

Focus and prosody in Tagalog: A preliminary study
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Tagalog displays regular correspondence between syntax and information structure. As summarized in Table 1, canonical constructions are used for the sentence-focus or the predicate-focus structure, while pseudocleft constructions are employed for the argument-focus structure (Kaufmann 2005; Nagaya 2007).

Table 1: Construction types and focus structures in Tagalog

CONSTRUCTION TYPE	FOCUS STRUCTURE	CONTEXTS
Canonical construction	Predicate focus	‘What happened to X?’ ‘What did X do?’
	Sentence focus	‘What happened?’
Pseudocleft construction	Argument focus	‘only’ focus of negation/focus of correction <i>wh</i> -question

However, there is at least one context where this correspondence does not hold in a strict sense: question-answer pairs. To be more specific, *wh*-questions can be answered by means of either canonical or pseudocleft constructions, even when one argument is exclusively in focus in the reply. For instance, consider (1).

- (1) Q: *Anong kinain ni Mama?*
Ano =’ng [k<in>ain ni= Mama]? [Pseudocleft]
what =NOM PV:PFV:eat P.GEN=Mama
 ‘What did Mama ate?’
- A1: *Kumain siya ng mami.*
 K<um>ain=siya nang= mami. [Canonical]
 AV:eat=3SG.NOM GEN= noodles
 ‘She ate noodles.’
- A2: *Mami ang kinain niya.*
Mami ang=k<in>ain=niya. [Pseudocleft]
noodles NOM=PV:eat=3SG.GEN
 ‘What she ate is noodles.’

In this presentation, we look into the role of prosody for expressing different focus categories in Tagalog, with special reference to those canonical constructions that express argument-focus structures. It will be shown that prosody plays some role in marking contrasts in the information structure of sentences.

References

Kaufman, Daniel. 2005. Aspects of pragmatic focus in Tagalog. In I Wayan Arka and Malcom Ross, eds., *The Many Faces of Austronesian Voice Systems: Some New Empirical Studies*, 175-196. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.

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