

# WORD ORDER VARIATION IN KARITIÂNA

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## ABSTRACT

In Karitiâna, departures from the basic SVO word order are explained in pragmatic terms. Discourse theme and sentence focus and topicalisation are posited as pragmatic factors influencing the choice of word order in text.

The passive-like nature of one object-fronting mechanism is also discussed.

## 1. INTRODUCTION.

David Landin in his M.A. Thesis (D. Landin 1980) argued that the basic word order for Karitiâna<sup>1</sup> clauses is S.V.O. On examining a corpus of text material, however, we find that this word order occurs very infrequently, and that sentences of the order OVS, VSO, etc., are also found. Is his thesis, therefore, invalid or are there other explanations to account for departures from the S.V.O. word order?

The purpose of this paper is to examine the word order variations in Karitiâna texts to see if they can be explained in pragmatic, discourse-related terms, that is by recourse to mechanisms of staging (Grimes 1975), where choices are semantic rather than grammatical. The study will be limited to clauses in text material which have noun phrases. Clauses with pronoun subjects and/or objects are far more limited in their word order possibilities and so have been excluded, as have dependent clauses with their typical OSV word order.

The corpus of texts studied includes narrative folk tales, historical narratives, conversation, and monologues.

A sample of four texts from the corpus (three folk tales and one historical narrative) totalling 389 clauses showed that 183 clauses (47%] had noun phrases as subjects and/or objects.

The full SVO order with two noun phrases was only found in ten clauses (26%) in this sample, but SV order (26 clauses) and VO order (25 clauses) account for a further 13.1%. Twenty-one clauses (5%) were object initial, and eighty clauses (21%) were subject final. (The remaining twenty noun phrase clauses from the sample were either non-verbal stative clauses or minor clause types such as ideophone + NP, or locative + NP or noun phrases standing alone).

It is these object initial and subject final clauses, 26% of the sample, and others like them in the larger corpus, which concern us in this paper. How can they be explained? Why does a Karitiâna speaker choose to vary the word order of an utterance? What effect does he cause thereby?

To talk about these phenomena, I have chosen to follow the terminology of Callow (1974). Thus for her, prominence "refers to any device whatever, which gives certain events, participants or objects more significance than others in the same context" (p. 50).

To explain word-order variations in Karitiâna it is necessary to posit two levels of prominence, depending on the domain over which it extends. The first is discourse prominence, which, as its name suggests, indicates the significant item or items over a whole discourse, and the second is sentence prominence.

## 2. DISCOURSE PROMINENCE.

The entire discourse is the domain of the THEME. Callow says, "Prominence that occurs with thematic significance is, in effect, saying to the hearer, 'This is what I'm talking about'." (1974, p. 52.)

Thus the theme of a discourse is established early in the discourse, and continues throughout its length. The method by which this is done varies with the discourse genre.

## 2.1. Theme in Narrative Folk Tales.

2.1.1. Narrative folk tales begin with an optional introduction. Where this is present, it is used to introduce the thematic participant or participants in the story that will follow, summarise the story and give background information about the participants.<sup>2</sup>

1. a) ka-'a-t saryt Okorokot (VS)  
ergative-be-past hearsay Okorokot
- b) ka-'a-t saryt kerep Okorokot (VIS)  
ergative-be-past hearsay long=ago Okorokot
- c) ogop pitat ta-'aka-t saryt Okorokot  
shameless really absolutive-be-past hearsay Okorokot
- d) epe'op ta so'y-t saryt (OV)  
tree hole absolutive intercourse-past hearsay
- e) epe'op ta so'y-t saryt Okorokot (OVS)  
tree hole absolutive intercourse-past hearsay Okorokot
- f) nhõnso pasap tykiri (Dep Cl)  
women not=like because
- g) ta sowak tykiri (Dep Cl)  
want=to because
- h) epe'op ta so'y saryt Okorokot (OVS)  
tree hole absolutive intercourse hearsay Okorokot

"There was once Okorokot, (there was once) long ago (Okorokot). Okorokot was shameless, so they say, he had intercourse with a hole in a tree. Okorokot had intercourse with a hole in a tree, because the women did not like (him) and did not want to. Okorokot had intercourse with a hole in a tree."

The thematic main character in the story whose introduction is quoted above is Okorokot. He is shown to be such by the way he is introduced. The noun phrase referring to him is in the final position in clauses a, b, c, e and h. The slow rate of introduction of new information is common in introductions, as is the frequent use of repetition, such as b, above--with additional temporal information--and e and h which are summaries of the story to follow. This example introduces only one theme character, and the associated verb in a and b above has the possibility of only one noun phrase associated with it, which thus follows the verb in a VS structure.

The following example (2) has two thematic main characters to introduce. In the story they relate to each other and therefore are presented in clauses with transitive verbs, with one theme character as S and one as O.

2. a) Isoason (NP)  
boason
- b) Õhëy taka 'y saryt kerep Isoason (OVS)  
Õhëy absolutive eat hearsay long=ago Isoason
- c) i sikyrip tykiri (Dep Cl)  
he foolish because
- d) hanÿn i asywyti-g tykiri (Dep Cl)  
speech he not=believe-vbl because
- e) iso nãka 'y-t saryt kerep Õhëy (SVO)  
fire ergative eat-past hearsay long=ago Õhëy
- f) Õhëy taka 'y-t ta'a saryt Isoason (OVS)  
Õhëy absolutive eat-past long=ago hearsay Isoason

"Isoason. Isoason ate Õhëy long ago, so they say, because he was foolish and didn't believe what people said. The fire ate Õhëy long ago. Isoason ate Õhëy long ago."

Here the first thematic character is introduced alone in a noun phrase, to emphasise his importance. Then he can be related to the second thematic character, a transitive clause which is a summary of the story to be related. Here the word order is OVS to stress that this second character is also of major importance in the story. The repetition, and variation in word order in clauses e) and f) serve the same purpose: to make these two characters stand out equally as the themes of the story that will follow.

2.1.2. Narrative folk tales without an introduction begin more abruptly. Nevertheless, the main thematic characters are introduced using the same pragmatic techniques.

3. a) Apip nãka tat-# Taomãg (VS)  
from-there ergative go-past Taomãg
- b) Apip nãka tat-# saryt Taomãg (VS)  
from-there ergative go-past hearsay Taomãg

"Taomag went, Taomag went so they say."

Such texts begin with events, but the participant here is identified as important by the repetition and the VS word order, as in Example 1 above. A number of texts exist where a thematic character does not enter into the story at the very beginning of the discourse, but even so he is mentioned initially to establish his prominence, even though he will not be referred to until much later in the story. The story of Eyot and his visit to Motÿnh is an example of such a situation.

4. a) mäsög ka'a-t saryt kerep Motÿnh, Deus (VS)  
 then ergative be-past hearsay long-ago Motÿnh God (Port)
- b) Nāka ho-t saryt Ejot (VS)  
 ergative go-past hearsay Ejot
- c) Ejot nā'aka-t saryt (SV)  
 Ejot ergative be-past hearsay
- d) Ejot nā'aka-t saryt Motÿnh tÿpyt (SV rel Cl)  
 Ejot ergative be-past hearsay Motÿnh find

"There was long ago Motÿnh, God. Ejot went. It was Ejot, it was Ejot who found Motÿnh, so they say."

Here the first clause of the story mentions a main character, Motÿnh, even though he does not enter into the events of the story until much later. It also introduces the other thematic character, Ejot, in clauses 4b, c, and d, using the techniques already described.

Another device to introduce a thematic character who is not participating in the initial action of a story is to define the secondary, non-thematic characters who are on the scene in terms of the main character<sup>3</sup> (in the case of example 5 below, by the use of a kinship term), and thus establish this main, thematic character's importance obliquely from the outset.

5. a) mäsög nāka tat-# tā'ā saryt i soj  
 then ergative go-past long-ago hearsay his wife  
Porena soj  
Poren's wife
- b) nāka ta-t saryt Porena-soj goko kÿn  
 ergative go-past hearsay Poren's wife cassava place=direction
- c) goko kÿn nāka ta-t saryt  
 cassava place-direction ergative go-past hearsay
- d) a-tykat tÿm nā so'ot- saryt opok-ot  
 be-contin=upright also ergative see-past hearsay wild-Indian-obj  
 i soj Porena soj  
 his wife Poren's wife

"Then long ago his wife went, Poren's wife. Poren's wife went to the cassava field, to the cassava field (she) went, so they say. His wife, Poren's wife saw some wild Indians (who were) also there."

The thematic character of this story is thus firmly established as Poren, even though he does not appear as an actor in the story until later.

## 2.2. Theme in Monologues.

This type of discourse differs from the narrative folk tale, but it can be shown to have a theme, though this is more likely to be an object (not in the grammatical sense) which can be introduced in the grammatical object slot.

Thus, a monologue by a woman who was making a hammock begins:

6. a) eremy 'ÿn nākam 'a-j 'ÿn hammock I ergative make-fut I O V Sp
- b) eremy 'ÿn nākam 'a-j 'ÿn kiri hammock I ergative make-fut I later-today O V Sp T
- c) eremy nhēpepā-pip y taka nhā-j 'ÿn kiri hammock weave-place I absolutive stay-fut I later-today (loc Sp V T)
- d) kiri 'ÿn nā nhēpepā-j 'ÿn eremy Later-today I ergative weave-fut I hammock T Sp V O

"I will make the hammock. I will make the hammock later today. I will stay at the place where I weave the hammock later today. Later I will weave the hammock."

The theme of this discourse is the hammock, and this is clearly stated by the word order in the first two sentences, where the object has been fronted as a prominence mechanism. The restatement-addition sentence repetition serves to underline the fact that the speaker is going to be talking about the hammock.

## 3. Sentence Prominence.

If the discourse is the domain of the theme, then the sentence is the domain of FOCUS. Callow says, "Prominence that occurs with focus significance is saying to the hearer, 'this is important, listen.'" (1974, p. 52)

If the normal word order is SVO, I suggest that this order is a type of unmarked prominence, if we consider that the initial element in the sentence is prominent. Thus, any movement of other elements to the initial position is a type of marked prominence which gives focus to the fronted element.

A corollary of this is that if the initial element is in focus, any non-initial element is necessarily less prominent, and thus in the main body of the text (i.e., apart from the introductory mechanisms described above in 2.1. and 2.2.) any new participant or prop introduced in non-initial position (i.e., in a VS structure) is non-thematic and secondary in a discourse sense, and not in focus at the sentence level.

### 3.1. Verb Initial Sentences.

Verb initial sentences may occur as unmarked variations of the SVO word order when there is zero subject reference, as in 7 below.

7. a) māsōg ka ta-t anyk saryt (V)  
then ergative go-past next hearsay
- b) anyk ka pã-oko-t sepa (VO)  
afterwards ergative weave-again-past basket
- "Then (he) went, so they say. Afterwards (he) wove another basket."

However, in other cases the verb phrase is fronted to bring into focus in that particular sentence the action of the event that is being talked about, as in 8b and d below.

8. a) pykÿÿn Õhěj ikypip (Id S Loc)  
noise-of-falling Õhěj his face-loc
- b) nāka 'y-t iso Õhěj (V S O)  
ergative eat-past fire Õhěj
- c) mop mā sorokōnh (V NP)  
finish look cinders
- d) atykit nā omyk saryt isoason ta mēm okop (V S Dep Cl)  
Deixis=cause ergative be=ashamed hearsay boason to come again
- "Õhěj fell down flat on his face. The fire ate Õhěj. He was finished--only cinders remained. Because of this boason was ashamed to come back again."

Here the verb-fronting mechanism highlights the fact that the participant was consumed by the fire and as a result of this the fire spirit was ashamed to return to live among the Karitiāna.

### 3.2. Object Initial Sentences.

There are two types of object initial sentences. The first is similar to verb-initial sentences in that it fronts the object, whilst the second has a fronted object and the particle ti- is attached to the verb.

#### 3.2.1. Object initial sentences without the particle.

Object fronting can be used to give prominence in three ways: Information focus, selective focus, and contrastive focus, and can occur in narrative, conversation and monologue.

##### 3.2.1.1. Information Focus.

This mechanism is similar to the verb-fronting described in 3.1., but the focus is on the object of the verb.

9. a) mÿnhÿm sakÿn yjja taka pykyj-i (O Sp V)  
three sacks we emphatic pull=up-future
- b) kanat yjja taka m'a-i (O Sp V)  
much we emphatic make-future
- "We will definitely pull up three sacks. We will make a lot."

Here in a monologue on the making of cassava-flour, having decided to make the flour, the speaker goes on to decide how much she will make. Thus, the quantity of flour is in focus in Example 9 above.

### 3.2.1.2. Selective Focus.

Object fronting can be used to show selective focus on part of a list of items, as in 10b and c below.

10. a) *kej omāky kyt, yjja kyt, hīm kyt*  
 grab=noise jaguar talisman, people talisman, game talisman  
*pōwēm kyt, pikkōm kyt, iripi kyt* (Id O<sup>n</sup>)  
 jungle=chicken talisman monkey talisman tapir talisman
- b) *omāky kyt my'y-t ta oky saryt omāky* (O V Dep Cl)  
jaguar talisman put=on-past to kill hearsay jaguar
- c) *opoko kyt my'y-t pat oky saryt opok* (O V Dep Cl)  
wild=Indian talisman put=on-past in=order=to kill hearsay wild=Indian

"He grabbed the jaguar talisman, the people talisman, the game talisman, the jungle chicken talisman, the monkey talisman and the tapir talisman. He put on the jaguar talisman to kill jaguars, and he put on the wild Indian talisman in order to kill wild Indians."

Sentences b and c in Example 10 above illustrate object initial sentences which show selective focus. Sentence 10a gives a list of talismans found by the man when he visits the sky. Of the list which he grabs, only the jaguar and wild Indian talismans are put on.

### 3.2.1.3. Contrastive Focus.

Object fronting can also be used to focus contrastively on similar elements in adjacent sentences.

11. a) *i ota taka 'y mytin ta'ā saryt* (O V)  
his companion absolutive eat completely long=ago hearsay
- b) *i 'y pitan ta'ā saryt-y i* (Sp V Op)  
he (hero) eat really long=ago hearsay-neg him
- c) *i 'o mŷrŷ'in ta ato saryt* (O V)  
his head (hero's) only absolutive take hearsay

"They completely ate his companion (but) they did not really eat him (the hero), they only took his head."

Here the contrast is between the hero and his companion. The companion was eaten completely, but the hero was not, rather only his head was taken away. The contrasted items in

the sentences, which are all objects, occur sentence-initially to show that they are in focus, contrastively with each other.

### 3.2.2. Object Initial sentences with the particle ti-.

In the corpus of text material I now have, object initial sentences with the particle ti- occur only in monologues, conversations and speech quotes in narrative discourse, i.e., they do not occur in the narrative part of the latter discourse type.

12. "Ōhēj i ti-'y-t iso" māsōg ka'a-t saryt (O V S)  
 Ōhēj he marker-eat-past fire then erg. say-past hearsay  
 "The fire has eaten Ōhēj' then (he) said."

The ti- particle occupies the position of the ergative/absolutive<sup>4</sup> particles in the verb phrase. The above example has two noun phrases. The ti- particle can also occur with a fronted object noun phrase and a pronoun subject as in Example 13.

13. opok aj ti-oky kiri (O Sp V T)  
 wild-Indian you-pl MARKER-kill later-today  
 "You will kill the wild Indians later on."

The ti- form can also occur in both a question form and its response.

14. a. "mōrāmōn a ti-pā tēnhān ōwē?" (O Sp V)  
 what you-sing MARKER weave seated=continuous dear  
 b. "sepa y ti-pā tēnhān ōwē." (O Sp V)  
 basket I MARKER weave seated=continuous dear  
 "What are you weaving my dear?" "I am weaving a basket my dear."

The question arises, what kind of structure is the clause with the ti- particle? Is it a passive? Or is it some kind of emphatic focus mechanism of stronger degree than the mere object-fronting prominence described in 3.2.1. above? To help answer this question I will refer to Langacker and Munro's characterization of passive (quoted in Chung 1976, p. 83). They propose that "Passive is a (universal) cluster of syntactic/semantic properties." These properties are:

- i) embedding to a higher stative-existential predicate BE
- ii) unspecified underlying subject
- iii) topicalisation of underlying direct object

Langacker and Munro accept the possibility that a construction may exhibit some of the properties they cite but not others.

It is interesting that their definition makes explicit the dual nature of the passive; two kinds of effects are at work, syntactic and semantic. In this sense the Karitiāna ti- construction seems a candidate for classification as a passive, as it does have both these aspects. I will examine the construction to see how it fulfills their criteria.

Almost all the ti- forms I have on record exhibit two clear candidates for the S and O positions; i.e., the underlying subject is specified. See examples 12 and 13 above where the subjects are iso and aj, respectively.

Also, the verb does not have any stative-like properties, nor is there the presence of the verb, 'aka' 'be,' which does appear in other constructions. Therefore, the ti- construction does not fulfill the first or second of Langacker and Munro's criteria. However, the fact that the ti- particle does occupy the position where the ergative/absolutive distinction is made does seem to be significant. In the object-initial constructions described in 3.2.1. above, the presence of the absolutive prefix on the verb (for example in 11a and 11c) is one indication that the preceding NP is in fact an object and not a subject; i.e., the subject/object distinction still holds in the first type of object-initial construction. Yet, in the ti- construction this distinction is obliterated. Does this mean that the associated noun phrases are now no longer to be seen as S and O? I.e., are they in some different relation to the verb?

I think that it does. The grammatical distinctions of S and O normally holding in a Karitiâna affirmative sentence are obliterated by other criteria, which can best be understood pragmatically, as semantic choices.

The Karitiâna ti- construction is a device which I will call TOPICALISATION, following Grimes (1975] who defines it as "the designation of a constituent in the grammar as the TOPIC by means of appropriate signalling devices." Thus, the object fronting, and the presence of ti- [instead of nã- or ta-) both signal that in such sentences the SVO distinction has been replaced by a TOPIC-COMMENT arrangement of the sentence constituents [to employ the usual terminology). This agrees with Chafe's answer to the question, 'What is a topic?' He says (1976) "...the topic sets a spatial, temporal or individual framework within which the main predication holds..." and that topics are "the frame within which the sentence holds."

Thus, the ti- construction clearly does satisfy the third property Langacker and Munro require of the passive, but only this one and would be excluded because it fails to satisfy the other criteria.

However, Chung chooses to modify Langacker and Munro's definition of passive, because she, too, has an object topicalisation construction with passive features. Her new criteria are as follows:

- i) stative meaning
- ii) possibility of unspecified agent deletion
- iii) topicalisation of underlying direct object

15. "mõrã kÿn ti-m hot aj ahy aj'a" iri'aj taso  
 what place MARKER-cause take go you=pl. say you=pl. do say man  
 "'You tell (me) where (he) takes (it),' said the man."  
 it is taken

Example 15 above illustrates the absence of the underlying subject (and object).

Thus, two of Chung's revised criteria are satisfied by the Karitiâna construction, namely ii) the possibility of unspecified agent deletion (as in example 17) and iii) topicalisation of the underlying direct object as has been shown above. The construction does, therefore, seem to have some passive-like features, and could usefully be called a Semi-Passive, following Langacker and Munro's suggestion for constructions which fulfill two of the three properties.

It is not possible at present, due to lack of access to native speakers, to check the further syntactic characteristics of the t<sub>i</sub>- construction to see how it behaves, and so my conclusions must rest as above.

Thus, we have two syntactic mechanisms for object prominence in Karitiâna. These two mechanisms, however, have different pragmatic effects.

The first one (described in 3.2.1.) gives FOCUS prominence to the fronted object, but the orientation of the sentence is still subject/ object, while the t<sub>i</sub>- construction is a semi-passive device, in a language with no classic passive, with the feature of TOPICALISATION of the underlying direct object and the suspension of the normal distinction between S and O, replacing it with a topic-comment arrangements i.e., the orientation chosen is a topic one, and not a subject one. Thus, the examples given above in this section could better be glossed as follows:

12. "It was Ohẽj the fire ate"
13. "It is the wild Indians you will kill later on."
14. "What are you weaving my dear?"  
"It's a basket I am weaving my dear."

### 3.3. Fronting of other items in the sentence.

Other sentence components can be fronted from their normal, unmarked position to have a focussing effect. These include Question Words, and locatives and temporals; the latter two are non-nuclear items whose unmarked position is following the last nuclear item.

#### 3.3.1. Question Words.

David Landin (1980, p. 26) has shown that there is a relation between the fronting of WH-questions and the fronting of objects. However, he also shows that the question words do not function as full object NPs, and so they are dealt with separately here.

I suggest that Karitiâna WH-questions may be derived from an underlying deep structure of the kind S V WH- in the same way that the English sentence, "What do you want?" can be derived from the underlying, "You want what?" by means of an obligatory WH-movement rule. The result is sentences of the structure illustrated in examples 16, 17, and 18 below.

16. Tikat y 'a aka-i hy? (Q Sp V)  
what I do fut question  
"What shall I do?"

17. mōrā tȳm i amo tyso (Q Sp V Loc)  
what by=way=of he climb continuous=upright sky question  
 "Which way does he climb to the sky?"
18. mōrā kȳn aj ymykyj hy?  
what place=direction you=pl come=pl question  
 "To where are you coming?"

Other question words which function in the same way are mōrāsōg "why," mōrāmōn "what," and tiho "to where."

Pragmatically, the structure serves to focus on the information sought by the question, and so its obligatory nature can be understood, since the WH-question structure is always focussing on the information required.

### 3.3.2. Locatives.

Example 19 below shows a fronted locative in focus as the place in which the hero's head was taken.

19. I sepa-pip tȳm nā ato-t saryt io Porena O (Loc V O)  
his basket-locative also ergative take-past hearsay his head Poren's head  
 "They took his head, Poren's head, away in his basket."
20. a) ho pa pitat taka kyw anyk ta'ã avião (Loc V S)  
 far very really absolutive land next long-ago aeroplane (Portuguese)
- b) pyk mȳhīn (Id)  
 landing-noise one
- c) Rio Branco i ãm'a-pip taka kyw anyk (Loc V S) ta'ã avião  
 Rio Branco call-locative absolutive land next long-ago aeroplane (Portuguese)
- "The plane landed far, far away, the first landing. The plane landed at a place called Rio Branco."

Examples 20a and c are further illustrations of fronting to focus on the location being discussed.

The fronting of a locative phrase can also be used as contrastive focus as in example 21, where the contrast is between the places from which the men excreted.

21. a) ta hyty-tȳm i egy-t saryt-y (Loc V)  
their neck-by=way=of they excrete-past hearsay-neg
- b) ta koromo-tȳm i egy-t saryt-y (Loc V)  
their mouth-by=way=of they excrete-past hearsay-neg Hoc VJ

- c) ta nhēre'opo-tŷm nā egy-t sarvt (Loc V)  
 their anus-by=way=of ergative excrete-past hearsay

"They did not excrete via their necks, nor their mouths, but via their anuses so they say."

### 3.3.2. Temporals.

In a similar way to that described above, temporal phrases can be fronted to give them sentence prominence.

22. ārāg y ta ka no-i  
a=long=time=later I absolutive finish-fut  
 "I will finish much later."  
 23. kiri 'ŷn nā nhēpēpŷ-i'ŷn eremy  
later-today I ergative weave-fut I hammock  
 "Later on today I will weave the hammock."

Temporals can also be fronted in a contrastive focus situation.

24. a) Kiri im pysot mŷrŷ'īn y taka 'a-i Kiri (T V V T)  
later-today it take-hold-of only I absolutive do-fut later-today  
 b) nim ŷn nā mŷ no-i (T V)  
 tomorrow I ergative cause finish-future  
 "Later today I'll just catch hold of it, (but) tomorrow I will finish (it)."

### 3.4. The case of Quotes and Ideophones.

Speech quotes and ideophones always occur as sentence initial elements as the following examples show.

25. pot pot pot iyry iyry iyry poroh, poroh, poroh (Id Id Id V S)  
jungle=breaking=noise marching=noise cracking=noise  
 māsōg ka'a-t saryt opok  
 then ergative do-past hearsay wild=Indian  
 "Snap, snap, snap, march march march, crack crack, went the wild Indians."  
 26. "sara ty y mygyynnī" iri'aj (Quote V)  
 crocodile big I swallow say  
 "The big crocodile swallowed me," he said.

Since this is the normal order, it cannot be analysed as a further example of prominence. It influences the word order of the speech tag or following clause, in that the usual order is VS. Thus, in this situation, following speech and ideophones, the VS order is normal.

#### 4. Conclusion.

Variations in the word order in Karitiâna discourse can be explained in terms of prominence at two levels that of the discourse theme and sentence focus. I need to posit these two kinds of prominence because different criteria are working at different places in the discourse to govern the word order, and these must be distinguished. Departures from the basic SVO word order can thus be explained as syntactic mechanisms used for the pragmatic purpose of highlighting certain items of information considered important by the speaker for various discourse-related reasons, and, in contrast, removing from the highlight other items considered less important.

Two kinds of object-fronting mechanisms are present in the data, and they are used in the text for differing pragmatic effects.

#### ABBREVIATIONS USED

S	Subject	Loc	Locative
V	Verb	Fut	Future
O	Object	Abs	Absolutive
Sp	Pronoun Subject	Id	Ideophone
Dep Cl	Dependent Clause	Op	Pronoun Object
Rel Cl	Relative Clause	Q	Question Word
Port	Portuguese	IO	Indirect Object
Contin	Continuous	NP	Noun Phrase
Erg	Ergative	Vbl	Verbaliser
Obj	Object Marker	Neg	Negative
T	Temporal	Pl	Plural

#### FOOTNOTES

1. The Karitiâna language is spoken by approximately eighty people resident on the Posto Indigena Karitiâna in the State of Rondonia in northern Brazil.

According to Rodrigues (1968), Karitiâna is a language of the Tupi stock, and the Arikêm family.

The data for this present study were collected during the period, September 1972 to September 1977 at the Posto Indigena Karitiâna under a contract between the Summer Institute of Linguistics and the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI). I am greatly indebted to the many Karitiâna Indians who have served as language informants. The present paper was written at a field workshop in Linguistics held in Porto Velho, Rondonia, from February to April 1982. I would like to thank Miss Eunice Burgess, who directed the workshop, for her helpful discussion and insights.

2. The examples in this paper are given in the practical orthography. There are five oral vowels: a, e, i, o, y, and their nasalised equivalents. The vowel symbolised 'y' has the phonetic value, [i]. There are thirteen consonants: g, h, k, m, n, nh, p, r, s, t, w, y, '. The liquids, h, r, w, y, occur in nasalised form adjacent to nasalised vowels. The nasals, m, n, nh, g, have the phonetic values [m, n, nh, g] adjacent to nasalised vowels, [mb, nd, ndy, ng], preceding oral vowels and [bm, dn, dŋ, gŋ], following oral vowels. ' represents [ʔ].
3. This idea is similar to what Chafe [1976] calls point of view or empathy (p. 54). He quotes Kuno (also 1976) as pointing out the difference between "John hit his wife" and "Mary's husband hit her," being that the former is describing the event "from John's side," and the latter "from Mary's side."
4. Karitiâna affirmative sentences are marked pre-verbally as ergative or absolutive, according to the preceding NP. ta- follows an intransitive subject and transitive object; nã- follows a transitive subject and zero. The taka- and nãka forms are explained phonologically, the ka- being inserted preceding a verb root with initial stress.

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