternatives are available – for example for (10), an alternative could be 'he is young'. Therefore, this shows us that the diagnostic power is limited to *parts of* idioms being focused.

4. Clefts

Clefts consist of a clause-initial focused phrase, a copula, and a clause usually marked as relative. Clefts and cleft-like structures in Luganda and Rukiga do not allow an idiomatic reading, identifying these constructions as focus constructions:

Luganda (JE15, database Namyalo and Van der Wal)
(12)   *cleft/preverbal focus construction*
        #A-ka-tambaala   ky-e   e-my-aka   gi-mu-wubidde.
        AUG-12PX-handkerchief   12-REL   4A-4PX-years   4SM-1OM-wave.PERF
        *'He is very old.'
        lit. 'It's a handkerchief that years waved at him.'

Rukiga (JE14, database Asiimwe and Van der Wal)
(13)   a.   *pseudocleft*
                E-kí   n-aa-yééyaguz-á   n'   ó-ru-gusyo.
                AUG-7.REL.PRO 1SG.SM-N.PST-scratch-FV   COP   AUG-11-shard
                *'I really struggled/am in a bad situation.'
                lit. 'What I have scratched (with) is a shard.'

        b.   *reverse pseudocleft*

O-ru-gusyo   ni-rw-ó   n-aa-yeeyagúz-a.
AUG-11-shard COP-11-RM 1SG.SM-N.PST-scratch-FV
*'I really struggled/am in a bad situation.'
lit. 'It's a shard that I scratched with.'

A question for the analysis of clefts in any particular language is whether the focused phrase has been moved to a clause-initial position from a lower position in which it was generated (e.g. as the complement of the verb), or alternatively that it has not moved but been generated in the high position. The retention of an idiomatic reading has been used as a test for a movement analysis of cleft constructions, since the idiom pieces should be lexically inserted together to generate the idiomatic reading. However, the infelicity of an idiom in a cleft does not necessarily mean that it is not derived by movement: if focus is inherent to a cleft, the incompatibility with the unfocusable idiom will also lead to rejection of the sentence.

For Lubukusu, Wasike (2007) shows that it is not possible to focus part of an idiom in a cleft:

Lubukusu (JD31c, Wasike 2007: 146, 147)
(14) a.   khu-khw-ara   chii-njekho
            AUG-15-break 10-laughter
            'to laugh loudly'
            lit. 'to break laughter'

      b.   Nanjekho   a-a-ara   chi-njekho.
            1.Nanjekho 1SM-PST-break 10-laughter
            'Nanjekho laughed loudly.'
            lit. 'Nanjekho broke laughter.'

      c.   #Chi-li   chi-njekho   ni-cho   Nanjekho   a-a-ara.
            10-be   10-laughter REL-10   1.Nanjekho 1SM-PST-break
            *'Nanjekho laughed loudly.'
            lit. ?'It is laughter that Nanjekho broke.'

This would at first sight suggest that the cleft is not derived by movement. However, Wasike (2007) argues that the idiomatic reading is present in relativised idioms (15), showing that the infelicity of (14c) is not (necessarily) due to the object being base-generated (as opposed to moved).

Lubukusu (JD31c, Wasike 2007: 151)
(15) Chi-njekho   ni-cho Nanjekho   a-a-ara
      10-laughter REL-10 1.Nanjekho   1SM-PST-break

      cha-a-sindusya   ba-ba-ana.
      10SM-PST-frighten-CAUS   AUG-2-children
      'The laughter that Nanjekho broke frightened the children.'

Wasike (2007: 151) concludes that "[we] cannot therefore take the idiom chunk facts as full proof (sic) evidence that the clefted phrase is base generated in the left

periphery". The suggestion, then, is that the clefted idiom is unacceptable not due to supposed non-movement, but because of the incompatibility with the focus reading of the cleft in Lubukusu.

5. How useless tasks can be focused

In spite of the evidence that parts of idioms resist focus, Kîîtharaka shows a split into two types of idioms under focus. Compare examples (16) and (17), which behave differently in a cleft. The SVO order in (16a) and (17a) has the literal as well as the idiomatic meaning, but the two idioms differ in the cleft construction in (16b) and (17b): 'to pound water' (do something useless) retains the idiomatic interpretation, whereas 'to climb a tree' (to become pregnant) loses it.

Kîîtharaka (E54, database Kanampiu & Van der Wal)[1]

(16) a.   N' û̋gûkíma rû̋û̋yî na ntîrî.

        ni   û-kû-kim-a   rû-ûyî   na   n-tîrî

        FOC   2SG.SM-PRS-pound-FV   11-water   with   9-mortar

        'You are engaged in a useless task.'

        lit. 'You are pounding water with a mortar.'

    b.   Í rû̋û̋yí û̋gûkíma ná ǹtîrí.   *cleft*

        ni   rû-ûyi   û-kû-kim-a   na   n-tîrî

        FOC   11-water   2SG.SM-PRS-pound-FV   with   9-mortar

        'You are engaged in a (really) useless task.'

        lit. 'You're pounding water with a mortar.'

(17) a.   N'áátwéére mûtî̋.

        ni   a-ra-tûa-ire   mû-tî

        FOC   1SM-YPST-climb-PFV   3-tree

        'She became pregnant.'

        lit. 'She climbed a tree.'

    b.   Í mûtî̋ mwaarí átweete.   *cleft*

        ni   mû-tî   mw-aari   a-tw-et-e

        FOC   3-tree   1-girl   1SM-climb-PFV

        *'The girl became pregnant.'

        lit. 'It's a tree that the girl climbed.'

This can be understood when we look at the alternatives triggered by focus: the object 'water' can be placed on a scale of 'usefulness of pounding', with alternatives such as millet or maize ranking higher, and water being close to the useless end of the scale. Importantly, there *are* alternatives that can be considered (see also Frey 2005 on idioms in German scrambling). The object in the other idiom, the 'tree', does not have viable alternatives linked to the idiomatic meaning, and therefore

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[1] In Kîîtharaka, the particle *ni* FOC has various functions (see Muriungi 2005, and Abels and Muriungi 2008). Combined with the tense marker *-kû-* it expresses the present progressive, as in (16a) and (21a), in a cleft it marks the focus, and its origin is still visible in its use as a copula. The particle appears as *i-* before a consonant, and *n-* before a vowel.

only retains the literal meaning when alternatives are required in a focus construction.

There are three interesting facts to be considered here, before the issue of compositionality is addressed. The first is that other idioms referring to useless tasks also retain the idiomatic reading in a cleft, as illustrated in (20) and (21). Phrasing these in a cleft is said to intensify the meaning – you're doing something *completely* useless. These can be compared to the idioms in (18) and (19), which do not refer to useless tasks, and do lose their idiomatic reading. We thus see a division between 'useless task' idioms and other idioms.

Kîîtharaka (E54, database Kanampiu & Van der Wal)
(18) a.   Kîthaká gíkûnunka mbwé.
           kî-thaka kî-kû-nunk-a m-bwe
           7-bush 7SM-PRS-stink-FV 9-fox
           'There is imminent trouble.'
           lit. 'The bush is stinking (of) fox.'

      b.   I kîthaka gîkûnunka mbwe.   *cleft*
           ni   kî-thaka kî-kû-nunk-a   m-bwe
           FOC 7-bush 7SM-PRS-stink-FV 9-fox
           *'It is trouble that is imminent.'
           'It is the bush that is stinking (of) fox.'

      c.   I mbwe kîthaka gîkûnunka   *cleft*
           ni   m-bwe kî-kû-nunk-a   kî-thaka
           FOC 9-fox   7SM-PRS-stink-FV 7-bush
           *'It is trouble that is imminent.'
           'It is the fox that the bush is stinking.'

(19) a.   Tîîri îgûûka.
           tîîri   î-kû-ûk-a
           9.dust   9SM-PRS-rise-FV
           'Things are finished.'
           lit. 'Dust has risen.'

      b.   I tîîri yáûká.   *cleft*
            ni   tîîri   î-a-ûk-a
           FOC 9.dust 9SM-PST-rise-FV
           *'Things are finished'
           lit. 'It is dust that has risen.'

(20) a.   kûthaambia ngûkû magûrû
           kû-thaamb-i-a   n-gûkû   ma-gûrû
           15-bathe-APPL-FV 9-chicken 6-legs
           'to engage in a useless task'
           lit. 'to bathe a chicken the legs'

b. ii ngûkɛ́ ûkûthaambia magûrû   *cleft*
   ni   n-gûkû   û-kû-thaamb-i-a   ma-gûrû
   FOC   9-chicken   2SG.SM-PRS-wash-IC-FV   6-legs
   'You're doing something (really) useless.'
   lit. 'It's a chicken you're washing the legs.'

(21) a. N'ɛ́kuínîra njá.
      ni   û-kû-in-îr-a   n-ja
      FOC   2SG.SM-PRS-sing[2]-APPL-FV   9-outside
      'You are doing something fruitless.'
      lit. 'You are singing outside.'

   b. I njá ûkuínîra.   *cleft*
      ni   n-ja   û-kû-in-îr-a
      FOC   9-outside   2SG.SM-PRS-sing-APPL-FV
      'It is something (very) fruitless you are doing'
      lit. 'It is outside that you are singing.'

A second observation is that pseudoclefts and reverse pseudoclefts resist the idiomatic interpretation across the board, as shown in (18c), (20c) and (21c) below.

(18) c. Kîthaka ikyó gɛ́kɛ́nunka m̀bwé.   *reverse pseudo*
      kî-thaka ni-kî-o kî-kû-nunk-a m-bwe
      7-bush FOC-7-PRO 7SM-PRS-stink-FV 9-fox
      *'There is imminent trouble.'
      lit. 'The bush is what is stinking (of) fox.'

(20) c. Ngɛ́kɛ́ nîyó ûkûthaambia mágûrû.   *reverse pseudo*
      n-gûkû   ni-î-o   û-kû-thaamb-i-a   ma-gûrû
      9-chicken   FOC-9-PRO   2SG.SM-PRS-wash-IC-FV   6-legs
      *'Something useless is what you did.'
      lit. 'The chicken is what you washed the legs.'

(21) c. Kûrá ûkuinîra i njá   *pseudocleft*
      kû-ra   û-ku-in-îr-a   ni   n-ja
      17-DEM.DIST   2SG.SM-PRS-sing-APPL-FV COP   9-outside
      *'You are doing an effort in futility.'
      'Where you are singing is outside.'

The unacceptability of (reverse) pseudoclefts can be understood if we consider their syntactic structure: (reverse) pseudoclefts are copular constructions, one part of which is a free relative. This means that the parts of the cleft are not generated as one chunk, and hence cannot receive their idiomatic interpretation. The reference of the free relative is calculated independently, creating a presupposition with only the

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[2] *kûina* refers to both singing and dancing (as traditionally the two go together).

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literal meaning: there exists a place where you are singing (and this is identified as outside).

A third interesting fact is that in Makhuwa, 1670 kilometers further south, we find a similar split in idioms. Here, too, the idiom for 'doing something useless' retains the idiomatic reading when the conjoint verb form is used, as illustrated in (22), whereas the idiom 'to stretch the legs' for 'to die' does not (see further discussion on the conjoint/disjoint alternation in section 2). The conjoint form expresses focus on the element directly following the verb (Van der Wal 2011), but since more useful alternatives to write on than water are easily available, the conjoint form is still accepted.

Makhuwa (P31)

(22)   a.   Woolépá mmaátsíni vó!   DJ
            o-o-lep-a   m-maatsi-ni   vo
            2SG.SM-PFV.DJ-write-FV   18-6.water-LOC   IP
            'You are wasting your time!'
            lit. 'You have written on water!'

       b.   Olepalé mmaátsíni vó!   CJ
            o-lep-ale   m-maatsi-ni   vo
            2SG.SM-write-PFV.CJ   18-6.water-LOC   IP
            'You are wasting your time!' (emphatically)
            lit. 'You have written on water!'

(23)   a.   Ohoókóla mwétto.   DJ
            o-o-kol-a   mwetto
            1SM-PFV.DJ-stretch-FV   3.leg
            'S/he died.'
            lit. 'S/he stretched the leg.'

       b.   Ookolalé mwettó.   CJ
            o-o-kol-ale   mwetto
            1SM-PFV.DJ-stretch-PFV.CJ   3.leg
            *'S/he died.'
            lit. 'S/he stretched *the leg*.'

The fact that it is precisely the 'useless task' idiom that allows focussing suggests that the division between the two types of idioms is rooted in an inherent semantic property of these idioms, not a language-specific quirk.

Specifically, the exceptional behaviour of this type of idiom can perhaps shed light on the question of the semantic decomposability of idioms. Nunberg (1978) and Nunberg et al. (1994) argue against a non-decompositional analysis of idioms across the board, suggesting instead that there are decomposable and non-decomposable idioms. These differ along three semantic properties (Nunberg et al. 1994: 498):

- conventionality: how predictable is the idiomatic meaning based on the conventional meaning of the words in isolation in a particular language environment?

- opacity (or transparency): to what extent is the original motivation for use recoverable?
- compositionality: to what extent can the phrasal meaning, once known, be derived from the idiom's parts?

We can clearly see how idioms like 'climb a tree' or 'stretch the legs' are more conventional, less transparent, and less compositional than 'pound water' or 'write on water'. Hence, we may hypothesise that only non-compositional idioms reject focussing, whereas compositional idioms allow it (see also experiments by Wierzba and colleagues, 2016). Nevertheless, idioms like 'to study in a hut' and 'to break laughter' are quite transparent and it is relatively easy to derive the idiomatic reading from the conventional meaning – yet they resist focus. I therefore propose that the 'useless task' idioms (additionally) need to have a scalar aspect of meaning, in order to facilitate the generation of alternatives in the idiomatic interpretation.[3] More research is needed to establish the precise dependencies between the various semantic properties (conventionality, opacity, compositionality, and scalarity) of idioms and their behaviour under focus. For now, we conclude that 'useless task' idioms are more transparant and indicate a scale, that this enables the generation of alternatives, and hence that they are acceptable in focus constructions.

6. Summary

In this short paper, we have seen how parts of idioms can be used as a test for focus, illustrating two types of the conjoint/disjoint alternation, focus on augmentless nouns, and the use in clefts. Two aspects to keep in mind when diagnosing focus strategies with idioms are, first, that whole idioms may still be focused but parts of idioms cannot, and second, that 'useless task' idioms can still be focused and hence cannot be used reliably in testing focus constructions.

It will be interesting to explore the focus behaviour of the 'useless task' idioms in other languages, as well as extending it to potential other idioms that are more semantically transparent and involve a scalar aspect of meaning.

Abbreviations and symbols

Numbers refer to noun classes, or to persons when followed by SG or PL. High tones are indicated by an acute accent, low tones are unmarked.

AUG	augment	IP	intensifying particle
APPL	applicative	IPFV	imperfective
CAUS	causative	lit.	literal meaning
CJ	conjoint verb form	LOC	locative
COP	copula	NEG	negation
DEM	demonstrative	NPST	non-past
DJ	disjoint verb form	N.PST	near past
FOC	focus particle	OM	object marker
FV	final vowel	PASS	passive

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[3] Alternatively, we may wonder whether 'useless task' idioms qualify as idioms at all, or should rather be seen as a metaphor: it is *as if* you are pounding water. Whether an analysis as metaphor would explain the different behaviour is doubtful, precisely because of the scalar effect.

PFV	perfective
PERS	persistive
PST	past tense
PRS	present tense
PRO	(strong) pronoun
REL	relative
SM	subject marker
T	tense
YPST	yesterday past

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