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## Information structure in Mangghuer: A narrative text analysis of topic and focus in a Mongolic language of northwestern China

Cory Christopher Coogan

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INFORMATION STRUCTURE IN MANGGHUER:  
A NARRATIVE TEXT ANALYSIS OF TOPIC AND FOCUS IN A MONGOLIC LANGUAGE  
OF NORTHWESTERN CHINA

by

Cory Christopher Coogan  
Bachelor of Science, Liberty University, 2018

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

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for the degree of

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May  
2021

This thesis, submitted by Cory Coogan in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

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This thesis is being submitted by the appointed advisory committee as having met all of the requirements of the School of Graduate Studies at the University of North Dakota and is hereby approved.

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Department Linguistics

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Cory Coogan  
May 6, 2021

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## ABBREVIATIONS

The abbreviations used in this thesis appear here:

1	First person
2	Second person
3	Third person
ABL	Ablative case
ACC	Accusative case
CAUSE	Causative
CL	Classifier
COLL	Collective (two or more actors acting together)
COMP	Comparative
COND	Conditional
COP	Copula
DAT	Dative case
DIR	Directive case (direction toward which something is moving)
DO	Direct object
EMPH	Emphatic particle
EXCL	Exclamatory interjection
FUT	Future
GEN	Genitive case
HEARSAY	Hearsay evidential
IMPERF	Imperfective aspect

INDEF	Indefinite
INST	Instrumental
IO	Indirect Object
NEG	Negative
NOMLZR	Nominalizer (turns a verb into a noun)
OBJ	Objective perspective (the speaker distances himself from the event)
OBL	Oblique
PERF	Perfective aspect
PL	Plural number
POSS	Possessive (possession by a third person; equivalent to 'his' or 'her')
PROG	Progressive aspect
PRT	Final particle (these particles have broad interactional or affective meanings)
PURP	Purpose
QUOTE	Quotative (reporting of someone's speech)
REFLPOSS	Reflexive Possessive (possession by the subject: equivalent to 'one's own')
S	Subject
SG	Singular
SUBJ	Subjective perspective (the speaker associates himself closely with the event)
V	Verb
VOL	Voluntative (first person imperative)

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis describes information structure in Mangghuer, a Mongolic language spoken in northwestern China. My analysis relies on a set of twenty-three narrative texts published in the 2005 volume, *Folktales of China's Minhe Mangghuer* (Chen et al. 2005), and I also draw from the text "Lu Buping," published in the 2001 *Mangghuer Folktale Reader* (Stuart & Zhu 2001). I rely on Lambrecht's (1994) approach to information structure as a theoretical framework to analyze these texts. I also apply methods from Levinsohn's (2015) "Self Instruction-Materials on Narrative Discourse Analysis." Default information structure in Mangghuer is the topic-comment sentence. The default form of the topic in these sentences depends on the topic referent's identifiability: zero-anaphora is used for continuing topics; both zero-anaphora and pronouns are used to establish highly identifiable topics; and noun phrases are used to establish unidentifiable or ambiguous topics. Topicalization strategies include a few types of heavy encoding as well as topic-fronting. Argument focus constructions occur to highlight one argument as contrastive or to highlight an argument as carrying narrative weight. Sentence focus constructions include presentational sentences with the copula *bang* and event-reporting sentences, which tend strongly to be marked with the sentence final particle *bai*. A full analysis of the use of *bai* shows that it indicates narrative importance. This thesis is not a comprehensive description of Mangghuer information structure, especially as prosody is not considered. However, this thesis shows some of the ways that Mangghuer storytellers use information structure throughout a narrative.

# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

Much has been written about the Mongolic language family. Several Mongolic languages have received thorough grammatical descriptions. However, prior to this thesis, little or no research has been published on information structure in any Mongolic language. This thesis begins to fill that gap by describing the types of topic and focus constructions used by Mangghuer speakers in narrative texts.

This thesis has the following organization: the rest of Chapter 1 addresses language background, theory, and methodology. Chapter 2 addresses default information structure in Mangghuer, including topic-comment sentence form and default topic encoding. Chapter 3 addresses non-default topic encoding. Chapter 4 addresses non-default focus structures. Finally, Chapter 5 offers a concluding discussion and suggestions for further research.

### 1.1 Mangghuer background

#### *1.1.1 Sociolinguistic background*

Mangghuer is a Mongolic, SOV language spoken in northwest China. The Ethnologue currently groups Mangghuer with several other closely related Mongolic varieties, calling them Tu [mjg] (Eberhard, Simons, & Fennig 2020). However, much of the literature refers to these languages as Monguor, which is also an ethnonym for the sociocultural ethnic group that speaks these languages. Mangghuer is sometimes geographically distinguished as Minhe Monguor. Finally, Mangghuer is also alternatively spelled Mangghuar. In this thesis, I use the term Mangghuer to refer to the language, and Monguor to refer to the ethnic group.

There are 37,000 native Mangghuer speakers (Slater 2003:10). These speakers live in the linguistically diverse Amdo region of Northwest China. The region is characterized by an extensive amount of language contact, which has resulted in complex sociolinguistic mixing and language change. This region has been variously termed the Qinghai-Gansu Sprachbund (Slater 2003), the Qinghai Linguistic Complex (Janhunen 2007), and the Amdo Sprachbund (Sandman & Simon 2016). There are at least fourteen distinct language varieties used in the region, belonging variously to the Sinitic, Bodic, Mongolic, and Turkic language families (Janhunen 2007:86).

### *1.1.2 Previous research*

Slater (2003) has published a grammar of Mangghuer. Some recent publications have discussed the pragmatic uses of various particles in the language (Slater & Wang 2010; Fried 2020; 2021). Other studies have been written on nearby languages in the Amdo Sprachbund (Fried 2010; Sandman 2016). However, no previous research has yet studied information structure in Mangghuer. This thesis will begin to fill that gap.

### *1.1.3 Basics of Mangghuer grammar*

In this section I overview some basic features of Mangghuer grammar. In particular, I address aspects of finite and non-finite verbal inflection and introduce clause-final particles. These sections do not provide comprehensive lists of verbal categories or of pragmatic devices in Mangghuer. I refer the reader to Slater's (2003) *A Grammar of Mangghuer* for a fuller description of Mangghuer grammatical categories. I discuss these particular categories here because they are of importance at various points throughout this thesis.

#### *1.1.3.1 Finite morphology*

Mangghuer inflects finite verbs with imperfective, perfective, or future suffixes. Each of these tense/aspect categories is also distinguished on the basis of the subjective/objective speaker involvement.<sup>1</sup> Slater says the subjective/objective speaker involvement system

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<sup>1</sup> This category is also sometimes labelled conjunct/disjunct or egophoricity marking.

"functions to indicate the degree to which the speaker wishes to identify him- or herself as being personally involved in the claim being made" (2003:194). I will not elaborate on this morphological category in Mangghuer at length (the reader is referred to Fried (2018) for a full discussion). However, I inform the reader that the glossing choice throughout my Mangghuer corpus is to gloss these categories as SUBJ and OBJ. Throughout this thesis I have maintained these glosses in the examples that I discuss in order to be consistent with other Mangghuer publications, but I alert the reader not to misunderstand these glosses as *subject* or *object*.

Furthermore, except for imperatives, all finite verbs in Mangghuer are inflected for either SUBJ or OBJ, so this marking becomes a useful way of distinguishing finite and non-finite clauses.

Table 1, adapted from Slater (2003:116), shows the finite verb suffixes for declarative mood inflected on the verb *ri* 'come:'

Table 1. Declarative verb forms

	<b>Perfective</b>	<b>Imperfective</b>	<b>Future</b>
<b>Subjective</b>	ri-ba	ri-la bi	ri-ni
<b>Objective</b>	ri-jiang	ri-lang	ri-kunang

The following examples illustrate some typical finite clauses in Mangghuer. The verbs in these clauses are inflected with some of the declarative forms given above:

- (1) *"Qi=ni luoti chuoruo-jiang.*  
 2:SG=GEN shoe break-OBJ:PERF  
 "Your shoes broke. (Chen et al. 2005:124)
- (2) *Bi jiang san-jin kerli-ni!*  
 1:SG only three-jin want-SUBJ:FUT  
 I only want three jin! (Chen et al. 2005:124)

### 1.1.3.2 Non-final clause morphology

One important feature of Mangghuer grammar is the use of clause chain constructions. These constructions consist of several successive clauses with non-finite morphology linked to a final, finite clause. Slater (2003:122) provides the following list of non-final clause markers:

Table 2. Non-final clause markers

Morpheme	Meaning/Function
-ku	Imperfective aspect
-sang zhi	Perfective aspect
-tala	Prior event
-sa	Conditionals <i>and</i> event–state relations
-Ø	Sequential actions
danang	Dependency
-ji	Imperfective aspect
-ser	Progressive aspect

The following is a typical example of a Mangghuer clause chain:

- (3) a. *Gan terghuo dier-si=nang musu,*  
 3:SG silk clothes-PL=REFLPOSS wear  
 (He) donned his silk clothes,
- b. *Ø mori-si=nang wuni*  
 horse-PL=REFLPOSS ride  
 (he) rode his horses,
- c. *Ø gezai-da xi-jiang bai.*  
 good-after go-OBJ:PERF EMPH  
 (and he) went in great glory. (Chen et al. 2005:127)

This chain conveys a list of sequential actions. There is no overt inflection on the verbs in the first two clauses. Only the final clause in the sequence receives finite marking, in this case the OBJ:PERF suffix, *-jiang*, marking the final clause. This type of clause chaining



occurs frequently throughout the data. I have included the null marker  $\emptyset$  to indicate an empty syntactic position in the clause. I elaborate further on this point in Section 2.2.1.

### 1.1.3.3 Clause-final particles

There is a small set of particles in Mangghuer that can occur post-verbally. The particles are *bai*, *ma*, *gelang*, *a*, *sha*, and *ba*. These particles are the only words that can appear in the syntactic position following the verb, and with the exception of *ma*, they always occur in this position. A few of these particles have been the focus of several other researchers. Fried (2020) has analyzed the clause connector *ma*. Slater & Wang (2010) have analyzed *gelang*. In addition, Slater (2003:151-158) has written a brief description of each particle. The particles have complex and varied pragmatic functions. This thesis discusses how two of these particles, *ma* and *bai*, interact with information structure. The following examples demonstrate the use of the final particles, *bai*, *gelang*, and *ma*:

- (4) *Nao-sa aba gua luosi danang hugu-lang bai,*  
 see-COND father totally be:hungry after die-OBJ:IMPERF EMPH  
 When they looked, (their) father was completely starving to death, (Chen et al. 2005:134)

The particle *bai* is described by Slater (2003) as an emphatic particle. I address this particle in Section 4.2.3.

- (5) *gan=ni huayan-ku-ni qijighe saihang=ni ting*  
 3:SG=GEN garden-IMPERF-NOMLZR bloom beautiful=GEN that  
  
*ge-lang gelang.*  
 do-OBJ:IMPERF HEARSAY  
 the bloom in his garden was very beautiful, they say. (Chen et al. 2005:140)

Slater & Wang (2010) describe the particle *gelang* as indicating a type of hearsay evidentiality.

- (6) *"Nige nanxin kong=ni ruo-ji ri-gha ma?"*  
 one poor person=ACC enter-IMPERF come-CAUSE PRT  
 "Can (I) let a poor man come in?" (Chen et al. 2005:125)

Fried (2020) describes the particle *ma* as having a variety of interactional functions. I will discuss one such function in Section 3.2.

## 1.2 Information structure

My approach is based in Lambrecht's (1994) theory of information structure. He describes two primary pragmatic information structure roles: topic and focus. In this section I define these two roles and some related terms as the theoretical framework that I use throughout my analysis of Mangghuer.

### 1.2.1 Topic

The term *topic* has been variously defined by linguists. I am specifically relying on Lambrecht's use of the term. He gives the following definition of topic: "a referent is interpreted as the topic of a proposition if in a given situation the proposition is construed as being about this referent" (Lambrecht 1994:131). There are several important points concerning this definition.

First, Lambrecht is careful to note that his definition differs from other approaches: "The notion of topic/theme as the first element in the sentence is extensively discussed in Prague School research (cf. e.g. the summary in Firbas, Jan 1966) and has been adopted e.g. by Halliday (1967) and Fries (1983) . . . Finally, my notion of topic differs from that of Givón and other linguists (cf. e.g. Givón (1983)), who often use the term 'topic' to refer to any 'participant' in a discourse and who do not draw a principled distinction between topical and non-topical participants, a distinction which is essential in my own approach" (Lambrecht 1994:117). Throughout this thesis I use topic in keeping with Lambrecht's approach.

I turn now to the content of Lambrecht's definition. In his approach topics refer to things. In a given discourse, a topic could refer to a character, an item, a place, or some other contextually established entity. Speakers use referring expressions, such as noun phrases, pronouns, or even zero-anaphora, to indicate referents. The referents present in a given discourse are often called participants. In this way Lambrecht's approach is comparable to that of Givón, mentioned in the quote above, as topic expressions do refer to participants. However, Lambrecht's definition clarifies that a referring expression is only a topic when the proposition, or semantic content, of the sentence is about that referent. In other words, not all referents/participants are topics.

Another important point about Lambrecht's definition is that it applies specifically to "the topic of a proposition." This means that his category of topic is an utterance-level category. There is a distinction between the notions of *discourse topic* and *sentence topic* (Dooley & Levinsohn 2001:69), and Lambrecht's approach deals specifically with sentence topics. Likewise, this thesis describes Mangghuer sentence topics.

The final key point in Lambrecht's definition is that topics have to do with aboutness. Consider the following sentence:

(7) *He hates the snow.*

There are two referring expressions in (7), *he* and *the snow*, but only one of them is topical. This sentence is saying something about the referent of *he*. This person hates snow. The topic is the pronoun and *the snow* is a part of the proposition about this topic.

There are also sentences without topics. Consider the following:

(8) *It's snowing.*

The sentence in (8) is a simple example of a sentence without a topic. This sentence has no referents; therefore, the proposition is not about any referent in the discourse.

The amount of linguistic encoding given to a topic is important. When the same referent continues as a topic for several sentences in a row, it is usually minimally marked, with pronouns or zero-anaphora. Topics brand new to a discourse are usually more heavily encoded, such as with a full noun phrase. When a referent that was previously introduced in the discourse is reintroduced as a topic, such as when a narrative switches from discussing one character to another, the referent often receives more than minimal encoding, such as a full noun phrase.

The form or amount of linguistic encoding often relates to information status. In Lambrecht's terminology, a brand new referent is not *identifiable* to the addressee. That is, it is not "already stored in the hearer's mind" (1994:76). Languages can use heavier encoding or even specific constructions to identify a referent for an addressee. However, just because a referent is identifiable does not mean it is *activated* in the mind of the addressee at any given moment in a discourse. This distinction is subtle, but Lambrecht describes it in the following way: "knowing something and thinking of something are different mental states. In order for an addressee to be able to process the presuppositions evoked by an utterance it is not only necessary that she be aware of the relevant set of presupposed propositions but that she have easy access to these propositions and to the elements of which they are composed" (Lambrecht 1994:93).

There are also many discourse contexts that produce marked encoding of topics. For example, a couple discussing paint colors in a hardware store may simply point at a paint chip and say, "that looks nice." In this context, the paint chip referent is a new topic, but it need only be minimally marked with a demonstrative pronoun because its physical presence makes it highly identifiable, and the speaker can activate it in the mind of the addressee by simply pointing at it. The takeaway here is that the amount of encoding that a topic referent receives correlates with that referent's identifiability and activation status, or more precisely, the degree to which the speaker believes the referent is identifiable and activated in the addressee's mental representation at any given point in a discourse. Simply put,

the speaker's judgements about the addressee's mental representation are reflected by the encoding given to referents.

As a final point about topic, it may be helpful to point out a common semantic quality associated with topic expressions: given the fact that they refer to identifiable referents, they are linguistically realized as either definite, such as pronouns, definite noun phrases, and proper nouns, or as generic indefinite, such as in, "a man's gotta eat" as opposed to "a certain man was very hungry." This semantic quality is true of Mangghuer topics throughout the data discussed in this thesis.

In Chapter 2 I describe Mangghuer strategies for default, or unmarked topic encoding, and in Chapter 3 I describe non-default, or marked topic encoding.

### *1.2.2 Focus*

Lambrecht gives the following definition of focus: "the semantic component of a pragmatically structured proposition whereby the assertion differs from the presupposition" (Lambrecht 1994). This is another terminologically loaded definition, so I will briefly define its various points.

First, the idea of *proposition* is important. Simply stated, the proposition of a sentence is the concept that a speaker is communicating. So the two sentences, "John threw the ball" and "the ball was thrown by John" can be said to communicate the same proposition.

Second, whereas topics relate to referents, the focus of a clause relates to propositional content. In this way topic and focus are complementary roles. A clause topic identifies some established entity as the subject of discussion (note that I do not mean *subject* in the grammatical sense), and the focus indicates the relevant information proposed by the clause. I use the term *relevant* here to describe focus non-technically; the precise nature of focus arises from the following discussion.

Lambrecht (1994) uses the term *presupposition* for the information already present in the addressee's mental representation at the time of speech and *assertion* for the information

supplied by an utterance. Some of the information in a given assertion may overlap with the presupposition, but some portion will always differ (Lambrecht 1994:206). The portion of the assertion that is different from the presupposition is what Lambrecht considers focus. There are three possible focus types, which are illustrated with the following contrived question and answer pairs:

(9) a. *Is Martha the one who hates the snow?*  
b. *I hate the snow.*

(10) a. *Why aren't you sledding?*  
b. *I hate the snow.*

(11) a. *What's the matter?*  
b. *I hate the snow.*

While the three answers in (9b), (10b), and (11b) above are the same, they each supply different types of missing information. The question in (9a) *presupposes* that someone hates the snow, but provides the wrong argument, Martha. Therefore, the answer in (9b) *asserts* the correct argument. Lambrecht's definition says the focus of the clause is the differing component between the presupposition and the assertion. The *different component* in (9b) is the first person singular pronoun argument, *I*. Thus, the focus type in sentences like (9b) is termed argument focus.

The speaker's question in (10a) presupposes that the addressee would enjoy going sledding, but the speaker does not know how the addressee feels about the snow. The response in (10b) asserts information in the predicate that answers the question. Notably, the question in (10a) is about the addressee, so the addressee is the topic. And the addressee remains the topic in the response. Therefore, the different component between the presupposition and the assertion is the predicate in (10b). Thus, (10b) is an example of what is called predicate focus. Predicate focus sentences are also frequently called topic-comment sentences.

The speaker's question in (11a) presupposes very little. Therefore, all of asserted information in (11b) differs from the presupposition. This includes the subject, which does not function as a topic in (11b). The different component, then, is the entire sentence. Thus, (11b) is an example of what is called sentence focus. However, this name is somewhat imprecise, as a more accurate label would be *clause* focus. A string of combined clauses may be considered one sentence, but each clause can have its own focus structure. However, in order to be uniform with my terminology, I continue to use the term *sentence* focus.

Examples (9b), (10b), and (11b) show Lambrecht's three categories of information structure: argument focus, predicate focus, and sentence focus. A key insight of information structure research is that every utterance uses one of these three focus structures.

While the three answer sentences above are syntactically identical in English, they differ prosodically. However, syntactic strategies could have also been used to indicate focus structure in the responses. For example, argument focus could be indicated with a sentence like, "it's me who hates the snow." It follows then, that languages adopt varieties of constructions, whether prosodic, morphological, or syntactic, to mark focus structure. Indeed, this is demonstrated quite extensively by Lambrecht (1994).

An important cross-linguistic insight is that predicate focus, as in (10b), is the default, or unmarked focus structure for the clause. Therefore, in Chapter 2 I describe the default Mangghuer clause, which is the predicate focus form of the clause. In Chapter 4 I describe argument and sentence focus in Mangghuer.

Lambrecht's three focus articulations outline an approach to the notion of focus that is distinct from alternative approaches in the field. Lambrecht notes the difference between his own approach and the focus-presupposition distinction put forth by Chomsky (1972:62-119) and Jackendoff (1972). Lambrecht says the following of their approach: "most of this research concerns pragmatic distinctions which are marked phonologically only, i.e. which do not involve alternative syntactic structures" (1994:9). Thus, Lambrecht broadens focus from the idea of a prosodic peak to the three pragmatic articulations discussed

above, each of which can (depending on the given language) be marked with a variety of prosodic or syntactic strategies. Lambrecht argues later "that 'the presupposition' in the Chomsky-Jackendoff tradition is in fact only one particular subtype of pragmatic presupposition" (1994:208). In fact, it seems that the "Chomsky-Jackendoff tradition" describes phenomena that can often be compared to Lambrecht's notion of argument focus. I make this point to alert the reader to the specific terminological approach of this thesis: I use the term focus strictly in Lambrecht's sense.

Researchers often relate the notion of focus to the notion of contrast. Indeed, argument focus in particular often seems to bear a contrastive effect (e.g. in (9) above). Bolinger (1961) describes contrast as a gradient property of all utterances. Lambrecht distinguishes contrast from information structure form, arguing that it "arises from particular inferences which we draw on the basis of given conversational contexts" (1994:290). The notion of contrast is important at points throughout this thesis. However, it is not clear from the Mangghuer data whether Lambrecht's approach is best. I return to this point in Section 4.1.

Given the discussion of focus in this section, I add a point to the discussion of topic above: referents can only be construed as topics in clauses with either argument focus or predicate focus structure, but a topic cannot occur with sentence focus because the entire clause is construed as the differing portion of the assertion, and a topic cannot, by definition, be contained in the difference between the presupposition and the assertion. Similarly, in a sentence with argument focus structure, the focused argument can never be considered topical because it is within the scope of focus. Therefore, (9b) and (10b) can be said to have topics, the first person subject; whereas, the subject pronoun is not topical in (11b) because it falls within the scope of focus.

### **1.3 Data and methodology**

Most of my analysis relies on a set of twenty-three narrative texts published in the 2005 volume, *Folktales of China's Minhe Mangghuer* (Chen et al. 2005). These texts were collected from eight different Mangghuer speakers. However, my analysis is based primarily



on three stories told by Lü Jinliang. Ms. Lü is a native Mangghuer speaker. She was born in 1920 and her tellings of the folktales were recorded in 1994 as she told them to other native Mangghuer speakers. (Chen et al. 2005:iii). The texts of her narratives are likely representative of highly natural storytelling in the language. I have chosen to rely on several stories from the same author in order to keep the corpus for my analysis internally consistent. The stories that I chose are "A Hired Farmhand," "Three Daughters," and "A Man and His Two Wives" (Chen et al. 2005:122-143). Lü Jinliang recounted twelve narratives in total. I selected these three because they are average length among her narratives, making a total of 258 lines of text. At times I also draw on examples from others of the narratives, especially the other nine that are told by Lü Jinliang.

In addition to the narratives discussed above, I also draw on one other narrative that is published in the 2001 *Mangghuer Folktale Reader* (Stuart & Zhu 2001). Many of the texts in this volume are the same narratives as in Chen et al. (2005). However, in this volume the texts are not interlinearized. One text unique to this volume is the Lu Buping story (Stuart & Zhu 2001:54-56). I draw on examples from this text at points throughout my analysis of Mangghuer. The interlinear examples from this text that occur in my thesis were originally completed by Robert Fried. I have kept his free translations without alteration, but I have revised his morpheme glossing in order to make it consistent with the rest of the glossing throughout this thesis.

The published forms of the texts are given in Chen et al. (2005) in an interlinear format using three tiers: the original Mangghuer, a morpheme by morpheme glossing, and a free translation. Throughout my analysis, all interlinear examples, including the glossings and free translations, are the same as the original published versions. I have at times bolded or bracketed portions of the original language and free translation tiers for ease of discussion. I sometimes also provide a fourth tier above the original Mangghuer which labels the various constituents as either S, V, or O.

I relied on Levinsohn's (2015) narrative text analysis procedures to analyze the three stories told by Lü Jinliang. This has provided the basis for counting the number of occurrences of certain Mangghuer forms, such as in the participant reference discussion in Section 2.2.

## CHAPTER 2

### Default information structure

In this chapter I describe default information structure in Mangghuer. In 2.1 I discuss default clause form. In 2.2 I discuss default topic referent encoding.

#### 2.1 Topic-comment sentences

In Lambrecht's approach, *topic-comment* is interchangeable with *predicate focus*. In these types of sentences, the speaker highlights the predicate as the portion of the assertion that the addressee is to pay attention to, the portion that differs in some respect from the addressee's presupposition. These sentences always have both a topical element and focus structure which has scope over the entire predicate. Recall the illustrative question-answer pair that I provided in Section 1.2.2, repeated here for convenience:

- (12) a. *Why aren't you sledding?*  
b. *I hate the snow.*

The topical element in (12b) is the first person pronoun *I*. This is clear because the question in (12a) inquires for information *about* the addressee. Thus, the response provides the requested information about the topic, which happens to be the speaker. In focus structure terms, the pronoun does not differ from the presupposition (it is not in focus), but the predicate does differ from the presupposition (it is in focus). Cross-linguistically, predicate focus clauses tend to have this topic + comment form, which is why they have this name.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> An exception would be an OVS language, such as Hixkaryana, which could be better described as having comment-topic sentences. A full discussion of the implications of OVS languages may have bearing on the interchangeability of the terms topic-comment and predicate focus. However, that discussion is beyond the scope of this thesis.

One important point about topic-comment sentences is that they are considered the cross-linguistically unmarked sentence form. Lambrecht says that predicate focus clauses are "the UNMARKED pragmatic articulation" (1994:228, emphasis his). However, what is meant by *unmarked* with respect to focus structure is somewhat vague. There seem to be at least two important factors: first, Lambrecht points out that the other two focus structure types, argument and sentence focus, "are distributionally more restricted" (1994:228). In other words, predicate focus sentences occur in the broadest range of discourse situations. Second, utterances with predicate focus in a given language tend to correlate with that language's basic word order. Indeed, this is the case for Mangghuer. This thesis agrees with most information structure literature on the position that predicate focus clauses are the default, or unmarked, clause type. This point is important because it predicts non-default clause structure could be a strategy for indicating other focus structure types.

### *2.1.1 Topic-comment sentences in Mangghuer*

In this section I discuss the default structure of the Mangghuer comment. Since predicate focus structure is encoded with default syntactic structure, the following discussion includes an overview of basic clause structure in Mangghuer. A thorough discussion of unmarked clause form in Mangghuer will also help the reader to analyze the marked forms that I address in later chapters.

The basic word order of Mangghuer is SOV. Of course, there are other linguistic elements besides subjects, objects, and verbs that can occur in the clause. The following, adapted from Slater (2003:112), proposes the ordering of all syntactic elements relative to one another in the Mangghuer clause:

(13)	Discourse connector	Topic <i>or</i> Oblique	Subject	Second position adverbial	Oblique (benefactive ablative, instrumental)	Direct object	Oblique (length of time, amount) <i>or</i> (Adverbial)
	Negative particle	Verb	AUX	Final particle			

My analysis of Mangghuer conforms to this template. While Slater clarifies that "any individual clause may vary in how it combines its particular subset of these elements" (2003:112), the default Mangghuer clause would be expected to conform to this general pattern. Since predicate focus clauses are the default focus structure, they tend to stick to this order. The Mangghuer examples discussed throughout this chapter illustrate typical predicate focus structure. Consider the following four examples of Mangghuer topic-comment sentences. Examples (14) and (15) were originally given in Section 1.1.3.1 as (1) and (2), but I repeat them here for convenience:

(14)                    S            V  
       "*[Qi=ni luoti] [chuoruo-jiang]*.  
       2:SG=GEN shoe break-OBJ:PERF  
       "Your shoes broke. (Chen et al. 2005:124)

(15) S                    DO            V  
       "*[Bi] jiang [san-jin] [kerli-ni]!*  
       1:SG only three-jin want-SUBJ:FUT  
       I only want three jin! (Chen et al. 2005:124)

(16) S                    DO                    V  
       "*[Aguer=ni] [pusa ge] [kerla-jiang]*.  
       daughter=POSS another SG:INDEF throw-OBJ:PERF  
       His daughter threw another one. (Chen et al. 2005:135)

(17) OBL S IO DO V  
*mali [bi] [qimai] [cai] [chaoke-la xi-a]."*  
 quickly 1:SG 2:SG:DAT food fry-PURP go-VOL  
 I'll quickly go to cook some food for you," (she said). (Chen et al. 2005:96)

(18) S IO DO  
*[Gan] [huguer=ni ger=du] [nughuai zhuerge ge=ni] [he*  
 3:SG cow=GEN house=DAT dog heart SG:INDEF=ACC take  
  
 V  
*xi-gha-jiang] gelang.*  
 go-CAUSE-OBJ:PERF HEARSAY  
 He had a dog heart taken to the cow's home, they say. (Chen et al. 2005:142)

The clauses above vary in terms of what kinds of constituents are present, but each of them conforms to Slater's (2003:112) ordering. This is because they are all topic-comment clauses. In each example, there is a clear topic, followed by a predicate which is in focus (the comment). Notice that a clause is considered default so long as its given set of constituents have default positioning relative to one another. E.g., an SV clause and SOV clause have equally default constituent order in Mangghuer, but an OSV clause is not default.

This point should also be applied to constituents that are not overtly marked. Mangghuer frequently marks constituents with zero-anaphora. I address referent encoding in detail in the following sections, but in the present discussion it suffices to note that zero-anaphora does not produce non-default constituent order. This can be illustrated by a clause chain. Subject referents in clause chains are usually marked with zero-anaphora. In terms of information structure, clause chains are a series of successive predicate focus clauses. Thus, the overt constituents conform to default constituent order. Consider the following:

(19) a. S DO V  
*Jiaoduer [Ø] [bieqin] [zhuangke],*  
 every:day illness pretend  
 Every day (she) pretended to be ill,

- b. S V  
 Ø *nita*,  
 sleep  
 (she) slept,
- c. S DO V  
*yigua* [Ø] *huaitu-si=la* [dama=nang] [ghua-lang].  
 totally cypress:needle-PL=INST face=REFLPOSS wash-OBJ:IMPERF  
 (and she) even washed her face with (water in which) cypress needles (had soaked).  
 (Chen et al. 2005:140-141)

Example (19) is a typical Mangghuer clause chain. The first two clauses have non-finite morphology, and the last clause has finite morphology (see Tables 1 and 2 in Sections 1.1.3.1 and 1.1.3.2). I address referent encoding in detail in the following sections, but in the present discussion it is worth noting that this is a typical context where topics are marked with zero-anaphora. Even though these clauses lack overt subjects, they conform to the default Mangghuer syntactic ordering. In (19a) the constituents are an oblique, followed by the direct object, followed by the verb. This is consistent with the default ordering given in (13). In (19b) the zero-anaphora leaves only one constituent, the verb, so this is also consistent. Finally, in (19c) the constituents are an instrumental oblique, followed by the direct object, and the verb, which is again consistent. Thus, the various clauses in chains conform to default Mangghuer word order.

## 2.2 Default topics

In this section I describe default topic referent encoding in Mangghuer. Topics are marked with default strategies when they are highly accessible. It is natural for a speaker to first establish a referent as a topic with some kind of heavier encoding, and then mark the referent minimally if it continues as the topic in consecutive clauses. I discuss continuing topics first in Section 2.2.1, as they are the most prototypical topics. Then in Section 2.2.2 I discuss strategies for switching topics when the new topic is highly accessible. I address strategies for establishing non-accessible topics in Chapter 3.

### 2.2.1 Continuing topics

Depending on the grammatical system of a given language, minimal encoding can be a pronoun, verb inflection, or zero-anaphora. Both zero-anaphora and pronouns occur as topics in Mangghuer. An analysis of topics in Mangghuer must, therefore, determine which encoding strategy is used by speakers as the default. In this section I show that default continuing topics in Mangghuer are marked with zero-anaphora.

Dooley & Levinsohn (2001) propose a methodology for analyzing participant reference in subjects. Though the notion of subject does not overlap entirely with topic, their procedure is also well suited to analyze topic. The Mangghuer data in the following discussion makes clear the distinction between subjects and topics. When applicable, I have added the null marker  $\emptyset$  to the interlinear examples throughout this chapter in order to show clearly where the zero-anaphora 'gap' occurs in the clause. I use this marker to indicate syntactic positions that can regularly contain overt arguments, but are nevertheless empty in the relevant example. This will be important particularly concerning zero-anaphora in dependent clauses.

Dooley and Levinsohn approach use the term *participant* for a referent in a given discourse. In their procedure, (2001:130) clause subjects should be categorized into four types, based on relation to the previous clause: subjects that are the same as the subject participants in the previous clause (S1), subjects that are the addressee of reported speech in the previous clause (S2), subjects that occur in the previous clause in some non-subject role besides being the addressee of reported speech (S3), and subject participants that do not occur in the previous clause. I tracked subjects for three of the Mangghuer folktales in my corpus: "A Hired Farmhand," "A Man and His Two Wives," and "Three Daughters." In the 258 lines of these three narratives, there are 67 S1 type subjects. Of these, 52 subjects are marked with zero-anaphora. This leaves fifteen S1 type subjects that are encoded with more than zero-anaphora. However, the majority of these are explainable, and the reasons for their occurrences are elaborated on throughout the rest of this section. For now, this



data suggests that the default marking strategy for continuing topics in Mangghuer is zero-anaphora. In the next section I discuss subjects that do not continue: the S2, S3, and S4 type clauses.

I turn now to a typical example of topic reference in Mangghuer. These are the first few lines that follow the title in the narrative, "A Hired Farmhand." This story begins by introducing a primary character, the antagonist. The referring expressions chosen throughout these lines demonstrate some of the basic patterns for topic reference in Mangghuer. Notice the progression from full noun phrase, to pronoun, and finally to zero-anaphora:

- (20) a. *Tiedun=du*,  
 past=DAT  
 In olden times,
- b. *kong yi-ge bang*.  
 person one-CL OBJ:COP  
 there was **a man**.
- c. *Gan kong=ni ala-lang*,  
 3:SG person=ACC kill-OBJ:IMPERF  
**He** killed (or: was killing) people,
- d. *Ø kong=ni ala-ku Ø luoti chuke-jiang*.  
 person=ACC kill-IMPERF shoe make:by:crumpling-OBJ:PERF  
 after killing people, (**he**) made shoes (from their skins). (Chen et al. 2005:122)

The phrase in (20a) locates this story in the past, and then the clause in (20b) introduces the story's antagonist. These types of introductory sentences are called presentational sentences, and they are discussed further in Section 4.2. It is important to note that the pattern in Mangghuer is that presentational sentences do not establish topics, but rather introduce participants to the narrative. It is the next clause, (20c), which establishes this participant as topic. This clause is a typical example of a topic-comment clause in Mangghuer. The subject pronoun *gan* establishes the participant that is introduced in (20b) as the topic. The function of the pronoun, rather than zero-anaphora, is to identify that this referent now has

topical status. Once the referent is established as the topic, it can then continue to be referenced as the topic in consecutive topic-comment clauses with zero-anaphora, which is the case for the two clauses in (20d). In these clauses, the topic is still the same participant, but now he is referenced with zero-anaphora. This is the minimal marking possible in Mangghuer, and it is the default strategy for referencing continuing topics.

One important syntactic point contributes to this discussion. Notice that example (20d) consists of a dependent clause, marked with the non-finite verb suffix *-ku*, and an independent clause, marked with the finite verb suffix *-jiang*. Dependent clauses marked with the non-finite suffix *-ku* frequently have their own, overt arguments, and their arguments are not required to be the same as those of the following, independent clause. Therefore, I analyze this dependent clause as having its own, separate case of zero-anaphora, rather than describe it as dependent on either the preceding or the final clause for its arguments. In fact, these clauses are dependent only in terms of the subjective/objective speaker involvement distinction as described in Section 1.1.3.1. My analysis of (20d) is reflected in the fact that I have included the zero-anaphora marker  $\emptyset$  twice in the language data line, once for each clause.<sup>2</sup>

The subject in (20c) is an S1 type subject; the same participant is the subject as in the previous clause. However, status as a continuing subject is not the same as status as a continuing topic, as there is no topic in the previous clause. Thus, continuing subjects must be distinguished from continuing topics. Though the two categories frequently overlap, they are not interchangeable. This is one reason why not all S1 type subjects are marked with zero-anaphora. Zero-anaphora is used in Mangghuer for continuing topics, but not necessarily for continuing subjects. Thus, the category of topic is useful for explaining what could otherwise seem arbitrary alternation between encoding strategies.

The discussion above describes the basic pattern for topic reference in Mangghuer. However, I will clarify at this point that zero-anaphora can, in fact, be used to establish a

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<sup>2</sup> I acknowledge that this is distinct from the free translation, which I have not modified and which only indicates a single parenthetical argument. However, I expect that this free translation simply intended to portray the meaning of the sentence, rather than perfectly reflect all aspects of the Mangghuer syntax.

referent as a topic. This does not contradict my points in the previous paragraph, rather it seems that overt pronouns and zero-anaphora share the functional load for establishing identifiable referents as topics. I describe the process of establishing topics in the next section, but for now the important point is to note that zero-anaphora is the default, minimal marking strategy for continuing topics.

I turn now to a discussion of zero-anaphora in Mangghuer clause chains, as this has bearing on the notion of continuing topic. Clause chains are a complex aspect of Mangghuer grammar, and they occur frequently throughout my corpus. I mentioned above that Mangghuer clause chains regularly mark subjects with zero-anaphora. I point out now that, depending on the theoretical approach that is applied, it is possible to object to the notion of zero-anaphora occurring in each clause throughout a clause chain. For this reason, I take some time to discuss the possible analyses of subject identifiability in clause chains. Consider the following example, which was presented earlier as (19). I provide it again here as (21), and this time I include the previous clause for context:

- (21) a. *ni mao bieri gan=ni ti burer=ni mugha=ni di-kuniang*  
 this bad wife 3:SG=GEN that calf=GEN meat=ACC eat-OBJ:FUT  
*bai.*  
 EMPH  
 this evil wife planned to eat the calf's flesh.
- b. *Jiaoduer Ø bieqin zhuangke,*  
 every:day illness pretend  
 Every day (she) pretended to be ill,
- c. *Ø nita,*  
 sleep  
 (she) slept,
- d. *yigua Ø huaitu-si=la dama=nang ghua-lang.*  
 totally cypress:needle-PL=INST face=REFLPOSS wash-OBJ:IMPERF  
 (and she) even washed her face with (water in which) cypress needles (had soaked).  
 (Chen et al. 2005:141)

Once again, I have included the null marker  $\emptyset$  in the language data lines of this example (however, the parenthetical subjects in the free translations are original). This represents an analysis which assumes there is truly zero-anaphora occurring with each verb in this clause chain. Notice that the topic is established by the overt noun phrase *ni mao bieri* 'this bad wife' in (21a). This topic referent is clearly the subject throughout the clause chain, but she is never overtly referenced. This is the normal pattern of topic reference for clause chains with a topic that continues from the previous clause.

Consider another clause chain that was shown earlier as (3), but which I present again here as (22) with the previous clauses for context. In this scene, the narrative's antagonist has just decided to travel to the local temple to have his future foretold. There is narrative emphasis in this scene on the wealth he takes with him, as his material grandeur becomes a negative moral example by the end of the narrative. In this example, the topic of the clause chain is identifiable from the previous clauses, but needs to be established, so a pronoun is used:

- (22) a. *Gan zou tuosi=ni tiemie-her erqi xi-jiang bai,*  
 3:SG thus oil=ACC camel-PURP carry go-OBJ:PERF bai,  
 So he went carrying oil on (his) camels,
- b. *yigua shuguo tuotong-si=nang.*  
 totally big bucket-PL=REFLPOSS  
 (in) really big buckets.
- c. *Gan terghuo dier-si=nang musi,*  
 3:SG silk clothes-PL=REFLPOSS wear  
 He donned his silk clothes,
- d.  $\emptyset$  *mori-si=nang wuni,*  
 horse-PL=REFLPOSS ride  
 (he) rode his horses,
- e.  $\emptyset$  *gezai-da xi-jiang bai.*  
 good-after go-OBJ:PERF EMPH  
 (and he) went in great glory.

(Chen et al. 2005:127)

In this scene, the antagonist is already topical in (22a). However, in my analysis his topical status is interrupted by (22b). Notice that since (22b) is lacking a verb, it is not a complete clause. The story teller has included this phrase as a right-dislocated afterthought of (22a) in order to emphasize the large size of the oil buckets, and therefore the wealth, of this character. In other words, the speaker decided to add even more information about the oil in order to drum up the character's excessiveness. Thus, (22b), by drawing attention to the buckets, interrupts the topical status of the antagonist, so the speaker uses the pronoun *gan* in the first clause of the chain in order to reestablish him as the topic. He then continues as the topic referent throughout the clause. This clarifies the pattern in (21).

The pattern for clause chains, therefore, is to either use zero-anaphora throughout to indicate a continuing topic or to simply establish the topic in the first clause of the chain with either an unambiguous pronoun or a noun phrase. Of course, one may object to the notion that zero-anaphora occurs in each clause of the chain. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to delve completely into a discussion of zero pronoun anaphora and Mangghuer speakers' cognitive representation of participant reference in clause chains. However, I have chosen to include each individual clause from clause chains in my total count of S1 type subjects, so I briefly discuss my reasons for this now.

It is difficult to determine with exactness the relationship between non-final, non-finite clauses and the final, finite clause in Mangghuer clause chains. As Slater points out, "in most instances we cannot say whether a particular dependent clause is or is not embedded within another clause; this simply does not seem to be a relevant distinction for the Mangghuer non-final clauses" (2003:229). Relatedly, it is not clear whether a subject is coreferenced by each clause in a chain, or shared as a singly referenced element of a larger matrix. Slater also says, "I have seen a couple of other examples of apparently noncontinuing subjects with  $-\emptyset$  clauses, but they are similarly unclear" (2003:261; here Slater uses  $-\emptyset$  to refer to the zero-suffix of the verb, rather than the zero-anaphora). However, it is clear that at least some arguments are not shared by all clauses in the chain, e.g. the direct

objects of (22d) and (22e). For the purposes of this thesis, therefore, I have considered the individual clauses in Mangghuer chains to also individually reference the subjects, whether overtly or with zero-anaphora.

To conclude a discussion of default topic reference, 52 out of 67 S1 type subjects in my analysis are encoded with zero-anaphora. Of the fifteen S1 type subjects with more encoding than zero-anaphora, three are continuing subjects but not continuing topics. In these examples, the extra encoding is used in order to establish the topical status of the referent. This category is addressed further in the next section. Another three are clearly instances of scene changes, and the extra encoding is used to help convey the narrative transition. There are also two instances of sentence focus clauses with S1 type subjects. Sentence focus clauses are addressed in Section 4.2, but for now it suffices to note that subjects are not topical in sentence focus clauses. This leaves only seven instances of S1 type clauses with more than minimal encoding. However, there is still one possible category: three of these seven sentences introduce reported speech. In other words, they are short "he said" clauses. There are examples of clauses in my corpus that introduce reported speech that use zero-anaphora, but it is possible that introducing reported speech somehow interacts with topic encoding. Even ignoring these reported speech examples as an explanatory factor, my analysis accounts for 60 out of 67 S1 type clauses. Zero-anaphora appears to be the default strategy for referencing continuing topics in Mangghuer.

### *2.2.2 Default encoding of newly established topics*

I briefly touched on the notion of accessibility in Section 1.2. I repeat here that the amount of encoding that a topic referent receives can correlate with the degree to which the speaker believes the referent is readily accessible to the addressee's mental representation at any given point in a discourse. So far in this chapter I have only described one factor that results in highly accessible topics: continuing topics always remain highly accessible from the previous clause. However, there are other factors besides continuation that can

produce a highly accessible topic. This section addresses the encoding strategies used in Mangghuer for establishing the topical status of a referent that is highly accessible for some reason other than continuation. In Chapter 3 I discuss strategies for establishing the topical status of referents with low accessibility.

### 2.2.2.1 Establishing topics with simple noun phrases

In (20b) above I showed that the third person singular pronoun *gan* can be used to establish a continuing participant as a topic. It is also possible for a participant to be highly accessible for some reason other than reference in the previous clause. For example, in story-telling the narrator regularly switches attention back and forth between various characters as the events of the story unfold. From an information structure perspective, this can be described as the topic regularly switching between participants that are well established as primary characters in the narrative. In Mangghuer a simple noun phrase suffices to establish a primary character as topic, such as in (23) below:

- (23) a. *Ø Berqie=du kuer-ku,*  
           pasture=DAT arrive-IMPERF  
           When (they) arrived at the pasture
- b. *Laohan zou keli-ji,*  
           old:man thus say-IMPERF  
           Old Man said, (Chen et al. 2005:131)

At this point in the narrative, a father and his three daughters are travelling to a pasture. The 3PL topic in (23a) is zero-marked. In (23b) the topic switches to just the father, so the simple noun phrase, *laohan* 'old man', indicates that the topic has switched from the whole group of four to just him. This noun has already been used as a referring expression for the father earlier in the narrative, so it makes the topic clear to the audience with the minimal marking necessary to establish the change. This is the minimal marking available in this context because there is no gender distinction on Mangghuer pronouns, so the third person singular pronoun *gan* would not distinguish between the father and any one of the daughters.

Using a simple noun phrase to establish a new topic is extremely typical in Mangghuer, and it occurs often in the data.

Any circumstance that makes a particular referent highly accessible allows Mangghuer speakers to use this simple noun phrase strategy to establish new topics. Consider the new topic referents in (24):

- (24) a. *Gan yao danang yi-ge ximie dian=du kuer-jiang.*  
 3:SG go after one-CL temple gate=DAT arrive-OBJ:PERF  
 He went until (he) reached the gate of a temple.
- b. [*Diamang=ni bamenjiang*] *ruo-ji xi-ji erseghe-jiang,*  
 door=GEN gate:keeper enter-IMPERF go-IMPERF ask-OBJ:PERF  
 [The gatekeeper at the door] went inside and asked,
- c. "*Nige nanxin kong=ni ruo-ji ri-gha ma?*"  
 one poor person=ACC enter-IMPERF come-CAUSE PRT  
 "Can (I) let a poor man come in?"
- d. [*Ximian=ni Laoye*] *keli-ji,*  
 temple=GEN living:buddha say-IMPERF  
 [The Living Buddha of the temple] said, (Chen et al. 2005:125)

In this section, both (24b) and (24d) switch the topic from the previous clause, to a gatekeeper and a Living Buddha, respectively. Neither of these participants have been introduced at all in this narrative, so the switches may seem abrupt. However, since there is a location change in (24a) to the temple gateway and in (24b) to the interior of the temple, it is natural to talk about a gatekeeper and a Living Buddha. These are participants that the audience would expect from the domain, so no character introductions are needed. This shows that participant accessibility is connected closely to cultural knowledge as well, as the speaker makes frequent assumptions that the audience will know what kinds of participants are typically associated with various contexts.

So far I have associated high accessibility with continuing reference, discourse prominence (such as primary characters in a narrative), and cultural knowledge (such as the Living



Buddha). There are certainly many more factors that contribute to accessibility. For example, the physical presence of the paint chip that I mention in Section 1.2. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to identify every factor that contributes to accessibility. Rather, it suffices to acknowledge that accessibility is a complex aspect of cognition that interacts with topic encoding.

#### 2.2.2.2 Establishing topics with zero-anaphora

In some contexts zero-anaphora is sufficient to establish a change in topic. One example of this occurs in the narrative "Three Daughters." At a certain point in the story, the three daughters are starving to death, but they are saved by digging in the ground and finding peas. In the sentences of this section, the topic switches repeatedly between the daughters digging and peas coming out of the ground:

- (25) a. *Du niezhang luosi-jiang ma,*  
 now wretched be:hungry-OBJ:PERF PRT  
 Now, wretched (and) hungry,
- b. *Ø ghazher=ni wake-jiang gelang.*  
 ground=ACC dig-OBJ:PERF HEARSAY  
 (they) dug (in) the ground, they say.
- c. *Ø Wake-ku,*  
 dig-IMPERF  
 When (they) dug,
- d. *gan yi-kuer pujieghe gher-jiang gelang.*  
 3:SG one-CL pea go:out-OBJ:PERF HEARSAY  
 it, a pea came out, they say
- e. *San-ge=la yi-ren diger ge di-jiang.*  
 three-CL=COLL one-person little:bit SG:INDEF eat-OBJ:PERF  
 The three of them each ate a little bit.
- f. *Pusa ge Ø wake-ku,*  
 another once dig-IMPERF  
 When (they) dug once again,

- g. *san-kuer gher-ji ri-jiang gelang.*  
 three-CL go:out-IMPERF come-OBJ:PERF HEARSAY  
 three (peas) came out, they say.
- h. *Pusa ge Ø wake-ku,*  
 another once dig-IMPERF  
 When (they) dug once again,
- i. *yi-ge mula tughuo gher-jiang gelang.*  
 one-CL small pot go:out-OBJ:PERF HEARSAY  
 a small pot (of peas) came out, they say. (Chen et al. 2005:133)

The interesting aspect of this section is the topic referencing in the last few lines. In (25f) the topic is the three daughters. This is a continuing topic from the previous sentences, so the topic is encoded with zero-anaphora. Then the topic switches in (25g) to three peas. The interesting sentence is (25h). This sentence is a verbatim repeat of (25f); however, the topic is not a continuing topic from (25g). It switches from the peas to the three daughters, but even though there is a switch, there is still zero marking. In this context, however, this is the third time the topic has switched back. There is a kind of rhythm at this point in the story: the daughters dig; peas come out. The listener can easily understand that the daughters are the topic, despite the change. The naturalness of this switch without marking is also aided by the animacy status of these participants. It is normal to understand that the daughters are the topic doing the digging, because inanimate peas do not dig. This shows, then, that when topic switching is clear because of narrative context, it need not always be explicitly encoded.

There is an alternative analysis of the data in (25). It is possible to posit that there is no change in topic from (25f) to (25h). This analysis is possible because (25g) is a sentence focus clause. This is clear because all of the information in (25g), including the subject referent, is new to the discourse. These sentences are fully addressed in Section 4.2, but recall from the discussion in Section 1.2 that a sentence focus clause does not have a topic. Thus, it is possible that zero-anaphora suffices in (25h) because the three daughters are considered as a continuing topic. Earlier I described continuing topic as continuation

from one clause to the next. The data in (25f-25h) suggests that topics may be considered continuing even when separated by an intermediate clause, so long as that intermediate clause does not itself contain a different topic.

This second analysis accounts for the data as well as the first, albeit requiring a slight adjustment to the notion of continuation. More instances of this kind of zero-anaphora would be necessary to determine which analysis is appropriate for describing Mangghuer, and my analysis of the corpus has not located enough similar examples to make a decision between these alternatives.

## CHAPTER 3

### Non-default topic

In the previous chapter I addressed default forms of topic referent encoding in Mangghuer. There are many examples in the narratives where non-default encoding occurs. In this chapter I describe two categories of marked topics: heavily encoded topics and fronted topics. I also discuss the pragmatic effects of each. Section 3.1 discusses several different types of extra heavy topic encoding strategies that Mangghuer speakers use. Section 3.2 addresses topic-fronting.

#### 3.1 Non-default topic encoding

##### 3.1.1 Scene shifting topic encoding

There are contexts where continuing topics are encoded with more than minimal marking. One such context is at the beginning of new episodes in the narrative. In the course of story-telling, it is common for one scene to begin with a topic participant that is the same as the topic participant in the sentence that just ended the scene beforehand. In this context, Mangghuer speakers usually mark the participant with a full noun phrase, rather than zero-anaphora. This occurs in (26):

- (26) a. **Gan** *jiang san-jin tuosi=la yigua zhula=du suer*  
3:SG only three-jin oil=INST totally lamp=DAT pour

*duer-gha-jiang bai.*  
fill-CAUSE-OBJ:PERF EMPH

He poured with only three *jin* of oil into all the lamps (in the temple) and made (them all) full.

- b. *Ni zhaler yi-zhuan mergu nuqi ri-ku,*  
 this hired:farmhand one-circle kowtow pass come-IMPERF  
 When this hired farmhand came back (after) kowtowing for one circuit (around  
 the temple), (Chen et al. 2005:50-51)

In (26a) the subject is the 3:SG pronoun *gan*, referring to the farmhand participant who plays a primary role in this narrative. Shortly before this clause, the farmhand had been kowtowing through a temple, pouring oil into lamps. However, he is not a continuing topic in (26a), as he is not present in the previous clause. Thus, the speaker encodes him with a pronoun in order to establish him as a topic in (26a). The scene changes with the next clause, (26b). The farmhand has finished his kowtowing, so there is a location change as this character "comes back" from kowtowing. Since (26b) marks the beginning of a new episode, the subject receives more than minimal encoding, the full noun phrase *ni zhaler* in this case. By reestablishing the topical status of a participant topic, Mangghuer speakers can invite their addressees to consider the previous section of discourse finished and a new one begun.

Extra topic encoding is also used to shift the narrative scene in the following example:

- (27) a. *gan-si ni tuosi=la dimei china-jiang bai.*  
 3:SG-PL this oil=INST bread cook-OBJ:PERF EMPH  
 They cooked bread with this oil.
- b. *Ø Yigua puzighuo china,*  
 totally deep:fried:dough:stick cook  
 (They) cooked deep-fried twisted dough sticks,
- c. *zou Ø beila ger=du=nang yao-jiang bai.*  
 thus carry house=DAT=REFLPOSS go-OBJ:PERF EMPH  
 (and) then (they) carried (the dough sticks) and went to their home.
- d. *[Gan san-ge=la] yao ger=du kuer ri-jiang ma*  
 3:SG three-CL=COLL go house=DAT arrive come-OBJ:PERF PRT  
  
*gerdi=sa ge nao-jiang bai.*  
 roof=ABL once see-OBJ:PERF EMPH  
 [The three of them] went, arrived at (their) home, and looked (down) from the  
 roof. (Chen et al. 2005:134)

The subject referring expressions refer to the same referents throughout these four sentences: the third person plural group of three daughters who are key characters in this narrative. The topic continues from (27a) into (27b), and from (27b) into (27c), so the speaker uses zero-anaphora for both continuing topics. However, even though the topic continues again from (27c) into (27d), the speaker uses the pronominal phrase: *gan san-ge* 'they three.' Notably, there is a change of location in (27d) as the daughters arrive at their home. Once again, extra encoding is used to help mark the transition between narrative episodes.

It may also be possible to indicate a scene shift when establishing a topic. Consider the encoding of the newborn child in the following passage from the story, "A Man and His Two Wives." Notice the extra heavy encoding of the topic referent in (28j).

- (28) a. *Tian-chuang=sa*  $\emptyset$  *tuer-ku*,  
 sky-window=ABL push-IMPERF  
 When (she) delivered (her baby) through the skylight,
- b. *gan ti-ge mao bieri xi danang gan=ni bulai=ni nieke ala*  
 3:SG that-CL bad wife go after 3:SG=GEN child=ACC strangle kill  
  
*ge-jiang bai.*  
 do-OBJ:PERF EMPH  
 she that evil wife went to strangle **her child** and kill it.
- c. *Ala danang jiao=du kerla xi-gha-jiang bai.*  
 kill after cellar=DAT throw go-CAUSE-OBJ:PERF EMPH  
 After killing (the child), she threw (it) into the cellar.
- d. *Xianliang bieri khari-ji ri-tula,*  
 kind wife return-IMPERF come-when  
 When the kind wife returned (into the house),
- e. *gan hazi miaori ge=ni hu ge-jiang bai.*  
 3:SG blind cat SG:INDEF=ACC give do-OBJ:PERF EMPH  
 she [the evil wife] gave (her) a blind cat.
- f. *Miaori=ni gongshui=du ge tangla danang,*  
 cat=ACC boiling:water=DAT once burn after  
 The cat had been scalded in boiling water,

- g. *ghuasi=ni shudi he-jiang.*  
 hair=ACC pull:out take-OBJ:PERF  
 its hair was pulled out (by the evil wife).
- h. *Ting ge-ku,*  
 that do-IMPERF  
 After that,
- i. *gan=ni ana=ni yila yila nudu=ni sughuoruo sao-jiang*  
 3:SG=GEN mother=POSS cry cry eye=POSS blind sit-OBJ:PERF  
*bai.*  
 EMPH  
 his [the baby's] mother cried and cried (until) her eyes became blind.
- j. *Gan=ni ti jiao=du kerla xi-gha-sang gulai jiao=sa*  
 3:SG=GEN that cellar=DAT throw go-CAUSE-PERF child cellar=ABL  
*erghuosi yi-ge-da wosi gher ri-jiang.*  
 thorn one-CL-bunch grow:up go:out come-OBJ:PERF  
**The boy who had been thrown into the cellar** grew up as a bunch of thorns out  
 of the cellar. (Chen et al. 2005:138-139)

In (28j) the topic is a noun phrase modified by a relative clause. This is significantly heavier encoding than what is typical to reestablish a participant as topical. This clause is also clearly a scene change. It is possible that this referent receives this much extra encoding in order to help indicate the change in scene.

There is an alternative analysis. Topicalizing the child in (28j) is somewhat unexpected from the audience's perspective. In the preceding stretch of clauses, the evil wife character murders the newborn child and then throws him into the cellar, and several more clauses occur before the child is mentioned again. By the time the narrative reaches (28j), the audience would certainly not expect the child to become a topic. The child is supposedly dead, and a dead child would not naturally grow into thorns. Thus, the storyteller may be using the relative clause in order to clearly identify the correct topic with this predicate. In this analysis, this extra heavy noun phrase is a simple way for the storyteller to give topical status to a referent which the speaker considers less accessible to the addressee.

There are not enough examples in my corpus to confidently determine which analysis of this clause is best. However, it seems to me that the use of the relative clause in (28j) does both: it helps establish the scene change, and it helps identify the correct participant.

### 3.1.2 Unique use of *gan*

One marked topic encoding form that occurs quite a few times in the narratives is the unique use of the pronoun *gan*. A description of the syntax of this construction raises some interesting questions, which I address later in this section. First, however, I describe its discourse function. In this construction, *gan* occurs next to a noun, as in example (29):

- (29) *Ting ge aguer gan puzighuo=nang ge*  
 that do daughter 3:SG deep:fried:dough:stick=REFLPOSS SG:INDEF  
  
*kerla-ji xi-gha-jiang.*  
 throw-IMPERF go-CAUSE-OBJ:PERF  
 then (one) **daughter she** threw one of her deep-friend twisted dough sticks (to him).  
 (Chen et al. 2005:135)

In this clause, the topic appears to be doubly marked with both the noun phrase *aguer* 'daughter' and the adjacent 3:SG pronoun *gan*. This construction seems to always establish a new topic when it is used. However, it is more encoding than is necessary for establishing a new topic (as discussed in Section 2.2, all that is necessary is an identifying noun phrase). In my analysis, therefore, this encoding strategy conveys something more than simply a topic change. In the following example this construction is used as the referring expression for the addressee of reported speech:

- (30) a. *Hu ma bi yao-ni.*  
 give PRT 1:SG go-SUBJ:FUT  
 (After you) give (it to me), I will go."  
  
 b. *Ni kong gan sai chengrengla-jiang.*  
 this person 3:SG NEG consent-OBJ:PERF  
**This man, he** didn't consent.



This example comes from the narrative, "A Hired Farmhand." The speaker in (39c) is the farmhand, and he is addressing his master. The referring expression *ni kong gan* 'this man he' refers to the master. It is certainly not default to use this construction for the addressee of reported speech. In fact, later in this same narrative, zero-anaphora is used for the master when he is again the addressee of reported speech. Furthermore, the semantic content of *ni kong gan* does not distinguish the farmhand from the master, as they are both 3:SG male participants in the narrative.

In my analysis, this construction has the effect of highlighting the propositional content of this sentence as especially significant in the narrative. Levinsohn says that more than default encoding on a participant can be used to "highlight the action or speech concerned" (2015:127). This idea seems to be true of this heavy encoding strategy in Mangghuer.

At this point in the narrative, the farmhand is asking for payment for his work. In fact, the entire narrative has led to this, as the earlier portions of the story recount the payment agreement between the master and the farmhand, and then describe the farmhand's efforts to complete his side of the agreement. The expectation is that the master will give the farmhand his due, so when that does not happen, the audience should be surprised. The extra encoding in (30b) highlights the plot significance of this information: the master has now cheated the farmhand.

This seems to also be the case when this construction is used in other situations. Consider an example from the story "A Man and His Three Daughters." In this scene, the three daughters have been out in a field picking flowers while they thought their father was splitting wood nearby. They then return to their father only to find that he had deceptively hung a board in the wind, which was making a banging noise, mimicking the sound of a thudding axe, so he has left them alone in the field. Once again, the use of both the noun phrase and pronoun is more encoding than necessary:

- (31) a. *Wuji-la xi-sa,*  
 take:note-PURP go-COND  
 When (they) went to look,

b. *gan banber ge=ni guala ge-ser bang.*  
 3:SG board SG:INDEF=ACC hang do-PROG OBJ:COP  
 (they found that) he had hung a board.

c. *Adi gan yao ge-jiang bai.*  
 dad 3:SG go do-OBJ:PERF EMPH  
**Dad, he** had left.

(Chen et al. 2005:132)

In this example, the topic in (31a) is zero-anaphora which refers to the 3:PL set of the three daughters. Notice that in (31b) the father is referenced with only the 3:SG pronoun *gan*. The father is certainly identifiable at this point in the narrative, so the use of the noun phrase and the pronoun is once again more encoding than necessary. Contextually, this expression is used to highlight this information. In this scene the father has just deliberately abandoned his daughters, leaving them to starve to death, and (31c) describes the moment that the daughters realize what has happened. Thus, the father's horrible action is highlighted.

Slater similarly notes the significance of this clause, drawing attention to the use of *ge* as an auxiliary verb in this sentence. He says, "Here, the emphasis is on the effectiveness of the father's going: he has really, completely gone" (2003:135). Though he is not discussing topic encoding, Slater's point accords with the predicate-highlighting function I have described for this construction.

I have said that the use of the noun phrase and pronoun together establishes new topics, yet it appears that the father is already topical in (31b). However, Slater (p.c.) has pointed out that the suffix *-sa*, which occurs at the end of (31a) and is glossed as COND, is a perspective shifting device. In other words, (31a) is the perspective of the narrator whereas (31b) shifts to the perspective of the daughters. Therefore, (31b) is likely a sentence focus clause (which I address in Sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.3). Therefore, there is no topic in (31b), and the topic needs to be established in (31c).

There is one more factor that may contribute to the function of this construction. By making the topical status of a referent highly salient, the speaker effectively excludes the

option of analyzing the utterance as event-reporting. I address event-reporting sentences in detail in Sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.3. For the present discussion, it is important to note that event-reporting clauses and topic-comment clauses can be syntactically ambiguous in Mangghuer. However, event-reporting clauses cannot by definition have topics. Thus, since this encoding strategy makes the topical status of the argument highly salient, it causes the addressee to necessarily process the comment as the focused portion of the clause. When a speaker intends to limit the scope of focus to the predicate, encoding the topic this way clearly distinguishes the focus structure of the clause.

I turn now to a syntactic account of this construction. I would like to point out that I have intentionally included this construction with the discussion of heavy encoding. Alternatively, one could analyze this construction as a form of left-dislocation, which would be a syntactic strategy rather than a form of a heavy noun phrase. This construction certainly bears similarity to left-dislocation. However, I consider the left-dislocation analysis inaccurate. I will address the reasons why I consider this construction distinct from left-dislocation and then elaborate on what I believe is the better approach.<sup>1</sup>

Fried (p.c.) has noted several problems with describing this construction as left dislocation: "(1) There is no pause. (2) Speakers adamantly refuse the possibility of putting a comma between [the noun and pronoun], and (3) I think the NP and the pronoun are obligatorily right next to each other." Some discussion of each of Fried's points is warranted.

Fried's first claim is based on prosody. Pauses are cross-linguistically expected with left-dislocation (Van Valin 2007:6). If speakers do not produce a pause in this construction, the most likely analysis is that this use of the pronoun is considered clause-internal, rather than dislocated from the left edge of the clause.<sup>2</sup> I have not analyzed the prosody of these

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<sup>1</sup> As a rule of thumb, it is customary to address any alternative, unfavored analyses only after laying out the "best" analysis. However, in this particular instance, I consider the "negative" discussion to lay helpful groundwork for the "positive."

<sup>2</sup> Associating pauses with left-dislocation is consistent with a variety of theoretical approaches. In a role and reference grammar approach, there is a prosodic pause because the left-dislocated item is external to the clause (Van Valin 2007). The same insight comes from a transformational grammar approach, in which the left-dislocated item has been moved, and its underlying position filled with (in this case) a pronoun; thus, the prosodic pause occurs between the underlying position and the surface position.

constructions, but further research into the prosody of these kinds of clauses would determine with greater certainty whether Mangghuer speakers conceptualize this construction as a heavy noun phrase or a syntactic manipulation.

Fried's second point has to do with speaker intuition. It could be that speakers simply disprefer commas for sociolinguistic reasons, but this would be an arbitrary explanation because they use commas at other points in their orthography. Furthermore, it should be noted that commas are only sometimes inserted between the noun and pronoun in the free translations throughout the data (compare examples (29) and (31c)) but never used in the language data lines themselves. This means that either the free translation methodology is inconsistent or perhaps that the prosody is not the same across these examples.

Fried's third claim is not contradicted by my corpus. If some noun phrase element occurred between the noun and pronoun, the most natural syntactic analysis would be left-dislocation. Mangghuer is a head final language, so most noun phrase elements precede the head noun. However, the two number markers *ge* SG:INDEF and *si* PL do occur after the head noun. Thus, if a number marker ever occurred with this construction, it would help to identify whether the noun and pronoun are indeed obligatorily adjacent. My corpus does not contain any such examples. There are at least twelve occurrences of this construction across all 23 narrative texts in Chen et al. (2005), and the noun and pronoun are adjacent every time. Of course, it may be that my corpus simply lacks the relevant example.

Taken together, Fried's points are at least plausible. However, a prosodic analysis of this construction and some elicitation to see if the noun and pronoun could be separated would determine with more certainty. For the purposes of this thesis, I have analysed this construction as a unique encoding strategy rather than a syntactic strategy. There are at least two possible descriptions of this construction. Both approaches are consistent with my corpus, and I have no reason to favor one over the other, so I will present them both.

First, it may be that *gan* has developed in this specific construction into a kind of emphatic noun marker, such as a topic marker. In this case, its connection with the 3:SG

pronoun *gan* is purely historical, but not synchronically accurate. Thus, the 3:SG gloss is inaccurate as this is a different, albeit homophonic, lexical item. Furthermore, in this analysis *gan* is not coreferential with the noun, but rather it is a modifier.

Second, this construction could be described as a kind of complex noun phrase. In this approach, it is the same 3:SG *gan* that occurs elsewhere. The pronoun is coordinated with a preceding noun phrase, and they are coreferential.

Both of these analyses are clause-internal accounts for this construction. Therefore, they are consistent with Fried's three points above: neither predicts a prosodic pause, neither provides an apparent reason for a comma, and both explain why the two words are adjacent. Further analysis of this specific construction may confirm one of these two analyses.

### 3.1.3 False starts

There is a certain encoding structure that occurs at least three times in the data. This structure is the reverse of the last construction: pronoun + noun phrase. It is possible that this is a marked encoding strategy that has some pragmatic function. However, I analyze it as a false start. One clear example comes from the story "A Hired Farmhand." In this scene, an old man appears in the protagonist's dream to give advice. Note that the two 3:SG pronouns in this example are not coreferential: the genitive pronoun *ganni* references the narrative's protagonist and the subject pronoun *gan* references the old man in the dream.

- (32) *gan=ni jiaodong=du [gan yi-ge laohan] keli-lang,*  
3:SG=GEN dream=DAT 3:SG one-CL old:man say-OBJ:IMPERF  
in his dream he, an old man said, (Chen et al. 2005:123)

Importantly, this old man is introduced for the first time in this clause. It seems that the storyteller simply uses a pronoun and then remembers that this character has not yet been properly introduced to the audience. The two pronouns would have been rather ambiguous had the story teller not corrected herself. Thus, the pronoun *gan* is a false start, and the clause really begins with the noun phrase, *yige laohan* 'an old man.' There are several

instances in my corpus of a pronoun + noun occurring together in this way. However, they appear to me to simply be false starts rather than a form of extra noun phrase encoding.

### 3.2 Direct object topic-fronting

Another topicalizing construction involves fronting a direct object to the clause-initial position. Slater identifies a unique function when direct objects are fronted. He says, "when a direct object appears in topic position, it is easy to see that it has been fronted for pragmatic purposes" (2003:189).<sup>3</sup> In my analysis, the effect of fronting a direct object is always to highlight it as a contrastive topic, as exemplified in (33) below:

- (33) a. S O V  
 [Gan] [gezai shinagu=ni] mao gang=du kuermer ge-jiang.  
 3:SG good woman=ACC bad vat=DAT cover do-OBJ:PERF  
 He covered the beautiful woman in an old vat.
- b. O S V  
 [Jiangjiu mao-sai-her=ni] [gan] shini gang=du kuermer  
 slightly bad-beautiful-COMP=ACC 3:SG new vat=DAT cover  
 ge-jiang.  
 do-OBJ:PERF  
 [The slightly uglier ones] he covered in new vats. (Chen et al. 2005:92)

At this point in this narrative, one character is trying to ensure that he receives the most beautiful wife out of a set of three women. He allows his companions to choose the vats they prefer, ensuring that he ends up with the old, and presumably less impressive looking, vat. The subject and direct object constituents in (33a) and (33b) are parallel, but their syntactic ordering is different, as the direct object is fronted in (33b). Contextually,

<sup>3</sup> Slater actually applies the term *topic* somewhat broader than I do. He says the following while describing topic-fronting: "This position sometimes functions like the Mandarin Chinese topic position, hosting a constituent which 'sets a spatial, temporal, or individual framework within which the main predication holds' (Li & Thompson 1981:85)" (Slater 2003:188-189). In this description, certain clause-initial oblique elements, such as ABL source-location phrases, are considered fronted topics. In contrast, I do not consider these kinds of obliques as fronted topics for two reasons: first, they are not topical in Lambrecht's sense as the referent the proposition is about; second, their default syntactic position is clause-initial.

the "slightly uglier ones" are being contrasted with the "beautiful woman." The prominence that results from this construction, contrastive *topic*, must be distinguished from contrastive *argument focus*. I address argument focus fully in 4.1. For the present discussion, it suffices to note that the fronted direct object in (33b) is not within the scope of focus. It may help to compare this construction with an English sentence provided by Lambrecht:

(34) *The CHILDREN went to SCHOOL and the PARENTS went to BED.* (Lambrecht 1994:124)

Lambrecht says, "Pronounced with two prosodic peaks, as indicated in (34) [with small caps], the sentence could still have a topic-comment reading, for example if used in reply to the question 'What did the children and the parents do?'" (1994:124). The strategy used in this English sentence is to mark the topic constituents with prosody in order to draw the addressee's attention to the contrast between what these two clauses are about. This is the nature of topical contrast.

Mangghuer speakers accomplish this same topical contrast by fronting a direct object. In (33b) the vats are new participants, and the fact that they are being used to cover the women is new information. Strictly speaking, the statement that two women are slightly uglier is somewhat new information. One of the women is identified as the most beautiful in (33a), so the fact that the other two are slightly less beautiful is at least highly accessible information. Contextually, it is clear that what happened to these women is contrasted with what happened to the first woman.

Therefore, returning to the definition of focus given in 1.2, the assertion that these women are covered by vats is the portion of the proposition that differs from the presupposition. In other words, the pragmatic effect of these clauses in this context is the same as if they were uttered in response to the following, contrived question: "What was done to the beautiful woman and the ugly women?" The speaker uses the fronting construction in (33b) in order to draw the audience's attention to the fact that this proposition is about the slightly uglier women, as opposed to what happened to the beautiful woman.

Consider two more occurrences of this construction used to highlight contrastive topics, both taken from some of the opening lines of the narrative "Monster Girl" (Chen et al. 2005:94-99):

- (35) a. *Ti=ni aguer khuergha=ni shulian=du kuguo-gha-la*  
 that=GEN daughter lamb=ACC evening=DAT nurse-CAUSE-PURP  
*xi-ku,*  
 go-IMPERF  
 When her daughter went to let the lamb suckle (its mother every) evening,
- b. [*gan yi-ge=ni kuguo-gha-ku*] [*yi-ge=ni gan di*  
 3:SG one-CL=ACC nurse-CAUSE-IMPERF one-CL=ACC 3:SG eat  
*ge-lang*].  
 do-OBJ:IMPERF  
 when she let one suckle, she would eat (another) [one].
- c. *Ni aguer=du liang-ge ama bang.*  
 this daughter=DAT two-CL mouth OBJ:COP  
 This daughter had two mouths.
- d. *Khuonuo yi-ge a mieshi yi-ge.*  
 back one-CL also front one-CL  
 One (in) the back and one (in) the front (of her head).
- e. *Ni zou mang'huzi bang.*  
 this thus monster OBJ:COP  
 So this was a monster.
- f. [*Gan=ni khuonuo=ni ama=ni*] *suzu kha ge-ser bang.*  
 3:SG=GEN back=GEN mouth=ACC hair cover do-PROG OBJ:COP  
 Hair covered [her back mouth].
- g. *Gan mieshi-ku ama=la wuge keli-lang,*  
 3:SG front-IMPERF mouth=INST word say-OBJ:IMPERF  
 She spoke with (her) front mouth, (Chen et al. 2005:94)

I have included this entire section of the narrative for context. These clauses are part of the narrative introduction, describing the antagonist character's monster-like qualities. The first contrastive fronting occurs in the two parallel clauses in (35b). The accusative



pronoun *yigeni* is fronted in the second clause, contrasting it with the lamb referenced in the first clause. As in (33), these sentences could have been uttered as the response to the question, "what did she do to the lambs?" It is already presupposed, because of (35a), that she is interacting with the lambs, but the fact that she is letting the one nurse and eating the other is the new, or differing portion of the assertion. Thus, (35b) is two topic-comment clauses with contrastive topics.

The second contrastive fronting occurs in (35f). This clause is parallel with the following clause, (35g). The fact that this girl has two mouths is established in (35c) and (35d), so once again the contrast is between topical referents. These sentences seem to be describing how she could manage to live among human society without drawing attention to the fact that she has two mouths. One mouth was concealed, and the other behaved normally. The propositions in these clauses are about the mouths, and the differing portion of the assertion is the comment element. Interestingly, the fronted direct object occurs in the first of the two parallel clauses; whereas, fronting occurred in the second of the two clauses in both (33) and (35b). Thus, while this construction does seem to involve two parallel clauses with a fronted object in one, the relative order of the clauses is not specified by the construction.

I noted earlier that topic should not be equated with subject. I point out here another reason why this is important: in this topic-fronting construction, the topical element is the direct object rather than the subject. Thus, the term "predicate focus" can be slightly misleading since *predicate* usually means the verb and all non-subject constituents. However, I use the term predicate focus synonymously with topic-comment.

One other point regarding topic-fronting that I will address concerns the sentence-final particle *ma*. The particle *ma* is one of a limited set of pragmatic particles in Mangghuer that can occur in the immediately post-verbal syntactic position. It is usually used as a clause conjunction, and in fact it has a variety of pragmatic functions, which have been described by Fried (2020; 2021). Slater labels *ma* an 'interactional particle' (2003:152). However, he describes an additional function of *ma* as a topic marker (2003:189). He cites the following clauses from the narrative, "Rabbit's Trick:"

- (36) a. *Ni-ge luoti=ni ma Chuna qi musi.*  
 this-CL boot=ACC PRT wolf 2:SG wear  
 These boots, Wolf, you wear (them).
- b. *Ni-ge bo=ni ma Yehu qi he-ji xi bai.*  
 this-CL drum=ACC PRT fox 2:SG take-IMPERF go EMPH  
 This drum, Fox, you take (it).
- c. *Dimei=ni bi he-ji xi-a bai,*  
 bread=ACC 1:SG take-IMPERF go-VOL EMPH  
 The bread, let me take (it), (Chen et al. 2005:235-236)

These clauses do not occur consecutively, but they occur close together in the same narrative unit. They are reported speech from the rabbit character. In this scene, the rabbit has just collaborated with a wolf and a fox to steal boots, a drum, and bread. However, the rabbit is deceiving the wolf and fox into taking the boots and drum because the rabbit wants the bread for himself. The referents are fronted in order to contrast them with one another. As in the examples I discussed in the previous section, these appear to be topical contrast because the propositions are about these referents, and the portion of the proposition that is asserted to be different than the audience's presupposition is the comment: which person should take them. These differ in two ways from the fronting examples I have already discussed. First, though they are contrasted with each other, they are not contrasted with a parallel sentence with normal, SOV order. Second, the particle *ma* occurs in both (36a) and (36b) immediately following the fronted topic referring expression. This is the reason that Slater describes one function of *ma* as a topic-marker (2003:189).

I note a problem with Slater's analysis. If *ma* is truly a topic marker, why does it occur in (36a) and (36b), but not in (36c)? Slater suggests that *ma* is optionally included in this construction (2003:189), but seeing as these clauses are meant to be contrasted with one another, one might expect the speaker to use parallel sentence forms, or at least use a parallel form to indicate the contrast.

Fried applies an alternative analysis of *ma* to the same section from "Rabbit's Trick." He says, "*ma* can also occur alone as a complete utterance with its own intonation contour.

In this context the speaker is inviting an interlocutor to take or receive something that he or she is offering (usually by holding it out in the immediate context)" (2020:304). This analysis could be confirmed with a review of the prosody of these clauses, but even without that review, it seems likely. First, this description coheres with Slater's original label of "interactional particle," and it clearly explains why *ma* is used in (36a) and (36b), where Rabbit is probably handing off the drum and the boots, but not in (36c), where Rabbit keeps the bread for himself. Consider the alternative free translations for (36a) and (36b): "These boots, here Wolf, you take them" and "This drum, here Fox, you take it." Thus, Rabbit uses *ma* to invite Wolf and Fox to receive the items, whereas this is not necessary when he takes the bread for himself.

In conclusion, the fact that the boots, drum, and bread are each fronted in their respective clauses is in keeping with my earlier analysis that constituents can be fronted to give them status as contrastive topics. In this case, the boots, drum, and bread are clearly contrasted with one another, but the use of the particle *ma* has nothing to do with the topic fronting construction. However, this discussion does add at least one point to my earlier description of topical contrast, namely that the construction is not required to occur together with a parallel, SOV sentence as occurred in (33a), (35b), and (35g).

## CHAPTER 4

### Non-default focus

Earlier in Section 2.1.1 I address clauses where the focus structure has scope over the predicate. In this chapter I address the two alternative focus structures: argument focus, where focus has scope over only a single argument, and sentence focus, where focus has scope over the entire sentence. I discuss argument focus and sentence focus respectively in Sections 4.1 and 4.2.

#### 4.1 Argument focus

To turn to argument focus, recall the illustrative question-answer pair that I introduced in Section 1.2.2:

- (37) a. *Is Martha the one who hates the snow?*  
b. *I hate the snow.*

The speaker in (37a) presupposes several things. First, there is the presupposition that someone hates the snow. Second, there is the presupposition that someone hates something. Third, there is the presupposition that the snow is the object of hatred. Any of these presuppositions could be incorrect, and in particular, the speaker is calling into question whether Martha is the one who hates the snow. In other words, the speaker is drawing attention to a specific argument among the presuppositions. The response in (37b) corrects the specific argument in the presuppositions. It is not Martha, but rather the addressee of the question who hates the snow. Thus, the speaker is adjusting the presupposition by iden-

tifying the correct argument. For this reason, argument focus type clauses are often called identificational sentences.

Notice also that the response in (37b) confirms that all other presuppositions were correct. This is because nothing else from the first speaker's presuppositions was addressed in the response. There are alternative responses, depending on what alternative presuppositions may have been incorrect:

- (38) a. *Martha and Evan hate the snow.*  
b. *Martha hates the rain.*

These alternative answers are pragmatically comparable to (37b) because they still identify the correct argument. In (38a) it is not only Martha, but also Evan, who hate the snow. This is identificational because it adds an argument that was missing, but apparently is considered by this speaker to be contextually relevant. In (38b) it is not snow, but rain that Martha hates. This time the question presupposed the correct subject, but the wrong direct object. The similarity across these identificational sentences is that the scope of focus covers only an argument within the clause, rather than the entire clause or the predicate.

Another important point is that argument focus can be used to portray a referent as contrasted against others. I have said in 1.2.2 that Lambrecht considers contrast a separate pragmatic category from information structure. In Lambrecht's approach, a given focus construction may be used for contrastive and non-contrastive effects depending on the discourse situation. However, this may be contradicted by my corpus: there is an argument focus construction that is always used contrastively and a separate argument focus construction that is never used contrastively. In my data, therefore, the notion of contrast does correspond with specific focus constructions. With that said, it is probable that this is simply a peculiarity of my corpus, as there is a limited set of argument focus clauses. Nevertheless, I have organized my discussion of Mangghuer argument focus in Sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 according to contrastive and non-contrastive construction types, as this accords naturally with the data I have available.

#### 4.1.1 Contrastive argument focus

Mangghuer speakers can focus a subject argument by positioning it in the immediately pre-verbal position. Recall that Mangghuer is an SOV language, and the pre-verbal position is not the default position for a subject argument. Of course, depending on the set of constituents that occur in a given clause, the subject may occur immediately before the verb without disrupting the default constituent order. This is often the case with intransitive clauses. However, if the subject is immediately pre-verbal, even when constituents that normally occur between the subject and verb are present, then the subject is likely given argument focus. This is often clear, for example, when the direct object precedes the subject.

Before I discuss examples of subjects in argument focus, I point out that these kinds of argument focus constructions have the same syntactic form as the topic fronting clauses that I discussed in Section 3.2, which indicate topical contrast.<sup>1</sup> I do not consider the similarity of these sentence types to indicate that they only have one function. Rather, it seems that one syntactic form can be used for multiple pragmatic effects. As far as distinguishing which pragmatic effect is intended, context seems to make the clause's function clear.

I turn now to examples of pre-verbal subject arguments in focus. The following stretch occurs in the narrative "Elder Sister and the Monkey." In this scene the monkey character is attempting to deceive the woman so that he can eat her child. He begins his deception by asking to hold her child. However, as the scene plays out, the mother realizes what is happening, so she asks for her child back. This results in two examples of pre-verbal argument focus in this scene: the first occurs in (39b) when the monkey asks to hold the child, and the second occurs in (39m) when the mother asks for the child back. The contrastive focus occurs on the subject pronoun *bi* in both clauses. The first speaker in this scene is the monkey:

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<sup>1</sup> In my examples, both the topic fronting construction and the pre-verbal argument focus construction have DO-S-V syntax. The clearest evidence for a pre-verbal argument focus construction would be a clause with some constituent besides a direct object occurring before the subject, such as an IO-S-V clause. I suspect that such clauses are possible in Mangghuer, but I have not found any in my corpus.

- (39) a. *"Aja,*  
elder:sister  
*"Aja,*
- b. O S V  
*diao=ni bi tierber-a,"*  
younger:sibling=ACC 1:SG hold-VOL  
let me hold the baby,"
- c. *ge tierber-jiang.*  
QUOTE hold-OBJ:PERF  
saying this, (Monkey) took (her child in his arms).
- d. *Tierber-ser gan yi-ge-ama ghazha-jiang ma,*  
hold-PROG 3:SG one-CL-mouth bite-OBJ:PERF PRT  
Holding (the baby), he took a bite and,
- e. *bulai "zha" ge-ji khaila-jiang.*  
child EXCL QUOTE-IMPERF shout-OBJ:PERF  
the child cried "zha," like that.
- f. *"Ajiu,*  
Ajiu  
*"Ajiu,*
- g. *"Ajiu,*  
Ajiu  
*"Ajiu,*
- h. *muni bulai=ni hu a."*  
1:SG:GEN child=ACC give PRT  
give (me) my son" (she said).
- i. *Pusa yi-jier yao-jiang,*  
another one-short:distance go-OBJ:PERF  
(They) walked another short distance,
- j. *pusa khaila-lang.*  
another shout-OBJ:IMPERF  
(and the boy) was crying again.
- k. *Shinagu keli-ji,*  
woman say-IMPERF  
The woman said,

l. *"Ajiu,*  
Ajiu  
*"Ajiu,*

m. O            S        V  
*bulai=ni    bi    tierber-a."*  
child=ACC 1:SG hold-VOL  
let me hold the baby."

(Chen et al. 2005:78-79)

In both (39b) and (39m), the 1:SG subject pronoun *bi* occurs immediately before the verb. This is not the default syntactic position for subject constituents. In the context of this narrative scene, it is fairly easy to see the contrastive function of the marked syntax in the clauses. In (39b) the speaker is the monkey, and in (39m) the speaker is the mother. Her near-verbatim repetition of the monkey's utterance highlights the contrastive function of these two clauses: the characters are saying, "let me, as opposed to you, hold the baby."

Furthermore, it is clear that this utterance conforms to Lambrecht's notion of argument focus. Consider the presupposition. When two adults (the monkey can be considered an anthropomorphic character) walk together with an infant, it is assumed that someone must hold the baby. Therefore, the action of holding the child is presupposed. In (39b) it is the mother who is already holding the child. Thus, the portion of monkey's request that differs from the presupposition is the 1SG pronoun. The same analysis can be applied to the mother's utterance in (39m).

A final point should be made about these clauses. Both of them have voluntative (VOL) inflection on the verb. The VOL suffix *-a* is the first person imperative form. VOL inflection on the verb is a kind of subject agreement. Not only does the position of the pronoun result in a contrastive effect, but the very presence of a pronoun in a VOL clause is optional. Consider the following two examples:

(40) a. *"A,*  
EXCL  
*"Then,*



b. *yao-a bai.*"  
go-VOL EMPH  
let's go."

(Chen et al. 2005:130)

(41) *"Du ya ge-a!*  
now what do-VOL  
"Now what will I do!

(Chen et al. 2005:97)

Both of these sentences use VOL inflection on the verbs, and the subjects are marked with zero-anaphora. The use of VOL inflection makes interpreting the subject referents as first person unambiguous, so the subjects can be marked with zero-anaphora. There are many more instances of VOL clauses in my corpus, including some with overt 1:SG subjects in the default syntactic position for subjects. I will not devote space to discussing this comprehensively. Rather, I simply point out that the presence of overt subjects in (39b) and (39m) would be extra encoding if not for the fact that these pronouns are in focus. Since they are focused, they must be overt. In other words, describing these clauses as argument focus is necessary to explain the use of overt subjects.

There is a second instance of this kind of argument focus in the story "Lu Buping." In the beginning of this story, Lu Buping's mother sacrifices time and money to give him a chance to acquire an education. He goes on to succeed in his studies and acquire a high societal position. However, he then disassociates himself from his mother, disrespecting her and even leaving her for dead. A different boy then finds Lu Buping's mother and takes care of her. The story presents a clear moral of "respect your parents and things will go well for you." Consider the following lines, which occur at the narrative climax as Lu Buping's position is given instead to the second, honorable boy. The stone mentioned in (42b) refers to an important participant in the narrative: a stone that symbolized Lu Buping's right to his position. By this point in the narrative he has lost possession of his stone, and it ended up in the possession of his mother and the second boy.

- (42) a. *Lu Buping=ni guan=ni begh bao-gha-jiang.*  
 Lu Buping=GEN rule=ACC hit lower-CAUSE-OBJ:PERF  
 Lu Buping's position was handed over.
- b. *qimeidu tashi a guang,*  
 2:SG:DAT stone also OBJ:NEG:COP  
 You (i.e. Lu Buping) don't have the stone,
- c. *yang zhiba a guang,*  
 what proof also OBJ:NEG:COP  
 (you) also don't have any proof.
- d. *zhengzheng guan sao-ku zhiba=ni nige kong bari-ser*  
 true position stay-NOMLZR proof=ACC this person take-PROG
- bang ning-ge-ji.*  
 OBJ:COP this-QUOTE-IMPERF  
 This person holds the enduring proof of true position," (it is said) like this.  
 (Stuart & Zhu 2001:56)

The first few lines show Lu Buping's downfall. First, he loses his position in (42a). Then in (42b) he is mocked for not having the symbol of his position. Since he does not have the stone, he apparently does not have any right to his position, which is the point of saying that he does not have *zhiba* 'proof' in (42c). Both (42b) and (42c) are addressed to Lu Buping. It is not clear whether these sentences are statements from the narrator or statements from the participants who makeup a crowd of onlookers in the narrative. Either way, the point is to condemn Lu Buping.

After the condemnation, Lu Buping is contrasted with the second, honorable boy in (42d). The noun phrase *nige kong*, 'this person' refers to the second boy. This subject noun phrase occurs in the focused position, immediately before the verb. The fact that the position has been given away is stated in (42a), and the proof is mentioned in (42c). The rest of the clause is all part of the presupposition, as none of it is new material. Therefore, this example also fits Lambrecht's definition of argument focus because the differing portion of the assertion is this single argument. The audience knows someone else has Lu Buping's position, but the narrator has not explicitly said who. Even though the audience is certainly

anticipating that the second boy will be honored at this point, the contrastive construction in (42d) gives the narrative peak, "It is *this boy*, not you Lu Buping, who acted honorably and deserves the right to an honorable position."

This example also provides some evidence that distinguishes pre-verbal argument focus from topic-fronting. Notice that the direct object which occurs clause initially is far from appearing to be a prototypical topic. Default topics are minimally marked, but the phrase *zhengzheng guan sao-ku zhiba=ni*, 'enduring proof of true position' is an unnecessarily heavy noun phrase. Using the two adjectives *zhengzheng*, 'true' and *sao-ku* 'enduring' is more than minimal, and use of both the words *zhiba*, 'proof' and *guan*, 'position' is also unnecessary, since only one would likely suffice. It seems too heavy to be accurately described as a topic. Furthermore, it is obviously wrong, given the context, to say that this clause is conveying information about the proof. The information structure of (42d) is best described as argument focus without a topic.

#### 4.1.2 Argument focus with the copula *bang*

There is another kind of argument focus that occurs in the corpus involving the use of the copula construction. In this construction the copula *bang* is used to form a grammatical utterance that pragmatically focuses a single argument. This construction appears to have a different function than the contrastive effect conveyed by the pre-verbal position described in the previous section. Consider the construction in (43d), given with the surrounding clauses for context:

- (43) a. *Gan zou pusa ge ximie ger=du ruo-ji*  
 3:SG thus another SG:INDEF temple house=DAT enter-IMPERF

*xi-sa,*  
 go-COND  
 When he thus went into another temple room,

- b. *san-ge jiaozi ge-ji ge-ser bang bai.*  
 three-CL sedan do-IMPERF do-PROG OBJ:COP EMPH  
 Three sedans had been put (there).

- c. *Yigua maodan-si=ni chuke danang zaihang=ni ting*  
 totally flower-PL=ACC make:by:crumpling after beautiful=GEN that

*ge-jiang bai.*  
 do-OBJ:PERF EMPH

(They) were all decorated with cloth flowers and were very beautiful.

- d. *Ni zou gan=ni wei bang bai,*  
 this thus 3:SG=GEN seat OBJ:COP EMPH  
 So this was his seat,

- e. *linshangmoyi gan ning=du sao-kuniang.*  
 finally 3:SG this=DAT sit-OBJ:FUT  
 in the end (i.e. the afterlife) he would sit here.

(Chen et al. 2005:126)

The construction in (43d) is formally similar to certain sentence focus clauses (see Section 4.2), but the difference is that there is no predication in the argument focus construction. Instead, there is a semantically empty verb (the copula), a semantically empty subject (the demonstrative), and a focused argument. The effect is a sentence which appears to be in sentence focus, but is pragmatically providing argument focus.

This argument focus construction is functionally different than the construction discussed in the previous section. Namely, it is not so concretely contrastive. The surrounding context sheds light on the pragmatic effect of this construction. In this scene, the character that sees the beautifully decorated sedan chairs is witnessing a vision. He has been sent into a special room in a temple to witness this sight. Thus, the effect of (43d) is not so much about identifying which seat belongs to this person as it is to say, "this would be his future." In fact, the word *wei* 'seat' may be indicating the idea of social position in this context. This explains why the speaker chose to give this clause argument focus structure. The narrator is drawing attention to the great importance of this seat for this particular character's life.

In Lambrecht's approach, this sentence could still be described as contrastive, though simply at the far end of a gradient spectrum of contrast. For example, one might point out that it is this future life, as opposed to any other lesser future, that is being contrasted. However, in my analysis this seems to muddle the point of the sentence in its context. It

seems to be more about the narrator's wonder at this future, rather than identifying one argument out of a set.

A second example of this kind of argument focus occurs in the narrative introduction to the monster girl previously addressed in Section 3.2 as (35e). I provide this sentence again here for convenience:

- (44) *Ni zou mang'huzi bang.*  
this thus monster OBJ:COP  
So this was a monster. (Chen et al. 2005:94)

Recall from the earlier discussion of this clause that this sentence is referring to a girl with a second mouth in the back of her head. This is a significant characteristic, and it is easy to see why the speaker chose this argument focus sentence. The narrator is highlighting the narrative importance of this participant's monstrous characterization. Indeed, the narrator names this story "Monster Girl," and this monster girl unsurprisingly turns out to be the antagonist. As in (43d), contrast does not seem to be the best way to describe the purpose of argument focus here. Rather, I describe this copula construction as a way of highlighting the significance of an argument. Significance may be a slightly imprecise description of the pragmatic effect. However, in narratives, this notion of significance is perhaps more precisely defined as having narrative importance. This same construction could be analyzed in other discourse genres to reach a fuller picture of its function in Mangghuer.

## 4.2 Sentence focus

As discussed in 1.2, sentence focus answers the question, "what happened?" I return to the same illustrative sentence pair discussed in that section:

- (45) a. *What's the matter?*  
b. *I hate the snow.*

A clause is considered to have sentence focus structure when the scope of focus covers the entire clause. In other words, when the narrator's utterance only contains information that is not within the audience's presupposition, the utterance will be considered to have sentence focus. All of the information supplied by (45b) is new, so it differs from the presuppositional content of (45a). The following sections describe key features of Mangghuer sentence focus clauses.

Of course, this question-answer pair is only a helpful way of getting at the notion of sentence focus. In discourse, sentence focus clauses do not always occur as answers to questions. As will be seen in Mangghuer, if formal features do not mark a clause with sentence focus structure, context alone may identify sentence focus. In terms of analyzing Mangghuer narratives, it is not always clear whether to analyze a given clause as having predicate or sentence focus structure (narrative characters are rarely so helpful to linguistic researchers as to lay out all of their presuppositions in detail). There are at least two categories of sentence focus that can be identified throughout the corpus.

A first category of sentence focus is the presentational sentence. These are sentences which introduce new participants to a discourse, such as, "once upon a time there was a princess who lived in a castle." For obvious reasons, presentational sentences are abundant throughout narratives, and especially at the beginnings of narratives. These are used to introduce main characters, but also used to introduce other important participants, including inanimate participants. Drawing again on Lambrecht's terminology introduced in Section 1.2.1, the primary function of presentational clauses is to make a participant identifiable to the addressee, i.e., to make it available within the addressee's mental representation. I discuss presentational sentences in Mangghuer in the next section.

A second important category of sentence focus is the event-reporting sentence. In Lambrecht's (1994) approach, this term is used as a way of describing the function of utterances which contain only new information, but which are not uttered in order to introduce participants. The example response in (45b) could be described as an event-reporting sentence. These kinds of utterances occur frequently without necessarily being the response

to a question. Lambrecht provides a helpful example of an event-reporting sentence occurring naturally: "At a bus stop, the departure of a crammed bus is delayed because a woman loaded down with shopping bags is boarding very slowly. Turning to the impatient passengers in the bus, the woman utters the following sentence with an apologetic smile: 'my car broke down'" (1994:14-15). In this context, the entirety of the information in the woman's utterance is new to the other bus passengers. At the same time, she is not just introducing participants, she is communicating that a particular event occurred. I discuss event-reporting sentences in Mangghuer in Sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.3.

#### 4.2.1 Presentational sentences

The use of copula clauses often occurs early in a narrative when important participants are introduced. This is the case for (46), which I present again here as (20b) for convenience:

- (46) *kong yi-ge bang.*  
 person one-CL OBJ:COP  
 there was a man. (Chen et al. 2005:122)

Example (46) is the third clause in the narrative "A Hired Farmhand." It is an existential sentence. The copula *bang* is a semantically empty verb, used here to introduce the presence of particular arguments. It introduces the antagonist, a primary character in the story. Slater notes that Mangghuer numerals typically precede the head noun in a noun phrase. However, they sometimes follow the head noun. When they do, it is to introduce a participant (2003:104-105). The numeral *yi-ge* in (46) is post-nominal, helping to indicate the introductory nature of this clause. Example (46) is a prototypical presentational clause in Mangghuer.

Consider a second example of a presentational sentence in Mangghuer:

- (47) *nige laohan=du san-ge aguer bang.*  
 one old:man=DAT three-CL daughter OBJ:COP  
 an old man had three daughters. (Chen et al. 2005:130)

Example (47) is also the third line in its respective narrative, "Three Daughters." While this sentence is semantically a possessive clause, indicating that a man has three daughters, it is presentational in terms of its information structuring. It is the first sentence in this narrative that mentions these main participants: the man and his three daughters.

Neither (46) nor (47) can be said to be about any particular referent, as is the case with topic-comment clauses, because all of the information in these clauses is new to the discourse. Therefore, the entire clause can be said to differ from the audience's presuppositions, which at the beginning of these narratives is essentially empty. Though these clauses are syntactically similar to the argument focus copula construction discussed in 4.1.2, they are quite clearly functionally different. The argument focus clauses that I address there are not introducing new participants, whereas, the presentational sentence communicates that "X referent exists in this discourse."

#### 4.2.2 *Event-reporting sentences*

Event-reporting clauses are syntactically ambiguous with topic-comment clauses in Mangghuer. Despite the ambiguity, there are a few factors besides syntax that distinguish event-reporting clauses from topic-comment clauses. The following is a typical example of an event-reporting sentence:

- (48) *Laoye gan=du ge ji-gha-jiang bai.*  
 living:buddha 3:SG=DAT once look-CAUSE-OBJ:PERF EMPH  
 Living Buddha let him see (this). (Chen et al. 2005:126)

The narrative context of (48) shows that it matches Lambrecht's notion of sentence focus. It occurs immediately after one of the main characters in the story has seen a vision of his future. It is the narrator giving an informative comment that the Living Buddha allowed or caused this vision; the narrator is explaining what happened. In this way, (48) reports an event and, thus, matches what Lambrecht calls an event-reporting sentence (1994:124).



I will discuss two more examples in order to elaborate on the function of event-reporting clauses in Mangghuer story telling. I already discussed one clause from the opening of the story, "Three Daughters. Consider now all of the opening lines from that story:

- (49) a. *Tiedun=du,*  
 past=DAT  
 In olden times,
- b. *nige laohan=du san-ge aguer bang.*  
 one old:man=DAT three-CL daughter OBJ:COP  
 an old man had three daughters.
- c. *San-ge aguer jiaoduer gan=ni mieshi-ku-ni*  
 three-CL daughter every:day 3:SG=GEN front-IMPERF-NOMLZR
- qiangke di-ba ge danang zou berqie=du*  
 scramble:for eat-SUBJ:PERF QUOTE after thus pasture=DAT
- kuerge-lang.*  
 send-OBJ:IMPERF  
 Because (he) objected to his daughters snatching food from him every day, (he decided to) send them to a (distant) pasture.
- d. *Ni laohan san-ge aguer=nang*  
 this old:man three-CL daughter=REFLPOSS
- langshe-lang bai.*  
 consider:too:many-OBJ:IMPERF EMPH  
 This old man thought his three daughters were too many. (Chen et al. 2005:130)

These are the first sentences in the narrative. The event-reporting clause is (49d). I have included the previous clauses for context. The old man participant is introduced in (20b), and then he is encoded with zero-anaphora as the topic of (20c). Then, (20d) functions as important introductory information about the state of affairs in this narrative world. The fact that this father thinks he has too many daughters is critical to the development of the plot. In this way, it is a type of comment from the narrator on "what was happening" as this story begins.

Context alone suggests that this clause is best analyzed as event-reporting, but there is a further piece of evidence: the subject referent is encoded with a full noun phrase despite the fact that the referent is the topic of the previous clause. Thus, the expected encoding would be zero-anaphora, as discussed in Section 2.2.1. Instead, the subject is encoded with a full noun phrase, which is not prototypical of topic-comment clauses. As discussed in Section 2.2.1, continuing topics can be marked with a full noun phrase in order to indicate a narrative shift. Thus, in a topic-comment reading of (49d), the use of the full noun phrase to mark the topic in (49d) could be analyzed as a way of indicating the beginning of the first narrative scene after the introductory sentences. However, in my analysis, this topic-comment reading seems to inaccurately describe the function of (49d). Rather, the statement in (49d) naturally follows from (49c). This father is planning to get rid of his daughters because he thinks he has too many of them. The content of these clauses is closely connected, so a narrative shift is a weak explanation of the full noun phrase. The use of a full noun phrase in this context helps to signal to the audience that this referent is not the topic of (20d), rather it is within the scope of focus.

As a final comment about this example, I point out that this use of an event-reporting clause near the beginning of a narrative may be typical. Event-reporting clauses can be used by Mangghuer speakers near the beginning of narratives as a way of establishing facts about the narrative world.

Before I discuss more examples, I point out one more detail about the event-reporting clause in (49d): this clause is marked with the clause-final particle *bai*. The corpus shows that this particle frequently cooccurs with sentence focus. Indeed, the next few examples of event-reporting clauses that I discuss are also marked with *bai*. I will not comment further on this now, however, as I devote the next section to describing the interaction between *bai* and sentence focus.

I turn now to a third example of event-reporting in Mangghuer. In this example, there is a conflict between a man's two wives, the so-called good wife and bad wife. The good wife

announces she is going to have a son, and the bad wife becomes jealous when the husband is pleased about this. This time the event-reporting clause is used to move the narrative from one scene to the next. Once again, I have included the surrounding sentences for context:

- (50) a. *"Qi ya-ji ni-ge bieri=nang shini-lang kao*  
 2:SG what=IMPERF this-CL wife=REFLPOSS smile-OBJ:PERF son  
*ghu=la jielie-a ge-sa?*  
 two=COLL meet-VOL QUOTE-COND  
 "Why did you smile at this wife, when (she) said (that she planned) to greet (you) with a son?"
- b. *Bi qimai=du xi bajia-ya ge-sa qi*  
 1:SG 2:SG:DAT=DAT banquet prepare-VOL QUOTE-COND 2:SG  
*ya=ji han werkuer-lang,"*  
 what=DIR other be:angry-OBJ:IMPERF  
 "When I said (that I would) prepare a banquet for you, you were angry,"
- c. *mieshi keli-sang-ni bieri mula-lang.*  
 first say-PERF-NOMLZR wife think-OBJ:IMPERF  
 thought the wife who had spoken first.
- d. *[Gan=ni xianliang bieri sara sao-ku shijie] kuer-jiang*  
 3:SG=GEN kind wife month sit-IMPERF time arrive-OBJ:PERF  
*bai.*  
 EMPH  
 His kind wife's time to give birth arrived.
- e. *"Qi tian-chuang=su tuer-la xi!"*  
 2:SG sky-window=ABL push-PURP go  
 "You go (up on the roof and) deliver (the baby) through the skylight!" (said the evil wife). (Chen et al. 2005:138)

In (50a-50c) the narrator is recounting the thoughts of the bad wife as she becomes jealous. Then (50d) is an event-reporting clause that indicates a scene change. The fact that the good wife is now about to give birth means that many months have passed between the bad wife's thoughts in (50a-50c) and her words in (50e). Thus, the narrator is describing an entire event, the arrival of the time of birth, in one sentence that brings the narrative forward

to a new location in time. Importantly, one can accurately state that the completion of the time of pregnancy is not presupposed by the audience before this point in the narrative. It is with this utterance that the narrator provides that information, so the whole utterance differs from the audience's presupposition. This example illustrates rather vividly that one available function of an event-reporting sentence in narratives is to move the story from one narrative episode to the next. This could not be said of (48), so it is certainly not the only use of event-reporting sentences in narratives. Nevertheless, transitions are contexts where event-reporting sentences can be useful.

This function of event-reporting clauses is comparable to the scene shifting function of heavy topic encoding that I describe in Section 3.1.1. However, it is clear that they are distinct categories in Mangghuer. In this particular case, the distinction is evident from the fact that (50d) is an intransitive clause. Notice the verb's single, albeit lengthy, argument (bracketed in the example) of the verb: the large noun phrase consists of the head noun *shijie* 'time' with several modifiers. The intransitive form of this clause rules out a topic-comment analysis, so describing the lengthy noun phrase as a topic would be inaccurate. Thus, example (50d) shows that scene-shifting event-reporting clauses are a distinct category from topic-comment scene-shifting clauses.

The three sentence focus examples above, (48), (49d), and (50d), show that Mangghuer storytellers can make use of event-reporting sentences in a variety of narrative contexts. Example (48) is a comment from the narrator on what has occurred in the story. Example (49d) shows that event-reporting clauses can be a helpful way to establish facts about the narrative world as a part of the introductory section. Finally, example (50d) shows that event-reporting sentences can be useful to indicate transitions. This is certainly not an exhaustive list of functions, but it shows a variety of discourse applications for clauses with sentence focus structure.

### 4.2.3 *Bai* and sentence focus

In this section I discuss the interaction between sentence focus and the clause-final particle *bai*. *Bai* is one of a small set of particles in Mangghuer that can occur after the final verb in the sentence. I initially introduced these particles in Section 1.1.3.3. I have already discussed one aspect of the particle *ma* in Section 3.2. The other particles in this category are *gelang*, *a*, *sha*, and *ba*. These particles are the only words that can appear in the syntactic position following the verb. They are used to indicate a variety of complex pragmatic effects on their respective clauses (Slater 2003:151-158).

The particle *bai* is briefly described in Slater (2003:152): “[*bai*] was universally identified by my consultants as having ‘emphatic’ force. One speaker told me that it is primarily used by older people, and that it has the flavor of talking to children.” Identifying *bai* with talking to children clearly associates the particle with register. The notion of “having ‘emphatic’ force” is the kind of imprecise description typical of pragmatic devices (Slater thinks the same, given his use of single quotes). In the full set of narrative texts, only some speakers use the particle. Lü Jinliang uses *bai* 115 times in 954 lines of text. However, even her usage varies considerably between narratives. In the 103 lines of “Shalangguer’s Story,” she uses *bai* seventeen times, whereas, in the 91 lines of “Stupid Boy,” she uses *bai* only once. From this cursory glance, *bai* appears to be an optional, pragmatic particle. In the nine narratives told by Lü Jinliang, 57% of the occurrences of *bai* cooccur with sentence focus. This is also the majority of clauses with sentence focus. The rest of the uses of *bai* cooccur with predicate focus clauses.

It is prototypical, but not necessary, for event-reporting clauses to contain *bai*. All three of the examples given in Section 4.2.2, (48), (49d), and (50d), end with the *bai* particle.

*Bai* can also be used with presentational clauses, such as in the following locative presentational example:

- (51) *Ger khuonuo qijighe yi-puda bang bai.*  
house back flower one-CL OBJ:COP EMPH  
Behind the house there was a clump of flowers. (Chen et al. 2005:145)

This sentence is syntactically comparable to the presentational examples (46) and (47) discussed in Section 4.2.1. This sentence presents the full noun phrase referent *qijighe yipuda*, “a clump of flowers,” and uses the copula *bang*. There are only minor differences in form between this clause and the presentational sentences already discussed: the postpositional, locative phrase, *ger khuono*, and the use of the particle *bai*. It may at first seem strange that *bai* would occur here with a presentational clause when it tends not to occur with presentational clauses at the start of narratives. However, there is a contextually significant, pragmatic difference between this clause and other presentational clauses. At this point in the narrative, an old man has been searching, presumably for some time without success, for flowers. Then he comes to a certain house, and behind this house he finds these flowers. In English this sentence may have been, "Aha! There is a clump of flowers behind the house." Thus, (51) seems to be a perspective shift. The preceding clauses are from the perspective of the narrator, but this clause seems to jump into the mind of the old man, and *bai* is uttered from his perspective to highlight the success of his search. This may also explain why *bai* occurs in (51) but not in (46) or (47), which occur at the beginning of a narrative, where participant introduction is routine.

In the hopes of presenting a fuller picture of the narrative function of *bai* and of sentence focus in Mangghuer story-telling, I will contrast the above examples with the use of *bai* in predicate focus clauses. Predicate focus clauses with *bai* tend to indicate transitions from one narrative episode to the next. In the story "Three Daughters," there is a scene when several clauses describe the daughters collecting peas to eat in an effort to avoid starving. After they collect and eat the peas, the following clause occurs:

- (52) *Ti=nang di-ku zou yao-jiang gelang bai.*  
 that=REFLPOSS eat-IMPERF thus go-OBJ:PERF HEARSAY EMPH  
 After eating that thing of theirs (the peas), then (they) started walking, they say.  
 (Chen et al. 2005:133)

This scene ends with (52) when they leave, and a new scene begins in the next sentence. The sentence is a clear transition between portions of the narrative, so it seems that *bai* is used here to indicate a scene change.

This transitional effect is even more clear in (53):

- (53) [*Ting-ku*      *ni*   *burer*   *maidie-jiang*]      *ma*   [*gan*   *xi*   *bayang*   *kong=ni*  
that-IMPERF this calf know-OBJ:PERF PRT 3:SG go rich person=GEN  
  
*diaogan=du*                      *xi*   *danang*]   [*kedie*   *sao-jiang*]      *bai*.  
threshing:ground=DAT go after lie sit-OBJ:PERF EMPH  
After that, this calf found out (about this) and he went, (and) after (he) went to a rich  
man's threshing floor, (he) lay there. (Chen et al. 2005:141)

This sentence stands alone between two narrative episodes. It is three conjoined clauses, which I have indicated with brackets. The episode beforehand describes one of the narrative participants feigning sickness and pretending she needs to eat the calf to recover. Then these three clauses describe the calf fleeing to hide in a rich man's house. In the following episode, dialogue begins between the rich man and the calf. Therefore, (53) functions as a short presentation of the events that occurred between these two scenes to move the narrative forward. These three clauses together make one sentence. It is natural, then, that *bai* occurs at the end of all three clauses, marking the entire sentence. It seems that *bai* occurs here to again communicate the idea of narrative transition.

Another indication that *bai* can be used with predicate focus clauses to mark scene transitions is that *bai* also often cooccurs with a certain set of clause connectors. There are several related connectors: *ting*, *ting-ku*, and *ting ge-ku*. Unlike *bai*, *ting* and *ting-ku* are clause-initial markers, and the phrase *ting ge-ku* appears to function as a clause in its own right. Slater identifies *ting-ku* as having a “scene shifting” use (2003:161). This function often cooccurs with the transitional function of *bai*. This is exemplified by (53) above where *bai* occurs at the end of the two conjoined clauses that begin with *ting-ku*. These two devices do not always occur together. In fact, they also both occur without the other, but the

cooccurrence of *bai* with these scene shifting devices certainly shows that it can be used to reinforce the transitional function of a clause. The following four lines from the narrative, "A Man and His Two Wives," shows these two devices cooccurring in another context, this time using the clausal form, *ting ge-ku*:

- (54) a. *Gan=ni ti burer ti ninger=ni nudu=ni duer*  
 3:SG=GEN that calf that old:woman=GEN eye=ACC lick  
  
*gai-gha-jiang bai.*  
 bright-CAUSE-OBJ:PERF EMPH  
 The calf licked the (kind) old woman's eyes (and) made (them) bright.
- b. *Ting ge-ku,*  
 that do-IMPERF  
 After that,
- c. *du,*  
 now  
 now,
- d. *ni mao bieri gan=ni ti burer=ni mugha=ni di-kuniang*  
 this bad wife 3:SG=GEN that calf=GEN meat=ACC eat-OBJ:FUT  
  
*bai.*  
 EMPH  
 this evil wife planned to eat the calf's flesh. (Chen et al. 2005:140)

The phrase *ting ge-ku* in (54b) functions to shift the narrative away from the scene described in (54a). Once again, *bai* cooccurs with the use of *ting ge-ku* by following the finite verb, *di-kuniang* in (54d) which marks the end of the complex sentence. The common cooccurrence of *bai* with *ting* shows that *bai* conveys transition when it marks predicate focus clauses.

The majority of the occurrences of *bai* in the texts occur with sentence-focus clauses. Of those occurrences that are not with sentence-focus, the large majority are topic-comment clauses that regularly include a scene shifting connective *ting*. In order to show that these factors can account for the great majority of the data, I now discuss one lengthier section



from the narrative “A Hired Farmhand” that shows the various functions I discuss above in their larger contexts.

- (55) a. *Gan zou pusa ge ximie ger=du ruo-ji*  
 3:SG thus another SG:INDEF temple house=DAT enter-IMPERF
- xi-sa,*<sup>2</sup>  
 go-COND  
 When he thus went into another temple room,
- b. *san-ge jiaozi ge-ji ge-ser bang bai.*  
 three-CL sedan do-IMPERF do-PROG OBJ:COP EMPH  
 three sedans had been put (there).
- c. *Yigua maodan-si=ni chuke danang zaihang=ni ting*  
 totally flower-PL=ACC make:by:crumpling after beautiful=GEN that
- ge-jiang bai.*  
 do-OBJ:PERF EMPH  
 (They) were all decorated with cloth flowers and were very beautiful.
- d. *Ni zou gan=ni wei bang bai,*  
 this this 3:SG=GEN seat OBJ:COP EMPH  
 So this was his seat,
- e. *linshangmoyi gan ning=du sao-kuniang.*  
 finally 3:SG this=DAT sit-OBJ:FUT  
 in the end (i.e. the afterlife) he would sit here.
- f. *Laoye gan=du ge ji-gha-jiang bai.*  
 living:buddha 3:SG=DAT once look-CAUSE-OBJ:PERF EMPH  
 Living Buddha let him see (this).
- g. *Ting ge gan yao-jiang bai,*  
 that do 3:SG go-OBJ:PERF EMPH  
 Then he (the hired farmhand) left,

<sup>2</sup> This is the same perspective switching suffix mentioned in 3.1.2. Thus, (55b) switches to the perspective of the farmhand as he sees the vision of sedans in this room. It is possible that this perspective shift is part of what inspires the speaker's use of *bai* in these clauses, conveying the character's reaction to the scene. However, it is not clear whether the clauses that follow (55b) maintain the perspective of the character or return to the perspective of the narrator.

- h. *yan gan=ni dongjia=ni ger=du xi-jiang bai.*  
 again 3:SG=GEN master=GEN house=DAT go-OBJ:PERF EMPH  
 (and) went again to his master's house. (Chen et al. 2005:126)

I showed these lines earlier in the discussion of argument focus in Section 4.1.2, but I include them again here for convenience, and I have also included several more lines from this narrative scene. This scene describes the protagonist of this story entering a temple room to see a vision of his future. This is the first of two narrative climaxes in this story, as the second occurs when the antagonist, the farmhand's employer, also goes to have his future foretold.

In these eight lines, the *bai* particle occurs six times. The first clause, (55a) is a dependent clause that sets up the scene: the participant enters the temple room. *Bai* cannot occur on dependent clauses, so it would not be expected on this clause. The first occurrence of *bai* is in (55b), which is a presentational type clause with sentence-focus. It uses the copula *bang* to introduce new participants: the set of three sedan chairs.

The next two clauses are less clearly explainable with my analysis. In (43c) the subject is minimally marked with zero-anaphora, so it appears to be a topic-comment type clause, yet this clause does not seem to indicate a narrative transition, which is the typical function of topic-comment clauses with *bai*. I discussed (55d) earlier as example (43d), where I describe it as an argument focus clause. However, I did not address the use of *bai* at that point. The occurrence of *bai* with argument focus shows that this particle can occur with the full range of focus types. Both of these clauses seem to be communicating wonder: the amazing beauty of the decorations and the surprise that this is the protagonist's future position. This is comparable to my discussion of the presentational clause in example (51) above, and it may be sufficient reason for the occurrence of *bai* here. Admittedly, however, this explanation feels somewhat weak. I discuss an alternative explanation shortly.

The next few clauses are easily accounted for. (55e) is a simple topic-comment sentence without *bai*. Even though *bai* can occur on topic-comment sentences, it does not occur here because there is no transition that needs to be indicated.

The next clause, (55f), was also discussed earlier as example (55f), but again I portray it here in context. It is an event-reporting sentence, so the use of *bai* is typical.

Finally, (55g) and (55h) are both topic-comment clauses with *bai*. These are used together to indicate a transition away from this scene.

The frequent use of *bai* in this section is striking. Given the optional, pragmatic nature of the particle, it may be that after this speaker uses the particle once, she is more likely to decide to use it again and again, creating small clusters of similar sounding sentences. Slater and Wang describe this same kind of clustering with the clause-final particle, *gelang*. They describe two functions of *gelang*: quotative and hearsay. Both of these functions, and especially hearsay *gelang*, "appear in clusters of two or more *gelangs* within a particular episode or other unit of text" (2010:8). Furthermore, their analysis is based on texts from the same speaker, Lü Jinliang, that I analyzed throughout this thesis. This kind of clustering may also explain why the particle can occur so many times in one narrative while hardly at all in another.

Clustering may be used to mark a narrative climax. The scene in (55) is an important climax for the protagonist in this narrative. The poor protagonist is shown a vision of the future glory he will experience. The clustering of *bai* into this scene highlights the whole section's significance. The desire to cluster the particle into the section may be sufficient reason for the speaker to use *bai* with clauses where it otherwise would not occur, which may be the case in (55c) and (55d).

I close my analysis of *bai* with a few reflective comments. There seems to be at least one generalization between the sentence focus and topic-comment clauses that use *bai*: they draw the audience's attention to important developments in the narrative. Whereas the topic-comment uses of *bai* correlate with scene shifting, the sentence-focus uses correlate with important reported events, which move the plot forward; with the introduction of important new participants; or with scene shifting. It may be that *bai* has the effect of communicating, "pay attention to this point in order to understand what happens next." If this is accurate,

it makes sense why it correlates with both scene-shifting topic-comment clauses and with sentence-focus, and it also explains why *bai* occurs repeatedly within short sections at narrative peaks. In fact, the speaker's desire to repeat the use of *bai* as a highlighting device throughout (55) may be the only reason that it is used in (55d), the argument focus clause. Finally, this has interesting implications for the relationship between information structure and narrative structure in Mangghuer. Namely, sentence focus clauses can correlate with certain positions in narratives, such as narrative peaks.

## CHAPTER 5

### Conclusion

#### 5.1 Summary and discussion

This thesis applies Lambrecht's (1994) approach to sketch a variety of features of Mangghuer information structure in a corpus of 24 narrative texts (Chen et al. 2005 & Stuart & Zhu 2001). The default information structure in Mangghuer is the topic-comment/predicate focus sentence, in which the topical element occurs first, followed by the comment. Default topic encoding varies depending on the identifiability of the referent in a given clause: the minimal grammatical referring expression is zero-anaphora, which is used for continuing topics and for establishing the topical status of highly identifiable referents; pronouns are also used to establish the topical status of highly identifiable referents; and noun phrases are used to establish the topical nature of inactive or otherwise ambiguous referents.

Several types of non-default topic constructions occur in the corpus as well: more than minimal encoding, such as a full noun phrase used for a continuing topic, frequently marks the beginning of new narrative episodes; the pronoun *gan* can cooccur with a full-noun phrase to highlight the narrative significance of a sentence's propositional content; and direct-object topics can be fronted to indicate topical contrast.

There are two argument focus constructions: subject arguments can occur in the immediately pre-verbal position, which always conveys a contrastive effect; and the copula *bang* can be used to form non-contrastive, identificational argument focus sentences.

Many sentence focus clauses also occur in the corpus. Presentational sentences are frequent at the beginning of narratives, and occur regularly to introduce new participants.

Event-reporting sentences can be used for a variety of functions: they can convey comments from the narrator about states of affairs in the discourse world, and they can indicate transitions between narrative episodes. They are also frequently marked with the sentence-final particle *bai*, which seems to be the result of overlap between the discourse functions of the particle and event-reporting sentences.

This thesis is neither a comprehensive description of Mangghuer information structure nor even a comprehensive description of Mangghuer information structure features in the corpus that has been its basis. There are certainly more features of Mangghuer topic and focus that can be addressed. However, the points discussed in this thesis shed light on how information structure can be applied throughout a narrative's structure. In particular, the highlighting effect of the pronoun *gan* when it cooccurs with a full noun phrase, the narrative prominence attributed to arguments in the identificational *bang* construction, and the narrator comments given in sentence-focus articulation show how information structuring contributes to Mangghuer story telling.

## 5.2 Suggestions for further research

This thesis has not addressed Mangghuer prosody. However, prosody is no doubt important to information structure. It is possible that prosody helps to distinguish some of the otherwise ambiguous constructions that have been discussed throughout this thesis, such as the topic-fronting construction versus the pre-verbal argument focus construction or topic-comment sentences versus event-reporting sentences. These are two examples of ambiguous structures that this thesis has identified, and it is possible that prosody plays an important role in distinguishing them. Furthermore, a prosodic analysis would be helpful to determine whether the topicalization construction discussed in Section 3.1.2 is best analyzed as a heavy NP or as left-dislocation. These are just some of the ways that a prosodic analysis of Mangghuer information structure could contribute to the discussion throughout this thesis. I can make no predictions as to how much of a role prosody takes in Mangghuer information structure, but much could be discerned from a proper prosodic analysis.

Aside from information structure, this thesis has addressed a variety of features of Mangghuer narrative discourse. The sentence final particles seem to be one of the more complex areas of Mangghuer pragmatics. I addressed the sentence final particle *bai* in Section 4.2.3. Slater & Wang (2010) describe the particle *gelang*, and Fried (2020; 2021) describes the particle *ma*. However, there are several more as yet undescribed sentence final particles in Mangghuer. Descriptions of the the pragmatics of these particles may produce insights into discourse pragmatics.

Another gap in this thesis is that I have not discussed language mixing. Mangghuer is in close contact with several other languages, as the Amdo Sprachbund is quite linguistically diverse. Slater (2003) addresses some of the ways that Mangghuer has borrowed features from other languages, especially the local Mandarin variety. However, I have not addressed information structure in these other nearby languages. A comparison of information structure between the languages of the Amdo Sprachbund may shed light on information structure and language change.

Finally, as far as I am aware, this thesis is the first description of information structure in any member of the Mongolic language family. Mongolic languages are spread across vast geographical and sociolinguistic areas. My thesis has only offered a beginning to the discussion of Mongolic information structure. Descriptions of information structure in other Mongolic languages could certainly provide valuable insight into a cross-linguistic understanding of information structure.

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