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## 10 Focus particles and related entities in Vietnamese\*

The chapter analyzes the system of focus-sensitive particles in Vietnamese. EVEN/ALSO/ONLY foci are discussed across syntactic categories, and Vietnamese is found to organize its system of focus-sensitive particles along three dimensions of classification: (i) EVEN vs. ALSO vs. ONLY; (ii) particles c-commanding foci vs. particles c-commanding backgrounds; (iii) adverbial focus-sensitive particles vs. particles c-commanding argument foci only. Towards the end of the chapter, free-choice constructions and additional sentence-final particles conveying ONLY and ALSO semantics are briefly discussed. The peculiar Vietnamese system reflects core properties of the analogous empirical domain in Chinese, a known source of borrowings into Vietnamese over the millennia.

**Keywords:** focus particles, background particles, free-choice, Chinese, association-with-focus, structured propositions

### 1 Introduction: Focus-sensitive particles

This chapter discusses strategies of expressing EVEN foci, ALSO foci and ONLY foci in Vietnamese (frequently referred to as AEO foci in the following). The article combines descriptive and analytical parts to get a grip on the empirical domain, which has, to the best of my knowledge, never been investigated in any detail before.

The data presented in this article, if not indicated otherwise, comes from elicitation work with native speakers.<sup>1</sup>

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1 I worked with two consultants: (i) HÀ Kiều Phương, female, 28 years old, from Hanoi/Vietnam, a student in Germany since she was 18; (ii) NGUYỄN Thu Trang, female, 24 years old, from Hanoi/Vietnam, a student in Germany since she was 20; Trang moved from Vietnam to the Czech Republic with her parents when she was ten years old.

The following semantic background assumptions concerning AEO foci are made.<sup>2</sup> ALSO foci presuppose the truth of an alternative proposition that differs in the position of the focus. For an English sentence like *Peter ate also the beans* this means that this sentence is felicitously uttered only if a proposition of type ‘Peter ate x’, with  $x \neq$  the beans, was part of the common ground before it was uttered (‘Peter ate the onions’, for instance).

ONLY foci entail the falsity of all (contextually relevant) alternative proposition that differ in the position of the focus. For an English sentence like *Peter ate only the beef* this means that this sentence is true if and only if Peter ate nothing from the set of contextually salient alternatives to the beef. A different way of stating the same entailment would be to say that all the things that Peter ate (from the set of contextually salient alternatives) were identical to the beef.

EVEN foci typically presuppose the truth of alternative propositions that have alternative values in the position of the focus. If one says “Even the first-year students solved this problem”, then this typically means that some more senior students likewise solved the problem. There is a complication here in that it needn’t necessarily be the case that other students did solve the problem if the sentence is to be uttered felicitously. This may, e.g., be the case in a context where lazy third-year students are contrasted with hard-working first-year students. It is sufficient if one just expects the more experienced students to be able to solve the problem to make the use of *even* felicitous in our example. This means that the existential quantification hypothesized to underlie the semantics of *even* (‘the same holds true of some alternative’) only holds with respect to possible states of affairs, but not necessarily with respect to a given state of affairs. For this reason the generalization concerning alternatives with EVEN foci was hedged when we first introduced it above (“EVEN foci typically presuppose the truth. . .”).

A second component of meaning tied to EVEN foci has to do with scalarity. EVEN foci have to mark the endpoint on a scale to be felicitous. It is typically assumed that the ordering underlying EVEN scales is expectedness or likelihood. If even the first-year students solved the problem, then these students were, among the relevant members of the comparison class, least likely or least expected to solve the problem.

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<sup>2</sup> I assume familiarity with basic notions of information structure. Cf. König (1991), Krifka (2007), or, for the more formally inclined, Rooth (1996) for overviews of the empirical domain from a theoretical perspective.

The literature on AEO foci is voluminous, but for the purpose of the survey in the present chapter, the informal characterizations of meaning just presented will be sufficient.<sup>3</sup>

To the best of my knowledge, no studies with a comparable empirical scope have been written to date. For this reason, the present article strives to carve out the major descriptive generalizations organizing the field of AEO foci in Vietnamese. Special problems tied to individual focus types or particles are noted throughout the chapter, but are, for the most part, left for future treatment.

As will become clear shortly, Vietnamese has a very rich system of AEO-particles. Most notably, a set of argument focus markers is opposed to a set of non-argument, or adverbial, focus markers. A second distinction can be drawn between particles interacting with foci on the one hand, and particles interacting with backgrounds on the other. A third distinction that will only concern us towards the end of the article has to do with sentence-final particles. In contradistinction to the particles that are discussed in the bulk of the chapter, viz. particles preceding foci or backgrounds, the particles discussed later come last in a sentence.

The chapter introduces the association-with-focus pattern of expressing AEO foci in section 2. Section 3 familiarizes the reader with the partition pattern of focus-background marking of Vietnamese. Ideally, the focus and the background are syntactically opposed to each other in this pattern, and both the focus and the background are morphologically marked as such. Section 3 likewise contrast focus-background partition structures with clefts. Section 4 reviews the expression of AEO foci across syntactic categories in Vietnamese; foci on direct objects, indirect objects, subjects, adjuncts and verbs are treated separately, and foci on subjects with intransitive verbs receive a discussion of their own. There is a Vietnamese free-choice construction involving indefinite pronominals in which background markers are used and which makes regular use of the partition pattern; this construction is discussed in section 5. Section 6 reviews the generalizations arrived at from a more general perspective. Section 7, finally, summarizes the main findings and puts the Vietnamese system in context before the background of the surprisingly similar system of focus-background marking in Mandarin Chinese. Language contact is identified as the

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<sup>3</sup> Classical references for ONLY include Horn (1969), Jacobs (1983) and von Stechow (1994). For a survey of the research on ONLY, cf. Horn (1996). See Krifka (1998) for an important take on ALSO. Influential contributions to the semantics of EVEN include Karttunen and Peters (1979), Kay (1990) and Krifka (1995). König (1991) gives a valuable overview of the entire empirical domain.

likely source of the similarity between Mandarin and Vietnamese, but the exact conditions of the language contact operative here must be left open.

## 2 The association-with-focus pattern (AwF)

Vietnamese has adverbial focus-sensitive particles to express AEO readings. These particles often occur in a sentence-medial position behind the subject and before the predicate as in (1). ‘Predicate’ is here taken to refer to a verbal projection comprising at least the VP and (non-epistemic) modal verbs, if there are any. Sentences where the particles are used in other positions, especially in sentence-initial position, will be discussed in subsequent sections. I call the resulting pattern of expressing AEO foci ‘association-with-focus’, or ‘AwF’, for short.<sup>4</sup> (1) and (2) provide one example each for *chỉ* ‘only’ and *thậm chí* ‘even’. (There is a syntactic complication with the adverbial ALSO particle, which we will turn to after the discussion of (1) and (2).)<sup>5,6</sup>

- (1) *Hôm qua Nam chỉ [ăn thịt bò] thôi.*  
 yesterday Nam only eat meat beef PRT  
 ‘Nam only [ate beef] yesterday.’
- (2) *Hôm qua Nam thậm chí [ăn thịt bò].*  
 yesterday Nam even eat meat beef  
 ‘Nam even [ate beef] yesterday.’

Much like their English translations, (1) and (2) are compatible with foci comprising any subconstituent, or the whole, of the bracketed constituents. (1), for instance, has at least the three potential interpretations (i) ‘The only thing that Nam did yesterday was to eat beef’ (VP focus), (ii) ‘The only thing that Nam ate yesterday was beef’ (object focus), and (iii) ‘The only thing that Nam did with

<sup>4</sup> The term ‘association-with-focus’ goes back to Rooth (1985). We will return to the theoretical significance of this terminological choice in the concluding section 6.

<sup>5</sup> The following abbreviations are used in examples: ANT – anterior tense; ASP – aspect marker; CL – classifier/determiner; CONT.CONJ – contrastive conjunction; COP – copula; FC – free-choice particle; PL – plural; POST – posterior tense; PRT – particle; PRT<sub>FOC</sub> – particle preceding foci; PRT<sub>BG</sub> – particle preceding backgrounds; Q – sentence-final question particle.

<sup>6</sup> We will discuss *thôi* in section 7. *Thôi* is a sentence-final ONLY marker which frequently co-occurs with other ONLY words. Since it is the ONLY word of Vietnamese that I know least about it is not discussed before the concluding section of the chapter.

the beef yesterday was to eat it' (verb focus). The same holds, *ceteris paribus*, for (2). Prosody partially disambiguates these different readings. Specifically, a focus accent on the verb will, under most circumstances, enforce a narrow verb focus, whereas a focus accent on the object is compatible with a wider array of readings.<sup>7,8</sup>

The difficulty arising with adverbial *cả* 'also' alluded to above is that this particle follows the verb instead of preceding it, as was the case with *chỉ* 'only' and *thậm chí* 'even'. This is shown in (3).

- (3) [*Bác nông dân nuôi lợn.*] (*Bác ấy*) *trồng cả cà chua.*  
 the farmer raise pig he grow also tomatoes  
 'The farmer raises pigs. He also grows tomatoes.'

The context provided for (3) makes it clear that the entire VP *trồng cà chua* 'grow tomatoes', as opposed to *nuôi lợn* 'raise pigs', is in focus. The focus particle separates the two parts of the focus. This is incompatible with the idea that adverbial focus-sensitive particles should c-command their foci (König 1991; Büring and Hartmann 2001). It is possible, however, to state a generalization with reference to the left edge of the VP if one says that *cả* 'also' as an adverbial particle must follow the first word of the VP, i.e. the main verb. As Thompson (1987: 271) puts it for the class of function words under which he subsumes *cả*: "Postpositive particles are movable particles occurring as complement after their immediate constituent partners." Even though this wording doesn't take into account the fact that the object together with the verb constitutes the relevant interacting category in this construction, the quote makes it clear that *cả* belongs to a distributional class whose members follow items with which they interact. In movement terms one could say that *cả* is in a syntactic position comparable to that of *chỉ* 'only' and *thậm chí* 'even' as in (1) and (2), except that for some idiosyncratic reason tied to *cả* the verb must move to a position immediately preceding the particle.<sup>9</sup> There may well be a phonological motivation

7 Cf. Schwarzschild (1999) or Büring (2006) for the conditions under which focus accents on verbs are compatible with wide foci.

8 Cf. Đỗ Thế Dũng et al. (1998) or Jannedy (2007) for studies on intonation in Vietnamese. According to Jannedy (2007), who bases her conclusions on experimental work, focus accents in Vietnamese can probably be described in terms familiar from intonation languages like English (among them segment duration,  $f_0$  excursions and amplitude).

9 Note that the V2-requirement of German, which is underlyingly OV, leads to similar patterns in main clauses. This is shown in (ia) with the derived main clause position of the inflected verb as opposed to the more basic linearization in subordinate clauses as in (ib). (Largest possible foci are marked by bracketing.)

for such a movement if *cả* is an enclitic.<sup>10</sup> At the moment I lack evidence to settle the issue, but this would certainly be a research question worth pursuing.

If the analysis is correct that *cả* may follow (parts of) its associating focus, we predict that, in the extreme case, *cả* should be possible with a narrow focus on the preceding verb. This pattern is indeed attested, as is witnessed by (4).

- (4) *Bác nông dân không chỉ ăn cà chua mà trồng<sub>F</sub> cả cà chua.*  
 the farmer not only eat tomato but grow<sub>F</sub> also tomato  
 ‘The farmer doesn’t just eat tomatoes, he also grows<sub>F</sub> tomatoes.’

The assumption of preposed verbs with *cả* receives further support from a similar pattern arising with a certain use of the modal element *được* ‘can’. In this pattern, too, the canonical order between main verb and functional element is reversed (Duffield 2001; Cheng and Sybesma 2004 discuss parallel facts for Cantonese *dak*). The SVO character of Vietnamese would generally seem to predict the order MODAL – MAIN VERB as attested in (5). But with the modal verb *được* as in (6) the reverse order MAIN VERB – MODAL occurs.

- (5) *Nam có thể ăn thịt bò.*  
 Nam can eat meat beef  
 ‘Nam can eat beef.’

- (6) *Nam ăn được thịt bò.*  
 Nam eat can meat beef  
 ‘Nam can eat beef.’ (he’s not allergic to it, or otherwise adversely affected by it)

This constitutes a parallel with the adverbial *cả* case in (3) where the main verb precedes the adverbial focus-sensitive particle. I conclude that there is some

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- (i) a. *Der Bauer [züchtet auch Tomaten].*  
 the farmer grows also tomatoes  
 ‘The farmer also [grows tomatoes].’  
 b. ... *dass der Bauer auch [Tomaten züchtet].*  
 that the farmer also tomatoes grows  
 ‘... that the farmer also [grows tomatoes].’

**10** Thanks to Stavros Skopeteas for pointing this possibility out to me.

support for the idea that the unexpected order of main verb and particle in (3) is derived and ultimately irrelevant to interpretation.<sup>11</sup>

The sentences in (5') and (6'), which combine the structures of (5) and (6) with an adverbial focus-sensitive particle, provide evidence for another pertinent generalization: The predicative constituent to the right of an adverbial focus-sensitive particle need not be a bare VP, but may include modal morphemes as well.

(5') *Nam **chỉ** có thể ăn thịt bò.*  
 Nam only can eat meat beef  
 'Nam can only eat beef.'

(6') *Nam **chỉ** ăn được thịt bò.*  
 Nam only eat can meat beef  
 'Nam can only eat beef.' (he's allergic to other things, or otherwise adversely affected by other things)

Besides modal elements, which always follow adverbial focus sensitive particles, the temporal particles *đã* 'ANTERIOR TENSE' and *sẽ* 'POSTERIOR TENSE' occur adjacent to adverbial focus-sensitive particles. *Thậm chí* 'even' precedes the temporal particles, whereas *chỉ* 'only' follows them. This is shown in (7).

- (7) a. *Nam (**thậm chí**) đã/sẽ (\***thậm chí**) ăn pho mát.*  
 Nam even ANT/POST even eat cheese  
 'Nam even ate cheese./'Nam will even eat cheese.'
- b. *Nam (\***chỉ**) đã/sẽ (**chỉ**) ăn pho mát.*  
 Nam only ANT/POST only eat cheese  
 'Nam only ate cheese./'Nam will only eat cheese.'

The position of *thậm chí* to the left of *chỉ*'s position fits in well with an observation that can be made in languages like English: if EVEN and ONLY occur in a single clause and their foci are nested, EVEN must take scope over ONLY (cf. *Paul even bought only flowers* vs. *\*Paul only bought even flowers*). Moreover, it is known that EVEN foci generally take wide scope (Krifka 1995).

If we generalize over the different cases surveyed in (6) through (7), we arrive at the schematic structure in (8). In terms of the sequence of TAM markers,

<sup>11</sup> In generative terms this amounts to saying that the verb reconstructs at LF and adverbial *cá* 'also' c-commands all parts of its focus at this level of representation.

it matches with the analogous tree-geometric architecture of functional verbal categories known, e.g., from Beck and von Stechow (2006).

(8) EVEN + tense + ONLY + modal (+ASP) + VP

Depending on one's theoretical choices, one may thus want to say that adverbial focus-sensitive particles are not, or need not be, sisters of VPs. Instead they may be said to adjoin to ModPs or TPs, i.e. to modality-marked or tense-marked constituents larger than VP. Alternatively, one could speak of the left edge of the extended VP domain as the structural position of *thậm chí*, *cả* and *chỉ*. Summarizing the discussion in this section, and evading the theoretical issue just mentioned, we can state the generalizations in (9).

(9) Adverbial focus-sensitive particles in Vietnamese

- (i) Adverbial focus-sensitive particles in Vietnamese associate with a constituent in the extended VP-projection of a sentence;
- (ii) the adverbial focus-sensitive particle for EVEN foci is *thậm chí*;
- (iii) the adverbial focus-sensitive particle for ALSO foci is *cả*;
- (iv) the adverbial focus-sensitive particle for ONLY foci is *chỉ*.

## 3 The partition pattern

### 3.1 Prototypical instantiations of the partition pattern

The prototypical partition pattern used to express AEO foci syntactically opposes an argument focus part and a background part. Either part may contain a particle yielding AEO focus readings. The structure in (10) depicts this state of affairs.

(10) THE PARTITION PATTERN (prototypical case)  
 [[PRT<sub>FOC</sub> Focus argument] [PRT<sub>BG</sub> Background]]

The particles preceding the focus in the partition pattern (PRT<sub>FOC</sub> in (10)) are different from the adverbial focus-sensitive particles discussed in section 2, and the background particles (PRT<sub>BG</sub> in (10)) constitute yet another distinct paradigm. In the clearest cases, as exemplified in (11), the focus precedes the background, and each part begins with the respective particle. Here and in the following, postverbal material which is to be construed as given is parenthesized. While its non-realization is the norm in actual discourse, its rendering in the examples is hoped to facilitate the accommodation of appropriate contexts.

- (11) a. [[**Đến** *Nam<sub>F</sub>*] [**cũng** [ăn (thịt bò)]<sub>BG</sub>]].  
 PRT<sub>FOC</sub>even *Nam* PRT<sub>BG</sub>even/also eat meat beef  
 ‘Even *Nam<sub>F</sub>* ate beef.’
- b. [[**Cả** *Nam<sub>F</sub>*] [**cũng** [ăn (thịt bò)]<sub>BG</sub>]].  
 PRT<sub>FOC</sub>also *Nam* PRT<sub>BG</sub>even/also eat meat beef  
 ‘*Nam<sub>F</sub>*, too, ate beef.’
- c. [[**Mỗi** *Nam<sub>F</sub>*] [**mới** [ăn (thịt bò)]<sub>BG</sub>]].  
 PRT<sub>FOC</sub>only *Nam* PRT<sub>BG</sub>only eat meat beef  
 ‘Only *Nam<sub>F</sub>* eats beef.’

In (11a), the EVEN focus is preceded by *đến*, and the EVEN background by *cũng*. In (11b), the ALSO focus is preceded by *cả*, while the background begins with the same particle *cũng* that was used in (11a). Note that *cả* in (11b) is analyzed as an instance of PRT<sub>FOC</sub> (i.e. as a particle which precedes arguments in focus), and not as an adverbial focus particle. The latter categorization was assumed for the homophonous form in section 2. I assume that the non-canonical adverbial syntax discussed there allows us to make this distinction. As a focus particle in the partition pattern, *cả* behaves just as the other particles of its paradigm. As an adverbial focus-sensitive expression, *cả* features the special verb-preposing behavior discussed above. (11c) makes use of the ONLY-particle *mỗi* preceding the subject focus, while the background begins with *mới* (the orthographic similarity between the two particles is misleading; we are dealing with two distinct words). The background particle *mới* is distinct from the background particle in the EVEN/ALSO cases in (11a/b).

It was stated above that the cases in (11) constitute prototypical cases with clear partitionings into focus and background. We will now turn to patterns where the partition turns out less neatly.

### 3.2 Subjects/Topics preceding background markers

One factor obscuring the picture is that, with non-subject foci, the background particle must follow the subject if there is one, even if the subject forms part of the background. This is illustrated in (12).

- (12) **Đến** [pho mát]<sub>F</sub> [*Nam cũng thích*]<sub>BG</sub>.  
 PRT<sub>FOC</sub>even cheese *Nam* PRT<sub>BG</sub>even/also like  
 ‘*Nam* likes even cheese<sub>F</sub>.’

I take this less clear-cut surface pattern of focus-background partition to reflect another information-structural partition, viz. that into topic and comment. While the fact that Nam likes, or doesn't like, certain things is under discussion and is, therefore, background, the discourse address under which this information is stored is Nam. In other words, *Nam* is the topic of (12) (this amounts to Reinhart's 1982 notion of 'aboutness' topics). There is a further complication here in that the rule requiring *Nam* to precede the background marker *cũng* is sensitive to subjects, and not to topics. It is, however, well known that the subject function is frequently the grammaticalized counterpart of the discourse function of topics. I therefore conclude that sentences like (12) don't just instantiate the focus background partition at the surface, but also the partition into subject/topic and predicate/comment.

### 3.3 Mixed structures and optional use of markers

Two more factors tend to render partition structures less transparent. Often either PRT<sub>FOC</sub> or PRT<sub>BG</sub> may be dropped, or adverbial particles may be used together with PRT<sub>FOC</sub> or PRT<sub>BG</sub>. (13)–(15) present relevant examples.

- (13) a. [[(**Đến**) *Nam*<sub>F</sub>] [**\*cũng**] [*ăn (thịt bò)*]<sub>BG</sub>]. (cf. (11a))  
 PRT<sub>FOC</sub>Even *Nam* PRT<sub>BG</sub>Even/also eat meat beef  
 'Even *Nam*<sub>F</sub> ate beef.'/'*Nam*<sub>F</sub>, too, ate beef.'
- b. [[(**Thậm chí**) (**đến**) *Nam*<sub>F</sub>] [**\*cũng**] [*ăn (thịt bò)*]<sub>BG</sub>].  
 even PRT<sub>FOC</sub>Even *Nam* PRT<sub>BG</sub>Even/also eat meat beef  
 'Even<sub>F</sub> *Nam* ate beef.'/'*Nam*<sub>F</sub>, too, ate beef.'
- (14) [[(**Cả**) *Nam*<sub>F</sub>] [**\*cũng**] [*ăn (thịt bò)*]<sub>BG</sub>]. (cf. (11b))  
 PRT<sub>FOC</sub>Also *Nam* PRT<sub>BG</sub>Even/also eat meat beef  
 '*Nam*<sub>F</sub>, too, ate beef.'
- (15) a. [**Chỉ**] [(**mỗi**) *Nam*<sub>F</sub>] [(**mới**) [*ăn (thịt bò)*]<sub>BG</sub>]. (cf. (11c))  
 only PRT<sub>FOC</sub>Only *Nam* PRT<sub>BG</sub>Only eat meat beef  
 'Only *Nam*<sub>F</sub> eats beef.'
- b. [(**Chỉ**)] [(**mỗi**) *Nam*<sub>F</sub>] [**mới**] [*ăn (thịt bò)*]<sub>BG</sub>].  
 only PRT<sub>FOC</sub>Only *Nam* PRT<sub>BG</sub>Only eat meat beef  
 'Only *Nam*<sub>F</sub> eats beef.'
- c. [(**Chỉ**)] [**mỗi**] *Nam*<sub>F</sub>] [(**mới**) [*ăn (thịt bò)*]<sub>BG</sub>].  
 only PRT<sub>FOC</sub>Only *Nam* PRT<sub>BG</sub>Only eat meat beef  
 'Only *Nam*<sub>F</sub> eats beef.'

The options in (13) illustrate the fact that either  $\text{PRT}_{\text{FOC}}$  *đến* or the adverbial marker *thậm chí*, or both, may be dropped without necessarily changing the interpretation. My consultants share the intuition, however, that the variants with *thậm chí* are less colloquial than those without. In contradistinction to the uses of adverbial *thậm chí* seen so far in (2) and (7), *thậm chí* precedes the subject in (13b).

In analogy to the EVEN cases in (13),  $\text{PRT}_{\text{FOCalso}}$  *cả* in (14) may be dropped without influencing the interpretation. Note, though, that with *cả* dropped (14) is string-identical to (13a) with *đến* dropped. Nevertheless a distinction can probably be drawn between (13) and (14) with the relevant particles left out. This is because the EVEN reading of (13) is felt to go along with a stronger focus accent on *Nam* and a more emphatic sentence intonation irrespective of whether *đến* is present or not. Put differently, it is not just the particles *đến* and *cả* that, if present, allow one to distinguish between (13) and (14), but also the more emphatic prosody of (13) if compared with (14). In contradistinction to the focus particles *cả* and *đến*, and the background particle *mỗi*, the background particle *cũng* may not be left out if a focus interpretation of the ALSO or EVEN kind is aimed at.

The ONLY-cases in (15) are different from the standard ALSO-case in (14) for at least three reasons. First, while all variants in (15) are grammatical, those that employ adverbial *chỉ*, with or without other overt markers, seem to be most natural and colloquial. In the case of the EVEN foci in (13), by contrast, the versions with adverbial *thậm chí* were identified as *less* colloquial above. Second, with ONLY foci in the partition pattern it is possible to leave out any one of the particles of the maximal structure. In the cases of ALSO foci and EVEN foci as in (13) and (14),  $\text{PRT}_{\text{BEven/also}}$  *cũng* is used no matter whether *cả*, or *đến*, precede its position or not.

At present, I cannot account for these differences between ONLY-marking and ALSO/EVEN-marking, but from a general perspective the different patterns are in line with observations made for other languages and in the theoretical literature. *Too*, *also*, *even* and *only* in English each have their peculiarities in English, and the same may be said about translational equivalents in other languages. From a theoretical perspective, such differences are to be expected for the contrast between additive focus semantics as with ALSO and EVEN as opposed to restrictive focus semantics as with ONLY. It was pointed out in section 1 that ONLY sentences entail the exclusion of alternatives, while ALSO and EVEN presuppose the inclusion of alternatives. Moreover, the necessarily emphatic nature of utterances with EVEN foci (Krifka 1995) sets these foci apart from ONLY foci and ALSO foci. What must remain a task for the future is to

match the observed distributional peculiarities of each Vietnamese particle with the general properties of each focus type.

### 3.4 Partition structures with in-situ foci

A further confounding factor in the domain of the partition pattern is that the foci marked by  $PRT_{FOC}$  need not be syntactically opposed to the background, but may also be embedded within the background. This pattern occurs with VP-internal material as illustrated in (16).

- (16) a. [*Lam cŭng cho Nam cả tiền*]<sub>BG</sub>.  
 Lam  $PRT_{BGiven/also}$  give Nam  $PRT_{FOCalso}$  money  
 ‘Lam gave Nam also money<sub>F</sub>.’
- b. [*Nam chỉ đọc mỗi sách* *thôi*]<sub>BG</sub>.  
 Nam only read  $PRT_{FOConly}$  book  $PRT$   
 ‘Nam read only [books/a book]<sub>F</sub>.’

In (16a) the object *tiền* ‘money’ is preceded by  $PRT_{FOCalso}$  *cả*, but the whole expression is embedded within the background predicate which is marked as such by  $PRT_{BGiven/also}$  *cŭng*. We will see more examples of such structures in sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2. A further peculiar fact about (16) concerns the ONLY-particle *mỗi* in (16b). We classify it as belonging to the partition pattern, but it is not embedded in a predicate background-marked by *mỗi*. Instead, the adverbial focus-sensitive ONLY-particle *chỉ* is used. The generalization seems to be that background-marking *mỗi* may precede only background material.

Abstracting away from the complications just stated, we find the preliminary topological system of focus-background partition summarized in (17).

- (17) TOPOLOGY OF THE PARTITION PATTERN FOR AEO FOCI (to be revised)
- a. The general pattern  
 $[PRT_{FOC} \text{ FOCUS}] [PRT_{BG} \text{ BACKGROUND}]$
- b. Instantiations
- |       |            |       |             |            |
|-------|------------|-------|-------------|------------|
| EVEN: | <i>đến</i> |       | <i>cŭng</i> |            |
| ALSO: | <i>cả</i>  | FOCUS | <i>cŭng</i> | BACKGROUND |
| ONLY: | <i>mỗi</i> |       | <i>mỗi</i>  |            |

We will refine our generalizations for the partition pattern in section 4.3 below. At that point it will be shown that the partition pattern interacts with the adverbial particles in a yet more general way than was discussed in connection with examples (13) through (15).

Having introduced the two basic patterns of focus construal (AwF vs. partition), we will now turn to a discussion of individual syntactic functions that may instantiate AEO foci.

## 4 AEO foci with different syntactic functions

### 4.1 Object foci

#### 4.1.1 Direct objects

There are two ways to arrive at AEO foci on direct objects. One way is to make use of the AwF pattern, the other one is to apply the partition pattern.

We have seen examples of the AwF pattern in (1)–(3) in section 2 already. These examples are repeated in (18) for convenience (with a trivial adaptation in the case of (18c)). In contradistinction to the discussion in section 2, the representations in (18) have been specified so as to restrict the readings to object foci.

- (18) DIRECT OBJECT + AwF STRATEGY
- a. *Hôm qua Nam **thậm chí** ăn [thịt bò]<sub>F</sub>.*  
yesterday Nam even eat meat beef  
'Nam even ate beef<sub>F</sub> yesterday.'
  - b. *Bác nông dân trồng **cả** [cà chua]<sub>F</sub>.*  
the farmer grow also tomatoes  
'The farmer also grows tomatoes<sub>F</sub>.'
  - c. *Hôm qua Nam **chỉ** ăn [thịt bò]<sub>F</sub> thôi.*  
yesterday Nam only eat meat beef PRT  
'Nam only ate beef<sub>F</sub> yesterday.'

A second set of sentences exemplifying the same AwF pattern is found in (19).

- (19) DIRECT OBJECT + AwF STRATEGY
- a. *Nam **thậm chí** đã đọc [quyển sách].*  
Nam even ANT read the book  
'Nam even read [the book]<sub>F</sub>.'

- b. *Nam ăn cả* [thịt gà]<sub>F</sub>.  
 Nam eat also meat chicken  
 ‘Nam also eats chicken<sub>F</sub>.’
- c. *Nó chỉ ghét tôi* thôi.  
 he only hates me PRT  
 ‘He only hates me<sub>F</sub>.’

(20) is a first set of examples of the partition pattern for AEO foci on direct objects. In these examples the objects in focus have been preposed.

(20) DIRECT OBJECT + PARTITION STRATEGY + PREPOSED FOCUS

- a. **Đến** [pho mát]<sub>F</sub> Nam **cũng** thích.  
 PRT<sub>FOEven</sub> cheese Nam PRT<sub>BGeven/also</sub> like  
 ‘Nam likes even cheese<sub>F</sub>.’
- b. **Cả** [quyển sách] Nam **cũng** đọc.  
 PRT<sub>FOAlso</sub> the book Nam PRT<sub>BGalso</sub> read  
 ‘Nam read even the book<sub>F</sub>.’
- c. (**Chỉ**) **mỗi** [thịt bò]<sub>F</sub> Nam **mới** ăn thôi.  
 only PRT<sub>FOOnly</sub> meat beef Nam PRT<sub>BGonly</sub> eat PRT  
 ‘Only beef<sub>F</sub> does Nam eat.’

My consultants report a strengthening effect for (20b) such that an EVEN reading is arrived at if the ALSO focus is preposed. This effect was absent with the subject focus in (14), presumably because that example involved no preposing. Cf. the discussion of (15) above for the fact that the ONLY focus in the partition pattern as in (20c) is, in contradistinction to EVEN foci and ALSO foci, additionally preceded by the adverbial particle *chỉ*.

As stated in 3.4 above, the foci in the partition pattern need not precede their backgrounds in each and every case if the focus is constituted by material that originally belongs in the VP. Since direct objects originate inside VP, (20b/c) have the in-situ variants in (20’b/c). EVEN foci on direct objects indicated by *đến*, by contrast, regularly trigger the clear partition pattern of (20a). The in-situ variant of (20a) in (20’a) is ungrammatical.

(20’) DIRECT OBJECT + PARTITION STRATEGY + IN SITU FOCUS

- a. \**Nam (cũng) thích đến* [pho mát]<sub>F</sub>.  
 Nam PRT<sub>BGeven/also</sub> like PRT<sub>FOEven</sub> cheese  
 int.: ‘Nam likes even cheese<sub>F</sub>.’

- b. *Nam cũng đọc cả [quyển sách]<sub>F</sub>.*  
 Nam PRT<sub>B</sub>Given/also read PRT<sub>FO</sub>Also the book  
 ‘Nam read also [the book]<sub>F</sub>.’
- c. *Nam chỉ ăn mỗi [thịt bò]<sub>F</sub> thôi.*  
 Nam only eat PRT<sub>FO</sub>Only meat beef PRT.  
 ‘Nam ate only beef<sub>F</sub>.’

A second asymmetry concerns the use of background marking *cũng* alongside *cả* in (20’b), whereas no background marking particle is used in the ONLY case in (20’c) (recall that *chỉ* is the adverbial ONLY particle; the background marker would be *mỗi*). Concerning the non-use of *mỗi* in such configurations it was stated in connection with ex. (16) above that *mỗi* may probably c-command backgrounded material only. This would predict that it cannot be used in in-situ partition structures like (20’c).

#### 4.1.2 Indirect objects

The picture that emerges for indirect objects with AEO focus interpretations is parallel to the one found with direct objects. As in the case of direct objects above, I will present paradigms for the AwF pattern and for the partition pattern. In the case of the AwF pattern, the foci are again restricted to the indirect object constituent despite the fact that identical strings are also compatible with verb foci, or VP foci. The verb figuring in examples (21)–(23) is *cho* ‘give’. Just as in the English construction *give s.o. s.th.*, the goal argument precedes the theme argument.

##### (21) INDIRECT OBJECT + AwF STRATEGY

- a. *Nam thậm chí/chỉ cho [học sinh]<sub>F</sub> tiền.*  
 Nam even/only give student money  
 ‘Nam only/even gives students<sub>F</sub> money.’
- b. *Nam cho cả [học sinh]<sub>F</sub> tiền.*  
 Nam give also student money  
 ‘Nam also gives students<sub>F</sub> money.’

(22) provides the paradigm for preposed indirect objects in the partition pattern, and (23) assembles the in-situ variants. Preposing of the ALSO focus in (22b) triggers the same strengthening effect observed with the direct object in (20b) above.

- (22) INDIRECT OBJECT + PARTITION STRATEGY + PREPOSED FOCUS
- a. **Đến** [học sinh]<sub>F</sub> Nam **cũng** cho (tiền).  
 PRT<sub>FOCeven</sub> student Nam PRT<sub>BGeven/also</sub> give money  
 ‘Even to [the student(s)]<sub>F</sub>, Nam gives money.’
- b. **Cả** [học sinh]<sub>F</sub> Nam **cũng** cho (tiền).  
 PRT<sub>FOCalso</sub> student Nam PRT<sub>BGeven/also</sub> give money  
 ‘Even to [the student(s)]<sub>F</sub>, Nam gives money.’
- c. **Chỉ mỗi** [học sinh]<sub>F</sub> Nam **mới** cho (tiền).  
 only PRT<sub>FOConly</sub> student Nam PRT<sub>BGonly</sub> give money  
 ‘Only to [the student(s)]<sub>F</sub> does Nam give money.’
- (23) INDIRECT OBJECT + PARTITION STRATEGY + IN SITU FOCUS
- a. \***Nam cũng** cho **đến** [học sinh]<sub>F</sub> (tiền).  
 Nam PRT<sub>BGeven/also</sub> give PRT<sub>FOCeven</sub> student money  
 int.: ‘Nam gives even [students]<sub>F</sub> money.’
- b. **Nam cũng** cho **cả** [học sinh]<sub>F</sub> (tiền).  
 Nam PRT<sub>BGeven/also</sub> give PRT<sub>FOCalso</sub> student money  
 ‘Nam gives also [students]<sub>F</sub> money.’
- c. Nam **chỉ** cho **mỗi** [học sinh]<sub>F</sub> (tiền) thôi.  
 Nam only give PRT<sub>FOConly</sub> student money PRT  
 ‘Nam gives only [students]<sub>F</sub> money.’

As is the case in English and many other languages, Vietnamese has a second argument frame for ditransitive predications. Instead of strings of type V IO DO, we also find strings of type V DO P IO as in English *give the present to Bertha*. I call this the prepositional IO pattern. The Vietnamese prepositional IO pattern is *đưa* DO *cho* IO. The preposition used (*cho*) is identical in form to the verb *cho* of the V IO DO pattern.<sup>12</sup>

In (24a), an example with focus on a prepositional object is given for the AwF pattern.

<sup>12</sup> This kind of polysemy between verbs of giving and directional prepositions occurs in many languages that employ verb serialization (with this term taken in a broad sense here), and it is the norm in the language area where Vietnamese is spoken (cf. Bisang 1992).

## (24) PREPOSITIONAL OBJECT + AwF STRATEGY

a. *Nam **thậm chí/chỉ** đưa tiền cho [học sinh]<sub>F</sub>.*

Nam even/only give money to student

‘Nam even/only gives money to students<sub>F</sub>.’

b. \**Nam đưa **cả** tiền cho [học sinh]<sub>F</sub>.*

Nam give also money to student

‘Nam also gives money to students<sub>F</sub>.’

It is not clear to me why the structure with postverbal adverbial *cả* cannot be used if narrow focus on the indirect/prepositional object is intended. While I conjecture that this has something to do with the non-canonical syntax of adverbial *cả*, I’m unable to state the exact reason for the unavailability of (24b) with the intended reading.

The partition pattern with preposed foci in the prepositional IO pattern produces degraded structures with preposition-marked IOs, or at least these structures have more specific requirements than the preposing partition patterns with the V IO DO pattern. (25) bears witness of this.

## (25) PREPOSITIONAL OBJECT + PARTITION STRATEGY + PREPOSED FOCUS

a. \*?***Đến** học sinh giàu<sub>F</sub> Nam **cũng** đưa tiền cho.*

PRT<sub>FO</sub>Even student rich Nam PRT<sub>B</sub>Even/also give money to

‘Nam gave money even to the rich<sub>F</sub> students.’

b. ?***Chỉ mỗi** học sinh nghèo<sub>F</sub> Nam **mới** đưa tiền cho thôi.*

only PRT<sub>FO</sub>Only student poor Nam PRT<sub>B</sub>Only give money to PRT

‘Only to the poor<sub>F</sub> students did Nam give money.’

What appears to contribute to the difficulties in the preposing structure in the prepositional IO pattern of (25a) is the fact that the preposition is stranded. Moreover, and possibly unrelatedly, one of my consultants provided the additional adjective *nghèo* ‘poor’, which will typically yield a narrow focus on this adjective within the larger pied-piped DP *học sinh nghèo* ‘the poor student(s)’. At the moment, I lack further information concerning the exact reasons for the degraded status of (25a), and why (25b) is rated a lot better by my consultants.

Due to the strengthening generally observed with preposed ALSO foci, (26) with *cả* instead of *đến*, if it is good, means the same as (25a) (cf. the discussion of (20b) and (22b) above).

- (26) ??**Cả**            *học sinh giàu<sub>F</sub> Nam cũng            đưa tiền cho.*  
 PRT<sub>FO</sub>Calso student rich Nam PRT<sub>B</sub>Geven/also give money to  
 ‘Nam gave money even to the rich<sub>F</sub> students.’

## 4.2 Subject foci with transitive verbs

(Intended) AEO subject foci with transitive verbs in the AwF pattern are presented in (27).

(27) SUBJECT + TRANSITIVE VERB + AwF STRATEGY

- a. **Thậm chí** Nam<sub>F</sub> *ăn cả (thịt bò).*  
 even Nam eat also meat beef  
 ‘Even Nam<sub>F</sub> eats beef.’
- b. \*Nam<sub>F</sub> *ăn cả (thịt bò).*  
 Nam eat also meat beef  
 int.: ‘Nam<sub>F</sub> eats beef, too.’
- [b’. **Cả** Nam<sub>F</sub> \*(**cũng**) *ăn (thịt bò).*  
 PRT<sub>FO</sub>Calso Nam PRT<sub>B</sub>Geven/also eat meat beef  
 ‘Nam<sub>F</sub>, too, eats beef.’]
- c. **Chỉ** Nam<sub>F</sub> *ăn (thịt bò).*  
 only Nam eat meat beef  
 ‘Only Nam<sub>F</sub> eats beef.’

(27b) shows that ALSO foci on subjects cannot be signaled by the adverbial ALSO particle *cả* with its peculiar verb-preposing property (cf. (3)/(4) in section 2). Given the use of *cả* in the initial position of the bracketed (27b’), one may be tempted to analyze this example as a case where the adverbial particle *cả* – which is homophonous with the ad-argument particle – embeds the complete sentence just like *chỉ* in (27c). The impossibility to drop background marking *cũng*, though, indicates that (27b’) is to be analyzed as an instance of the partition pattern with *cả* instantiating the ad-argument particle. In contradistinction to the ALSO case, the ONLY focus on the subject with the adverbial particle *chỉ* in (27c) yields a grammatical structure.

The partition patterns for subject foci look as in (28) and (29).

- (28) SUBJECT + PARTITION STRATEGY + PREPOSED FOCUS
- a. **Đến** *Nam<sub>F</sub>* **cũng** *ăn (thịt bò).*  
 PRT<sub>FOCeven</sub> Nam PRT<sub>BGeven/also</sub> eat meat beef  
 ‘Even Nam<sub>F</sub> eats beef.’
- b. **Cả** *Nam<sub>F</sub>* **cũng** *ăn (thịt bò).*  
 PRT<sub>FOCalso</sub> Nam PRT<sub>BGeven/also</sub> eat meat beef  
 ‘Nam<sub>F</sub>, too, eats beef.’
- c. (**Chỉ**) *mỗi* *Nam<sub>F</sub>* **mới** *ăn (thịt bò).*  
 only PRT<sub>FOConly</sub> Nam PRT<sub>BGonly</sub> eat meat beef  
 ‘Only Nam<sub>F</sub> eats beef.’
- (29) SUBJECT + PARTITION STRATEGY + IN SITU FOCUS
- a. **Đến** *Nam<sub>F</sub>* \*(**cũng**) *ăn (thịt bò).*  
 PRT<sub>FOCeven</sub> Nam PRT<sub>BGeven/also</sub> eat meat beef  
 ‘Even Nam<sub>F</sub> eats beef.’
- b. **Cả** *Nam<sub>F</sub>* \*(**cũng**) *ăn (thịt bò).*  
 PRT<sub>FOCalso</sub> Nam PRT<sub>BGeven/also</sub> eat meat beef  
 ‘Nam<sub>F</sub>, too, eats beef.’
- c. **Chỉ** *mỗi* *Nam<sub>F</sub>* (**mới**) *ăn (thịt bò).*  
 only PRT<sub>FOConly</sub> Nam PRT<sub>BGonly</sub> eat meat beef  
 ‘Only Nam<sub>F</sub> eats beef.’

As before, the partition patterns for ONLY foci in (28) and (29) are peculiar in that adverbial *chỉ* is preferably used in sentence-initial position alongside the ad-argument focus marker. It is doubtful whether an in-situ partition pattern for subjects with EVEN foci and ALSO foci really exists, because the grammatical variants in (29a/b) are string-identical to (28a/b). A similar question may be raised in connection with (29c) with the ONLY focus in the in-situ partition pattern, except that, here, the background marker may be dropped.

### 4.3 Adjunct foci

For adjunct foci in the partition pattern, I will provide data of two different structural types: adjunct foci in simple sentences, and foci in adjunct clauses within complex sentences. Before turning to those structures, the AwF pattern for adjunct foci in simple clauses is covered. I have no data illustrating the AwF pattern for complex clauses with foci in adjunct clauses whose focus markers take matrix scope.

### 4.3.1 Adjunct foci in simplex sentences

(30) is a paradigm of AEO foci on adjuncts in the AwF pattern.

(30) ADJUNCT + AwF STRATEGY

- a. *Năm ngoài Nam làm việc **thậm chí** vào [chủ nhật]<sub>F</sub>.*  
last year Nam do work even on Sunday  
'Last year Nam worked even on Sundays<sub>F</sub>.'
- b. *Năm ngoài Nam làm việc **cả** vào [chủ nhật]<sub>F</sub>.*  
last year Nam do work also on Sunday  
'Last year Nam worked also on Sundays<sub>F</sub>.'
- c. *Năm ngoài Nam làm việc **chỉ** vào [thứ ba]<sub>F</sub>.*  
last year Nam do work only on Tuesday  
'Last year Nam worked only on Tuesdays<sub>F</sub>.'

In (30) the adverbial focus-sensitive expressions occur syntactically close to the adjuncts with which they interact. In addition, *thậm chí* in the preverbal position does seem to allow for EVEN readings on adjuncts.<sup>13</sup>

The partition pattern for adjunct foci in simplex clauses yields the paradigm in (31).

(31) ADJUNCT + PARTITION STRATEGY + SIMPLEX SENTENCE

- a. *Năm ngoài **thậm chí** vào [chủ nhật]<sub>F</sub> Nam **cũng** làm việc.*  
last year even on Sunday Nam PRT<sub>B</sub>Even/also do work  
'Last year Nam worked even on Sundays<sub>F</sub>.'
- b. *Năm ngoài **cả** vào [chủ nhật]<sub>F</sub> Nam **cũng** làm việc.*  
last year also on Sunday Nam PRT<sub>B</sub>Even/also do work  
'Last year Nam also worked on Sundays<sub>F</sub>.'
- c. *Năm ngoài **chỉ** vào [thứ ba]<sub>F</sub> Nam **mới** làm việc.*  
last year only on Tuesday Nam PRT<sub>B</sub>Only do work  
'Last year Nam worked only on Tuesdays<sub>F</sub>.'

<sup>13</sup> I.e., sentences like (i) with the interpretation given in the translation are grammatical.

(i) *Năm ngoài Nam **thậm chí** làm việc **vào** [chủ nhật]<sub>F</sub>.*  
last year Nam even do work on Sunday  
'Last year Nam even worked on [Sundays]<sub>F</sub>.'

The examples in (31) all involve preposing. In-situ partition structures are not provided, but they are possible with *cả* ‘also’. It is worth pointing out that the automatic strengthening effect that we observed with preposed ALSO foci that are *arguments* is probably absent with *non-arguments* (i.e., (31b) is not necessarily interpreted as ‘Last year Nam worked *even* on Sundays’).<sup>14</sup>

If compared with the other partition structures discussed so far, an important difference emerges. The particles marking the foci in previous examples have all been from class PRT<sub>FOC</sub>, i.e. from the class of focus markers for argument expressions. The general pattern of these pairings of focus and background particles is repeated in (32)(= (17)).

(32) TOPOLOGY OF THE PARTITION PATTERN FOR AEO FOCI (to be revised)

a. The general pattern

[PRT<sub>FOC</sub> FOCUS] [PRT<sub>BG</sub> BACKGROUND]

b. Instantiations

EVEN: *đến* *cũng*

ALSO: *cả* FOCUS *cũng* BACKGROUND

ONLY: *mỗi* *mỗi*

What we find in (31), though, is that the adverbial focus-sensitive particles that have figured in the AwF patterns of previous sections now combine with the background markers that were so far only matched with the ad-argument focus particles of class PRT<sub>FOC</sub>. Our topology of the partition pattern for AEO foci should thus be modified as in (33) to allow for either possibility depending on whether arguments or non-arguments are in focus in the partition pattern.

<sup>14</sup> Stavros Skopeteas (p.c.) has suggested to carve out the difference between arguments and adjuncts with a minimal pair corresponding to *The cat jumped only onto the table* vs. *The cat slept only on the table*. I tested these sentences, but the result was inconclusive. Both sentences may have *mỗi* in them, the particle hypothesized here to mark argument foci only; cf. (i) and (ii).

(i) *Con mèo chỉ nhảy mỗi lên bàn.*  
the cat only jump PRT<sub>FOConly</sub> onto table  
‘The cat jumped only onto the table.’

(ii) *Con mèo chỉ ngủ mỗi trên bàn.*  
the cat only sleep PRT<sub>FOConly</sub> onto table  
‘The cat slept only on the table.’

The parallel construal of the PPs in (i) and (ii) with *mỗi* need not be counterevidence to the claim defended in the main text, viz. that arguments have focus markers of their own, among them *mỗi*. ‘Sleeping’-verbs frequently classify as verbs of posture with PP complements that are subcategorized for (like ‘live’, ‘stand’, ‘lie’, ‘sit’; Chinese is a case in point). Therefore one would have to construe a minimal pair with a different set of verbs. I haven’t done this.

## (33) TOPOLOGY OF THE PARTITION PATTERN FOR AEO FOCI (revised)

## a. The general pattern

$$[\text{PRT}_{\text{FOC}}/\text{PRT}_{\text{ADV}} \text{ FOCUS}] [\text{PRT}_{\text{BG}} \text{ BACKGROUND}]$$

## b. Instantiations

ALSO:	<i>cả/cả</i>		<i>cũng</i>	
EVEN:	<i>đến/thậm chí</i>	FOCUS	<i>cũng</i>	BACKGROUND
ONLY:	<i>mỗi/chỉ</i>		<i>mới</i>	

## 4.3.2 Adjunct foci in complex sentences

Complex sentences with foci in adjunct clauses are found in (34).

## (34) ADJUNCT + PARTITION STRATEGY + COMPLEX SENTENCE

- a. {**Ngay cả/Thậm chí (cả)**} *khi thời tiết đẹp<sub>F</sub> Nam cũng*  
 even also/even also when weather good Nam  $\text{PRT}_{\text{BEven/also}}$

*đi ô tô.*

drive car

‘Even when/if the weather is good<sub>F</sub> Nam still drives with his car.’

- b. **Cả** *khi thời tiết đẹp<sub>F</sub> Nam cũng đi ô tô.*  
 also when weather good Nam  $\text{PRT}_{\text{BEven/also}}$  drive car

‘Nam also drives with his car when/if the weather is good<sub>F</sub>.’

- c. **Chỉ** *khi thời tiết xấu<sub>F</sub> Nam mới đi ô tô.*  
 only when weather bad Nam  $\text{PRT}_{\text{BGonly}}$  drive car

‘Only when/if the weather is bad<sub>F</sub> does Nam drive with his car.’

With the exception of *ngay* in (34a), the complex sentence patterns employ exactly those markers that we have seen in the simple sentences already.

We may say, by way of summary, that Vietnamese adjunct foci in simple sentences may be encoded in the AwF pattern, or in the partition pattern. In complex sentences with foci in adverbial or adjunct clauses, only examples in the partition pattern were presented. Background particles with adjunct foci are not matched with focus particles from class  $\text{PRT}_{\text{FOC}}$  as in the case of argument foci, but with particles from the adverbial paradigm. I.e., the split in the system that separates partition structures from non-partition structures cannot be aligned with the use of adverbial particles as opposed to particles from class  $\text{PRT}_{\text{FOC}}$  if adjunct foci are taken into consideration. We will return to the issue in section 6, where the resulting system will also be represented schematically.

#### 4.4 Verb foci

With verbs in AEO focus, we find the sole availability of the AwF pattern. The partition pattern seems to be excluded. Accordingly, the examples in (35) through (38) all involve adverbial association-with-focus by means of *thậm chí* ‘even’, *cả* ‘also’ (with its characteristic preposing of the verb) and *chỉ* ‘only’.

(35) VERB + AwF STRATEGY

*Hôm qua Nam thậm chí ăn<sub>F</sub> pho mát(, chứ không chỉ đứng nhìn).*  
 yesterday Nam even eat cheese CONTR.CONJ not only stand see  
 ‘Yesterday Nam even ate<sub>F</sub> the cheese(, he didn’t just look at it).’

(36) VERB + AwF STRATEGY

*Nam thậm chí không thèm nhìn<sub>F</sub> pho mát.*  
 Nam even not want see cheese  
 ‘Nam didn’t even want to look<sub>F</sub> at the cheese.’

(37) VERB + AwF STRATEGY

*Bác nông dân không chỉ ăn cà chua mà trồng<sub>F</sub> cả cà chua.*  
 the farmer not only eat tomato but grow<sub>F</sub> also tomato  
 ‘The farmer doesn’t just eat tomatoes, he also grows<sub>F</sub> tomatoes.’

(38) VERB + AwF STRATEGY

Q: *Có phải hôm qua Nam nấu và ăn thịt bò không?*  
 is.it.true yesterday Nam cook and eat meat beef Q  
 ‘Did Nam cook and eat the beef yesterday?’

A: *Không, nó chỉ nấu<sub>F</sub> (thịt bò) thôi.*  
 no he only cook meat beef PRT  
 ‘No, he only cooked<sub>F</sub> the beef/it.’

(35) is a sentence in which *ăn* ‘eat’ is an EVEN focus; eating is construed as the contextually identified superlative relation in terms of unexpectedness that may hold between Nam and cheese; by contrast, just looking (at cheese) is the contextually given more likely relationship.

(36) shows that negation intervening – and possibly scoping between – the focus operator and the focus does not alter the picture.<sup>15</sup> From the perspective of

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Gast and van der Auwera (2010) for discussion of analytic options in the typology of scalar additive operators with respect to the interaction with negation and other entailment-reversing operators.

English, this is not much of a surprise (cf. the English translation of (36)). But languages like German or Dutch have special EVEN markers that must be used in such configurations (*nicht einmal*, *auch nicht* ‘not even’ in German, *zelfs niet*, *niet eens* ‘not even’ in Dutch; cf. König 1991).

(37) with its special verb-preposing syntax is identical to (4). The discourse in (38), finally, enforces a narrow ONLY focus on the verb *nấu* ‘cook’.

#### 4.5 Sentences with intransitive verbs

In this subsection, we will take a look at AEO foci with intransitive verbs. We will discuss how narrow AEO argument focus and broad AEO sentence focus are expressed in these structures. Since the expression of argument focus is as with transitives, we will concentrate on the differences between sentences with unaccusatives and unergatives in their potential to express narrow focus or broad (sentence) focus.

There is no difference between sentences with unaccusative and unergative verbs in terms of the availability of different readings in the AwF pattern (all-new/thetic vs. subject in focus vs. verb in focus). Thetic readings and subject foci are available while verb foci are excluded. (39) illustrates this for ONLY foci.

- (39) a. INTRANSITIVE VERB + UNACCUSATIVE + AwF STRATEGY

**Chỉ** cây đổ.

only tree topple.over

- (i) ‘The only thing that was the case was that [the tree toppled over]<sub>F</sub>.’  
(the chair wasn’t blown away)  
(ii) ‘Only [the tree]<sub>F</sub> toppled over.’ (the lamp post didn’t)  
\*(iii) ‘The tree only [toppled over]<sub>F</sub>.’ (it didn’t burst in addition)

- b. INTRANSITIVE VERB + UNERGATIVE + AwF STRATEGY

**Chỉ** thầy giáo nhảy.

only teacher dance

- (i) ‘It was only the case that [the teacher danced]<sub>F</sub>.’ (nothing else happened)  
(ii) ‘Only [the teacher]<sub>F</sub> danced.’ (the students didn’t)  
\*(iii) ‘The teacher only [danced]<sub>F</sub>.’ (he didn’t smile happily at the same time)

If a narrow focus on the verb is intended, the particles must immediately precede the verbs as in (40).

- (40) a. INTRANSITIVE VERB + UNACCUSATIVE + AwF STRATEGY  
*Cây **chỉ** đổ                      thôi.*  
 tree only topple.over PRT  
 ‘The tree only [toppled over]<sub>F</sub>.’ (it didn’t burst in addition)
- b. INTRANSITIVE VERB + UNERGATIVE + AwF STRATEGY  
*Thầy giáo **chỉ** nhảy<sub>F</sub> thôi.*  
 teacher only dance PRT  
 ‘The teacher only danced<sub>F</sub>.’ (he didn’t smile happily at the same time)

There are at least two non-ambiguous ways to narrow the focus down to the subject. These two ways are (i) partition structures with background markers and (ii) *lâ*-clefts (not covered here; but cf. Hole 2008: 17–20; 36–37). Special intonation patterns may be a further possibility.

Strategy (i) alone, partition structures with background markers in non-modalized contexts, is generally available with EVEN foci and with ALSO foci (cf. (41a/a’/b/b’)). In accordance with our generalizations about the partition pattern for EVEN foci and ALSO foci we always find background-marking *cũng* in (41a/a’/b/b’). For ONLY foci, we get a split. Unaccusative *đổ* ‘topple over’ yields ungrammatical results in a partition structure with background marking *mới* (cf. (41c)), whereas unergative *nhảy* ‘dance’ yields a grammatical sentence (cf. (41c’)).

- (41) INTRANSITIVE VERB + PARTITION STRATEGY
- a. **Đến**            [*cái cây*]<sub>F</sub> **cũng**            *đổ*.  
 PRT<sub>FOEven</sub> the tree PRT<sub>BEven/also</sub> topple.over  
 ‘Even [the tree]<sub>F</sub> toppled over.’
- a’. **Đến**            [*thầy giáo*]<sub>F</sub> **cũng**            *nhảy*.  
 PRT<sub>FOEven</sub> teacher PRT<sub>BEven/also</sub> dance  
 ‘Even [the teacher]<sub>F</sub> danced.’
- b. **Cả**            [*cái cây*]<sub>F</sub> **cũng**            *đổ*.  
 PRT<sub>FOalso</sub> the tree PRT<sub>BEven/also</sub> topple.over  
 ‘[The tree]<sub>F</sub>, too, toppled over.’
- b’. **Cả**            [*thầy giáo*]<sub>F</sub> **cũng**            *nhảy*.  
 PRT<sub>FOalso</sub> teacher PRT<sub>BEven/also</sub> dance  
 ‘[The teacher]<sub>F</sub> danced, too.’

- c. **Chỉ mỗi** [cái cây]<sub>F</sub> (\***mới**) **đổ**.  
 only PRT<sub>FO</sub>only the tree PRT<sub>BG</sub>only topple.over  
 int.: ‘Only [the tree]<sub>F</sub> toppled over.’
- c’. **Chỉ mỗi** [thầy giáo]<sub>F</sub> (**mới**) **nhảy**.  
 only PRT<sub>FO</sub>only teacher PRT<sub>BG</sub>only dance  
 int.: ‘Only [the teacher]<sub>F</sub> danced.’

While one expects the difference between unaccusatives and unergatives to surface somewhere, the interpretation of the contrast between (41c) and (41c’) is by no means trivial. First, it is unclear why the contrast arises with ONLY foci only. Second, one would like to know whether the differing availability of background-marking *mới* reflects different structural positions of the foci. One could imagine that, due to their agentive semantics, subjects of unergatives like *nhảy* ‘dance’ must surface higher, i.e. in a position more to the left than subjects of unaccusatives like *đổ* ‘topple over’. It could then be the case that just the position more to the left actually precedes the structural position of *mới*, and that *mới* with unaccusatives is ungrammatical for that reason. In the absence of further evidence this is just a speculation, though.

This concludes our survey of AEO foci in sentences with intransitive verbs.

## 5 Partition structures and free-choice

The background marker for AE foci, *cũng*, occurs in at least one more construction expressing universal quantification with specific restrictions in terms of information structure, viz. in free-choice constructions. The present section discusses this construction, but I am not aiming at an exhaustive coverage of the empirical domain.

(42a) is an example of a free-choice construction obligatorily employing *cũng*.

- (42) a. {Đứa nào/ Ai} Nam \*(**cũng**) thích (cả).  
 person which/ who Nam PRT<sub>BG</sub>also/even like FC  
 ‘Nam likes everyone<sub>F</sub>.’/‘Nam likes whoever there is.’
- b. \*Nam **cũng** thích {đứa nào/ ai} (cả).  
 Nam PRT<sub>BG</sub>also/even like person which/ who FC  
 int.: ‘Nam likes everyone<sub>F</sub>.’/‘Nam likes whoever there is.’

In (42a) the object constituent contains an indefinite pronominal (glossed by a *wh*-word; cf. Tran and Bruening in this volume for more discussion of indefinite pronominals/*wh*-words), and it must be preposed (cf. the ungrammaticality of (42b) with the in-situ object). (There are two ways to encode the human indefinite, either analytically with the phrase *đứa nào* ‘which person’, or with a single-word indefinite for humans *ai* ‘who’.) *Cũng* must not be dropped. I analyze this construction as a free-choice construction, where universal quantification is over arbitrary valuations of the person variable. This means that a sentence like (42a) asserts that for the (arbitrarily) chosen value from the domain of persons we get the truth-value 1 for the sentence, and choosing any other value would likewise yield 1.<sup>16</sup>

(43) demonstrates how things change under negation.

- (43) a'. *Nam (\*cũng) chẳng thích {đứa nào/ ai} (cả).*  
 Nam PRT<sub>BG</sub>also/even not.EMPH like person which/ who FC  
 ‘Nam likes [nobody (whatsoever)]<sub>F</sub>.’  
 (good with *cũng* as ‘It is also the case that Nam likes nobody (whatsoever).’)
- a'. *Chẳng {đứa nào/ ai} là Nam thích (cả).*  
 not.EMPH which person/ who COP Nam like FC  
 ‘Nam likes [nobody (whatsoever)]<sub>F</sub>.’
- b. *\*{Đứa nào/ Ai} Nam chẳng thích (cả).*  
 person which/ who Nam not.EMPH like FC  
 int.: ‘Nam likes nobody<sub>F</sub>.’

<sup>16</sup> More precisely, this analysis amounts to saying that the focus in free-choice constructions in Vietnamese is on the relevant operator, i.e. that device that picks out a particular referent from the relevant domain, and that alternative operators would pick out other referents with the same truth-functional outcome. This construal of free-choice semantics allows us to identify the operator in free-choice constructions with the choice function, i.e. the  $\epsilon$ -operator (von Stechow 1997; cf. also Giannakidou 2001 on the analysis of free-choice constructions). This is an indirect way of arriving at universal quantification over the entire domain. Cf. Hole (2004: sect. 4.3.4, 2006: 344–5) for the parallel case in Mandarin. A more widely adopted analysis of free-choice semantics was developed by Kratzer and Shimoyama (2002). Kratzer and Shimoyama analyze free-choice pronouns as denoting sets of type-identical elements. The crosslinguistic tendency to have a single pronominal form for pronouns with a negative polarity semantics and with a free-choice semantics speaks in favor of the analysis sketched above in terms of quantification over choice functions. Since NPIs are not typically interpreted as sets (Krifka 1995), one may wish to maintain a parallel semantics for free-choice pronouns, too.

(43a) is the negation of (42a). The sentence features the emphatic negative particle *chãng*; non-emphatic *không* ‘not’ may not be used. The indefinite pronominals must stay in situ if nothing else changes alongside (cf. the ungrammaticality of (43b), where the indefinite pronominals have moved). With this syntax, the use of background marking *cũng* is deviant (unless an ALSO-reading with wide scope is aimed at where *cũng* is not part of the construction under discussion, i.e. a reading like ‘Nam, too, likes nobody (whatsoever)’). (43a’) is a variant of (43a) where the pronominal has been preposed and which is grammatical. The reason for the grammaticality is that the negation precedes the pronominals as in (43a) because the negative particle has likewise been preposed. With preposing of the pronominals, the copula *là* must be used before the predicate. This copula is the same element that occurs in clefts (cf. Hole 2008: 17–20; 36–37). The pattern instantiated by (43a’) is special in that it has an indefinite pronominal in what appears to be a clefted position. An English translation as *It is Nobody who Nam likes* is deviant because the clefted constituent may not be a quantifier.<sup>17</sup> A more adequate structure to mimic the preposing syntax in English would seem to be one involving *do*-support (*Nobody does Nam like*). This, in turn, would cast doubt on a free-choice analysis for the Vietnamese structure under scrutiny, viz. structures with preposed negation and indefinite pronominal plus *là* as a functional equivalent of the in-situ structures as in (43a). This is so because the universal quantification relevant to the interpretation of a sentence like *Nobody does Nam like* derives from the quantifier alone. In the analysis of the free-choice construction that we have sketched above and in footnote 16, the effect of universal quantification arises in the focus-semantic domain: the arbitrarily chosen valuation of the assertion yields a true sentence, and so would any alternative valuations. For the time being, I will continue to treat the preposing structure in (43a’) as a free-choice construction, but the issue needs to be revisited.

The sentences in (42) and (43) have an optional free-choice particle *cả* at the end of the sentence. Note that we have discussed *cả* as an adverbial focus sensitive particle ‘also’ and as a homophonous ad-focus particle in previous sections. I assume that the free-choice marker *cả* is at least related to these uses by polysemy. Free-choice *cả* does not seem to form a constituent with the pronominals since it occurs in sentence-final position in (43b), a sentence in which the pronominals have been preposed; *cả* would be predicted to move along if it formed a constituent with the indefinite arguments.

<sup>17</sup> The cleft structure with a focus accent on *nobody* should not be confounded with an acceptable English sentence like *It is nobody who Nam LIKES* [; *it is someone who he DESPISES*]. In the latter construction the relative clause restricts the person variable and forms a constituent with the pronominal. Any verb may embed the pronominal in such a construction (cf. *I met nobody who Nam likes*). Cleft constructions as discussed in the text are restricted to cooccur with copulae.

Table 1 summarizes the properties of Vietnamese free-choice-constructions with positive and negative polarity that we have discussed.

	Positive polarity	Negative polarity
position of indefinite pronominal	Preposed	preposed (with negation)/in situ
use of background marker <i>cũng</i>	Yes	No
use of COP <i>là</i>	No	yes (with preposing of indefinite pronominal)
use of free-choice marker <i>cả</i>	Possible	Possible
form of negation	d.n.a.	emphatic negation <i>chả</i>

**Table 1:** Properties of free-choice constructions with positive and negative polarity

Examples with indefinite/free-choice pronominals other than *đứa nào* ‘which person’ and *ai* ‘who’ are found in (44) through (46). The a-examples feature positive polarity, the b-examples negative polarity. The b’-examples involve preposing of the negation particle and the pronominal.

(44) PLACE

- a. {*Chỗ nào/ Đâu*} *Nam* \*(*cũng*) *lau chùi* (*cả*).  
 place which/ where Nam PRT<sub>BGeven/also</sub> clean FC  
 ‘Nam cleans up everywhere<sub>F</sub>.’
- b. *Nam chẳng lau chùi* {*chỗ nào/ đâu*} (*cả*).  
 Nam not.EMPH clean place which/ where FC  
 ‘Nam cleans up [nowhere (whatsoever)]<sub>F</sub>.’
- b’. *Chẳng* {*chỗ nào/ đâu*} *là Nam lau chùi* (*cả*).  
 not.EMPH place which/ where COP Nam clean FC  
 ‘Nam cleans up [nowhere (whatsoever)]<sub>F</sub>.’

(45) TIME

- a. *Lúc nào Nam* \*(*cũng*) *lau chùi*.  
 time which Nam PRT<sub>BGeven/also</sub> clean  
 ‘Nam cleans up [at any time]<sub>F</sub>.’
- b. *Nam chẳng lúc nào lau chùi* (*cả*).  
 Nam not.EMPH time which clean FC  
 ‘Nam [never (ever)]<sub>F</sub> cleans up.’
- b’. *Chẳng lúc nào là Nam lau chùi* (*cả*).  
 not.EMPH time which COP Nam clean FC  
 ‘Nam [never (ever)]<sub>F</sub> cleans up.’

(46) THING

a. *Cái gì Nam \*(cũng) lau chùi.*  
 thing what Nam PRT<sub>B</sub>Even/also clean  
 ‘Nam cleans up everything<sub>F</sub>.’

b. *Nam chẳng lau chùi cái gì (cả).*  
 Nam not.EMPH clean thing what FC  
 ‘Nam cleans up [nothing (whatsoever)]<sub>F</sub>.’

b'. *Chẳng cái gì là Nam lau chùi (cả).*  
 not.EMPH thing what COP Nam clean FC  
 ‘Nam cleans up [nothing (whatsoever)]<sub>F</sub>.’

There are probably further specialized indefinite pronominal expressions that figure in free-choice constructions like the ones in (42) through (46). They are used to express free-choice meanings of other semantic types, e.g. manner or cardinality. Since I lack sufficient evidence to exclude that some, or all, of these additional expressions instantiate constructions that are *not* free-choice constructions I must leave the exact delimitation of free-choice constructions in Vietnamese for future research.

## 6 The patterns of focus marking in Vietnamese: three orthogonal dimensions of classification

Table 2 presents a first classification of Vietnamese focus-sensitive expressions as it has emerged from the discussion above.<sup>18</sup>

	Adverbial particles	Argument focus markers	Background markers
EVEN	<i>thậm chí</i>	<i>đến</i>	<i>cũng</i>
ALSO	<i>cả</i>	<i>cả</i>	<i>cũng</i>
ONLY	<i>chỉ</i>	<i>mỗi</i>	<i>mới</i>

**Table 2:** Vietnamese focus-sensitive expressions with AEO foci (to be revised)

<sup>18</sup> Table 2 deliberately refrains from making use of a representation format with more under-specification. To be sure, one could also have a single instance of *cả* and *cũng*, respectively, and use it to fill two adjacent positions. Since I'm not sufficiently confident about the nature of the observed identities on the signifier side (and whether both identities should be treated on

In a sense, Table 2 constitutes an idealization. To sharpen the picture in the previous sections, I have not usually represented those variants of EVEN foci which have *đến* or *thậm chí* immediately followed by *cả* without changing the interpretation; cf. (34a), repeated here as (47).

- (47) {*Ngay cả/Thậm chí (cả)*} *khi thời tiết đẹp*<sub>F</sub> *Nam cũng* *đi ô tô.*  
 even also/even also when weather good Nam PRT<sub>BEven/also</sub> drive car  
 ‘Even when/if the weather is good<sub>F</sub> Nam still drives with his car.’

In fact, this pattern occurs frequently in spontaneous utterances provided by my consultants. From the perspective of what we have assumed about the semantic relationship between EVEN foci and ALSO foci in section 1, this co-occurrence is not much of a surprise. Still, since I am not sure about how to analyze *cả* in individual instances of those combinations (argument vs. non-argument focus?), I have decided in favor of an exposition which maximizes the signaling contrast between EVEN foci and ALSO foci.

Recall from section 4.3 that it is not right to treat the background markers as necessarily co-occurring with the argument focus markers, even though most examples that we have discussed would support this pairing. What we have seen in connection with adverbially focus-marked adjuncts, which may also trigger background marking, is that it is more adequate to oppose the background markers to the set of focus-sensitive expressions as a whole. Put differently, we have three dimensions of classification, and not just two. These dimensions of classification are listed in (48).

- (48) a. EVEN vs. ALSO vs. ONLY  
 b. particles preceding **argument** foci only vs. particles also preceding **non-argument** foci  
 c. particles preceding **foci** vs. particles preceding **backgrounds**<sup>19</sup>

a par), I have decided in favor of maximum specification in Table 2. The alternative not favored here is given in (i).

(i)

	Adverbial particles	Argument focus markers	Background markers
EVEN	<i>thậm chí</i>	<i>đến</i>	<i>cũng</i>
ALSO	<i>cả</i>		
ONLY	<i>chỉ</i>	<i>mỗi</i>	<i>mới</i>

<sup>19</sup> Recall from the discussion of the partition structures that the generalization in terms of c-command or precedence is an idealization in the case of the background markers (at least if

		Particles c-commanding foci	Particles c-commanding backgrounds (at some level of representation)
EVEN	argument	<i>đến</i>	<i>cũng</i>
	non-argument	<i>thậm chí</i>	
ALSO	argument	<i>cả</i>	<i>cũng</i>
	non-argument	<i>cả</i> (plus preposing of the verb)	
ONLY	argument	<i>mỗi</i>	<i>mỗi</i>
	non-argument	<i>chỉ</i>	

**Table 3:** Vietnamese focus-sensitive expressions with AEO foci (final)

This concludes the discussion of the core system of focus-sensitive and background-sensitive expressions in Vietnamese as it has been laid out in the present chapter.

## 7 Conclusions and outlook

This chapter has surveyed the distribution of elements signaling EVEN foci, ALSO foci and ONLY foci in Vietnamese. We have found variation along three major dimensions. The first dimension concerns the difference between ad-argument markers and adverbial markers: there is one set of particles combining with arguments in focus, or with arguments containing a focus, and another set combining with non-arguments in focus, or with non-arguments containing a focus. Another dimension of variation separates particles preceding foci from particles preceding backgrounds. The third dimension of variation is a classification of foci into EVEN foci, ALSO foci and ONLY foci. The general architecture of this system was discussed in the preceding section 6. Table 4 summarizes the special properties of each kind of focus type that we have identified in this chapter.

This chapter has only paid cursory attention to the register sensitivity of individual particles. It seems to be the case that *thậm chí* has a more formal flavor to it than *chỉ* or *cả* in the same paradigm. The same holds true of *thậm chí* in comparison with *đến* and *cũng* in the orthogonal EVEN paradigm.

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one looks at the surface patterns only). While the particles in the left column reliably c-command their foci at the surface (with the sole exception of adverbial *cả*; cf. section 2), the particles in the right column may c-command both (the largest portion of) the background and the focus. The clear partition is only visible at the surface if the focus has been preposed, or if constituents with a canonically preverbal position are in focus.

EVEN	ALSO	ONLY
preposing/topicalization of foci unrestricted (except for verb foci)	no preposing/topicalization of foci (preposing triggers EVEN readings)	preposing/topicalization frequently possible
BG-marking <i>cũng</i> obligatory in partition structures with foci preceding their backgrounds	BG-marking <i>cũng</i> obligatory in partition structures with foci preceding their backgrounds	BG-marking <i>mới</i> frequently optional in partition structures with foci preceding their backgrounds
adverbial particle <i>thậm chí</i> either precedes the predicate or the whole sentence	adverbial particle <i>cả</i> follows the verb	adverbial <i>chỉ</i> either precedes predicate or the whole sentence
	syncretism/homonymy of adverbial focus-sensitive particle <i>cả</i> and argument focus particle <i>cả</i>	frequent use of adverbial <i>chỉ</i> alongside FOC and BG markers.
	use of sentence-final <i>nữa</i> alongside other ALSO-particles attested (see below)	frequent use of sentence-final <i>thôi</i> alongside other ONLY-particles (see below)

**Table 4:** Special properties of EVEN foci, ALSO foci and ONLY foci in Vietnamese

Another interesting issue left undiscussed in the main parts of the chapter concerns the fact that there is at least one more position in which particles signaling AEO foci may occur, namely the sentence-final position. With ONLY foci, in particular, we find the frequent use of a particle, *thôi* ‘only’, in sentence-final position.<sup>20</sup> With ALSO foci we sometimes find *nữa* in that position. Cf. (49) for one example each; the sentence-final particles have been highlighted.

- (49) a. ***Chỉ mới*** [thịt bò]<sub>F</sub> Nam ***mới*** ăn ***thôi***.  
 only PRT<sub>FOConly</sub> meat beef Nam PRT<sub>BGonly</sub> eat only  
 ‘Only beef<sub>F</sub> does Nam eat.’
- b. Nam ăn thịt bò và ***cũng*** ăn ***cả*** [thịt gà]<sub>F</sub> ***nữa***.  
 Nam eat meat beef and PRT<sub>BGeven/also</sub> eat PRT<sub>FOalso</sub> meat chicken also  
 ‘Nam eats beef, and he eats also chicken<sub>F</sub>.’

*Thôi* occurs frequently in my data and its use is often considered, if not obligatory, then at least strongly preferred. One of my consultants reports the intuition that the use of *thôi* interacts with the use of *chỉ* in the following way. Both

<sup>20</sup> *Thôi* is used in (1), (16b), (18c), (19c), (20c), (20’c), (23c), (25b), (38) and (40).

particles may be used simultaneously, as is the case in (56a), but if both are dropped, at least one of them is felt to be missing. Sentence-final *thôi* occurs in many examples in this chapter, but for reasons of exposition I just glossed it as PRT when it occurred.<sup>21</sup> While I'm unable to state anything precise about restrictions or triggers of *thôi* (or *nũa*) at the present moment, it is immediately evident that the existence of these additional particles enhances the analytical challenge posed by the “particle proliferation” that we find in the domain of AEO foci in Vietnamese. In (49a), for instance, four words are used that we could, with some justification, translate as ‘only’. In the present chapter, and except for a comparative remark below, I will have nothing else to say about the intriguing property of particle proliferation of Vietnamese.

From the perspective of Standard Average European languages, the various strategies for expressing AEO foci in Vietnamese appear exotic and highly peculiar. In the areal context, however, there is at least one more language with a similarly complex pattern of AEO focus marking. This language is Mandarin Chinese, and chances are high that more instances of such systems can be found in Chinese dialects. (50) provides a set of examples to illustrate the AwF pattern. The partition pattern is exemplified in (51).

(50) MANDARIN CHINESE + AwF STRATEGY

- a. *Lǎo Wáng shènzhì bù hē chá<sub>F</sub>.*  
 old Wang even not drink tea  
 ‘Old Wang doesn’t even drink tea<sub>F</sub>.’
- b. *Lǎo Wáng yě hē chá<sub>F</sub>.*  
 old Wang also drink tea  
 ‘Old Wang also drinks tea<sub>F</sub>.’
- c. *Lǎo Wáng zhǐ hē chá<sub>F</sub>.*  
 old Wang only drink tea  
 ‘Old Wang only drinks tea<sub>F</sub>.’

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<sup>21</sup> In the English translation of 1b), the translation of the focus constituent is a contrastive topic, and *either* is in focus (cf. Krifka 1998). This is an indirect result of the obligatory postposing of *either* in English. In the Mandarin sentence, the information-structural partitioning may indeed be as indicated. Cf. also the German translation, which has been added for (51b) and which mimics the Chinese information structure more straightforwardly.

## (51) MANDARIN CHINESE + PARTITION STRATEGY

- a. **Lián** [zhèi zhǒng shū]<sub>F</sub> Lǎo Wáng \*(**dōu**) mǎi-guo.  
 PRT<sub>FOC</sub>even this kind book old Wang PRT<sub>BG</sub>even buy-ASP  
 ‘Old Wang has bought even [this kind of book]<sub>F</sub> before.’
- b. **Jiùsuàn** Dénián<sub>F</sub> lái, wǒ \*(**yě**) bú qù.  
 if.PRT<sub>FOC</sub>also Denian come I PRT<sub>BG</sub>also not go  
 ≈ ‘Denian<sub>CT</sub> coming won’t make me go, [either]<sub>F</sub>.’<sup>22</sup>  
 cf. German *Auch wenn Denian<sub>F</sub> kommt, gehe ich nicht hin.*
- c. **Zhǐyǒu** [zhèi zhǒng shū]<sub>F</sub> Lǎo Wáng \*(**cái**) mǎi-guo.  
 PRT<sub>FOC</sub>only this kind book old Wang PRT<sub>BG</sub>only buy-ASP  
 ‘Only [this kind of book] has Old Wang bought before.’

Without going into any detail here, it is evident that Mandarin instantiates a system that is very similar to that of Vietnamese. Table 5 duplicates Table 3 for Mandarin.

	Particles c-commanding foci	Particles c-commanding backgrounds
EVEN	<i>lián</i> (partition) <i>shènzhī</i> (AwF)	<i>dōu</i>
ALSO	[ <i>jiùsuàn</i> (partition)] <sup>22</sup> <i>yě</i> (AwF)	<i>yě</i>
ONLY	<i>zhǐyou</i> (partition) <i>zhǐ</i> (AwF)	<i>cái</i>

**Table 5:** Particles c-commanding foci vs. particles c-commanding backgrounds in Mandarin

One difference between the Mandarin and the Vietnamese systems should be pointed out, though. In Mandarin, the adverbial particles are restricted to an adverbial position at the left edge of VPs/tense phrases/modal phrases. Subjects invariably precede them. The Vietnamese adverbial particles *thậm chí*, *cả* and *chỉ*, by contrast, may also head complete sentences, simplex and complex. This could either be interpreted as evidence to the effect that Vietnamese adverbial particles are more flexible in terms of possible adjunction sites; or it could be taken to mean that the adverbial particles occur in identical positions in Mandarin

<sup>22</sup> *Jiùsuàn* ‘If ... too’ has been bracketed because it is a focus marker and simultaneously a complementizer. I have no clear evidence of any ALSO particle in Mandarin which obligatorily precedes/c-commands ALSO foci in the Mandarin partition pattern of simplex sentences; but cf. Hole (2006: 353, fn. 14) for a possible instance in the Mandarin counterpart of the *rather ... than*-construction.

and Vietnamese, but that Mandarin can move material across this position to the left more easily. I'll have to leave this matter for future research.

For a second similarity between Vietnamese and Chinese turn to (52) and (53). These Chinese sentences feature the (highlighted) sentence-final 'only'-words *éryǐ* and *bàle*. I.e. Mandarin, just like Vietnamese, has a sentence-final position that may host ONLY-particles.

- (52) *Qǐtú zhìào bú yòng néngyuán-de yǒngdòngjī*  
 try construct not need source.of.energy-MOD perpetuum.mobile  
*zhǐ shì yī zhǒng huànxiǎng éryǐ.* (adapted from Hou (ed.) 1998: 190)  
 only COP 1 CL:kind illusion only  
 'To try and construct a machine capable of perpetual motion which is not in need of a source of energy is just a chimera and no more.'

- (53) *Wǒ zhǐ shì shuō shuō bàle, nǐ zěnmē jiù dāngle zhēn ne!*  
 I only COP say say only you how at.once take.as true PRT  
 'I just said it [without really meaning it], how could you take it for granted right away?' (adapted from Hou (ed.) 1998: 13)

To the best of my knowledge, the exact distribution of these particles hasn't been investigated yet. What may be said with some certainty is that *bàle* is more colloquial than *éryǐ*, and that *éryǐ* with its classical origin literally means 'then stop'. Moreover, there is an intuition of speaker orientation and down-toning present in the Chinese sentence-final ONLY-words that parallels certain uses of *just* in English (cf. [*Don't scold him.*] *He's just a boy*/[*She didn't mean to interfere.*] *She just wanted to offer her help*). I hypothesize that the same shade of meaning is also present with *thôi* in Vietnamese. The parallels to Vietnamese in terms of syntax and "particle proliferation" are again striking.

To be sure, Chinese and Vietnamese are not genetically related. Chinese is Sino-Tibetan, while Vietnamese is an Austro-Asiatic Language. It is well-known, however, that Chinese has exerted strong influence on Vietnamese over the last two millennia. For this reason, one could easily imagine that there has been structural borrowing from Chinese to Vietnamese in addition to the well-attested numerous lexical borrowings (cf. Lương 1994 with his list of 2316(!) borrowed monosyllabic morphemes/characters).<sup>23</sup> In fact, according to Lương (1994: 176,

<sup>23</sup> Note that contemporary research in contact linguistics no longer assumes structural borrowings to have their source in substrate languages only. If the contact situation is close enough, structural borrowings with their source in superstrate languages (Chinese in our case) do occur (Thomason 2001).

192) and Alves (2006), from among the function words discussed in this chapter, at least the following are of Chinese origin: *thậm chí* ‘even’ (cf. Mod. Chinese *shènzhì* ‘even’ as in (50a), *chỉ* ‘only’ (cf. Mod. Chinese *zhǐ* ‘only’ as in (50c/52)) and *mỗi* ‘PRT<sub>FOConly</sub>’ (cf. Mod. Chinese *měi* ‘every’<sup>24</sup>). It is quite likely that the number of loans in our domain is even bigger than that, but at present I lack reliable information about the diachrony of other particles.

I hope that this chapter, despite the many questions that had to be left unresolved, will serve as a point of departure for further studies dealing with the empirical intricacies and theoretical implications of AEO foci in Vietnamese and in general. There is some hope that the rich Vietnamese system can shed new light on the modeling of the focus background partition. The co-existence, and reliable distinguishability, of different paradigms of expressions signaling AEO foci may, for instance, be used to argue for a less-than-minimal theory of focus syntax. Given that an association-with-focus strategy competes with a partition strategy in Vietnamese, the theoretical divide between adverbial approaches (Jacobs 1983; Büring and Hartmann 2001) and partition approaches (von Stechow 1982) to the syntax and semantics of focus particles appears in a new light. This is so because Vietnamese would seem to lend support to both theories. The detailed argumentation for such a theory is beyond the scope of this chapter and must be left for a future occasion.

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<sup>24</sup> It is certain beyond doubt that *mỗi* is a Chinese loan as a quantifier with the meaning ‘each’ (Lương 1994; Alves 2006). The semantic connection with the focus particle use of *mỗi* ‘only’ is not obvious.

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