Clause-final particles and focus in Eastern Cham

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1 Introduction

• Eastern Cham (Austronesian: Vietnam), like many Southeast Asian languages, has a set of clause-final particles that typically mark mood or aspect
  – (cf. Simpson 2001 on Thai, Cambodian, Cantonese, and Vietnamese)
• These particles are generally clause-final, but the object may be shifted rightward

(1) (a) kaw bǎŋ p̥ɔh ʔɔʔ hu
  1SG eat CLF mango ROOT
  ‘I can eat mango.’
(b) kaw bǎŋ hu p̥ɔh ʔɔʔ
  1SG eat ROOT CLF mango
  ‘I can eat mango.’

• Why are these particles clause-final in an otherwise largely head-initial language?
• Furthermore, why are these particles not always final?
• We provide strong evidence for Simpson (2001)’s predicate raising analysis, which preserves a right-branching structure
• Additionally, we give a more detailed description of object shift as focus movement

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2Orthography is largely IPA, with some exceptions in line with the Cham linguistic tradition (Moussay, Thurgood, Brunelle, etc.): open circles underneath consonants indicate falling, breathy tone on the following vowel; superscript consonants indicate coarticulation or highly reduced sesquisyllables. Note that there is significant inter-speaker phonetic and lexical variation even within small villages (Baclawski 2016) underlying this data. Clause-final particles are generally bolded for emphasis.

3Abbreviations used: CLF = numeral classifier; EMPH = emphatic particle; FOC = focus; ITER = iterative aspect; QP = polar question particle; PROG = progressive aspect; ROOT = root modal; SG = singular; (VN) = loanword from Vietnamese.

4Data is from the author’s fieldwork in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam with seven native speakers in 2016. All errors are my own.
• Roadmap:
  – Section 2: Clause-final particles are syntactic heads above vP, evidence from
    polar question responses
  – Section 3: Object shift is the result of new information focus movement
  – Section 4: Object shift with multiple clause-final particles strongly supports
    predicate raising with a right-branching structure
  – Section 5: A revised analysis of clause-final particles is sketched, along with its
    ramifications for information structure
  – Section 6: Conclusion

2 Mood and aspect

• “Clause-final particles” are so named because they are postverbal and may only be
  followed by focussed objects (Section 3), adjuncts, and sentence-final particles (e.g.
  the question particle hlej; Erlewine (to appear) on Mandarin)

• The most prominent clause-medial (i.e. preverbal) and clause-final particles in East-
  ern Cham are given in (2)
  – Glosses largely from Brunelle & Văn Hẳn (2015)
  – Note that hu ‘ROOT’ appears to be the only grammaticalized modal in use

(2) (a) Clause-medial particles: cɛʔ ‘NEAR PROSPECTIVE’, ṭɔʔ ‘PROGRESSIVE’, ka
    ‘INCOMPLETE’

(b) Clause-final particles: o ‘NEGATIVE’, hu ‘ROOT MODAL’, vɨʔ ‘ITERATIVE’, mĭn
    ‘EMPHATIC’, (p̥ɔh) cɨ ‘COMPLETIVE’

• These mood and aspect markers are not affixes to the verb, as words can intervene
  (cf. the object in 3a), and Eastern Cham otherwise lacks bound morphology

• They also do not exhibit any properties of adjuncts (cf. their fixed order in 3b)

(3) (a) kaw bān ḅ̇h ʔɔʔ   hu
    1SG eat CLF mango ROOT
    ‘I can eat more mango.’

(b) kaw bān hu   vɨʔ  p̥ɔh ʔɔʔ
    1SG eat ROOT ITER CLF mango
    ‘I can eat more mango.’

(b’) *kaw bān vɨʔ hu  p̥ɔh ʔɔʔ
2.1 The predicator test

- The “predicator test” applies in languages where polar questions may be answered (positively) with a single verb or auxiliary

- Characteristically, only the structurally highest verb or auxiliary in the question may be a felicitous response (compare 4–6 in Thai)

(4) (a) \(khaw_5 \ ?a\tilde{a}n_2 \ n\tilde{a}n_5 \ s\tilde{i}i_5 \ ma\tilde{y}_4\)
   he read book QP
   Q: ‘Did he read?’ (Visonyanggoon 2000: 117)

(b) \(?a\tilde{a}n_2\) A: ‘Yes.’

(5) (a) \(khaw_5 \ ya\tilde{a}k_2 \ ?a\tilde{a}n_2 \ n\tilde{a}n_5 \ s\tilde{i}i_5 \ ma\tilde{y}_4\)
   he want read book QP
   Q: ‘Does he want to read?’ (Visonyanggoon 2000: 118)

(b) \(ya\tilde{a}k_2\) A: ‘Yes.’

(b′) *\(?a\tilde{a}n_2\) A: ‘Yes.’

(6) (a) \(khaw_5 \ ?a\tilde{a}n_2 \ n\tilde{a}n_5 \ s\tilde{i}i_5 \ da\tilde{y}_3 \ ma\tilde{y}_4\)
   he read book may QP
   Q: ‘May he read?’ (Visonyanggoon 2000: 141)

(b) \(da\tilde{y}_3\) A: ‘Yes.’

(b′) *\(?a\tilde{a}n_2\) A: ‘Yes.’

- This phenomenon is found across Southeast Asia, including languages closely related to Eastern Cham (e.g. Indonesian) and those in intense language contact (Vietnamese)
  – Vietnamese (Austroasiatic): Thompson (1987) describes “predicative fragments”, modals and aspect markers that may answer polar questions (e.g. \(d\tilde{u}t\tilde{\check{g}}c\) ‘root modal’, \(r\tilde{o}i\) ‘perfective’)
  – Indonesian (Austronesian): Sneddon, et al (2012: 324) list possible responses to polar questions, which are all modals or aspect markers (e.g. \(bo\tilde{\ell}eh\) ‘may’, \(sudah\) ‘already’)

- Martins (1994) and Visonyanggoon (2000) propose that polar questions in these languages involve a Sigma/Polarity Phrase (\(\Sigma P\)), which dominates the extended vP projection and probes for the most local syntactic head with verb features (citing López 1999)
(7) Partial structure of (5b), before ellipsis (Visonyanggoon 2000: 121)

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\Sigma P \\
\Sigma \\
yaak_{2i} \quad V \\
t_i \\
v \quad DP \\
?a\text{an}_2 \\
n\text{aŋ}_5 \text{si}_5
\end{array}
\]

- In Eastern Cham, modals and aspect markers pass the predicator test, whether clause-medial or clause-final
- (9–11) imply the hierarchical order below (noting that tɔʔ and hu do not cooccur):
  
  – tɔʔ ‘PROG’ / hu ‘ROOT’ ≫ vĩʔ ‘ITER’ ≫ V

(8) (a) zut bāŋ hlej
friend eat QP
Q: ‘Did you [friend] eat?’
(b) bāŋ ‘Yes.’

(9) (a) zut bāŋ vĩʔ hlej
friend eat ITER QP
Q: ‘Did you [friend] eat more?’
(b) vĩʔ A: ‘Yes.’

(10) (a) zut bāŋ vĩʔ hu hlej
friend eat ITER ROOT QP
Q: ‘Can you eat more?’
(b) hu A: ‘Yes.’

(11) (a) zut tɔʔ bāŋ vĩʔ hlej
friend PROG eat ITER QP
Q: ‘Are you eating more?’
(b) tɔʔ A: ‘Yes.’

2.2 Fragment answers

- Eastern Cham polar questions may also be answered with fragment answers
- Taking this as a proxy for constituency, (12–13) confirm the hierarchy from above:
  
  – tɔʔ ‘PROG’ / hu ‘ROOT’ ≫ vĩʔ ‘ITER’ ≫ V
(12) (a)  zut  bāŋ  vɨʔ  hu  hlej  Q: ‘Can you eat more?’
friend  eat  ITER  ROOT  QP
(b)  bāŋ  vɨʔ  hu  A: ‘Yes.’
(b’)  bāŋ  vɨʔ
(b’’)  #bāŋ  hu

(13) (a)  zut  tober  bāŋ  vɨʔ  hlej  Q: ‘Are you eating more?’
friend  PROG  eat  ITER  QP
(b)  tober  bāŋ  vɨʔ  A: ‘Yes.’
(b’)  bāŋ  vɨʔ
(b’’)  #tober  bāŋ

• In the vein of Simpson (2001), there are two obvious approaches to the structure of clause-final particles:5
  – Mixed-headedness: clause-medial particles are head-initial, while clause-final particles are head-final (14)
  – Predicate raising: the whole language is head-initial, but clause-final particles trigger some kind of predicate raising (15)

(14) Mixed-headed approach for (12a)
(15) Predicate raising approach for (12a)

3 Object shift and focus movement

• Focussed objects may undergo movement to the right of clause-final particles (compare 16–17)6
• This phenomenon is only found with the set of clause-final particles in (2b)

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5cf. Simpson (2001: 95–98) for arguments against a “sentential subject” analysis, in which clause-final modals head TP/IP, while the rest of the sentence is embedded in subject position. The data in Section 4 on multiple clause-final particles constitutes even more evidence against such an analysis, as it would seem to predict only one clause-final particle per clause.

6Grammaticality judgments are presented as recorded in the data. # refers to infelicity, ? refers to a “better than” judgment: the speaker was presented with two sentences and is asked if one is better or they are equally felicitous. Some speakers consistently gave stronger judgments than others, but the paradigms reported here appear to be robust.
(16) (a) CONTEXT: Who can eat mango?
   (b) $kaw_{Foc} \ bąŋ \ hu \ pɔh \ ?ɔ$
   (b’) $kaw \ bąŋ \ pɔh \ ?ɔ \ hu$

   1SG eat CLF mango ROOT

   ‘I$_{Foc}$ can eat mango.’

(17) (a) CONTEXT: In the morning, what can you eat?
   (b) $ŋɔ̆ʔ \ k̥e \ kaw \ bąŋ \ pɔh \ ?ɔ_{Foc}$
   in morning 1SG eat ROOT CLF mango

   ‘In the morning, I can eat mango.’
   (b’) $ŋɔ̆ʔ \ k̥e \ kaw \ bąŋ \ pɔh \ ?ɔ_{Foc} \ hu$

   • Object shift is not obviously correlated with syntactic weight (18)

(18) (a) CONTEXT: Out of the blue.
   (b) $s̥ɛj \ ɨŋ \ hwăʔ \ vɨ̆ʔ \ m\text{thej} \ zut \ ^{_{m}hni}$
   self want eat.rice ITER cooked.rice friend cook

   ‘I want to eat the rice you [friend] cooked.’
   (b’) $s̥ɛj \ ɨŋ \ hwăʔ \ ^{m}\text{thej} \ zut \ ^{m}hni \ vɨ̆ʔ$

   (c) $s̥ɛy \ ɨŋ \ bąŋ \ vɨ̆ʔ \ k̥wa \ pɔh \ ^{j}zaw.thaw \ pjɔŋ^m \ năn$
   self want eat ITER 2 CLF fruit big that

   ‘I want to eat those two big fruits.’
   (c’) $s̥ɛy \ ɨŋ \ bąŋ \ k̥wa \ pɔh \ ^{j}zaw.thaw \ pjɔŋ^m \ năn \ vɨ̆ʔ$

   (d) $kaw \ bąŋ \ hu \ pɔh \ ?ɔ \ hɔŋ^m \ pɔh \ hɔŋ^m$
   1SG eat ROOT CLF mango with CLF papaya

   ‘I want to eat those two big fruits.’ (DTT)
   (d’) $kaw \ bąŋ \ pɔh \ ?ɔ \ hɔŋ^m \ pɔh \ hɔŋ^m \ hu$

3.1 Not exhaustive/ID focus

• While focus movement is often associated with identificational/exhaustive focus (cf. Horváth 2010), this does not seem to be the case here

• Compatibility with ‘only’ is a crucial diagnostic for identificational focus (Kiss 1998)
   – Accordingly, object shift is obligatory in (19)
   – However, there are cases where object shift is infelicitous with ‘only’ (20)
(19) (a) CONTEXT: In the morning, what can you eat?

(b) tŭʔ ke kaw băŋ hu sĭt p̥oh ʔɔ̆ʔ mîn

hour morning 1SG eat ROOT only CLF mango EMPH

‘In the morning, I can only eat mango.’

(b’) #tŭʔ ke kaw băŋ sĭt p̥oh ʔɔ̆ʔ (hu) mîn (hu)

(20) (a) CONTEXT: Which fruit here can you sell me?

(b) #kaw p̥lɛj ka hi hu sĭt p̥oh hɔŋ mîn

(b’) kaw p̥lɛj ka hi sĭt p̥oh hɔŋ mîn hu

1SG sell to 2SG only CLF papaya this EMPH ROOT

‘I can only sell you this papaya.’

- Conversely, identificational focus should be incompatible with the universal quantifier and existentials like ‘something’ (Kiss 1998)7

- However, object shift is felicitous with p̥ih ‘every’ and wh-indefinites (21–22)

(21) (a) CONTEXT: Which fruits do you want me to buy at the market?

(b) kaw băŋ hu p̥ih p̥oh jːaw hi p̥lɛj

1SG eat ROOT all CLF fruit 2SG buy

‘I can eat anything you buy.’

(b’) #kaw băŋ p̥ih p̥oh jːaw hi p̥lɛj hu

(22) (a) CONTEXT: Can you eat anything?

(b) kaw băŋ hu k̥et

1SG eat ROOT what

‘I can eat something.’

(b’) kaw băŋ k̥et hu

3.2 New information

- Instead, object shift appears to occur when the focussed phrase is new information
  - In (23), ‘mango’ is not part of a shared context set, and object shift is obligatory

7Other tests from Kiss (1998) include ‘also’ and ‘even’, but no appropriate counterparts in Eastern Cham have yet been found.
– In (24), ‘this fruit’ is a visible referent, clearly part of a shared context set, and object shift is infelicitous
– This paradigm was confirmed by four separate speakers

(23) (a) CONTEXT: In the morning, what can you eat? [speaking generally]
   (b)ŋɔ̆ʔ k̥e kaw băŋ hu p̥ɔh ?3?
in morning 1SG eat ROOT CLF mango
    ‘In the morning, I can eat mango.’
   (b’)#ŋɔ̆ʔ k̥e kaw băŋ p̥ɔh ?3?

(24) (a) CONTEXT: Which fruit here can you eat? [fruits are visible]
   (b) #kaw băŋ hu p̥ɔh jːaw ni
   (b’) kaw băŋ p̥ɔh jːaw ni hu
     1SG eat CLF fruit this ROOT
     ‘I can eat this fruit.’

• Returning to (20), repeated below, object shift is infelicitous despite the ‘only’ phrase, as it is contextually given

(25) (a) CONTEXT: Which fruit here can you sell me?
   (b) #kaw plej ka hi (hu) sīt p̥ɔh hɔŋ̣̣ ni mĩn
   (b’) kaw plej ka hi sīt p̥ɔh hɔŋ̣̣ ni mĩn hu
     1SG sell to 2SG only CLF papaya this EMPH ROOT
     ‘I can only sell you this papaya.’

• At this point, it is worth mentioning that this so-called object shift is not restricted to objects
• Any focussed phrase in the predicate may be shifted, such as indirect objects (26) and prepositional adjuncts (27)

(26) (a) CONTEXT: Who can you give a banana to?
   (b) kaw plej vtheon hu ka çah raŋ nän mǐ:
     1SG sell banana ROOT to only person that EMPH
     ‘I can only sell bananas to that person.’
   (b’) kaw plej vtheon ka çah raŋ nän hu mǐ:

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8I.e. the answer to a D-linked question in the sense of Comorovski 1996; ‘accessible’ information in Lambrecht 1994’s terminology.
(27) (a) CONTEXT: Where can I put beer?

(b) hi cɛʔ bɨʔa hu sɨt păʔ ɬam khin mĭn
   2SG put beer(VN) ROOT only in inside kitchen EMPH
   ‘You can only put beer in the kitchen.’

(b’) hi cɛʔ bɨʔa sɨt păʔ ɬam khin (hu) mĭn (hu)

3.3 Preliminary analyses

- In the mixed-headedness approach, the most natural analysis involves right-dislocation of foci, perhaps to a phase edge (cf. López 2009 on Romance clitic right-dislocation)

(28) Object shift in the mixed-headed approach

• To explain similar data in Thai, Simpson (2001) proposes the predicate raising structure in (Figure 1):
  - The external argument is generated in Spec-DeP (headed by the clause-final modal dai) and raised to Spec-TP to satisfy an EPP feature
  - The focussed object undergoes movement to a FocP generated under DeP
  - Then, the remnant VP is raised to some intermediate phrase (“YP”) below TP
4 Multiple object shift and predicate raising

- Cooccurrence patterns of multiple clause-final particles strongly support the predicate raising analysis
- In the presence of two clause-final particles and an object, there are four grammatical orderings, all apparently equally natural:
  - When the object is focussed, both (29a–b) are grammatical
  - When the object is not under focus, (29c–d) are grammatical
  - (29e–f) are ungrammatical regardless of the information structure of the sentence

(29) (a) kaw bâŋ hu viʔ ?ʔʔFoc
     1SG eat ROOT ITER mango
     ‘I can eat more mangoFoc.’
(b) kaw bâŋ hu ?ʔʔFoc viʔ

(c) kaw bâŋ ?ʔʔ hu viʔ
(d) kaw bâŋ ?ʔʔ viʔ hu
(e) *kaw bâŋ viʔ ?ʔʔ hu
(f) *kaw bâŋ viʔ hu ?ʔʔ
• This paradigm can be replicated with other pairs of clause-final particles, such as *hu* ‘root modal’ and *mîn/mî:* ‘emphatic’ (30)9

• Other clause-final particles show similar interactions, but are complicated by other factors like scope (e.g. *o* ‘negation’, *(p̥lɔh) c̥ɨ* ‘perfective’, and *mîn* when the object is emphasized)

(30) (a) \textit{tha oŋ năn num hu miː ?yæ ni}_{Foc}  
1 grandfather that drink \textsc{root emph} water this  
‘Only that old man can drink this water.’

(b) \textit{tha oŋ năn num hu ?yæ ni}_{Foc} \textit{miː}:
(c) \textit{tha oŋ năn num ?yæ ni hu miː}:
(d) \textit{tha oŋ năn num ?yæ ni miː hu}
(e) *\textit{tha oŋ năn num miː ?yæ ni hu}
(f) *\textit{tha oŋ năn num miː hu ?yæ ni}

• Finally, the same paradigm can be found when other phrases like indirect objects are shifted as well10

(31) (a) \textit{tha oŋ năn p̥lɛj kan hu miː ka hi}_{Foc}  
1 grandfather that sell \textsc{fish root emph} to \textsc{2sg}  
‘Only that old man can sell you fish.’

(b) \textit{tha oŋ năn p̥lɛj kan hu ka hi}_{Foc} \textit{miː}:
(c) \textit{tha oŋ năn p̥lɛj kan ka hi hu miː}:
(d) \textit{tha oŋ năn p̥lɛj kan ka hi miː hu}
(e) *\textit{tha oŋ năn p̥lɛj kan miː ka hi hu}
(f) *\textit{tha oŋ năn p̥lɛj kan miː hu ka hi}

• It would be highly difficult to rectify the mixed-headed approach with this data

• Right-dislocation in the presence of two clause-final particles would predict that the (e–f) sentences are grammatical (32)

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9Note that the ‘only’ phrase in (30) is a second-occurrence focus (cf. Krifka 2006). Here, a response to ‘What did only that old man drink?’

10Again, this involves a second-occurrence focus. Here, a response to ‘Who can only that old man sell fish to?’
(32) Mixed-headed approach predicting $^\times$(29f)

• By contrast, the predicate raising analysis offers a natural account of this data
• First, two modifications to Simpson’s analysis are made:
  – Instead of raising to some undefined XP, we assert that vP’s raise to the specifiers of ModP/AspP where they check a [–Focus] feature
  – Instead of being generated in Spec-DeP (here, Spec-ModP), subjects are generated below in vP, on the logic that it would otherwise not explain the intervention of AspP
• The order in (29c) occurs when the vP undergoes raising to Spec-ModP (33)
• (29d) is accounted for by a “roll-up” movement first to Spec-AspP, then all of AspP to Spec-ModP (34)

(33) kaw băŋ $^?_i$ hu viʔ ‘I can eat more mango.’

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For this analysis, we will follow Erteschik-Shir (2006, 2007) in assuming that information structure features may percolate upwards.
(34) *kaw bāŋ ʔɔ̆ʔ viʔ hu* ‘I can eat more mango.’

- When the object is focussed, it may undergo movement to a FocP below Asp (35) or Mod (36)
- These structures correspond to (29a–b), respectively

(35) *kaw bāŋ hu viʔ ʔɔ̆ʔ Foc* ‘I can eat more mango_{Foc}.’

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(36) *kaw bąŋ hu ?5ʔFoc viʔ ‘I can eat more mango_{Foc}.’

- Finally, if we assume that the specifiers of ModP and AspP must be non-focussed, the ungrammatical orders in (29e–f) are impossible

- In (37), Spec-ModP paradoxically must contain a FocP

(37) *kaw bąŋ viʔ hu ?5ʔ ‘INTENDED: ‘I can eat more mango.’
5 Discussion

• Overall, only a predicate raising analysis can capture the clause-final particle facts in Eastern Cham
  – This preserves Eastern Cham as a head-initial language, despite apparent clause-final elements (cf. Kayne 1994)

• However, some modifications are needed to Simpson (2001)’s proposal:
  – Clause-final particles have a strong [–Foc] feature, resulting in vP movement to their specifiers
  – Subjects are generated below ModP and AspP in vP, not selected by clause-final particles themselves

5.1 Information structure

• These data are problematic for some theories of information structure

• In general, focus movement seems to target phrase edges, whether in the CP domain (e.g. Italian) or the vP domain (e.g. Hungarian)
  – For Simpson (2001: fn.22) and many others (e.g. Zubizarreta 1998 on p-movement), foci undergo movement to receive stress/prosodic phrasing
  – For López (2009), focus features are assigned at phase boundaries by an invasive pragmatics module
  – For Samek-Lodovici (2015), focus movement is evacuative, in order to avoid something else like topic marking

• However, the focus movement presented here does not have any of these properties:
  – The focussed object does not move to final position, nor one with any prosodic prominence in (38, repeated from above)
  – Also in (38), if focus movement is evacuative, then why does the object move through two separate FocP’s?
  – If López (2009)’s account were to hold, both AspP and ModP must constitute separate phases
Instead, we propose that clause-final particles (those that exhibit object shift) are something like focus associators (Krifka 2006; Toosarvandani 2010) and partition the sentence into focus and presupposition

- As per Rizzi (1997), focus phrases in the left periphery of languages like Italian partition the sentence into a focus (specifier) and a presupposition (complement) (39a)

- Along these lines, clause-final particles partition the sentence into a presupposition (specifier) and a focus (complement) (39b)

- In the absence of a focus in the predicate, the clause-final particle simply moves the entire predicate to its specifier

(39) (a) Focus phrase, after Rizzi (1997) (b) Clause-final particles and focus

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However, unlike traditional focus association, there of course does not have to be an overt focus. Also, this object shift is incompatible with second-occurrence foci.
• It is unclear why some mood and aspect markers should be associated with focus, but not others (cf. 2)
• However, if these particles are present in a sentence, their association with focus is obligatory
  – When the context is properly controlled, Eastern Cham object shift is obligatory (Section 3)
  – Simpson (2001: 106) reports that object shift is likewise obligatory in Thai

### 6 Conclusion

• Clause-final particles are best explained by a predicate raising analysis
• They characteristically trigger two phenomena:
  – vP-raising to its specifier
  – Focus movement of material out of the vP to a lower FocP
• A number of questions remain:
  – What about sentence-final particles (e.g. the question particle hlej)
    * After Erlewine (to appear), one may suspect that they would be less amenable to a right-branching structure
  – What are the interpretive differences between the sentences in (29)?
  – How do focussed subjects fit into this picture? Why can they not undergo low focus movement?
    * In general, Eastern Cham seems to be a topic-prominent language
    * Many focussed subjects are clefts
  – To what extent are these effects identical to those in Vietnamese, the major contact language?
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