# Information structure and the pragmatic function of clause order variation in Cheke Holo (Oceanic)

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## 1. Introduction

This paper examines clause-level constituent order and a number of related morphological and syntactic phenomena in Cheke Holo, in terms of the discourse sensitivity of clausal arguments. Clause order varies in the language. Many clauses are verb initial, while some have an argument in preverbal position, and range of orders occur among postverbal arguments. Moreover, certain arguments are marked with a particle, *si*, that is associated with clause-final position.

The present paper examines two central issues: the functions of the various clause orders, and the function of the *si* particle. It examines existing theories on Cheke Holo clause order variation and the function of *si*, then examines evidence from texts to identify information structure factors influencing constituent order. The paper identifies three clausal orders: a pragmatically unmarked order, a constituent order reflecting overt topicalisation, and a focusing strategy. Each order is characterised in terms of its discourse context and the kinds of participants eligible for each marked position.

Cheke Holo is an Oceanic language spoken on the island of Santa Isabel, Solomon Islands. It has traditionally been known to linguists as Maringe, the name of one region in which the language is spoken. The present paper follows White, Kokhonigita and Pulomana (1988) (henceforth WKP) and Boswell (2002) in using the more widely accepted local term Cheke Holo (henceforth CH).

CH, along with all but one of Santa Isabel's at least 7 languages, belongs to Ross's North-West Solomonic group, part of his New Ireland-Northwest Solomonic linkage within the Meso-Melanesian linkage of Western Oceanic. (Ross 1988: 215-218, 2002: 101-103) The Santa Isabel languages form a discrete subgroup within North-West Solomonic. It is not yet clear whether they form a higher order subgroup with the New Georgia subgroup of North-West Solomonic.

The morphosyntactic issues at stake here have been discussed briefly by WKP in a sketch grammar at the front of their dictionary, and by Ross (1988: 226ff, particularly 240-247). Data used in the present paper is from WKP and Ross, and particularly from Bosma (1981), a collection of twenty CH texts.

## 2 Clause-level argument order

### 2.1 Argument order possibilities

A range of possible orders exist for the major clausal constituents in CH. These include verb-initial orders and argument-initial orders. Verb-initial clauses may be VS, VSO or VOS:

(1)  a.  *Hara    ñau      mana    gne.*

        seek    LMT      heM     this

        V                 S

        'He is still searching.' (WKP)[1]

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[1] Unless otherwise specified, examples are from Bosma (1981). Examples are presented in the local orthography used by WKP and Boswell (2002). Examples from Bosma and Ross have been modified to conform to this orthography. All letters have their IPA value except:

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *g* | /ɣ/ | *ñ* | /ŋ/ | *ch* | /tʃ/ | *r* | /ɾ/ |
| *ḡ* | /g/ | *gn* | /ɲ/ | *j* | /dʒ/ | ' | /ʔ/ |

Digraphs of a sonorant followed by *h* represent voiceless sonorants, while a voiceless plosive followed by *h* represent an aspirated plosive (White 1995, Palmer 1999b):

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *mh* | /m̥/ | *gnh* | /ɲ̥/ | *rh* | /ɾ̥/ | *ph* | /pʰ/ | *kh* | /kʰ/ |
| *nh* | /n̥/ | *ñh* | /ŋ̥/ | *lh* | /l̥/ | *th* | /tʰ/ | | |

WKP provide no morpheme glosses, so the glosses in examples from WKP are mine. Ross's glosses have been modified to conform to those used here. Abbreviations used in the glosses are:

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | first person | IMM | immediate aspect | PRED | nonverbal predicate |
| 2 | second person | INC | inclusive | PRP | preposition |
| 3 | third person | INDF | indefinite | PURP | purposive |
| A | transitive subject | LMT | limiter | RFL | reflexive |
| AN | anaphoric base | M | masculine | RD | reduplication |
| ART | article | NEG | negative | S | intransitive subject |
| CP | consumable possessive base | NM | nominaliser | SB | subordinating particle |
| CPT | completive aspect | O | object | SEQ | sequencer |
| CS | causative | OBL | oblique argument | SG | singular |
| EMPH | emphatic | P | possessor | TAM | tense/aspect/mood marker |
| EXC | exclusive | PL | plural | TLOC | temporal locative |
| FOC | focus | PM | predicate marker | V | verb complex |
| GP | general possessive base | PN | place name/personal name | | |

b. *Ḡinou    fa'aḡe    ña      iara    no-u      roño    re.*

   later     send     INDF   I     GP-2SGP    money   ART

          V              A     O

'Later I will send your money.' (WKP)


c. *Au'agu    kmano    ḡlepo    si    mae    gne.*

   hold       many     thing   *si*   man   this

   V         O             A

'This man is holding many things in his arms.' (WKP)


In argument-initial clauses a single preverbal argument position exists in which an argument with any grammatical relation may occur, including intransitive and transitive subjects ((2)a.-b.), objects ((2)c.) and obliques ((2d.):


(2)  a.   *Iara    neke    gamu    hi.*

          I      TAM   eat     CPT

          S      V

         'I have already eaten.' (WKP)


    b.   *Richard    na      e      tusu      mei    radio    na      ka      iara.*

          Richard   ART   PM   hand:over  come   radio   ART   PRP   I

          A              V               O          OBL

         'Richard handed the radio to me.' (WKP)


    c.   *U    suḡa    igne    neke    hohoro    kma-ḡu      iara.*

          ART   house   this   TAM   build       father-1SGP   I

          O                   V           A

         'This house my father built.' (R88:241)

d.  *Ka    mana   sini   meke    lase-ni        ña      ge-hati.*

    PRP   heM    thus   TAM     know-3SGO      INDF    weEXC-PL

    OBL               V                            A

'Because of him we started to understand.' (WKP)

## 2.2 Frequency of alternative clause orders

WKP (1988:xxxiii) only identify three possible clause structures: VSO, VOS, and SVO,[2] saying they are constructed "with equal facility" and "occur with great frequency". However, the data suggests the various clause orders do not occur with comparable frequency. Verb-initial clauses occur significantly more often than argument-initial clauses. Of the first 50 declarative main clauses with one or more overt argument given by WKP as dictionary examples, 31 (62%) are verb-initial, 18 (36%) are subject-initial and one (2%) is object-initial. In the approximately one thousand clauses in Bosma (1981), about two hundred have preverbal arguments. Bosma's clauses include subordinate clauses, which do not allow preverbal arguments (as discussed below), so the proportion of main clauses with initial arguments would be higher, but still considerably lower than that of verb-initial clauses. Within verb-initial clauses, VSO clauses occur more frequently than VOS. In the same 50 clauses, 10 are verb-initial with both an overt subject and an overt object. Of these, 7 are VSO, while only 3 are VOS. Again this impression is supported by the Bosma data. The preferred order therefore appears to be VSO, with SVO a less preferred order and VOS less preferred again. All other orders occur extremely infrequently.

## 3 The *si* particle

### 3.1 Argument distribution of *si*-marking

WKP (1988:xxxiii) identify the particle *si* as a post-verbal subject marker. However, most subjects in the data are not marked with *si*, and non-subjects can be *si*-marked. The particle occurs marking intransitive subjects ((3)a.), transitive subjects ((1)c. above), objects ((3)b.), or even adjuncts ((3)c.).

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[2] WKP do not refer to clauses with an initial object or oblique.

(3)  a.  *Nolo*  *tafri*  *kolho*  **si**  **iara**  *ia*.

      walk    around  simply  *si*  I      ART

      V                     S

      'I am simply walking around.' (WKP)

 

b.  *Ne*  *rubru-gau*  *na'itu*  **s-ara**  *ia*.

      TAM   chase-1SGO  spirit  *si*-I  ART

      V                 A     O

      'A spirit chased me.' (WKP)

 

c.  *ara*  *neke*  *filo-ni*  *George*  **si**  **gnora**  **na**

      I     TAM   see-3SGO  George  *si*  yesterday  ART

      A    V             O       TLOC

      'Yesterday I saw George.' (R88:241)

*Si* is therefore not linked to any grammatical relation. Instead it is associated with clause-final position, as Ross (1988: 240) proposes. *Si*-marked arguments do not occur in preverbal position. In transitive main clauses with an overt subject and object, *si*-marked subjects occur in VOS order (as in (1)c.), while *si*-marked objects are always in VSO clauses (as in (3)b.). Moreover, *si*-marked subjects or objects are preceded by any other argument, such as obliques. In intransitive clauses with no obliques (such as (1)a. and (3)a.), *si*-marked and unmarked subjects appear to occur in the same clause position. However, the presence of post-verbal obliques shows that this structural similarity is superficial. In unmarked clauses core arguments precede obliques ((4)a.), while *si*-marked arguments follow obliques ((4)b.):

(4)  a.  *Meḡoña*  *ne*  *ahu*  *ñala*  **sasa**  *ka*  *faña*  *na*.

      suddenly   TAM   disappear  LMT   fish   PRP   net     ART

      V                        S    OBL

      'Suddenly the fish just disappeared from the net.' (WKP)

b.

| *Tei* | *no-ḡu* | *ka* | *sitoa* | *balu-gna* | *Thomas* | **s-ara** | **ia**. |
|-------|---------|------|---------|------------|----------|-----------|---------|
| go | GP-1SGP | PRP | store | with-3SGP | Thomas | *si*-I | ART |
| V | | OBL | | OBL | | S | |

'I'm going to the store with Thomas.' (WKP)

Arguments marked with *si* are typically NPs. However, other argument types such as subject and complement clauses may also be *si*-marked:

(5)

| *The'ome* | *tañomana* | *jau* | **si** | *te* | *aho* | *na* | *nakete* | *gne*. |
|-----------|------------|-------|--------|------|-------|------|----------|--------|
| NEG | be:able | possibly | *si* | SB | clear | TAM | rain | this |
| V | | | S | | | | | |

'It's not likely this rain will clear up.' (lit. 'That this rain will clear is not likely.') (WKP)

*Si* may also mark the subject of non-verbal predicates:

(6)

| *Ge-ḡu* | *chau* | *iara* | **si** | **igne**. |
|---------|--------|--------|--------|-----------|
| CP-1SGP | banana | I | *si* | this |
| PRED | | | S | |

'This is my banana.' (R88:241)

### 3.2 Anomalous *si*-marking distribution

While a clear link exists between *si* and clause-final position, a number of apparent anomalies occur in WKP's data. WKP (xxxiii) imply that *si* occurs freely with subjects in both VSO and VOS clauses, giving examples of marked and unmarked subjects in VSO clauses. This general claim allows two possibilities that do not conform to the overall pattern described above: unmarked subjects in VOS; and *si*-marked subjects in VSO.

In a number of clauses VOS order occurs without subject *si*-marking. However, *si*-marking is limited to main clauses (as discussed below), and many non-*si* VOS examples involve relative clauses. In other instances apparent VOS orders may involve incorporation, so are actually VS clauses. Indeed, WKP (xxxiii) note that when an object agreement marker is present (and hence there can be no

incorporation) the clause order is normally VSO. The remaining small number of VOS main clauses occurring without *si* are typically imperatives, and appear to involve an extra-clausal participant not connected to clausal constituent order possibilities:

(7)  *Fa-nomho-ni    vaka    ia    egu    **go-tilo  ia**.*

CS-hear-3SGO   ship   ART   EMPH    you-PL   ART

V                  O                        A

'Listen for the ship, you all!' (WKP)

The data therefore presents no counter-evidence to a hypothesis that subjects in main clause-final position are marked with *si*. More problematic are VSO clauses where the subject is *si*-marked. Several such examples occur in WKP's sketch.

(8)  a.   *Aḡa      fa-the'o    **s-ara**    ketele    kho'u    na    ia.*

drink      CS-NEG    *si*-I      kettle     water    ART    ART

V                     A         O

'I drank all the water in the kettle.' (WKP)

b.   *La      ae'ahe   hi    **s-ago**      khoilo    ra?*

IMM    count    CPT    *si*-youSG    coconut    ART

V                      A          O

'Have you counted the coconuts yet?' (WKP)

Examples such as (8) occur only very occasionally in WKP's dictionary examples, and the *si* marking of subjects in VSO clauses occurs only with first or second person singular pronouns. It is perhaps significant that in all such examples the particle and the pronoun are fused to form a marked pronoun. No examples of VSO clauses with *si*-marked pronoun subjects are found in Bosma's (1981) texts, so no contextual discourse information is available. However, it seems likely that these represent pragmatically marked pronouns occurring in their pragmatically unmarked clause position with functions similar to those of clause-final *si*-marked arguments.

**3.3 Frequency of *si*-marking**

WKP (1988:xxxiii) claim *si* occurs often, and the particle occurs in between a fifth and a quarter of the example sentences in their dictionary. However, this frequency appears to be unrepresentative. In Bosma's (1981) texts *si* occurs more frequently in reported speech than in narrative, but even so, several of the twenty texts contain no *si* marking. In the approximately one thousand clauses in Bosma, there are only 19 *si*-marked phrases, including in reported speech. The predominance of *si*-marking in reported speech suggests it may be more common in conversation than in narrative, so Bosma's texts overall may not be representative as they are largely procedural. Nonetheless, *si*-marking clearly occurs infrequently.

**4 The function of *si* and of clause order variation**

WKP do not comment on the function of the presence or absence of their *si* "subject marker", and say little on the function of clause order variation, proposing only that the variation between verb-initial and subject-initial constructions "often reflects topical emphasis, foregrounding or focusing attention on a particular part of the sentence." They do not elaborate on or illustrate this, and make no comment on the basis for the VSO/VOS alternation.

Ross (1988: 240) proposes that the pragmatically unmarked clause order in CH is VSO with the *si* particle not present, a claim supported by the frequencies discussed above. He proposes (1988: 240-241) that the alternative structures are pragmatically marked, involving topicalisation. Ross identifies two topicalisation strategies in CH: one involving preverbal position; the other a combination of clause-final position and marking with *si*, which he analyses as a topic marker. This second strategy is represented by VOS clauses, and those VSO clauses where the object is *si*-marked.

Ross (1988: 244) also notes that in relative clauses the argument coreferential with the head (ie. the controlled argument) is realised by zero anaphora (ie. gapped), and that relative clauses may not contain either a preverbal or a *si*-marked argument. He infers from this that the controlled argument is the topic of the relative clause. For example:

(9)     *iara   neke  filo-ni   ḡaju   [teke  aknu-ni  khuma  Ø   nalha'u  ana]*

| I | TAM | see-3SGO | wood | SB | hit-3SGO | dog | | man | that |
|---|-----|----------|------|-----|----------|-----|---|-----|------|
| A | V | | O | SB | V | O | OBL | A | |

'I saw the stick the man hit the dog with.' (R88:243)

Here the controlled argument in the relative clause is an oblique. It is the topic of the relative clause and is gapped. However, in this particular example the constituent order of the relative clause is VOS (with, as Ross predicts, no *si*-marking). This raises a problem for Ross's analysis: the relative clause has two pragmatically marked arguments – the gapped 'topic' oblique and the clause-final 'topic' subject. Comparable phenomena occur in main clauses with an overt preverbal argument and a clause-final *si*-marked argument. Ross gives (3)c. as an example of a *si*-marked 'topic', but notes that the clause also has a preverbal subject topic. In (3)c., one of the marked arguments is an adjunct, but both strategies may also cooccur when both marked arguments are core arguments, as the following example from Bosma (1981) shows:

(10)     ***Iara***   *thome*   *magnahage-ni*   ***si***   ***nalha'u  tu-ana***.

| I | NEG | want-3SGO | *si* | man | AN-that |
|---|-----|-----------|------|-----|---------|
| A | V | | O | | |

'I don't want that man.'

This poses a problem, as it requires that a clause may have two overt topics. Moreover, the presence of two separate formal strategies itself raises the possibility that each may have a separate function. The main body of the present paper is concerned with identifying and characterising these separate functions.

## 5 Topic and focus

### 5.1 Topic and focus in Cheke Holo

The problem of a single clause with two apparent topics may be resolved by closer consideration of the notion of topic. Ross (1988: 421) describes topics as "newly introduced referents". In his

discussion of constituent order variation in Cheke Holo and the New Georgia language Roviana, Ross (1988: 241) says that preverbal position and clause-final *si*-marked position "both serve to (re)introduce referents into discourse". He later (1988: 246) refers to topicalisation as "a strategy for (re)introducing discourse referents". Corston (1996: 58) questions this definition, saying it "is the opposite of the more usual definition, in which topic is equated with old information". He terms "the type of constituent Ross refers to a 'focus', this being the more usual term for newly presented information." Corston then reads 'focus' for Ross's 'topic' throughout. However, Ross (1988) clearly intends 'topic' to indicate any pragmatically marked argument, either reintroduced (ie. old information) or newly introduced (new information). Ross's 'topic' is therefore an umbrella term encompassing both focus and topic in the narrower sense. However, as CH employs two pragmatically marked constructions it is necessary to distinguish between functionally different types of pragmatically marked arguments.

## 5.2 The information status of participants in discourse

The terms 'topic' and 'focus' are often taken to refer to given and new information respectively. However, different types of new and given information occur in discourse, and languages can mark various types of newness or givenness in differing ways. Traditionally, the notion of 'topic' is confined to information previously overtly mentioned in the discourse. Any such information can be topicalised, and such information cannot be focused. Similarly, 'focus' is traditionally limited to information not previously overtly mentioned, any such information can be focused, and such information cannot be topicalised. This oversimplifies the complex interplay of information in discourse.

Any information not previously overtly mentioned in the discourse is new, but it may only be new to the discourse, not the addressee. For example, the sentence

*I met a refugee from Iraq yesterday.*

may contain two participants not previously mentioned in the discourse: *I* and *a refugee from Iraq*. However, while the hearer may have previously been unaware of the existence of the refugee, they are inherently aware of the existence of participants in the speech event, including the speaker. The refugee is therefore new to both the discourse and the hearer, while the speaker is new only to the discourse. The refugee is discourse-new and hearer-new, while the speaker is discourse-new but hearer-old. Hearer-new

presupposes discourse-new, but the reverse does not apply. Equally, discourse-old presupposes hearer-old, but not the other way around.

The hearer may be assumed to be aware of the existence of several kinds of information, whether or not it has been overtly mentioned in the discourse. Such information includes participants in the speech event (such as the speaker and addressee, the discourse locus and so on); and entities permanently present in the speech environment (such as the sun, the sea in a coastal village, the house in which the discourse takes place, etc). On occasions a speaker may also assume that the hearer is aware of participants that are known as a result of cultural knowledge shared by the interlocutors (such as the chief of the village. the local religious leader, the national capital of the country, etc), and treat such participants as hearer-old.

So in the example above, the refugee is discourse-new and hearer-new, while the speaker is discourse-new, but hearer-old. We may follow up that example by saying:

*Tom met him too.*

Now the refugee is both discourse-old and hearer-old, and is therefore eligible for a pronominal mention.

If a participant has been previously mentioned in the discourse, but not for some time, it may be necessary to reintroduce them into the discourse. What this means in effect is that the hearer's attention is assumed to have switched to another participant, and needs to be drawn back to the earlier participant and away from the more recently mentioned participant. For example, we can continue our example by adding

*I talked to quite a few of the visitors and the head of the agency,*

*but later I had another long conversation with the Iraqi.*

Now the refugee is mentioned again, but this time a pronoun is not sufficient. Instead he gets a full NP mention to disambiguate him from the head of the agency and to switch the hearer's attention back to him. Note also that the NP has a different form to that of the participant's first mention, and is now definite to indicate that this is the previously mentioned Iraqi, and not a new participant. With both the pronominal and subsequent NP mention the participant is discourse-old, but in each sentence that

participant represents a different kind of old information, and the different forms of the mentions reflect that.

How information is presented in discourse depends on assumptions the speaker makes about what the hearer is aware of, and about what information has the hearer's attention. On the basis of these factors, information can be backgrounded or foregrounded. Topicalisation refers to morphosyntactic strategies for backgrounding information. Focus refers to morphosyntactic strategies for foregrounding information. Arguments that are morphosyntactically marked to background them are topics, while arguments that are morphosyntactically marked to foreground them are focused. Structures containing no morphosyntactic backgrounding or foregrounding strategies are pragmatically unmarked.

**5.3 Topic**

Three kinds of topics exist: marked, unmarked and contrastive. All share the characteristic that they provide the "framework within which the main predication holds" (Chafe 1976: 50).

An unmarked topic expresses information that has been overtly mentioned in the immediately preceding discourse and is assumed to be prominent in the hearer's mind. Unmarked topics maintain this prominence, and such information is topicalised to background it in relation to the rest of the clause. Cross-linguistically, unmarked topics are often expressed by zero anaphora to fully background them. Restrictions on controlled arguments in relative clauses, such as gapping, grammaticalise this tendency.

Marked topics involve information that the hearer is assumed to be aware of, but which is assumed not to be prominent in the hearer's mind. This may be hearer-old, but not have been overtly mentioned in the discourse, or it may be discourse-old but not have been mentioned for some time. A marked topic introduces a previously unmentioned hearer-old information into the discourse, or reintroduces discourse-old information, drawing the hearer's attention back to it while simultaneously backgrounding it to function as the context for the information expressed by the rest of the clause. Alternatively, a marked topic may be a participant which has been relatively recently mentioned in the discourse, but which is being reintroduced with a different grammatical relation to that of its previous mention.

Contrastive topicalisation involves a participant that has recently been mentioned in the discourse as part of a group of participants that are contrasted with each other on the basis of an assigned value or quality. Topicalisation backgrounds each participant in favour of the contrast between the values or

qualities of each. With contrastive topicalisation, it is the values or qualities, not the participants, that are contrasted.

In summary, topics have two fundamental characteristics. First, to qualify for topicalisation information must be assumed to be known to the addressee, either through a previous mention in the discourse or because it is hearer-old. Second, the speaker must intend to background that information in favour of other information present in the clause. Together these criteria allow topicalisation to involve information and participants of various degrees and types of givenness.

**5.4 Focus**

A distinction will be made here between two kinds of focus: contrastive and non-contrastive focus. Focused information may or may not be known to the hearer, and may or may not have been previously mentioned in the discourse. Focus "does not - or need not" provide new information. (Chafe (1976: 35)) To the extent that newness is an issue, it is an issue of relative newness in relation to other information in the clause, not of absolute newness. (Myhill 1992: 24)

Non-contrastive focus involves foregrounding information to draw the hearer's attention to it (in the case of newly introduced information), or back to it (in the case of reintroduced information). This is distinct from marked topics, where attention is drawn to information so it can provide the context for the rest of the clause. With non-contrastive focus, attention is drawn to information with the intention of making that information itself prominent.

Contrastive focus involves foregrounding a participant to which some value or quality is being ascribed in contrast with other possible participants. This is also distinct from contrastive topicalisation. With the latter, the topicalised participant provides the context for a contrast between the value or quality assigned to that participant and some other possible value or quality. With contrastive focus it is the participant itself which is in contrast, being contrasted with other possible participants that could have that value or quality. Contrastive focus can apply to participants that have only just been mentioned, because "contrastive sentences are qualitatively different from those which simply supply new information from an unlimited set of possibilities." (Chafe 1976: 34)

As with topic, with focus the motivation of the speaker is crucial: focused information is foreground because the speaker wants to make it more prominent either than the rest of the information in the clause, or than all other relevant information.

For the rest of the present paper contrastive focus will be specified as such, but non-contrastive focus will be referred to simply as 'focus'.

## 5.5 Contrastive topicalisation versus contrastive focus

To illustrate the distinction between contrastive topicalisation and contrastive focus consider the following example. Here contrastive topicalisation is present:

*I liked most of their wines, but the merlot I thought was terrible*

In this sentence the merlot in the second clause is fronted as a contrastive topic. It is backgrounded to form the context for a contrast of the value assigned to that wine ('terrible') with other possible values (ie. 'not terrible'). More precisely, it forms the context of a contrast between the value of being thought of by the speaker as terrible, and the value of being liked by the speaker. It is the values that are contrasted, not the backgrounded participant.

However, in the cleft construction

*I liked most of their wines, but the one that was terrible was the merlot.*

the merlot in the second clause is foregrounded and therefore focused. This is contrastive focus because it is not the assigned value that is being contrasted, but the participant itself. The merlot is contrasted with the other wines in the stakes for the status 'terrible'.

## 6 The discourse distribution of pragmatically marked arguments in Cheke Holo

CH employs a number of strategies by which arguments may be foregrounded or backgrounded. In addition there is a constituent order in which no such strategies have been employed, that being the unmarked constituent order in the language. The background and foregrounding strategies may be regarded as pragmatically marked morphosyntactic structures. This section presents evidence from Bosma's (1991b) texts on the discourse distribution of these structures.

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**6.1 Pragmatically unmarked clauses**

As Ross (1988: 240-241) proposes, the pragmatically unmarked clause order in CH is VSO with no *si*-marking. Clauses of this type are exemplified in (11). Clause 1 consists of a series of intransitive verbs followed by the sole argument of the clause. This argument is neither preverbal, nor marked by the *si* particle applicable to marked clause-final arguments, and so the clause reflects the unmarked intransitive constituent order VS. Clause 2 is transitive and consists of the verb followed by an overtly realised subject and object in that order. Again there is no preverbal positioning or clause-final *si*-marking, and so this clause reflects the unmarked transitive constituent order VSO.

(11) 1.

| *La* | *lao* | *me* | *la* | *lehe* | *toñana* | *lao* | *sini* | ***sasa*** | ***na***, |
|------|-------|------|------|--------|----------|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| IMM | proceed | and | IMM | die | everywhere | proceed | thus | fish | ART |
| V | | | | | | | | S | |

'The fish goes ahead and dies everywhere,

2.

| *me* | *salo* | *kolho* | *ña* | ***ge-hati*** | ***sasa*** | ***gne***. |
|------|--------|---------|------|-----------|--------|--------|
| and | pick:up | simply | INDF | weEXC-PL | fish | this |
| V | | | | A | O | |

and then we simply gather up this fish.'

Although the fish in clause 2 has only just been mentioned and is therefore a potential candidate for topicalisation, it has switched from functioning as the subject to functioning as the object, and therefore receives a full mention in its pragmatically unmarked clause position.

**6.2 Topicalisation**

**6.2.1 Preverbal arguments and zero anaphora**

Arguments in preverbal position are not morphologically marked in any way: being marked by syntactic position alone. As discussed in 2.1, preverbal position may be filled by an argument with any grammatical relation including transitive and intransitive subjects, objects or obliques. Preverbal position

does, however, appear to be limited to nominal arguments. The data suggests that subordinated clauses such as complement clauses may not occur preverbally.

An examination of the discourse context of clauses with preverbal arguments reveals that preverbal position has the pragmatic function of hosting topics. Bosma's texts reveal several kinds of participant in preverbal position. One is a participant that has been mentioned in the immediately preceding discourse, but is reintroduced with a different grammatical relation to that of its previous mention. This typically involves reintroducing as subject an argument recently mentioned as object, oblique or possessor. A further preverbal participant type is an argument that has been mentioned in the discourse, but not for several clauses, which is being reintroduced to the discourse. A still further type is a newly introduced participant that has not been mentioned in the discourse but is hearer-old: a participant the addressee can be assumed to be aware of. Each of these types are marked topics and are typically realised by full NPs, although proform mentions may occur if referent tracking is not compromised.

A further type of participant occurring preverbally is one that has been mentioned in the immediately preceding discourse, whose role in the discourse is being maintained. These participants are unmarked topics. Unmarked topics in CH are almost always realised by zero anaphora. However, in some instances they are overtly realised by a pronoun or demonstrative in preverbal position.

In addition to realising unmarked topics, zero mentions are used to refer to participants that are highly prominent as a result of their role in the speech event, typically the speaker and addressee. The addressee often receives a zero mention in imperative clauses (as in (12)), and the speaker in statements of intention ((14) clause 1).

(12)     *Fa-so-sobo-ni*          *Ø*     *hore,*     *na*     *elo.*
         CS-RD-anchor-3SGO            canoe     TAM     drift
         'Anchor the canoe or else it will drift.' (WKP)

In other instances, newly introduced participants that are hearer-old are introduced with an overt mention in preverbal position. In (13) clause 2 introduces a participant that includes the speaker and the addressee. Despite its newly introduced status, it is a marked topic and is located in preverbal position. This discourse fragment is the beginning of an account of hunting practices:

(13) 1.      *Uve,*     *hili*

        yes       hunt

        'Yes, to hunt.

2.      *Hili-gna* **ta-hati**    *ne*    *tei hili*    *ña*     *nu*     *balu khuma,* *balu ḡrojo,*   *naflahi.*

        hunt-NM   weINC-PL   TAM   go hunt   INDF   SEQ   with   dog,     with   spear    knife

        S           V                                OBL      OBL       OBL

        Hunting. We go hunting with dogs, with spears, knives.'

Overt preverbal mentions are also used for marked topics where a recently mentioned participant is reintroduced with a different grammatical relation, typically involving a promotion to subject. The following fragment of discourse opens with a statement of intention on the part of the speaker, who receives a zero mention. Clause 2 then opens with a topicalised restatement of a participant in clause 1. The subject matter of the discourse has been established in the first clause. Clause 2 then opens with a marked topic. The topicalised participant is the most recently mentioned participant in the discourse. However, its previous mention was as a possessor inside an object noun phrase. In clause 2 it is reintroduced as the subject of an equative clause, and as such is presented as a marked topic. It is located in pre-predicate position with a full NP mention, switching attention from the subject of the previous clause to the new subject.

(14) 1.      *Uve,*   *na*    *ke*    *thoutonu*   *Ø*    *no-gna*     *ḡ-loku*    *ḡa'ase*    *na*      *gne.*

        yes     TAM   TAM   tell:story         GP-3SGP     NM-work   woman    ART     this

        V                         A    O

        'Yes, I will talk about the work of the woman.

2.      **Ḡa'ase**    **na**       *no-gna*     *ḡ-loku*     *na*

        woman    ART     GP-3SGP     NM-work    ART

        S                  PRED

        The woman has the job

3.  *[te     mala    taji-di          ñala    Ø    sua     re,*

    SB     PURP    look:after-3PLO   LMT          child   ART

    V                                A       O

    of caring for the children,

4.  *e    keli-di      ñala    Ø    suḡa    ḡre].*

    do    good-3PLO    LMT          house   these

    V                  A       O

    of looking after the houses.

5.  *Ne     soro        ña      ke     kosi       na*

    TAM    overgrown    INDF    TAM    outside    ART

    V                                  S

    If the outside is overgrown

6.  *nu     ḡa'ase    na     u      ñala    mala    thoi-tobi-di    ḡeri    suḡa    re,*

    SEQ    woman     ART    TAM    LMT     PURP    RD-clear-3PLO    edge    house   ART

    A                V                                              O

    then the woman clears the areas around the houses.'

Clauses 3-4 in this fragment are coordinated relative clauses modifying *ḡloku na* 'the job'. In both clauses the subject, 'the woman', and is gapped. Interestingly, the gapped argument is not coreferential with the head of the relative clause, but with the main clause subject. Nonetheless, this participant is the most recently mentioned subject, and has been established as the performer of the work. Moreover, it is the topic of the main clause. The gapping in the relative clauses therefore represents an unmarked topic expressed with zero anaphora, displaying topic persistence.

Clause 5 contains a completely new subject participant not previously mentioned in the discourse. Consequently, the clause is unmarked, the sole argument appearing in its unmarked position. Clause 6 has the same subject participant as clauses 2, 3 and 4. Because this participant has only recently been mentioned it is again topicalised. However, because of the interposition of the subject of the clause 5,

attention is redirected to the topicalised participant. Consequently, it is a marked topic realised by a full NP.

The pattern seen in clauses 5-6 is then repeated in clauses 7-8:

(15) 7.
| *e* | *the'o* | *ḡaju* | *ña* |
|---|---|---|---|
| do | NEG | wood | INDF |
| V | | S | |

'If there is no firewood

8.
| *nu* | **ḡa'ase** | **na** | *u* | *ñala* | *mala* | *ke* | *uge* | *mei-di* | *ḡaju* | *re.* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SEQ | woman | ART | TAM | LMT | PURP | TAM | cut:wood | come-3PLO | wood | ART |
| | A | | | V | | | | | O | |

then women will cut and bring the wood.

9.
| *ḡahu* | **Ø** | *ḡano* | *re.* |
|---|---|---|---|
| bake | | food | ART |
| V | | A | O |

[She] bakes food.

10.
| *teteḡo* | **Ø** | *ḡano* | *re.* |
|---|---|---|---|
| ground:bake | | food | ART |
| V | | A | O |

[She] cooks food in ground ovens.

11.
| *chachapo* | **Ø**. |
|---|---|
| wash | |
| V | S |

[She] washes.

12. | *wasi* | *gu* | **Ø** | *pohe* | *are.* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| wash | EMPH | | clothes | those |
| V | | A | O | |

[She] washes the clothes.

13. | *teu-na* | *u* | *ñala* | *ḡa'ase* | *gne* | *no-gna* | *ḡ-loku* | *na.* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| AN-ART | TAM | LMT | woman | this | GP-3SGP | NM-work | ART |
| S | PRED | | | | | | |

That is the work of the women.'

As in clause 6, *ḡa'ase na* 'the woman' in clause 8 has been re-established as the subject by means of an overt mention as a marked topic. That participant then continues as the subject of the next four clauses. In each of clauses 9-12 the subject is the same participant as the subject and topic of the preceding clause. In each instance the subject has just been mentioned, so is topicalised, and in each it retains the same grammatical relation and topic status as in the preceding clause. This is topic persistence and is expressed by a series of unmarked topics in the form of zero anaphora.

Clause 13 is an equative clause recapitulating the preceding clauses. As the subject is the semantic content of the entire preceding discourse it is topicalised. However, as it is neither the subject nor the topic of the preceding clause there is no topic persistence, and it is ineligible for a zero mention. Instead it is realised as a marked topic, receiving a preverbal mention. Nonetheless, as its semantic content encompasses the entire preceding discourse it is highly prominent and does not require a full NP, expressed instead by an anaphoric demonstrative.

The discourse continues by switching attention back to 'the woman' as subject:

(16) 14. | *Keha* | *fata* | *re* | **na'a** | *mala* | *no-gna* | *ḡ-loku* | *la-ñau,* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| some | occasion | ART | she | PURP | GP-3SGP | NM-work | IMM-LMT |
| | | | A | V | O | | |

'Sometimes she will go to her work,

15.     *ja'i*    **Ø**    *thobi.*

        plant        garden

        V     A    O

        [and] plant the garden.'

In clause 14 attention is switched back to 'the woman'. While not the subject or topic of the preceding clause, this participant is mentioned in that clause, so is topicalised. As there is no topic persistence it is ineligible for a zero mention as an unmarked topic. However, unlike clauses 6 and 8, the switch is not away from a totally different subject participant. As this participant has only just been mentioned, and is now well established in the discourse, it requires only a pronominal mention rather than a full NP. This is sufficient for referent tracking as no other potential actor has previously been mentioned, and reference to an alternative participant would require a full NP.

The discourse continues in clause 15 with an unmarked topic subject. In clause 15 the subject topic is identical to the subject topic of the preceding clause. This topic persistence licences a zero anaphoric unmarked topic. The discourse then continues in the vein of clause 15, with six further clauses listing jobs associated with women, each displaying topic persistence with a zero anaphoric unmarked topic. This section of the discourse concludes with a recapitulative equative clause similar to clause 13, with an anaphoric demonstrative as a marked topic subject. However, this time when the discourse resumes with a clause parallel to clause 14, attention switches back to 'the woman' as subject without requiring even a pronominal mention. Now this participant is sufficiently well established as the recurrent topic of the discourse for a zero mention to suffice:

(17) 22.     *Keha fata*   *re*     *kaikaliti-di*     **Ø**    *ḡano*    *are,*

           some  occasion ART   prepare-3PLO        food    those

                                  V            A   O

           'Sometimes [she] prepares the food

23.     *[mala   gamu sua,   kheto-gna    gu      are],*

           PURP   eat   child  spouse-3SGP  EMPH  those

           V            S

           for that child and spouse of hers to eat,

**22**

24.    *li-lisi*          **Ø**   **Ø**   *ka*     *thapera*   *egu,*

      RD-put:down               PRP     plate       EMPH

      V                A       O       OBL

      and puts [it] on the plates.'


Clause 23 is an adverbial subordinate clause that introduces an intransitive subject new to the discourse. As a newly introduced participant this occurs in the unmarked subject position. In clause 24 the subject of clause 22 continues as a zero unmarked topic, despite the interference from the subject of clause 23. The status of this participant as subject of the preceding main clause, as the most recently topicalised participant, and as the established recurrent topic of the discourse, along with the semantics of the verb in the context of the preceding clauses, conspire to render a zero mention again sufficient to switch attention back to that participant as subject. In addition, the object in clause 24 is also realised by zero anaphora. This participant is the object of clause 22. As such it is the object of the preceding main clause, and as the subordinate clause 23 is intransitive, it is also the most recently mentioned object. As such its grammatical relation is maintained and zero anaphora is sufficient to maintain its status in the discourse.

The above text demonstrates that in a discourse of this kind, with significant subject continuity and topic persistence, a participant may be represented initially by a full NP, then by a pronominal form, and finally by zero anaphora. Where this involves overt realisations, either full NPs or proforms, they are realised preverbally. When other participants are introduced into the discourse those participants are realised in their unmarked clause position. Preverbal clause position is reserved for participants already prominent in the discourse, backgrounding such participants in favour of less prominent information.

This is demonstrated in discourse like (14) to (17), with a high level of subject maintenance and topic persistence. It is also demonstrated by discourse in which attention is frequently switched back and forth between participants. In discourse of that kind there is very little subject maintenance or topic persistence, so full NPs, or at least proforms are more frequent. In such texts only participants mentioned in the immediately preceding discourse occur preverbally, backgrounded in favour of newly introduced participants or participants not mentioned for some time. These newly introduced or reintroduced participants are realised in their unmarked clause position, as the discourse fragment in (18) shows.

This fragment is from a text about hunting. The first part of the text relates to hunting pigs. The discourse then turns to a new issue:

(18) 13. *[Egu-teu-na,*    *te*    *the'o*    *kolho*    *ñala*    *bosu*    *teu-na],*

       EMPH-AN-ART    SB    NEG    simply    LMT    pig    AN-ART

                          V                           S

       'OK, when there isn't a pig,

14. *te*    *tañomanana*    *deni*    *la-ñau*    **Ø**    *ḡahua*    *teu-di*    *are.*

       SB    be:able    meet    IMM-LMT       possum    AN-3PLP    those

       V                                 A    O

       then maybe we find one of those possums.'

The possum in clause 14 is newly introduced and is presented in its unmarked clause position. The subject is a group of people including the speaker, and is realised by zero anaphora due to its status as recurrent topic.

To indicate that a specific hypothetical possum is being introduced, the next clause again realises 'a possum' in its unmarked clause position. Clause 17 then reintroduces 'the dogs', a participant which has been mentioned in the discourse, but not since clause 7. This participant could be eligible for marked topic status. However, it is located in a subordinate clause. As there is no preverbal topic position in subordinate clauses, and as this participant has not been mentioned recently enough to allow a zero mention, it is introduced by a full NP in its unmarked clause position. The controlled argument, meanwhile, is gapped:

(19) 15. *Egu-teu-na,*    *ne*    *au*    *ña*    *nu*    *ḡahua*    *pari*    *nu,*

       EMPH-AN-ART    TAM    exist    INDF    SEQ    possum    below    SEQ

                          V                       S

       'OK, [if] a possum is on the ground,

16-17. **tu-ana**    *[te*    *fa-le-lehe*    *khuma*    *na*    **Ø]**    *ia.*

       AN-that    SB    CS-RD-die    dog    ART       ART

       S        PRED    V        A            O

       that's the one the dogs kill.'

Clauses 16-17 are an equative construction with a subordinated clause as predicate. The subject of the equative construction is the same participant as the subject of the preceding clause. Although this would seem to be highly eligible for zero anaphora, it is realised by a proform. This is because in this instance that subject is a contrastive topic. It will be recalled from §5.3 that a contrastive topic backgrounds a participant in favour of a value assigned to it in contrast with a different value assigned to another participant. In clause 16 that proform mention refers to the possum found on the ground, which has the value of being killed by the dogs, in contrast with the value assigned to the possum in clause 18 below, which has a different fate. Contrastive topics are marked topics in CH, and consequently the contrastive topic in clause 16 is realised by an overt mention in preverbal position. The full NP mention of that participant as subject in the immediately preceding clause, however, renders a proform mention sufficient in clause 16.

The discourse continues in clause 18 with the introduction of a new participant, another hypothetical possum. Although the preceding clause contained mention of a possum, the object in clause 18 is a different participant, and as such it is newly introduced and therefore occurs in its unmarked clause position. Clause 18 also includes a further overt mention of the dogs. As the subject of the preceding clause, this participant would seem like a good candidate for topicalisation. However, the dogs are not eligible for zero mention as an unmarked topic as they are not the subject/topic of the preceding main clause and there is no topic persistence. It would seem more plausible to present this participant as a marked topic, however, to switch attention to this very recently mentioned participant as topic. This does not occur, however, because clause 18 presents an entirely new hypothetic scenario. As such, all information in the clause in the clause is presented as new information and no topicalisation of any kind occurs.

(20) 18.

| *Ne* | *gnañho* | *deni* | *ña* | *khuma* | *na* | *ḡahua* | *na* |
|------|----------|--------|------|---------|------|---------|------|
| TAM | smell | meet | INDF | dog | ART | possum | ART |
| V | | | | A | | O | |

'If a dog smells a possum

**25**

19. *[te    au    teu    Ø    kligna    na]    nu,*

    SB    exist    TAM          above    ART    SEQ

    V                  S

    which is up in a tree,


20. ***mana    na    e    hau    kolho    pari    me    pari,***

    heM    ART    do    bark    simply    below    and    below

    S              V

    then he just barks from below,'


Clause 19 is a relative clause in which the controlled argument is gapped. That participant is coreferential with the head of the relative clause, and zero anaphora is sufficient to maintain the reference. This is in contrast with the relative clauses in (14) in clauses 2-4. In those clauses the gapped argument is coreferential, not with the head of the relative clause, but with the subject of the main clause. In those clauses, however, the head of relative clause is not semantically interpretable as the subject of the relative clauses, so that anaphor is interpreted as referring to the main clause subject/topic. In (20) the head of the relative clause is semantically interpretable as the subject of the relative clause. Zero anaphora is therefore sufficient to make that reference. A gapped subject in a relative clause can therefore be seen to be an anaphoric reference to the relative head if that interpretation is semantically plausible, or failing that, a reference to the main clause subject.

In clause 20 the subject is the same participant as the subject of the preceding main clause. As such it is eligible for topicalisation as an unmarked topic. In this instance it is realised not by zero anaphora but by a proform mention in preverbal position.

In clause 21 the subject, 'we people', is realised by a full NP in its unmarked clause position. This participant has been mentioned previously in the discourse. However, it has not been mentioned overtly since clause 5, and has not received a zero anaphoric reference since clause 14. Several subjects have subsequently intervened. As a result, the participant requires reintroducing to the discourse with its full NP. This could be a marked topic located in preverbal position. However, it is not being backgrounded as the context for the clause predication. Instead it is presented as a component of equally weighted information and is located in its unmarked position.

The discourse then continues with a series of clauses which maintain the subject of clause 21. This subject maintenance and subsequent topic persistence is realised by a series of zero anaphoric references. In clause 25 an object is introduced. This participant, the possum, has not been mentioned for several clauses. However, its most recent overt mention was as main clause object (in clause 18), and its subsequent mention, as subject by zero anaphora, is in a relative clause on its overt object mention. Moreover, the possum is the most recent object mentioned. As a result, despite the gap of several clauses, its appearance in clause 25 maintains its object status and a zero anaphora is again sufficient to track reference. Clause 26 then continues with zero anaphoric references to the same subject and object as clause 25, maintain the grammatical relations of the participants of that clause. Clause 27 is a relative clause on the main clause oblique of clause 26. The subject of that clause is the controlled argument and is coreferential with the relative head, so is gapped.

| (21) | 21. | *me* | *lao* | | *ña* | | *ta-hati* | | *na'ikno* | *re* | | *me,* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | and | proceed | | INDF | | weINC-PL | | person | ART | | and |
| | | | V | | | | S | | | | | |

'and we people will go

| | 22-25. | *hiro* | *Ø* | *kligna,* | | *me* | *apla* | *Ø,* | | *me* | *hage* | *Ø,* | | *atha* | *Ø* | *Ø,* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | seek | | above | | and | climb | | | and | ascend | | | take | | |
| | | V | S | | | | V | S | | | V | S | | V | A | O |

and look up and [one will] climb up, take him

| | 26-27. | *lho-lhoku* | *soru* | *Ø* | *Ø* | *ka* | *mae* | *[te* | *au* | *teu* | *Ø* | *pari]* | | *are.* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | RD-grasp | descend | | | PRP | person | SB | exist | TAM | | below | | those |
| | | V | | A | O | OBL | | | V | | | | S | |

and hand it down to those people who are down below.'

Clause 26 concludes with a reference to 'those people below', a new participant introduced as an oblique in its unmarked clause position. The same participant then receives a further full NP mention at the beginning of the following clause (clause 28). In this instance although this participant has only just been mentioned, it is a marked topic functioning to reintroduce the participant with a new grammatical

relation. The oblique of clause 26 is reintroduced as the subject of clause 28. Moreover, it is reintroduced to form the context for the rest of clauses 28-30, those clauses dealing with the actions of that participant. For these reasons the participant is a marked topic and is located in preverbal position.

(22) 28-29. *Mae*　　*[te*　*au*　*teu*　*Ø*　*pari]*　*are*　*sini*

person　　SB　exist　TAM　　below　those　thus

S　　　　　V　　　　S　　　　　V

'Those people who are down below are there for that reason

30.　　*me,*　*pipīgla*　*ña*　*egu*　*ñala*　*Ø*　*u*　*gahua*　*na.*

and　bind　　INDF　EMPH　LMT　　ART　possum　ART

V　　　　　　　　　　　　A　O

and will tie the possum up.'

This section of the discourse concludes with a final reference to the possum. The subject of clause 30 is a zero anaphoric unmarked topic maintaining the subject of clauses 28-29 and reflecting topic persistence. As the object of clause 30, the possum would seem to parallel the appearance of that participant in clauses 25 and 26. Its status as object is maintained, and no alternative object has intervened. A zero mention would seem to be sufficient. Nonetheless, it receives a full NP mention. It is not topicalised in preverbal position (the topic of clause 30 is its subject), but why does it not receive a zero mention? In this instance the reason seems to relate to information structure over the entire discourse. This mention of the possum concludes the section of the discourse dealing with the hunting of possums. The discourse then turns to the hunting of other creatures. The overt mention in this instance appears to mark the conclusion the section dealing with possums.

### 6.2.2 Summary of topicalisation

CH has two syntactic strategies for backgrounding arguments: overt topicalisation in preverbal position, and zero anaphora. These strategies are employed to encode two types of topic: marked and unmarked. Marked topics are located in preverbal position and receive full NP or proform mentions.

Unmarked topics are typically represented by zero anaphora, but may be represented by proform mentions in preverbal position.

Participants that have not been mentioned in the discourse and are not hearer-old are introduced into the discourse in their unmarked clause position. (Examples occur throughout the data, eg. (18) clause 14).

Participants that have been mentioned in the discourse, but not for some time, are typically reintroduced in their unmarked clause position (as in (21) clause 21). Previously mentioned participants may also be reintroduced as marked topics in preverbal position. However, such participants are normally only realised as marked topics if they have been relatively recently mentioned, and another participant with the same grammatical relation has intervened (as in (14) clauses 6 and (15) clause 8).

Participants that have been mentioned in the immediately preceding discourse may be marked topics if they are changing grammatical relation, typically if they are being promoted from object, oblique or possessor to subject (as in (14) clause 2 and (22) clause 28)

Participants that have been mentioned in the immediately preceding discourse may also be marked topics if they are contrastive topics - if they are the context for a comparison of values assigned to them in contrast with values assigned to another participant (as in (19) clause 16).

Participants that have not been mentioned in the discourse but are hearer-old are eligible for introduction as marked topics and as such may occur as full NPs in preverbal position (as in (13) clause 2). Alternatively they may be introduced with a zero mention (not, however, anaphoric, as they have not been mentioned). This typically occurs with participants such as participants in the speech event that are readily recoverable form context (as in (12) and (14) clause 1.

Participants present in the immediately preceding discourse can be unmarked topics in main clauses if they are maintaining the same grammatical relation as their previous mention. If an unmarked topic refers to a participant that was the topic of its previous mention it demonstrates topic persistence and can be realised by zero anaphora (examples throughout the data, but see eg. the subjects in (15) clauses 9-12). If its previous mention was not topicalised, it can be realised by zero anaphora (eg. the subjects in (21) clauses 22-27), or occur as a proform mention in preverbal position (as in (20) clause 20).

Gapped arguments in relative clauses are zero anaphoric unmarked topics. The participant referred to in this way is typically coreferential with the relative head (as in (20) clauses 18-19). However, the semantics of the relative verb and the head noun may render that interpretation implausible. In such

situations the gapped argument is interpreted as coreferential with the subject or topic of the main clause (as in (14) clauses 2-4).

## 6.3 Clause-final *si*-marked arguments

### 6.3.1 The formal characteristics of *si*-marked arguments

Arguments may be located in a clause-final position and marked phrase-initially with the particle *si*. This is a focus construction. As discussed in 3.1, a clause-final *si*-marked argument may have any grammatical relation.

Arguments marked with *si* are not located in their unmarked clause position. In a clause with no obliques a focused intransitive subject or transitive object will be in a position superficially resembling its unmarked position. However, the superficiality of this resemblance is revealed when obliques are present. As discussed in 3.1, oblique arguments in unmarked clauses follow core arguments, while *si*-marked core arguments occur clause-finally, following any obliques (see the examples in (4)). Moreover, focused intransitive subjects follow their objects (as in (1)c. above). Apart from the anomalous use of fused focal pronouns discussed in 3.2, *si*-marked arguments are confined to clause-final position.

*Si*-marked arguments themselves may be realised by an NP of any level of complexity, including with prepositional or relative clause modifiers:

(23) a. *La*   *ḡara*   *hi*   *la*   **si**   **thafnu**   **ka**   **suḡa**   **kuki**   **gne**.

     IMM   burn:to:ashes   CPT   IMM   FOC   fire   PRP   house   cook   this

     V                          S

     'The fire in the cook house has burned to ashes.' (WKP)

   b. *La*   *snamhu*   *la*   **si**   **mae**   **teke**   **foḡra**   **teku**   **ia**.

     IMM   breathe:last   IMM   FOC   person   SB   sick   thus   ART

     V                      S

     'The man who was sick breathed his last [ie. died].' (WKP)

A focused argument may consist of a subordinate clause functioning as an argument of the main clause, as in the following interrogative equative construction:

(24)  *Heva*  **si**  *[te*  *au*  *ge-da*  *mha'u*  *re]-a?*

      where    FOC   SB   exist   CP-1INCP   taro      ART-ART

      PRED   S         V      S

      'Where is our taro?' (Lit. 'Where is that which is our taro?') (WKP)

Alternatively, a focused argument may be realised simply by a *si*-marked proform such as a pronoun or demonstrative:

(25) a.  *Ne*  *rubru-gau*  *na'itu*  **s-ara**  **ia**.

      TAM   chase-1SGO   spirit    FOC-I    ART

      V                A       O

      'A spirit chased me.' (WKP)

   b.  *Ne*  *di'a*  **s-ana**.

      TAM   bad   FOC-that

      V         S

      'That's bad.' (WKP)

Where a focused participant is realised by a vowel initial pronoun or demonstrative, the topic marker optionally cliticises to the pronoun, as in (25). Although this is the most common form of *si*-marked proforms, cliticisation is optional, as a comparison of (26)a. and b. shows:

(26) a.  *Loku*  *unha*  *ḡ-loku*  **si**  **iago**  **ia?**

      work    what   NM-work   FOC   youSG   ART

      V       O               A

      'What job are you working on?' (WKP)

b.     *E-ni*     *unha*     **s-ago**     **ia?**

       do-3SGO     what     FOC-youSG     ART

       V           O        A

       'What are you doing?' (WKP)

*Si*-marked phrases are usually modified by an article or demonstrative, frequently the article *ia* (as in (26)). However, this is not obligatory, as a comparison of (27) and (26) shows:

(27)        *Achi*     *mei-ni*     Ø     **s-ago**.

            hold:arm     come-3SGO        FOC-youSG

            V                   O     A

            'Bring him arm in arm.' (WKP)

Where the focused participant is expressed by a vowel-final article or demonstrative, the article *ia* optionally cliticises to the NP-final particle, as shown in (24) and (28):

(28) a.     *Niha*     *ame*   *fa-gnafa*     * n̄a*     *si*     *suḡa*     *tarai*     **gne-a?**

       how:much   then    CS-be:finished   INDF     FOC     house     pray        this-ART

                              V                      S

       'How long before the church is finished?' (WKP)

b.     *Tanhi-ni*     *hei*     *ame*

       reach:time-3SGO   which     then

       V                O

       'What time

       *gnafa*     *n̄a*     *egu*     *si*     *ḡ-loku*     *re*     *mae*    *Buala*     **re-a?**

       finished   INDF    EMPH     FOC     NM-work     ART     man    Buala     ART-ART

       V                        S

       will the Buala men's work be finished?' (WKP)

**6.3.2 The discourse function of clause-final *si*-marked arguments**

In support of his argument that both preverbal position and *si*-marked clause-final position are used to "(re)introduce arguments", Ross (1988: 241) provides the example in (29), given by his informant. For the purposes of this example I have retained Ross's gloss T(opic)M(arker) for *si*.

(29) 1.     *Kaisei   narane   na'a  neke   tei  ka     namhata*

           one      day       he     TAM   go   PRP   bush

                            S       V              OBL

     'One day he went for a walk in the bush.

2.     *filo-ni      [na'a]  kaisei   mo͞go      ** [si    na'a  ia].*

           see-3SGO   [he]     one     snake       [TM   he     ART]

           V            [A]      O                 [A]

     He saw a snake.' (R88:241)

In the narrative as originally given clause 2 included the bracketed *na'a* 'he', but

*the informant commented that it could be omitted (as the subject is understood from the context of the previous clause). However, she rejected the alternative with the (starred and bracketed) topic, evidently because the subject is here prevented by context from being treated as a newly introduced or reintroduced referent.* (Ross 1988: 241)

This provides interesting evidence about both topicalisation and the use of clause-final *si*-marking. The clause 2 argument in question is the subject of that clause, and refers to the same participant as the subject of clause 1, which itself is a marked topic in preverbal position. Despite subject maintenance and the potential for topic persistence in clause 2, this participant may nonetheless be expressed by a proform in its unmarked clause position. This shows that preverbal topicalisation is an optional strategy for backgrounding a participant as the context for other information in the clause (optional, at least, with proform mentions). With the proform present, there is no backgrounding. Instead, all information in the clause, including the recently mentioned subject, is presented with equal weighting. However, this

argument may also be omitted, agreeing with the discourse evidence presented above that zero anaphora may be used to fully background most recently mentioned participants which maintain their grammatical relation.

The example also provides crucial evidence about the discourse function of *si*-marked clause-final position. Representing the relevant participant in clause 2 in that way is judged unacceptable by the informant. Clause 1 sets up this participant in a situation, precisely to provide the context for the event expressed in clause 2. Clause 2 is 'about' what happens to this participant. That participant is therefore a prime candidate for topicalisation, but could not be foregrounded and thereby presented as the focused information in that clause. This supports the view that *si*-marked clause final position cannot be used to background arguments and is therefore not a topicalisation strategy, but one with a different pragmatic function. The unacceptability of that structure in this example suggests that it is instead a foregrounding strategy. An examination of the discourse context of the structure supports that hypothesis.

*Si*-marked clause-final position in CH is a focusing strategy. Focus in CH serves two purposes: it can provide contrastive foregrounding; and it can foreground reintroduced participants which have been mentioned previously in the discourse, but not for some time, or newly introduced participants that have not been mentioned previously in the discourse but are known to the addressee, such as participants in the speech event.

**6.3.2.1 Contrastive focus**

In §5.4 a distinction was drawn between contrastive topicalisation and contrastive focus. In short, contrastive topicalisation backgrounds a participant as the context for a comparison between a value assigned to that participant and some other possible value. Contrastive focus on the other hand involves foregrounding a participant so that participant itself is compared with some other possible participant.

Contrastive focus is exemplified in (30), from a text about arranged marriages. A potential wife has been found for a young man, and he has been approached for his agreement. His response takes the form of reported speech:

(30)     *Iara*    *thome*    *magnahage-i*     **si**     **ḡa'ase**    **tu-ana**    **ia**.

           I        NEG     want-3SGO       FOC    female     AN-that    ART

           A       V                 O

           'I don't want **that girl**.' (My emphasis.)

Here the focused participant is foregrounded contrastively. The speaker is rejecting the specific girl in question, but by foregrounding that participant, the speaker is indicating that the rejection does not imply a lack of interest in marry someone. In (30) the focused participant is foregrounded to compare her with other possible girls. In that respect this examples corresponds to English contrastive fronting, as in *that girl, I don't want*, or prosodic emphasis, as in *I don't want **that girl***.

It should be noted that there is no implication that the marked participant in (30) is new information. As discussed in §5.4, focus is not taken here to indicate new information. In fact contrastive focus in CH appears to be limited to previously mentioned participants, or newly introduced but hearer-old participants such as participants in the speech event, as long as they are foregrounded contrastively.

Similar contrastive foregrounding is employed in (31). This discourse fragment is from a procedural account of how traditional houses are built. A series of sequential stages of construction are described, each requiring completion before the next stage can commence. As each stage is completed, that completion is expressed by a focused foregrounding of the completed stage, emphasising that it is only this stage that is complete:

(31)     *Ke*       *lao*       *nu*       *mae*     *khoto*   *suḡa*   *gne*     *the-gna*

           TAM    proceed   SEQ    person   owner   house   this     RFL-3SGP

           V                      S

           'The owner of the house will then himself go ahead

           *te [...] fofotho-di*   *Ø*    *kligna*   *ra*.

           SB     shut-3PLO       top     ART

              V         A    O

           to… close in the tops.

*Gnafa*   *si*   *fofotho-di*   *kligna*   *re,*   *me [...]*

finish   FOC   shut-3PLP   top   ART   and

V   S

Closing the tops is finished, and then…

*nha'a*   *lao*   *nu*   Ø *gahe*   *ḡougou-di*   *are,*

put:in:place   proceed   SEQ   leg   floor-3PLP   those

V   A   O

[he] puts in place those legs for the floor.

*gnafa*   *si*   *tu-aro*

be:finished   FOC   AN-these

V   S

These are finished,

*me* *nha'a*   *lao*   *na*   *na'a*   *u*   *ḡaju [...]*

and   put:in:place   proceed   TAM   he   ART   post

V   A   O

then he puts in place posts…

*e*   *nha'a*   *lao*   *ña*   *na*   Ø *saloro*   *are*

do   put:in:place   proceed   INDF   TAM   floor:pole   those

V   A   O

[he] puts in place those floor poles

*me*   *haru*   *fa-ma-mhaku*   *la*   Ø *te*   *si*   *saloro*   *are*   *me,*

and   bind   CS-RD-firm   IMM   SB   FOC   floor:pole   those   and

V   A   O

and ties together that which are those floor poles, then

| *Tei* | *rave* | Ø | *phane* | *ña [...]* |
|-------|--------|---|---------|------------|
| go | chop:wood | | areca:palm | INDF |
| V | | | A | O |

goes and splits areca [for flooring]…'

These discourse fragments are excerpts from the overall text. Between these fragments further details of each stage were present but have been omitted from the data presented here. The fragments given represent the end of each stage of construction and the introduction of the following stage. The conclusion of each stage is represented by a constituent referring to that stage, which has been marked with *si* and located clause-finally. Here again the construction is used as a foregrounding strategy to contrast the focused participant with all other possible participants, in this case other stages of construction. This is not contrastive topicalisation as it is not the completion that is contrasted, but the stages themselves, and thus the marked arguments.

In (31) each alternative stage is overtly mentioned, providing overt targets for the focused participant to be contrasted with. In (30) no other overt participants are the target for contrast, but the semantics of the clause indicate that the contrast is with other potential wives. In (32) however no alternative to the contrasted participant is obviously apparent. This fragment of discourse is from a discussion of etiquette:

(32) 1.

| *Mare* | *iva-di* | *re,* | *e* | *the'ome* | *mala* | *ke* | *fa-fnakno* | Ø | *nañha-di* | *re.* |
|--------|----------|-------|-----|-----------|--------|------|------------|---|-----------|-------|
| theyM | in:law-3PLP | ART | do | NEG | | PURP | TAM | CS-famous | | name-3PLP | ART |
| | | | V | | | | | | A | O | |

'Their in-laws, they are not to mention their names.

2.

| *Egu* | *mare* | *nañho-di* | *ba* | *iva-di* | *teu-ḡre* |
|-------|--------|------------|------|----------|-----------|
| EMPH | theyM | wife's:mother-3PLP | or | in:law-3PLP | AN-these |
| O | | | | | |

Their mother-in-law or these in-laws

| *mala* | *mamaja-di* | *s-igne-a*. |
|--------|-------------|-------------|
| PURP | shame-3PLO | FOC-this-ART |
| V | | A |

this would shame.'

In (32) the marked argument in clause 2. refers to the entire semantic content of clause 1. As such, it is very recently mentioned. However, instead of being backgrounded, it is foregrounded. Instead of forming the context for the predication of shaming the in-laws, it is contrastively focused. As in (30), in this instance the target of contrast is not specifically identifiable. The contrast is between this behaviour and other ways of behaving.

**6.3.2.2 Foregrounding reintroduced or newly introduced participants**

In addition to contrastive foregrounding, the focus construction may be used to foreground a reintroduced or newly introduced participant.

As indicated in §6.2.2, participants that have previously been mentioned in the discourse, but not for some time, may be reintroduced as marked topics. However, this normally only occurs if they have been relatively recently mentioned, but another participant with the same grammatical relation has intervened. Previously mentioned participants that have not been mentioned for some time are otherwise normally reintroduced in their unmarked clause position. However, such participants may also be reintroduced as a focused argument.

In the following example a previously mentioned participant is reintroduced as a focused argument. A group of mourners have gone to a graveyard with a coffin. The coffin has not been mentioned even by zero anaphora for ten clauses, and it was last overtly mentioned twelve clauses earlier. Now at the graveyard the narrative continues:

(33)

| *Fa-tei* | *pari* | *au* | *ñala* | *tei* | *fatiti* | *li-lisi-gna* | Ø | *lamna* | *khora* | *na* | *s-ana*. |
|----------|--------|------|--------|-------|----------|---------------|---|---------|---------|------|----------|
| CS-go | low | exist | LMT | go | ? | RD-put:down-3SGP | | in | hole | ART | FOC-that |
| V | | | | | | | A | OBL | | | O |

'[They] lower that down into the hole.'

In (33) a considerable number of clauses have intervened since the last reference to this participant, and in the meantime several new participants have been introduced into the discourse (a church, an altar, prayers, the cemetery, the hole), several of which have occurred as objects. Now the coffin is reintroduced. The demonstrative proform reference indicates that the identity of the participant is recoverable from the semantics of the clause. However, the length of interval since its last mention means it is not eligible for reintroduction as a marked topic, particularly since it is clear this participant is not functioning as the context for the rest of the information in the clause. It is possible to speculate that this participant could have been reintroduced in its unmarked clause position. However, the emphasis required by the speaker's choice to use a proform rather than a full NP to reintroduce the participant, coupled with the fact that the focus of the action now shifts to the reintroduced participant, means the focus construction has been employed.

In (35) a slightly different situation applies. In this instance a newly introduced participant is a general class of participant embracing several relatively recently mentioned individual participants. The discourse deals with children, and opens with a lengthy discussion of the ways children are named by their parents, each scenario represented by an individual hypothetical child. A series of such hypothetical children are discussed, concluding as follows:[3]

(34) 1.  *Jame    tei    ūgra    mana,    uve,*

         if       go     fish[v]     heM      yes

         'If he [the father-to-be] goes fishing, yes,

2.  *fa-nañha-gna       sua  gne   'ūgra-mana,      gase-'ūgra'       teu-ḡre*

     CS-name-3SGP       child  this    fish[v]-heM      female-fish[v]     AN-these

     [they] call the child "fisherman, fishing-girl"

3.  *eigna    kma-gna    **sua**   gne   neke   tei   ūgra     neku*

     because     father-3SGP      child    this    TAM   go    fish[v]      TAM

     because the father of this child had gone fishing

---

[3] The clauses in (34) and (35) are numbered from the beginning of the fragment, not the entire discourse

4.  *neke    karha    ña      **na'a**.*

    TAM     be:born  INDF    heM

    when he was born.


5.  *Tu-are    ngala    keha    nafnata-di    re.*

    AN-those  LMT     some    type-3PLP     ART

    Those are the kinds of things.'


The discourse then switches to a new issue - the actual raising of children:


(34) 6.  *Eghu    me    taego       ngala   ido-di      kma-di      ghu    re*

     EMPH    and   raise:child  LMT     mother-3PLP father-3PLP  EMPH   ART

     'Their mothers and fathers raise children


7.  *me   ghile   jaja'o   bi'o   eghu    **si    sua   gre-a**.*

    and   until   walk     big    EMPH    FOC   child  these-ART

    until these children walk like a grown up.'


The noun *sua* 'child' has last been mentioned only four clauses earlier (albeit as a possessor), and that participant received a pronominal mention in the subsequent clause (ie. three clauses earlier). Moreover, children are implicit in the semantics of the verb *taego* 'raise children'. The interval since the last reference to children is therefore much less great than the interval since the last mention of the coffin in (33). However, in (33) the reference is to the same individual participant as the distant previous mention. In (34) the referent of *sua* is not the same participant as the referent of *sua* in clauses 3-4. In those clauses the reference is to an individual hypothetical child. In clause 7 the reference is to children in general. Although the noun is the same, this is a newly introduced participant. However, it is a participant the existence of which is implicit in previous references to individual hypothetical children, and in the semantics of *taego*. This participant is newly introduced, but is treated as known to the addressee. Moreover, clause 7 represents the first instance in which a child or children appear as an active participant. In this instance the focused participant is a discourse-new but hearer-old, and is focused to switch attention to that participant as the new focus of the discourse.


**40**

In (35) the focused participant is newly mentioned, but is implicit in the preceding discourse. The focus construction in CH is also used to introduce participants not previously mentioned and not implicit in the preceding discourse, but that are hearer-old, usually by virtue of their involvement in the speech event. No examples occur in Bosma's texts of a full NP of this kind introduced in this way. However, it seems likely that examples from WKP such as those in (23) and (24) are examples of this. In those examples a full NP is presented as a focused argument. WKP provide no discourse contexts for these examples, but the semantics of the marked arguments suggest they are likely to be known to the addressee. However, Bosma's texts do contain several examples of first or second person pronouns introduced using this structure.

Apart from contrastive focusing, the focus foregrounding of first and second person pronominal participants typically applies when the speaker or the addressee is introduced to the discourse as a participant for the first time. This foregrounds a newly introduced participant that is inherently known to the addressee. In (36) the example is reported speech, and reflects the common CH strategy of a speaker introducing themselves as a participant by means of focused foregrounding. In (36) a course of action has been proposed, without any discussion of who will carry it out. The response is reported speech:

| (36) | *Hea,* | *nake* | *e-ni* | *tu-ao* | ***si*** | ***ta-hati-a****.* |
|------|--------|--------|--------|---------|----------|----------|
|      | yes    | TAM    | do-3SGO | AN-this | FOC      | weINC-PL-ART |
|      |        | V      |        | O       | A        |          |

'Yes, we will do this.'

It is possible to argue that this may be contrastive focus, as the discourse has set up a course of action that someone will carry out, and the speaker is identifying a group they belong to as those who will carry it out, in contrast to some other possible group. Other examples in Bosma are more clearly not contrastive:

| (37) | *Keha* | *fata* | *re* | *"nake* | *hiro* | *gano* | *ñau* | *ka* | *thoñna* | *ḡre* | *ju* | ***s-ara****"* |
|------|--------|--------|------|---------|--------|--------|-------|------|----------|-------|------|--------|
|      | some   | occasion | ART | TAM     | seek   | food   | LMT   | PRP  | sea      | these | ?    | FOC-I  |

'Sometimes: "I will look for food in the sea"

| *egu* | *ga'ase* | *ana.* |
|-------|----------|--------|
| EMPH | woman | that |

says the woman.'

This clause is from the text relating to women's work discussed earlier. In this instance words are put into the mouth of a hypothetical woman in the form of reported speech. This is the first time reported speech is used in this particular text. The use of *ara* 'I' here therefore refers to a newly introduced participant. As the speaker of the reported speech is a hypothetical woman, *ara* here does not refer to an individual already known to the addressee of the actual discourse. However, as a first person pronoun it refers to the speaker in the hypothetical speech event being reported. As such, it is an individual known to the hypothetical addressee in this hypothetical speech event. The participant is not hearer-old in the speech event of the actual discourse, but she is hearer-old in the hypothetical speech event in which the reported speech takes place. Consequently she is eligible for focusing.

In addition to newly introduced hearer-old participants, it appears that the focus construction may be used to introduce completely new participants. No examples of this type occur in Bosma's texts. However, some examples in WKP have focused participants that, on the basis of their semantics, seem likely to be completely new (ie. not hearer-old):

(38) a.

| *Fagano* | *fara* | *si* | *gamu-gna* | *nadali* | *na* | *ia.* |
|----------|--------|------|-----------|----------|------|-------|
| be:nice | very | FOC | eat-3SGP | eel | ART | ART |

'Eating eel is very nice.' (WKP)

b.

| *Nheta* | *fara* | *si* | *mae* | *Merika* | *re.* |
|---------|--------|------|-------|----------|-------|
| be:strong | very | FOC | man | PN | ART |

'American men are very strong.' (WKP)

Finally, it is possible that in imperative clauses *si*-marked focusing of second person pronouns relate to politeness. In neighbouring Kokota (Palmer 1999a, 2002, f.c.) the particle *si* also occurs with a focus function, and Kokota imperative clauses with a pronoun that is not *si*-marked are regarded as inappropriate for use with another adult, particularly an important or respected adult. WKP do not deal directly with imperative clauses in their sketch, although they do claim that the particle *ba*, a marker of

possibility, makes imperatives polite. (WKP:xxxix) However, imperative clauses occurring as dictionary examples in WKP which have an overt pronoun subject typically do carry *si*-marking. Only one imperative clause with an overt subject occurs in Bosma's texts, and that carries *si*-marking:

(39)  *Tolaghi*   *lao*       *the-mi*    **si**   **gho-tilo**.

marry     proceed     RFL-2PLP    FOC   you-PL

'Make your own marriages, you lot.' (lit. 'Go ahead yourselves and marry, you lot.')

This may represent a politeness use of the structure. Alternatively this may again represent contrastive focus. In the discourse preceding this example the parents have attempted to arrange a marriage partner for their child, but their suggested partner has been rejected. Example (39) is the parents' response to that rejection, in the form of reported speech. This could readily be interpreted as a contrasting the efforts of the addressees with those of the speaker.

As discussed in section 6.2, participants in the speech event can be introduced into the discourse as unmarked topics. As has just been discussed, such participants can also be introduced as focused arguments. It is not clear how to characterise the distinction between the topicalisation of such participants and their focusing, particularly with an apparently non-contrastive function, such as in (37). Perhaps the best that can be said is that the choice of foregrounding rather than backgrounding in this situation depends on the intention of the speaker. In examples like (13) the speaker is backgrounding the subject, in this case the group they belong to, with the intention of presenting as important the event represented by the predication, while in (37) the speaker appears to intend to draw attention to herself as the participant in the event.

### 6.3.3 Focus summary

Arguments are foregrounded in CH main clauses by a focus construction in which the argument is located in clause-final position and marked with the preposed particle *si*. Focus in CH realises two categories: contrastive and non-contrastive foregrounding.

Participants that have been overtly mentioned in the discourse, no matter how recently, may be focused contrastively, where they are contrasted with other possible participants, themselves either overtly mentioned or not (as in (30)-(32)). Participants that have not been overtly mentioned in the

discourse but are hearer-old, such as participants in the speech event, may also be contrastively focused (possibly as in (36) and (39).

Participants that have been previously mentioned in the discourse, but not for some time, may be reintroduced into the discourse as non-contrastive focused arguments (as in (33)).

Participants that have not been overtly mentioned in the preceding discourse, but are implicit in it, may be treated as hearer-old and introduced as focused arguments.

Participants that have not been overtly mentioned in the preceding discourse, but are hearer-old by virtue of their participation in the speech event, may be introduced as focused arguments if the speaker intends to foreground them (as in (37) and possibly (36) and (39).

Focus does not introduce hearer-new participants into the discourse. That function is carried out by unmarked clause positions.

## 6.4 Preverbal arguments with clause-final *si* marking

In addition to the constructions described above, CH has a construction involving both a preverbal argument and a clause-final *si* marking an article or demonstrative, but with no substantive argument present in clause-final position. WKP (1988:xxxiii) claim that a clause may contain a preverbal argument that is associated with a clause-final particle *sia*, which they treat as a contraction of *si* and *ia*. WKP gloss this particle as emphatic, and exemplify it by comparing (40)a. (given earlier as (3)a.) with (40)b.) For the moment in (40)b. For the purposes of this example I am retaining WKP's unsegmented *sia* and its gloss as EMPH.

(40) a.   *Nolo*   *tafri*   *kolho*   **si**   **iara**   **ia**.

        walk   around   simply   FOC   I   ART

        'I am simply walking around.' (WKP)

   b.   ***Iara***   *nolo*   *tafri*   *kolho*   **sia**.

        I   walk   around   simply   EMPH

        'I am simply walking around.' (WKP)

WKP say that the contraction of *si* and *ia* takes place "as if the subject, **iara**, in the verb-initial sentence...had been removed and placed at the beginning." (WKP's emphasis.) Unfortunately they do not discuss the motivation of this apparent alternation, or any affect it may have on the semantics of the clause.

Ross (1988: 246) analyses *sia* as a "topic copy", where his clause-final *si*-marked 'topic' undergoes left dislocation, leaving a *si*-marked copy. He says that "the sequence *si* + ART is quite often left behind clause-finally when the topic is shifted to pre-verbal position." In a sense he is suggesting that the argument is topicalised twice, perhaps a more intense form of topicalisation. He illustrates the construction with (41). For the moment I am retaining Ross's gloss for *si* of T(opic)M(arker):

(41)      ***Keha***    ***sua***    ***re***     *neke*     *tei-tei*     *no-di*        ***si***    ***ia.***

             some      child     ART     TAM     RD-go     GP-3PLP     TM    ART

             'Some children went for a walk.' (R88:246)

This analysis is incorrect to the extent that any argument associated with clause final position in CH is focused, not topicalised. If the construction involves a fronted version of an argument that would otherwise be in clause-final position, that argument must be focused. Indeed, the semantics of the preverbal argument in (41) suggest it is being mentioned for the first time. As summarised in 6.2.2, the only newly introduced arguments in CH that are eligible for topicalisation are those which are hearer-old, and again the semantics of the preverbal argument in (41) suggest this is not the case here. This indicates that this preverbal argument is focused, not topicalised, as we would expect if it is a fronted version of a *si*-marked clause-final argument. It also indicates that this preverbal argument is not the marked topic we would otherwise expect in preverbal position. Together, this suggests that an analysis that associates this preverbal argument with the standard focus construction is right. This is not a preverbal topic that happens to coincide with some functionally unclear clause-final particle. It is a fronted focused argument.

In (40)b. and (41) the argument realised by the *si*-marked article is the subject. However, with this construction as with standard focusing, there is no grammatical relation restriction. Other grammatical relations such as objects may participate in the construction:

(42)      ***Iara***    *ne*     *fa-'au-'ahu*   *g#au*    *mana*    ***si-a***.

           I      TAM    steal:from    1SGO    heM     FOC-ART

           'He took [all my things] from me.' (WKP)

Looking briefly at the form of this construction, first and second person pronouns appear to be the most common arguments to be represented in this manner, although not exclusively so, as (41) shows. In addition, the final particle in (40)b. does appears to be a fusion of the focus marker and the article *ia*, as both WKP and Ross suggest. However, the construction is not confined to clauses with the final article *ia*. Other articles and demonstratives occur in the same position. Noun phrases in CH typically contain a final article or demonstrative, even when the phrasal head is a pronoun. That article or demonstrative remains clause final and is marked with *si*, whatever particular article or demonstrative happens to be present. In (43), for example, it is a demonstrative:

(43)      ***Juta***    ***gne***     *aga*     *fara*    ***si-gne***.

           lamp     this     be:clear   very     FOC-this

           'This lamp is very bright.' (WKP)

In some instances not article or demonstrative is present in the fronted NP (as in (40)b.). However, the fronted NP typically does carry an article or demonstrative, and the clause-final *si*-marked article or demonstrative typically agrees with the one in the fronted NP (as in (43)). However, this is not always so. The two may differ, as (41) and (44) show:

(44)      ***Ge-hati***    ***mae***   ***Nahu***   ***re***    *e*     *marhu*     *ge-mi*      ***si-a***.

           weEXC-PL   man   Nahu   ART    do    have:food   CP-1EXCP   FOC-ART

           'We Nahu men have plenty of food.' (WKP)

What is particularly puzzling is that the article *ia* is normally associated with singular head nouns, its plural counterpart being *re*. In examples like (44), *ia* occurs as the clause-final *si*-marked article despite the fact that the fronted argument is plural and marked with *re*. This paradox is not restricted to this fronted focus construction, however. On occasions a similar situation applies to normal clause-final

focused arguments. In (45) (repeating (28)b.), for example, the *si*-marked focused NP has a plural head that is marked with *re*, but the final article is *ia*.


(45)  *Tanhi-ni       hei      ame*

      reach:time-3SGO   which    then

      'What time


      *gnafa   ña    egu    si    ḡ-loku    **re**    mae    Buala    re-**a**?*

      finished  INDF  EMPH  FOC   NM-work   ART    man    Buala    ART-ART

      will the Buala men's work be finished?' (WKP)


This, coupled with the fact that the article remains in clause-final position when the NP is fronted, suggest that the final article in focused constructions marks the position, rather than the NP, and is associated syntactically in some way with the *si* particle. The details of this remain to be investigated, however, this analysis allows the possibility that the clause-final *si*-marked article itself remains the focused argument, anaphorically linked to the referent of the fronted NP. If correct, this in turn would allow the possibility that the fronted NP reflects extra-clausal dislocation, rather than location in clause-initial position.

Extra-clausal dislocation is seen elsewhere in the language. In (46) an extra-clausal NP occurs sentence-initially. It is clear this is extra-clausal as it precedes a preverbal topic:


(46)  ***U    ḡaju    tu-gne***   *ge-hati    e    ja'i    Ø    nu    mala    fa-lehe    Ø    sasa*

      ART   tree    AN-this    weEXC-PL  do    plant         SEQ   PURP   CS-die          fish

      'This tree, we planted it to kill fish.'


This clause has no *si* focus trace, but one of the participants in the event is expressed by an initial extra-clausal NP, demonstrating that participants can be dislocated to an extra-clausal position preceding that of preverbal topic. In (46) the dislocated participant is backgrounded by zero anaphora in the clause itself. However, this is not obligatory. In (47) (repeating (32)1.) the initial extra-clausal participant is not exactly identical with a main clause argument, and the main clause argument it is connected with is overtly realised:

(47)      **Mare  iva-di     re**, e the'ome mala ke   fa-fnakno Ø **nañha-di  re**.

            theyM   in:law-3PLP  ART  do NEG     PURP TAM CS-famous     name-3PLP  ART

                         V                              A  O

      'Their in-laws, they are not to mention their names.'

The possibility that examples like (46) and (47) involve an initial extra-clausal focus position is supported by the semantics of the initial participants, particularly that in (47). That example is from a discourse in which the sentence-initial NP refers to a hearer-new participant introduced into the discourse for the first time with this mention. Participants of this kind cannot be introduced as marked topics. Instead its appearance in this position in this sentence marks it pragmatically by foregrounding it.

Taken together, the evidence presented above allows the hypothesis that CH allows the left-dislocation of a participant reference to an extra-clausal sentence-initial position as a foregrounding strategy independent of the clause-final *si*-marking strategy. The dislocated reference does not remain an argument of the clause, the clause retaining a separate reference to that participant, either overtly, or by zero anaphora. This dislocation may occur with a participant that is already in clause-final focus position. The *si*-marked residual article or demonstrative remains the argument of the clause, and that argument remains focused, but refers anaphorically to the dislocated participant.

Evidence supporting this hypothesis is found in clauses where the focused argument is expressed only by an article or demonstrative.

(48) a.    *The'ome   maku     **si-gne**,     kma-kmasa     egu      **si-gne**.*

           NEG         be:strong    FOC-this     RD-be:frayed   EMPH    FOC-this

           'This isn't strong, it's frayed.' (WKP)

     b.    *Fa-'unha  egu      **si-a**.*

           CS-what    EMPH      FOC-ART

           'How will I do that?' (WKP)

In (48)a. the demonstrative refers to a newly introduced participant, the identity of which seems to be recoverable from the context of the speech event. In (48)b. it is not clear whether the focused article

refers to the speaker, in which case it is identifiable from the context of the speech event, or the thing to be done, in which case it is presumably recoverable from the preceding discourse. The fact that a focused argument can be expressed using an article or demonstrative alone if the referent is identifiable can apply to examples like (40)b.-(44). In (48) a focused argument can be an article or demonstrative alone because the referent is identifiable from the speech event or discourse context. In (40)b.-(44) it can be an article or demonstrative alone because the referent has been established extra-clausally.

If this hypothesis is correct we would expect prosodic evidence, such as intonation patterns and possible pauses, to indicate that the initial NP is extra-clausal. As this hypothesis involves an extra-clausal NP in a separate position to that of a preverbal topic, it may be that a dislocated extra-clausal NP associated with a clause-final *si*-marked article or demonstrative could cooccur with a preverbal marked topic. The current data has no examples of this, and the permissibility of such a construction awaits testing.

An alternative hypothesis is that in clauses like (40)b.-(44) *si* simply marks the clause as being a focus construction. In that hypothesis the fronted argument is located in the same clause-internal pragmatically marked position normally reserved for marked topics. The presence of *si* marks the clause as a focused construction, and this in turn indicates that the preverbal argument is focused not topicalised. If this hypothesis is correct we would expect that prosodic evidence would not support an extra-clausal interpretation, and a fronted argument could not cooccur with a preverbal topic. There is no independent evidence supporting that hypothesis, so the initial hypothesis is favoured at this stage.

## 6.6 Topic and focus in relative clauses

Topic and focus in relative clauses differ from that in main clauses in two ways. As discussed in §4, the controlled argument in a relative clause is its topic, and must be gapped (ie. realised by zero anaphora). As Ross (1988: 244) notes, no preverbal arguments are allowed in relative clauses. Ross exemplifies this with (49) (given earlier in (9)). Here the main clause object is coreferential with the topicalised and zero realised oblique instrument of the relative clause.

(49)  *iara   neke   filo-ni   ḡaju   [teke   aknu-ni   khuma   Ø   nalha'u   ana]*

      I      TAM   see-3SGO   wood   SB   hit-3SGO   dog          man      that

      A      V        O          V        O     OBL  A

'I saw the stick the man hit the dog with.' (R88:243)

Ross also notes that relative clauses in CH may not contain a *si*-marked constituent. He infers from this that the controlled argument of a relative clause corresponds to both preverbal arguments and *si*-marked constituents in main clauses. Gapped controlled arguments are topics and do correspond to main clause topics (ie. main clause preverbal or zero anaphoric arguments). However, they do not also correspond to *si*-marked clause-final arguments. Such arguments are focused, not topicalised, and controlled arguments are inherently topics and therefore cannot be foregrounded. Yet it is true that the *si* particle does not occur in relative clauses. In fact the focused construction does occur in relative clauses. The difference between main clause and relative clause focusing lies in the fact that the *si* particle is restricted to main clauses and does not occur in relative clauses. Focus in relative clauses in CH involves locating the argument in clause final position, without marking it with *si*.

Ross does not comment on the fact that the relative clause in (49) is VOS. As that clause shows, a relative clause may contain a focused argument, and that argument is marked syntactically by its location in clause-final position, as with main clauses. However, unlike main clauses, the morphological focus marker *si* does not also occur. In the absence of the morphological marker, clause-final topic position in relative clauses is not always apparent. To be visible it requires at least two overt arguments to be present. It can be seen when the controlled argument is a relative clause oblique and a focused subject follows an overt object (as in (49)); or when the controlled argument is the relative clause subject or object, located following a relative clause oblique. Although it occurs infrequently, examples of relative clause focusing occur in Bosma's texts:

(50)  *Ne   au   kaisei   khakla   ḡaju   [te   mala   fa-le-lehe   sasa   Ø   ge-hati   agne]*.

      TAM   exist   one   leaf   tree   SB   PURP   CS-RD-die   fish        weEXC-PL here

      V        S                   V          O    OBL A

'There's a tree leaf that we here use to kill fish.'

As in (49), the controlled argument of the relative clause is a zero topicalised oblique, and again the relative clause subject is focused by virtue of its clause-final location, without the presence of the *si* particle.

This distinction between the *si*-marking of main clause focused arguments and the absence of morphological marking of focused relative clause arguments is probably reconstructable for Proto New Georgia/Isabel. As a result of a diachronic shift in Roviana, *si* marks absolutive in that language, but only in main clauses. Absolutive arguments in relative clauses are unmarked. (Corston 1996, Corston-Oliver 2002)

**6.7 Marked constituent order generated ambiguity**

The variant constituent orders allowed by topicalisation and focusing in CH create the potential for ambiguity in the grammatical relations of the arguments. In unmarked clauses grammatical relations are apparent from constituent order: in a transitive clause the immediate post verbal argument is subject, and the next is object. Where an argument has been topicalised or focused, constituent order can no longer be relied on to identify grammatical relations. For example, a clause initial topic may be subject or object (or for that matter oblique), the remaining post verbal arguments then have the remaining relations. This potential for ambiguity is resolved semantically, or failing that, by object agreement on the verb.

Where only one semantically meaningful reading is possible that is assumed. In (51) the semantics of the arguments preclude ambiguity:

(51)     *Au'agu      kmano   ḡlepo      si      mae   gne.*

         hold:bunch   many    thing      FOC    man   this

         'This man is holding many things in his arms.' (WKP)

In other instances the semantics of the arguments make either possible reading equivalent in meaning. In (52) there is grammatical relation ambiguity. However, although *ḡognaro* 'today' is focused, whether that argument is resembling or being resembled by *gnoraia* 'yesterday' would only be of significance in a discourse context which itself would resolve that ambiguity.

(52)  *Aho    jateu    gnoraia    egu    si    ḡognaro    gne.*

be:clear   resemble   yesterday   EMPH   FOC   today      this

'This day is clear just like yesterday.' (WKP)

However, in clauses where either argument could equally have either grammatical relation with a significant difference in meaning, real ambiguity is possible. In such situations ambiguity is resolved by marking the verb with object agreement. In (51) and (52) the verb has no object agreement. In (53), with a preverbal topic and two human arguments, either argument could be doing the swearing and either could be sworn at. Now object agreement is present, resolving the ambiguity by indexing the postverbal argument, thus head-marking it as object, and leaving the preverbal topic as subject:

(53)  *John   na    ne    nago-di        mare    re.*

John   ART   TAM   swear:at-3PLO   theyM   ART

'John swore at them.' (WKP)

Where an argument is focused, similar ambiguity is possible. In (54) (given above as (3)b.), either argument could be doing the chasing and either being chased. Again verb indexing has assigned the object relation to one of the arguments, in this case the focused argument, leaving the remaining argument as subject:

(54)  *Ne      rubru-gau    na'itu    s-ara    ia.*

TAM     chase-1SGO   spirit    FOC-I    ART

'A spirit chased me.' (WKP)

Object agreement is the only morphosyntactic means in CH of resolving grammatical relation ambiguity in clauses with pragmatically marked constituent order. Object agreement is not obligatory in the language, and the resolution of potential grammatical relation ambiguity is one of its main functions. However this strategy is only effective when the number and/or person categories of the arguments differ. Where the person and number of the arguments is the same, ambiguity resolution must rely on paraphrase, and there are no examples in the data of clauses structured in a way that allows such ambiguity.

**7 A diachronic note**

The findings presented in this paper have implications for a hypothesis on the relationship between CH's Isabel subgroup and the neighbouring New Georgia subgroup of NWS. Ross identifies CH, and Roviana from the New Georgia chain, as topic-final languages, in contrast with the topic-initial status of Proto North-West Solomonic (PNS) and most members of other subgroupings of North-West Solomonic languages. He proposes that this provides possible evidence of a subgrouping of the Isabel and New Georgia chains under a proposed Proto New Georgia/Ysabel.[4]

Ross points out that this description of the two languages as topic-final is fundamentally diachronic. He describes Roviana as synchronically topic-initial, and CH as having both clause-initial and clause-final topics. He proposes, however, that both were historically topic-final, and that a common ancestor underwent the innovation of introducing clause-final topics marked with the particle *si*. Both languages later developed morphologically unmarked clause-initial topics, Roviana going on to reanalyse *si* as a pivot marker. Corston (1996) disagrees with this synchronic analysis of Roviana *si*, claiming instead that it is a main clause absolutive marker. Since Ross argues that PNS was topic-initial, he effectively proposes a diachronic path for New Georgia/Isabel languages from clause-initial topics to the innovation of *si*-marked clause-final topics, then through a process of demarking, back to clause-initial topics.

Ross proposes that in CH *si* continues to mark clause-final topics, claiming that clause initial topics are the result of left dislocation of otherwise clause-final topics. He claims that

> *there is reason to infer that the present pre-verbal topic in Maringe* [ie. CH] *is not a direct descendant of the PNS pre-verbal topic, but a more recent introduction. It was suggested above that because its old topic was being reinterpreted as a pragmatic pivot, Roviana adopted a new topicalisation strategy. It appears that the pre-verbal topic in Maringe represents a similarly new topicalisation strategy. The Maringe* si- *introduced topic is almost always a subject, and is perhaps also in the process of being reinterpreted as a pivot […]. The* si- *introduced topic occurs more frequently than the pre-verbal topic,*

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[4] Ross uses the pre-independence orthographic form Ysabel to refer to the Santa Isabel subgroup.

*suggesting that the latter is more marked, and therefore more recent (since languages*

*tend to de-mark marked structures, not the reverse).* (1988: 246)

The claim that the CH preverbal topic is less frequent and therefore more marked and thus more recent than the *si*-marked topic is not supported by the data. As mentioned earlier, the 20 texts in Bosma (1981) contain only 19 *si*-marked arguments, but about two hundred preverbal arguments. *Si*-marking appears to be more common in conversation than in narrative, so Bosma's texts may be less than representative. However, the discrepancy is clear.

More importantly, the differing pragmatic functions of preverbal and clause-final *si*-marked arguments demonstrated in this paper remove the empirical basis for Ross's hypothesis. The clause-final argument is focus, not topic, and there is no evidence that is was ever topic. There is therefore no evidence to support a view that at any stage between PNS and synchronic CH the preverbal topic position was lost and then reintroduced. What does appear to have been innovated is the marking of focus position with *si*. It is not clear at this stage whether a clause-final focus position may be reconstructed for PNS. If not, that may represent an innovation shared by the Isabel and New Georgia languages. At present, however, the only apparent shared innovation relating to the issues under investigation in this paper that may link the Isabel and New Georgia groups is the development of clause-final *si*-marking.

**8 Conclusions**

This paper has surveyed the discourse context for the various clause orders of arguments in CH. It found that the various orders are discourse sensitive and relate to information structure. CH has the following main clause structure:

TOP + V + S + O + OBL + FOC

Topicalisation is encoded by location in preverbal position, or by zero anaphora. Focus is encoded by a combination of location in clause-final position and marking with the preposed particle *si*.

Relative clauses have more restricted forms of pragmatic marking than main clauses: the controlled argument is topic and is realised by zero anaphora; no preverbal topic position exists; and

clause final focused arguments are marked by clause position only, the *si* particle not occurring in relative clauses.

Ambiguity arising from pragmatically motivated variability in argument clause position is resolved semantically or by object agreement on the verb.

In addition, there may be an initial extra-clausal pragmatically marked position in which participants may be foregrounded by dislocation from their normal clause position. This applies to participants already focused clause-internally. Dislocated phrases are not arguments of the clause, the argument remaining within the clause, either overtly or as zero anaphora. When already focused participants are dislocated the residual clause internal argument is a clause-final *si*-marked article or demonstrative. An alternative hypothesis has focused arguments fronted to preverbal position which is then interpreted as a focus position not topic on the basis of the clause-final *si*-marked trace.

Topicalisation backgrounds participants, either as marked topics (proforms or full NPs in preverbal position) or unmarked topics (zero anaphora, or proforms in preverbal position). Focus foregrounds participants. Participants eligible for topicalisation include hearer-old participants not previously mentioned in the discourse; and participants mentioned relatively recently or in the immediately preceding discourse. Participants eligible for focusing include completely new (ie. hearer-new) participants; hearer-old participants not previously mentioned in the discourse; and participants mentioned previously but not for some time. Contrastive topicalisation backgrounds recently mentioned participants as the context for a comparison of values assigned to the participant, while contrastive focus foregrounds participants regardless of how recently they have been mentioned, or whether they have been previously mentioned at all, to contrast the participant itself with some other participant.

Participants that have not been mentioned in the discourse and are not assumed to be known to the addressee (ie. not hearer-old) are normally introduced into the discourse in their unmarked clause position, although they may occur in focus position.

Hearer-old participants that have not been mentioned in the discourse may be introduction as marked or unmarked topics, the latter typically with participants in the speech event, or may be introduced as focused arguments, depending on whether the speaker intends to background or foreground them.

Participants that have been mentioned in the discourse, but not for some time, are reintroduced in their unmarked clause position, or in focus position.

Participants that have been mentioned in the discourse relatively recently, but where another participant with the same grammatical relation has intervened, may be reintroduced as marked topics.

Participants mentioned in the immediately preceding discourse may be marked topics if they are changing grammatical relation, typically from object, oblique or possessor to subject. Such participants may be unmarked topics if they are maintaining the same grammatical relation as their previous mention, often demonstrating topic persistence.

Overall, the evidence from CH supports several claims about the interaction of pragmatic function and morphosyntactic structure.

First, there is no straightforward relationship between the pragmatic marking of arguments and newness or oldness of information. No straightforward correspondence exists between topic and old information, or between focus and new information. Newly introduced hearer-new information may be introduced in a pragmatically unmarked way (this is the typical strategy for presenting new information in CH). Such information need not be overtly focused. Instead, overt focus is employed when the speaker wishes to draw special attention to the information or emphasise it for some reason. Old information also need not be overtly topicalised. Overt topicalisation occurs when the speaker feels it is necessary to bring information back to the speaker's attention, but only so that further information can be presented that requires the old information to place it in context. Some information may be eligible for focusing or topicalisation depending on the intention of the speaker, particularly when that information may be assumed to be known to the hearer but not most prominent in the hearer's mind (such as discourse-new hearer-old information, or discourse-old information not mentioned in the immediately preceding discourse); or when a contrast of some kind is intended.

Second, the use of morphosyntactic structures that are marked for pragmatic function is not determined purely on the basis of principles operating within the grammar. Instead, the intention and attitude of the speaker plays a part in determining what morphosyntactic structure will occur. This involves two factors: the backgrounding and foregrounding intentions of the speaker; and the speakers opinion of what the hearer is aware of (ie. whether information is hearer-old or not) and what previously mentioned information requires drawing the hearer's attention back to (ie. whether information needs to be overtly introduced or reintroduced).

A combination of these two non-grammatical factors determine which of a set of possible morphosyntactic structures present in the language will be employed. The morphosyntactic structures

themselves are part of the grammar of the language. The choice of structure is determined by factors outside the grammar.

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