

Chapter 9

FOCUS: Warao and Urarina

1. *Introduction*

In this chapter, we examine two languages, both of which have been described as object-initial. Warao is said to be an OSV language, and Urarina is an OVS language. Object-initial languages are uncommon: OSV and OVS “are hardly accounted for” (Olawsky 2006.654). Derbyshire & Pullum (1981) list 8 OVS languages (Hixkaryana, Apalai, Makushi, Hianacoto-Umua, Arekuna-Taulipang, Panare, Bacairi, and Asurini) and 4 OSV languages (Apuriña, Urubu, Nadëb, and Xavante). In a survey of 1,063 languages, Tomlin (1986.180 & 192) adds only two OSV languages: Fasu, spoken in New Guinea, and Jamamadi, an Arawakan language. In addition to these 14 object-initial languages, we may add the two languages of this chapter plus Trio (Carlin 2004). Perhaps because of the paucity of such languages, authors express caution in accepting a language as object-initial. Derbyshire & Pullum (1981.193) note, “... not all of the languages on the list are totally secure cases of basic OVS,” and Olawsky (2006.652) writes, “Even for some languages listed as ‘OVS’, this order is not entirely consistent ... Some authors describe them as ‘OVS’, but others as ‘SOV’” In section 2, we will find that Warao is only insecurely to be added to the number of object-initial languages, while Urarina is more confidently on the list.

At various times, researchers have expressed doubts that object-initial languages existed at all (Greenberg 1963.61), or they have explicitly denied their existence (Venneman 1973.27 & Pullum 1977.269). If such languages do exist, and they seem to, there is a remarkable skewing in their numbers and their geographical location. There are extremely few of them and they all “belong to South American Indian groups” (Derbyshire & Pullum 1981.193).¹ Our general interest in them here, and specifically Warao and Urarina, lies first

¹ With the exception of Fasu. “The Fasu people live in a valley parallel and west of Lake Kutubu in the Southern Highlands District of Papua, but separated from the lake by a range of mountains. There are approximately 750 speakers of the language” (Loeweke & May 1966.31). Loeweke & May (1966.19) have this OSV utterance as typical:

- (i) saro aporo-mo ape-a ru-sua-po
 [pig man-SUBJ house-LOC kill-past-INDICATIVE]
 ‘The man killed the pig in the house’

in the manner in which they have accommodated their grammars to the expression of FOCUS.

2. *Warao*

Warao is “a language isolate spoken in eastern Venezuela” (Romero-Figueroa 1985a:106). Romero-Figueroa’s work is the most recent source of information on Warao.² Vaquero’s 1965 *Idioma warao: Morfología, sintaxis, literatura* is also frequently referred to.³ Vaquero’s grammar contains numerous texts, two of which are presented in Chapters 19 & 20.⁴ In this chapter, I will draw examples from them where appropriate.

Initially, Warao is of interest to us because Romero-Figueroa confidently declares, “OSV is the unmarked order in the language” (Romero-Figueroa 1985a.106). Vaquero (1965.142) also comments on the OSV word order of Warao:

Como norma general: La construcción del Warao es descendente or figurada. Es decir, los Warao conciben y expresan los juicios y las ideas en un orden lógico inverso al del idioma castellano.

Cuando un castellano dice: “Yo quiero buscar a mi hermano”, lo primero que

² *A Reference Grammar of Warao* has Romero-Figueroa’s surname spelled *Romero-Figeroa* on the cover and title page. The bibliography of the grammar uses *Romero-Figueroa* in identifying earlier work by the same author. I shall consistently spell the author’s name *Romero-Figueroa*.

³ Other descriptive work has been performed by Osborn (1966a & 1966b). Neither publication has relevant data on the syntax of Warao. Romero-Figueroa’s 1985a & 1985b articles are almost identical. There are minor differences in phrasing and in the footnotes; otherwise, they are the same. I will cite the 1985a version. Romero-Figueroa’s 1986a & 1986b papers are also nearly identical. They differ in that the former has more non-Warao data (e.g. Nandi & Serbo-Croatian). The Warao content, however, is the same between the two.

Elizabeth Charette has completed a 167 page dictionary of the Warao spoken in Guyana, which I have referred to in the analysis of texts in Chapters 19 & 20. Stefanie Herrmann has also worked on Warao. The one article I have cited is available on a web site (<http://tcl.sfs.uni-tuebingen.de/a2/warao-arb.pdf>), but is otherwise unpublished, as far as I know. There is no date associated with the webpage, and I have cited it using the date of the fieldwork, 1999.

⁴ The texts are *Waira-Joyo* ‘The Stone Boat’ and *Bure kuare Warao* ‘The Buzzard and the Warao’. They are presented by Vaquero with the Warao on the left side of the page and with a Spanish translation on the right side. There are no grammatical glosses and no explicit matching of the Spanish with the Warao. Cf. Chapters 19 & 20 for a description of my reworking of the texts.

When an example from the text is cited, there will be an alphanumeric ID, e.g. 23c, at the right margin. That identifies the place in the text from which the example is drawn. Cf. Chapter 18 for an explanation of the numbering.

aflora a su mente es la idea de querer, la posición de un acto voluntario. Ese acto se concretiza en la búsqueda. Y esa búsqueda tendrá por término al hermano.

El proceso mental y, consiguientemente, verbal del Warao es totalmente inverso. Este mismísima oración la expresa en estos términos: “Ma daka najobukitane ine obonoya”, que literalmente significa: “Mi hermano buscar yo quiero”. **Como se ve, el término de la acción goza de prioridad mental y expresiva** [Emph. mine, PWD]: “a mi hermano”. Inmediatamente se aclara la predicación: “buscar quiero”, que realiza el sujeto “yo”.⁵

This *norma general* seconds Romero-Figueroa’s conclusion that OSV is the “unmarked order”. Herrmann, however, is more cautious. She writes (1999.3), “There is no general agreement in the literature about the basic word order, which is quite free but ‘verb-final’.” The only common point of agreement is that the language appears to place its Verbs in final position. And it does, mostly; but we will find below that post-verbal position has a function as well. The language is not invariably Verb final.⁶

The primary impetus for examining Warao in the context of FOCUS is Romero-Figueroa’s assertion that the language is “unmarked” OSV and secondly, his description of the language as one that uses sentence-initial position to signal FOCUS. If these two claims are supported, Warao would be similar to Bella Coola, Yogad, and Haida in the deployment of its morphosyntactic resources to convey FOCUS, and Warao would be similar to Rwanda and Telugu in associating the Patient function — more than any other function — preferentially with the semantics of FOCUS. The effect of these two properties combined in one language would be to give Warao the

⁵ This is an English rendition of Vaquero’s remarks:

As a general rule: A Warao sentence is descending or figurative. That is to say, the Waraos conceive and express judgements and ideas in an order that is logically inverse to Castilian.

When a Castilian says, “I want to find my brother,” the first thing that comes to his mind is the idea of wanting, the postulation of a voluntary act. This act is concretized in the search. And this search will have a termination in the brother.

The mental and, consequently, the verbal process of a Warao is completely inverted. This same utterance is expressed in these terms: *Ma daka najobukitane ine obono-ya* [my brother find-infinitive want-present], which literally means “My brother to find I want”. As we see, the end point of the action has mental and expressive priority: “my brother”. The predication, “to find I want, which contains the subject “I”, is uttered next.

⁶ Romero-Figueroa (1997.5) says, “In all cases, intransitive verb(s) in Warao are sentence final ... When Object(s) and non-major constituents such as interjections are present, V is overwhelmingly sentence final. Occasionally, some OBL(iques) and interjections follow v.” We will look at this in more detail below.

appearance of being O-initial in the way that Bella Coola is V-initial.

But matters in Warao are not that clear. While sentence-initial position appears to be clearly implicated in the signalling of FOCUS, other grammar is also used. And it is not certain, after all, whether the language is indeed O-initial, or what that claim means for Warao. Still, the examination is worthwhile, although the descriptions of Warao leave several crucial questions unanswered.

2.1 *Warao Word Order in General*

Like Haida, West Greenlandic Eskimo, and Telugu, Warao inclines to be V final.⁷ “In all cases, intransitive V(erbs) in Warao are sentence-final ... When O and nonmajor constituents such as interjections are present V is overwhelmingly sentence-final” (Romero-Figueroa 1985a.107 & 1997.5). The text of *Waira-Joyo (El Barco-Peñon or The Stone Boat)* does not entirely

⁷ For our purposes here, a finite Verb will be recognized by the presence of tense-aspect-modality markers. The most frequent (cf. the Warao texts in Chapters 19 & 20) seem to be *-ya* PRESENT, *-(n)ae* PRETERITE, *-te* IMPERATIVE, and *-kotu* IMPERATIVE. If a Verb in this sense is not present, two non-Verbs may be juxtaposed with sense of predication. These examples are from the aforementioned text:

- (i) Ajabara warao a tida manamo 1a
 [first Warao POSSESSIVE woman two]
 ‘The first Warao had two wives’
 [Lit. ‘The first Warao’s wives were two’]
- (ii) Tamaja ma jarako 34c
 [this our prey]
 ‘This is what we shot’
 [Lit. ‘This is our prey’.]

Alternately, a copular form may appear finally; *ja* is the positive and *yana* is the negative:

- (iii) Wauta a darakojo jima ja 26a
 [Wauta door iron COPULA]
 ‘Wauta’s door was iron’
- (iv) Daiba, tamaja ka nibora yana 12b
 [elder.sister this our husband NEGATIVE]
 ‘Elder sister, this is not our husband’

Romero-Figueroa (1997.10) says that the copula “has three well-defined predicative functions ... equative ... attributive ... adverbial” and that it “never functions as an existential.” See, however:

- (v) A rani-tuma yaru-kore nebu manamo ja. 31a
 [mother-PL go.in-when person two be]
 ‘When the women went in, there were two young men’

indirecto, de suyo, precede al complemento directo.” But the sentence-initial position of the RECIPIENT is immediately qualified: “A pesar de esta norma general, la colocación del complemento indirecto es muy voluble, casi libre. Así ... Puede ir después del complemento directo ... Con frecuencia se coloca después del predicato verbal.”⁹ Vaquero (1965.139) identifies “complementos indirectos” in the following way: “Indican el término a que se dirige la acción del verbo o el fin que se propone el sujeto. Llevan siempre la posposición SABA, a veces elidida or sobretendida.”¹⁰ In these examples (Vaquero 1965.139), the RECIPIENTS are sentence-initial and sentence-final:

- (6) (a) *Nobo-tomo saba* dijabera kona-ya
 [young.person-PL for sweet bring-PRES]
 ‘I’m bringing candy for the children’
 ‘Traigo caramelos para los niños’
- (b) Aru nisa-nu *ma saba*
 [cassava buy-IMP.2ndSG me for]
 ‘Buy cassava for me’
 ‘Compra casabe para mí’

Here are two textual examples of the RECIPIENT, one in medial position and one with the postposition “elidida”:

- (7) (a) Yatu a joro-juku *ma saba* asid-ae 20d
 [you skin-smell me for detest-PRET]
 ‘Your smell is making me sick’
 ‘Vuestro olor me causa náuseas’

⁹ “OBL.s may appear in several places within sentences” (Romero-Figueroa 1985a.112).

¹⁰ If ‘give’ is the prototypical EVENT to occur with a RECIPIENT, it is interesting that *moa* ‘give’ occurs 17 times in the *Waira-Joyo* text, 16 times with an overt RECIPIENT and once with it elided ([30a]). In the 16 appearances of RECIPIENT with *moa* ([30b], [35b], [35d], [38d], [38e], [41c], [45b], [45c], [46a], [48a], [48b], [48c], [49c], [49d], [49e] & [51a]), the RECIPIENT is *never* accompanied by *saba*. And it *never* appears after the Verb. The RECIPIENT occurs in two positions: immediately before the Verb (12 times) or sentence-initially (4 times). Sentence-initial RECIPIENTS are relevant to the presence of FOCUS, as we will see below in section 3.4.

Romero-Figueroa (1997.9) identifies an “indirect object” that “can be defined as a postpositional phrase introduced by *saba* ‘to/for,’” but he also allows a series of suffixes to mark indirect objects: *-(i)si*, *-to*, and *-(m)a*. Each suffix has slightly differing semantics.

- (b) *Araisa* daukojo mo-ae. 30b
 [other cane.flute give-PRET]
 ‘She gave the other a cane flute’
 ‘Al otro una flauta de caña’

Romero-Figueroa qualifies his description of Warao word order with the restrictions “overwhelmingly” and “unmarked”, while Vaquero (1965:144) employs “reglas y excepciones de la construcción”. The positioning of content is then not an invariant absolute, but meaningful in its choice.

2.2 *Warao FOCUS and Word Order*

We shall begin our pursuit of FOCUS by employing our usual heuristic of inspecting the use of *wh*-questions and their corresponding answers. Once we have become oriented to the morphosyntax of FOCUS, we can look for its uses beyond the narrow one of questions and answers, thus refining the constitution of FOCUS in the language.¹¹

2.2.1 *Sentence-initial position*

“Interrogative pronouns are obligatorily sentence-initial in Warao questions” (Romero-Figueroa 1997:23). Thus (8) - (10) (Romero-Figueroa 1997:23 & 1985a:110) are formed by “... an obligatory rule of WH-QUESTION MOVEMENT ... [and] the focal point ... [is] fronted” (Romero-Figueroa (1997:34):¹²

- (8) *Sina* sisiko oko naru-te-ra
 [who with we go-NON.PAST-INTER]
 ‘With whom do/will we go?’
- (9) *Bitu* buare isiko hua n-ae-ra
 [what machete OBL Juan kill-PRET-INTER]
 ‘What did John kill with the machete?’
- (10) *Sina* tamaha dibu-ya-ra
 [who DEM say-PRES-INTER]
 ‘Who says that?’

¹¹ This accords with Romero-Figueroa’s approach. Cf., for example, the quotations from Romero-Figueroa in section 3.3.

¹² This is a verbatim repetition from Romero-Figueroa 1985a:110.

In response to the question of (11a), we find (11b) (Romero-Figueroa 1997.27):

- (11) (a) Kasikaha yatu hat-ae-ra
 [what you spear-PRET-INTER]
 ‘What did you spear?’
- (b) Domu ine hat-ae
 [bird I spear-PRET]
 ‘I speared a bird’

or just *Domu* ‘A bird’. But notice that here, the answer of (11b) is identical with the grammar of the simple statement ‘I speared a bird’, when not pronounced in answer to a question. Romero-Figueroa writes that sentence (11b) might be said first and then be followed by the echo question of (11c):¹³

- (11) (c) Kasikaha-ra yatu hat-ae
 [what-INTER you spear-PRET]
 ‘Whát did you spear?’

only to be repeated as the confirming answer to (11c). Sentence (11b) is both statement and answer.

The behavior of *wh*-questions and answers points to sentence-initial position as the signal of FOCUS in Warao. When a form occurs ‘fronted’, “no movement of other constituents takes place” (Romero-Figueroa 1985a:111).¹⁴ Beginning with the OSV utterances in (12) and (13):

- (12) Yatu hua mi-ya
 [you.pl Juan see-PRES]
 ‘John sees you all’
- (13) Hua yatu mi-ya
 [Juan you.pl see-PRES]

¹³ Notice the position of the INTERROGATIVE marker in contrast with (11a).

¹⁴ But see Vaquero’s (1965.65)

- (i) Sina yejebu-ya-ra iji?
 [who call-PRES-INTER you]
 ‘Who are you calling?’

‘You all see Juan’

Romero-Figueroa (1985a.114) reports, “My informants unanimously consider that the sentences [(12) & (13)] have meanings” that reflect an OSV ordering. Sentences (12) and (13) apparently do **not** have the glosses, respectively, of ‘You all see John’ and ‘John sees you all’. Romero-Figueroa observes that, paralleling (12) and (13), there exist these near homophonic pairs:¹⁵

- (14) Yatu , hua mi-ya
 [you.pl PAUSE Juan see-PRES]
 ‘(It’s) you (who) see John’
- (15) Hua , yatu mi-ya
 [Juan PAUSE you.pl see-PRES]
 ‘(It’s) John(who) sees you all’

and then states (1985a.114):

Both ... [(14)] and [(15)] show SOV order as the result of the fronting of their subjects for purposes of highlighting or focusing. In ... [(14)] and [(15)], as well as **all examples** used to illustrate the operation of the focusing rule, *focusing* implies a **short pause** [Emphases mine, PWD] after the package of fronted information. Such a short pause is accompanied by slightly falling pitch and sustained volume. In summary, excluding stative sentences which are commonly subject-initial and tend to exhibit an S-COMP.COP order, SOV is a marked order in all other basic sentence types in Warao.

Although Romero-Figueroa asserts that the above pattern applies to “all examples used to illustrate the operation of the focusing rule,” the phrase “SOV is a marked order in all other major sentence types” suggests that the use of PAUSE is constrained to opposing SOV to OSV. That is, the PAUSE is absent from (11b) when it answers (11a). If we hear Noun₁ Noun₂ Verb with no pause after Noun₁, then we should understand the sequence functionally as OSV. But if there *is* a pause after Noun₁, then we should hear SOV. There is no suggestion that PAUSE is involved in (11b), whether *Domu ine hat-ae* ‘I speared a bird’ is uttered first as a statement or whether it is spoken as an answer to *Kasikaha-ra yatu hat-ae* ‘Whát did you spear?’ The two performances are homophonous. Indeed, if they were **not** homophonous and if

¹⁵ To emphasize the contrasts, I have introduced a comma and glossed it PAUSE.

the OSV answer *Domu ine hat-ae did* contain a pause after *domu*, then (14) would also have the OSV gloss ‘It’s you whom John sees’. Since Romero-Figueroa does not attribute this meaning to (14) — nor ‘It’s John whom you all see’ to (15) — we must assume that PAUSE is **not** present in OSV utterances ... as statement or as answer.¹⁶

2.2.2 Further on questions & answers

The Warao interrogative elements are *sina* ‘who’ and *kasikaha* ‘what’ (Romero-Figueroa 1997.23).¹⁷ The same forms express indefiniteness (as in

¹⁶ This series of observations by Romero-Figueroa suggests (i) that except for a sentence-initial O’s, all sentence-initial content will be followed by a pause and (ii) that sentence-initial O’s will not be followed by pause.

Vaquero (1965) makes no mention of pause, and in a latter publication on Warao, Romero-Figueroa (1997.33-37) fails to reprise the discussion of pause, although sentence-initial position continues to be the essential morphosyntax of FOCUS. Romero-Figueroa 1997 begins (5) with “the hypothesis of an OSV basic order”. The demonstration of the “basic order” is now limited to citing examples of that sort and no other, and asserting their basicness. The existence of non-OSV utterances is acknowledged (6-7), but I find no statement of what prevents their being accepted as “basic” (should one want to claim that): “So far, basic OSV order for Warao has been exemplified in each of the major sentence types. However, structural arrangements different from OSV are often found in the language.”

Neither Vaquero nor Romero-Figueroa, that I can find, discusses such a simple question as ‘Who brought Juan?’ Romero-Figueroa’s description suggests the possibility of a pause following an initial interrogative pronoun *sina* ‘who’, i.e., an S,OV question. Otherwise, the utterance would mean ‘Who did Juan bring?’, i.e. the OSV question.

¹⁷ In Romero-Figueroa 1985a, the two cited instances of ‘what’ are not *kasikaha*, but *bitu* (110). There is no comment on this difference. Vaquero (1965.65) offers this explanation:

KASIKAJA se emplea indiferentemente para preguntar por personas y cosas ...
BITU se usa exclusivamente para preguntar por cosas ...

And there is some indication that *sina*, in some contexts, may have the meaning ‘what’ (Vaquero 1965.318):

- (i) ¿Sina najoro-ae?
[eat-PRET]
¿Qué has comido?

Vaquero’s gloss suggests that *sina* is here ‘What?’, and the context supports that. A gloss ‘Who ate (it)?’ would not be appropriate since the response given to (i) is:

- (ii) Najoro-ae aru, wajabu
[eat-PRET cassava morocoto]
‘He comido casabe, morocoto asado’

Notice, also, that (ii) is an O-final utterance, even when the O’s seem to be answering ‘What?’

Telugu, Hungarian, etc. And Urarina in section 3 below.) (Romero-Figueroa 1997.52-53):

- (16) Osibu oko yab-ae **nobo-tuma** **sina**
 [morokoto we fish-PRET grandfather-PL who
 ribu-a-e
 say-PRET]
 ‘Some grandfathers said ‘we fished for *morokoto*’
- (17) **Wahibaka-no kasikaha** ine hokata-te
 [canoe-LOC what I get.on-NON.PAST]
 ‘I will get on in **any** canoe’

The indefinite forms become interrogative when they combine with the grammar of FOCUS. For Warao, that is initial position plus accompaniment by the interrogative suffix *-ra* (Romero-Figueroa 1997.23):

Information questions are formed with the use of sentence-initial interrogative pronouns co-occurring with the sentence final interrogative marker *-ra* ‘INTERROG’.

Following Romero-Figueroa, (18) without *-ra* would mean something like ‘Some Warao will hurry their work’ (Romero-Figueroa 1997.52),

- (18) **Warao-tuma sina** yaota rubuhi-te-**ra**
 [Warao-PL who work hurry-NON.PAST-INTERROG]
 ‘Which Warao will hurry their work?’

and with *-ra*, (17) would mean ‘Which canoe will I get on?’ The same interrogative *-ra* appears without other interrogative elements to effect a yes/no question (Romero-Figueroa 1997.23):

- (19) Hi-rima nao-naka ta-te-**ra**
 [your-father come-NEG AUX-NON.PAST-INTER]
 ‘Your father doesn’t come, does he?’

Romero-Figueroa’s characterization of questions requires two immediate cautions. First, while the suffix *-ra* does appear in yes-no questions (Vaquero 1965.274, 278):

- (20) (a) Iji ¿ji jiji ekida-*ra*? 14g
 [you your soft.hair nothing-INTER]
 ‘Have you no hair?’
 ‘Tú no tienes cabello?’
- (b) Natu, ¿ma tatu-tuma iji
 [Grandmother my woman-PL you
 mi-naja-*ra*? 24h
 see-NEG-INTER]
 ‘Granny, have you not seen my wives?’
 ‘Vieja, ¿tú no has visto a mis mujeres?’

it does not appear in all (Vaquero 1965.284):¹⁸

- (21) ¿Bitadairi-tuma ji dair-ae tai? 51d
 [-PL you -PRET that.one]
 ‘Have deceitful people misled you?’
 ‘¿Qué embusteros os han engañado?’

In Romero-Figueroa (1985a.110), there is this example of a *wh*-question without *-ra*:

- (22) **Bitu** hi dani obono-ya
 [what your mother want-PRES]
 ‘What does your mother want?’

No explanation is offered for the absence of *-ra*. Vaquero (1965.65) states of the “pronombres interrogativos” that “*Se usan indistintamente solos o con el sufijo RA, fórmula característica de interrogación.*” And Vaquero (1965.58) modifies Romero-Figueroa’s description:

El sentido de interrogación puede expresarse mediante la simple inflexión indagativa de la frase, pero con frecuencia adoptan la fórmula ordinaria de interrogación, que consiste en añadir la partícula sufija RA bien al interrogativo, bien al verbo ...

¹⁸ Given just these examples, we might speculate that *-ra* is more compatible with questions to which the speaker expects a positive response. Notice the negative *ekida* ‘nothing’ in (20a) and *-naja-* NEG in (20b).

Although it is not mentioned, we might assume that sentences such as (21) have an appropriate intonation that enables them to succeed as questions. In the *Waira-Joyo* text (Chapter 19), there are fourteen questions in the dialogue portions. Nine are *wh*-questions, but none of them contain *-ra*. These are six questions without *-ra*, in which the *wh*-word occurs initially (Vaquero 1965:65, 274, 276):

- (23) (a) Sína dokojot-ae
 [who shout-PRET]
 ‘Who shouted?’
- (b) Bitu iji obono-ya
 [what you want-PRES]
 ‘What do you want?’
- (c) ¿Sína tai? 8b
 [who that.one]
 ‘Who is this person?’
 ‘¿Quién es ese?’
- (d) ¿Katukane ta-te? ... ¿Katukane oko nisa-te? 12d
 [how act-IMP ... how we get-IMP]
 ‘How are we to act? ... How are we to get them?’
 ‘—¿Y cómo haremos? ... ¿Cómo los cogeremos ...?’
- (e) ¿Kasaba yatu naru-ae? 17b
 [where you.PL walk-PRET]
 ‘Where did you go?’
 ‘¿A dónde os habéis marchado?’
- (f) ¿Katukane ta-te, dajía? 21a
 [how act-IMP younger.sister]
 ‘What are we to do, little sister?’
 ‘¿Y qué haremos ahora, hermanita?’

The suffix *-ra* clearly brings its own meaning to questions. The contrasting pair in (11a) & (11c) above suggests something of what that meaning may be.

The second caution to Romero-Figueroa’s description of questions is this. Six of the fourteen questions that appear in Vaquero’s *Waira-Joyo* text have

the question word in non-initial position. Two have the question word preceding the verb (Vaquero 1965.274, 284):

- (24) (a) Ama *katukane* ta-te? 14f
 [now how act-IMP]
 ‘Now what are we going to do?’
 ‘¿Y ahora qué haremos?’
- (b) Iji *katukane* ta-nae? 51b
 [you how act-PRET]
 ‘What have you done?’
 ‘¿Qué os ha sucedido?’

The remaining four have placed the *wh*-word finally in the position usually occupied by the Verb (Vaquero 1965.274, 278, 280):

- (25) (a) — Ma tatu, ¿Ojio *kasaba*-ra? 7b
 [my woman landing where-INTER]
 ‘My good lady, where has he gotten to?’
 ‘—Mujer mía ¿a dónde queda el desembarcadero?’
- (b) Ona-ya ja-kotai ji noboto ¿*sína*? 22c
 [weep-PRES be-REL her child who]
 ‘Whose child is it that’s crying?’
 ‘— ¿Qué es ese crío que llora?’
- (c) Natu, ¿ka noboto-mo *kasaba*? 31b
 [grandmother our child-PL where]
 ‘Granny, where are our children?’
 ‘—Abuela, ¿dónde están nuestros niños?’
- (d) Jaburi, ¿ji daka *kasaba*? 41d
 [Jaburi your male’s.younger.brother where]
 ‘Jaburi, where is your brother?’
 ‘— Jaburi, ¿dónde está tu otro hermano?’

Notice that in (25a), *-ra* appears one more time. Although Vaquero (1965) makes no explicit statement about the ordering of interrogative pronouns, all his cited examples (as opposed to his texts) have the *wh*-word in initial

position.

2.2.3 FOCUS beyond questions & answers

Sentences (26) and (27) show that initial position ... and FOCUS ... is not reserved solely for *wh*-words in questions and their answers. Contrasts of what appears initially are present in yes/no questions. Although Romero-Figueroa (1985a.110) proposes “an obligatory rule of yes/no question movement”, illustrated by (26) (Romero-Figueroa 1985a.109):

- (26) ***Ihi*** ma isiko nao-naha-ra
 [you.sg me OBL come-NEG-INTER]
 ‘Don’t you come with me?’

sentence (27) shows that there is no fixed order to yes/no questions as there may be for *wh*- questions (Romero-Figueroa 1997.38):

- (27) Ma kaika ***ihi*** nao-naka ta-e-ra
 [me with you come-NEG AUX-PRET-INTER]
 ‘Don’t you come with me?’

Sentence (26) is ordered S + Oblique + V, while (27) is Oblique + S + V.¹⁹ In (26), “the focal point has been fronted” (Romero-Figueroa 1985a.110), and if so, it must have also been “fronted” in (27). The two sentences contrast in having selected differing content for FOCUS. If sentence-initial position signals FOCUS, then Warao FOCUS is here similar to the contrasting points of interest marked by English sentence accent: ‘Don’t *you* come with me?’ mirroring (26) vs. ‘Don’t you come with *me*?’ expressing (27).²⁰

Romero-Figueroa (1985a.110) compares “focal point” with “new information” remarking that “The concept *focal point* or *focus* here is somewhat similar to that of *new information*; it applies to what is requested through the question rather than to what is already common knowledge or proposed” (Romero-Figueroa 1985a.110). When “highlighting, and providing *new information* rather than requesting it” (Romero-Figueroa 1985a.111), a similar use is made of sentence-initial position:

¹⁹ Romero-Figueroa gives the Warao of both (26) and (27) the same gloss.

²⁰ There is no comment on the possible import of the contrasting forms of NEGATIVE in (26) and (27): *nao-naha* vs. *nao-naka*. Nor the use of an Auxiliary in (27).

- (28) (a) DAT+O+S+V
Atono saba yasi yakera tai nisa-te
 [Antonio DAT hat good DEM buy-FUT]
 ‘That one (he) will buy a good hat for Anthony’
- (b) S+DAT+O+V
Tai atono saba yasi yakera nisa-te
 [DEM Antonio DAT hat good buy-FUT]
 ‘(It is) that one (he) who will buy a good hat for Anthony’
- (c) O+DAT+S+V
Yasi yakera atono saba tai nisa-te
 [hat good Antonio DAT DEM buy-FUT]
 ‘A good hat (is what) that one (he) will buy for Anthony’

A last SOV, non-question order appears often in myths and legends and extends still further the sense of FOCUS: “Characters, mythological, legendary or otherwise, tend to be highlighted by being mentioned first, which brings about SOV order in the vast majority of cases”²¹ (Romero-Figueroa 1985a:115):

- (29) ***Waro-tuma*** atuhe-bitu nahamutu arai
 [Warao-PL before-SUPERL sky OBL
 kahu-ya-yama
 live-PRES-HEARSAY]
 ‘The Warao, long, long ago lived in the sky, it is said’

2.2.4 FOCUS beyond questions & answers: RECIPIENTS

The *Waira-Joyo* text has a RECIPIENT with the EVENT *moakitine* ‘to give’ marked consistently without a postposition, and the RECIPIENT is either immediately pre-verbal (12 times) or sentence-initial (4 times). Since we suspect that sentence-initial position is the grammatical mark of FOCUS, let us inspect the examples with that in mind:

²¹ Such sentences also contain a mark *yama*, “which indicates the narrator tells by hearsay” (Romero-Figueroa 1985a.114), and “*Yama* is mostly heard in sentence-final position in subject-initial sentences relating Warao myths and legends”. The discussion in Chapter 19, section 5 shows, however, for that text at least, the occurrence of *yama* with respect to the distribution of S’s, O’s, and elision is elegantly random.

- (30) (a) Natoka-kore neburatu manamo 29e
 [pull.taut-when young.man two
 namonina-e.
 become-PRET]
 ‘When they were pulled taut, they became two young
 men’
 ‘... y, al estirarlos, los transformó en jóvenes’
- (b) Jarijari mo-ae esemoi. 30a
 [toucan give-PRET flute]
 ‘She gave (one) a bone flute’
 ‘A uno le dio un flauta de venado’
- (c) *Araisa* daukojo mo-ae. 30b
 [other give-PRET]
 ‘She gave the other a cane flute’
 ‘Al otro una flauta de caña’
- (31) (a) Jaburi a so, tai a rani-tuma 38d
 [Jaburi feces that.one mother-PL
 isanamata-ya kotai, domu-tuma mokomoko
 punish-PRES REL bird-PL
 sejibo-itane a rani-tuma moa-ya kotai.
 urinate-GER mother-PL give-PRES REL]
 ‘That’s Jaburi shit. They are punishing their mothers by
 giving them little birds that they have urinated on’
 ‘¡Aquí está el excremento de Jaburi! Esos sinvergüenzas
 que están maltratando a sus propios madres,
 dándoles unos miserables pajaritos, empapados de
 orin’
- (b) *A rani yana jaja* a jarako yaro-mu 38e
 [mother NEG that.is prey guan-PL
 moa-ya kotai.
 give-PRES REL]
 ‘It’s not their mothers that they are giving the guans to’
 ‘En cambio a la que no es su madre la dan los paujís’

- (32) (a) Iji ja-kotai domu aide-mo araibasi 48b
 [you be-REL bird -ABL female's.elder.sister
 moa-te.
 give-IMP]
 'It's you who should give the bird to the elder sister'
 'Y tú se los das a la hermana mayor'
- (b) **Wauta ja-kotai** domu mokomoko, 48c
 [Wauta be-REL bird
 sejibo-itane, moa-kotu.
 urinate-GER give-IMP.2nd.PL]
 'It is Wauta to whom you all should give the little birds
 that have been urinated on'
 'A Wauta le dais pájaros chiquitos, pero bien orinados'
- (33) (a) Yatu sike ka a rani. 50f
 [you our mother]
 'Yóu are our mothers'
 'Vosotras sois nuestras verdaderas madres'
- (b) **Wauta ja-kotai** domu mokomoko mo-ae, 51a
 [Wauta be-REL bird give-PRET
 sejibo-itane
 urinate-GER]
 'They gave the little birds, urinated on, to Wauta'
 'Así que a Wauta la dieron los pájaros pequeños, bien
 orinados'

The sentences of (30) come from a point in the text at which a villainous woman, Wauta, is trying to usurp the position of mother to the two young Jaburi boys. She has made them into young men, now she is giving them each a flute. She gives the first son a bone flute (as their father had had), but to the other, she gives a cane flute. There is a contrast between first óne, and then the óther, and the difference between a bone flute and a cane flute heightens the contrast. The sentences of (31) come from later in the story when the Jaburis have been sent hunting for birds, and following the instructions of Wauta, they have been giving the best birds to her and the worst, smallest, and befouled ones to their true mothers (whom they apparently do not recognize). Sentence (31a) describes this circumstance, and then (31b) decries that it was not their

true mothers — as it should have been! — to whom the guans (one of the best birds) were given. The sentences of (32) extend this theme, but now the Jaburis are being told that it is Wauta — not their true mothers! — to whom the befouled birds should be given. The sentences of (33) complete this. Finally, it was Wauta to whom the dirty birds are given.

The presence of opposition — *this*, not *that* — seems to accompany each of the RECIPIENT-initial sentences. This is suggested by the circumstance within the narratives, and further underscored by the contrastive negative *yana* in (31b), and by the positive *ja-kotai* ‘the one who is’ in (32b) and (33b).

2.2.5 *Conclusion.*

In addition to the function of (i) answering questions, Warao FOCUS — sentence-initial position — encompasses (ii) contrasting perspectives ([26] & [27]), (iii) the intrinsic interest of mythological characters, and (iv) a sense of contrast ([30c]. [31b]. etc.). In 2.3.1 below, we will discover sense (v) of FOCUS, which is based on the contrast between a ‘hale’ — the FOCUS — and an ‘address’, marked by other morphosyntax.

2.3 *Warao Sentence-final Position*

At this point we will digress and spend some time examining sentence-final position in Warao. We have earlier encountered — but passed over without especial comment — a phenomenon in which a language reserves an area of its syntax as a semantic ‘dead zone’. Material expressed in such a position has no specific relation to the remainder of the PROPOSITION.²² It carries no meaning of ROLE, VOICE, FOCUS, or TOPIC. The content placed there is merely rejoined, with no value added. In its utterances with eradicating stress signalling “corrective” FOCUS, Hungarian allows the position following to Verb to be such a dead zone. Content in this position “is neutral from the point of view of function; complements in [this] position ... have no particular communicative role” (Kiss 1981a.188). Similarly, Telugu assigns the position to the right of V in the SOV formula a function that

²² Commonly, such morphosyntax has been spoken of as “right dislocated”. Cf. Cowper 1979. Or semantically, as “antitopic” (Chafe 1976). It is neither. It is as much “antifocus” as it is “antitopic”. If Aghem is correctly understood, this function does not have to be “right dislocated.” The content occupies some specified morphosyntactic spot (defined variously for the particular language), and it has no relation to TOPIC. “There seems to be no necessary relationship between the left-to-right order of elements in the sentence proper, and that of the corresponding dislocated elements” (Cowper (1979.71). There is no sense of the knitting together that TOPIC accomplishes. Moutaouakil (1989.123-138) describes a similar grammar for Modern Standard Arabic, and using terminology from Simon Dik, he calls the function a “tail.”

proscribes TOPIC, FOCUS, and marks no particular ROLE. Unlike Hungarian and Telugu, which associate pre-verbal position with FOCUS, Aghem uses post-verbal position to mark FOCUS. To complete the complementarity, Aghem proscribes any FOCUS from pre-verbal position (and probably TOPIC, although that is unconfirmed) and allows any ROLE in the position. Therefore, pre-verbal position does not signal ROLE. Pre-verbal content is merely cited. (Cf. footnotes 35 & 40 in Chapter 7).

2.3.1 Sentence-final AGENTS

The sentence final position that Vaquero says the RECIPIENT can occupy is also available to the AGENT. Vaquero (1965:144) notes of pronominal AGENTS that “Los mismos pronombres se posponen, a veces, al predicado, en forma muy elegante.” Of the 271 numbered utterances in the *Waira-Joyo* text seven of them are S final. There is the intransitive example in (1) above, and these six examples with transitive Verbs (Vaquero 1965:280, 282, and 284):

- (34) (a) Domu mokomoko sejibo-ae **Jaburi.** 35c
 [bird urinate-PRET Jaburi]
 ‘The Jaburis urinated on the little birds’
 ‘Los Jaburis se orinaron sobre los pajaritos ...’
- (b) Tai awajabara, yatu a rimasi najoro-ae 42a
 [that.one before you father eat-PRET
Jajuba.
 Jajuba]
 ‘Earlier, Jajuba ate your father’
 ‘Sucede que anteriormente el Jebü Jajuba se comió a
 vuestro padre’
- (c) Yatu a rimasi najoro-ae **Jajuba.** 43a
 [you father eat-PRET Jajuba]
 ‘Jajuba ate your father’
 ‘Como os decimos, jajuba devoró a vuestro padre’
- (d) Yaro-kore, aru bujara-mioroi yatu a 43d
 [go.in-when cassava reap-in.order.that you
 rani-ma kajotabu-ae **Wauta ja-kotai.**
 mother-PL command-PRET Wauta be-REL]
 ‘When they went in, the Wauta person commanded them’

‘They make a grill, each makes one’
 ‘Hacían la parrilla, cada cual preparaba su parilla’

- (c) *Jaritari* mo-ae *esemoi*. 30a
 [toucan give-PRET flute]
 ‘She gave (one) a bone flute’
 ‘A uno le dio un flauta de venado’
- (d) *Domu* jata-nae: *Dokosi-mo*, 33b
 [bird hit.with.bow.arrow-PRET turkey-PL
yaro-mo, sinarianaka domu mokomoko-tuma.
 guan-PL all.kinds bird little-PL]
 ‘They shot (some) birds, kinds of turkeys, guans and all
 kinds of birds’
 ‘Flecharon pavas de monte, paujís y pajaritos sin cuento’

In these examples, the sentence-final content reprises the pre-verbal content or it elaborates upon it. In (36a), *jaritari* identifies the kind of *esemoi* ‘flute’. It is a flute made of a toucan bone. In (36b), the AGENT is an elided ‘they’. The sentence-final material repeats the *diri* ‘grill’ that was made and now specifies that each member of the elided ‘they’, *jisaka* ‘one’, prepared a grill. Sentence (36c) is the inverse of (36a). *Jaritari* says that it was a toucan bone that was given, and then the post-verbal form reassures us that it was not just any bone, but a bone made into the form of a flute. Sentence (36d) identifies *domu* ‘birds’ as what the Jaburis shot, and the posverbal content expands upon *domu* by listing the kinds and qualities of the birds. The post-verbal material in the examples of (35) & (36) reprises information already stated to elucidate it (or perhaps to emphasize it in [35]). It appears to be a simple (re)naming of a PARTICIPANT without regard to its function in the preceding EVENT. That is, these are not named as S’s or O’s, but are entities as such. Support for this conclusion is found in Vaquero’s (1965.141 & 145) statements that “*El complemento directo*: Precede siempre al verbo (predicado verbal)” and that “Este [el complemento directo] nunca puede ir detrás del predicado.” The 271 utterances in the *Waira-Joyo* text confirm Vaquero’s conclusion. There is no sentence with a final PATIENT, except those in (36b), (36c), and (36d). There are no VO-sentences other than these, and these are not VO either if we conclude, as before, that post-verbal, sentence-final material simply reprises content only to rename or elaborate upon it. Thus, *dokosi-mo, yaro-mo, sinarianaka domu mokomoko-tuma* in (36d), for example, is not acting as a

PATIENT although this series of words names the same individual as *domu*, which precedes the Verb and which *is* acting as PATIENT.²³ *Dokosi-mo, yaro-mo, sinarianaka domu mokomoko-tuma* is material added independently of any semantic function in the PROPOSITION.²⁴

In this light, we may return to reconsider examples (1) and (34), those in which AGENTS appeared sentence-finally. Perhaps they, too, are not really VS-final utterances, but additional examples of final citations. Let us look at the first AGENT final example in (34). It is repeated here as (37b) along with the utterance that precedes it in the text:

²³ We might also point to the (inconsistent) punctuational practice of Vaquero. In (58b), the Verb is followed by a comma, and in (58d), the Verb is followed by a colon. The material following the colon is further isolated by an initial orthographic uppercase *D* in *Domu*.

²⁴ There is, in the text *Tida Tobe Namoninaja* “The Woman who Became a Jaguar” (Vaquero 1966:244), this example:

- (i) A kua yakera wijia-ja abaya-mioroi dabomana
 [head good scrape-be put.down-in.order.that scissors
 isa-kotu, **kuanetete kuare**
 -imp.2nd.pl comb and]
 ‘In order to make your hair look good, buy scissors and a comb’
 ‘Para arreglaros el pelo comprad unas tijeras y un peine’

It appears that sentence-final *kuanetete* ‘comb’ is a patient, just as pre-verbal *dabomana* ‘scissors’ is. But it is likely (also given the comma punctuation) that *kuanetete* is an added afterthought.

In the *Waira-Joyo* text, there is this example

- (ii) Tai joka-kore, ya araisa **jataburu** nona-e, 32b
 [that.one dawn-when other bow.of.ite.palm make-pret
jatabu nona-e.
 arrow make-pret]
 ‘Then when it dawned, the old woman made a bow and an arrow’
 ‘Al día siguiente, al amanecer, la vieja les hizo unos arcos y unas flechas’

There are two patients in (ii) as there are in (i), but there are also two occurrences of the finite Verb, so that both continue to be not sentence-final. Dual patients can also both occur before the Verb:

- (iii) **Dokosi-mo, yaro-mu** koya-nae. 33e
 [turkey-PL guan-PL hunt-PRET]
 ‘They hunted turkeys and guans’
 ‘Amarraron juntos a los paujís y a las pavas’
- (iv) ... **dokosi-mo, yaro-mu** Wauta najoro-ae. 36b
 [turkey-PL guan-PL Wauta eat-PRET]
 ‘Wauta ate the big ones, the turkey and the guan’
 ‘... las pavas, los paujís se los comió Wauta’

- (37) (a) Sejibo-itane tatu-tuma moa-o. 35b
 [urinate-GER woman-PL give-IMP.2ndSG]
 ‘When they are urinated on, give them to the women’
 ‘Asi, bien meados, dádselos a esas mujeres’
- (b) Domu mokomoko sejibo-ae **Jaburi.** 35c
 [bird urinate-PRET Jaburi]
 ‘The Jaburis urinated on the little birds’
 ‘Los Jaburis se orinaron sobre los pajaritos ...’

Consider the possibility that there is an elided pre-verbal AGENT ‘they’ in (37b)/(34a), and that *Jaburi* reprises that unmentioned AGENT, just as *Jajuba* reprises and repeats the AGENT in (35).²⁵ Sentence (37b)/(34a) comes at a point in the *Waira-Joyo* text at which the Jaburi brothers are being told of their true past and instructed on how to correct their behavior. The unexpressed ‘you’ of the Imperative in (37a) is continued as the elided third person AGENT in the following (37b), but then confirmed with the post-verbal *Jaburi*. Sentence (34f) has a similar explanation. It and the sentence preceding it in the text are given in (38):

- (38) (a) Tai kuare wajibaka nona-o. 54c
 [that.one reason boat make-IMP.2nd.SG]
 ‘That’s why you should make a boat’
 ‘De modo que haced la curiara’
- (b) Wajibaka nona-e **Jaburi.** 55a
 [boat make-PRET Jaburi]
 ‘The Jaburis made a boat’
 ‘Los Jaburis hicieron la curiara ...’

Sentence (38b)/(34f) comes at a point in the *Waira-Joyo* text at which the Jaburi brothers are trying to flee the evil Wauta character. They are instructed in the utterance preceding to make a boat in which to escape. The unexpressed ‘you’ of the Imperative in (38a) is again continued in the following (38b), but confirmed with the post-verbal *Jaburi*. A more accurate English rendition of (38b) might be ‘And make a boat the Jaburis did’ (and something similar for [37b]).

²⁵ In the next section, we will find that elision of AGENTS and PATIENTS is fairly common.

There are three additional examples that are close to these.

- (39) ¿Katukane ta-te, *dajía?* 21a
 [how act-IMP younger.sister]
 ‘What are we to do, little sister?’
 ‘— ¿Y qué haremos ahora, hermanita?’
- (40) — Tamaja domu najoro-kotu, *tatu-tuma.* 35e
 [these bird eat-IMP.2ndPL woman-PL]
 ‘Eat these birds, you women’
 ‘— Niñas, a comer estos pajaritos’
- (41) — Nanaka-nu, *Jaburi.* 39b
 [climb.down-IMP.2nd.SG Jaburi]
 ‘Climb down, Jaburis’
 ‘— Bajad para abajo, Jaburis’

The post-verbal, sentence-final terms are here vocatives identical with the person subjects of the Verbs. The difference between these and (37b) & (38b) is that (39), (40) & (41) do not repeat the commanded EVENT (e.g. *nona* in [38a] recurs in [38b]), but go on directly to address the third person AGENT, which then is a vocative and not a grammatical AGENT as in (37b) & (38b). It is pertinent to note here that other vocative orders exist with the Imperative, and the contrast is instructive. Consider

- (42) —*Natu,* ji darakojo ebuje-nu. 20a
 [grandmother your door -IMP.2ndSG]
 ‘Granny, open your door!’
 ‘— Abuela, ábrenos tu puerta’

Here, the two wives of Mayakoto have fled Jajuba to the house of Wauta. The door is shut. Now, the two women must hale Wauta to get the door open. Wauta responds “No.” And now the two wives engage in a more direct conversation with Wauta:

- (43) —Dubujida, *natu.* Ji darakojo ebuje-nu. 20c
 [quick grandmother your door -IMP.2ndSG]
 ‘Hurry, Granny. Open your door!’
 ‘Enseguida, abuela. Abrenos la puerta’

Now, because they have Wauta's attention, the vocative is sentence-final.

The same contrast is present later in the story when the Jaburis are fleeing Wauta's house and the house post is calling to Wauta to warn her of their flight:

- (44) **Wauta**, Jaburi ji omi naría. 59c
 [Wauta Jaburi you without without]
 'Wauta, the Jaburi are escaping from you!'
 '— ¡Wauta, los jaburi te abandonan ...!'

Wauta does not hear the warning and the house post calls again:

- (45) —¡Jaburi ji omi naría, **Wauta**! 59c
 [Jaburi you without without, Wauta]
 'The Jaburis are getting away from you, Wauta!'
 '— ¡Los Jaburi te abandonan, Wauta ...!'

The second time is not a hyle, but a direct address. Wauta still does not hear, and now the parrot takes up the call:

- (46) —¡**Wauta**: Jaburi ji omi naría. 59g
 [Wauta Jaburi you without without]
 'Wauta, the Jaburis are escaping!'
 '¡Wauta ...! ¡Los Jaburi te abandonan ...!'

Note that the vocative is initial ... again, because the parrot is haling Wauta on its own behalf. The attention getting sense of an initial vocative is confirmed by this:

- (47) **Jaburi-tuma**, nao-kotu. 41a
 [Jaburi-PL come-IMP.2ndPL]
 'Jaburis, come here'
 '—Pues escuchad, queridos Jaburis'

The Nutria people are summoning the Jaburis to hear a recitation of their personal histories. In (39) - (41) the speaker & addressee are face-to-face, and the vocative is sentence-final. In (44), the two parties are not face-to-face, and the vocative is sentence-initial. In (43), the two parties are engaged in conversation, and the vocative is final. In (44) & (46), the two parties are not

face-to-face, and the vocative is sentence-initial again. In (45), having been hailed once, the vocative is now final. In (47), the Jaburis are separate from the Nutrias, who call them over. The vocative is initial. The contrast between a sentence-initial hale/summons and a sentence-final direct address now becomes part of the content of sentence-final position. At the same time, FOCUS is seen to support the sense of ‘hale’/‘summons’ in contrast to ‘address’.

The common thread between (i) the sentence-final AGENTS of (37b) & (38b) and (39), (40) & (41) and (ii) the sentence-final vocatives (whether AGENT or not) of (35), (36), (37) & (45) is that the information/identity is already before us. The post-verbal sentence-final placement serves only to index it and to maintain it ... **not** to place it in a relationship with the EVENT/Verb.²⁶

Continuing with the reexamination of the sentences of (34), in which an AGENT is sentence-final, (34d) places the AGENT *Wauta* in post-verbal final position, but also qualifies *Wauta* with *ja-kotai*, which means roughly ‘the who is’, an explicit naming device. *Wauta* has been introduced by name in the preceding utterance, and that presence is now referenced by a sentence-final *Wauta ja-kotai*.²⁷

The remaining three examples of sentence-final AGENTS in (34) are interesting in their own right. They all describe the same historical event. For our discussion, I will repeat them here:

- (34) (b) Tai awajabara, yatu a rimasi najoro-ae
 [that.one before you father eat-PRET
Jajuba. 42a
 Jajuba]
 ‘Earlier, Jajuba ate your father’
 ‘Sucede que anteriormente el Jebü Jajuba se comió a
 vuestro padre’

²⁶ This would account for Vaquero’s observation (1965.144) that the sentence-final agents are Pronouns, and for our observation from the *Waira-Joyo* text that they are proper Nouns just recently named, that is, PARTICIPANTS known to both speaker & hearer.

²⁷ In Chapter 19, section 4.3.2, it is argued that one of the functions of *jakotai* is to mark a kind of TOPIC, one that is — independently of textual vicissitudes — always to be taken as a center of the story telling. Such a value of *jakotai* would be appropriate to the citation, maintaining function of post-verbal, sentence-final position.

- (c) Yatu a rimasi najoro-ae **Jajuba**. 43a
 [you father eat-PRET Jajuba]
 ‘Jajuba ate your father’
 ‘Como os decimos, jajuba devoró a vuestro padre’
- (e) Tai sike ji rima najoro-ae **Jajuba ...** 53c
 [that.one your father eat-PRET Jajuba ...]
 ‘Then Jajuba ate your father’
 ‘Pero sucedió que Jajuba devoró a vuestro padre’

The impetus for the *Waira-Joyo* narrative is a murder. The first Warao, who was named Mayakoto and who had a family of two wives and two sons living in Eden-like tranquility, was killed and eaten by Jajuba. All the postlapsarian events in the text devolve from that misfortune. The above utterances in (34) are all taken from the speech of those who are participants in the events of the narrative. Elsewhere, when the narrator him/herself refers to the murder, a different order is used ([48a] was cited above as [35]):

- (48) (a) **Jajuba** Mayakoto najoro-ae, **Jajuba**. 5d
 [Jajuba Mayakoto eat-PRET, Jajuba]
 ‘Jajuba ate Mayakoto, the Jajuba’
 ‘Y Jajuba se tragó a Mayakoto’
- (b) Tai **Jajuba** Mayakoto najoro-ae. 9c
 [that.one Jajuba Mayakoto eat-PRET]
 ‘But the Jajuba had eaten Mayakoto’
 ‘Jajuba se había tragado a Mayakoto’

It is as if the foulness of the murder does not permit the perpetrator to be named outright as AGENT, but only alluded to: ‘Earlier, he ate your father, that Jajuba,’ ‘He ate your father, that Jajuba,’ and ‘Then he ate your father, that Jajuba.’ Some delicacy, some circumspection is required in talking of this to the sons of the victim, and the sentence-final usage here may be an example of the “forma muy elegante” that Vaquero (1965.144) spoke of above.

2.3.2 *Other sentence-final content*

There are many examples of other content following a Verb. They can be partitioned into two categories. The first contains examples with post-verbal postposition phases. In the following, the (b)-examples are the ones with

sentence-final postpositional phrases:

- (49) (a) Ari-tane, *jobaji arai* toa-nae. 16b
 [pull.out-GER ground on spread-PRET]
 ‘Having pulled it out, she spread it on the ground’
 ‘... y les esparció por la tierra’
- (b) Yaburu-kitane abajabara kaimi-ae *jobaji* 37h
 [climb-INF before defecate-PRET ground
arai.
 over]
 ‘Before climbing up, they defecated over the ground’
 ‘Pero antes de subir hicieron sus necesidades entierra’
- (50) (a) — *Ka isiko* nau-naja. 31d
 [us with go.way-NEG]
 ‘They didn’t go with us’
 ‘—No vinieron con nosotras’
- (b) Naru-ae Jaburi *Wauta isiko.* 63a
 [walk-PRET Jaburi Wauta with]
 ‘The Jaburis walked with Wauta’
 ‘Marcharon los Jaburi, acompañados de Wauta’
- (51) (a) Jajuba *a kua omi* jakabu-ae. 27c
 [Jajuba head without run.away-PRET]
 ‘Jajuba ran away without his head’
 ‘Jajuba marchó descabezado, ...’
- (b) Kabata-kore Jajuba jakabu-ya *a kua omi.* 26f
 [chop-when Jajuba run.away-PRES head without]
 ‘When his head was cut off, Jajuba ran away headless’
 ‘Jajuba salió corriendo sin cabeza’
- (52) (a) Aya-kore a *jatabu saba* kuai yaburu-ae. 37g
 [-when arrow to above climb-PRET]
 ‘When it stuck, they climbed up to the arrow’
 ‘Ellos determinaron subir a buscarla’

- (a) Tai du-ya *osibu saba*, ... 2b
 [that.one active-PRES morocoto for ...
 ‘He goes fishing for morocoto ...’
 ‘El salía a buscar morocoto ...’
- (53) (a) Jajuba a kúa *dara eku* ebutoro-nae. 26c
 [Jajuba head door inside -PRET]
 ‘Jajuba stuck his head inside the door’
 ‘... y Jajuba asomó su cabezota por debajo de la puerta’
- (b) Jaka-nae ja-kotai weba jaka-nae, 13e
 [escape-PRET be-REL far run.away-PRET
dauna eku-ya.
 forest inside-to]
 ‘They escaped, they ran far into the forest’
 ‘... corre que te corre, por medio de la selva’

These contrasting pairs with pre-verbal and post-verbal postpositional phrases are difficult to disentangle. Some, like (51), are close to being minimal pairs, yet it is not clear — from the text — what motivates the choice between the two. Romero-Figueroa (1985a.112) has these examples (which he has taken from Vaquero [1965.145 & 146]):²⁸

- (54) (a) hanokoina ekuya ebe sabuka hoho
 [village OBL before a.lot dance
 iramotuma aban-ae *kasiri isiko*
 old.men organize-PRET Kasiri OBL]
 ‘(It was) in the village, a long time ago, that the chiefs
 organized a dance with Kasiri’

²⁸ The (b)-sentences are as Vaquero has them. The (a)-sentences are Romero-Figueroa’s representation of them.

- (b) Janoko-ina²⁹ ekuya³⁰, idamo-tuma³¹, ebe³²
 [house-COLL inside old.man-PL before
 sabuka,³³ jojo³⁴ aba-nae,³⁵ **kasiri**³⁶
 less dance put.down.PRET
aisiko.
 with]
 ‘In the village, the chiefs, before long, organized a dance,
 with alcoholic beverages’
 ‘En cierto ranchería, hace algún tiempo, los jefes
 organizaron un baile con casiri’

- (55) (a) warao isaka dau arai tobo-tia-yata
 [Warao one trunk OBL sit-ITER-AUX
ho amukoho
 water OBL]
 ‘(It was) a certain Warao (who) was sitting and sitting on
 a tree trunk by the river’

- (b) Warao isaka dau³⁷ arai³⁸ tobó tía yama³⁹,

²⁹ *Janoko* ‘house’ (Vaquero 1965.162). “Los sufijos INA y SEBE transforma a los sustantivos en colectivos” (Vaquero 1965.167).

³⁰ “Tiene primordialmente sentido determinativo locativo ...” (Vaquero 1965.105).

³¹ *Aidamo* ‘Viejo, jefe’ (Vaquero 1965.160).

³² “Como adverbio de orden significa antes que, delante, etc. ...” (Vaquero 1965.103).

³³ Vaquero 1965.51.

³⁴ Vaquero 1965.175.

³⁵ Vaquero (1965.163) has “Abakitane: Poner”. The infinitive marker is *kitane* (Vaquero 1965.76), and the root/stem here is *aba*, not *aban*.

³⁶ Charette (1980.63) glosses *kasiri* as a “fermented alcoholic beverage from boiled, grated cassava, n.” It is unclear why Romero-Figueroa should use upper case *Kasiri*.

³⁷ Vaquero 1965.163.

³⁸ Vaquero 1965.165.

³⁹ Vaquero (1965.193) has a similar example with *tobotía yama*. *Tobó* and *tía* are not segmented. Romero-Figueroa has changed Vaquero’s *yama* to *yata*. Romero-Figueroa

[Warao one tree on sit
jo amukojo
 water by]

‘A certain Warao was sitting in a tree by the water’

‘Cierta Warao estaba sentado sobre un tronco, a la orilla del agua’

“The relocation of the OBL.s *kasiri isiko* ‘with Kasiri’ in ... [54] and *ho amukoho* ‘by the river’ in ... [55] — both representing packages of old information — depends upon the speaker’s consideration of them as secondary or unimportant enough to be side-staged or placed far from the center of the stage occupied by the new information of focus” (Romero-Figueroa 1985a.113). Vaquero (1965.146) reports “la colocación de los complementos circunstanciales no se sujeta a ninguna norma fija. Obedece al sentido lógico [?] de la oración y la eufonía de la frase. Cuando son adverbios ordinariamente preceden al predicado verbal.” He then cites these additional five permutations of (55):

- (55) (c) Warao isaka, jo amukojo, dau arai, tobó tía yama.
 (d) Jo amukojo, Warao isaka dau arai tobó tía yama.
 (e) Jo amukojo, dau arai, Warao isaka tobó tía yama.
 (f) Warao isaka tobó tía yama dau arai, jo amukojo.
 (g) Warao isaka, jo amukojo tobó tía yama, dau arai,

(1985a.114-115) notes the existence of *yama* and describes it as “mostly heard in sentence-final position in subject-initial sentences in narratives relating Warao myths and legends.” Here, it is not quite sentence-final in (55b). The form *yama* appears once in the *Waira-Joyo* text in (50b):

- (i) Yatu ja-kotai ka rani-tuma yama.
 [you be-REL our mother-PL now]
 ‘Now you are our mothers’
 ‘Ahora sabemos que vosotras sois nuestras madres’

Here, it is in quoted speech, and it is very unlikely to have the sense of hearsay. Vaquero glosses it as ‘ahora’, as if *yama* were in fact *ama*, which has the gloss ‘ahora’ and which also occurs (according to Romero-Figueroa 1997) in the system of demonstratives with the gloss ‘that yonder’. However, in the next longest text, *Bure kuare Warao* “The Buzzard & the Warao” (Vaquero 1965.258-266), which has 163 utterances, *yama* appears 43 times. *Yama* is sentence-final in all but two instances, when it is followed by *diana* ‘already, now’. The form *ama* appears 24 times in the same syntactic position, suggesting that *yama* and *ama* are variants. Cf. Chapter 19, section 5. The contrasting use of *yama* ~ *ama* in *Bure kuare Warao* indicates that it and *Waira-Joyo* are two different styles of narrative.

and says that they all six have an “idéntico sentido”.⁴⁰ Given the behavior of AGENTS, PATIENTS, and vocatives in the preceding section, Romero-Figueroa’s description of sentence-final postpositional phrases as “side-staged” may be correct (although he adduces no evidence for this conclusion).

In addition to the sentence-final postpositional phrases, we also find sentence-final Gerunds (*-itane*), Infinitives (*-kitane*), Purposives (*-mioroi*), and others:

- (56) (a) Wauta ja-kotai domu mokomoko mo-ae,
 [Wauta be-REL bird give-PRET
sejibo-itane 51a
 urinate-GER]
 ‘They gave the little birds, urinated on, to Wauta’
 ‘Así que a Wauta la dieron los pájaros pequeños, bien
 orinados’
- (b) Koita-kore a tida manamo kanamu-ya,
 [chirp-when woman two get.up-PRES
 jekunu nauta-ya *osibu wajabu-kitane.* 3a
 fire -PRES morocoto cook.fish-INF]
 ‘When (the flute) chirps, the two women get up; they
 build the fire to cook the mococotos’
 ‘Al sonar la flauta se levantaban las dos mujeres y
 preparaban el fuego para asar los morocotos.’

⁴⁰ The punctuation is Vaquero’s, and given the following statement (Vaquero 1965:24-25), he should be transcribing Warao differences and not letting Spanish habits intrude:

... siguiendo sus reglas claves [del “Institut d’Etnologie” de Paris ... y del “Instituto B. de Sahagún de Antropología y Etnología” de Madrid] para una notación fonética correcta:

- 1) No escribir lo que no se pronuncia.
- 2) Leer todo carácter escrito.
- 3) No emplear más de signo para un sonido.
- 4) Dar siempre un sólo valor a cada signo.
- 5) Emplear, siempre qu sea posible, signos de una sola letra.

Taken together, these are an excellent characterization of Post-Bloomfieldian phonological practice, including the principles of audibility and biuniqueness.

- (c) ... yatu omi naru-ae **aru**
 [you without go.away-PRET cassava
bujara-kitane 44a
 reap-INF]
 ‘... your mothers went without you to gather cassava’
 ‘... vuestras madres salieron a arrancar la yuca, ...’
- (d) Raro-kore Wauta ka kajotabu-ae **aru**
 [go.in-when Wauta us command-PRET cassava
bujara-kitane. 53f
 reap-INF]
 ‘When we went in, Wauta ordered us to harvest cassava’
 ‘A nuestra llegada Wauta nos mandó arrancar yuca’
- (e) Dijapera-kore arai yaje-nu, **simo**
 [-when on -IMP.2nd.SG honey 64a.
jobi-kitane
 drink-INF]
 ‘If you like it, get on it (the tree with the honey) and drink
 the honey’
 ‘Pues te gusta, échate sobre el árbol y toma lo que
 quieres’
- (f) Tai natu yatu kajotabu-ae
 [that.one grandmother you command-PRET
domu jata-mioroi. 45a
 bird hit.with.bow.and.arrow-in.order.that]
 ‘Then the grandmother commanded you to hunt birds’
 ‘Después, la vieja os mandó a flechar pájaros’
- (f) Esemoi koita-ya **toatane jese osibu .**
 [flute chirp-PRES thus same morocoto
ja-kore 4b
 be-when]
 ‘He plays the flute the same way when there were
 morocotos’
 ‘El tocaba su flauta siempre que traía morocoto’

- (g) A jikoto koita-ya *tai uba-yaja:* 11b
 [nose chirp-PRES that.one sleep-as
 ‘He’s snoring as he sleeps ...’
 ‘... y comenzó a roncar ...’

When the forms of (56) occur before the Verb, their position may be immediately pre-verbal, or it may be sentence-initial.

- (57) (a) Tia-ja⁴¹ Jaburi *domu jata-kitane* 37a
 [do-be Jaburi bird hit.with.bow.and.arrow-INF
 naru-ae.
 go.away-PRET]
 ‘After a while, the Jaburis went out to hunt birds with
 their bows and arrows’
 ‘Después de algún tiempo los Jaburis salieron a flechar
 sus pájaros, como de costumbre’
- (b) *Yaburu-kitane* abajabara kaimi-ae 37h
 [climb-INF before defecate-PRET
 jobaji arai.
 ground over]
 ‘Before climbing up, they defecated over the ground’
 ‘Pero antes de subir hicieron sus necesidades entierra’

The use in (57b) is representative of a well-defined grammar of TOPIC. Cf. Chapter 19 for an extended description. It is the use in (57a) that has an uncertain semantic contrast with the sentence-final clauses in (56).

2.3.3 Conclusion

Given the patterns of (34) - (48), it may well be the case that the other contrasts of (49) - (56) are of the same ilk. That is, all content following a finite Verb is present only to point to or name elements without specifying how — or whether — that content functionally relates to the EVENT/Verb.

2.4 “Basic” Order?

In the *Waira-Joyo* text, there are 221 finite Verbs.⁴² Ellipsis of

⁴¹ Cf. *Tiame* ‘Porque’ and *Tia kuare* ‘Por tanto’ (Vaquero 1965.98).

⁴² “Finite” by the criterion cited above, that is, presence of Tense-Aspect-Modality markers

PARTICIPANTS is common in these 221 clauses, but there are asymmetries in its use. Figure 2 summarizes the numbers of seven different configurations.

Clause Type	Number of Occurrences
OSV	7
SOV	25
SV _t	9
OV _t	62
V _t	13
SV _i	52
V _i	53

Figure 2: *Frequency of Sentence Types in a Warao Text.*

A second text, *Bure kuare Warao* ‘The Buzzard and the Warao’ (cf. Chapter 20) contains 172 clauses. In that text, the clausal configurations are as follows:

Clause Type	Number of Occurrences
OSV	0
SOV	24
SV _t	5
OV _t	23
V _t	5
SV _i	82
V _i	33

Figure 3: *Frequency of Sentence Types in a Second Warao Text.*

Let’s begin with the observation that, with a transitive Verb, the SOV sequence clearly predominates. Cf. Figure 4. Of the 116 transitive Verbs in *Waira-Joyo*, 7 or 6.0% are OSV (or 21.9% of those 32 sentences with both overt S & O). In *Bure kuare Warao*, none of the 57 transitive Verbs is accompanied by an OS sequence. In contrast to the paucity of OSV utterances, 21.6% of the transitive Verbs in *Waira-Joyo* are SOV (or 78.1% of those 32

for PRESENT, PRETERITE, IMPERATIVE, EXHORTATIVE, etc. I have rather arbitrarily not included 56 Verbs of “saying”, which introduce the quoted words of characters in the narrative. I have also omitted those utterances that appear to have a copular form. The number 221 is what is left after these subtractions.

sentences with both overt S & O). 42.1% of the transitive Verbs in *Bure kuare Warao* are SOV (or 100% of those 24 sentences with both overt S & O). This

	OSV _t	SOV _t
<i>Waira-Joyo</i>	21.9%	78.1%
<i>Bure kuare Warao</i>	0%	100%

Figure 4: *Frequency of of OSV & SOV Where Both S and O Are Overt.*

clearly does not suggest an OSV language.

Let us now compare the occurrences of utterances with one or both of the S and/or O functions elided. Romero-Figueroa (1985a:109) writes that the AGENT or S in Warao “tends to be expressed.”⁴³ Our two texts have a distinctly different take on the expression of S. In fact, the most common sentence type is a transitive Verb in which the PATIENT, but not the AGENT, is overtly expressed (Figure 5).⁴⁴ It is immediately clear that the predominant transitive configuration for both texts is OV_t. Overall, the preference for eliding the S is overwhelming. Of the combined 117 transitive Verbs in the two texts, with some elision, 103, or 88%, have the S elided. Only 32, or

⁴³ He associates this with the fact that “the Warao verb is unmarked for subject agreement, hence subjects need to be present to avoid ambiguities and misunderstandings.” Romero-Figueroa (1985a.120) observes that “Subject pronouns are sometimes affixed to verbs for stylistic effects in literature. The suffixed pronoun always reduplicates the agent filling in the subject position.” This is clearly a pattern different from that involving PATIENTS.

We may also note that the AGENT-Subject marking on the EVENT/Verb is absent only in the third person and in the second person plural. Romero-Figueroa (1997.64) provides this paradigm of “Free and bound subjective personal pronouns”:

	Independent	Suffixed
1sg	ine	-ine
2sg	ihi	-ihi
3sg	tai	Ø
1pl	oko	-oko
2pl	yatu	Ø
3pl	tatuma	Ø

⁴⁴ I will express the occurrences as percentages of the total number of transitive Verbs with some elision, *not* the sum total of *all* transitive Verbs in the text.

27.4%, have the O elided.⁴⁵ When the Verb is intransitive, the AGENT is pre-

	SV _t	OV _t	V _t
<i>Waira-Joyo</i>	10.7%	73.8%	15.5%
<i>Bure kuare Warao</i>	20.0%	65.7%	14.3%

Figure 5: *Frequency of Transitive Verbs with Some Elision.*

sent 134 times, and elided 86 times. In these texts, the AGENT does not tend to be expressed. If anything, the PATIENT “tends to be expressed”.

Supported by two separate texts, we have two confirmed Warao syntactic patterns: (i) the narrative dominance of SOV over OSV and (ii) the dominance of S-elision over O-elision. We must now ask whether that means anything.

To understand these Warao facts, I shall return to some patterns we have discovered in previously examined languages. I will first present two conclusions, derived from discussion in earlier chapters, and then invoke them in suggesting an explanation of the Warao patterns.

First, the S-function is – by virtue of being “S” – more likely to be present and continuing in the conversation/narrative than is the O-function.

Second, the O-function is – by virtue of being “O” – more semantically imbued with the sense of FOCUS than is S.⁴⁶

Looking at Warao from the perspective of these two statements, we can assert that the S-function is the more often elided in accordance with the first principle. Because identity of an S persists in a narrative, S’s are more likely to be elided than to be repeatedly renamed. The more common presence of O in the OV_t sequence is in accord with the first principle as well. Because O’s are less persistent, PARTICIPANTS that are O’s are more likely to be named on their occurrence. This also happens (in a null sort of way) to illustrate the second principle. In this case, Warao sentence-initial position (absent all

⁴⁵ The sum of these two percentages exceeds 100 because the V_t is counted twice as showing both S-elision and O-elision.

⁴⁶ While these two observations seem to be so, we have as yet no understanding of why they should exist, and, furthermore, why they are not absolute. Cf. Chapters 10 - 13 and Chapters 28 ff.

expressions of TOPIC. Cf. Chapters 19 & 20.) is the grammatical mark of FOCUS. Now, when the S *is* overtly expressed in the presence of an overt O in SOV_t, it is named because the S is also the FOCUS of the utterance. In the SV_t sentences, S is also FOCUS, but it does not compete with O for that semantics. Because S is the less FOCUS-like of the two and because S is more likely to be a continuing component in one utterance to the next, when S *is* overtly expressed, it is accompanied by the semantics of FOCUS. If sentence-initial position is the mark of FOCUS, the two principles combine to produce the Warao textual preference for SOV utterances.

The reasoning of the previous paragraph implies two expectations that we can immediately examine for confirmation: (i) Is, in fact, the S more often continued into the next utterance than O or not, and (ii) The OSV utterances should have especial conditions for their occurrence in order for the O nevertheless to outweigh the inherent unexpectedness of actually naming an S PARTICIPANT in the presence of O, which normally results in its being FOCUSSED. We will look at (i) first.

2.4.1 *S and Continuity*

An examination of SOV utterances (n=24) in *Bure kuare Warao* with respect to the “continuity” of the S’s and O’s is summarized in Figure 6:⁴⁷

⁴⁷ “Continuity” has been interpreted liberally here. Identity of function is not relevant. If a PARTICIPANT serves as the object of a postposition in one utterance but is the S of the following, then continuity is present. In addition to exact repetition of a PARTICIPANT from one utterance to the next, I have counted paraphrase designations as well. This implies that if a named PARTICIPANT is present by elision in the preceding or following utterance, then continuity is present. Finally, if a PARTICIPANT is present as speaker of an utterance and then appears as PARTICIPANT in the adjacent SOV utterance, then continuity is also present. This happens once with SOV utterances:

- (34) (c) Iji kemo soro-nu.
 [you there look-IMP]
 ‘You look the other way.’
 ‘...ponte mirando para allá.’
- (35) (a) Ama seke *tai* *ja-kotai* tai bisi
 [that.yonder actually that be-REL that tree
 kab-é ama.
 cut-PRET now]
 ‘Then he cut the tree.’
 ‘Aquel hombre cortó el cachicamo en un instante.’

Tai jakotai ‘he’ is the S of (35a), and he is also the speaker of (34c).

S continued from previous utterance 25%	O continued from previous utterance 20.8%
S continuing to following utterance 54.2%	O continuing to following utterance 58.3%

Figure 6: *Continuity of S's & O's in Bure kuare Warao SOV Utterances.*

This is somewhat surprising. First of all, there appears to be no significant (?) difference in the behavior of S's and O's with respect to continuity. More to be expected, overt S's and O's in an SOV utterance are more than twice as likely to carry over to the following utterance than they are to have been carried over from the preceding one. In Figure 7, we look at continuity in SV_t utterances ($n=5$), i.e. those transitive sentences with an overt S, but with an elided O:

S continued from previous utterance 60.0%	Elided O continued from previous utterance 80.0%
S continuing to following utterance 40.0%	Elided O continuing to following utterance 40.0%

Figure 7: *Continuity of S's & O's in Bure kuare Warao SV_t Utterances.*

Recalling from above the propensity for S to elide, we find only 7 examples of

Elided S continued from previous utterance 52.2%	O continued from previous utterance 13.0%
Elided S continuing to following utterance 43.5%	O continuing to following utterance 21.7%

Figure 8: *Continuity of S's & O's in Bure kuare Warao OV_t Utterances.*

SV_t in *Bure kuare Warao*. But there is now — even in these small numbers — a distinct difference in the behavior of S’s and O’s with respect to continuity, but it appears to turn on the presence of ellipsis. The elided O shows greater continuity. Let us now look at the syntactic complement OV_t, an overt O and an elided S (n=23) in Figure 8. Now, it is the elided S that greatly outpaces the overt O in the percentage of instances that show continuity. Utterances with both the S and the O elided, V_t (n=5), show the greatest involvement with continuity:

Elided S continued from previous utterance 80.0%	Elided O continued from previous utterance 100.0%
Elided S continued from previous utterance 60.0%	Elided O continued from previous utterance 40.0%

Figure 9: *Continuity of S’s & O’s in Bure kuare Warao V_t Utterances.*

Looking finally at S in intransitive utterances, we find the following for SV_i (n=80) and for V_i (n=33)

SV _i	V _i
S continued from previous utterance 25.6%	Elided S continued from previous utterance 66.6%
S continuing to following utterance 37.8%	Elided S continuing to following utterance 42.4%

Figure 10: *Continuity of S’s in Bure kuare Warao SV_i & V_i Utterances.*

What we end with is a conclusion that does not contradict the expectation that the S more often continues into the next utterance than O, but one that does not strongly support it. When both S and O are overtly present, they continue into the following utterance at about the same frequency (S = 54.2% and O = 58.3%). But when the S is elided, S outpaces the O in continuing to

the next utterance 43.5 % of the time to 21.7% for the overt O.⁴⁸

2.4.2 OSV

Since the text *Bure kuare Warao* has no examples of OSV, we must turn to the *Waira-Joyo* text:

- (58) *Mayakoto a esemoi Jajuba namina-ná.* 7a
 [Mayakoto POSS flute Jajuba know-NEG]
 ‘Jajuba did not know (how to play) Mayakoto’s flute’
 ‘Pero Jajuba no sabía tocar la flauta de Mayakoto, y, al llegar ...’
- (59) *Ma darakojo ine ebuje-re.* 22f
 [my door I -FUT]
 ‘I’ll open my door’
 ‘Voy a abrir la puerta’
- (60) (a) *Jajuba dibu-nae: — Natu, ¿ma tatu-tuma*
 [Jajuba say-PRET Grandmother my woman-PL
iji mi-naja-ra? 24b
 you see-NEG-INTER]
 ‘Jajuba said, ‘Granny, have you not seen my wives?’’
 ‘Este preguntó: —Vieja, ¿tú no has visto a mis mujeres?’
- (c) — *Ine ji tatutuma mi-naja. Webaya*
 [I your woman-PL see-NEG far-to
na-ru. Ji jorojuku ma saba
 go.away-IMP your skin-smell me for
asid-ae. 24c
 -PRET]
 ‘I haven’t seen your wives. Go away! Your odor has
 made me sick’
 ‘—Yo no he visto a tus mujeres. Vete lejos. Tu olor me
 causa náuseas’
- (61) *Domu jata-itane, aide-mo:* 45b
 [bird hit.with.bow.and.arrow-GER -ABL]

⁴⁸ Otherwise, continuity from the preceding utterance jumps when elision of either S or O is present, transitive or intransitive.

The number of SV_t and V_t are too small to influence any conclusion.

- yaro-mu, dokosi-mo* yatu Wauta mo-ae.
guan-PL turkey-PL you Wauta give-PRET]
‘Shooting the birds, the big ones, you gave the guans and the turkeys to Wauta’
‘Y vosotros la dísteis a la vieja los pájaros grandes: los paujís y las pavas’
- (62) *Domu yakera-ja* yatu Wauta mo-ae. 46a
[bird good-be you Wauta give-PRET]
‘You gave the birds that were good to Wauta’
‘Así que los pájaros apetitosos se los dísteis a Wauta, ...’
- (63) Taisi kuare *domu aide-mo ja-kotai:* 48a
[that because bird -ABL be-REL
dokosi-mo, yaro-mu, ji
turkey-PL guan-PL your
daka ja-kotai a
male’s.younger.brother be-REL POSS
rajia-si moa-te.
female’s.younger.sister -to give-FUT.INDEF]
‘Therefore, your younger brother should give the big birds, the turkeys and the guans, to the younger sister’
‘Por consiguiente, tu hermano debe de dar los pájaros grandes: las pavas y los paujís a la menor de ellas’
- (64) Tamaja *tida aidamo ja-kotai* ka 50d
[this woman old be-REL our
rani tane *oko* aba-ya.
mother so we -PRES]
‘We believed thus that it was this old woman who was our mother’
‘Estábamos creídos que esta vieja bruja era nuestra madre ...’

The first thing to note is that, with the exception of (58)/(7a), the remainder come from portions of the text in which there is quoted speech of the characters. Five of the seven have speech act participants as the subjects. There is no clear common thread to these OSV utterances. We may contrast, however, the OSV utterance in (60a) — *Have you not seen my wives?* — with (60b), an answering SOV utterance — *I have not seen your wives.*

3. *Urarina*

“Urarina is an isolate spoken by less [sic] than 3,000 people in the area of the Rio Chambira, Loreto Province, North-Western Peru” (Olawsky 2006.1). According to Olawsky (2006.1), “One of the most remarkable properties of Urarina grammar is its pervasive constituent order OVA/VS ...” And “The basic constituent order of Urarina is OVA/VS” (Olawsky 2006.146). Cf. also Olawsky 2006.654. Compare these two utterances (Olawsky 2006.144 & 143):⁴⁹

- (65) enejtʂ kwára-a katʂá
 [monkey see-3ps/A man]
 ‘The man saw the monkey’
- (66) ahaarutó-a katʂá
 [be.warm-3ps/A man]
 ‘The man is warm [due to the heat]’

3.1 *Urarina Questions & Answers*

Urarina possesses a form *dža* which expresses interrogative ‘what’ and ‘who(m)’ (Olawsky 2006.705) when it occurs sentence-initially.⁵⁰ The same form “may also function as an indefinite pronoun for ‘something’ ...” The sentences in (67) illustrate the use of *dža* as an indefinite pronoun (Olawsky 2006.827):⁵¹

- (67) (a) ni-a *dža*=ne ...
 [be-3ps/D what=CND ...]
 ‘If there is something [in the trap] ...’

⁴⁹ “Urarina can be characterized as a ‘pitch accent language’ ... As Urarina has an intriguingly complex system of tonal alternations, only parts of it have been analysed at this stage” (Olawsky 2006.120). “The position of the H tone [marked by an acute accent in the examples, PWD] is predictable for most nouns and the majority of verbs ... (123).”

Olawsky follows the common practice of using the symbol *A* for transitive *S*. Where relevant in this section, I will follow his practice. I have systematically substituted *ñ*, *š* and *ž* for the equivalent IPA symbols that Olawsky uses.

A is “Subject of transitive clause”.

⁵⁰ Other *wh*- content question words appear to be build on *dža* or *dž*: *džahiri* ‘which?’, *džanɛ* ‘why?’, *džatoanéi* ‘how?’, *džasíi* ‘how?’, *džabana* ‘when?’, *džɛ* ‘where?’ (Olawsky 2006.819-824).

⁵¹ Most of the abbreviations are transparent. CND is “Conditional”. PL is “Plural”. NEG is “Negative”. SUB is “Subordinate”. D is the D type of person inflection.

- (b) ñãe *dža* laate-kuru-i
 [already what need-PL-NEG:3ps/A
 mesari-tšuru-a=na hãu
 hunt-PL-3ps/D=SUB because]
 ‘They already do not need anything to hunt’

The sentences of (68), (69), and (70) show the use of *dža* as the interrogative (Olawsky 2006.706 & 816):⁵²

- (68) *dža=te* kwara-e
 [what-FOC see-3ps/E]
 ‘Who has seen it?’
- (69) *dža* kwara-e
 [what see-3ps/E]
 ‘What has he seen?’
- (70) *dža=te* nii kahe kana ruku-era ne-ĩ
 [what=FOC that from 1pl/in pull.out-AG be-PRT
 ne-lu
 be:3ps/E=REM]
 ‘Who is the one to pull us out of that?’

Two things are apparent from these examples. The question word appears sentence-initially; “... all interrogatives occur in initial position” (Olawsky 2006.815). Second, the A (or S) is accompanied by =*te*, which Olawsky (2006.693-694 et passim) identifies as a “focus marker”.⁵³ At first, it appears

⁵² FOC is “Focus”. E is the E type of the person inflection, and PRT is “Participle”.

⁵³ The shape of the focus marker will vary according to the “subject marking on the verb” (Olawsky 2006.694). We may expect these shapes:

PERSON	MARKER
1sg	=na/=ne
2sg	=te
3sg	=te
1pl/exclusive	=na/(=ne)
1pl/dual	=te
1pl/inclusive	=te
2pl	=te
3pl	=te

that A's (or S's) occurrence in initial position *must* be accompanied by the mark of FOCUS, but that is not categorially the case.⁵⁴ Sentences (71) & (72) show that only sentence-initial position is the constant mark of an interrogative, and that the FOCUS marker is doing something in addition to that (Olawsky 2006.817):⁵⁵

(71) *dža=te* *itša-re=ĩ*
 [what-FOC do-IRR:3ps/E=ASS]
 'What would he do?'
 'Who would do it?'

(72) *dža* *itša-re=ĩ*
 [what do-IRR:3ps/E=ASS]
 'What would he do?'
 'Who would do it?'

If it is correct that *=te* may occur or not in questions and that *dža* may signal A (S) or O, then (71) must also have a gloss 'What has he seen?' and (72) must have a gloss 'Who has seen it?' Indeed, Olawsky (2006.706) comments about these sentences in this way:

Theoretically, a range of interpretations could apply to both sentences [(71) & (72)], as grammatical function and animacy are not predetermined. The possible readings for each sentence are:

- 1) 'Who has seen it/him?'
- 2) 'What has seen it/him?'
- 3) 'What has he seen?'
- 4) 'Whom has he seen?'

"The marker *=te* ... is the most frequent one" (Olawsky 2006.436), so hereafter when I cite the marker, I shall use "*=te*" to identify it.

⁵⁴ Olawsky is ambivalent, if not contradictory, in his statements about the presence of the FOCUS marker. In places (732), he writes that the marker is necessary: "The insertion of a focus marker is obligatory only with a frontshifted subject" But in other places (438), he writes, "the fronting of a constituent without the focus marker is very rare" and "However, while the presence of a focus marker in answers to content questions is preferred, it is not obligatory. The same observation can be made with regard to content questions — these can contain a focus marker optionally ..." (697). Ultimately, it appears that the FOCUS marker occurs after any sentence-initial element, and it adds its own content in addition to the content of FOCUS that is sufficiently signaled by sentence-initial position alone. We will address the content of FOCUS and the marker *=te* in section 3.3.

⁵⁵ IRR is "Irrealis", and ASS is "Assertive".

The answering content to these questions must appear in the same sentence-initial position as the *wh*-word (Olawsky 2006.707):⁵⁶

- (73) (a) *dža=te* najñe-re kwara-a
 [who=FOC be.able-IRR:3ps/E see-NTR
 kɯ-a=ne=ta, ...
 go-3ps/D=CND=FRS ...]
 ‘Who could go to see?’
- (b) *kanu=na* najñ-re-ũ ...
 [1sg=FOC:1sg be.able-IRR-1sg/E ...]
 ‘I can’

The answering content will commonly be followed by the FOCUS marker (Olawsky 2006.697): “... the reply fills the respective syntactic slot and marks it with a focus enclitic ...” Answering contents that are O’s as well as A(S)’s or other functions will be followed by the FOCUS marker. Sentence (74) is a response to an “implied ‘Whom did he send?’” (Olawsky 2006.714):

- (74) *kanu=te* letoa-e
 [1sg=FOC send-3ps/E]
 ‘It’s me whom he will send’

Although reliance upon our heuristic of assuming that answers to *wh*-questions will reveal the morphosyntax of FOCUS indicates that Urarina FOCUS is signaled by sentence-initial position, there may be one additional component to the morphosyntax of FOCUS (Olawsky 2006.435):

There is one context that strictly requires the choice of the E-form [of the verb]: this is the case when a sentence contains any constituent in focus position. For instance, the presence of a focus marker in a sentence always results in the marking of the inflected verb with suffixes from the E-form.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ NTR is “Neutral Form”. FRS is “Frustrative/Negative Attitude”.

The sentences of (73) are the only two in the 932 page grammar which are paired as a *wh*-question and its answer, and they are contained in a larger utterance as quoted speech, i.e. “As he said, ‘Who could go to see?’, his major son [saying] ‘I can’ met him and went to see.”

⁵⁷ Urarina has two other “forms”: the D-form, which occurs in finite dependent clauses only (Olawsky 2006.431) and the A-form for subjects of transitive clauses.

The E-form is noted as “obligatory” in content questions and when the “FOC marker precedes verb” (Olawsky 2006.432). If sentence-initial position is the mark of FOCUS, and if some content is always in sentence-initial position, then the implication is that *every* Urarina verb should be in the E-form. Certainly every transitive OVA or AOV utterance should show the E-form. Let us look briefly at some utterances with =te and at some content questions, also with =te (Olawsky 2006.699, 703, 819):⁵⁸

- (75) *lejhú katša=te* miɨŋka ke katša-ɯɯ
 [one man=FOC working.session VLI man-be
 kuti-hjái amia-rate
 invite-PRT work-CAU2]
 ‘One man invited people to a working session and made them work’
- (76) *kwane=te* kana+kwaaɯn-era baha-akatše
 [let’s=FOC our.creator ask-1pl/inclusive]
 ‘Let us pray’
- (77) (a) *dža kahe=te* kanaanaɯj erɯ-i=ta
 [what from=FOC child find-2ps=FRS]
 ‘(From) where did you find the child?’
- (b) *dža kahe=te* ɯɯ-re akaɯ
 [what from=FOC come-IRR.3ps/E water]
 ‘From where would the water come?’

Sentences (75) and (76) appear to lack an E-form of the verb, where it should occur. Sentence (77a) lacks an E-form, while the very similar sentence (77b) contains one.⁵⁹ The best that we can conclude from this is that the relation between FOCUS and the E-forms of verbs is unresolved. I shall assume that it

⁵⁸ VLI is “Valency Increaser”, and CAU2 is “Causative”.

⁵⁹ Olawsky (2006.432) also notes that the E-form is “impossible ... with introducer *kwatia*.” *Kwatia* is ‘not’. Yet we find (Olawsky 2006.663):

- (i) *kwatia* kanɯ i=tšene letono *ni-a-ũ=ta*
 [not 1sg 2sg=place envoy be-NEG-1sg/E=FRS]
 ‘I am not the envoy to your place’

with both the introducer *kwatia* and an E-form of the verb in the same clause.

does not affect the remaining discussion of FOCUS.

This leaves us finally with three questions about FOCUS, which we will address in turn. First, what is the relation of O's to FOCUS? Second, what other functions, in addition to answering questions, may sentence-initial position have? And third, what semantic increment is contributed by *=te*?

3.2 *Urarina OVA*

Within the paradigm of occurrence with FOCUS in questions and answers, the O function is clearly different from the A(S) function (Olawsky 2006.712):

While focus of subjects (A/S arguments) is comparatively common in Urarina, only relative few examples for objects followed by a focus marker are attested.

And in differentiating (71) and (72) (Olawsky 2006.817):

When a focus marker is present ..., an interpretation of *dža* as referring to a subject is more likely; when there is no focus marker ..., the object reading may be preferred.

In spite of such examples as (72) and (78) (Olawsky 2006.714),⁶⁰

- (78) *itulere=te* *itša-kure=lə* *haɹria*
 [all.kinds-TOP make-3pl/E=REM first]
 ‘They made all kinds of things at first [i.e. in those days]’

the O function is less apt to appear with a morphological marker of FOCUS:

To say that Urarina is OVA (or OVS) does not mean that *only* O's appear in sentence-initial position or that *only* OVA (or OVS) occurs. Nor is it the case that O's — if overtly expressed — *must* appear in initial position. Sentence (79) is AOV (or SOV) (Olawsky 2006.661):

- (79) *raj* *kalau=te* *fwei* *bajhja-î*
 [POSS son=FOC firewood carry.on.shoulder-PRT
 ama-e
 take-3ps/E]
 ‘Her son carries firewood on his shoulder and takes it along’

⁶⁰ REM is “Remote Past”.

“... any [non-O] constituent of a clause can be focused; in this case it is followed by a focus marker and shifted to the front” (Olawsky 2006.660). But unless the O cedes its initial position in this way to other content so that they accept in their turn the semantic increment of FOCUS, it is the O which will be sentence-initial, and hence, the bearer of FOCUS. It is this formal and semantic imbalance that privileges the O in initial position and makes the language OVA (or OVS). The language is object-initial because the O is semantically “special”. Its appearance initially does not require support by *=te* to the degree that the other functions do ... mostly (Olawsky 2006.712):

A possible reason for this is that objects already occupy a position that intrinsically implies focus. Only when an object is subject to focus, emphasis or contrast in some way, it is marked with one of the enclitics *=ne*, *=na*, or *=te*.

It would appear that the conclusion to be drawn from this asymmetry is that the O function, more than any other function, intrinsically bears a degree of FOCUS, which the others lack.⁶¹

Having presented reasons for concluding that Urarina is OVA (or OVS), it is interesting finally to compare the actual frequency of Urarina clause types with the frequency of clause types in Warao (Olawsky 2006.657).⁶² Cf. Figure 11. There are several points of convergence (and difference) between the two languages. First, both languages have a penchant for eliding A’s and O’s in

⁶¹ Object-initial utterances are then “unmarked” (Olawsky 2006.654):

OVA is the formally and functionally unmarked constituent order ... The examples are functionally unmarked as they do not exhibit any pragmatic peculiarities in the context they occur in.

This suggests that OVA (without *=te*) and VS function to express broad or informational focus, but Olawsky does not explicitly say so. For example, in a discussion of polar questions (Olawsky 2006.831-834), there is no indication of how they are answered (and how they cannot be answered). In a discussion of *dža itša-re=ĩ* ‘What would he do?’ (Olawsky 2006.817), we are not told of the possible answers and their contrasts.

⁶² The Urarina frequencies are based on 445 main clauses contained in seven texts. The Warao frequencies combine the 393 clauses from the two texts displayed in Figures 2 & 3. I have used “A” for the transitive subject in order to make the differences more easily visible. The dual labeling of the first column reflects the fact that Urarina appears to be OVA while Warao is OAV. The OAV order in Urarina “cannot be regarded as a possible variation” (Olawsky 2006.657). Since Warao uses post-verbal position only as a “dead zone”, v_A and v_S contain no entry for that language. Olawsky combines v_t and v_i and gives a single frequency for both.

transitive clauses, and both favor the A for elision.⁶³ Second, for being object-initial languages, both show surprisingly few examples of OVA_tOAV_t: 3.6%

	OVA _t OAV _t	AOV _t	VA _t	AV _t	OV _t	VS _i	SV _i	V _t	V _i
Urarina	3.6%	5.6%	1.6%	2.2%	19.1%	11.5%	3.4%	52.8%	
Warao	1.8%	12.5%	—	3.6%	21.6%	—	34.1%	4.6%	21.9%

Figure 11: *Comparative Frequency Word Orders in Urarina & Warao.*

for Urarina and 1.8% for Warao. If the languages are OVA_tOAV_t, the conclusion cannot to be based on frequencies. Conversely, the infrequency of OVA_tOAV_t does not necessarily imply that the languages are *not* object-initial.

3.3 *Urarina FOCUS: Position and Morphology*

In this section, we will examine the semantic dimensions of Urarina FOCUS as signaled by sentence-initial position, as well as the semantics of the morphological marker =*te*.

3.3.1 *Sentence-initial position as FOCUS*

We began by discovering that sentence-initial position was the only morphosyntactic constant in the signaling of answers to *wh*-questions. Identifying that morphosyntax as the mark of FOCUS, we now find that it is exploited to other semantic ends (Olawsky 2006.664):

... instances of order variation in which the subject is moved to initial position without involvement of a focus marker are found in a limited number of contexts. Interestingly, all of these are in some way related to the concept of focus or emphasis ...

Let us begin with sentence (80) (Olawsky 2006.663):

- (80) *kwatia kanu* i=tšene letono ni-a-ã=ta
 [not 1sg 2sg=place envoy be-NEG-1sg/E=FRS]
 ‘I am not the envoy to your place’

⁶³ “It has to be noted that, in a language with extensive omission of overt NPs, the presence of arguments realised as core NPs is not very frequent” (Olawsky 2006.654).

Olawsky comments on the sense of (80) in this way:

The function of this order variation clearly relates to focus and emphasis ... This becomes especially clear in ... [(80)], where Adam, who is the only human left in the world, warmly welcomes one of the two women who suddenly appear. In protest, she makes it very clear that he is embracing the wrong one: the pronoun for 1sg, which is in initial position, is in focus to mean ‘it is not me (but the other one)’ ... It should be noted that negation does not normally incur subject-initial order; this only applies when focus or emphasis of the subject are [sic] implied.

The adverbs *-netonaj* ‘also’ and *nianatii* ‘even’ and the modal *netene* ‘must’ frequently combine with a constituent which is placed in sentence-initial position (Olawsky 2006.664, 666 & 667):

In all examples, the use of ‘also’ puts the noun to which it is attached in focus, as to point at the involvement of that particular participant in addition to others (664) ... The same focus-like structure ... is found with another expression that follows a noun: *nianatii* ‘even’ frequently follows a subject that occurs in clause-initial position. Similar to *-netonaj*, an inherent emphatic function is implied (666) ... Another context which allows a subject to move to front position without overt presence of a focus marker is the construction with ‘must’ ... With this construction, a subject may precede the verb (667)

None of these *require* association with initial position (665, 666, 668), but they appear, by their usage, to *support* the content of FOCUS. We may assume, then, that the meaning of FOCUS itself is elucidated in some way by the content of these three elements. In each case (‘also’, ‘even’, and ‘must’), the sentence-initial constituent stands out against the background of the alternatives.

3.3.2 *The marker =te as FOCUS*

While the marker *=te* may be the norm in some uses (as noted above), there seem to be no morphosyntactic environments in which the use of *=te* is obligatory. There are, however, syntactic configurations in which *=te* cannot appear, e.g. “negative clauses do not occur with focus markers” (663) & “focus markers do not occur in polar questions” (831). In each of these morphosyntactic environments, Urarina still has recourse to sentence-initial position for signalling FOCUS. Cf. (80) above. The one morphosyntactic constant to signaling FOCUS is sentence-initial position, and the morphology of *=te* then complements FOCUS in some way.

Recall the discussion of Haida FOCUS from Chapter 4. Haida, like Urarina,

uses sentence-initial position to mark FOCUS. And Haida has a suffix, *ɕuu*, which like Urarina *=te*, is common in questions and answers, but ultimately is independent from them. The morphosyntactic constant of FOCUS in Haida is sentence-initial position as it is in Urarina. When Haida *ɕuu* is employed, like Urarina *=te*, it must occur with the semantics of sentence-initial FOCUS. Neither *ɕuu* nor *=te* appears without sentence-initial FOCUS, but each adds its own contribution to whatever FOCUS is in each language. In Haida, that increment was summarized with the word “noteworthiness” (Enrico 1986.122). In Urarina, there is probably no such summarizing word. Olawsky does not offer one.⁶⁴

Consider sentence (81), which contains *=te*, and then Olawsky’s remarks about it (Olawsky 2006.697):⁶⁵

- (81) *kanu=na* hana+tšäe ñaara kusëera=nuke
 [1sg=FOC:1sg besides+also 2pl assistant=PURP
 letono ne-î ne-ũ=ra
 envoy be-PRT be-1sg/E=EMF]
 ‘I instead, am sent to be your assistant’

The 1sg pronoun must be marked because it is shifted into initial position. In this position, it marks contrastive focus, which becomes clear through the context: *kanu* is emphasized in opposition to ‘my sister’, whose function is mentioned in the preceding sentence.

Elsewhere, Olawsky (2006.692) associates *=te* with “contrastive focus”: “Focus in the sense of contrastive focus as characterised above [“understood as ‘material which the speaker calls to the addressee’s attention, thereby often evoking a contrast with other entities that might fill the same position’”] probably is the most common function of this enclitic ... One could therefore refer to the focus marker in Urarina as a general device to mark prominence.” There is no minimal pair of Urarina utterances presented which turns on the

⁶⁴ Hausa, a Chadic language with more than 30 million speakers mostly in Nigeria and The Republic of Niger (Jagger 2001.1-2), has a particle *nee* and *cee* (feminine) that occurs after a sentence-initial focused constituent. As in Urarina and Haida, the particle is not mandatory (Hartmann & Zimmermann 2007.243). Hartmann & Zimmermann (2007.251-258) argue that *nee/cee* is a marker of ‘exhaustivity’. Hausa differs from Urarina and Haida in that it is an SVO language which uses sentence-initial position to mark FOCUS, but has, as well, a second *in situ* FOCUS “possible for any constituent ... with the exception of subjects (Hartmann & Zimmermann 2007.243). The particle *nee/cee* also occurs with the *in situ* FOCUS.

⁶⁵ PURP is “Purposive Complementiser”, and EMF is “Final Emphatic”.

presence and absence of *=te*.⁶⁶

Unfortunately, in the discussion of (80), which lacks *=te*, and in the discussion of (81), which has *=te*, Olawsky relies on the English “emphasize” in describing both. We are finally left to surmise what the contrast may be. The best guess is probably that *=te* in various ways amplifies and intensifies the sense of FOCUS marked by sentence-initial position alone.

4. *Conclusion*

In this chapter, we have paid more attention to the grammar of FOCUS than to refining its content, and in this conclusion, we will attend to two patterns in the morphosyntax. First, we consider the general interaction between FOCUS and word order. Second, we speculate on the morphosyntax of object-initial languages such as Warao and Urarina.

4.1 *Word Order and FOCUS*

Languages such as Bella Coola, Yogad, Haida, Warao, and Urarina depend upon sentence-initial position to mark FOCUS. Hungarian and Lisu (Chapter 18) depend upon pre-verbal position, and Aghem uses post-verbal position. West Greenlandic Eskimo employs sentence-final position. Of course, we can never examine all languages, so I will simply make the following conjecture: No language which uses order to communicate FOCUS will employ a landmark other than the three we have encountered. The three landmarks are these: (i) sentence-initial position, (ii) sentence-final position, and (iii) the EVENT/Verb.⁶⁷ If the conjecture is correct, these limitations are so restricting that they cannot be random.

⁶⁶ Relying on a sense of “about” to describe TOPIC (Olawsky 2006.692), Olawsky projects, in some examples, a TOPIC function onto *=te*. For example (Olawsky 2006.699), in (i)

- (i) *lejhiĩ ranũna=te nitahe*
 [one girl=FOC get.lost:3ps/E]
 ‘One girl got lost’

“The constituent ... marked with *=te* ...clearly refer[s] to topic, which, however, does not implicitly exclude an interpretation as focus or emphasis.” *Lejhiĩ ranũna=te* occurs as the title of a story, and that fact appears to be what suggests TOPIC. There is no other discussion of TOPIC in Urarina, except as it may be encoded by *=te* in a few examples. Because TOPIC is probably *not* to be characterised as ‘about’ (cf. Chapters 14-21), and because there is *no other* independent formal mark of TOPIC in Urarina, I (rather arbitrarily, perhaps) discount ‘topic’ as part of the semantics of *=te*. The assertion of ‘about’ in the examples seems to proceed from the linguist observer without internal support from the language.

⁶⁷ This is not a vacuous claim. One can easily imagine other ordering possibilities to signal FOCUS: preceding the A/S, second position in a clause à la Wackernagel’s Law, etc.

Given that a language uses order to signal FOCUS, FOCUS may *only* associate with the sentence-initial position, sentence-final position, or the EVENT/Verb (either before or after). The principle that accomplishes the associations is this: *Like may go with like*,⁶⁸ but *never* will unlike go with like. The implication of this assertion is that FOCUS, EVENTS, sentence-initiations and sentence-endings all share some common content. But because sentence beginnings and endings are just that — starts and stops — they would appear to bear no content, just as the phone [kʰ] bears no inherent content. If they do, then that ‘semantics’ does not lie within language.

The conjecture which I advocate implies that language is, in the manner of any other human cognitive construct, necessarily embedded in intelligence and partakes of the substance of intelligence. Language is shaped of the capacities that make up intelligence and therefore reflects the character of whatever those capacities may be. The locus of the commonality between FOCUS, EVENTS, and sentence boundaries is then drawn from some common substance of intelligence. In the following chapter, we return to support this claim in the context of a discussion of the meaning of FOCUS and its typology.

4.2 *Other Semantics and FOCUS*

We turn finally again to our two object-initial languages. Overlooking the vagueness in the description of the semantics of FOCUS in Urarina, two things appear clear: (i) sentence-initial position is the morphosyntax of FOCUS and (ii) the O function, more than any other function, participates in the semantics of FOCUS.⁶⁹ For all the indeterminacy in the description of Warao, it appears to share those same two properties with Urarina.

We will look briefly at three more object initial languages from the perspective of (i) and (ii). **Trio** is a Cariban language with 2,000 speakers who live in the southern rainforest of the Republic of Suriname (Carlin 2004.1). It appears to be OVA (Carlin 2004.479):

⁶⁸ I have discovered that this is a variant of a principle expressed in the 19th century as Behagel’s First Law (cited in Vennemann 1974.339):

Das oberste Gesetz ist dieses, da daß gelästig eng Zusammengehörende auch eng zusammengestellt wird.

This principle does not require an association. It only specifies that if such occurs, the association will obey the like-with-like rule.

And yes, there is at least one more: Behagel’s Second Law (Vennemann 1985.869).

⁶⁹ This, again, is Behagel’s First Law.

... both A and O may be encoded lexically, and if so, the object noun precedes the verb and the agent noun follows the verb ... This gives the word order OVA as the unmarked basic word order ...

Carlin (2004.253) describes Trio *wh*-questions and answers as follows:

While the preferred order of constituents in a declarative sentence is OVA and VS, in interrogative clauses question words are in focus position and thus tend [?] to come sentence-initially regardless of their role in the clause ... With the exception of the verb, any constituent can be replaced by a question word ... [In answer to a question,] the temporal adverb can either fill the slot taken up in the question by the question word, or alternatively, it can come after the verb phrase, depending on its degree of focus ... Whenever some other element in the clause is in focus or topicalized, then that element comes sentence-initially regardless of whether it is an interrogative clause or not.

Hixkaryana, “a member of the Carib family ... spoken by about 350 people in groups located on the rivers Nhamundá and Mapuera in northern Brazil, halfway between Guyana’s southern border and the Amazon” (Derbyshire & Pullum 1981.193), has been argued to be OVA (Derbyshire & Pullum 1981.194):

Declarative clauses with nominal subject and object that show OVS order constitute 91 percent of the corpus. If one assumes only that over large amounts of text a grammatically basic order will tend to be statistically frequent as an occurring surface order (as stylistic preposings and postposings average each other out), this figure suggests very strongly that OVS is descriptively [?] basic for the language.

This is Derbyshire & Pullum’s brief description of what we will take to be the grammar of FOCUS (Derbyshire & Pullum 1981.195):

There is an obligatory rule which moves all question words to sentence-initial position whatever grammatical relation they bear in the sentence. Only one other rule is then needed to account for the fronting of the subject; this relates to discourse-conditioning factors pertaining to emphasis, focus, and highlighting of a constituent. Both rules apply to indirect objects and oblique objects (adverbials, locatives, etc.) as well as to subjects.

Apuriña is an Arawakan language spoken in the northwestern Amazon region of Brazil (Facundes 2000.1). Derbyshire & Pullum, citing Pickering (1974a & 1974b), propose Apuriña to be object-initial: “Both motivation and

evidence point to OSV [as the basic order].” Although Derbyshire & Pullum (1981.207) report that “Pickering, in a personal communication, indicates that he is now of the opinion that there is no single ‘underlying’ configuration of constituents in Apurina,” they maintain that “the facts and data which Pickering reports, as outlined above, appear to us to constitute a strong confirmation of a single basic order-OSV for Apurina.” Facundes (2000.548) sides with Pickering: “... it would appear that none of the clausal constituent order types in the language can be argued to be more basic/neutral/unmarked than the other ...”⁷⁰ Regardless of how one determines whether there is some “basic word order” in Apurina and whether it is object-initial, the language does appear to use sentence-initial position to signal FOCUS.⁷¹ “Interrogative words are always sentence-initial” (Facundes 200.541):

- (82) ke-pa oka-pe-ru uwa-nhi?
 [WH-INT kill-PFTV-3M.O 3SG.M-AFFECT]
 ‘Who/What has killed him/it?’
- (83) ke-pa p-oka-pe?
 [WH-INT 2SG-kill-PFTV]
 ‘What/Who have you killed?’

Facundes does not anywhere describe the syntax of the answers to these questions, but he does describe the grammar of a “focus marker” *-ra* (Facundes 200.408-410 & 430-432): “The focus marker *-ra* is used to mark focus of attention constructions, such that, e.g. N-*ra* translates into English as ‘it’s N that’.”⁷² So that

- (84) ***nota-ra*** oka-pe-ru uwa-nhi
 [1SG-FOC kill-PFTV-3M.O 3SG.M-AFFECT]
 ‘It’s I who killed him/it’

⁷⁰ The occurring types are SOV, SVO, VOS, OSV, and OVS. VSO does not occur at all, and VOS & VSO are absent from texts (Facundes 2000.550).

⁷¹ It is not possible to discern unambiguously the morphosyntax of FOCUS from the descriptions provided.

⁷² “... the strong [?] preference is for the phrasal constituent ... with which *-ra* occurs to be positioned clause-initially” (Facundes 2000.431).

might respond to (82).⁷³ We might also expect that simple word order contrasts would suffice to differentiate between an answer and a non-answer. Thus, either SV sentence of (85), but not the VS sentence of (86) (Facundes 2000.450):

- (85) (a) *suto* apo-pe
 [woman arrive-PFTV]
 ‘The woman has already arrived’
- (b) *suto-ra* apo-pe
 [woman-FOC arrive-PFTV]
 ‘It’s the woman who has already arrived’
- (86) o-apo-pe suto
 [3SG.F-arrive-PFTV woman]
 ‘The woman has already arrived’

would answer the question of (87):⁷⁴

- (87) *ke-pa* apo-pe
 [who-INT arrive-PFTV]
 ‘Who has already arrived?’

We now make our second conjecture of the conclusion. The conjecture is this: *Any* language, which by *any* criteria, appears to be object-initial will also exhibit the properties of (i) Sentence-initial position is the morphosyntax of FOCUS and (ii) The O function, more than any other function, participates in the semantics of FOCUS. The fact of *syntactic* object-initial is secondary. It is a consequence and not the cause of anything. The essential are properties (i) and (ii), which combine to give the impression of object-initial. In the way I have framed the issue, no language can possibly be completely and solely object-

⁷³ I have created (84) using the model of (82) and (i) (Facundes 200.431):

- (i) nota-ra aōku-ta-pē-ka-ru uwa
 [1SG-FOC see-PFTV-PASS-3M.O 3SG.M]
 ‘It’s I who have already seen him’

⁷⁴ Again, (85b) and (87) are hypothetical utterances based on the model of cited ones.

initial.⁷⁵

This second conjecture is another instance of Behagel's First Law, which now assumes the status of a diagnostic. It is the discovery of a morphosyntactic association that suggests the conclusion of a shared semantics. Behagel's First Law is interpreted to assert that the neutral combination of the O function with the morphosyntax of FOCUS is evidence for concluding that the O function and FOCUS share a semantics.⁷⁶ That is, it

⁷⁵ Such a language would oddly restrict FOCUS solely to occurrence with the PATIENT/Object.

Not all word orders are created equal. Bella Coola *is*, for example, entirely VSO. If a clause contains a "verb," it will be first from the speaker's mouth or they are not speaking Bella Coola. If the "verb" is followed by two "nouns," the first will *always* be the S and *never* the O.

⁷⁶ Because Behagel's First law does not say what cannot occur, our problem becomes one of recognizing the existence of the neutral association against the background of non-neutral ones. It prescribes a usual state of the sort we found between FOCUS and Patient in Telugu. The compels us to answer/discover what is "normal" or "neutral" and what is not.

There is a question begged here, and there is no way around begging it. There is *no way* to prescribe once-and-for-all how to recognize "neutral" (or "unmarked" or "basic"). *If*, in some language, it happens that whatever we are talking about has only the one way to be expressed, then that way is absolutely "neutral". "Neutral" (or "unmarked" or "basic") is a matter of degree and presupposes the existence of one or more choices. *So* it may be that one way of saying things is noticeably more frequent than the alternatives. Then that one way is "neutral". For example, Derbyshire & Pullum (1981:193) have written of Hixkaryana, "Declarative clauses with nominal subject and object that show OVS order constitute 91 percent of the corpus ... this figure suggests very strongly that OVS is descriptively basic for the language." If you look at the Warao text in Chapter 19 searching for finite affixes, you'll find them more often than not on the final constituent in an utterance. Warao is "basically" verb-final. *Or* it may be that an utterance of a particular sort, presented to a speaker, will always be heard in a certain way. For example, in Bella Coola, an utterance with a "Verb" followed by a "Noun", followed in turn by another "Noun" was *always* heard with the second "Noun" naming the entity that was in control of the event and acting upon the second "Noun". Hence, we feel comfortable in talking about the language as VSO. However, in Apuriña, that tactic seems to be less secure: "Indeed, it is true that some speakers choose OSV as default interpretation when ambiguity cannot be resolved by semantics and pragmatics. However, now it is also clear that the strategy used to resolve ambiguity varies across speakers. I have not been able to confirm OSV as default order for more than a handful of speakers" (Facundes 2000:557). So probably Apuriña is not OSV, at least for that reason. Recall Romero-Figueroa's use of this criterion to establish an OSV order for Warao in the discussion of sentences (12) & (13) above. *Or* it may be that saying something one way requires less grammar than another way of saying it. For example, in Urarina, placing the O initially in an OVA order seems to require one fewer morpheme (i.e. the "focus marker") than if we place the A initially in an AOV sequence: "OVA is the formally and functionally unmarked constituent order ... A formal marking would involve a frontshift of the subject to the front, in which case a focus enclitic must be attached to it" (Olawsky 2006:654). Be we have seen in section 3 that this is not absolute, just "neutral". *Or* it may be that one way of expressing content appears to carry less meaning than another. Langacker (1977:24), in an overview of Uto-Aztecán, invokes a "most neutral order ... which carries no special nuances or semantic value." *Or* just the opposite of the preceding. An utterance is unmarked just in case it does possess "special nuances or semantic value." Lambrecht

is precisely because of the association that we conclude a semantic commonality. Once we are alerted to the existence of a shared semantics, however, it is incumbent upon us to clarify its nature, to make plausible the combinations and the overlaps that we have discovered.⁷⁷ Unless we can accomplish that, any patterns that exist will remain mysteries.⁷⁸ We are now committed, at least, to show how the O function and FOCUS can have anything in common. For the moment, we simply accept it (and use it), and in the following chapter, we will address its origin and its nature as we also discuss the ordering restrictions of FOCUS noted above.

Support for interpreting the relation between the O function and FOCUS in terms of a version of Behagel's First Law is drawn from the observation of the law's functioning in more cases than just this one. More contents are linked with FOCUS than just the O function. For example, given (i) that Bella Coola uses sentence-initial position for FOCUS and given (ii) that the EVENT/Verb always occupies that position in its clause, we must conclude that the EVENT/Verb exhibits strong semantic affiliation with FOCUS.⁷⁹ Haida, on the other hand, has a much more fragmented use of order. Given that it, like Bella Coola, employs sentence-initial position for FOCUS, Haida differs in two important ways. Haida does *not* associate the EVENT with FOCUS in the manner of Bella Coola, and it has several degrees of FOCUS. The strongest degree is indicated by *-çuu*, which follows sentence-initial material. When the strongest degree of FOCUS is not invoked, then the relative FOCUS-like character of propositional functions (Agent vs. Patient) and lexical content (pronoun vs. non pronoun) become operative. We repeat here from Chapter 4

(1994.17) writes, "... given a pair of allosentences ["semantically equivalent but formally and pragmatically divergent"], one member is pragmatically unmarked if it serves two discourse functions while the other member serves only one of them." *Or*, it may be that this way of expressing things just feels more "neutral" than the other, and I am still looking for a reason to justify that feeling: "... indeed, the facts and data which Pickering reports, as outlined above, appear to us to constitute a strong confirmation of a single basic order-OSV-for Apuriña" (Derbyshire & Pullum 1981.207). Certainly, "neutral", "unmarked," and "basic" are slippery notions that come in degrees.

If we make a claim of "neutral" ("unmarked" or "basic") for some word order, there may be some immediate support for it, but ultimately, the claim is justified by the increased understanding that it brings to the problem at hand.

⁷⁷ This is the same strategy that we have adopted in using the answers to *wh*-questions as a way of recognizing the presence of FOCUS. Had we stopped at the point of discovering how to answer *wh*-questions, FOCUS would have remained a meaningless summary of that formal fact.

⁷⁸ And the patterns themselves will become questionable.

⁷⁹ Cf. Chapters 2 & 15.

the summary of three such Haida configurations:

- (i) When a noun and a pronoun co-occur together as ‘S’ and/or ‘O’, it does not matter which is which, the order is noun + pronoun.
- (ii) When two pronouns occur together, the order is ‘O’ + ‘S’. No variation is possible.
- (iii) When two nouns occur together, and they differ in ‘potency’, the one that is the less POTENT is ‘S’ only when it is initial.

All things being equal, (i) the content of a NAME/Noun is more FOCUS-like than a Pronoun, (ii) the O-function (Patient) is more FOCUS-like than the S-function (Agent), and (iii) the expectation is that the less POTENT PARTICIPANT is the PARTICIPANT affected, and if it is to be the affecting PARTICIPANT, it is required to be placed in sentence-initial position in order to signal a divergence from the expected. All of these Haida patterns recognize a congruency between greater FOCUS and sentence-initial position, which

- (i) is wedded to the name that identifies the contextually introduced PARTICIPANT, the ‘strange’ member of the noun-pronoun pair.
- (ii) is wedded to the Object ROLE, when two pronouns co-occur, identifying the more contingent of the ROLE pair Object and Agent
- (iii) facilitates the unnatural combination of less-POTENT-acting-on-more-POTENT.

Both Bella Coola and Haida each in their own way recognize congruencies between FOCUS and other content. But where this produces the impression of ‘VSO’ in Bella Coola, in Haida, it is completely irrelevant to impose some ordering using ‘V’, ‘S/A’, and ‘O’. Whereas viewing the languages from the perspectives of their meanings yields a very consistent understanding of them, viewing them from a more formal perspective suggests an absence of pattern.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ It is for reasons such as these that in the following chapter on the typology of FOCUS, word order typology will not be invoked, as it is not here. Commonly, typologies about word order assume that form is primary and separate/independent from meaning. They are purely syntactic typologies. Tomlin (1986:13) illustrates this:

Subject is strictly a syntactic category; it has no semantic or pragmatic attributes. It does have semantic and pragmatic correlates, but since these are partly to be demonstrated through the principles motivated here, it is not permissible to include them in identification procedures ... The syntactic relation of object is even more

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elusive to define than subject ... The verb is taken here to [be] a straightforward category. *Verb* should be taken to refer to the verb root and any bound morphemes may included tense, aspect, agreement markers, pronominal clitics, directional markers, and so on.

The position I have adopted will not permit a typology like the above. With deference to the vast literature developing such typologies, I still believe that little good can come from them. I must claim that any regularities that a syntactic word order typology produces are accidents, the result of an unexpected overlap of the syntactic counters S, O, & V with some semantic content.