



Focus, Q-particles and prosodic inversion

Line Mikkelsen, Grethe Schmidt & Ellen Thrane*

Abstract. This paper examines a second-position focus clitic in Kalaallisut (Inuit, Greenland) and argues that it provides support for Cable's (2010) theory of Q-particles. Moreover, we demonstrate that anti-pied-piping, in the sense of Branan and Erlewine (2023), extends to possessive structures, a configuration not discussed in their work. Finally, the paper provides the first detailed analysis of the interaction between syntactic structure and prosodic inversion in Kalaallisut focused possessive nominals.

Keywords. focus, anti-pied-piping, prosodic inversion, Q-particle, Inuit

1. Introduction. In the classic analysis of A'-movement some A'-element—a *wh*-phrase, a focused phrase or a relative operator—moves to the specifier of functional head high on the clausal spine (Chomsky 1986; Cheng 1991; Rizzi 1997 among many others). More recently Cable (2010) has developed a different view: the A'-bar element forms a constituent with a Q-Particle and it is that constituent that moves. Cable (2010) focuses on *wh*-questions but suggests (pp. 200-205) that the analysis can be extended to focus movement (Hedding 2022) and relativization (Márquez 2024). Against this backdrop, we argue for a Q-Particle analysis of focus fronting in Kalaallisut (Inuit, Greenland) coupled with a prosodic inversion analysis of the second-position behavior of the focus clitic. Empirical support for a Q-Particle analysis over a classic analysis of focus fronting comes from focus marking of possessive DPs and from in-situ foci.

In addition we show that focus marking in Kalaallisut has implications for what Branan & Erlewine (2023) call 'anti-pied-piping': morphosyntactic marking of focus targets a subpart of the logical focus. The first implication is that anti-pied-piping is not limited to the configurations discussed in Branan & Erlewine (2023), namely clausal and predicate focus, but extends to complex DPs. The second implication is that the dual marking of focus in Kalaallisut—focus particle and focus movement—challenges their theoretical account of anti-pied-piping because only particle placement displays anti-pied-piping whereas focus movement targets the entire logical focus. We argue that a prosodic inversion account of focus particle placement in Kalaallisut resolves this tension. Morphosyntactically speaking, there is no anti-pied-piping at all in Kalaallisut focus marking and therefore no size mismatch in focus marking. Finally, we briefly explore the consequences of a prosodic inversion analysis for other instances of anti-pied-piping discussed in their paper.

2. Background. This work reported here stems from a collaboration between linguist Line Mikkelsen and Kalaallisut speakers Grethe Schmidt and Ellen Thrane. The collaboration is centered around weekly one-on-one elicitations conducted in Danish. The Kalaallisut examples below were translated into English by the first author. All elicitation recordings are archived in the California Language Archive.

Kalaallisut is a member of the Inuit-Yupik-Unangan language family, which is spoken from Eastern Russia across Alaska and Canada to Greenland. It is the sole official language of Green-

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land, with around 50,000 speakers in Greenland and another 17,000 in Denmark (Naja Blytman Trondhjem p.c.). The language is acquired by children in the home and taught in school. Danish has been a colonial power in Greenland and Danish language has a big presence, especially in administration. English has a growing presence.

Two linguistic features—word order and clitics—are of immediate relevance for the arguments we make below. Starting with word order, Fortescue (1993) makes a sustained argument that the unmarked word order in Kalaallisut is SOV, as in (1).^{1,2}

- (1) Naja-p Juuna ikior-paa.
 Naja-ERG Juuna.ABS help-3SG>3SG.IND
 Naja helped Juuna. Ellen Thrane AFX-1

This conclusion is based on an extensive corpus study and supported by elicitation, in which SOV order is always accepted and always volunteered in an out-of-the-blue context. Second, Kalaallisut has a rich inventory of second position (2P) enclitics; see Molich (2022) for details and discussion of relevant literature. Most 2P enclitics have clause-level meaning and their domain is the CP. This is the case, for instance, for the discourse enclitic (=mi) in (2):³

- (2) [Illim=**mi** ungasissu-pilus-su-u-vutit CP].
 2SG.ABS=MI far.away-colossal-big-COP-2SG.IND
 You are infinitely far away. (de Saint-Exupéry 2017:34 via Molich 2022:69)

For other 2P clitics the domain is smaller, e.g. DP. This is the case for =ttaaq ‘also’ in (3).⁴

- (3) [Inu-it=**taaq** taakku suliffi-isa illuta-at DP]
 human-PL.ERG=also these.PL.ERG work.place-3PL>3PL.ERG house-3PL>3PL.ABS
 amerla-qi-su-tigut ajor-luinnar-put.
 many-very-nomz-EQUA.PL be.bad-completely-3PL.IND
 [Also the physical surroundings of those people’s workplace] are in many ways very poor. (Sermitsiaq⁵ 11/15/2007 via Molich 2022:86)

=mi and =ttaaq are specifically 2W clitics in the sense of Halpern (1995:15): they are positioned after the first phonological word in their domain, which need not correspond to the maximal projection in their domain. In (2) the domain of =mi is the clause (Molich 2022:69), but =mi attaches to the first word of the clause. In (3) the syntactic domain of the clitic is the entire complex

¹ Elicited and volunteered examples are annotated with the name of the speaker and an alpha-numerical code identifying it in First Author’s notebooks. Examples from the literature are adapted to current standard orthography and glossed in accordance with footnote 2.

² Glossing conventions: ABS = absolutive case; ACC = accusative; COP = copula; ERG = ergative case; FOC = focus; FUT = future; GEN = genitive; IND = indicative mood; INST = instrumental; NOM = nominative; PART = participial mood; PL = plural; PRT = particle; SG = singular; TOP = topic. 3SG>3SG.IND means third person singular subject acting on third person singular object in indicative mood. The morphological distinction between absolutive and ergative case is neutralized in plural and pronominal DPs. I gloss these for case based on their syntactic function.

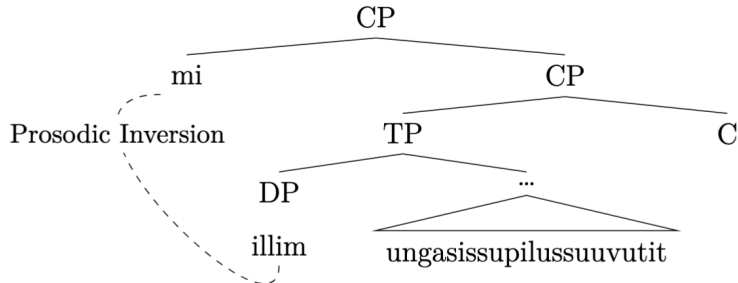
³ Molich translates =mi with the Danish discourse particle *jo*, which is equally impossible to gloss and translate into English, so here we simply gloss =mi as =MI and leave it out of the translation. The important point here is its position, not its meaning.

⁴ Possessors are marked with ergative case. 3PL>3PL.ERG means 3PL possessor with 3PL possessum in ergative case.

⁵ Greenlandic newspaper.

DP, but the clitic is realized on the first word of that DP. In the syntax these W2 clitics are generated above their host and then undergo PROSODIC INVERSION with the first phonological word to their right (Halpern 1995; King 1996:289-290). This analysis is illustrated for (2) in (4).⁶

(4)



3. Focus fronting. Kalaallisut has a focus construction in which the focused element appears in initial position followed by an agreeing focus enclitic (=una for singular foci, =uku for plural foci) and the verb appears in the participial mood; see Fortescue (1984:74ff, 184ff), Molich (2022:100-107), and Mikkelsen et al. (2026). Anticipating the discussion of anti-pied-piping in section 6, we bracket the focused constituent with a subscripted F for focus in the English translation. Recall that underlying word order is SOV.⁷

- (5) **Meeqqa-n=uku** ippassaq Naja-p ikior-ai.
 child-PL=FOC.PL yesterday Naja-ERG help-3SG>3PL.PART
 It was [the children]_F Naja helped yesterday.

Ellen Thrane CNF-4

For the second and third author, =una/=uku focus fronting is obligatory. Leaving =una/=uku and their host in situ is ungrammatical:

- (6) *Ippassaq Naja-p **meeqqa-n=uku** ikior-ai.
 yesterday Naja-ERG child-PL.ABS=FOC.PL help-3SG>3PL.PART
 Intended: It was [the children]_F Naja helped yesterday.

Ellen Thrane CNG-2

It is similarly ungrammatical to front only =uku

- (7) ***Uku** ippassaq Naja-p meeqqa-t ikior-rai.
 FOC.PL yesterday Naja-ERG child-PL.ABS help-3SG>3PL.PART
 Intended: It was [the children]_F Naja helped yesterday.

Grethe Schmidt CXC-GS-2

It is also ungrammatical to front just the focused XP without =uku. This holds true whether =uku is realized as an independent word (8), undergoes prosodic inversion with the verb immediately to its right (9) or leans onto the immediately preceding adverb (10).

⁶ There are several alternative analyses of 2W clitics, including morphological Lowering (e.g. Embick & Noyer 2001), prosodic subcategorization (e.g. Jenks & Sande 2025), and phonological optimization (e.g. Bennett et al. 2016). It remains to be investigated whether our argument for a Q-particle analysis of Kalaallisut focus fronting based on particle placement in possessive DPs goes through under each of these alternative analyses of 2W clitics.

⁷ Note that una/=uku trigger nasalization of a preceding oral stop. The base form of ‘children’ is meeqqat.

- (8) *Meeqqa-t ippassaq Naja-p **uku** ikior-rai
 child-PL.ABS yesterday Naja-ERG FOC.PL help-3SG>3SG.PART
 It is [the children]_F Naja helped yesterday. Grethe Schmidt CXC-GS-3
- (9) *Meeqqa-t Naja-p ippassaq ikior-rai=**uku**
 child-pl.abs Naja-ERG yesterday help-3SG>3PL.PART=FOC.PL
 Intended: It was [the children]_F Naja helped yesterday. Grethe Schmidt CXD-GS-1
- (10) *Meeqqa-t Naja-p ippassar=**uku** ikior-rai
 child-PL.ABS Naja-ERG yesterday=FOC.PL help-3SG>3PL.PART
 It is [the children]_F Naja helped yesterday. Grethe Schmidt CXD-GS-2

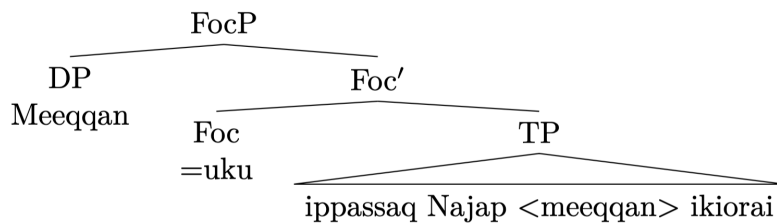
This focus fronting pattern is summarized in (1).

FRONTING	GRAMMATICALITY
clitic & focused phrase	✓
clitic only	✗
focused phrase only	✗
neither	✗

Table 1. Kalaallisut focus fronting pattern

Starting with the classic analysis of A'-movement, (5) would have the derivation in (11).

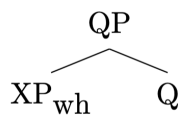
(11)



On this analysis the adjacency of =uku to its host is the result of syntactic movement of the host to the specifier of the projection headed by the focus clitic (King 1996, Weisser 2025 a.o.).

4. Q-Particle analysis. Cable (2010) offers very different analysis of A'-movement, based on a case study of Tlingit (Na Dene, Alaska) *wh*-questions. Instead of the question particle (Q-Particle) *sá* heading a functional projection on the clausal spine, the question particle takes the *wh*-phrase as its complement forming a QP, as in (12).

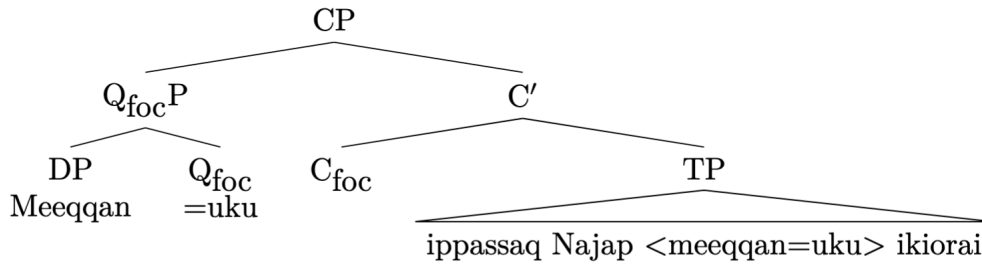
(12)



The QP moves to a left-peripheral position taking the *wh*-phrase with it. Transposing Cable's analysis of Tlingit *wh*-movement to Kalaallisut focus fronting, (5) has the derivation in (13),

where the focus Q-Particle is labeled Q_{foc} and the functional head driving focus fronting is labeled C_{foc} .⁸

(13)



Note that the parallel with Tlingit *wh*-questions is very close. Like the Tlingit question Q-particle *sá*, the Kalaallisut focus clitic *=una i* is overt, ii) triggers overt movement to the left edge, and iii) takes the focused element as its sister. This exact parallelism is predicted under a generalized version of the Q-Particle theory.

While they posit very different derivations for focus fronting, the classic theory of A'-movement and the Q-Particle theory both account for basic cases of focus fronting like (5). Next we look at two phenomena that differentiate the two approaches in favor of the Q-Particle analysis.

5. Two arguments for a QP analysis. We offer two arguments in support of the Q-Particle analysis of focus fronting based on focus marking of possessive DPs and the possibility of in-situ focus.

5.1. FOCUS FRONTING OF POSSESSIVE DPs. Kalaallisut possessive DPs consists of a, possibly null, possessor followed by the possessum.

(14) angut-ip qimmi-i
 man-ERG dog-3SG>3PL.ABS
 the man's dogs

Ellen Thrane BOP-4

When overt, the possessor is marked with ergative case. The possessum bears a portmanteau suffix that indicates i) number and person of the possessor, ii) number of the possessum and iii) case. When a possessive DP is focus fronted the enclitic is hosted by the possessor, as opposed to the expected position after the possessum.⁹ We see this in (15), where the scope of focus is the entire possessive DP, as indicated by the plural agreement, but its host is the possessor.

(15) [Kaali-m=**uku** meera-i] Naja-p ikior-ai.
 Kaali-ERG=FOC.PL meera-3SG>3PL.ABS Naja-ERG help-3SG>3PL.PART
 It was [Kaali's children]_F that Naja helped.

Grethe Schmidt CGR-GS-1

This placement generalizes to more complex DPs, as seen in (16a). In these examples, the possessor is itself internally complex and the focus particle is enclitic on the first word of the possessor.

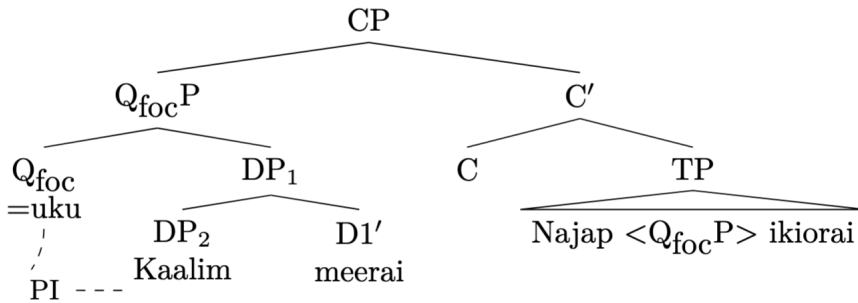
⁸ The headedness of $Q_{\text{foc}}P$ will be revised in section 5.1.

⁹ For the second author, the possessor is the only acceptable host for the clitic. The third author sometimes alternatively allows the clitic to be hosted by the possessum. Anticipating the analysis below, this is because *=uku* may invert with the entire possessive DP as opposed to the phonological word in grammar of the second author. See Branen and Erlewine (2023:617ff), Fortescue (1984:312) and Weisser (2025) for relevant discussion.

- (16) a. [Meeqqa-m=**uku** angisuu-p qimmi-isa] kii-gaannga.
 child-ERG-FOC.PL big-ERG dog-3SG>3PL.ERG bite-3PL>1SG.PART
 It was [the big child's dogs]_F that bit me. Grethe Schmidt, CTS-GS-2
- b. [Illin=**uku** saniler-pit ernir-isa] ikior-aannga.
 2SG.ERG=FOC.PL neighbor-2SG>3PL.ERG son-3SG>3PL.ERG help-3PL>1SG.PART
 It was [your neighbor's sons]_F that helped me. Ellen Thrane CTG-1

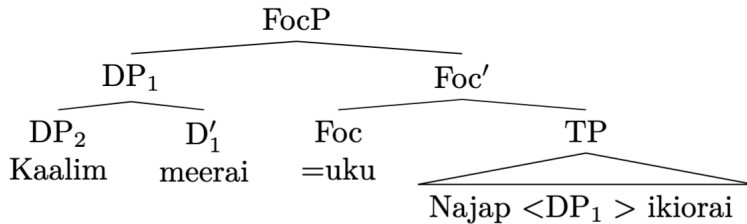
This placement of the focus clitic is anti-pied-piping in the sense of Branan & Erlewine (2023): focus is marked on a proper subpart of the semantic focus. Under the Q-Particle analysis of focus fronting, this configuration follows from three assumptions: i) $Q_{foc}P$ moves to the specifier of a left-peripheral C_{foc} head (Mikkelsen et al. 2026), ii) $Q_{foc}P$ is head-initial and iii) $=una/=uku$ are 2W clitics that undergo prosodic inversion with the first phonological word to their right. Collectively these assumptions result in the derivation of (15) in (17). PI stands for prosodic inversion.

(17)



Under the classic analysis PI would proceed from the structure in (18).

(18)

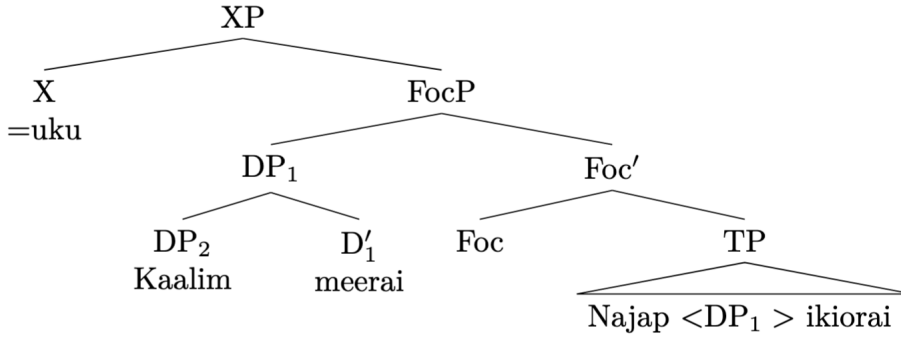


Since $=uku$ is a 2W clitic and undergoes prosodic inversion with the element immediately to its right, the expected outcome is the ungrammatical (19):

- (19) *Kaali-p meera-i Naja-m=**uku** ikior-ai.
 Kaali-ERG meera-3SG>3PL.ABS Naja-ERG=FOC.PL help-3SG>3PL.PART
 Intended: It was [Kaali's children]_F that Naja helped. Ellen Thrane CLV-1

Prosodic inversion can't derive (15) under the classic analysis because the focus phrase is *higher* in the structure than the focus clitic, so there is no way for the focus clitic to lower onto the possessor. One could try to save the classic analysis by adding a projection about FocP that is headed by $=uku$, as in (20).

(20)



In this structure, the possessor *is* lower than =uku and =uku can lower onto it. However, this is entirely ad hoc: the only function of the added head is to provide a higher head position for =uku. In contrast both Q_{foc} and C_{foc} are motivated on the Q-Particle analysis: Q_{foc} manages the focus alternatives, specifically encoding exhaustivity (Cable 2010:200-205), and C_{foc} triggers movement of $Q_{\text{foc}}P$ to its specifier.

5.2. OPTIONAL FOCUS FRONTING. Recall that focus fronting is obligatory for the second and third author of this paper.

- (21) *Illit **meeqqa-n=uku** ikior-itit.
 2SG.ERG child-PL.ABS=FOC.PL help-2SG>3PL.PART
 Intended: It was [the children]_F you helped. Grethe Schmidt BNX-GS-2

However, Fortescue (1984) and Molich (2022) present text examples where the focused phrase is not clause-initial. In (22) the focus marked interrogative phrase *qassi-nik* ‘how many-INST’ follows the subject.

- (22) Saara **qassi-nik=una** ukio-qa-ler-niar-toq?
 Sara.ABS how.many-INST=FOC year-have-soon-FUT-3SG.PART
 How old is Sara going to be? Thygesen 1984 via Molich 2022:104 ex 120

Similarly, in the embedded clause in (23), the focus marked subject *Hansi* follows the adverb *taamani* ‘at that time’.

- (23) Eqqaama-vara [taamani **Hansi=una** pisorta-a-soq].
 remember-1SG>3SG.IND at.that.time Hansi.ABS leader-COP-3SG.PART
 I remember Hansi was the leader at that time Fortescue 1984:189.

These are very difficult to account for on the classic analysis, where =una is a high head on the clausal spine. Specifically, how would a high functional head end up attached to an in-situ focus phrase. The Q-Particle analysis, in contrast, offers a straightforward account: for the authors of (22) and (23) focus fronting is optional. Hence in (22) and (23) the $Q_{\text{foc}}P$ surfaces in-situ with prosodic inversion of the focus particle and the focused XP. For the second and third author of this paper, on the other hand, focus fronting is obligatory.

6. Implications for the theory of anti-pied-piping. Above we noted that the placement of the Kalaallisut focus particles =*una* and =*uku* in possessive structures fits the profile of anti-pied-piping in the sense of Branan & Erlewine (2023) (henceforth B&E): when an entire possessive DP is in focus, the focus clitic docks to the possessor which is a subpart of the logical focus. In this section we discuss a tension that arises when focus movement is taken into account. For reasons detailed below, B&E predict dual focus marking (i.e. focus particle placement *and* focus movement) to be in lock step: either both exhibit anti-pied-piping or neither exhibits anti-pied-piping. In Kalaallisut, however, only particle placement exhibits anti-pied-piping, focus movement targets the entire possessive DP. We argue that the prosodic inversion analysis developed above resolves this tension: the Kalaallisut focus particles are in fact adjoined to the entire logical focus but this is masked by prosodic inversion. In other words, there is no anti-pied-piping, in B&E’s morphosyntactic sense, in Kalaallisut focus marking, only a syntax-prosody mismatch. This analysis raises an interesting question: is anti-pied-piping actually a unified phenomenon as assumed by B&E or are some instances cited in their paper better analyzed as morphosyntactic marking of the entire logical focus follows by prosodic inversion?

6.1. ANTI-PIED-PIPING. B&E use the term ANTI-PIED-PIPING for focus structures in which focus is morphosyntactically marked—by focus movement or a focus particle—on a subpart of the logical focus. Relevant configurations are illustrated by focus particle placement in predicate and clausal foci in Yaeyaman (Japonic) in (24) and (25), respectively. MSF stands for morphosyntactic responses to focus and F for logical focus.

(24) Sentence focus (Davis 2013:33, via B&E p. 608)

- a. Noo-n-du ari?
 what-NOM-PRT existed
 What happened?
- b. [Hajasi-san]_{MSF}-du ziroo-ba bari.
 Hayashi-san-PRT Jiro-ba hit
 [Hayashi-san hit Jiro]_F.

(25) Predicate focus (ibid.)

- a. Unu midunpto-o noo-ba-du hii?
 that woman-TOP what-ba-prt did
 What did that woman do?
- b. Kunu midunpto-o [iz-ba]_{MSF}-du fai.
 this woman-TOP fish-ba-PRT ate
 This woman [ate fish]_F.

In the answer in (24b) the scope of focus is the entire clause, but the focus particle *du* docks to a subpart of the semantic focus, namely the subject. In (25b) the focus is on the predicate, but the focus particle attached to the object.

Similarly, (26) and (27) illustrate anti-pied-piping for focus movement in clausal and predicate focus structures.

(26) French (Sasse 1987:538, via B&E p. 616)

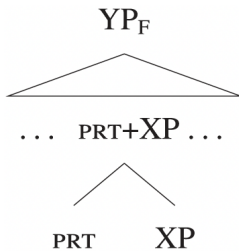
- a. C' est [maman]_{MSF} qui ___ me bat.
 this is mother who 1SG hit
 [Mums hitting me]_F.

(27) Russian (Fanselow & Lenertová 2011:203, via B&E p. 615)

- a. [Cvety]_{MSF} oni sobrali ___
 flowers.ACC 3PL plucked
 They [plucked flowers]_F.

B&E account for anti-pied-piping by separating the semantic mechanism for deriving the logical focus from the morphosyntactic mechanism for deriving focus particle placement or focus movement. Their starting point is the OPERATOR-PARTICLE theory of focus particles (Lee 2004, 2005, 2017 2017, Hole 2017, Sun 2021, among others). In this view, the particle itself does not carry any semantics, but instead signals that there is a null semantic focus operator higher in the clause. That null operator is adjoined to the clausal spine where it takes a proposition-denoting constituent as its sister. The logical focus is contained inside that constituent and F-marked (in the sense of Rooth 1992). Anti-pied-piping arises when a focus particle adjoins inside the logical focus (PRT = particle):

(28)



PRT bears a formal [FOC] feature which projects to its mother. [FOC] enters into an Agree relationship with the higher focus operator and, in languages with focus fronting, [FOC] triggers focus movement. PRT may be overt, as in (24) and (25), or null as in (26) and (27). B&E observe that in many instances of anti-pied-piping the adjunction site of PRT is determined by linear order, such that an overt particle surfaces after the leftmost word; see (24) and (25). B&E analyze this tendency in terms of the left-alignment rule for particles in (29).

(29) PARTICLE PLACEMENT:

During phasal Spell-out, Late Adjoin the particle to a phrase that is • -left-aligned/is preferably • -left-aligned/overlaps with the logical focus.

In language where this rule is active, focus particles (preferentially) dock to the left-most element of the logical focus and, if there is movement, it is the left-most element that moves.

To sum up: the semantics of focus is calculated by way of a, possibly null, operator adjoined to the clausal spine. Morphosyntactic responses to focus, such as focus particle placement and focus movement, are determined by a semantically inert, possibly null, PRT head which is counter-cyclically adjoined either to the logical focus (no anti-pied-piping) or inside of the logical focus (anti-pied-piping). The host of the adjunction is subject to a left-most requirement or preference.

6.2. DUAL FOCUS MARKING. B&E discuss constructions of dual focus marking within a single focus construction, as in example (30) below.¹⁰

(30) Kĩtharaka (Abels & Muriungi 2006:9 via B&E p. 616)

- a. I-[nyomba]_{MSF} Maria arakire __.
 PRT-house Maria built
 Maria [built the house]_F.

In this instance of anti-pied-piping a subpart of the predicate focus, namely the object, is doubly marked by movement and a particle. Kalaallisut also exhibits dual focus marking (movement and particle placement). However, unlike the examples presented by B&E, only one of these marking strategies, namely particle placement, exhibits anti-pied-piping, whereas focus movement targets the entire logical focus.

(31) [[Kaali-m]_{MSF}=uku meera-i]_{MSF} Naja-p ikior-ai.
 Kaali-ERG=FOC.PL meera-3SG>3PL.ABS Naja-ERG help-3SG>3PL.PART
 It was [Kaalís children]_F that Naja helped. Grethe Schmidt CGR-GS-1

If particle placement and the target of focus movement are keyed to the same unique PRT head, how can a size mismatch arise on B&E's theory? We argue that the problem is only apparent because the anti-pied-piping behavior of =*una*/=*uku* is prosodically governed, not morphosyntactically governed. In the Kalaallisut focus construction PRT adjoines to the logical focus (i.e. the possessive DP in the cases of interest). Therefore it is the entire possessive DP that undergoes focus movement. However prosodic inversion of the focus particle (PRT) with the first word of the possessor, masks the high adjunction site of =*una*/=*uku* and creates the illusion of a morpho-syntactic mismatch.

If this analysis is on the right track, it is relevant to ask whether other instances of anti-pied-piping reported by B&E could be reanalyzed in terms of prosodic inversion. The strong tendency for left-alignment of PRT adjunction (see 29) suggests that this could be a promising line of investigation: if PRT is left-adjoined to the logical focus and undergoes prosodic inversion with the first word of the logical focus to its right, the result is that PRT immediate follows the left most word of the logical focus, as encapsulated in (29). As B&E note, the Tagalog focus particle =*lang* 'only' behaves as a second position clitic. This is seen in (32) where the logical focus is a transitive VP and the clitic leans on the first word of the VP, namely the verb.

(32) Tagalog (Kaufman 2005:181, via B&E p. 614)

- a. Sa simbahan ay nagbibigay=**lang**=ako ng pera.
 OBL church TOP give=only=1SG GEN money
 In church, I only [give money]_F.

B&E don't consider a prosodic inversion analysis of (32), but it seems to us that it would straightforwardly account for (32). Other languages cited by B&E as having second position focus particles are Thompson River Salish and Latin. While a prosodic inversion analysis might be viable for these and other cases of left-aligned focus particles, a prosodic inversion analysis has nothing

¹⁰ The structure in (30) is also compatible with focus on just the object, in which case there is no anti-pied-piping.

to say about anti-pied-piping in focus movement. An attractive feature of B&E’s theory is that it covers *both* particle placement and movement, i.e. the focus aspect. An attractive feature of the prosodic inversion analysis is that it unites second-position focus particles with second position clitics more broadly. A next step is to examine all left-aligned focus PRT’s in B&E’s language sample to see if a prosodic inversion analysis is supported on language-internal grounds.

7. Conclusion. We have substantiated Cable’s (2010:200-205) hypothesis that the Q-Particle analysis of *wh*-interrogatives can be extended to focus fronting. This complements Márquez’s (2024) Q-Particle analysis of relative clauses in Nuntajiyi (Soque, Mexico). Our work, together with that of Cable (2010) and Márquez (2024), demonstrates that the Q-Particle theory has broad empirical support. Specifically, it allows for a unified analysis of three major A’-movement constructions in languages from distinct language families and differing typological profiles.¹¹

We presented two arguments for a Q-Particle analysis of Kalaallisut focus fronting over a classic analysis. First the Q-Particle approach offers a straightforward account of the immediately post-possessor position of the enclitic in possessive DPS, whereas the classic analysis has to posit a functional head with no independent justification to account for this. Second, the classic analysis cannot account for the possibility of non-initial =*una*/=*uku*-marked foci for some speakers.

Our analysis extends the empirical scope of what Branan & Erlewine (2023) call ‘anti-pied-piping’—focus marking of a subpart of the semantic focus—to possessives, which are not discussed in their paper. We furthermore documented a novel constellation of morpho-syntactic focus marking: focus movement of the entire focus and focus marking of a subpart of the focus. This is difficult to account for under B&E’s theory because particle placement and focus fronting are keyed to a single adjunction site. We suggested that this difficulty resolves under a prosodic analysis of Kalaallisut focus particle placement. The particle that governs both forms of focus marking is adjoined to the entire focus, but prosodic inversion creates the illusion of a lower adjunction site for the focus particle.

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¹¹ Additionally, Hedding (2022) provides a unified Q-Particle analysis of *wh*-questions and focus movement in San Martín Peras Mixtec (Otomanguean, Mexico).

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