

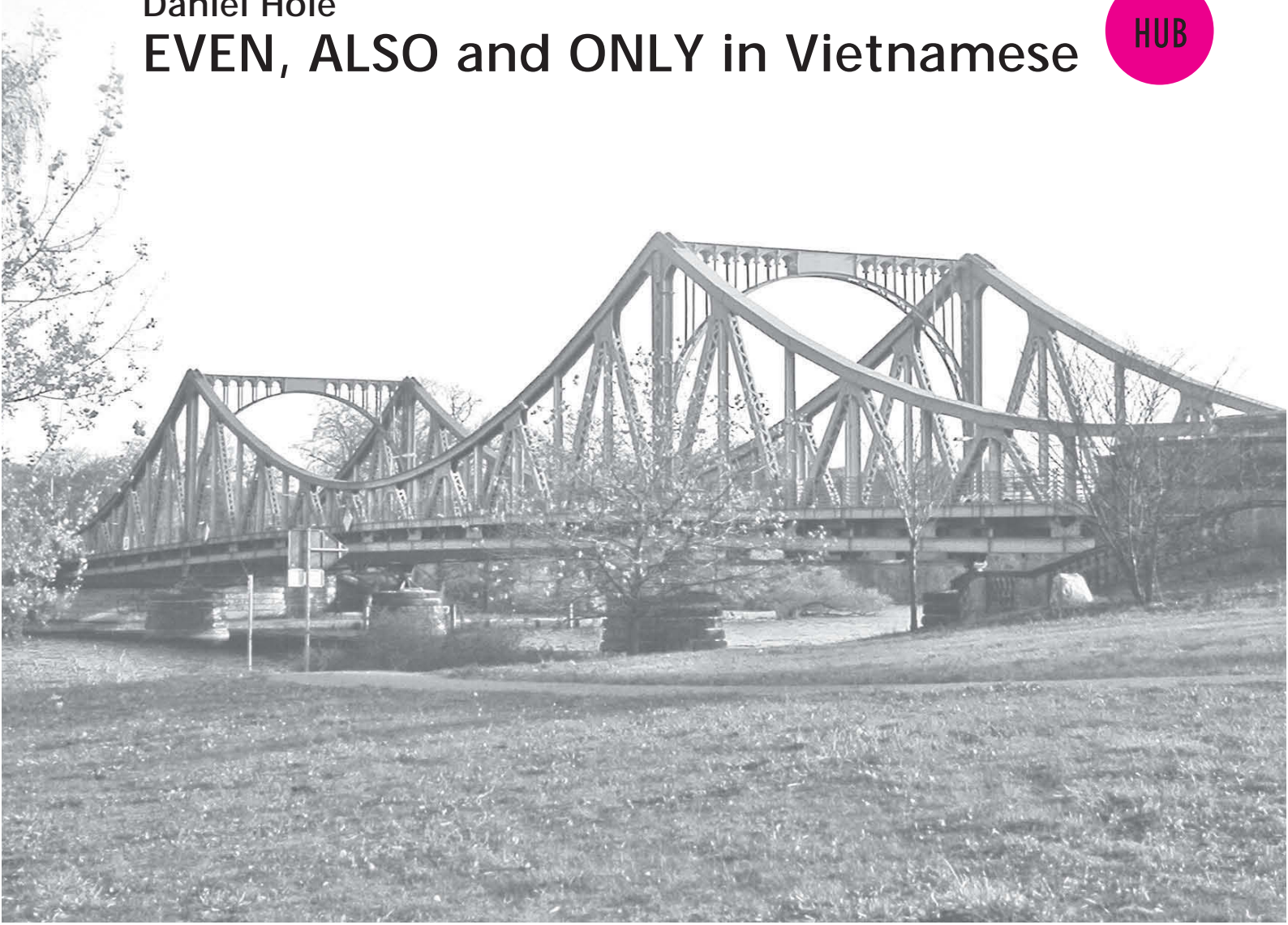
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Daniel Hole

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EVEN, ALSO and ONLY in Vietnamese^{*}

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The article analyzes the system of focus-sensitive particles and, to a lesser extent, clefts 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 paper, 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, clefts, free-choice, Vietnamese, Chinese

1 Introduction: The Vietnamese language and focus-sensitive particles

This paper discusses strategies of expressing EVEN foci, ALSO foci and ONLY foci in Vietnamese (frequently referred to as AEO foci in the following). The paper 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.

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Vietnamese (Viet, Annamese) is the official language of Vietnam with approximately 67 million native speakers. It is an Austro-Asiatic language of the Mon-Khmer branch with six lexical tones. Word order is consistently VO. Vietnamese is frequently mentioned as the paradigm case of an isolating language.¹

The data presented in this article, if not indicated otherwise, comes from elicitation work with native speakers.²

The following semantic background assumptions concerning AEO foci are made.³ 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 all alternative propositions that have alternative values in the position of the focus. If one says “Even the

¹ Cf. Thompson (1987) and http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=vie for further general information on Vietnamese.

² I worked with two consultants: (i) HA Kieu Phuong, female, 28 years old, from Hanoi/Vietnam, a student in Germany since she was 18; (ii) NGUYEN 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.

³ 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.

first-year students solved this problem”, then this typically means that all the 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 universal quantification hypothesized as underlying the semantics of *even* (‘all alternatives are the same’) 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 that...”). Another way to put this is to say that, with *even*, universal quantification is over the domain of possible states of affairs.

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 probability. 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.

The literature on AEO foci is voluminous, but for the purpose of the survey in the present paper, the informal characterizations of meaning just presented will be sufficient.⁴

⁴ 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.

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 paper, 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 paper, viz. particles preceding foci or backgrounds, the particles discussed later come last in a sentence.

The paper 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 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.⁵ (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).)^{6, 7}

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

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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_{FOC} – particle preceding foci; PRT_{BG} – particle preceding backgrounds; Q – sentence-final question particle.

⁷ 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 paper.

- (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 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.^{8,9}

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.
 CL 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. Still 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

⁸ Cf. Schwarzschild (1999) or Büring (2006) for the conditions under which focus accents on verbs are compatible with wide foci.

⁹ 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).

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.¹⁰ There may well be a phonological motivation for such a movement if *cả* is an enclitic.¹¹ At the moment I lack evidence to settle the issue, but this would certainly be a research question worth pursuing.

¹⁰ Note that the V2-requirement of German, which is underlyingly OV, leads to similar patterns in main clauses. This is shown in (ib) 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.)

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

¹¹ Thanks to Stavros Skopeteas for pointing this possibility out to me.

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]_F **cả** cà chua.
 the farmer not only eat tomato but grow also tomato
 The farmer doesn't just eat tomatoes, he also [grows]_F 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. (Boxes highlight the relevant elements in (5) and (6).)

- (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

support for the idea that the unexpected order of main verb and particle in (3) is derived and ultimately irrelevant to interpretation.¹²

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.'

¹² In generative terms this amounts to saying that the verb reconstructs at LF and adverbial *cả* 'also' c-commands all parts of its focus at this level of representation.

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, 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_{FOC} Focus argument] [PRT_{BG} Background]]

The particles preceding the focus in the partition pattern (PRT_{FOC} in (10)) are different from the adverbial focus-sensitive particles discussed in section 2, and the background particles (PRT_{BG} 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.

- (11) a. [[**Đến** [Nam]_F] [**cũng** [ăn thịt bò]_{BG}]].
 PRT_{FOC}Even Nam PRT_{BG}Even/also eat meat beef
 ‘Even Nam ate beef.’
- b. [[**Cả** [Nam]_F] [**cũng** [ăn thịt bò]_{BG}]].
 PRT_{FOC}also Nam PRT_{BG}Even/also eat meat beef
 ‘Nam, too, ate beef.’
- c. [[**Mỗi** [Nam]_F] [**mới** [ăn thịt bò]_{BG}]].
 PRT_{FOC}only Nam PRT_{BG}only eat meat beef
 ‘Only Nam 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_{FOC} (i.e. as a particle which precedes arguments in fo-

cus), 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]_F [Nam **cũng** thích]_{BG}.
 PRT_{FO}Ceven cheese Nam PRT_{BG}Ceven/also like
 ‘Nam likes even [cheese]_F.’

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_{FOC} or PRT_{BG} may be dropped, or adverbial particles may be used together with PRT_{FOC} or PRT_{BG}. (13)–(15) present relevant examples.

(13) a. [[**(Đến)** [Nam]_F] [***(cũng)** [ăn thịt bò]_{BG}]]. (cf. (11a))
 PRT_{FOCeven} Nam PRT_{BGeven/also} eat meat beef
 ‘Even Nam ate beef.’/‘Nam, too, ate beef.’

b. [[**(Thậm chí) (đến)** [Nam]_F] [***(cũng)** [ăn thịt bò]_{BG}]].
 even PRT_{FOCeven} Nam PRT_{BGeven/also} eat meatbeef
 ‘Even Nam ate beef.’/‘Nam, too, ate beef.’

(14) [[**(Cả)** [Nam]_F] [***(cũng)** [ăn thịt bò]_{BG}]]. (cf. (11b))
 PRT_{FOCalso} Nam PRT_{BGeven/also} eat meat beef
 ‘Nam, too, ate beef.’

(15) a. [**Chỉ** [**(mỗi)** [Nam]_F] [**(mới)** [ăn thịt bò]_{BG}]]. (cf. (11c))
 only PRT_{FOConly} Nam PRT_{BGonly} eat meat beef
 ‘Only Nam eats beef.’

b. [**(Chỉ)** [**(mỗi)** [Nam]_F] [**mới** [ăn thịt bò]_{BG}]].
 only PRT_{FOConly} Nam PRT_{BGonly} eat meat beef
 ‘Only Nam eats beef.’

c. [**(Chỉ)** [**mỗi** [Nam]_F] [**(mới)** [ăn thịt bò]_{BG}]].
 only PRT_{FOConly} Nam PRT_{BGonly} eat meat beef
 ‘Only Nam eats beef.’

The options in (13) illustrate the fact that either PRT_{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 *mới*, 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), $\text{PRT}_{\text{BGeven/also}}$ *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 **cũng** cho Nam **cả** [tiền]_F]_{BG}.
 Lam $PRT_{BGeven/also}$ give Nam $PRT_{FOCalso}$ money
 ‘Lam gave Nam also [money]_F.’
- b. [Nam **chỉ** đọc **mỗi** [sách]_F **thôi**]_{BG}.
 Nam only read $PRT_{FOConly}$ book PRT
 ‘Nam read only [books/a book]_F.’

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

3.5 Cleft partition structures

Independently of AEO-foci, Vietnamese has cleft structures as in (18).

- (18) a. **Là** Nam đã ăn thịt bò.
 COP Nam ANT eat meat beef
 ‘It is Nam who ate beef.’
- b. Nam **là người** đã ăn thịt bò.
 Nam COP person ANT eat meat beef
 ‘Nam is the one who ate beef.’

In clefts such as (18a) the copula precedes the clefted constituent and the background predicate immediately follows it. In clefts such as (18b) the clefted constituent precedes the copula, and the (relative clause) background predicate follows a noun with a general semantics matching the ontological kind of the clefted constituent. These two structures are schematically represented in (19).

- (19) a. COP + clefted constituent + background predicate
 ‘It is <clefted constituent> who <background predicate>.’
- b. clefted constituent + COP + **general noun** + background predicate
 ‘<clefted term> is a <general noun> who/what <BG predicate>.’

Là-clefts of type (19b) may also be used to form a partition pattern with ONLY foci. Examples are given in (20). (The corresponding structure for clefts of type (19a) is ungrammatical. I don’t know why this is so.)

- (20) a. **Chỉ** [mỗi học sinh này] là [Nam phê bình thôi].
 only PRT_{FO}Only student this COP Nam criticize PRT
 ‘It was only this student who Nam criticized.’

- b. **Chỉ** [m^õi th^ịt b^ò] **là** [Nam ăn hết].
 only PRT_{FOConly} meat beef COP Nam eat up
 ‘It was only the beef that Nam eat up.’
- c. **Chỉ** [nh^ững h^ọc sinh ngh^èo] **là** [t^ôi cho ti^ên th^ôi].
 only PL student poor COP I give money PRT
 ‘It was only to the poor students that I gave money.’

Since the copula in (20) occurs between the clefted ONLY focus and the background predicate, the structure conforms to the b-pattern of (18) and (19). There is one difference, though. The b-pattern of (18) and (19) included a general head noun, which is absent from (20). To make the parallel with (18b) and (19b) complete, one could assume that structures like (20) include a covert constituent, and the background predicate adjoins to this empty head, thereby rendering the parallel with (19b) complete. Such a structure is tentatively provided in (21).

- (21) HYPOTHESIS ABOUT THE STRUCTURE OF ONLY CLEFTS IN VIETNAMESE
 [clefted ONLY focus] + COP + [\emptyset + background predicate]
 ‘Only <clefted focus> is a < \emptyset > who/what <background predicate>.’

Example (20) features an ONLY focus, and not an EVEN focus or an ALSO focus. There is a reason for this. EVEN foci and ALSO foci are deviant in the cleft partition pattern. This is demonstrated in (22) for cases parallel to (20).

- (22) a. # [Đ^{ến} h^ọc sinh này] **là** [Nam phê bình].
 PRT_{FOCeven} student this COP Nam criticize
 # ‘It is even this student who Nam criticizes.’
- b. # [C^ả h^ọc sinh này] **là** [Nam phê bình].
 PRT_{FOCalso} student this COP Nam criticize
 # ‘It is this student, too, that Nam criticizes.’

Just like the English translations, the Vietnamese EVEN/ALSO clefts in (22) are not felicitous. This behavior fits in well with findings about clefts in other languages, and the infelicity of the English translations in (22) bears witness of this. Clefts are frequently incompatible with additive or scalar foci cross-linguistically, presumably because they often have an in-built restriction that excludes the background predicate from holding true of other contextually salient referents. While the exact empirical status and theoretical implementation of the uniqueness condition found with clefts is a matter of ongoing debate (cf. Hedberg and Fadden 2007), our data corroborate the crosslinguistic validity of the exhaustivity requirement for at least some cleft constructions.

Cleft sentences with sentence-medial *là* might give rise to the hypothesis that *là* belongs in the same paradigm as the background markers *cũng* and *mới* (cf. sections 3.1 through 3.4). But this analysis cannot be right. As witnessed by (23), *là* and background-marking *mới* may co-occur, and *là* is structurally higher than *mới* because it precedes the subject in (23) whereas *mới* follows it (recall from section 3.2 that subjects always precede the background markers).

- (23) **Chỉ** [những học sinh nghèo] **là** [tôi **mới** cho tiền thôi].
 only PL student poor COP I PRT_{BGonly} give money PRT
 ‘It was only to the poor students that I gave money.’

Admittedly, this state of affairs would still be compatible with the modified hypothesis that all partition structures are really clefts, but that *là* is frequently missing, or is left unpronounced. For this to be true, *là* and the background marking particles wouldn't have to members of a single paradigm. A stronger counterargument against the cleft analysis for all partition structures derives from the fact that partition structures occur indiscriminately with additive, scalar and restrictive foci. As we have stated above, clefts with *là* are restricted to ONLY foci. I conclude that there is a certain similarity between cleft-like struc-

tures and partition structures in Vietnamese, but that the two notions cannot be collapsed unless one assumes a generalized cleft syntax-and-semantics to underlie our partition structures, and this generalized cleft pattern would have to be void of any exhaustivity component.

I will not offer any more detailed account of *là*-clefts in this paper, but we will have opportunity to discuss some more pertinent data in section 4.5. Section 4.5 deals with intransitive sentences, and in these structures *là*-clefts may be used to excludethetic readings.

We are now at a point where the analytical apparatus needed to survey AEO foci with different syntactic functions has been laid out. The following section will thus be devoted to a systematic survey of AEO foci on objects, subjects, adjuncts, verbs and (parts of) sentences with intransitive verbs.

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 (24) for convenience (with a trivial adaptation in the case of (24c)). In contradistinction to the discussion in section 2, the representations in (24) have been specified so as to restrict the readings to object foci.

(24) DIRECT OBJECT+AwF-STRATEGY

- a. Hôm qua Nam **thậm chí** ăn [thịt bò]_F.
 yesterday Nam even eat meat beef
 ‘Nam even ate [beef]_F yesterday.’

- b. Bác nông dân trồng **cả** [cà chua]_F.
 CL farmer grow also tomatoes
 ‘The farmer also grows [tomatoes]_F.’
- c. Hôm qua Nam **chỉ** ăn [thịt bò]_F thôi.
 yesterday Nam only eat meat beef PRT
 ‘Nam only ate [beef]_F yesterday.’

A second set of sentences exemplifying the same AwF-pattern is found in (25).

(25) DIRECT OBJECT+AwF-STRATEGY

- a. Nam **thậm chí** đã đọc [quyển sách].
 Nam even ANT read CL book
 ‘Nam even read [the book]_F.’
- b. Nam ăn **cả** [thịt gà]_F.
 Nam eat also meat chicken
 ‘Nam also eats [chicken]_F.’
- c. Nó **chỉ** ghét [tôi]_F thôi.
 he only hates me PRT
 ‘He only hates [me]_F.’

(26) 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.

(26) DIRECT OBJECT+PARTITION STRATEGY+PREPOSED FOCUS

- a. **Đến** [pho mát]_F Nam **cũng** thích.
 PRT_{FO}Even cheese Nam PRT_BEven/also like
 ‘Nam likes even [cheese]_F.’
- b. **Cả** [quyển sách] Nam **cũng** đọc.
 PRT_{FO}Also CL book Nam PRT_BAlso read
 ‘Nam read even [the book]_F.’
- c. **(Chỉ) mỗi** [thịt bò]_F Nam **mới** ăn thôi.
 only PRT_{FO}Only meat beef Nam PRT_BGonly eat PRT
 ‘Only [beef]_F does Nam eat.’

My consultants report a strengthening effect for (26b) 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 (26c) 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, (26b/c) have the in-situ variants in (26'b/c). EVEN foci on direct objects indicated by *đến*, by contrast, regularly trigger the clear partition pattern of (26a). The in-situ variant of (26a) in (26'a) is ungrammatical.

(26') DIRECT OBJECT+PARTITION STRATEGY+IN SITU FOCUS

- a. * Nam (**cũng**) thích **đến** [pho mát]_F.
 Nam PRT_BEven/also like PRT_{FO}Ceven cheese
 int.: 'Nam likes even [cheese]_F.'
- b. Nam **cũng** đọc **cả** [quyển sách]_F.
 Nam PRT_BEven/also read PRT_{FO}Calso CL book
 'Nam read also [the book]_F.'
- c. Nam **chỉ** ăn **mỗi** [thịt bò]_F thôi.
 Nam only eat PRT_{FO}Conly meat beef PRT.
 'Nam ate only [beef]_F.'

A second asymmetry concerns the use of background marking *cũng* alongside *cả* in (26'b), whereas no background marking particle is used in the ONLY case in (26'c) (recall that *chỉ* is the adverbial ONLY particle; the background marker would be *mới*). Concerning the non-use of *mới* in such configurations it was stated in connection with ex. (16) above that *mới* may probably c-command

backgrounded material only. This would predict why it cannot be used in in-situ partition structures like (26'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 (27)–(29) is *cho* ‘give’. Just as in the English construction *give s.o. s.th*, the indirect object follows in immediately postverbal position.

(27) INDIRECT OBJECT+AWF-STRATEGY

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

(28) provides the paradigm for preposed indirect objects in the partition pattern, and (29) assembles the in-situ variants. Preposing of the ALSO focus in (28b) triggers the strengthening effect observed with the direct object in (26b) above already.

(28) INDIRECT OBJECT+PARTITION STRATEGY+PREPOSED FOCUS

- a. **Đến** [học sinh]_F Nam **cũng** cho tiền.
 PRT_{FOC}even student Nam PRT_BGeven/also give money
 ‘Even to [the student(s)]_F, Nam gives money.’

- b. **Cả** [học sinh]_F Nam **cũng** cho tiền.
 PRT_{FO}also student Nam PRT_BGiven/also give money
 ‘Even to [the student(s)]_F, Nam gives money.’
- c. **Chỉ mỗi** [học sinh]_F Nam **mới** cho tiền.
 only PRT_{FO}only student Nam PRT_BGonly give money
 ‘Only to the student(s) does Nam give money.’

(29) INDIRECT OBJECT+PARTITION STRATEGY+IN SITU FOCUS

- a. * Nam **cũng** cho **đến** [học sinh]_F tiền.
 Nam PRT_BGiven/also give PRT_{FO}even student money
 int.: ‘Nam gives even [students]_F money.’
- b. Nam **cũng** cho **cả** [học sinh]_F tiền.
 Nam PRT_BGiven/also give PRT_{FO}also student money
 ‘Nam gives also [students]_F money.’
- c. Nam **chỉ** cho **mỗi** [học sinh]_F tiền thôi.
 Nam only give PRT_{FO}only student money PRT
 ‘Nam gives only [students]_F 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.¹³

In (30a), an example with focus on a prepositional object is given for the AwF-pattern.

¹³ 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).

(30) PREPOSITIONAL OBJECT+AWF-STRATEGY

- a. Nam **thậm chí/chỉ** đưa tiền cho [học sinh]_F.
 Nam even/only give money to student
 ‘Nam even/only gives money to [students]_F.’
- b. * Nam đưa **cả** tiền cho [học sinh]_F.
 Nam give also money to student
 ‘Nam also gives money to [students]_F.’

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 (30b) 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. (31) bears witness of this.

(31) PREPOSITIONAL OBJECT+PARTITION STRATEGY+PREPOSED FOCUS

- a. ^{*?} **Đến** học sinh [giàu]_F Nam **cũng** đưa tiền cho.
 PRT_{FOEven} student rich Nam PRT_{BGeven/also} give money to
 ‘Nam gave money even to the [rich]_F students.’
- b. [?] **Chỉ mỗi** học sinh [nghèo]_F Nam **mới** đưa tiền cho thôi.
 only PRT_{FOONLY} student poor Nam PRT_{BGonly} give money to PRT
 ‘Only to the [poor]_F students did Nam give money.’

What appears to contribute to the difficulties in the preposing structure in the prepositional IO pattern of (31a) is the fact that the preposition is stranded. Moreover, and possibly unrelatedly, my consultant 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 (31a), and why (31b) is rated a lot better by my consultants.

Due to the strengthening generally observed with preposed ALSO foci, (32) with *cả* instead of *đến*, if it is good, means the same as (31a) (cf. the discussion of (26b) and (28b) above).

- (32) ?? **Cả** học sinh [giàu]_F Nam **cũng** đưa tiền cho.
 PRT_{FO}also student rich Nam PRT_BGiven/also give money to
 ‘Nam gave money even to the [rich]_F students.’

4.2 Subject foci with transitive verbs

(Intended) AEO subject foci with transitive verbs in the AwF-pattern are presented in (33).

(33) SUBJECT+TRANSITIVE VERB+AwF-STRATEGY

- a. **Thậm chí** [Nam]_F ăn **cả** thịt bò.
 even Nam eat also meat beef
 ‘Even [Nam]_F eats beef.’
- b. * [Nam]_F ăn **cả** thịt bò.
 Nam eat also meat beef
 int.: ‘[Nam]_F eats beef, too.’
- [b’. **Cả** [Nam]_F*(**cũng**) ăn thịt bò.
 PRT_{FO}also Nam PRT_BGiven/also eat meat beef
 ‘[Nam]_F, too, eats beef.’]
- c. **Chỉ** [Nam]_F ăn thịt bò.
 only Nam eat meat beef
 ‘Only [Nam]_F eats beef.’

(33b) 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 (33b’), 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 (33c). The impossibility to drop background marking *cũng*, though, indicates that (33b') 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 (33c) yields a grammatical structure.

The partition patterns for subject foci look as in (34) and (35).

(34) SUBJECT+PARTITION STRATEGY+PREPOSED FOCUS

- a. **Đến** [Nam]_F **cũng** ăn thịt bò.
 PRT_{FO}C_{even} Nam PRT_BG_{even/also} eat meat beef
 ‘Even [Nam]_F eats beef.’
- b. **Cả** [Nam]_F **cũng** ăn thịt bò.
 PRT_{FO}C_{also} Nam PRT_BG_{even/also} eat meat beef
 ‘[Nam]_F, too, eats beef.’
- c. **(Chỉ) mỗi** [Nam]_F **mới** ăn thịt bò.
 only PRT_{FO}C_{only} Nam PRT_BG_{only} eat meat beef
 ‘Only [Nam]_F eats beef.’

(35) SUBJECT+PARTITION STRATEGY+IN SITU FOCUS

- [a. **Đến** [Nam]_F ***(cũng)** ăn thịt bò.
 PRT_{FO}C_{even} Nam PRT_BG_{even/also} eat meat beef
 ‘Even [Nam]_F eats beef.’
- b. **Cả** [Nam]_F ***(cũng)** ăn thịt bò.
 PRT_{FO}C_{also} Nam PRT_BG_{even/also} eat meat beef
 ‘[Nam]_F, too, eats beef.’]
- c. **Chỉ mỗi** [Nam]_F **(mới)** ăn thịt bò.
 only PRT_{FO}C_{only} Nam PRT_BG_{only} eat meat beef
 ‘Only [Nam]_F eats beef.’

As before, the partition patterns for ONLY foci in (34) and (35) 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 structures in (35a/b) are string-identical to (34a/b). A similar question may be raised in connection with (35c) 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 and matrix scope.

4.3.1 Adjunct foci in simplex sentences

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

(36) ADJUNCT+AwF-STRATEGY

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

In (36) 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.¹⁴

The partition pattern for adjunct foci in simplex clauses yields the paradigm in (37).

(37) ADJUNCT+PARTITION STRATEGY+SIMPLEX SENTENCE

- a. Năm ngoái **thậm chí** vào [chủ nhật]_F Nam **cũng** làm việc.
 last year even on Sunday Nam PRT_{BGeven/also} do work
 ‘Last year Nam worked even on [Sundays]_F.’
- b. Năm ngoái **cả** vào [chủ nhật]_F Nam **cũng** làm việc.
 last year also on Sunday Nam PRT_{BGeven/also} do work
 ‘Last year Nam also worked on [Sundays]_F.’
- c. Năm ngoái **chỉ** vào [thứ ba]_F Nam **mới** làm việc.
 last year only on Tuesday Nam PRT_{BGonly} do work
 ‘Last year Nam worked only on Tuesdays.’

The examples in (37) 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., (37b) is not necessarily interpreted as ‘Last year Nam worked *even* on Sundays’).¹⁵

¹⁴ I.e., sentences like (i) with the interpretation given in the translation are grammatical.

(i) Năm ngoái Nam thậm chí làm việc vào [chủ nhật]_F.
 last year Nam even do work on Sunday
 ‘Last year Nam even worked on [Sundays]_F.’

¹⁵ 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).

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_{FOC} , 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 (38)(= (17)).

(38) Topology of the partition pattern for AEO foci (to be revised)

- a. The general pattern
 $[PRT_{FOC}$ FOCUS] $[PRT_{BG}$ BACKGROUND]
- b. Instantiations
 EVEN: *đến* *cũng*
 ALSO: *cả* FOCUS *cũng* BACKGROUND
 ONLY: *mỗi* *mới*

What we find in (37), 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_{FOC} . Our topology of the partition pattern for AEO foci should thus be modified as in (39) to allow for either possibility depending on whether arguments or non-arguments are in focus in the partition pattern.

-
- (i) Con mèo **chỉ** nhảy **mỗi** lên bàn.
 CL cat only jump $PRT_{FOC\text{only}}$ onto table
 ‘The cat jumped only onto the table.’
- (ii) Con mèo **chỉ** ngủ **mỗi** trên bàn.
 CL cat only sleep $PRT_{FOC\text{only}}$ on table
 ‘The cat slept only on the table.’

The parallel treatment of both PPs 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.

(39) TOPOLOGY OF THE PARTITION PATTERN FOR AEO FOCI (revised)

a. The general pattern

[PRT_{FOC}/ PRT_{ADV} FOCUS] [PRT_{BG} 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 (40).

(40) ADJUNCT+PARTITION STRATEGY+COMPLEX SENTENCE

- a. {**Ngay cả/Thậm chí (cả)**} khi thời tiết [đẹp]_F Nam **cũng** đi ô tô.
 even also/even also when weather good Nam PRT_{BGeven/also} drive car
 ‘Even when/if the weather is [good]_F Nam still drives with his car.’
- b. **Cả** khi thời tiết [đẹp]_F Nam **cũng** đi ô tô.
 also when weather good Nam PRT_{BGeven/also} drive car
 ‘Nam also drives with his car when/if the weather is [good]_F.’
- c. **Chỉ** khi thời tiết [xấu]_F Nam **mới** đi ô tô.
 only when weather bad Nam PRT_{BGonly} drive car
 ‘Only when/if the weather is [bad]_F does Nam drive with his car.’

With the exception of *ngay* in (40a), 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 PRT_{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 PRT_{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 (41) through (44) all involve adverbial association-with-focus by means of *thậm chí* ‘even’, *cả* ‘also’ (with its characteristic preposing of the verb) and *chỉ* ‘only’.

(41) VERB+AWF-STRATEGY

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

(42) VERB+AWF-STRATEGY

Nam **thậm chí** không thèm [nhìn]_F pho mát.
 Nam even not want see cheese
 ‘Nam even didn’t want to [look]_F at the cheese.’

(43) VERB+AWF-STRATEGY

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

(44) 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]_F (thịt bò) thôi.
 no he only cook meatbeef PRT
 ‘No, he only [cooked]_F the beef/it.’

(41) 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.

(42) shows that negation intervening – and possibly scoping between – the focus operator and the focus does not alter the picture.¹⁶ From the perspective of English, this is not much of a surprise (cf. the English translation of (42)). 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).

(43) with its special verb-preposing syntax is identical to (4). The discourse in (44), 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. (45) illustrates this for ONLY foci.

¹⁶ Cf. Gast and van der Auwera (2008) for discussion of analytic options in the typology of scalar additive operators with respect to the interaction with negation and other entailment-reversing operators.

- (45) 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.]_F.’ (the chair wasn’t blown away)
 (ii) ‘Only [the tree]_F toppled over.’ (the lamp post didn’t)
 * (iii) ‘The tree only [toppled over]_F.’ (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]_F.’ (nothing else happened)
 (ii) ‘Only [the teacher]_F danced.’ (the students didn’t)
 * (iii) ‘The teacher only [danced]_F.’ (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 (46).

- (46) a. INTRANSITIVE VERB+UNACCUSATIVE+AWF-STRATEGY
 Cây **chỉ** đổ thôi.
 tree only topple.over PRT
 ‘The tree only [toppled over]_F.’ (it didn’t burst in addition)
- b. INTRANSITIVE VERB+UNERGATIVE+AWF-STRATEGY
 Thầy giáo **chỉ** nhảy thôi.
 teacher only dance PRT
 ‘The teacher only [danced]_F.’ (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) *là*-clefts (cf. section 3.5). 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. (47a/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 (47a/a'/b/b'). For ONLY foci, we get a split. Unaccusative *đổ* 'topple over' produces ungrammaticality in a partition structure with background marking *mới* (cf. (47c)), whereas unergative *nhảy* 'dance' yields a grammatical sentence (cf. (47c')).

(47) INTRANSITIVE VERB+PARTITION STRATEGY

- a. **Đến** [cái cây]_F **cũng** **đổ**.
 PRT_{FOCeven} CL tree PRT_{BGeven/also} topple.over
 'Even [the tree]_F toppled over.'
- a'. **Đến** [thầy giáo]_F **cũng** **nhảy**.
 PRT_{FOCeven} teacher PRT_{BGeven/also} dance
 'Even [the teacher]_F danced.'
- b. **Cả** [cái cây]_F **cũng** **đổ**.
 PRT_{FOCalso} CL tree PRT_{BGeven/also} topple.over
 '[The tree]_F, too, toppled over.'
- b'. **Cả** [thầy giáo]_F **cũng** **nhảy**.
 PRT_{FOCalso} teacher PRT_{BGeven/also} dance
 '[The teacher]_F danced, too.'
- c. **Chỉ mỗi** [cái cây]_F (***mới**) **đổ**.
 only PRT_{FOConly} CL tree PRT_{BGonly} topple.over
 int.: 'Only [the tree]_F toppled over.'
- c'. **Chỉ mỗi** [thầy giáo]_F (**mới**) **nhảy**.
 only PRT_{FOConly} teacher PRT_{BGonly} dance
 int.: 'Only [the teacher]_F danced.'

While one expects the difference between unaccusatives and unergatives to surface somewhere, the interpretation of the contrast between (47c) and (47c') 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.

Strategy (ii) to express argument focus with intransitives, the *là*-cleft, is exemplified in (48). It only produces grammatical results for ONLY foci (cf. (48c/c')). Additive and/or scalar EVEN foci and ALSO foci as in (48a/a'/b/b') cannot be used in this structure. As pointed out in 3.5 already, this behavior is a reflex of the exhaustivity effect of cleft(-like) structures.

(48) INTRANSITIVE VERB+CLEFT-LIKE PARTITION

- a. **Đến** [cái cây]_F (**#là**) **cũng** đổ.
 PRT_{FOCeven} CL tree COP PRT_{BGeven/also} topple.over
 #‘It was even [the tree]_F that toppled over.’
- a'. **Đến** [thầy giáo]_F (**#là**) **cũng** nhảy.
 PRT_{FOCeven} teacher COP PRT_{BGeven/also} dance
 #‘It was even [the teacher]_F who danced.’
- b. **Cả** [cái cây]_F (**#là**) **cũng** đổ.
 PRT_{FOCalso} CL tree COP PRT_{BGeven/also} topple.over
 #‘It was [the tree]_F, too, that toppled over.’
- b'. **Cả** [thầy giáo]_F (**#là**) **cũng** nhảy.
 PRT_{FOCalso} teacher COP PRT_{BGeven/also} dance
 #‘It was [the teacher]_F who danced, too.’
- c. **Chỉ (mỗi)** [cái cây]_F **là** đổ.
 only PRT_{FOConly} CL tree COP topple.over
 ‘It was only [the tree]_F that toppled over.’

- c'. **Chỉ (mỗi)** [thầy giáo]_F **là** nhảy.
 only PRT_{FOConly} teacher COP dance
 ‘It was only [the teacher]_F who danced.’

Apart from the split between ONLY foci and AE foci in *là*-clefts, the data in (48) allow for another generalization if compared with the canonical partition structures in (47). While *là*-clefts are grammatical for unaccusatives and unergatives, only unergatives were grammatical with background marking *mỗi* in (47).

This concludes our survey of AEO foci in sentences with intransitive verbs. We will return to the cleft-like structures with *là* in sections 5 and 6.

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’m not aiming at an exhaustive coverage of the empirical domain.

(49a) is an example of a free-choice construction obligatorily employing *cũng*.

- (49) a. {Đứa nào/ Ai} Nam *(**cũng**) thích (cả).
 person which/ who Nam PRT_{BGalso/even} like FC
 ‘Nam likes [everyone]_F.’/‘Nam likes whoever there is.’
- b. * Nam **cũng** thích {đứa nào/ ai} (cả).
 Nam PRT_{BGalso/even} like person which/ who FC
 int.: ‘Nam likes [everyone]_F.’/‘Nam likes whoever there is.’

In (49a) the object constituent contains an indefinite pronominal (glossed with a *wh*-word), and it must be preposed (cf. the ungrammaticality of (49b) with the in-situ object). (There are two ways to encode the human indefinite, either ana-

lytically with the phrase *đưa 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 (49a) 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 1.¹⁷

(50) demonstrates how things change under negation.

- (50) a. Nam (***cũng**) chẳng thích {đưa nào/ ai} (cả).
 Nam PRT_{BG}also/even not.EMPH like person which/ who FC
 ‘Nam likes [nobody (whatsoever)]_F.’
 (good with *cũng* as ‘It is also the case that Nam likes nobody (whatsoever).’)
- a’. Chẳng {đưa nào/ ai} là Nam thích (cả).
 not.EMPH which person/who COP Nam like FC
 ‘Nam likes [nobody (whatsoever)]_F.’
- b. * {Đưa nào/ Ai} Nam chẳng thích (cả).
 person which/ who Nam not.EMPH like FC
 int.: ‘Nam likes [nobody]_F.’

¹⁷ 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 ε -operator (von Stechow 1997; cf. also Giannakidou 2001 on the analysis of free-choice constructions). This is an indirect way to arrive 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.

(50a) is the negation of (49a). The sentence features the emphatic negative particle *chả*; non-emphatic *không* ‘not’ may not be used. The indefinite pronominals must stay in situ if nothing else changes alongside (cf. the ungrammaticality of (50b), 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)’). (50a’) is a variant of (50a) where the pronominal has been preposed and which is grammatical. The reason for the grammaticality is that the negation precedes the pronominals as in (50a) 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 we discussed in connection with *là*-clefts above. The pattern instantiated by (50a’) 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.¹⁸ 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 (50a). 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 fn. 18, the effect of uni-

¹⁸ 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.

versal 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 (50a') as a free-choice construction, but the issue needs to be revisited.

The sentences in (49) and (50) 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 related to these uses by polysemy at least. Free-choice *cả* does not seem to form a constituent with the pronominals since it occurs in sentence-final position in (50b), 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.

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 (51) through (53). The a-examples feature positive polarity, the b-examples negative polarity. The b'-examples involve preposing of the negation particle and the pronominal.

(51) PLACE

- a. {Chỗ nào/ Đâu} Nam ***(cũng)** lau chùi (cả).
 place which/ where Nam PRT_{BGiven/also} clean FC
 ‘Nam cleans up [everywhere]_F.’
- b. Nam chẳng lau chùi {chỗ nào/ đâu} (cả).
 Nam not.EMPH clean place which/ where FC
 ‘Nam cleans up [nowhere (whatsoever)]_F.’
- b'. Chẳng {chỗ nào/ đâu} là Nam lau chùi (cả).
 not.EMPH place which/ where COP Nam clean FC
 ‘Nam cleans up [nowhere (whatsoever)]_F.’

(52) TIME

- a. Lúc nào Nam ***(cũng)** lau chùi.
 time which Nam PRT_{BGiven/also} clean
 ‘Nam cleans up [at any time]_F.’
- b. Nam chẳng lúc nào lau chùi (cả).
 Nam not.EMPH time which clean FC
 ‘Nam [never (ever)]_F cleans up.’
- b'. Chẳng lúc nào là Nam lau chùi (cả).
 not.EMPH time which COP Nam clean FC
 ‘Nam [never (ever)]_F cleans up.’

(53) THING

- a. Cái gì Nam ***(cũng)** lau chùi.
 thing what Nam PRT_{BGiven/also} clean
 ‘Nam cleans up [everything]_F.’
- b. Nam chẳng lau chùi cái gì (cả).
 Nam not.EMPH clean thing what FC
 ‘Nam cleans up [nothing (whatsoever)]_F.’
- b'. Chẳng cái gì là Nam lau chùi (cả).
 not.EMPH thing what COP Nam clean FC
 ‘Nam cleans up [nothing (whatsoever)]_F.’

There are probably further specialized indefinite pronominal expressions that figure in free-choice constructions like the ones in (49) through (53). 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.¹⁹

	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)

¹⁹ 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 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>

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. (40a), repeated here as (54).

- (54) {**Ngay cả/Thậm chí (cả)**} khi thời tiết [đẹp]_F Nam **cũng** đi ô tô.
 even also/even also when weather good Nam PRT_BEven/also drive car
 ‘Even when/if the weather is [good]_F 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 (55).

- (55) 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**²⁰

		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>mới</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 paper.

In the following subsection I will discuss the relationship between *là*-clefts and the partition pattern.

7 Conclusions and outlook

This paper 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-

²⁰ 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 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.

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 paper.

EVEN	ALSO	ONLY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preposing/topicalization of foci unrestricted (except for verb foci) • BG-marking <i>cũng</i> obligatory in partition structures with foci preceding their backgrounds • adverbial particle <i>thậm chí</i> either precedes the predicate or the whole sentence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no preposing/topicalization of foci (preposing triggers EVEN readings) • BG-marking <i>cũng</i> obligatory in partition structures with foci preceding their backgrounds • adverbial particle <i>cả</i> follows the verb • syncretism/homonymy of adverbial focus-sensitive particle <i>cả</i> and argument focus particle <i>cả</i> • use of sentence-final <i>nhỉa</i> alongside other ALSO-particles attested (see below) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preposing/topicalization frequently possible • BG-marking <i>mới</i> frequently optional in partition structures with foci preceding their backgrounds • adverbial <i>chỉ</i> either precedes predicate or the whole sentence • frequent use of adverbial <i>chỉ</i> alongside FOC and BG markers. • frequent cooccurrence of cleft-like structures with <i>là</i> and partition structures • 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

This paper 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.

Another interesting issue left undiscussed in the main parts of the paper 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. With ALSO foci we sometimes find *nữa* in that position. Cf. (56) for one example each; the sentence-final particles have been highlighted.

- (56) a. **Chỉ mới** [thịt bò]_F Nam **mới** ăn **thôi**.
 only PRT_{FOConly} meat beef Nam PRT_{BGonly} eat only
 ‘Only [beef]_F does Nam eat.’
- b. Nam ăn thịt bò và **cũng** ăn **cả** [thịt gà]_F **nữa**.
 Nam eat meat beef and PRT_{BGeven/also} eat PRT_{FOCalso} meat chicken also
 ‘Nam eats beef, and he eats also [chicken]_F.’

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 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 paper, but for reasons of exposition I just glossed it as PRT when it occurred.²¹ While I’m unable to state anything precise about restrictions or triggers of *thôi* (or *nữa*) 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 (56a), for instance, four words are used that we could, with some justification, translate as ‘only’. In the present paper, and except for a comparative

²¹ *Thôi* is used in (1), (16b), (24c), (25c), (26c), (26’c), (29c), (31b), (44) and (46).

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. (57) provides a set of examples to illustrate the AwF pattern. The partition pattern is exemplified in (58).

(57) MANDARIN CHINESE+AWF-STRATEGY

- a. Lǎo Wáng **shènzhì** bù hē chá.
old Wang even not drink tea
'Old Wang doesn't even drink tea.'
- b. Lǎo Wáng **yě** hē chá.
old Wang also drink tea
'Old Wang also drinks tea.'
- c. Lǎo Wáng **zhǐ** hē chá.
old Wang only drink tea
'Old Wang only drinks tea.'

(58) MANDARIN CHINESE+PARTITION STRATEGY

- a. **Lián** [zhèi zhǒng shū]_F Lǎo Wáng *(**dōu**) mǎi-guo.
PRT_{FOC}even this kind book old Wang PRT_BGeven buy-ASP
'Old Wang has bought even this kind of book before.'
- b. **Jiùsuàn** [Déníán]_F lái, wǒ *(**yě**) bú qù.
if.PRT_{FOC}also Denian come I PRT_BGalso not go
≈ '[Denian]_{CT} coming won't make me go, [either]_F.'²²
cf. German *Auch wenn* [Denian]_F *kommt, gehe ich nicht hin.*

²² In the English translation of (58b), 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 parti-

- c. **Zhǐyǒu** [zhèi zhǒng shū]_F Lǎo Wáng *(**cái**) mǎi-guo.
 PRT_{FOConly} this kind book old Wang PRT_{BGonly} 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>shènzhì</i> (AwF)	<i>dōu</i>
ALSO	[<i>jiùsuàn</i> (partition)] ²³ <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 Manda-

tioning may indeed be as indicated. Cf. also the German translation, which has been added for (58b) and which mimics the Chinese information-structure more straight-forwardly.

²³ *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.

rin 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 (59) and (60). 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.

- (59) Qǐtú zhìzào 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.’
- (60) Wǒ **zhǐ** shì shuōshuō **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 downtoning 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. Luong 1994 with his list of 2316(!) borrowed monosyllabic morphemes/characters).²⁴ In fact, according to Luong (1994: 176, 192) and Alves (2006), from among the function words discussed in this paper, at least the following are of Chinese origin: *thậm chí* ‘even’ (cf. Mod. Chinese *shènzhì* ‘even’ as in (57a) *chỉ* ‘only’ (cf. Mod. Chinese *zhǐ* ‘only’ as in (57) and *mỗi* ‘PRT_{FOConly}’ (cf. Mod. Chinese *měi* ‘every’²⁵). 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 paper, 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 de-

²⁴ 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).

²⁵ It is certain beyond doubt that *mỗi* is a Chinese loan as a quantifier with the meaning ‘each’ (Luong 1994, Alves 2006). The semantic connection with the focus particle use of *mỗi* ‘only’ is not obvious.

tailed argumentation for such a theory is beyond the scope of this paper and must be left for a future occasion.

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