

# Contrastive topic in Eastern Cham

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## 1 Introduction

In this paper, we claim that contrastive topic (CT) in Eastern Cham (Austronesian: Vietnam) is marked by *hu*, which is orthogonal to (non-contrastive) topicalization. The classic CT characteristics are seen with *hu*: anaphora to a Question Under Discussion strategy and resistance to exhaustive answers (Büring 2003; Constant 2014). In terms of syntactic distribution, when the CT is above the  $\nu$ P, *hu* immediately precedes it (cf. the subject CT in 1a), but when the CT is inside the  $\nu$ P, *hu* must be predicate-initial, resulting in string ambiguities like the one in (1b).<sup>1</sup>

- (1) a. hu thùən ʔa tʃej maj pǎʔ ni...  
CT Thuận invite self come in this  
‘Thuận<sub>CT</sub> invited me to come here...’ EASTERN CHAM
- b. kaw hu pʒʌh pɔh h:ɔŋm ka thùən...  
1SG CT give CLF papaya to Thuận  
‘I gave the papaya<sub>CT</sub> to Thuận...’ / ‘I gave the papaya to Thuận<sub>CT</sub>...’

The contrastive topic meaning of *hu* is related to two other uses of *hu* in contemporary Eastern Cham: existential closure and verum focus. The surface syntactic distribution of *hu* is comparable to a homophonous *hu* that overtly marks existential closure, much like Zimmermann’s (2007) analysis of *adi* in Bura (Central Chadic: Nigeria). The form *hu* also marks verum focus, much like *có* in Vietnamese (Austroasiatic: Vietnam). Using Gutzmann, Hartmann & Matthewson’s (2017) analysis of verum focus as a QUD phenomenon, it is suggested that verum focus is in fact another instance of contrastive topic. The remainder of this section presents background on Eastern Cham and Vietnamese. Section

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<sup>1</sup>Eastern Cham orthography is in line with the Cham linguistic tradition: open circles underneath consonants indicate a falling, breathy register on the following vowel that spreads rightward to the end of the word. Short vowel diacritics indicate either short vowels or sesquisyllables. Long diacritics on consonants indicate geminate sonorants. When present, Vietnamese words are transcribed in IPA. The following abbreviations are used: CLF = classifier, COP = copula; CT = contrastive topic; DIST = distal demonstrative; EX.COP = existential copula; EXIST = existential; FOC = focus; FUT = future tense; ITER = iterative aspect; NEG = negation; POL = polite; PROG = progressive aspect; PROX = proximal demonstrative; PRT = discourse particle; REL = relativizer; ROOT = root modal; SG = singular; TOP = topicalizer; VR = verum focus.

2 presents the evidence for *hu* as a contrastive topic marker. In Sections 3–4, the connections between *hu* and existential closure and verum focus are explored. Finally, a syntactic analysis is sketched in Section 5 before concluding.

Eastern Cham is an Austronesian language spoken in south-central Vietnam by about 100,000 people. It is considered endangered due to a lack of intergenerational transmission, high levels of bilingualism with Vietnamese, and limited language education (cf. Brunelle 2008; Moseley 2010). Following the period from the 1650’s to the 1800’s, Eastern Cham has been in a unidirectional language contact situation with Vietnamese, the dominant socioeconomic language of the area (cf. Po 1991). The prevalence of language contact has led to numerous proposed contact effects from Vietnamese (cf. Thurgood 1999; Brunelle & Phú, forthcoming). Data for this paper come from the author’s field elicitation with 15 native speakers of university age from the Cham villages of Ninh Thuận province, Vietnam. These speakers exhibit numerous such contact effects, and there is inter- and intra-speaker variation present in numerous lexical items (cf. Baclawski Jr., forthcoming).

Topicalization has been discussed in the Eastern Cham literature, but not specifically contrastive topic. Regular (i.e. non-contrastive) topic is marked by movement to the left periphery, as in (2). Blood (1977:63), Thurgood (2005:8), and others claim that left peripheral topics are optionally marked by a topicalizer *năn*, elsewhere the distal demonstrative ‘that’ (2a). This form is not found in the author’s data; instead, left peripheral topics are optionally marked by the relativizers *po* or *plh* (2b). It is worth noting that the previous literature is based on work with speakers from the same Cham villages in Ninh Thuận province, but those of older generations than in the data presented here. However, it is also worth noting that the apparent topicalizer *năn* in (2a) and other examples from the previous literature can also be analyzed as resumptive pronouns, which accompany hanging topics, separated by a pause, as in (2c).

- (2) a. pan năn (năn) t̚h loj  
 guy DIST DIST PROG swim  
 ‘That guy is swimming.’ (Brunelle & Phú: (51))
- b. l:ɔ n:u? (po) kaw t̚? b̆ɲ  
 meat chicken TOP 1SG PROG eat  
 ‘Chicken, I am eating.’
- c. l:ɔ m:ɔ năn<sub>i</sub> // kaw iŋ b̆ɲ năn<sub>i</sub>  
 meat cow DIST 1SG want eat DIST  
 ‘That beef, I want to eat it.’

In the following sections, the form *hu* is analyzed as a contrastive topic marker. In previous literature, *hu* is noted to be polyfunctional. Thurgood & Li (2003) and Brunelle & Phú (forthcoming) explore its grammaticalization paths. In contemporary Eastern Cham, *hu* is a verb meaning ‘have’, a clause-final root modal, and an existential copula (3a). In addition to these uses, *hu* often accompanies negation in a variety of positions, such as

predicate-initial (3b), and it can also mark contrastive topic in these same positions (3c).<sup>2</sup> The forms of *hu* in (3a–c) are different from the ‘have’ and modal uses, as they are not in verbal or clause-final positions, and the relevant meanings are absent. In Section 3, existential clefts, negation, and contrastive topic are explored further.

- (3) a. hu t̚wa n̩ʔ seh naw p̚ac  
 EXIST 2 CLF student go school  
 ‘There are two pupils who go to school.’ (Brunelle & Phú: (30))
- b. h̩l̩ʔ hu naw p̚ajʔ p̩ʔ h̩lej o  
 1SG.POL EXIST go study at which NEG  
 ‘I don’t go to school anywhere.’
- c. kaw hu b̩ʔn̩ l̩ːɔ n̩ːuʔ  
 1SG CT eat meat chicken  
 ‘I ate the chicken<sub>CT</sub>...’

Owing to the language contact situation, some attention should be paid to the corresponding constructions in Vietnamese. According to Tran (2016), contrastive topic in Vietnamese is marked by movement to the left periphery and the marker *thì* or the copula *là* (4). Tran notes that *thì* correlates with contrastive topics, but instead labels it a discourse particle.

- (4) Mãng cụt {thì/là} ai cũng thích.  
 mangosteen PRT/COP who also like  
 ‘Mangosteen<sub>CT</sub>, everybody likes.’ (Michaud & Brunelle 2015: (11)) VIETNAMESE

In terms of Eastern Cham *hu*, the Vietnamese form *có* has a similar grammaticalization path, originating as a verb meaning ‘have’, now also the existential copula, which can mark clefts (5a). Like Eastern Cham *hu*, Vietnamese *có* can appear predicate-initially. Tran (2016) analyzes these instances as verum focus markers (labelled VR; 5b). *Có* can also appear clause-finally following predicate raising to a higher position (5c). Section 4 shows that some, but not all instances of Eastern Cham *hu* can be attributed to verum focus, but it is one possible origin for the broader contrastive topic semantics.

- (5) a. Có hai sinh viên đi học.  
 EX.COP 2 student go school  
 ‘There are two pupils who go to school.’ VIETNAMESE  
 CONTEXT: Tan didn’t help Mai.
- b. Không. Tân #(có) giúp Mai.  
 not Tan VR help Mai.  
 ‘No, (that’s not true). Tan did help Mai.’  
 CONTEXT: Tan helped Mai.

<sup>2</sup>It should be noted that the prosody is different when *hu* accompanies negation. In these cases, *hu* has falling intonation; otherwise, it is generally the most prominent word in a sentence.

- c. Không. Lan giúp Mai thì có.  
 not Lan help Mai PRT VR  
 ‘No, (that’s not true). (The truth is) Lan did help Mai.’ (Tran 2016: (16–17))

## 2 *Hu* is a contrastive topic marker

Contrastive topic in Eastern Cham is marked by *hu*, based on recent diagnostics involving Question Under Discussion and exhaustivity. This section presents a paradigm demonstrating these facts and the possible positions of *hu* relative to the contrastive topic. Additionally, some cross-linguistic parallels are proposed. The relative position of *hu* and the contrastive topic is summarized in Table 1. *Hu* directly precedes subjects, certain adverbials, and extracted objects. For phrases inside the predicate, *hu* is predicate-initial.

Table 1: Position of *hu* and the CT

<i>hu</i>	SCT	V	DO	IO
S	V	DO	<i>hu</i>	Adv <sub>1</sub> CT
S	<i>hu</i>	V	DOCT	IO
S	<i>hu</i>	V	DO	IOCT
S	<i>hu</i>	V	DO	Adv <sub>2</sub> CT
<i>hu</i>	DOCT <sub>i</sub>	S	V	t <sub>i</sub>

Büring (2003) and Constant (2014) characterize contrastive topic in terms of Roberts’ (1998) Question Under Discussion (QUD) framework.<sup>3</sup> In the QUD framework, discourses are organized around questions and subquestions, which are modeled as a hierarchy of ‘questions under discussion’ (QUD’s). According to Roberts, a ‘strategy’ answers a QUD by separating it into multiple sub-QUD’s. In other words, a strategy is a multi-part answer to a QUD. Consider the discourse in (6). Speakers A and B are discussing the QUD *Who brought what?*, perhaps during a lively potluck. A direct answer to this QUD would be a list of pairs of people and their corresponding foods. Instead, Speaker A creates a strategy by picking out individuals from the set *who* and asking about each. In other words, the strategy is organized around the set *who*. By doing so, *Fred* is a contrastive topic in Speaker B’s response (marked in English by a characteristic rise-fall-rise intonation, denoted with all caps), because it is anaphoric to the organization of the QUD strategy. By contrast, *beans* is just an information focus (marked by small caps), because it directly answers the sub-QUD. Büring (2003) shows that contrastive topics must be anaphoric to the organization of a QUD strategy in this way.

(6) QUD: Who brought what?

a. A: Well, what about Fred, what did he bring?

STRATEGY: {who}

<sup>3</sup>Contrastive topic is also known as the ‘B-accent’ (Jackendoff 1972), ‘rise-fall-rise’ intonation, ‘sentence topics’ (Reinhart 1981), and others. See Büring (2003:538) for additional references.

b. B: FRED<sub>CT</sub> brought the BEANS<sub>Foc</sub>...(Adapted from Jackendoff 1972)

The diagnostics that emerge from this literature are that CT's should be members of a contextually salient set, they should refer to the set around which a QUD-strategy is organized, and they may not exhaustively evaluate this set with respect to the QUD. Anti-exhaustivity is an important aspect of contrastive topic. In (6b), there must be more people in the set *who*, who brought other foods. Otherwise, the sentence (6b) is a direct answer to the QUD, and there is no multi-part strategy. CT intonation is consistently infelicitous in exhaustive answers (cf. 7). Anti-exhaustivity throughout this paper is denoted by ellipses, which indicate that Speaker B has more to say, or is implying so.

(7) a. A: Who ate what?

b. B: #EVERYONE<sub>CT</sub> ate the BEANS<sub>Foc</sub>.

b'. B: #FRED<sub>Foc</sub> ate EVERYTHING<sub>CT</sub>.

Turning back to Eastern Cham, *hu* marks answers to questions, only if contrastive topic conditions are met. However, due to difficulties eliciting multiple *wh*-questions, a new paradigm is used, instead manipulating D-linking. D-linking is not discussed directly in Buring (2003) or Constant (2014), but there is reason to think that a D-linked *wh*-phrase, like *which person*, can prompt a CT answer, like FRED. Comorovski (1996:110) claims that D-linked *wh*-phrases correspond with the 'sortal key' in multiple *wh*-questions (alternately, 'sorting key'; using terminology from Kuno 1982). The sortal key refers to the phrase around which an answer is sorted or broken up. For example, the sortal key in (8b) is the contextually salient set of people. According to Constant (2014:40,90), contrastive topics also mark sortal keys. From this, we assert that a D-linked *wh*-phrase will force a contrastive topic in a paired list response, if it picks out a non-exhaustive subset.<sup>4</sup> This makes the prediction that the CT intonation in (8b) is an appropriate response to (a).

(8) QUD: Who brought what?

a. A: Which person brought what? STRATEGY/SORTAL KEY: {people}

b. B: FRED<sub>CT</sub> brought the BEANS<sub>Foc</sub>...

Henceforth, anti-exhaustive answers to D-linked *wh*-phrases will be used as a proxy for contrastive topic. First, in the context (9a), *jaŋ hlej* 'which person' is D-linked, and *zut* 'friend' is contextually taken to refer to multiple people.<sup>5</sup> Since 'Thuận' is a non-exhaustive subset of 'which person', it is predicted to be a contrastive topic. Here, *hu* is preferred in the response, and it must precede *thùən* 'Thuận'; any other position in the sentence is infelicitous (e.g. 9b'). If the preceding *wh*-phrase is non-D-linked (e.g. *thej* 'who'), or if *zut* 'friend' only refers to one person, the presence of *hu* is infelicitous. This is because the response would exhaustively answer the QUD, violating the anti-exhaustivity of contrastive topics.

<sup>4</sup>In multiple *wh*-questions, with multiple D-linked *wh*-phrases, there must be competition between multiple sortal keys.

<sup>5</sup>Honorifics and third person pronouns are generally unmarked for number.

- (9) a. jaŋ hlej ʔa zut maj pǎʔ ni  
 person which invite friend come in this  
 A: ‘Which person invited you [friend] to come here?’ EASTERN CHAM  
 [Directed at multiple people]
- b. hu thùəŋ ʔa tʃej maj pǎʔ ni...  
 CT Thuận invite self come in this  
 B: ‘Thuận<sub>CT</sub> invited me to come here...’
- b’. #thùəŋ hu ʔa tʃej maj pǎʔ ni...  
 Thuận CT invite self come in this  
 INTENDED: B: ‘Thuận<sub>CT</sub> invited me to come here...’

*Hu* must also precede certain adverbial contrastive topics. In (10a), the D-linked *wh*-phrase *thũn hlej* ‘which year’ indicates that the temporal adverbial is the sortal key. In the answer, *hu* must precede the adverbial *klaw plũh thũn ni* ‘thirty years ago’. It cannot appear in the other positions indicated by brackets.

- (10) a. mɛʔ mi hi khĩn kuʔ thũn hlej  
 mother father 2SG/PL get.married year which  
 A: ‘Which year did your parents get married?’  
 [Directed at multiple people]
- b. {#hu} mɛʔ mi kaw {#hu} khĩn kuʔ {hu} klaw plũh thũn  
 CT mother father 1SG CT get.married CT 3 10 year  
 ni ɟi...  
 this already  
 B: ‘My parents got married thirty years<sub>CT</sub> ago...’

Contrastive topics within the predicate, however, follow a different pattern: *hu* must be predicate-initial. (11) illustrates a contrastive topic direct object. In the question, *jaŋ hlej* ‘which person’ is a D-linked direct object, Eastern Cham being a *wh*-in situ language. In the answer, *hu* must precede the verb *ʔa* ‘invite’, again as illustrated by brackets. Even though this pattern is different than the preceding examples, *hu* is still a CT marker. As demonstrated by (11b’), *hu* is infelicitous if the response exhaustively answers the QUD. Here, ‘Thuận and I’ represents the exhaustive set of inviters in the context.

- (11) a. zut ʔa jaŋ hlej maj pǎʔ ni  
 friend invite which person come in this  
 A: ‘Which person did you [friend] invite to come here?’  
 [Directed at multiple people]
- b. {#hu} tʃej {hu} ʔa {#hu} thùəŋ maj pǎʔ ni...  
 CT self CT invite CT Thuận come in this  
 B: ‘I invited Thuận<sub>CT</sub> to come here...’
- b’. hǎʔ thəŋm thùəŋ {#hu} tǎʔa kɛn ni maj pǎʔ ni mĩn  
 1SG.POL with Thuận CT invite Kenny come in this EMPH

B: ‘Thuận and I only invited Kenny<sub>CT</sub>.’

(12) gives an example of an indirect object contrastive topic. In this case, *hu* must also be predicate-initial. As noted in the introduction, this results in a string ambiguity between direct and indirect object contrastive topics. It seems likely that this is disambiguated by prosody, with some kind of stress or intonation marking one phrase in the predicate over another. More data with high sound quality is needed to conclude how prosody contributes to contrastive topic here.

- (12) a. *zut pɿΛh pɔh h:ɔŋm ka jaŋ hleɟ*  
 friend give CLF papaya to person which  
 A: ‘Which person did you [friend] give the papaya to?’  
 [Directed at multiple people]
- b. *kaw {hu} pɿΛh pɔh h:ɔŋm {#hu} ka thùən...*  
 1SG CT give CLF papaya CT to Thuận  
 B: ‘I gave the papaya to Thuận<sub>CT</sub>...’

To add to this potential ambiguity, when certain adverbials are contrastive topics, as in (13), *hu* must again precede the verb. Perhaps the difference between adverbials that pattern like this and adverbials that pattern as in (10) maps onto a distinction between low and high adverbials. However, more data is needed to test such a claim.

- (13) a. *miŋ pjoɟ zut naw jum ɤa fe piən hleɟ*  
 yesterday friend go drink cafe time which  
 A: ‘What time were you at the cafe yesterday?’  
 [Directed at multiple people]
- b. *miŋ pjoɟ kaw {hu} naw jum ɤa fe {#hu} tu? mɿΛn...*  
 yesterday 1SG CT go drink cafe CT hour 8  
 B: ‘Yesterday, I went to the cafe at eight o’clock<sub>CT</sub>...’

Finally, there is a syntactic means to disambiguate contrastive topics in the predicate. If a contrastive topic is extracted to the left periphery, then it can be marked directly by *hu*. In (14a), *pɔh h:ɔŋm* ‘the papaya’ is extracted to the left periphery and marked with *hu*. This would be impossible if *pɔh h:ɔŋm* remained in situ. Conversely, it is possible for *hu* to continue to mark the predicate, as in (14b). Here, it seems that the contrastive topic remains in the predicate, such as the indirect object ‘Thuận’.

- (14) a. *hu pɔh h:ɔŋm kaw pɿΛh ka thùən...*  
 CT CLF papaya 1SG give to Thuận  
 B: ‘The papaya<sub>CT</sub>, I gave to Thuận...’
- b. *pɔh h:ɔŋm kaw hu pɿΛh ka thùən...*  
 CLF papaya 1SG CT give to Thuận  
 B: ‘The papaya, I gave to Thuận<sub>CT</sub>...’

A question that remains to be answered is to what extent CT marking is orthogonal to topicalization. If the movement in (14a) above is topicalization, then *pəh huəŋm* ‘the papaya’ is marked both as a topic and a CT. If this is the case, then what conditions this double marking, and when can a CT not also be marked as a topic?

To summarize, *hu* is a CT marker in Eastern Cham. It marks phrases that are anaphoric to a QUD strategy and do not exhaustively answer the QUD. If the contrastive topic is inside the predicate, *hu* is predicate-initial. If the contrastive topic is a subject, certain adverbials, or phrases otherwise extracted from the predicate, *hu* can precede them directly. This pattern is represented by Table 2. A number of questions remain to explain this distribution, from the role of prosody to the distinction between the two sets of adverbials, and the role of movement to the left periphery.

Table 2: Position of *hu* and the CT

<i>hu</i>	SCT	V	DO	IO
S	V	DO	<i>hu</i>	Adv <sub>1</sub> CT
S	<i>hu</i>	V	DOCT	IO
S	<i>hu</i>	V	DO	IOCT
S	<i>hu</i>	V	DO	Adv <sub>2</sub> CT
<i>hu</i>	DOCT <sub>i</sub>	S	V	t <sub>i</sub>

While contrastive topic in English is marked by prosody, along with movement to the left periphery (i.e. topicalization), there is cross-linguistic support for marking CT by other means. In Japanese, there is an overt contrastive topic marker *wa*, which accompanies movement to the left-periphery (Kuno 1973, a.o.). In Mandarin Chinese, contrastive topic is marked by *ne*. Contrastive topics optionally move to the left-periphery, in which case *ne* follows them. However, contrastive topics may also remain in situ, in which case *ne* occurs sentence-finally (Constant 2014:299). CT markers are also known to give rise to ambiguities. Contrastive topic is marked in Paraguayan Guaraní by a second-position clitic =*katu*, regardless of the identity of the CT (Tonhauser 2012). Of these, Eastern Cham *hu* is perhaps most similar to Mandarin *ne*, except that it is ordered to the left of the relevant constituents.

### 3 *Hu* and existential closure

As discussed in the introduction, the contrastive topic *hu* is homophonous with a *hu* that overtly marks existential closure in Eastern Cham. Previously, *hu* has been described as an existential copula (Thurgood & Li 2003; Brunelle & Phú, forthcoming), as it can introduce new referents in a cleft-like construction (15a). Unlike a copula, though, in many sentences, negation is accompanied by a predicate-initial *hu* (15b), and negative *wh*-indefinites must be licensed by *hu* (15c).

- (15) a. *hu twa nɿʔ seh naw pac*  
 EXIST 2 CLF student go school



‘There are two pupils who go to school.’ (Brunelle & Phú: (30))

- b. kaw hu ɓǎŋ l:ɔ n:u? o  
 1SG EXIST eat meat chicken NEG  
 ‘I didn’t eat the chicken.’
- c. hǎ? hu naw pǎj? pǎ? hlej o  
 1SG.POL EXIST go study at which NEG  
 ‘I don’t go to school anywhere.’

This distribution corresponds naturally with the existential closure marker reported in the Bura language by Zimmermann (2007). According to Zimmermann, *adi* combines with predicates and existentially binds individual or event variables, when no other such binding is possible. Existential closure is needed in clauses like (16a), due to the absence of a verb. Negative eventive clauses also require *adi*, assuming that verbs cannot existentially bind their outermost event variable (16b; Zimmermann 2007:338). This also assumes that the context supplies existential binding in positive eventive clauses, making *adi* unnecessary in clauses with positive polarity (Zimmermann 2007:348).

- (16) a. mda adi ti tsa kuga  
 person ADI REL 3SG invite  
 ‘There is somebody that he invited.’ (Zimmermann 2007:(7)) BURA
- b. pindar adi ata sa mbal wa  
 Pindar ADI FUT drink beer NEG  
 ‘Pindar will not drink beer.’ (Zimmermann 2007:(5))

This account of Bura predicts that existential closure markers should appear in clauses with indefinites and no lexical verb, and negative eventive clauses. Both of these predictions are borne out with Eastern Cham *hu*, at least in its existential sense. First, there is a definiteness effect in existential copular clauses (17a). Second, according to the available data, *hu* appears to be necessary in negative eventive clauses (17b), but not negative individual-level clauses, such as those about knowing and ability (17b–c). More data is needed to fully test this point, especially since the structure of negative clauses has undergone recent change and may be subject to formality-based variation (Brunelle & Phú, forthcoming). However, it is true that *hu* is generally obligatory in negative eventive clauses elicited out of the blue, while it is largely absent in sluicing and ability modal constructions, as in (17b–c).

- (17) a. hu {tha raŋ/#oŋ nǎn/#thùəŋ} tɔ? pǎ? ŋ:iw nǎn  
 EXIST one person/old.man DIST/Thuận PROG in outside DIST  
 ‘There is {a person/that old man/Thuận} out there.’ EASTERN CHAM
- b. hu l:ɔ n:ujh tɔ? pǎ? ŋ:iw l:an pɔ kaw thaw thej o  
 EXIST many person COP at outside street but 1SG know who NEG  
 ‘There are many people out in the street, but I don’t know who.’

- c. kaw jum ɣa fe ɕiŋ o  
 1SG drink coffee able NEG  
 ‘I can’t drink coffee.’

In Eastern Cham, the existential *hu* also interacts with negative *wh*-indefinites. Negative *wh*-indefinites must be in the scope of *hu*. If the subject is a negative *wh*-indefinite, *hu* precedes it (18a). If the negative *wh*-indefinite is in the predicate, like the object *kit* ‘what/something’, then *hu* is predicate-initial (18b–c). Finally, *hu* precedes extracted object *wh*-indefinites (18d). In all these cases, negation scopes above the existential operator. This can be explained by positing that *o* ‘NEG’ is merged in a higher position in the clausal spine than *hu*. While the syntactic distributions are not identical, this is true with *không* ‘NEG’ and *có* ‘EX.COP’ in Vietnamese. Tran (2016), among others analyze the negation operator as the specifier of a phrase headed by the existential operator.<sup>6</sup>

- (18) a. #(hu) thej maj pǎ? ni o  
 EXIST who come in PROX NEG  
 ‘Nobody came here.’ / #‘Somebody didn’t come here.’      ¬ ≫ ∃
- b. kaw #(hu) bǎŋ kit o  
 1SG EXIST eat what NEG  
 ‘I didn’t eat anything.’ / #‘I didn’t eat something.’      ¬ ≫ ∃
- c. hǎ? #(hu) naw paj? pǎ? hlɛj o  
 1SG.POL EXIST go study at which NEG  
 ‘I don’t go to school anywhere.’ / #‘I don’t go to school somewhere.’      ¬ ≫ ∃
- d. hu thej kaw boh ɕij l̩:an o  
 EXIST who 1SG see middle street NEG  
 ‘I didn’t see anyone in the middle of the street.’ /  
 #‘There is somebody I didn’t see in the middle of the street.’      ¬ ≫ ∃

Zimmermann (2007:346) contends that Bura *adi* is merged above  $\nu$ P/AspP, like other existential markers. This same analysis can be extended to Eastern Cham *hu*. Predicate-initial instances of *hu* demonstrate this straightforwardly (18b–c). The position of *hu* and subject and extracted negative *wh*-indefinites in (18a,d) can then be explained as clefts.

There are several reasons to conclude, then, that Eastern Cham *hu* is an existential closure marker, informally a direct spelling out of  $\exists$ . The CT marker *hu* may have a similar syntactic distribution, but it does not share other distributional properties. For example, the definiteness effect disappears with the CT marker. In the example below, and many others in Section 2, the complement of *hu* does not need to be indefinite. Instead, it must have the contrastive topic properties laid out in that section.

<sup>6</sup>Albeit, in Vietnamese, the existential copula is not required for negative *wh*-indefinites. In fact, the opposite is true; it is required for positive *wh*-indefinites. Perhaps this is due to the status of *có* as an existential copula, but not a general existential closure marker.

- (19) hu thùən ʔa tʃej maj pǎʔ ni...  
 CT Thuận invite self come in this  
 ‘Thuận<sub>CT</sub> invited me to come here...’

However, there is some evidence that the existential *hu* and CT *hu* perform the same function. In (20), *hu* appears to mark contrastive topic of *p̄ih n̄ujh* ‘everyone’, and also existentially binds the event variable of *mjæ* ‘dance’.<sup>7</sup> However, it is also possible that there are two lexical items reduced to one by haplology or some other process.

- (20) CONTEXT: Did everyone dance?  
 hu p̄ih n̄ujh mjæ o // m̄n hu l:o n̄ujh mjæ  
 CT every person dance NEG but EXIST many person dance  
 ‘Not everyone danced, but many people did.’

To summarize this section, as laid out in Table 1, Eastern Cham *hu* and Bura *adi* have the characteristics of general existential closure markers, while Vietnamese *có* is more restricted, as an existential copula. The Eastern Cham CT marker *hu*, however, has different characteristics altogether.

	Existential cleft	Negative eventive clause
Eastern Cham <i>hu</i> <sub>EXIST</sub>	✓	✓
Bura <i>adi</i>	✓	✓
Vietnamese <i>có</i> <sub>EX.COP</sub>	✓	✗
Eastern Cham <i>hu</i> <sub>CT</sub>	✗	✗

Figure 1: Existential closure in Eastern Cham, Bura, and Vietnamese  
 Solid line = General existential closure marker  
 Dashed line = Existential copula

## 4 *Hu* and verum focus

The final use of *hu* to be discussed is verum focus, which we argue is an instance of propositional contrastive topic. As discussed in the introduction, the closest parallel to

<sup>7</sup>Constant (2014) and others have noted that CT’s resist maximal elements like *all*. The use of *p̄ih n̄ujh* ‘everyone’ in this example is ameliorated by negation and the contrast with *ko n̄ujh* ‘many people’.

*hu* in Vietnamese is the existential copula *có*, which Tran (2016) argues is a verum focus marker, when it is in predicate-initial position. Verum focus is found when a proposition is contextually given, and there is focus on the polarity of the proposition. Examples given include the denial of a negative clause (21a) and an indirect polar question (21b). The verum focus marker can also cooccur with the contrastive topic marker *thì*, as in (21c), accompanied by predicate raising, leaving *thì có* clause-final.

(21) CONTEXT: Tan didn't help Mai.

- a. Không. Tân #(có) giúp Mai.  
 not Tan VR help Mai.  
 'No, (that's not true). Tan did help Mai.'

VIETNAMESE

CONTEXT: I wonder whether Nam goes to church or not.

- b. Nam #(có) đi nhà thờ.  
 Nam VR go to church  
 'Nam does go to church.'

CONTEXT: Tan helped Mai.

- c. Không. Lan giúp Mai thì có.  
 not Lan help Mai PRT VR

'No, (that's not true). (The truth is) Lan did help Mai.' (Tran 2016: (15–17))

Gutzmann, Hartmann & Matthewson (2017) propose a new analysis of verum focus, based on cross-linguistic evidence (see also Gutzmann & Castroviejo Miró's (2011) earlier work). Instead of marking focus, it marks a certain discourse relation to the QUD. Evidence for this approach is that verum foci cannot be uttered out of the blue, and they cannot be direct answers to questions (22a–b). If verum focus were simply focus on polarity, it is unclear why it should be infelicitous in answers to polar questions. In some way, the context must be richer in order to license verum focus. For example, verum focus is ameliorated if the speaker makes some kind of continuation or contrast with the statement (22b').

(22) CONTEXT: Out of the blue.

- a. #Alex DOES love Blair.

CONTEXT: Does Alex love Blair?

- b. #Alex DOES love Blair.

- b'. Alex DOES love Blair, but...

As a "first sketch" analysis, Gutzmann, Hartmann & Matthewson (2017:42) propose that verum focus expresses the speaker's wish to prevent the QUD from being reduced ('downgraded') to  $\neg p$ . In other words, the speaker expresses a desire to bias the QUD away from  $\neg p$ . We propose an alternative hypothesis, that verum focus actually marks propositional contrastive topic. Recall that contrastive topic requires a contextually salient set and a non-exhaustive answer to a QUD. Gutzmann, Hartmann & Matthewson's account says

comparable things about verum focus. They conclude that  $\neg p$  must be a possible alternative to  $p$  in the context, either overtly discussed or contextually salient. Then, by positing that verum focus only marks a speaker’s wish instead of a direct assertion of  $p$ , it is assured that a verum focus will never be an exhaustive answer to the QUD. Verum focus, then, has the classic characteristics of contrastive topic.

To illustrate, consider again the potluck context. Speakers A and B are discussing the QUD *What did Fred bring?* Speaker A starts a QUD-strategy by picking out one member of the set *what* and asking a polar question. Here, the sortal key is the set of such polar questions.<sup>8</sup> Both a positive and negative answer to (23a), then, would be anaphoric to the QUD-strategy. This alone is not enough to license contrastive topic. If Speaker B answers the polar question exhaustively, verum focus intonation is infelicitous (23b). If the answer is non-exhaustive, however, then the intonation is felicitous (23b’).

- (23) QUD: What did Fred bring?
- a. A: Did Fred bring the beans? STRATEGY/SORTAL KEY: {Fred brought {what}}
- b. B: #Yes, Fred DID<sub>CT</sub> bring the beans.
- b’. B: [We weren’t sure he would do it, but...] Fred DID<sub>CT</sub> bring the beans.

In Vietnamese, it is at least sometimes clear that verum focus marks propositional contrastive topic. In (24), repeated below, *thì* marks the entire proposition *Lan giúp Mai* ‘Lan helped Mai’ as a CT, according to Tran’s (2016) analysis, in addition to the verum focus marked by *có*.

- (24) CONTEXT: Tan helped Mai.
- Không. Lan giúp Mai thì có.  
not Lan help Mai PRT VR  
‘No, (that’s not true). (The truth is) Lan did help Mai.’ (Tran 2016: (15–17))

More research is needed to test whether these contrastive topic conditions are sufficient to explain the breadth of verum focus contexts. If true, this would provide a natural explanation for Eastern Cham *hu* as a broad contrastive topic marker. Like the Vietnamese *có*, *hu* is also found in verum focus contexts (25b). Here, Speaker B is indirectly answering the *wh*-question by answering a polar question, then giving a non-exhaustive answer.

- (25) a. jut naw paj? pǎ? hlej  
friend go study at which  
A: ‘Where do you [friend] go to school?’ EASTERN CHAM  
STRATEGY/SORTAL KEY: {You go to school {where}}
- b. ʔǎhɿǎ? hu naw tha sỏ tǎỏ...  
1SG.POL CT go 1 number(VN) place(VN)  
B: ‘I do go somewhere...[but I can’t tell you].’

<sup>8</sup>Note that the QUD framework assumes that there is always a level of sub-QUD consisting of polar questions for each member of the most embedded *wh*-alternative set.

By contrast, *hu* is infelicitous in direct answers to polar questions (26b), as it is an exhaustive answer to the QUD. This also aligns with Gutzmann, Hartmann & Matthewson’s (2017) cross-linguistic generalization.

- (26) a. *thùə̀n zut p̚ləj ɸi: ni ʔjaw? hləj*  
 Thuận friend buy beer PROX correct which  
 A: ‘Thuận, you [friend] bought this beer, right?’
- b. *ʔjaw? // thùə̀n (#hu) p̚ləj ɸi: ni*  
 correct Thuận CT buy beer PROX  
 B: ‘Right, I did buy this beer.’

Table 2 summarizes this section. The Eastern Cham CT marker *hu* is found in classic CT contexts, as well as verum focus contexts. We posit that this makes *hu* a general CT marker that can combine with at least individuals and propositions. Vietnamese *có* is more restricted, only being used in verum focus contexts. Though, it can cooccur with the CT marker *thì* (cf. 21c above).

	Verum focus contexts	Contrastive topic contexts
Eastern Cham <i>hu</i> <sub>CT</sub>	✓	✓
Vietnamese <i>có</i>	✓	✗
Eastern Cham <i>hu</i> <sub>EXIST</sub>	✗	✗

Figure 2: Verum focus in Eastern Cham and Vietnamese  
 Solid line = General CT marker  
 Dashed line = Verum focus marker

## 5 Conclusion

To conclude, Eastern Cham *hu* acts variously as a contrastive topic, existential closure, and verum focus marker. We hypothesize that these three uses represent two separate lexical items: *hu*<sub>1</sub>, a general CT marker, and *hu*<sub>2</sub>, the existential. This relies on an analysis of verum focus as propositional contrastive topic. This adds to the known grammaticalization paths of *hu* from a verb meaning ‘have’ to a root modal and existential copula (Thurgood & Li 2003). One possible historical account for this current state is that *hu*<sub>2</sub> existed prior, with the syntactic distribution described in Section 3. Then, verum focus semantics were calqued from Vietnamese *có*, such that some instances of *hu* marked

verum focus. But since *hu* can also combine with individual predicates, verum focus (i.e. contrastive topic) semantics spread to its current status as a general CT marker. While this is a tentative conjecture, the negation paradigm and verum focus semantics appear to be recent developments (cf. Brunelle & Phú, forthcoming on negation), so contemporary fieldwork along with manuscript analysis can be performed to test it.

A syntactic analysis of the CT marking *hu* most naturally derives from the syntax of the existential *hu*. In Section 3, it was hypothesized that the existential *hu* is merged above  $\nu$ P. The CT marking *hu* can be accounted for in a similar way. When a CT is inside the  $\nu$ P, *hu* is in its base-generated position, as in (27a). When the CT is outside the  $\nu$ P, like a subject or extracted object, they are instead in a cleft with *hu*. However, the *hu* here is no longer an existential copula, but instead marks contrastive topic.

- (27) a. kaw hu pɹah pɔh h:ɔŋm ka thùən...  
 1SG CT give CLF papaya to Thuận  
 ‘I gave the papaya<sub>CT</sub> to Thuận...’ / ‘I gave the papaya to Thuận<sub>CT</sub>...’
- b. hu [thùən [ʔa tʃej maj pǎ? ni]]...  
 CT Thuận invite self come in this  
 ‘Thuận<sub>CT</sub> invited me to come here...’
- c. hu [pɔh h:ɔŋm [kaw pɹah ka thùən]]...  
 CT CLF papaya 1SG give to Thuận  
 ‘The papaya<sub>CT</sub>, I gave to Thuận...’

Problematic cases for this analysis, though, are adverbials that can be directly preceded by *hu*, as in (28a). These do not appear to be clefts, as they cannot appear sentence-initially (28b).

- (28) a. mɛ? mi kaw khĩn ku? hu klaw plũh thũn ni ɕi...  
 mother father 1SG get.married CT 3 10 year this already  
 ‘My parents got married thirty years<sub>CT</sub> ago...’
- b. #hu klaw plũh thũn ni ɕi mɛ? mi kaw khĩn ku?...  
 INTENDED: ‘My parents got married thirty years<sub>CT</sub> ago...’

Many questions for future research have already been posed in this paper on Eastern Cham *hu* and the connection between contrastive topic and other parts of the grammar like verum focus and topicalization. To add one final direction, the relation between contrastive topic and *wh*-phrases needs further investigation. It is known that CT’s may appear in interrogative sentences (Constant 2014:64), but less known is whether *wh*-phrases themselves can be CT’s. In Eastern Cham, *hu* can mark *wh*-phrases in apparent contrastive topic contexts. In (29a), *hu* precedes *thej* in a content *wh*-question. Note that this is a *wh*-question, which implies that *hu* is not an existential in this case.

- (29) a. hu thej tʃə?a zut maj  
 CT who invite friend come  
 A: ‘Who invited you[friend] to come?’

(≠‘Is there somebody who invited you[friend] to come?’)

b. səʔaj            hǎʔ            tǝʔa    hǎʔ            thɔŋm̄    səʔaj            thùən  
older.sibling 1SG.POL invite 1SG.POL with older.sibling Thuận

B: ‘My older brother invited Thuận and I.’

While *wh*-phrases are often assumed to be foci, not topics or contrastive topics, it is clear that *wh*-phrases can undergo topicalization in Eastern Cham (Baclawski Jr. 2015). Perhaps it is also the case that they can be contrastive topics.

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