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## On Distinctive and Isolating Emphasis in Egyptian and in General

Leo Depuydt, New Haven

The present paper is an attempt to establish a theory of contrastive emphasis on an empirical basis.<sup>1</sup> Central to this theory are (1) the interpretation of instances of contrastive emphasis as linguistic signs in the Saussurean sense and (2) the distinction between two types of contrastive emphasis called distinctive emphasis and isolating emphasis.

### I *Contrastive Emphasis as signe linguistique*

1 The definition of the *signe linguistique* lies at the heart of Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of the structure of language as formulated in his *Cours de linguistique générale*, probably the most influential work on linguistics ever written.<sup>2</sup> The eminent Swiss linguist defined the linguistic sign as an indivisible union of two components. One component of the sign is a mental concept; de Saussure called this the *signifié*, which is usually translated as the "signified." The other component is the acoustic image of a sound pattern; this he called the *signifiant*, translated as "signifier." The example used by de Saussure to explain the nature of the linguistic sign is *arbor*, the Latin word for "tree." In the *Cours de linguistique générale* drawings are used to clarify the nature of the sign.

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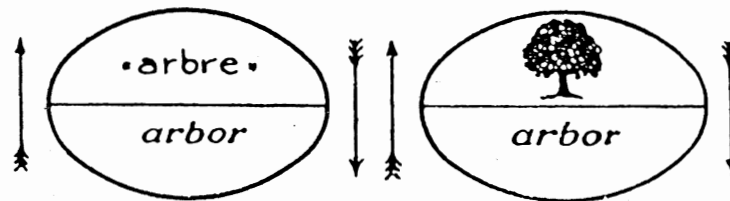
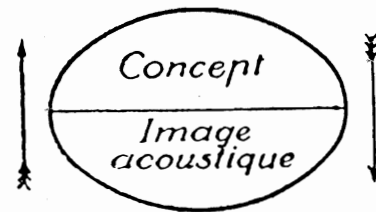
<sup>1</sup> I owe a debt of gratitude to Laurence Horn of Yale University for taking the time to discuss with me some of the issues treated in this article and especially to Louis Goldstein of Yale University and Haskins Laboratories for help with the phonetic experiments conducted to test my hypothesis (see § 12 and elsewhere).

<sup>2</sup> The *Cours* was published posthumously from student notes by de Saussure's disciples Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, with the collaboration of Albert Riedlinger. I have used Tullio de Mauro's annotated edition (Paris 1972). The linguistic sign is defined and discussed on pages 97-104 of the *Cours*.

Le signe linguistique est donc une entité psychique à deux faces, qui peut être représentée par la figure :

Ces deux éléments sont intimement unis et s'appellent l'un l'autre. Que nous cherchions le sens du mot latin *arbor* ou le mot par lequel le latin désigne le concept « arbre », il est clair que seuls les rapprochements

consacrés par la langue nous apparaissent conformes à la réa-



lité, et nous écartons n'importe quel autre qu'on pourrait imaginer.

To understand the nature of the linguistic sign as de Saussure sees it, it is crucial to realize that the two sides of a linguistic sign are not names or things but mental configurations residing in the minds of all speakers of the language to which that linguistic sign belongs. On the one hand, the mental concept of a linguistic sign like *arbor* is present in the mind of Latin speakers even when no trees are to be seen. On the other hand, the mental image of the acoustic pattern *arbor* can activate the pronunciation of the word *arbor* at any time, but that acoustic image resides in the minds of Latin speakers even when the word is not pronounced. What is necessary to make language work according to de Saussure is the union between mental concepts and the mental images of their sound patterns: these unions are linguistic signs.

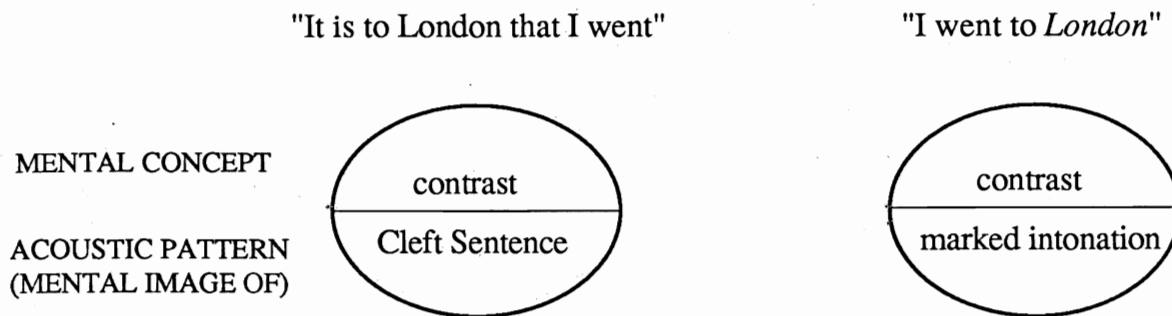
2 Like Latin *arbor* "tree," expressions of contrastive emphasis can be analyzed as linguistic signs and represented by drawings modeled after those shown in § 1.

The two following sentences contain instances of contrastive emphasis: "It is to London that I went" and "I went to *London*." The sentences are roughly synonymous: they both emphasize the element "London." Each uses a different expression of contrastive emphasis in order to lay stress on "London." In the first example, contrastive emphasis is expressed by a syntactic construction, to wit the Cleft Sentence. In the second example, contrastive emphasis is expressed by a marked intonation indicated in writing by italics.

In order to define these two instances of contrastive emphasis as linguistic signs, as de Saussure would have done it, two questions need to be answered: (1) What is their mental concept? (2) What is the acoustic pattern whose mental image is inextricably connected with that mental concept?

The mental concept is the same for both instances of contrastive emphasis in "It is to London that I went" and "I went to *London*." That is after all why they have both been classified as instances of the same species of contrastive emphasis in the first place. The term which most adequately describes this mental concept is "contrast." Indeed, both "I went to *London*" and "It is to London that I went" can imply, for instance, "not to Birmingham." "London" is therefore contrasted with "Birmingham."<sup>3</sup>

But the two linguistic signs differ with regard to the acoustic pattern whose mental image is connected with the mental concept of contrast. In "It is to London that I went," the acoustic pattern is the Cleft Sentence. In "I went to *London*," the acoustic pattern is a marked intonation, rendered conventionally by italics. The two linguistic signs can therefore be represented as follows:



The linguistic signs themselves are neither mental concepts nor mental images of acoustic patterns, but rather the *unions* between the two. In order to refer to these linguistic signs, I will employ the term "contrastive emphasis." The linguistic signs pictured above can therefore be called *instances of "contrastive emphasis."* Just as the linguistic sign consists of two sides, the term "contrastive emphasis" contains two components: the component "contrastive" refers to the mental concept; the component "emphasis" indicates a marked and more emphatic pronunciation of a certain element and hence refers to the acoustic pattern whose mental image is linked to the mental concept of "contrast."

<sup>3</sup> The traditional name for linguistic signs sharing the same mental concept is *synonyms*; the two instances of contrastive emphasis "I went to *London*" and "It is to London that I went" are therefore synonyms. *Homonyms*, on the other hand, are linguistic signs which have different mental concepts but the same acoustic patterns.



## II Contrastive Emphasis and Subject and Predicate

3 In the present paper, contrastive emphasis is solely a collective term for linguistic signs characterized by acoustic patterns such as the Cleft Sentence and specific emphatic intonations whose mental images are linked to the mental concept of contrast (see § 2).<sup>4</sup>

In contemporary Egyptian grammar, however, contrastive emphasis is often intertwined with the distinction between subject and predicate, topic and comment, or theme and rheme. It is commonly assumed that emphasizing an element in a sentence involves a shift in the subject-predicate structure of the sentence. In receiving emphasis, an element functioning as subject is considered to become the predicate, or a predicate to become a marked predicate ("vedette").<sup>5</sup>

4 But there are strong reasons to doubt that subject and predicate are at all workable concepts.<sup>6</sup> In a recent article, Udo Fries has noted that "no agreement on a definition of theme and rheme has yet been achieved and (...) no exact method of finding out the theme or the rheme in a sentence has been developed."<sup>7</sup> He also observes that "the terms *rheme* and *theme* have been used in a wide and confusing variety of ways during the last two decades" and deplores the "situation that almost everyone writing about this topic sticks to his or her definition without even taking notice of the work that has been done by other authors."<sup>8</sup> According to Fries, it is justified to ask the following questions about theme and rheme: "For a complete appreciation of the problems involved with the theme/rheme dichotomy, should we turn to psychology or psycho-linguistics or stay within linguistics

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<sup>4</sup> The paper does not treat contextual or cotextual aspects such as the factors triggering the production of an emphatic construction or the effect of emphasis on the hearer (but see §§ 13 beginning, 18 end). The rise of pragmatics in the study of the Egyptian language is described by Loprieno, in: *Crossroad*, 255-59.

<sup>5</sup> I have echoed this view myself in an unpublished essay quoted in Junge's recent discussion of logical and pragmatic issues pertaining to emphasis (*"Emphasis" and sentential meaning*, at 18, 26).

<sup>6</sup> I have expressed similar concerns in *CdE* 63 (1988), 401-6. See especially the opinion of the eminent French linguist Lucien Tesnière (*ibid.*, 402 n. 1), who regards the distinction between subject and predicate as "une survivance non encore éliminée, qui va d'Aristote à Port-Royal, où toute la grammaire était fondée sur la logique" (*Éléments de syntaxe structurale*, 104). In the *Cours de linguistique générale*, subject and predicate receive no mention. The persistence of subject and predicate beyond de Saussure is at least in part due to the fact that the Prague School, which confesses itself structuralist and is heir to much of the Saussurean legacy, embraced it in the form of theme and rheme.

<sup>7</sup> Fries, in: *Festschrift Leisi*, 177-92 at 190.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 177. Cf. also Junge, *"Emphasis" and sentential meaning*, 42 and Johnson, in: *Crossroad*, 400-10 at 400-401.

proper?"<sup>9</sup> and "Is the theme/rheme dichotomy something that helps us understand and explain language? Or is it not rather a superfluous distinction?"<sup>10</sup>

A severe drawback of the subject-predicate distinction is that it has no empirical foundation whatsoever.<sup>11</sup> I therefore maintain that contrastive emphasis should be severed from purely theoretical notions such as subject and predicate, topic and comment, and theme and rheme and that all possibilities for expanding the theory of emphasis *hand in hand* with empirical observation should be exhausted before introducing notions devoid of any foundation in fact.

In what follows the difference between absence and presence of contrastive emphasis, instead of being interpreted as a shift from subject to predicate status, will be regarded as an opposition between an unmarked or neutral construction and a marked construction.<sup>12</sup> The empirical components according to this way of viewing contrastive emphasis are observable acoustic patterns laying stress on a certain element.

### III *Distinctive and Isolating Emphasis: Definitions*

5 In Egyptian grammar, terms such as "emphasis," "emphatic," and "emphasizing" indicate two distinct phenomena. On the one hand, syntactic constructions like the Cleft Sentence are called "emphatic." On the other hand, "emphasis" is also used in the expression "anticipatory emphasis." This does not signal an inconsistent terminology. Rather, it reflects the fact that Egyptian, like other languages, possesses not one but *two types* of contrastive emphasis. The Cleft Sentence is an instance of one type which will be called *isolating emphasis*. "Anticipatory emphasis" is an instance of a second type which will be called *distinctive emphasis*.

6 The *locus classicus* for "anticipatory emphasis" in Egyptian is § 146 of Alan H. Gardiner's monumental *Egyptian Grammar*.<sup>13</sup> In this paragraph, Gardiner remarks that "the effect [of anticipatory emphasis] is (...) sometimes different from what might be expected,"<sup>14</sup> and he illustrates his point by referring to such examples as 'ntyw n.j-jm sw

<sup>9</sup> Fries, in: *Festschrift Leisi*, 178.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 177.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Depuydt, *CdE* 63 (1988), 401-2.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 406.

<sup>13</sup> See also Junge, *RdE* 30 (1978), 96-100 and Schenkel's comprehensive survey, in *Einführung*, 170-77.

<sup>14</sup> See Schenkel, *Einführung*, 170: "Was den Zweck der 'Voranstellung' angeht, waren die besten Grammatiker mit der Erklärung als 'Hervorhebung' nie hundertprozentig glücklich."

"the incense, it belongs to me" (Sh. S. 151). To Gardiner, it seems odd that "the stress [in Sh. S. 151] is upon the *predicate* [*n.j-jm*], not upon the *subject* [*sw*]."

By "predicate" Gardiner clearly means *n.j-jm*, as one learns from § 114.3-4 of his grammar. And by "stress (...) upon the predicate" he obviously refers to his statement in the same paragraph that "some emphasis is (...) laid on the possessor" in the construction 'ntyw *n.j-jm sw*, that is, on *n.j-jm*. By describing the emphasis in 'ntyw *n.j-jm sw* as "different from what might be expected," Gardiner is puzzled by the fact that it is *n.j-jm* that is emphasized in 'ntyw *n.j-jm sw*, but 'ntyw that is placed in "anticipatory emphasis."

But in fact, there is no conflict between the emphasis on *n.j-jm* and that on 'ntyw. They are two different types of emphasis which each add a nuance of their own to the sentence. The distinctive emphasis on 'ntyw distinguishes it from *hknw pf* in the next sentence ("as for the incense, on the one hand, ... as for that spice, on the other hand, ..."). The isolating emphasis on *n.j-jm* singles out "I" as possessor to the exclusion of everyone else ("it is I who own the incense").

7 I have defined instances of contrastive emphasis in § 2 as linguistic signs with two sides, a mental concept and the mental image of an acoustic pattern. The distinction between mental concept and mental image of an acoustic pattern must therefore now also be carried through systematically in defining the two subtypes of contrastive emphasis, distinctive emphasis and isolating emphasis.

The difference between distinctive emphasis and isolating emphasis lies in the first place in their mental concepts. In fact, that is the very reason why they have been classified separately as two types of emphasis in the first place. As the mental concept of contrastive emphasis has been defined as contrast, it follows that the mental concepts of its two subtypes, distinctive and isolating, can be called isolating contrast and distinctive contrast respectively. The mental concepts distinctive contrast and isolating contrast can be described as follows.

*Distinctive contrast* distinguishes a certain element from one or more explicitly mentioned or implied elements. If distinctive emphasis is applied to an element X, then X is presented *as distinct from* other elements.

*Isolating contrast* isolates a certain element from one or more explicitly mentioned or implied elements. If isolating emphasis is applied to an element X, then X is presented *at the exclusion* of other elements ("X, *not* Y").<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Perhaps, isolating emphasis presupposes distinctive emphasis and is therefore the marked term. The definition of isolating emphasis could then be changed into "X is presented *as distinct from and at the exclusion* of Y."



Note the distinction between the terms "distinctive contrast" and "distinctive emphasis." The former refers to the mental concept only, the latter to the linguistic sign as a whole, that is, the union between the mental concept and the mental image of the acoustic pattern.


8 Both isolating and distinctive emphasis consist of several linguistic signs which share the same mental concept but differ with regard to the mental image of their acoustic patterns.<sup>16</sup> In Old and Middle Egyptian, an acoustic pattern whose mental image is linked with the mental concept of distinctive emphasis is "anticipatory emphasis" (with or without *jr*); instances of isolating emphasis are the Cleft Sentence or Participial Statement and the substantival or "emphatic" verb forms.<sup>17</sup>

Instances of both types of contrastive emphasis occur side by side within the same sentence in the following examples. "Anticipatory emphasis" introduced by *jr* is combined with a substantival verb form (*jtt.f*) in the first example and with a Cleft Sentence or Participial Statement (*ntk sk3*) in the second.<sup>18</sup>

Ptahhotep 167-68                      *jr nb qd m nb ht jtt.f mj msh m qnbt*  
 "As for him who possesses character or property, he robs like a crocodile in the council."

Heḳanakhte<sup>19</sup> 1, recto 1              *jr jwht nbt m 3hwt.n ntk sk3 s(y)*  
 "As for any flooded land which is among your fields, it is you who cultivate it".<sup>20</sup>

9 The distinction between distinctive and isolating emphasis is a determining factor in the interpretation of the three following passages from Urk. I:

 *n.sn shr* (102, 9).

<sup>16</sup> This makes them synonyms (cf. n. 3).

<sup>17</sup> Gunn, *Studies*, 61-63 uses the terms "isolating emphasis" and "distinctive emphasis," but his list of examples of "distinctive emphasis" consists almost exclusively of instances of what is in this paper interpreted as "isolating emphasis," save for Urk. IV 1069, 6-7 and English "and he also," "and he, moreover" (*ibid.*, 63). An interesting example listed by Gunn as an example of "distinctive emphasis" is pEbers 99, 6: *jn 2 djdj nšwt jn 2 djdj snf* "Two (is the number of those that ) give mucus. Two (is the number of those that) give blood" (cf. pKahun 8, 23-28: *jn-m dd sw...jn 20 dd sw* "What is the result? [literally, What is it that says it?]. Twenty is the result"). It is tempting to translate pEbers 99, 6 with distinctive emphasis ("Two, on the one hand, give mucus. Two, on the other hand, give blood"), but the Cleft Sentence introduced by *jn* invariably expresses isolating emphasis.


<sup>18</sup> The examples are taken from Borghouts, in: *Crossroad*, 45-70 at 66.

<sup>19</sup> James, *Heḳanakte Papers*, Plate 1.

<sup>20</sup> Here too probably belongs *mw m jtrw swr.t(w)f mr.k t3w m pt hnm.t(w)f dd.k* "As for the water in the river, it is drunk when you wish. As for the air in the sky, it is breathed when you say so" (Sin. B 233-34). See also pEbers 99, 12-14; 100, 18-19.



 *sn* (217, 7).

 *hbs n ḥ3 nb t n ḥqr nb jm* (217, 9).

It is idiosyncratic of Old Kingdom texts that the first person suffix pronouns are not written out and hence have to be supplied in transcription. The verb forms in the examples could therefore be interpreted as *wn(.j) jr(.j)*, *wn(.j) sḥtp(.j)*, and *wn(.j) dj(.j)*.<sup>21</sup> These would be instances of the compound verb form *wn.f sdm.f* "he used to hear" or "he would hear," the preterite conversion of the Aorist *jw.f sdm.f* "he hears." While *jw.f sdm.f* expresses actions that are generally valid at the time of speaking, *wn.f sdm.f* refers to actions that used to be generally valid but no longer are. According to this interpretation *jnk* is placed in "anticipatory emphasis" and the passages express *distinctive* emphasis:

"I, on my part, used to command them."

"I, on my part, used to appease them."

"I, on my part, used to give clothes to the naked and bread to the hungry."

But "I, on my part" implies "as distinct from someone else who did something else," which does not suit the context.

Alternatively, the three examples can be interpreted as Cleft Sentences or Participial Statements: *jnk wn jr(.j)*, *jnk wn sḥtp(.j)*, *jnk wn dj(.j)*. These sentences contain the verb form *wn sdm.f* "who used to hear" or "who would hear," a nominal conversion of *wn.f sdm.f* "he used to hear" or "he would hear."<sup>22</sup> The first element of *wn sdm.f* must be the past (Gardiner's "perfective") participle *wn* because of the structure of the Cleft Sentence. The second element, *jr(.j)*, *sḥtp(.j)*, and *dj(.j)*, remains what it is in the independent *wn(.j) jr(.j)*, *wn(.j) sḥtp(.j)*, and *wn(.j) dj(.j)*: an adverbial verb form.

<sup>21</sup> Edel, *AäG*, § 896; Osing, *Orientalia* 46 (1977), 165-82 at 168.

<sup>22</sup> There can be little doubt that *wn.f sdm.f* has the same structure as all the Old and Middle Egyptian compound tenses and consists of a substantival verb form (*wn.f*) and an adverbial verb form (*sdm.f*) (Polotsky, *Transpositions*, 33 § 3.8.2): "that I was (or, my being in the past) is characterized by the circumstance of (generally) hearing" (*ibid.*, 40 § 3.9.1). *Wn.f*, which is a past, can be either (1) substantival *wn.f*, the "abstract" relative equivalent of the "concrete," "perfective" relative *sdm.f* (Gardiner, *EG*, 298 top, with n. 0a), or (2) substantival *wn.n.f*, since the *sdm.n.f* of *wnn* seems to be written only with one *n* (Doret, *JNES* 39 [1980], 37-45 at 40, with nn. 29-34). If *wn.n.f* gradually replaced *wn.f* in the form *wn.f sdm.f* from Old to Middle Egyptian, an evolution paralleled by that from relative *sdm.f* to relative *sdm.n.f* and from passive *sdm.f* to passive *sdm.n.tw.f*, it could not be observed because *wn.n.f* and *wn.f* are presumably written the same way (Doret, *ibid.*). *Wn.f* persists in Late Egyptian, and ultimately in Coptic, as a preterite converter; if *wn.n.f* existed in Middle Egyptian, it would again have become *wn.f* in Late Egyptian (Polotsky, *Orientalia* 38 [1969], 465-81).

Participial *wn sdm.f* is also found outside the Cleft Sentence in Urk. I 50, 3 *jr rmt nb wnw jr.sn n(.j) ht jm* "As for every one who works on it for me."<sup>23</sup> *Wnw jr.sn* "who would (generally) hear" is the adjectival conversion of the preterite Aorist *wn.sn jr.sn* "they would (generally) hear." Note that the adjectival conversion of the Aorist *jw.sn jr.sn* "they (generally) hear" is the plural active participle *jrr(w)* "who (generally) hear."

In the three Participial Statements above it is the actor (*jnk*) that is emphasized. When the emphasized element is not the actor, the Cleft Sentence with *pw* is used: *bw nfr pw wn(.j) dd(.j) hr nsw* "It was good things that I used to say in the presence of the king" (Urk. I 57, 5); *wn(.j)* is a relative form,<sup>24</sup> forming a compound verb form together with *dd(.j)*, an adverbial *sdm.f*. According to this alternative interpretation, the examples express *isolating emphasis*.

"It was I who used to command them."

"It was I who used to appease them."

"It was I who used to give clothes to the naked and bread to the hungry."

This translation suits the context far better. For instance, "It was I who used to command them" (102, 9) is followed by "though my function was (only) that of overseer of royal ?tenants" (102, 10). The isolating emphasis in 102, 9 ("It was I") is very appropriate, as one might have expected someone of a higher rank to command the troops. The clause "though my function was that of overseer of royal ?tenants" also appears in 101, 3, where it is preceded by an unambiguous Cleft Sentence: *jnk jr sš w'.k(w) hn' s3b jry Nhn w'* "It is I who have put (it) in writing together with one Senior Warden of Nekhen" (101, 2).<sup>25</sup>

The following section (IV) seeks to consolidate the distinction between distinctive and isolating emphasis by examining it in four different contexts.

<sup>23</sup> Edel, *AäG*, § 650.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Pyr. 623c, 760b *wnt.k jr.k* "what you used to do," Pyr. 759c *wnt.f jr.f* "what he used to do" (Allen, *Inflection of the Verb*, § 281 B.2). The forms *wn(.j)*, *wnt.k*, and *wnt.f* are in all probability instances of the so-called "perfective" relative *sdm.f* (thus Thacker, *Relationship*, 265), which was gradually replaced by the relative *sdm.n.f* (Pyr. 759c M has the variant *wn.t.n.f jr.f*) and had become an archaism in Middle Egyptian (Polotsky, *Orientalia* 33 [1964], 284 = *Collected Papers*, 69). But Urk. IV 973,14 *wnt jr.j* "what I used to do," described by Gardiner, *EG*, § 474.3 as "unique," dates to the 18th Dynasty, when Middle Egyptian had become a dead language and verb forms with two suffix pronouns such as *jw.f sdm.f* and *wn.f sdm.f* had disappeared. The form *wnt jr.j* – for *wnt.j jr.j* or *wn.j jr.j* – is the obvious result of grammatical ignorance: bad Middle Egyptian.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Osing, *Orientalia* 46 (1977), 182.

IV *Expressions of Distinctive and Isolating Emphasis*

A *Distinctive and Isolating Intonation in Spoken English*

10 Spoken English will be discussed at greater length than is normal in a paper on Egyptian grammar. But one is better equipped to understand and analyze a phenomenon in Egyptian if it is already familiar from a better known language. Often in the past, comparisons between English and Egyptian have benefited our understanding of the latter.

Much English language research has been published on contrastive intonation,<sup>26</sup> but I am not aware of any discussion of two types of contrastive intonation, distinctive and isolating, as a "minimal pair" in parallelism with the syntactic distinction between "anticipatory emphasis" and the Cleft Sentence (cf. § 7).

11 In a discussion of contrastive intonation, Noam Chomsky gives the following example:<sup>27</sup>

"John is neither EASY to please, nor EAGER to please, nor CERTAIN to please, nor INCLINED to please, nor HAPPY to please ..."

Chomsky observed that this sentence uses a type of contrastive intonation that differs from the better known type found in the following example:

"Did the Red Sox play the YANKEES? No, the TIGERS."<sup>28</sup>

The emphasis on YANKEES and TIGERS is clearly isolating: the Yankees are presented as distinct from *and at the exclusion of* the Tigers. The same effect could have been achieved by using a Cleft Sentence, which also expresses isolating emphasis.<sup>29</sup>

It is argued here, then, that the emphasis laid on EASY, EAGER, and CERTAIN in the earlier sentence achieves the same effect as "anticipatory emphasis": it distinguishes the concepts from one another without isolating them at the exclusion of other elements. This type of emphasis can therefore be called "distinctive."<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> See, for instance, Couper-Kuhlen, in: *Festschrift Leisi*, 137-58.

<sup>27</sup> Chomsky, in *Semantics: An Interdisciplinary Reader in Philosophy, Linguistics and Psychology*, 183-216 at 205.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Harries-Delisle, in: *Universals of Human Language. Volume 4: Syntax*, 419-86.

<sup>30</sup> But as a reaction to "John is neither DIFFICULT to please, nor UNWILLING to please, nor UNLIKELY to please, nor RELUCTANT to please, nor UNHAPPY to please...", the sentence would be pronounced differently and would be an instance of isolating emphasis.



12 The question arises as to how the two types of contrastive intonation are kept empirically distinct. The instruments of phonetic science reveal that there is a clear difference in pitch contour between the two types, one distinctive, the other isolating.

For instance, there are two ways of adding emphasis by intonation to the simple sentence "I will." It is possible to say "*I* will" implying "Not you," and "*I* will ..." implying "And what about you?" The first "*I* will" excludes "you" and isolates "I." The second "*I* will" distinguishes "I" from "you": "I, on my part ... So what about you on your part?" There is a clear difference in pitch contour between the two pronunciations of "*I* will." The same difference exists between "*I*" implying "not you" and "*I*" implying "and what about you?"<sup>31</sup>

But intonation has a different function when distinguishing "*I* didn't" as an abbreviation of "*I* didn't put it there" from "*I* didn't" as an answer to "Who did not go?" These two instances of "*I* didn't" both express isolating emphasis (i.e. "*I* at the exclusion of others"), but they differ with regard to the function of the negation: the first instance is a synonym of "It is not I who did" while the second is synonymous to "It is I who did not." When the italics in "*I* didn't" express distinctive emphasis, as in "*I* didn't, *she* won't, *he* never does" (said with reference to a certain chore), yet a third pronunciation is required.

### B *Distinctive and Isolating Intonation in Written English*

13 The second avenue I wish to explore is written representations of intonational stress in English. Italics used to be a common device to indicate stress in writing. But modern manuals such as *The Chicago Manual of Style* now disapprove of this and advise writing in such a manner that the emphasis is clear from the context. Making emphasis clear from the context is a problem of pragmatics (cf. n. 4).

Italicized words and phrases appear throughout the works of Jane Austen. Each instance can be assigned to one of the two types of emphasis. In other words, the italics signal not one linguistic phenomenon but two. The following example is taken from the novel *Sense and Sensibility*:<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> On a cautionary note, it needs to be observed that the difference between the two pronunciations of "*I* will" and "*I*" may perhaps be neutralized in speech if what is implied, for instance "not you" and "and what about you?," is made explicit. The function of distinguishing between distinctive and isolating emphasis is then taken over by those explicit phrases. But this would have to be confirmed by additional phonetic experiments.

<sup>32</sup> Ed. T. Tanner (The Penguin English Library 1984 = 1967), 225.



"*These* assured him that his exertion had produced an increase of good-will towards himself, and *these* gave Elinor hopes of its being farther augmented hereafter."

The two instances of "these" have the same referent, Marianne's "pitying eye" and "the gentleness of her voice." This is an instance of isolating emphasis. The Cleft Sentence, which is the syntactic expression of isolating emphasis, can be substituted for the italics without changing the meaning of the sentence: "It was these that assured him that his exertion had produced an increase of good-will towards himself, and it was these (same things) that gave Elinor hopes of its being farther augmented hereafter." However, if the referents of the first and second "these" had differed, the example would be an instance of distinctive emphasis and a more explicit version of the same sentence might be: \*"*These*, on the one hand, assured him that his exertion had produced an increase of good-will towards himself, and *these*, on the other hand, gave Elinor hopes of its being farther augmented hereafter."

14 Another example that illustrates the difference between the two kinds of intonation is the following. The word "that" is twice written in italics, first as a marker of isolating emphasis, then as a marker of distinctive emphasis:<sup>33</sup>

"'And what sort of a young man is he?'

'As good a kind of fellow as ever lived, I assure you. A very decent shot, and there is no bolder rider in England.'

'And is *that* all you can say for him?' cried Marianne, indignantly. 'But what are his manners on more intimate acquaintance? What his pursuits, his talents and genius?' Sir John was rather puzzled.

'Upon my soul,' said he, 'I do not know much about him as to all *that*. But he is a pleasant good humoured fellow, and has got the nicest little bitch of a pointer I ever saw. Was she out with him today?'"

The italics in "Is *that* all you can say for him?" mark an instance of isolating emphasis in the sense of "*that* alone, at the exclusion of all the other things you could have said." There is no way of interpreting the italics in the example above as a marker of distinctive emphasis since the isolating emphasis resting on *that* is additionally marked by a so-called pseudo-Cleft Sentence, an unambiguous marker of isolating emphasis.<sup>34</sup>

The emphasis in "I do not know much about him as to all *that*" is distinctive in the sense of "*that*, as distinct from what I know about him in other respects." If the contrast expressed by "*that*" were isolating, the sentence would be pronounced differently and the meaning would be something like "It is with regard to *that* that I do not know much about

<sup>33</sup> Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*, ed. Tanner, 76.

<sup>34</sup> "It is I who said this" is a Cleft Sentence (with the "dummy" *it*). "What he said is this" is a pseudo-Cleft Sentence, as are "This is what he said" and, in questions, "Is this what he said?" or "Is this all he said?"

him" (implying, for instance, "in case you were wondering with regard to what I do not know much about him)."<sup>35</sup>

15 The distinction between distinctive and isolating emphasis allows one to appreciate the subtlety of Miss Austen's irony. When Mrs. Bennet says to Miss Lucas,<sup>36</sup> "You began the evening well, Charlotte ... You were Mr Bingley's first choice," she is not using isolating emphasis – as if the question to be answered were who of all women had had the honor of dancing first with Mr. Bingley –, but rather she lays distinctive emphasis on "you" ("you, as distinct from someone else who did something else"), implying that her own daughter Jane had danced more than just one of the following dances with Mr. Bingley. The distinctive emphasis on "you" ("as distinct from ...") is too tempting an invitation not to make explicit the one from whom "you" is distinguished and Miss Lucas unwittingly walks into the trap by replying, "Yes, – but he seemed to like his second [choice] better." Mrs. Bennet then promptly brings her subtle act of linguistic manipulation to a successful conclusion, securely sealing off the trap by replying with double isolating emphasis on "did," "Oh! you mean Jane, I suppose – because he danced with her twice. To be sure that *did* seem as if he admired her – indeed I rather believe he *did*,"<sup>37</sup> thus excluding, through the use of isolating emphasis on "did," the possibility that he did not.

### C *The Verstärker in Coptic Egyptian*

16 Coptic Egyptian shares with the Semitic languages a property that to a limited extent makes up for the lack of information about speech intonation and provides material for the study of emphasis. In Coptic, pronouns often take the form of suffixes or prefixes which are prosodically too weak to be stressed. When such a pronoun requires emphasis, it is accompanied by an independent pronoun of the same person, gender, and number which can bear the stress on behalf of the suffix or prefix. Since H. J. Polotsky's classical study on the subject,<sup>38</sup> independent pronouns and other expressions used in this manner are known as *Verstärker*. *Verstärker* ("strengtheners") is the German translation of *mu'akkida*, the name given to this phenomenon in medieval Arabic grammars. The emphasis expressed by *Verstärker* is always distinctive. An example is:

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<sup>35</sup> Unaware of the distinction between the two types of emphasis, I have used, in *Orientalia* 56 (1987), 37-54, at 50 bottom, an example of distinctive emphasis, "That I don't know" (implying, "But I know other things"), in a context in which I was discussing isolating emphasis. Isolating emphasis would be expressed by, for instance, "That is what I don't know."

<sup>36</sup> *Pride and Prejudice*, ed. Tanner (The Penguin English Library 1985 = 1972), 65.

<sup>37</sup> Distinctive emphasis would be expressed by, for instance, "He *did* do it, *does* do it and *will* do it."

<sup>38</sup> *Orientalia* 30 (1961), 294-313 = *Collected Papers*, 398-417. The first example quoted below is found at 311 = 415.

*oua anok p-et=i-sooun mmo=f* "It is one thing that I, on my part, know" (John 9:25). *anok* bears the stress on behalf of the first person suffix in *p-et=i-sooun*; this is an instance of distinctive emphasis ("I, on my part"). In addition, *oua* is stressed by the Cleft Sentence as an instance of isolating emphasis.

Laying distinctive emphasis on a pronoun in the same way as the Coptic *Verstärker* is apparently achieved in the following Old Egyptian example,<sup>39</sup> in which an independent pronoun (*jnk*) instead of a suffix or dependent pronoun is used in the adverbial sentence:

"Those four akhs who are with me ... shall ferry me ..." *snw hr gs snw hr gs jnk m hmw*  
"two on one side, two on the other, and I, on my part, at the helm" (Pyr. 1092-93a).

17 An example of a *Verstärker* is also found in 2 Corinthians 12:15.<sup>40</sup>

*ešje t=i-me mmō=ten emate e=tetn-me anok mmo=i n-ou-šēm* "If I love you very much, do you love me (at least) a little?"

As Polotsky has pointed out, two elements receive emphasis in this sentence. The adverbial phrase *n-ou-šēm* is emphasized by the Second Tense *e=tetn-me*: "Is it (at least) a little that you love me?" The first person singular suffix in *mmo=i* is stressed by the *Verstärker anok*. But the two types of emphasis differ: *anok mmo=i* distinguishes "I" from "you," in the sense of "I, on my part, and you, on your part." This is distinctive emphasis. The emphasis on the adverbial phrase *n-ou-šēm* singles out or isolates a specific way of loving at the exclusion of other ways, namely "(just) a little." This is isolating emphasis.

Another example in which both types of emphasis appear in the same sentence is John 9:25 cited in § 16.

18 The difference between the two types of emphasis is that between the sentence patterns *\*anok t=i-sooun / \*t=i-sooun anok*,<sup>41</sup> on the one hand, and the pattern *\*anok et-sooun*, on the other. The former means "I know," with the implication "But what about you?" This can also be rendered as "I, for my part, know" or "I, in turn, know." The

<sup>39</sup> Allen, in: *Crossroad*, 30.

<sup>40</sup> See Polotsky, *Orientalia* 30 (1961), 297, 311 = *Collected Papers*, 401, 415.

<sup>41</sup> Polotsky, *ibid.*, esp. §§ 1 end, 17, defines *Verstärker* as enclitic, that is, not capable of taking first position in a sentence. According to this definition, only *anok* in *t=i-sooun anok* is a *Verstärker*, while *anok* in *anok t=i-sooun* is an extraposed pronoun. Though, prosodically speaking, there may be two different sets of independent pronouns, one enclitic, the other non-enclitic, they both seem to signify distinctive emphasis and are hence treated together here. Polotsky, *ibid.*, 312 § 20 compares John 8:21 and Ruth 1:16: the sentences are very similar in meaning but, in imitation of the Greek, one uses a *Verstärker*, the other extraposition to stress a personal pronoun. *Verstärker* and extraposition are in parallelism in Morgan M612, f. 10v *a* = CSCO 522, 34, 20-21 (in press): *ang ou-asōmatos gar anok ntok de ntk ou-sarks* "For I, on my part, am bodiless. But you, on your part, are fleshly."



second means "I know" (implying "Not you"). From a pragmatic point of view (cf. n. 4), "I know" with distinctive emphasis, as an answer to a question, is politer than "I know" with isolating emphasis because it implies that others may know too.

19 Examples like 2 Corinthians 12:15 (§ 17) are instructive because they contain both types of emphasis side by side. So does the following Coptic example, which is of particular interest because it is *the same element* that is emphasized twice, once by a Second Tense and once by "anticipatory emphasis." Each type of emphasis adds a nuance of its own.

*p-ma etere t-šeleet mmau e=f-mmau nci p-numphios mn n-et-nmma=f*  
*p-ma ce etere t-mnt-eusebēs mmau e=f-mmau nci pxs (sic Chassinat) auō ne=f-aggelos*  
 (...) *p-ma etere m-pahs n-hēt=f e=u-mmau nci ne-thērion mn n-halate te=u-hre gar te*  
*p-ma ce etere m-mnt-asebēs n-hēt=f e=f-mmau nci p-satanas auō ne=f-dikaiōma mn*  
*pn(eum)a nim n-akatharton te=u-hre gar te*

"As for the place in which the bride is, it is there that the bridegroom and his companions are. As for the place in which piety is, it is there that Christ and his angels are. As for the place in which the prey is, it is there that the wild animals and the birds are. For it is their food. As for the place in which impiety is, it is there that Satan and his ordinances and every impure spirit are. For it is their food" (Shenute ed. Émile Chassinat <sup>42</sup> 138, 25-55).

The four places listed in the example are distinguished from one another by "anticipatory emphasis." This is distinctive emphasis. In addition, *mmau* "there," which resumes *p-ma* ..., is emphasized four times by a Second Tense. This is isolating emphasis. This adds the nuance that someone is there *and nowhere else*; the location is isolated from or singled out among other places. In conclusion, each of the four places is emphasized twice and either emphasis adds a nuance of its own.

20 It has been observed that Second Tenses and Cleft Sentences are incompatible with *Verstärker*.<sup>43</sup> In other words, both may occur in the same sentence but they will never simultaneously stress the same element. The reason seems to be that Second Tenses and Cleft Sentences, on the one hand, and *Verstärker*, on the other, express different kinds of emphasis and hence would clash when applied to the same element. A good analogy is perhaps that it is not possible to apply two different tenses to a single verb form.

21 Yet two signals can emphasize a single element, providing that both express the same type of emphasis and hence confirm and reinforce one another, as in the example from Jane Austen quoted in § 13 above, "And is *that* all you can say for him?": "*that*" is

<sup>42</sup> *Le quatrième livre des entretiens et épîtres de Shenouti.*

<sup>43</sup> Polotsky, *Orientalia* 30 (1961), 297 = *Collected Papers*, 401.



emphasized simultaneously by isolating intonation and a pseudo-Cleft Sentence, which both express isolating emphasis.

Moreover, it is possible to apply two different types of emphasis to the same element in an indirect way, namely by repeating that element. The example discussed in § 19 serves as an illustration of this: *p-ma* "the place" is resumed by *mmau* "there"; *p-ma* is marked by distinctive emphasis, *mmau* by isolating emphasis.

**22** Distinctive and isolating emphasis also occur in the same sentence in the following example. What is remarkable is that the element stressed by distinctive emphasis is part of that stressed by isolating emphasis.

*a=u-phragellou m-p-joeis m-p-tēr=f alla hm pe=f-ouōš ntof nta=u-r nai na=f* "The Lord of All was whipped, but it was while he too wanted it that these things were done to him" (M595, f. 40r b 5-9, unpublished).

The Second Tense *nta=u-r* stresses *hm pe=f-ouōš*; this is rendered in the translation by a Cleft Sentence. The *Verstärker ntof* emphasizes the suffix *f* in *pe=f-ouōš*; this can be translated by "he, on his part," or "he, in turn," or "he too." The element stressed by the *Verstärker (f)* is part of the element stressed by the Second Tense (*hm pe=f-ouōš*).

#### *D Distinctive and Isolating Emphasis from Greek to Coptic Egyptian*

**23** Distinctive emphasis can be indicated in Greek by the particles μέν and δέ or by δέ alone. The following example again features the two types of emphasis.

ὁ δὲ δίκαιος τί ἐποίησεν *p-dikaios de nta=f-r ou*  
 "As for the righteous man, what has he done?" (Psalm 10:3).

In the Coptic translation, the interrogative pronoun *ou* is emphasized by the Second Tense. This is isolating emphasis. The noun *p-dikaios* is emphasized by "anticipatory emphasis" and is additionally marked by *de*; thus, the righteous man is distinguished from the unjust man. This is distinctive emphasis.

**24** The comparison of Coptic sentences with their Greek originals has played a crucial role in establishing the function of the Second Tenses.<sup>44</sup> Often, when an element is emphasized in Coptic by a Second Tense or a Cleft Sentence, the Greek equivalent of that element will be found before the verb.

<sup>44</sup> Polotsky, *Études*, 25, § 5 end = *Collected Papers*, 129.

In the following examples a personal pronoun is placed before the verb in the Greek original. The Coptic translation uses a Cleft Sentence or a Second Tense:<sup>45</sup>

"As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren," ἔμοι ἐποιήσατε  
*anok p-enta=tetn-aa=s nai* "it is to me that you have done it" (Matthew 25:40).

εἰ οὖν ἐμὲ ζητεῖτε *ešje anok ce p-e=tetn-cine nsō=i*  
 "If it is I that you seek" (John 18:8).

"But if any one has caused pain," οὐκ ἐμὲ λελόπηκεν *nta=f-lupei mmo=i an*  
 "it is not to me that he has caused it" (2 Corinthians 2:5).

These are instances of isolating emphasis ("not to me, but to someone else," etc.). In other Greek sentences, however, a personal pronoun also precedes the verb but the Coptic translator does not use a Cleft Sentence or a Second Tense. Instead, the frontal position is interpreted as distinctive emphasis and a *Verstärker* or an independent pronoun in "anticipatory emphasis" is used to express it. In the following examples, the distinctive emphasis is obvious from the fact that the emphasized pronoun is followed by the particle δέ, a marker of distinctive emphasis (see § 23).<sup>46</sup>

"This jealousy does not appear to many" ἐμὲ δὲ πολεμεῖ *f-polemei de anok ero=i*  
 "but as for me, it fights with me" (L. Th. Lefort, *Pères apostoliques* [CSCO 135], 54, 3).

ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω "I, however, say to you" (Matthew 5:22).

In the two following instances, a pronoun again precedes the verb in the Greek original and its function must be to express emphasis since the first person singular is already expressed by the ending of the verb. Since the pronoun is not followed by μέν or δέ, it was left to the Coptic translator to interpret which type of emphasis was expressed by ἐγώ, distinctive or isolating. In one instance, the translator interpreted the stress on ἐγώ as distinctive emphasis and rendered it by an independent pronoun in "anticipatory emphasis."

ἐγὼ ἐλθὼν θεραπεύσω αὐτόν *anok t=i-neu t=a-r pahre ero=f*  
 "As for me, I will come to heal him" (Matthew 8:7).

In the second instance, the emphasis on ἐγώ is interpreted as isolating and translated by a Cleft Sentence.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> The examples are taken from *ibid.*, 27, 64, 65 = 131, 168, 169.

<sup>46</sup> The first example is taken from Polotsky, *Orientalia* 30 (1961), 311 = *Collected Papers*, 415.

<sup>47</sup> In the Greek original, the difference must have been one of intonation, which does not appear in writing, as is the case with the two pronunciations of "I will" (§ 12) and "I know" (§ 14).

ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω ὑμᾶς ὡς πρόβατα ἐν μέσῳ λύκων  
*eis hēēte anok et-jouu mmō=tn n-t-he n-hen-esoou hn t-mēte n-hen-ouōnš*  
 "Behold, it is I who send you like sheep among the wolves" (Matthew 10:16).

V     *The constructions jw + Noun + sdm.f and Noun + sdm.f*

25     In principle, every instance in which a noun is extraposed and resumed in the same sentence by a pronoun is a candidate for distinctive emphasis. However, for distinctive emphasis to be effective, there must be a contrast between a marked construction with emphasis and an unmarked construction without emphasis.

Along these lines, Pascal Vernus observed that the effect of "anticipatory emphasis" in *jw + Noun + sdm.f* is "weakened."<sup>48</sup> Indeed, the non-emphatic counterpart of *jw + Noun + sdm.f*, *jw + sdm + Noun*, is extremely rare.<sup>49</sup> Due to the absence of a clear contrast, the effect of extraposing the noun may have lost its effect. This possibility, though difficult to quantify, has to be kept in mind in studying "anticipatory emphasis."

26     Another construction in which a noun is resumed by a suffix pronoun is *Noun + sdm.f*.<sup>50</sup> Instances of this construction are often interpreted as independent sentences. But Allen has argued that *Noun + sdm.f* can in certain instances be subordinate and adverbial,<sup>51</sup> adducing Pyr 1089-90, in which *Noun + sdm.f* is in all probability stressed by a substantival verb form.<sup>52</sup>

According to Polotsky,<sup>53</sup> *Noun + sdm.f* is not a special construction, but simply *jw + Noun + sdm.f* minus *jw*, or the adverbial counterpart of *jw + Noun + sdm.f*. Morphologically speaking, this is confirmed by the fact that the *sdm.f* in both *jw + Noun + sdm.f* and *Noun + sdm.f* is adverbial.<sup>54</sup> Syntactically speaking, since *jw(f)* is followed by

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<sup>48</sup> Vernus, in: *Festschrift Westendorf*, 197-212 at 198. See also Schenkel, *Einführung*, 172 (quoting Adolf Erman).

<sup>49</sup> Vernus, in: *Festschrift Westendorf*, 198 n. 7.

<sup>50</sup> A survey of the history of research is found in Schenkel, *Einführung*, 172-73 (with bibliography at 177).

<sup>51</sup> Allen, *Inflection of the Verb*, §§ 274-78.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, § 275.

<sup>53</sup> Personal communication. I am quoting and using this observation by Prof. Polotsky's kind permission.

<sup>54</sup> For *Noun + sdm.f*, see Doret, *JNES* 39 (1980), 37-45.



adverbial verb forms in compound tenses, the removal of *jw* must result in an adverbial verb form. According to the Standard Theory,<sup>55</sup> omitting *jw* is a well established syntactic device converting independent into adverbial verb forms; conversely, adding *jw* converts adverbial into independent verb forms. From the point of view of the system, adverbial Noun + *sdm.f* fills a gap in the Standard Theory: one might have wondered *a priori* how to convert a verb form as common as *jw* + Noun + *sdm.f* into its adverbial counterpart.

27 It follows from the above that, in texts in which the contrast between presence and absence of *jw* is carefully observed and some of the great literary texts are unfortunately suspicious candidates, *all* the instances of Noun + (adverbial) *sdm.f* must be adverbial conversions of *jw* + Noun + *sdm.f*, that is, subordinate constructions.<sup>56</sup>

It also follows that the wellknown example *t3.n ph.n sw* (Sh. S. 11) is a different construction altogether: since *t3.n* is not resumed by the suffix of the verb form (*ph.n*) but by *sw*, *t3.n ph.n sw* cannot be viewed as the adverbial conversion of *\*jw t3.n ph.n sw*.<sup>57</sup>

The resulting increase of subordinate constructions seems acceptable from a philological point of view and, in fact, harmonizes with the frequency of *jw* + Noun + *sdm.f*. Some examples are:

*jn 3st snq.s tw Nbt-hwt dj.s n.k mnd.s shdh* "It is Isis who will suckle you, *while* Nephthys gives you her breast upside down<sup>58</sup>" (CT I 280j - 281b T<sub>9</sub>C).

*jw dbn N tn jrt-Hr r-'.s Dhwtj d3.f pt hft N tn jw N tn sw3.s nfr* "This N circles around with the Eye of Horus at her side, *while* Thoth crosses the sky in front of her. This N passes well" (CT VII 294c - 295b B<sub>3</sub>C).<sup>59</sup>

*dd mdw jn Nwt ... ntrw nbw dd.sn ...* "Recitation by Nut ... *while* all the gods say ..." (Pyr. 5).

<sup>55</sup> For a recent definition of the Standard Theory, see Junge, "Emphasis" and sentential meaning, 11; cf. Schenkel, *Einführung*, 158.

<sup>56</sup> Excluding, of course, the homonymous syntagm "NN, while/as he ..." found in legends (see Polotsky, *Transpositions*, 31-32 § 3.5).

<sup>57</sup> Nor does *mw m jtrw swr.t(w).f mr.k t3w m pt hnm.t(w).f dd.k* (Sin. B 233-34) belong here, since it consists in all probability of two instances of "anticipatory emphasis," each followed by a substantival verb form emphasizing an adverbial form (see n. 20).

<sup>58</sup> Since the goddess stands at the head of the deceased who is lying down (cf. Münster, *Untersuchungen zur Göttin Isis*, 24-25), she tenders her breast upside down to him from *his* point of view.

<sup>59</sup> Notice the contrast between *Dhwtj d3.f* (adverbial without *jw*) and *jw N tn sw3.s* (independent with *jw*). Also compare B<sub>3</sub>C *Dhwtj d3.f* (adverbial Noun + *sdm.f* with noun as actor) with B<sub>1</sub>L *d3.f pt* "while he crosses the sky" (adverbial *sdm.f* with pronoun as actor).



*nfr mtnw.j w't ḥd.t(w).s jnn.j '3.j ḥr šn't.s* "My course is good *when* (only) one (whisk) is destroyed. I will buy my donkey back for its (the whisk's) price" (Peas. 13-14).<sup>60</sup>

28 It was mentioned in § 25 that *jw* + Noun + *sdm.f* is much more frequent than *sdm* + Noun, and that it is hence possible that the effect of distinctive emphasis in *jw* + Noun + *sdm.f* has weakened. On the other hand, subordinate Noun + *sdm.f* seems much more frequent than subordinate *sdm* + Noun.<sup>61</sup> This does not only confirm that Noun + *sdm.f* is *jw* + Noun + *sdm.f* without *jw* (§ 27), but also shows that the same *caveat* concerning the possible weakening of emphasis equally applies to Noun + *sdm.f*.

On the other hand, distinctive emphasis is quite suitable as a translation of some of the examples in § 27: (CT I 280j - 281b) "It is Isis who will suckle you, *while* Nephthys, on her part (i.e. as distinct from Isis), gives you her breast upside down"; (CT VII 294c - 295b) "This N circles around with the Eye of Horus at her side, *while* Thoth, on his part, crosses the sky in front of her."

## VI Appendix: Egyptian Sentence Patterns as signes linguistiques

29 In the previous sections, I have tried to describe contrastive emphasis independently from the distinction between subject and predicate. Now there are other areas of Egyptian grammar where subject and predicate are employed. One such area is the sentence patterns. Since the publication of the first edition of Gardiner's *Egyptian Grammar* in 1927, it has been customary to distinguish Egyptian sentence patterns according to the word class to which the predicate belongs.<sup>62</sup> The four main sentence patterns in Egyptian are therefore known as "the sentence with nominal (i.e. substantival) predicate," "the sentence with adjectival predicate (or *nfr sw* pattern)," "the sentence with adverbial predicate," and "the sentence with verbal predicate." Convenient abbreviations are "substantival sentence," "adjectival sentence," "adverbial sentence," and "verbal sentence."<sup>63</sup>

<sup>60</sup> For this interpretation, see Wentz, *JNES* 24 (1965), 105-9.

<sup>61</sup> Though this would need to be confirmed by an exhaustive collection of examples. For an example of subordinate *sdm* + Noun, see Gardiner, *EG*, 373 top (but existential *wn* may be a special case).

<sup>62</sup> See especially Gardiner, *EG*, §§ 27-28. The great merit of this way of distinguishing sentence patterns was that it put an end to bizarre concepts, prevalent at the time, such as "verbal nominal sentence" and "adverbial nominal sentence," terms that can ultimately be traced back to the influence of medieval Arabic grammar on Egyptian grammar (Polotsky, *Grundlagen des koptischen Satzbaus*, 9-16, esp. 15-16).

<sup>63</sup> Sentences expressing existence and non-existence could be counted as a fifth pattern (cf. Gardiner, *EG*, § 28 Obs.).

30 Is it possible, however, to define the sentence patterns without having recourse to the distinction between subject and predicate? The alternative I would like to propose is to interpret the sentence patterns as linguistic signs.

The examples that first come to mind when one thinks of linguistic signs are single words; de Saussure's classical example of the linguistic sign is itself a single word, namely *arbor*, the Latin for "tree" (see § 1). It may perhaps strike one as unusual to interpret entire sentences as linguistic signs but this is, in fact, the only possible explanation of the Egyptian sentence patterns if de Saussure's theory of the structure of language is applied consistently. For de Saussure, language is a system entirely made up of signs; or, as the *Cours* states it, signs "are the only kind of facts language contains."<sup>64</sup> A linguistic sign occurs wherever a certain form (mental image of an acoustic pattern or *signifiant*) and a certain meaning (mental concept or *signifié*) meet and form an inextricable union (see § 1). The acoustic patterns by themselves are not language; the mental concepts by themselves are not language; they become language as they pair up as linguistic signs. All significant features of language, including sentence patterns, are therefore by definition linguistic signs. Sentence patterns are not mentioned as linguistic signs in the *Cours de linguistique générale*, but then, in the Indo-European languages, from which de Saussure takes his examples, there is no marked distinction between different types of sentences with different meanings. On the other hand, one of the most characteristic features of Middle Egyptian is the rigorous distinction between four sentence patterns.

The Saussurean definition of the linguistic sign suits the Egyptian sentence patterns perfectly. Let us take the example of the adjectival sentence or *nfr sw* pattern. The sequence "adjective + substantive (or pronoun)" as an acoustic image is inextricably connected with the mental concept of "someone's or something's having a quality or property." Note that the acoustic pattern "adjective + substantive (or pronoun)," whose mental image is connected with "someone's or something's having a quality or property," only concerns the structure of the pattern, the specific sequence of the elements itself, not any individual instances of the word class adjective or the word class substantive.

A drawback of defining sentence patterns according to the word class of the predicate (§ 29) is that it does not cover such simple facts as that the adverb follows the substantive in the adverbial sentence whereas the adjective precedes the substantive in the adjectival sentence.

31 Linguistic signs may overlap in writing. In "I went to *London*," "*London*" contains two linguistic signs: one is the word "London," whose mental concept is the city with that name; the other is the italics, whose mental concept is contrastive emphasis.

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<sup>64</sup> *Cours*, 166.

Consider, for instance, *jtt.f* in the following sentence (also quoted in § 8).

*jr nb qd m nb ht jtt.f mj msh m qnbt* "As for him who possesses character or property, he robs like a crocodile in the council" (Ptahhotep 167-68).

Linguistic signs pertaining to *jtt.f* are (1) the lexeme *jtt*, which has as a mental concept the verbal notion of "taking," (2) the sequence substantive (in this case a substantival verb form) + adverb (in this case an adverbial phrase), which has as a mental concept "somebody's or something's being in a certain place or manner," and (3) the substantival verb form, marked by gemination, which reveals that the adverbial phrase *mj msh m qnbt* stands isolated in the second slot of the adverbial sentence. The mental concept corresponding to this last structure is isolating emphasis on *mj msh m qnbt*; this contrasts with the absence of isolating emphasis in the corresponding verbal sentence *\*jw.f jt.f mj msh n qnbt*.

32 As distinct from other definitions of the sentence patterns, a definition of a sentence pattern as a linguistic sign must consist, due to the nature of the linguistic sign, of *two* components that are connected (§ 1). One half of the definition is incomplete without the other.

The following is an preliminary attempt to define the four sentence patterns as linguistic signs.<sup>65</sup> These definitions could be represented in drawings like those in §§ 1 and 2.

## 1 Substantival sentence

- a *Mental concept or signified*  
"somebody's/something's being somebody/something"<sup>66</sup>

The substantival sentence *identifies*.

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<sup>65</sup>This type of definition has been formulated *avant la lettre* by Polotsky, when he speaks of "die syntaktischen Besonderheiten [signifiers]..., die im ägyptisch-koptischen Sprachbau das Etwas-Sein [a signified] vom Irgendwo-Sein [another signified] scheiden" (*Grundlagen des koptischen Satzbaus*, § 11).

<sup>66</sup> As to the question of what is attributed to what, see Depuydt, *CdE* 63 (1988), 404-5 (for *mere*, read *me*).

- b *Acoustic image or signifier* (simplified)  
 kernel<sup>67</sup> = Substantive + Substantive<sup>68</sup>  
 Substantive + *pw* (+ Substantive)

## 2 Adjectival sentence

- a *Mental concept or signified*  
 "somebody's/something's being (having) a quality"  
  
 The adjectival sentence *attributes a property*.
- b *Acoustic image or signifier*  
 kernel = Adjective + Substantive

## 3 Adverbial sentence

- a *Mental concept or signified*  
 "somebody's/something's being somewhere"  
  
 The adverbial sentence typically *situates in place*.
- b *Acoustic image or signifier*  
 kernel = Substantive + Adverb

## 4 Verbal sentence

- a *Mental concept or signified*  
 The verbal sentence expresses *action*,<sup>69</sup> involving one or more satellites  
 (actor, direct object, indirect object, etc.)
- b *Acoustic image or signifier*  
 kernel = A verb form

<sup>67</sup> The kernel is the structure that remains if all elements are removed while retaining a complete sentence. It is also the structure that all sentences of a given type share.

<sup>68</sup> In this and the following definitions, pronouns can be substituted for substantives.

<sup>69</sup> Including, for instance, the state resulting from that action.



33 The empirical foundation of the definitions in § 32 is the acoustic patterns. That it is empirical distinctness that really matters in classifying sentence patterns is borne out by a comparison of Classical Egyptian with Biblical Hebrew. In Classical Egyptian, the signifiers of the substantival, adjectival, and adverbial sentences are quite distinct, to a considerable extent as a result of the strict word order of Egyptian. Some features are: *pw* is only found in the substantival sentence; the adjectival sentence begins with an undeclined adjective; the adverbial sentence consists of a substantive or pronoun followed by an adverbial phrase; etc.

But in Biblical Hebrew, "somebody's being somebody," "somebody's having a quality," and "somebody's being somewhere" have the same signifiers. Hebrew grammars therefore classify the three together as a single sentence pattern called the nominal sentence or the verbless sentence.<sup>70</sup>

If the definition of sentence patterns according to the nature of the predicate (§ 30) is applied to Biblical Hebrew, it appears that it too has sentences with substantival, adjectival, and adverbial predicate, but it does not pay to distinguish them in this way because they are empirically not distinct, that is, their acoustic patterns are identical. Yet another theoretical option is to consider the three Hebrew sentence patterns homonyms. Homonyms are linguistic signs whose mental concepts are different but whose acoustic images are identical. But the question whether three distinct mental concepts should be distinguished behind a single acoustic image may be a purely theoretical one.

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<sup>70</sup> See, for instance, Andersen, *The Hebrew Verbless Clause in the Pentateuch*.

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