The syntax and semantics of the Coptic cleft constructions

Chris Reintges

Abstract

Cleft constructions are very common in the syntactic syntactic patterns of Coptic Egyptian used to indicate the focal status of nominal arguments. Cleft sentences are complex sentences structures that express a single proposition by means of a biclausal syntax. In Coptic, cleft constructions represent a special type of tripartite nominal sentences in which a noun phrase (or equivalent) is equated with a restrictive relative clause. Nominal clefts encode different semantic types focus, ranging from presentational (new information) focus explicit contrast.