

Aspects of pragmatic focus in Tagalog

1.0 Background

This paper sets out to accomplish the following three goals:

- 1) To show that Tagalog possesses regular syntactic expressions of the universal pragmatic relations focus and topic.
- 2) To identify the role of prosody in the pragmatic component of Tagalog.
- 3) To account for a portion of what was previously considered to be semantically vacuous scrambling in Tagalog based on the first two observations.

Most work on Philippine languages has taken case/voice alternations to be the most salient feature of the grammatical system and has consequently approached these grammars primarily from the point-of-view of this system. As a result, linguists dealing with Philippine languages have often conflated syntactic and pragmatic categories, a problem which is epitomized by the use of pragmatic terms such as “topic” and “focus” to describe an essentially syntactic phenomenon. Assumptions about the pragmatics and discourse role of the *ang* phrase (which has been variously termed “focus”, “topic”, “subject” among others) have largely gone unexamined.

One of the repercussions of ignoring pragmatics is creating the appearance of more free word order than actually exists. Upon taking a closer look at the interactions between the pragmatic and syntactic components of the language we find that much of this variation is in fact conditioned by discourse context. Of course, the degree to which this may be considered a problem is dependent on our definition of free word order. If by free word order we simply refer to the possibility of a language to permute its constituents within a sentence while maintaining grammaticality, then we may safely put pragmatics aside. However, the value of this type of definition for a general theory of language is quite suspect. Namely, it appears misguided for a grammar to be able to generate all the permuted variants of a sentence within a “free order language” without having access to the discourse felicity of these various permutations. This problem has been treated within the Chomskyan model, for instance, by positing functional projections for pragmatically salient positions. By this means a “Topic Phrase” and a “Focus Phrase” are generated at the left periphery of the sentence and serve as potential landing-sites for movement from within the clause proper. Both the Topic and Focus phrase have been generally accepted in application to languages that are described as being “discourse configurational” (Hungarian, Catalan, Somali) as well as those which are not generally characterized as such (Italian, English). This has the effect of greatly reducing the differences in the formal explanation of languages that are characterized as configurational on the one hand and those that are described as non-configurational or discourse-configurational on the other hand. Specifically, if Focus in a language like Hungarian can be shown to exhibit similar syntactic properties to English subjects, then we

have made a powerful generalization and one which begins to bridge the gap between languages which were previously analysed as possessing “free word order” and the more familiar configurational languages such as English. This is of course a welcome simplification, but there still remains the seemingly intractable task of proving that word order variation correlates regularly with particular pragmatic contexts within a given “discourse-configurational” language. Based on the present state of our knowledge of the world’s languages, it seems futile to try to show that all word order variation correlates with pragmatic differences.

Any claims of this type are additionally weakened by a paradox which emerges if we look at this question from a diachronic perspective. How would a language develop from point A in which the ordering of elements was strict and configurational to point B in which ordering was equally strict and configurational but different from that of point A, without passing through an intermediate stage where “free” variation was permitted? I believe this question makes it all the more apparent that it is not sufficient to categorize languages as being either configurational in the manner of English or discourse-configurational in the manner of Hungarian. Even if one wished to argue that the synchronic variation seen in discourse-configurational languages is entirely conditioned by context, it becomes an ontological necessity to concede that there must have existed stages in the development of such languages in which focus or topic positions were being occupied by non-foci and non-topics. Otherwise, we find no explanation as to how these pragmatically salient positions may become neutralized over time; a well-attested phenomenon in language change.

For the purposes of this paper I only set out to show the extent of discourse-configurationality in Tagalog while still noting that context cannot determine all variation, most notably variation in the post-verbal field. I introduce a prosodically based analysis influenced by Zubizarretta (1998) which may be profitably applied to Tagalog to account for some of what was previously dismissed as “free” word order variation.

2 Definition of terms

The two pragmatic relations under discussion here are topic and focus. I rely on Lambrecht’s (1994) definition which is in turn influenced by Reinhart (1982).

A referent is interpreted as the topic of a proposition if in a given discourse the proposition is construed as being about the referent. i.e. as expressing information which is relevant to and which increases the addressee’s knowledge of this referent. Following Reinhart (1982), we may say that the relation “topic-of” expresses the pragmatic relation of aboutness which holds between a referent and a proposition with respect to a particular discourse. The term “pragmatic relation” should be understood as meaning “relation construed within particular discourse contexts. Topic is a pragmatically construed sentence relation.

Focus on the other hand is succinctly defined by Lambrecht (1994, p.52) based on the concepts of presupposition and assertion given here.

PRAGMATIC PRESUPPOSITION: The set of propositions lexico-grammatically evoked in a sentence which the speaker assumes the hearer already knows or is ready to take for granted at the time the sentence is uttered.

PRAGMATIC ASSERTION: The proposition expressed by a sentence which the hearer is expected to know or take for granted as a result of hearing the sentence uttered.

With these definitions in place, Lambrecht (1994, p.213) now defines focus in the following manner.

FOCUS: The semantic component of a pragmatically structured proposition whereby the assertion differs from the presupposition.

I rely on these definitions of pragmatic relations for the following discussion of Tagalog.

3.0 A methodology for analyzing pragmatic focus in Tagalog

The first step in this line of research is to discern the distinctive functions in Tagalog of what Daneš (1966) termed ALLOSENTENCES, that is, sentences which are regarded as carrying the same proposition but which differ in their syntactic or prosodic structure. This relationship between semantically similar but formally divergent sentences is necessarily more inclusive than the set of sentences containing all the possible permutations of elements since allosentences may also refer to clefts, morphologically marked topicalizations and other marked deviations from the “simple sentence”.¹

I adopt here again a methodology outlined by Lambrecht which rests on a systematic comparison of allosentences. The methodology is summarized in the following excerpt,

Information structure analysis is centred on the comparison of semantically equivalent but formally and pragmatically divergent sentence pairs, such as active vs. passive, canonical vs. topicalized, canonical vs. clefted or dislocated, subject accented vs. predicate accented sentences.

I concentrate here particularly on the two elements that form the backbone of the pragmatic component across languages: position and intonation. The approach then will be to examine how these co-vary with particular discourse contexts. In comparing Tagalog allosentences, I employ the question-answer pair method that has become popular in the focus literature after Jackendoff 1972 where it was originally introduced as a formal diagnostic for focus. Here the focus of a given sentence is revealed by examining what questions a particular sentence could serve as a felicitous answer to. The informative part of the answer – that is, the part of the answer which corresponds to the information being sought in the question, is taken to be the focus. This can be exemplified by the simple question-answer pair in (1).

(1) A: What did John take to the picnic?

B: John took potato salad to the picnic.

¹ From its use in the literature there appears to be no semantic value ascribed to differences in definiteness among the elements in allosentences. This appears to be an oversight with clear complications. However, I continue to use the term in this sense and leave it to be determined if some of the discourse usage of certain allosentences may not be predictable from the semantics of definiteness and if pairs of sentences with differing definiteness should be considered to possess any relationship at all.

The underlined portion of B's response (which would be given prosodic prominence) is said to be the focus based on the fact that it provides the answer elicited by a preceding question. It is important to mention here that we are abstracting away from the elliptic nature of natural discourse in order to concentrate on the differences which exist between formally different but semantically similar full sentences. Thus, although it might be argued that a more natural answer to A's question above might simply be "potato salad", we must remember that this is in part due to the absence of potential ambiguity in such a small context. Within actual discourse, full sentences are often employed to relate the focus to particular referents. The question-answer test represents only a truncated version of discourse and thus is an "extreme case" of how discourse relations such as topic and focus function within a larger context. However, it has been proven to be a valid methodology to approach the subtleties of ordinary discourse from the extreme cases in which pragmatic relations are entirely explicit. The mere acceptability of B's answer above is proof enough that this sentence contains "potato salad" as part of its focus. Accordingly, the unacceptability within the same context of such allosentences as the ones found in (2) shows that these sentences do not contain the focus "potato salad".²

(2) A: What did John take to the picnic?

B: # The picnic is where John took the potato salad.

John took the potato salad to the picnic.

Employing this and other diagnostics we find that Tagalog does possess well defined, pragmatically significant positions within the phrase structure. Furthermore, we find that Tagalog employs syntactic methods commonly where English employs phonological means.³

Although this represents a crucial difference between the two languages, this fact has been exaggerated and has ultimately led to the brushing aside of the communicative aspects of Tagalog prosody. The hypothesis taken here, simply stated, is that prosody plays a decisive role in the pragmatic component in precisely the places where the syntax cannot do the job. Furthermore, it can be shown that while the left periphery of the sentence contains pragmatically salient positions, the right periphery contains the natural position of the nuclear stress which together account for the ordering of focused constituents.

4.0 Allosentences in Tagalog

An over-arching descriptive generalization concerning syntactic structure in Philippine languages is that these languages possess a "predicate initial" word order. A less agreed upon proposition is whether these languages contain bi-clausal cleft like structures or are strictly mono-clausal as concerns single predicate sentences. Although I take the latter view, I withhold discussion of this for a later work and follow the taxonomy set out by Constantino (1965) in looking at the major allosentences available in the language. Table 1

² The symbol "#" indicates a grammatical sentence which is infelicitous within the given context.

³ This can be seen as a direct result of Tagalog syntax which is quite strictly organized according to information structure as indexed by definiteness.

contains a basic paradigm of Tagalog sentences with differing information structures. Column (a) of table 1 shows four sentences containing a verb phrase and a noun phrase all expressing the proposition in (3) while column (b) contains four sentences all expressing the proposition found in (4).

- (3) there exists an x such that x is child and x ate
 (4) there exists an x such that x is a child and x swam in Bulacan

The first row contains what may be considered the canonical sentence in which a VP, a “prototypical predicate”, is followed by an NP, a “prototypical subject”. (2a) of Table 1 contains the structure which has been claimed as a cleft by several authors (Kroeger, 1993; Richards, 1998; Aldridge, forthcoming) i.e. a nominal predicate in the initial position with a headless relative in the subject position. (2b) shows a prepositional phrase in the initial position followed by the verb and the subject. Examples (3a) and (b) show both the predicate-like constituent and the subject-like constituent nominalized with the DP *ang bátà* “child” in the initial position. Examples (4a) and (b) in the paradigm show a kind of morphologically marked fronting with the particle *ay*, sometimes referred to as an “inversion marker”.⁴

Table 1.

	a. VP + NP	b. VP + NP + PP
1.	Kumáin ang bátà AV.COM-eat NOM child “The child ate.”	Lumangoy ang bátà sa Bulakan AV.COM-swim NOM child OBL Bulakan “The child swam in Bulacan.”
2.	Bátà ang kumáin child NOM AV.COM-eat “The one who ate was a child.”	Sa Bulakan lumangoy ang bátà OBL Bulakan AV.COM-swim NOM child “It was in Bulacan that the child swam.”
3.	Ang bátà ang kumáin NOM child NOM AV.COM-eat “The one who ate was the child” / “The child was the one who ate.”	Ang bátà ang lumangoy sa Bulakan NOM child NOM AV.COM-swim OBL Bulakan “The child was the one who swam in Bulacan” / “The one who swam in Bulacan was the child”
4.	Ang bátà ay kumáin NOM child ay AV.COM-eat “The child ate”	Sa Bulakan ay lumangoy ang bátà OBL Bulakan ay AV.COM-swim NOM child “In Bulacan, the child ate.”

It will be shown here through the use of the question-answer test and through several syntactic diagnostics that XP in the construction [XP [*ang* YP]] occupies a focus position

⁴ Abbreviations used: NOM – nominative (absolute) case marker; GEN – genitive (ergative) case marker; OBL – oblique/locative case marker; P.NOM – personal nominative case marker; P.GEN – personal genitive case marker; P.OBL – personal oblique case marker; 1st – first person nominative pronoun; 1stGEN – 1st person genitive pronoun; 1stPL.EX – 1st person nom. plural exclusive; AV – actor voice; PV – patient voice; CV – conveyance voice; LV – locative voice; COM – completed aspect; INC – incomplete aspect; INF – infinitive; NONV – non-volitional; NEG – negative; LNK – linker; ADJ – adjectival morpheme; STA – stative; CAU – causative morpheme; IMP – imperative; Q – question marker; EXT – existential particle; REP – reported speech particle.

while DPs and PPs preceding *ay* in sentences such as (4) are topics. This is merely an elaboration of the observations made by Paz-Naylor (1975), Kroeger (1993), Schachter and Otones (1972). What I hope to add to the discussion is that these pragmatic relations also appear to obey universal syntactic tendencies applying to foci and topics.

5.0 Identifying the Focus and Topic positions in Tagalog

Looking at Table 1 we see that a pre-posed focus position is available for both a VP as in (1a), an NP as in (2a), or a PP as in (2b).⁵ The information structure as understood out of context by native speakers can be gleaned from the glosses to each sentence. These intuitions can be systematically verified through the question-answer test mentioned above. In (5) we see three allosentences expressing the same proposition in answer to a question which elicits VP focus.

- (5) A: Anong ginawá ninyo sa Bulakan?
 what OV.COM-do 2.PL.GEN OBL Bulacan
 ‘What did you do in Bulacan?’
- (a) B: Nagpíkrik kami sa Bulakan
 AV.COM-picnic 1.PL.EX OBL Bulacan
 ‘We picnicked in Bulacan.’
- (b) Sa Bulakan ay nagpíkrik kami
 OBL Bulacan ay AV.COM-picnic 1.PL.EX
 ‘In Bulacan, we picnicked.’
- (c) # Sa Bulakan kami nagpíkrik
 OBL Bulacan 1.PL.EX AV.COM-picnic
 ‘It was in Bulacan that we picnicked.’

A few important points are made evident from native speaker judgements concerning the felicity of the three answers (a-c). First, the unacceptability of (5c) suggests that the position occupied by the PP *sa Bulakan* is indeed a focus position and that Tagalog follows the universal tendency by which a discourse topic may not felicitously be presented as a focus.⁶

⁵ This latter construction with a fronted PP as in 2b of Table 1 is referred to by Kroeger (1998) as Oblique Fronting. This fronting is characterized by forming a unitary prosodic phrase with the following clause and triggering clitic raising as shown by the pre-verbal position of the pronoun *kami* in (5c). In this respect it differs from fronting with *ay* in that this latter type of fronting does not trigger clitic raising and often has the fronted material in a separate prosodic phrase.

⁶ The same infelicity is present in the English gloss. However, there are instances in which a topic is presented as a contrastive focus. Here a discourse topic is ‘re-introduced’ into a new role as in (i). (Larry has the status of a discourse topic after A’s question but is treated as a focus in B’s answer by virtue of being

Second, the acceptability of (5b) suggests that the position occupied by the PP in this sentence is a topic position and that topicalization of a referent which is active in the discourse is optional, not effecting felicity judgements. These generalizations are supported by the judgements found in (6) where the question elicits focus on a PP.

- (6) A: Saan kayo nagpíknik?
 where 2.PL AV.COM-picnic
 ‘Where did you picnic?’
- (a) B: ? Nagpíknik kami sa Bulakan.
 AV.COM-picnic 1.PL.EX OBL Bulacan
 ‘We picnicked in Bulacan.’
- (b) # Sa Bulakan ay nagpíknik kami.
 OBL Bulacan *ay* AV.COM-picnic 1.PL.EX
 ‘In Bulacan, we picnicked.’
- (c) Sa Bulakan kami nagpíknik.
 OBL Bulacan 1.PL.EX AV.COM-picnic
 ‘It was in Bulacan that we picnicked.’

Here we see that, as it was infelicitous to present a topic as a focus as shown in (5c), it is also infelicitous to present a focus as a topic as exemplified by (6b). The elicited focus, *sa Bulakan*, must appear either in the focus position as in (6c) or in its canonical position as the last phrase in a verb initial clause as in (6a).⁷

5.1 Negation and other focus sensitive particles

Typically, the class of words considered to be focus sensitive includes the adverbs “only”, “also”, “even”, and negation among others (Rooth 1996, König 1991). We predict that this class of words should only take scope over the focus of a sentence, which in Tagalog we

clefted in the *it*-cleft construction.)

(i) A: Where did Larry go for Halloween?

B: It's Larry who was that robot following me around all evening!

⁷ Another crucial point to emerge here is that many speakers find (6a) (generally considered to be a canonical sentence in the recent literature) to be an infelicitous answer to the question. This has interesting consequences for the analysis which takes clefts to be present in Tagalog. Namely, for the speakers who consider (6a) infelicitous in this context, the verb is interpreted as the focus of the sentence. That is, (6a) can serve to answer the questions, “What did you do in Bulacan?”, “What did you do?” or “What happened?” but cannot answer a question in which the information conveyed by the verb is presupposed. This interpretation then views the “canonical” type sentence seen in (1a+b) of Table 1 to be parallel in its information structure with the sentence type represented in (2a+b). In other words, the first phrase in a sentence with structure [XP [*ang* YP]] is interpreted as the focus regardless of its lexical category. I leave this point to be further developed in later work.

claim is the first phrase in sentences of the structure [XP [*ang* YP]]. Furthermore, we can predict that focus sensitive words should be ungrammatical if forced to associate with a topic since a topic by definition is presented as presupposed/predictable and therefore should not be available for modification. These predictions are borne out by the scope and grammaticality of negation as shown in (7).

- (7a) Hindi sa Bulakan kami nagpíknik.
 NEG OBL Bulacan 1.PL.EX AV.COM-picnic
 ‘It wasn’t in Bulacan where we had a picnic.’
- (b) Hindi kami nagpíknik sa Bulakan.
 NEG 1.PL.EX AV.COM-picnic OBL Bulacan
 ‘We didn’t picnic in Bulacan.’
- (c) * Hindi sa Bulakan ay nagpíknik kami.
 NEG OBL Bulacan *ay* AV.COM-picnic 1.PL.EX
 * Not in Bulacan, we picnicked.

In (7a) we find the oblique focus construction ([2b] of Table 1 with the clause initial negator *hindi*. The only reading available in (7a) is the one in which negation takes narrow scope over the PP, *sa Bulakan*, and the proposition “we picnicked” is presupposed. This contrasts with (7b) where the negation takes scope over the VP.⁸

If we try to negate the phrase fronted with the particle *ay* (construction [4b] of table 1) the result is ungrammatical as seen in (7c). The ungrammaticality of (7c) further supports the analysis of this type of fronting as a proto-typical topicalization.

These same facts hold true for quantificational adverbs which are also considered to be members of the universal set of focus-sensitive items. The Tagalog quantificational adverb *lang* “only”, can be seen to follow the same pattern of scope and grammaticality as that of negation.

- (8a) Sa simbahan lang ako nagbibigay ng pera.
 OBL church only 1.SG AV.INC-give GEN money
 ‘I only give money to the church.’
- (b) Sa simbahan ay nagbibigay lang ako ng pera.
 OBL church *ay* AV.INC-give only 1.SG GEN money

⁸ The negator *hindi* triggers clitic movement which is responsible for the preverbal position of the pronoun *kami*.

To the church, I only give money.

(* It's only to the church that I give money)

- (c) * Sa simbahan lang ay nagbibigay ako ng pera.
OBL church only ay AV.INC-give 1.SG GEN money

(8a) shows that *lang* may only associate with the PP *sa simbahan*, “to the church”, and cannot take wider scope with the meaning, “the only thing I do is give money to the church.” This supports the idea that the PP in clause initial position is a focus and that focus in Tagalog has many of the syntactic/semantic properties that are assumed to be universals for this pragmatic relation. In (8b) we see that the focus-sensitive adverb *lang* may not associate with the PP fronted with *ay* but rather must associate with the VP. Any attempt to force an association between the PP fronted with *ay* and a focus-sensitive adverb results in ungrammaticality as seen in (8c) where *lang* is found in the fronted PP. Again, we see that this type of fronting bears one of the semantic hallmarks of topicalization.

5.3 Cooccurrence with *wh*-words

Another place to look for interactions with topic and focus is *wh*-questions. Both from the semantics of *wh*-questions and their treatment cross-linguistically, we expect to find a parallel between the position of *wh*-words and the position occupied by foci (if a focus position is present within the given language). In Tagalog we find an exact parallel between the position of the *wh*-words, *ano* “what”, *alin* “which” and *sino* “who” and the position of the NP in the cleft-like construction (e.g. *bátà* in sentence type 2a of table 1). Similarly we find that the position of the *wh*-words *saan* “where” and *kailan* “when” occupy the same position as does the fronted PP/oblique in the construction exemplified by 2b in table 1. This latter set of *wh*-words triggers clitic movement which was also observed with the relevant PP initial construction. The two constructions are compared in (9) and (10).

- (9a) Saan ka pumunta?
where 2.SG AV.COM-go
‘Where did you go?’
- (b) Sa Manila ka pumunta?
OBL Manila 2.SG AV.COM-go
‘Did you go to Manila?’
- (10a) Kailan ka nagtúrò?
when 2.SG AV.COM-teach
‘When did you teach?’

- (b) Kahápon ka nagtúro?
 yesterday 2.SG AV.COM-teach
 ‘Was it yesterday you taught?’
 (cf. Nagtúro ka kahápon? – ‘Did you teach yesterday?’)

As seen in (11) and (12), these fronted elements are in mutually exclusive distribution.

- (11) * Saan ka kahápon pumunta?
 where 2.SG yesterday AV.COM-go

- (12) * Kailan ka sa Maníla pumunta?
 when 2.SG OBL Manila AV.COM-go

The mutually exclusive distribution of all types of focus phrases may be interpreted to suggest that they occupy a single, non-recursive position in the phrase structure. However, an alternative solution which is more in concordance with the present study is suggested in Rizzi 1997. The ungrammaticality of multiple focus phrases is seen as stemming from the fact that focus has the effect of bifurcating the sentence into a focal portion and a presupposition. Because a focus is essentially unpredictable, it is banned from appearing as a presupposition. Thus, any possibility of multiple focus is ruled out since the presence of one focus would render the others as presuppositions.⁹

5.4 Co-occurrence of oblique fronting with cleft like constituents

As suggested above, this pattern of distribution extends to a restriction on the co-occurrence of focused nominals and focused PPs/adjuncts. In (13a) we see an example of a bare nominal in the focus position of the cleft-like construction while in (13b) we find the wh- question “where” which was shown in (9) to be parallel to the PP/adjunct focus construction.

⁹ This particular property is one of those which distinguish syntactic focus from prosodic focus. Cross-linguistically there appears to be no restriction on sentences containing multiple elements which are prosodically focused. This is the distinction which Rooth (1996) refers to as “strong” versus “weak” focus. “Strong focus” is realized through syntactic means and usually contains an exhaustive listing effect and the property of turning the non-focal portion of the proposition into a presupposition. The difference can be seen in comparing a cleft (syntactic focus) as in (i) with prosodic focus as in (ii).

- (i) # Either it was John who broke the window or the window isn’t broken.
 Presupposition: *x broke the window*
- (ii) ok Either JOHN broke the window or the window isn’t broken.
 No presupposition

(13a) Siya ang sikat
 3.SG NOM famous
 ‘S/he is the famous one.’

(b) Saan siya sikat?
 Where 3.SG famous
 ‘Where is s/he famous?’

Crucially, we find that the nominal in the cleft-like construction of (13a) and the *wh*-word in (13b) cannot appear together in one clause. This is seen in (13c)¹⁰.

(13c) *Saan siya ang sikat?
 where 3.SG NOM famous

5.5 Recursivity and the relative positions of Topic and Focus

Turning our attention now to the relative positions of the pragmatic relations in Tagalog we come upon further support for the alignment of the Tagalog topic and focus with a universal configuration. First we see that as a rule, interrogatives may not occur fronted with *ay* (14a+b) suggesting that foci in general are banned from occurring with *ay*.

(14a) *Saan ay pumunta ka?
 where *ay* AV.COM-go 2.SG

(b) *Ano ay ginawa mo?
 what *ay* PV.COM-do 2.SG.GEN

Taking fronting with *ay* to be a topicalization, the facts in (14) can be explained by referring to the incompatibility of a focus in a topic position. This is true for English as it is for Tagalog. (15a) contains a topicalized PP in a declarative sentence while (15b) displays the ungrammaticality of having a *wh*-phrase (a focus by definition) in the position of a topic.

(15a) To George, they gave a tortoise.

(b) *To whom, they gave a tortoise?

¹⁰ Notice that such constructions are just as bad in English despite the clearly bi-clausal structure of the cleft. All three cleft structures available in English are incompatible with *wh*- questions.

i) *Where is it that what you drink is Whiskey?

ii) *Where is it that it's Whiskey that you drink? / *Where is it Whiskey that you drink?

iii) *Where is it that Whiskey is what you drink?

However we do find topics co-occurring with foci in sentences such as (16a) in which the topic precedes a PP/adjunct focus. The reverse order, focus-topic, is not allowed in Tagalog as is also the case in a wide range of languages.¹¹

- (16a) Ang isdá ay sa túbig nabúbúhay
 NOM fish *ay* OBL water STA-INC-live
 ‘Fish live in the water.’
- (b) *Sa túbig ang isdá ay nabúbúhay
 OBL water NOM fish *ay* STA-INC-live

Recursivity has been shown to be a property of Topic as opposed to Focus in a wide range of languages. It has already been shown here that there is a restriction on multiple foci in Tagalog and it can also be shown that the left periphery in Tagalog may host multiple topics. The possibility of multiple topics is of course tempered by the well known general constraint in Philippine languages that objects (*ng* phrases) may not be extracted. Thus, multiple topic constructions as in (17) and (18) necessarily contain adverbs and other non-arguments in addition to the *ang* phrase.

- (17) Ngayon ay siya ay natátákot.
 now *ay* 3.SG *ay* STA-INC-fear
 ‘Now he is scared.’
- (18) Ngayon ay itong dalawang bátá ay palibhásá ay intersado...
 now *ay* this-LNK two-LNK child *ay* because *ay* interested...
 ‘Now, these two children, on account of being interested...’

¹¹ For instance, Hebrew:

(The presence of the resumptive pronoun requires a topic interpretation for its co-indexed nominal, “fish”.)

- i) Dagim, ba-maym hem hayyim ii) *Ba-maym dagim hem hayyim.
 Fish, in-water 3rdPL-M live-PL-M In-water fish 3rdPL-M live-PL-M
 Fish, they live in the water

It is perhaps tempting to ascribe this kind of restriction to something akin to the Praguian theme-rheme principle although this is clearly violated in canonical Tagalog sentences which are predicate initial. It seems clear that the theme-rheme organizational principle is abided by more closely in the pragmatically salient positions of the left-periphery than in the basic clause. The large number of predicate initial languages (belonging to the Celtic, Mayan, Semitic and Austronesian families among others) attests to the implausibility of this principle as being an active determinant of word order more generally. A counter-example to the topic-focus order in the left-periphery appears to be provided by Italian as analyzed in Rizzi 1997. Rizzi notes that certain topic-like constituents may intervene between a preposed focus and the main clause and accordingly he posits a phrase structure with a recursive Topic Phrase that may be instantiated on either side of the Focus Phrase. It is not clear however if the post-focus topic in Italian is restricted to certain adverbs or if it may also host arguments.

(Taken from Wolff [forthcoming; text 20])

5.6 Dislocation possibilities

Left-dislocation, or what is referred to in the Romance languages as CLLD (clitic left-dislocation), is generally accepted as a construction that is only compatible with topics and not with foci. Left-dislocation is marked by a preposed argument co-indexed with a resumptive pronoun in the main clause. Indeed we find that in Tagalog, resumptive pronouns do not usually refer back to a focus and are generally construed with a topic. (19) shows a question-answer pair in which the Agent, *Dódong*, has topic status while (20) is a minimally differing question-answer pair in which the Agent has focus status. The status of B's response containing left-dislocation is regarded as more felicitous in the context of (19) than it is in the context of (20).¹²

(19) A: Saan nag-ááral si Dódong?

where AV.INC-study P.NOM Dodong

'Where does Dodong study?'

B: Si Dódong, nag-ááral siya sa unibersidad.

P.NOM Dodong AV.INC-study 3.SG OBL university

'Dodong, he studies in the university.'

(20) A: Sino ang nag-ááral sa unibersidad?

who NOM AV.INC-study OBL university

'Who studies in the university?'

B: ? Si Dódong, nag-ááral siya sa unibersidad.

P.NOM Dodong AV.INC-study 3.SG OBL university

¹² Interestingly, the demonstratives *iyán* and *iyun* may also be used to refer back to a preposed argument and in this case a focus reading is considerably better than it would be with a resumptive pronoun. E.g.

A: Sinong may pérà sa inyo? "Who of you has money?"

who-LNK EXT money OBL 2.PL

B: Si Títo Bóbong, mayáman yun. "Uncle Bobong, HE's rich."

P.NOM uncle Bobong, ADJ-wealth that-NOM

#? Si Títo Bobong, mayáman siya.

P.NOM uncle Bobong, ADJ-wealth 3rd-NOM

‘Dodong, he studies in the university.’

In addition, a preposed focus may never co-refer to a resumptive pronoun in the clause as in (21).

- (21) * Si Dódong ang nag-áral siya sa unibersidad.
 P.NOM Dodong NOM AV.INC-study 3.SG OBL university

The findings above are summarized in Table 2. Preposed topic refers to the constituent preposed with the particle *ay* or with comma intonation while the preposed focus I take to be the first major constituent in the clause.

Table 2.

	PREPOSED TOPIC	PREPOSED FOCUS
SINGLE PROSODIC PHRASE	No	Yes
ASSOCIATION W/FOCUS SENSITIVE PARTICLES	No	Yes
CO-OCCURENCE WITH <i>WH</i> -WORDS	Yes	No
RECURSIVITY	Yes	No
LEFT-MOST POSITION OF THE CLAUSE	Yes	No
CO-OCCURENCE WITH RESUMPTIVE PRONOUNS	Yes	No

The summarized results show clearly that Topic and Focus are highly grammaticalized relations in Tagalog and that their pattern of grammaticalization largely agrees with received notions of universal topic and foci. We can now move onwards to goals two and three as outlined in the introduction. That is, describing the role of the prosody in focusing, and accounting for some of the free word order in Tagalog by recourse to the prosodic component.

6 The role of prosody in focusing

The first question we must address is the following, if Tagalog possesses a syntactic focus position, then when would prosody be necessary to mark pragmatic relations? The answer is simple: prosody functions as a back-up alternative in marking the focus when the syntax is unable to do so. The cases I will examine in which syntax is unable to mark focus are the following.

- 1) Double focus (as used for constrastive purposes)
- 2) Situations where the “strong” effects of syntactic focus are pragmatically inappropriate.

- 3) Focus within non-predicational domains (i.e. DPs, PPs, relative clauses etc.)

6.1 Double focus

Let us look at these cases one by one. Double focus typically occurs in a situation where two separate constituents of a previous statement are contrasted. As mentioned earlier, one of the characteristic effects of syntactic focus is to turn the non-focus portion of the sentence into a presupposition. Thus, we can see that the syntactic position discussed earlier is incompatible with more than one focus leaving double focus to be realized prosodically rather than syntactically. We see in (22) that A's question contains two overt arguments, *pérà* "money" and *gúrò* "teacher". In a response which contrasts one of these arguments, the preferred sentence would focus the contrasted constituent via the syntactic focus position. In the case of a PP as in B's first response this would involve the fronting of PP in the construction which triggers clitic fronting. In the case of a contrasted NP as in B's second response this would involve fronting the NP in the cleft like structure. However, when both the NP and the PP are contrasted the syntactic position is no longer available for either phrase. Rather, the focus must be realized prosodically as indicated in B's third response. Any attempt to focus one constituent syntactically while focusing the other prosodically (as in responses [iii] and [iv]) results in ungrammaticality since the portion not included in the syntactic focus will always be interpreted as a presupposition.

- (22) A: Dápat bang magbigay ng pérà sa mga gúrò?
 should Q-LNK AV.INF-give GEN money OBL PL teacher
 'Should one give money to the teachers?'
- (a) B: Hindè, sa mga bátá ka na lang magbigay ng pérà.
 NEG OBL PL child 2.SG only AV.INF-give GEN money
 'No, just give money to the KIDS.'
- (b) Hindè, regálo na lang ang ibigay mo sa mga gúrò.
 NEG gift only NOM CV.IMP-give 2.SG.GEN OBL PL teacher
 'No, just give GIFTS to the teacher.'
- (c) Hindè, magbigay ka na lang ng KENDI sa mga BÁTÀ.
 NEG AV.IMP-give 2.SG only GEN candy OBL PL child
 'No, just give CANDY to the KIDS.'
- (d) *Hindè, sa mga bátá ka na lang magbigay ng KENDI.
 NEG OBL PL child 2.SG only AV.INF-give GEN candy

(e) *Hindè, kendi na lang ang ibigay mo sa mga BÁTÀ.
 NEG candy only NOM CV.IMP-give 2.SG.GEN OBL PL child

6.2 *Inappropriate semantic effects*

The second case in which syntactic focus is not able to the job comprises of examples in which the semantic effects of “strong” (cf. footnote 9) focus are inappropriate within a given context. The effect referred to here in particular is “exhaustive listing”, which is universally associated with clefts. Exhaustive listing is the phenomenon by which, for a sentence such as, “It’s John who broke a window,” we obtain the reading, “there is a unique x such that x broke a window and x is John”. In other words, from the point of view of this sentence “John” is an exhaustive list of possible entities who broke a window. In Tagalog, it is quite transparent that the focus position triggers the semantic effects of exhaustive listing by virtue of the fact that the relative-like constituent is within the domain of the definite determiner *ang*.¹³ Thus, in (23) we have the presupposition,

There is a unique x such that x broke a plate

With the assertion,

x = Kengkoy

(23) Si Kéngkoy ang nakabásag ng pinggan.
 P.NOM Kengkoy NOM AV.COM.NONV-break GEN plate
 ‘Kengkoy was the one who broke the plate (accidentally).’

Now we can see how the exhaustive listing effect which is inextricably bound up with the syntactic focus position might be inappropriate in a discourse such as (24).

(24) A: May binili ka ba?
 EXT PV.COM-buy 2.SG Q
 ‘Did you buy anything?’

(a) B: ? Radyo ang binili ko
 radio NOM PV.COM-buy 1.SG.GEN
 ‘Yes, a radio is what I bought.’

(b) Bumili ako ng radyo.
 AV.COM-buy 1.SG GEN radio
 ‘Yes, I bought a radio.’

¹³ Definite descriptions are understood to trigger uniqueness readings. Cf. Kadmon (2001) for a general overview of these issues.

B's first response can be considered felicitous through the pragmatic process known as "accommodation" (Lewis, 1979). Here a presupposition is accepted (i.e. accommodated) by an interlocutor as felicitous where in fact no such presupposition existed in the previous discourse. B's first response, by virtue of the semantics of definite descriptions, presupposes that there was something that he bought although no such presupposition exists in A's question. As a result, B's first response is felt to require an extra step on A's part, and this is manifested by a slightly reduced discourse felicity. In cases such as these, where focus is elicited on a constituent but where no uniqueness or exhaustivity is appropriate, prosodic focus comes into play. An example of prosodic focus in such a discourse environment is given in (25).

(25) A: Meron ka bang nakilála sa New York?
 EXT 2.SG Q-LNK PV.COM-know OBL New York
 'Did you meet anyone in New York?'

B: Nakilála ko doon ang pangúlo.
 PV.COM-know 1.SG.GEN there NOM president
 'I met the president in New York.'

The third case mentioned above in which the syntax is rendered inoperative is the case of focus within non-predicational domains. The bifurcation between predicational and non-predicational domains is epitomized by the difference between a sentence and a referring expression. In Tagalog, this difference manifests itself morpho-syntactically in the following way; a referring phrase has all of its component words connected by the nasal linker¹⁴ while a predication is distinguished by the presence of two XPs in apposition.¹⁵ In the most typical case a bare XP is followed by an *ang* phrase.

Predication:

(26a) Masúngit ang gúrò.
 ADJ-grouchy NOM teacher
 'The teacher is grouchy.'

(b) Gúrò ang masúngit.

¹⁴ The linker has two allophonic variants, the velar nasal occurs following a word with a final vowel, /n/, or glottal stop while /na/ occurs after words ending in anything else.

¹⁵ Although note that secondary predications such as small clauses are introduced with the linker:

i) Itinuring ko siyang mayabang "I considered him arrogant."
 CV-COM-consider 1stGEN 3rd-LNK ADJ-arrogance

teacher NOM ADJ-grouchy

‘The grouchy one is a teacher.’

Referring expression:

(27a) (Ang) gúrong masúngit.
NOM teacher-LNK ADJ-grouchy
‘(The) grouchy teacher.’

(b) (Ang) masúngit na gúrò
nom adj-grouchy lnk teacher
‘(The) grouchy teacher.’

(c) Ang nása Manílà kong kapatid.
NOM LOC Manila 1.SG.GEN sibling
‘My sibling in Manila.’

(d) Ang matalínong kapatid kong nása Manílà.
NOM ADJ-intelligence-LNK sibling 1.SG.GEN-LNK LOC Manila
‘My smart sibling in Manila.’

The pragmatically salient clause initial positions discussed earlier are predictably absent in non-predicational constructions i.e. referring expression.¹⁶ Thus, the clear semantic difference between (26a) and (b) is not at all present in the same manner between (27a) and (b). Despite the fact that referring expressions permit a very wide range of word-order permutations, there is no syntactically determined focus position. In the same manner, we find that the topic position is also absent in referring expressions as seen by (28).

(28a) * Gúrò ay masúngit
teacher ay adj-grouchy

(b) * Masúngit ay gúrò
ADJ-grouchy ay teacher

We find then, as in the previous two cases reviewed, that the prosody is the only available means of indicating focus when focus is elicited on a single constituent within a larger referring expression.

¹⁶ This corresponds to the generally accepted analysis of the Focus and Topic Phrase as being projections above IP, the traditional domain of predication.

(29) A: Sino ba? Iyong mabait na babáe?
who Q that-LNK ADJ-nice LNK woman?
'Who was it? That nice woman?'

B: Hindí yun, iyong babáeng masúngit!
NEG that that-LNK woman-LNK ADJ-grouchy
'Not that one, the grouchy woman!'

A natural question which will lead us to the next section is the following, in the absence of pragmatically salient syntactic positions, what are the determinants of word order in referring expressions? To answer this we must first examine some basic features of Tagalog prosody.

7.0 Fundamental prosodic features of Tagalog and their consequences

Although a truly adequate description of Tagalog prosody has yet to be produced, scholars have generally accepted some basic points. These basic points will prove to be sufficient for accounting for the word order variation discussed here. The three relevant prosodic characteristics are listed below.

- 1) Tagalog has a final rising contour in unmarked declarative sentences (akin to a *LH% boundary tone in the ToBI style notation.)
- 2) Focus is marked with a high tone and probably linked to the stressed syllable of the word (following Schachter and Otones 1972).
- 3) There is no "defocalization" phenomenon in Tagalog such that post-focal or repeated background material may be phonologically reduced (via intonation, duration or intensity).

The first characteristic lends prominence to the end of the final prosodic phrase and, impressionistically, gives the feeling that the "nuclear stress" (in the sense of Chomsky and Halle, 1968) is strongly set in this position. The second characteristic may be classified as part of the larger cross-linguistic tendency of giving emphasis to "new information and is certainly not unique to Tagalog.¹⁷ The third characteristic above will prove to be the most critical for my account. It has been shown by linguists working in the field of sentence prosody as well as those working on the phonology-syntax interface that languages may be gainfully classified into roughly two groups according to whether or not they possess a process of phonological defocalization.¹⁸ Defocalization refers to a phonological reduction

¹⁷ Focus spreading, that is, the ability of one pitch movement to signal focus on a larger constituent, cannot be discussed here for lack of space. This issue must be addressed in a more comprehensive account of focus in Tagalog.

¹⁸ Main contributors to the development of this grouping include Zubizarretta (1998) who formalizes the prosodic difference between these two language groups as the interactions between a set of rules; Ladd (1996, p.175-9) who gives examples of cross-linguistic variation in defocalization (referred to by him as

effecting “given information” after the focus portion of the sentence. This phenomenon is made clear in the following English exchange.

(30)A: I had the time of my life in the jungles of Uruguay in the summer of seventy-eight.

B: That’s funny, I was stuck in a coal mine *in Uruguay in the summer of 1978.*

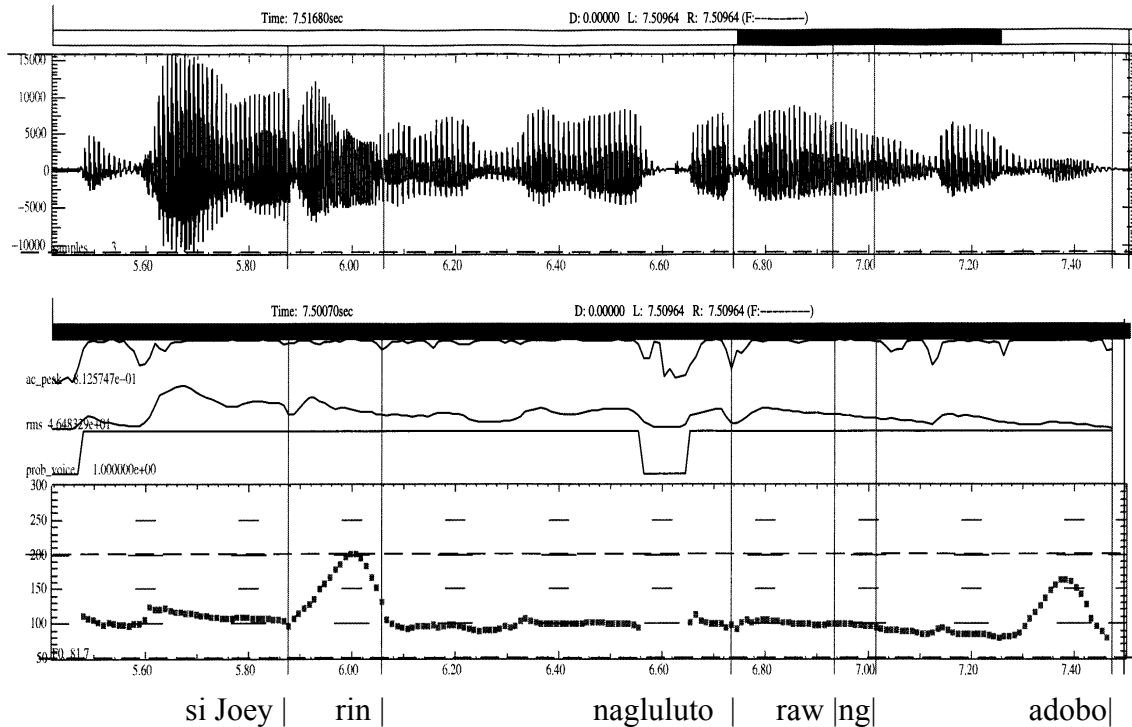
The repeated information in B’s response to A, marked by italics, would most probably be phonologically reduced. This defocalization is manifested most notably by a flattening of the pitch contour and a reduction in the overall duration. In A’s statement, assuming a pronunciation which consisted of a unitary prosodic phrase, the nuclear stress (marked by the grave accent) would fall on the final accentable unit, “eight”. In B’s response on the other hand the italicized portion would be reduced and would not be calculated in determining the place of the nuclear stress. Thus the nuclear stress in the statement would fall on the first vowel of the compound “coal mine”. This is a phenomenon which distinguishes languages like English and German on the one hand from languages such as Spanish (Contreras, 1976), European Portuguese (Cruz-Ferreira, 1998) and Catalan (Vallduvi, 1991) on the other hand. The first group utilizes defocalization while the latter group does not. Tagalog patterns very much with the latter group in not employing defocalization. We can see this clearly in the pitch track below which comes from a recording of a native speaker uttering B’s response in (31) as a reaction to A’s statement.

(31) A: Marámi raw ang naglúlútó ng adóbo.
many REP NOM AV.COM-cook GEN adobo
‘Many people cooked adobo.’

B: Si Joey rin, naglúlútó raw ng adóbo.
P.NOM Joey also AV.COM-cook REP GEN adobo
‘Joey is also cooking adobo (I heard).’

We do not find a flattening of the intonational contour which typically marks defocalization. Instead, we see a secondary pitch movement on *adóbo* at the end of the intonational phrase regardless of the fact that it was mentioned in the immediately preceding context.

deaccenting); as well as Contreras (1976) and Vallduvi (1991) who both offer evidence for prosody-syntax interactions in Spanish and Catalan respectively similar to what I claim here for Tagalog.



Looking at the three prosodic characteristics outlined above, it is not difficult to imagine a situation in which a conflict would arise in satisfying all three. In the clearest case, this occurs when a focalized constituent, seeking to be marked intonationally, is found in a position which does not receive the nuclear stress (i.e. anywhere but the end of the final prosodic phrase.) In this case the inability to defocalize would cause a clash between the principle of giving prominence to the focused constituent and the inflexible, sentence final nuclear stress. In these cases, it is the syntax which rescues these sentences by placing the focalized constituents in the appropriate position in the sentence in order to receive the nuclear stress (i.e. the sentence final position). Thus we may explain the following types of word order alternations in the responses of (32) and (33).

(32) A: Ano ang gusto mong prutas na maásim?
 what NOM like 2.SG.GEN-LNK fruit LNK ADJ-sour
 ‘What fruit do you like that is tart (bitter)?’

B: Gusto ko ng maásim na mangga.
 want 1.SG.GEN GEN ADJ-sour LNK mango
 ‘I like tart mango.’

? Gusto ko ng manggang maásim.
 want 1.SG.GEN GEN mango-LNK ADJ-sour

(33) A: Alin ang Amerikánong dumating kanína?
which NOM American-LNK COM.AV-arrive earlier
‘Which American arrived earlier today?’

(a) B: Iyong Amerikánong matangkad.
that-LNK American-LNK ADJ-height
‘The tall American.’

(b) ? Iyong matangkad na Amerikáno.
that-LNK ADJ-height LNK American

Extending this principle of prosodically motivated word order to the phrasal level, we find that phrasal ordering is also determined to an extent by the same considerations effecting word order in the DP. The differing order of the post-verbal arguments in (34) and (35) is a function of their divergent focus marking. This is reflected concretely by the differing readings obtained as a result of the interactions with the focus-sensitive word *rin* “also”.

(34) Bukod kay Ricky, ipinákilala ko rin kay Paolo
besides P.OBL Ricky CV-COM-CAU-know 1.SG.GEN also P.OBL Paolo
si John.
P.NOM John

‘Besides Ricky, I also introduced John to Paolo.’

Implied reading: I also introduced Ricky to Paolo

(35) Bukod kay Ricky, ipinákilala ko rin si John
besides P.OBL Ricky CV-COM-CAU-know 1.SG.GEN also P.NOM John
kay Paolo.
P.OBL Paolo

‘Besides Ricky, I also introduced John to Paolo.’

Implied reading: I also introduced John to Ricky

We are now in a position to explain previously unaccounted for cases of “scrambling”. The canonical phrasal order in Tagalog sentences with full NPs has been generally accepted to be ‘Predicate *ng-P ang-P sa-P*’. Nevertheless, it has been noted that native speakers accept all permutations with little hesitance. Employing the methodology of eliciting speaker judgments in a pragmatic vacuum, this variation appears entirely unmotivated. Moreover, since we are dealing not with pragmatically marked syntactic positions but rather the results

of prosodic interactions with the syntax, speakers themselves do not sense any inherent focal differences between these minimal pairs. Armed however with a basic understanding of Tagalog prosody we can approach this variation in a more informed manner. The “non-canonical” order ‘verb *ang-P ng-P*’ turns out to be the preferred order provided that we can find a context in which the *ng-P* is focused and therefore prone to receive prosodic prominence. Such a context presents itself in (36).

- (36) A: Kumákáin ng lahat si Jason, di ba?
 AV.INC-eat GEN all P.NOM Jason NEG Q
 ‘Jason eats everything doesn’t he?’
- B: Ano ka? Hindí kumákáin si Jason ng isdà!
 what 2.SG NEG AV.INC-eat P.NOM Jason GEN fish
 ‘What are you talking about? Jason doesn’t eat fish!’
- B: ? Ano ka? Hindí kumákáin ng isdá si Jason!
 what 2.SG NEG AV-INC-eat GEN fish P.NOM Jason
 ‘What are you talking about? Jason doesn’t eat fish!’

By way of a conclusion, the general picture given here is remarkably similar to what Judith Aissen (1992) has observed for the group of Mayan languages she investigated.¹⁹ Aissen describes the ordering principles in Mayan (also a ‘predicate initial’ language family) thus, “Preverbal orders are governed by logical and discourse-level relations like focus and topic, while post-verbal orders appear to be governed by properties of individual NPs – definiteness, animacy, heaviness, and pronominal.” What I have tried to show in this paper is that while the left-periphery is often home to pragmatically salient syntactic positions (indeed this has been claimed to be a universal in verb-initial/predicate-initial languages), the right periphery, by virtue of being the natural site of nuclear stress placement, also plays an important role in focalization. In Tagalog, utilization of the right periphery can be best characterized as a last chance for focus marking to be realized, the grammar preferring to realize this marking through the syntax when possible.²⁰

As a final note I would like to briefly address the relationship between pragmatic focus and the Philippine voice/case system which has dominated the limelight of linguistic investigations into Tagalog and other languages. Fortunately, Philippine linguistics is well on

¹⁹ Thanks to Mark Donohue for this reference.

²⁰ This may reduce to something like *wh-* movement, which in English may only apply to one *wh-* word in a clause with secondary *wh-* words having to remain in-situ (being licensed prosodically by Zubizarretta’s [1998, p.92-97] analysis). The comparison is of course not perfect since focus, unlike *wh-* questions, has the effect of turning the rest of the sentence into a presupposition thus giving rise to the kind of facts shown in (22). I am not aware of any language which has a similar restriction on the behavior of *wh-* words. Namely, a language where *wh-* movement applies in a sentence containing a single *wh-* word but does not apply at all in cases of multiple *wh-* questions.

its way to freeing itself from the past habits of conflating syntactic and pragmatic categories. A practice which was common until recently and which gave rise to the now standard (although inappropriate) terminology of “topic” and “focus” to describe the *ang* phrase. Having said that, we must also note that the relationship between the voice morphology and pragmatic focus is not an arbitrary one either. We find that the definite reading associated with the *ang* phrase in conjunction with the fact that (non-generic) topics universally tend to be definite often makes the *ang* phrase appear as a grammaticalized topic.²¹ However, any attempt to equate the *ang* phrase with a single pragmatic relation breaks down immediately in the face of such contrasting examples as (37) and (38). In (37) the context question sets “Juan” as the topic and elicits a focus on the theme of the action. B’s response contains the verb “to give” in the locative voice thus selecting the recipient as the *ang* phrase and making the theme an indefinite *ng* phrase. This might lead one to say that the *ang* phrase tends to overlap with pragmatic topic.

(37) A: May ibinigay ka ba kay Juan?
 EXT CV-COM-give 2.SG Q P.OBL Juan
 ‘Did you give anything to Juan?’

B: Oo naman, binigyan ko si Juan ng sanlibong dolyar!
 PRT LV-COM-give 1.SG.GEN P.NOM Juan GEN 1,000-LNK dollar
 ‘Of course, I gave him a thousand dollars.’

However, this hypothesis cannot be maintained when considering the type of exchange shown in (38). Here the context question elicits the recipient as the focus and we see that an answer selecting the recipient as the *ang* phrase is preferred.

(38) A: Sino ang binigyan mo ng pèrà?
 who NOM LV-COM-give 2.SG.GEN GEN money
 ‘Who did you give money?’

B: Si Juan ang binigyan ko!
 P.NOM Juan NOM LV-COM-give 1.SG.GEN
 ‘Juan is who I gave (money) to!’

Where then is the connection? The answer is that the connection is only indirect. As shown in the beginning of the paper, focus and topic are directly associated with positions in the phrase structure. This, in conjunction with the much discussed Austronesian constraint by which only *ang*-phrases may be extraposed, leads us to the observation that selection by

²¹ As noted by Adams and Manaster-Ramer (1988) the requirement that the *ang* phrase be definite is not absolute.

the voice morphology is necessary in licensing both syntactic focus and topic but has no inherent pragmatic significance in and of itself.

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