

Chapter 3

A Descriptive Study of Yami Focus Constructions

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to investigate the morphological manifestations of different types of verbs in the four most common focus constructions in Yami, as well as the case marking of nominals, in order to lay a foundation for further investigation of the more complex structure of ditransitive constructions in the following chapter. In Yami, a verb usually has several variants which take different nominals bearing different theta roles in the subject position. In other words, the verbal morphology always encodes the theta role of the subject nominal. A sentence with a one-place predicate which subcategorizes one argument is always constructed in the agent focus. A sentence with two-place predicate usually has two variants – an agent or a patient focus construction. The case of a sentence with a three-place predicate is more complex. There are usually more than two variants for a sentence with a three-place predicate and the variety of the variants depends on the thematic structure of the predicate. In addition to the number and thematic structure of the predicate, the degree of transitivity and verbs of different event classes are examined in various focus constructions for any possible influence on the case marking and verbal morphology.

This chapter consists of five sections including the introduction. The next section reviews some previous studies conducted in Yami and discusses relevant issues

regarding its linguistic typology. Section three begins a discussion of various focus constructions with different verb types in various aspects – number of predicate, degree of transitivity, thematic structure, and event classes - and their effects on verbal morphology, and the case marking on nominals in different structure positions. Section four summarizes the verbal morphology and case marking of nominals in various focus constructions and discusses general patterns and exceptions that have been observed. Section five concludes the chapter.

3.2 Literature Review

The linguistic typology of Yami, like that of other Austronesian and Philippine languages, has remained controversial. English is claimed to be an accusative language that codes its subjects of intransitive and transitive sentences with the same morphology. Ho (1990) claims that Yami is an ergative language that codes the subject of intransitive sentences and the patient nominal of transitive sentence with the same case morphology based on the proposal of considering the patient focus sentence as the basic transitive sentence, as illustrated in (1), and one-place predicate sentence as antipassives, as illustrated in (2).

(1) ya na ni-patuktukan ni Mapapu imu
 TNSPRO Perf-kick CM Mapapu you (sg.)
 ‘Mapapu has kicked you(sg.).’ (Ho 1990: 79)

(2) ya manlinas si Manluk
 TNS wipe CM Manluk
 ‘Manluk is wiping (something).’ (Ho 1990: 80)

Chang (1997) focuses her attention mainly on the study of the interaction between theta roles and focus system, and has provided a general overview of the

grammar of the language in 2000. Chang (2000) has reported that the word order of Yami is considerably flexible with VSO as the one most frequently observed, and has identified five different focus constructions: agent, patient, location, beneficiary, and instrument. She makes no claim about the linguistic typology or basic transitive sentence of this language. Shih (1997) has offered a descriptive study of word formation for verbs and nouns, and also makes no claim on the language typology. Rau and Tong (2000) discusses the four most frequently observed focus constructions including agent, patient, location and beneficiary/instrument focus, as well as the surface structures and case markings of the nominals of causative constructions of one-place, two-place, and three-place predicates. She has observed and reported some general patterns regarding case marking of focused and unfocused nominals in various focus and causative constructions: focus nominals are always nominative case marked, unfocused agent nominals are always genitive case marked, unfocused patient or theme nominals are always marked by the case marker – *so*, and unfocused locative nominals are always marked by the locative case marker – *ji* or *do*. Like Chang and Shih, she makes no claim on the typology of the language. Both Rau and Chang have discussed the case marking of nominals in different focus constructions, but they do not take the influence of verb types and transitivity into consideration or investigate any possible variation with verbal morphology and case marking of nominals. Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to have a more detailed examination of the interaction between focus system and verb types.

Deng (2005) focuses his study on argument-function linking in Yami. He claims that Yami is an ergative language and points out that argument-function linking in this language cannot be explained adequately by any existing linking theories. He suggests that the linking problem in Yami can be better explained from the perspective of

Optimality Theory.

Ho (1990) and Deng (2005) who have each identified ergative characteristics based primarily on the criteria for examining the degree of transitivity proposed by Hopper and Thompson (1980), both claim that Yami is an ergative language. The linguistic properties that they have identified include morphological markedness, semantic transitivity, and individuation of object. The proposal for morphological markedness is based on two premises. The first premise is that the most unmarked predicate should be considered the basic one, and the second premise is that a sentence with a two-place predicate whose verbal morphology is identical with the verbal morphology of one with a one-place predicate should be considered to be an intransitive sentence. They have observed that some verbs are zero marked/un-affixed in patient focus construction and that the verbal morphology of agent focus construction and the one-place predicate sentence is identical in Yami. These observations are in accordance with the two premises and have led them to propose that Yami is an ergative language whose subject nominal of intransitive sentence and patient nominal of the basic transitive sentence are marked with the same case marker – nominative case. Moreover, the observation that telic actions are more frequently expressed in patient focus construction and atelic actions are usually expressed in agent focus construction is part of their supporting evidence for considering the patient focus construction as the basic transitive sentence. They further support the claim of the ergative nature of Yami through the property of the individuated patient nominal of PF construction. They suggest that the patient nominal of PF construction is definite and is more highly affected than the indefinite patient nominal of AF construction. Hence the PF construction has higher transitivity than AF constructions and should be considered as basic transitive sentence.

The observations of Deng and Ho are not affirmative and counterexamples can easily be found. Besides, the claim based on the last observation that the patient nominal of PF construction is definite and is highly affected is not only weak but also circular. The patient nominal of AF construction can be made definite when the possessive pronoun is added to the NP, as exemplified in (3). In addition, every focus nominal must be definite in Yami, as illustrated by the examples of nominal bearing different theta role taking the subject position in (4). Notice that the subject nominals in (4) are definite no matter what theta role they bear. The subject in (4a) is an agent nominal, (4b) is a patient nominal, and (4c) is a location nominal. The patient nominal as a focus element in PF construction surely has to be definite. Therefore, their claim is circular and considerably weak. Upon detailed examination, their proposal that Yami is an ergative language does not seem to be built on solid ground.

- (3) ja-bo ka-ji ko angsem-an **so mata mo**
 EMP-no NF-NEG 1.S.NOM SUB-eat.raw.meat-NF Obl eye 2.S.Gen
 ‘I will definitely (lit. by no means not) eat your eyes.’¹ (Rau 2003: 24)

- (4) a. ya ni-manonit **o anak mo** so tao
 TNS Perf-bite Nom child your Cm person
 ‘Your child bit a person.’ (Ho 1990: 103)

- b. ya-na ni-siprotan no zazaker **o kanakan**
 TNS-PRO Perf-beat Gen old man Nom child
 ‘The old man has just beaten the child.’ (Ho 1990: 104)

- c. ya ko ni-pi-yakan-an so among **o pasalan ya**
 YA I(Gen)Past-eat(LV) Obl fish Nom shore this
 ‘This shore is where I ate fish.’ (Deng 2005: 11)

¹ The example is directly taken from Rau (2003). EMP is the abbreviation for emphasis; NF is the abbreviation for nominal affix. Rau has analyzed the *so-nominal* as an oblique whose characteristic remains controversial and will be discussed later in this chapter.

In the following section, the case marking of nominals and verbal morphology in various focus constructions with verbs of different number of predicate, different degree of transitivity, thematic structures, and event types are investigated and compared in order to examine any possible influence these factors may have on the surface forms of these focus constructions.

3.3 Focus Constructions

The classification of Yami focus constructions can be varied. Some researchers make a detailed classification according to the theta role of the focus nominal. Ho (1990) for instance, has identified seven different focus constructions in Yami including agent, patient, instrument, beneficiary, location, reason, and time focus. However, the primary goal of the current study is to explore whether Yami ditransitive construction has two distinct structures or not while this language possesses a very unique focus system. Ditransitive verbs usually involve at least three nominals. Therefore, nominals that might occur in ditransitive constructions are examined. These nominals include agent, theme, and the destination or origin of the theme element, which has been treated differently by researchers. The terms that have been used to refer to this element includes beneficiary, goal, source, location, . . . , etc. To avoid confusion and focus our attention on possible dative alternation in Yami, nominals that denote location, receiver, and beneficiary of the theme element are classified under the category of LOCATION. Furthermore, instrument focus is also included in this segment of the discussion to compare with agent, patient, and location focus. The main focus of this section is to examine the influence of verb types on the verbal morphology and case marking on nominals. Notice that the term ‘focus’ has been broadly used in many researches of Yami and other Austronesian languages, but

the controversy and appropriateness of using this term to describe this unique grammatical relation is to be discussed in the following chapter. The patient focus construction in this chapter refers to sentences whose subject position is occupied either by patient or theme nominal. In the following subsections, verbal morphology and case marking of nominals are discussed in four different focus constructions.

3.3.1 Agent Focus

While the subject nominal of a sentence is the doer of the action, the sentence is referred to as the agent focus sentence or construction (AF). An agreement between the verb and the subject nominal is established through the verbal morphology. Once the verb is inflected with agent focus affix *-om-*, *m-*, *om-*, , or *ma-*, the subject position has to be occupied by the nominal bearing the agent role, as exemplified in (5).

- (5)

o

 volai **man**-songit so ino
 Nom snake AF-bite CM dog
 ‘The snake will bite the dog.’ (Chang/c 1997: 11)

In most cases, the subject of agent focus construction is the doer of the action. However, there are some exceptions with one-place predicate. The one-place predicate only has one variant which is always inflected by agent focus affix, as exemplified in (6). The subject in (6) is not an agent nominal, but a theme nominal. The sentence with a one-place predicate which takes one argument is always constructed in agent focus, even though the subject nominal is not the doer of the action. Syntax does not make any distinction between agent nominal and theme nominal with the one-place predicate. In other words, the one-place predicate can only be found in AF constructions and the argument is always nominative case marked.

- (6) **ma-rakat** o **ino**
 AF-die Nom dog
 ‘The dog is dead.’ (Chang 1997: 13)

Unlike the one-place predicate, the subject/external argument of the two-place predicate AF sentence has to be the agent nominal and is always nominative case marked. The internal argument is always *so* case marked, as exemplified in (7).

- (7) **koman so wakai si yakai**
 AF-eat CM sweet potato Nom grandfather
 ‘My grandfather eats sweet potatoes.’ (Chang/c 1997: 26)

The subject position of an AF construction with a three-place predicate has to be occupied by the agent nominal which is nominative case marked. The patient or theme nominal is *so* case marked, and the third nominal is locative case marked, as illustrated in (8).

- (8) **ya nimaparala si Manidong so soli ji Macinanao**
 Past-AF-mail Nom Manidong CM taro Loc Macinanao
 ‘Manidong mailed Macinanao taro.’

3.3.1.1 Transitivity

Hopper and Thompson (1980) have suggested that transitivity is not a property of a verb but a property of an entire clause. Therefore, examination of the degree of transitivity should take the whole clause into consideration. Hopper and Thompson have identified a set of parameters of Transitivity to determine the degree of transitivity. They suggest that a clause with at least two participants has higher transitivity than a clause with one participant, because for an activity carrying over or being transferred from one participant (agent) to the other participant (patient), it has to involve at least two participants. Besides, the predicate that denotes an action has

higher transitivity than the predicate that denotes a state. In the following paragraphs, examples of one-place and two-place predicates and verbs that denote action and state are compared to investigate the influence of transitivity on the verbal morphology and the case marking of argument nominals.

First, sentences with one-place and two-place predicates are listed in (9) for comparison. Another pair of sentences which have verbs that denote an action and a state is listed in (10) for comparison. The degree of transitivity of each pair of sentences is determined based on the parameters of Transitivity. For the pair of sentences in (9), the sentence in (9a) has lower transitivity than the sentence in (9b) due to its number of participants. Sentence (9a) only has one participant. No transfer of action can take place while only one participant is present. Sentence (9b) involves two participants, and an activity can be transferred from one to the other. The agent or subject in both sentences is nominative case marked, and the patient/theme in (9b) is genitive case marked.

- (9) a. ya mioyaoya si Mapay
 Tns AF-hate Nom Mapay
 ‘Mapay is getting angry.’ (Shih 1997: 75)
- b. si Manidong yamakzra ni Macinanao
 Nom Manidong AF-like Gen Macinanao
 ‘Manidong likes Macinanao.’

While taking kinesic parameter into consideration, the sentence in (10a) has lower transitivity than that in (10b). The sentence in (10a) describes a state which cannot be transferred from one participant to another while sentence in (10b) denotes an action which can be transferred from one participant to another.

Notice that sentences (9b) and (10a) only differ in their object/theme nominals: the object nominal in (9b) is a proper noun and in (10a), it is a common noun. These two object nominals are each marked by the genitive markers – *ni* (genitive case marker for proper noun) or *no* (genitive case marker for common noun). The subject and also the agent of the two sentences in (10) are marked the same by the nominative case marker – *si*, and the patient/theme nominal is marked by the genitive case markers – *no* in (10a) and *so* in (10b) (Most researchers have claimed that *so* is an oblique case marker. However, its status has remained controversial and will be discussed in later sections. Therefore, *so* here is considered as a case marker – abbreviated as CM). The case marking for the nominal elements in (9) and (10) are summarized in Table 1. Notice that this subsection focuses on the verbal morphology and the case marking of nominals of AF constructions, and observes that the agent of each example is consistently nominative case marked and the case marking for the other participant – theme/patient – is divergent: either genitive case marked (*no* or *ni*) or *so* case marked. This divergence might be due to degree of transitivity or to the event classes of the verbs. Verbs of different event classes will be discussed in the subsection following the one on thematic structure.

- (10) a. *si* *Manidong* *yamakzra* no *talili*
 Nom *Manidong* AF-like Gen *clothing*
 ‘*Manidong* likes the *clothing*.’
- b. *ya* ***manbakbak*** *si* *Mapapu* so *kanankan*
 TNS AF-hit Nom *Mapapu* CM *child*
 ‘*Mapapu* is hitting a *child*.’ (Ho 1990: 69)

Table 1.

	low in transitivity	high in transitivity
verbal morphology	ma-, mi-	man-, ma-
Subject/agent	Nom (<i>si</i>)	Nom (<i>si</i>)

object/theme Gen (ni/no) so

3.3.1.2 Thematic Structure

In this subsection, verbs that have different thematic structures are examined. Chang (1997) divides verbs into four classes according to their thematic structure: unergative verbs, unaccusative verbs, verbs that take two entities, and verbs that take three entities. Notice that unergative and unaccusative verbs only involve one entity and can only be found in AF construction; the unergative verb subcategorizes an agent while the unaccusative verb subcategorizes a theme. These two classes of verbs only require an entity which is doubtlessly the focus nominal of the sentence. The unergative and unaccusative verbs are only found in AF constructions. A problem arises with an unaccusative verb that subcategorizes a theme argument. How is it possible for an entity that is not the doer of the action to be the focus element in an AF construction? The data have shown that both unergative and unaccusative verbs can only be found in AF constructions, as exemplified in (11). Notice that Chang has analyzed the focus construction of unaccusative verbs as TF (Theme focus), as in (11c). However, the verbal morphology leads us to consider it as a subtype of AF construction and as such, to incorporate it into the discussion of this section. Notice the prefix *ma-* in (11b) and (11c), it is an AF affix prefixes to show agreement with the focus nominal of the sentence.

(11) a. **koman** si Manidong
 AF-eat Nom Manidong
 ‘Manidong is eating.’

b. ya **masaray** si ina
 AF-happy Nom mother
 ‘Mother is happy’ (Deng 2005:21)

- c. **marakat** o kois
 AF-die Nom pig
 ‘The pig is dead.’ (Chang/c 1997: 31)

As the only nominal in the sentence, it is unquestionably nominative case marked. With verbs that subcategorize two nominals – agent and theme/patient, the focused element in AF construction is the agent and marked with nominative case – *si* or *o*, as exemplified in (12). Notice that the second participant in (12a - c) is a patient, not a theme; and the second participant in (12d) is a theme, not a patient. The distinction between theme and patient is subtle, but the syntax treats them the same. Therefore, the second participant in this subcategory could either be theme or patient. The case marking for this second participant is always marked by *so* case marker, except in (12d), where the second participant is marked by genitive case marker *ni*.

- (12) a. **koman** so soli si Manidong
 AF-eat CM taro NomManidong
 ‘Manidong eats taro.’
- b. ya **mamakbak** si ama so kanakan
 AF-hit Nom father CM child
 ‘Father is hitting a child.’ (Ho 1990: 75)
- c. ya **manzakat** si Mapay so kois
 AF-kill NomMapay CM pig
 ‘Mapay is killing a pig.’ (Shih 1997: 35)
- d. si Manidong y**amakzra** ni Macinanao
 Nom Manidong AF-like Gen Macinanao
 ‘Manidong likes Macinanao.’

The last class of verbs has a more complex thematic structure which involves three entities. Besides agent and theme/patient, the third entity could be goal, source, or instrument. Chang (1997) only discusses verbs that have the thematic structure of

[agent, theme, goal/locative], since this third entity is required to complete the meaning of the clause in English. However, the purpose of our present study is to survey the verbal morphology and the alternation of case marking with verbs of different thematic structures. Therefore, this subsection discusses not only verbs that have thematic structure of [agent, theme, goal/locative], but also those that take instrument as third entity – [agent, theme, instrument]. The discussion of the third entity denoting location is further divided into two subcategories – goal and source.

The example in (13) shows a verb that has thematic structure of [agent, theme, goal], while (14) shows [agent, theme, source], and (15), [agent, theme, instrument]. The agent nominal is nominative case marked as expected. The theme is *so* case marked in examples (13) and (15), and the theme is marked with nominative case – *o* in (14); the goal and source are locative case marked – *ji* and the instrument is genitive case marked – *no*. Unlike English, which employs different prepositions to indicate the direction of location, Yami uses one case marker to signal location.

(13) [agent, theme, goal]

ya nimaparala si Manidong so soli ji Macinanao
 AF-mail Nom Manidong CM taro Loc Macinanao
 ‘Manidong mailed taro to Macinanao.’

(14) [agent, theme, source]

ya nimamood si Manidong ji Macinanao \emptyset vakong
 AF-borrow Nom Manidong Loc Macinanao Nom book
 ‘Manidong borrowed a book from Macinanao.’

(15) [agent, theme, instrument]

si Manidong yanimzakat so kois no ipangan
 Nom Manidong AF-kill CM pig Gen knife
 ‘Manidong killed a pig with the knife.’

The case marking for classes of verbs with different thematic structures are summarized in Table 2. The exceptions are marked in boldface and are discussed in a later section.

Table 2 Verbs with different thematic structures in AF construction.

	unergative [agent] [agent]	unaccusative [theme] [theme]	[agent, theme] [agent, theme]	[agent, theme, goal] [agent, theme, goal]	[agent, theme, source] [agent, theme, source]	[agent, theme, instrument] [agent, theme, instrument]
agent/subject	Nom (si/o)	Nom (si)	Nom (si)	Nom (si)	Nom (si)	Nom (si)
theme	N/A	N/A	so/ Gen (ni)	so	Nom (o)	so
goal/source	N/A	N/A	N/A	Loc (ji)	Loc (ji)	N/A
instrument	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Gen (no)

In the next subsection, the discussion turns to the interaction between verbs of different event classes and the surface structure of the sentence: verbal morphology and the case marking of nominals.

3.3.1.3 Vendler event classes – stative, activity, achievement, and accomplishment

The predicates in examples (15 - 18) can be divided into four classes: stative, activity, accomplishment, and achievement according to Vendler's classification. Sentences in (15) are examples of the stative verb, (16) are examples of the activity verb, (17) is an example of the accomplishment verb, and (18) is an examples of the achievement verb.

(15) Stative verb

- a. ya **ma**-tava o kanankan
 AF-fat Nom child
 'The child is fat.' (Shih 1997: 34)

- b. si Manidong y**amakzra** ni Macinanao
 Nom Manidong AF-like Gen Macinanao

‘Manidong likes Macinanao.’

- c. *si* Manidong **yamakzra** *no* talili
 Nom Manidong AF-like Gen clothing
 ‘Manidong likes the clothing.’

(16) Activity verb

- a. *ya* **koman** *si* Mapay
 AF-eat Nom Mapay
 ‘Mapay is eating.’ (Shih 1997: 35)

- b. *ya* **manzakat** *si* Mapay *so* kois
 AF-kill NomMapay CM pig
 ‘Mapay is killing a pig.’ (Shih 1997: 35)

(17) Accomplishment verb

- a. *ya* **nimacinanao** *si* Manidong *so* ciriciring *no* tao
 AF-learn Nom Manidong CM language of people
 ‘Manidong learned Yami.’

(18) Achievement verb

- a. *ya* **mipa-tava** *si* Maluck
 AF-fat Nom Maluck
 ‘Maluck becomes fat.’ (Shih 1997: 38)

Examples in (15) denote a state or condition; (15a) is a one-place predicate and (15b) is a two-place predicate. Both subjects – the child and Manidong – are marked with nominative case – *o* or *si*. The child in (15a) is not the initiator of an action and should be considered as the theme, but the syntax treats it as an agent and its case is in agreement with the verb morphology *ma-* indicating it is an AF construction. The object of (15b) is marked by the genitive case marker *ni*. When the object is replaced by an inanimate entity, it remains genitive marked and has a definite interpretation as in (15c). The examples in (16) emphasize the action performed by the agent. The subject or the agent of both sentences is marked the same by the nominative case

marker – *si*, and the object of the two-place predicate verb is marked with the case marker *so*. This observation is in accordance with the verb that denotes a state in the discussion of transitivity in section 3.3.1.1. The second participant of the verb that describes a state is always genitive case marked, and the animacy of the participant does not influence or change the case marking of the nominal.

The example in (17) denotes a completed event. The subject position is occupied by the doer of the action – Manidong – and is marked with the nominative case marker – *si*. The object is marked with the case marker *so*. The sentence in (18) is an example of achievement which involves a change of state. Unlike other AF constructions, the nominative case marked nominal is not the doer of the action, and it is the theme and only argument of the predicate.

The subject nominal in each of the examples above is nominative case marked and denotes the entity that initiates the action (except for examples in (15a) and (18) – stative and achievement verbs). The one and only one argument in examples (15a) and (18) is the theme, not the agent. However, they still occupy the subject position and its predicate is inflected by agent focus affix – *m-* or *ma-*. The verbal morphology of different event classes and the case marking of nominals are summarized in Table 3. There are various variants of AF affix, but all of these variants either begin or end with the consonant [m].

Table 3. case marking of AF construction of four event classes.

	Stative	Activity	Accomplishment	Achievement
Verbal morphology	ma-	-om-, man	ma-	mi-
Subject/agent	Nom (si)	Nom (si)	Nom (si)	Nom (si)
Object/theme	Gen (ni/no)	so	so	N/A

In this section, the verbal morphology and the case marking of nominals of AF

construction are investigated. The subject nominal of AF construction is consistently marked by the nominative case marker, and the object nominal is usually *so* case marked with a few exceptions where the object nominal is genitive case marked. These exceptions are only found with verbs that describe states, such as ‘like’. Another exception occurs with the nominative case marked theme nominal in AF construction. Two nominative nominals are present in an AF sentence whose verb has the thematic structure of [agent, theme, source], as the example shown in (14) reduplicated in (19) below. The triggering reason for the presence of two nominative nominals is unknown and requires further investigation. After the verbal morphology and the case marking of nominals in AF construction with various types of verbs have been investigated, we will turn our attention to the interaction of surface forms of PF construction involving different types of verbs.

- (19) ya nimamood [si] Manidong ji Macinanao [o] vakong
 AF-borrow **Nom** Manidong Loc Macinanao **Nom** book
 ‘Manidong borrowed a book from Macinanao.’

3.3.2 Patient Focus

PF constructions involve promoting the patient/theme to the subject position and demoting the agent nominal. One-place predicates are always constructed in AF, and hence PF sentences involve at least two participants. Verbs are usually inflected with one of the following affixes: *-an*, *-en*, and \emptyset , to show agreement with the focused element. The subject position of a two-place predicate PF sentence is always occupied by the patient nominal and is always nominative case marked as in (20). The agent nominal is always genitive case marked. With three-place predicate, the addition nominal ‘*Macinanao*’ is marked by the locative case marker ‘*ji*’, as in (21a). However, the marking of this third nominal might not always be performed by the locative case

marker. The case marking changes as the theta role of the nominal changes. If the third nominal is an instrument, it is likely to be genitive case marked by *no*, as shown in (21b). The thematic structure of the verb does reflect on the marking of the nominals and will be discussed in the section following the section on transitivity.

- (20) na soungiten no volai o ino
 PF-bite Gen snake Nom dog
 ‘The snake is about to bite/is biting the dog.’ (Chang/c 1997: 80)
 ‘‘The dog is about to be bite by the snake.’’

- (21) a. na pararahen ni Manidong ji Macinanao o soli
 PF-mail Gen Manidong Loc Macinanao Nom taro
 ‘It is taro that Manidong mails to Macinanao’

- b. na zakaten no ipangan o kois ni Manidong
 PF-kill Gen knife Nom pig Gen Manidong
 ‘It is the pig that Manidong kills with the knife.’

3.3.2.1 Transitivity

The two sentences in (22) differ in terms of the degree of transitivity. The sentence in (22a) has a lower transitivity than the one in (22b), due to the absence of the following properties: kinesis (action) and affectedness of object (total), both of which (22b) possesses. The patient nominal which occupies the subject position is marked by the nominative case marker – *si* or *o* in both of these sentences. The agent is genitive case marked – *ni*. In (23), a minimal pair is provided. (23a) is lower in transitivity than (23b), due to differing degrees of affectedness of the object. The object of (23a) has a lower degree of affectedness than the object of (23b). However, the different degree of transitivity does not reflect on the case marking of either agent or patient nominals. The patient nominal is always nominative case marked and the agent nominal is always genitive case marked despite the degree of transitivity of the

clause. The verbal morphology and the case marking of the nominals in PF construction with different degree of transitivity are summarized in Table 4. Notice that the degree of transitivity does not seem to have any impact on the case marking, and that the verbal morphology for verbs of low transitivity seems to be zero marked while the verb of high transitivity is inflected by the patient focus affix *-an*. Thus, having ruled out degree of transitivity as an influencing factor, the next subsection will deal with verbs of different thematic structures.

(22) a. *naikakzra ni Manidong si Macinanao*
 PF-like Gen Manidong Nom Macinanao
 ‘Macinanao is the one who Manidong likes.’

b. *ya na bakkakan ni ama o anak na*
 PF-hit Gen father Nom child his
 ‘Father is hitting his child.’ (Ho 1990: 75)
 ‘The child is being hit by his father.’

(23) a. *na iyawow ni Manidong o ngaran na ni Macinanao*
 PF-forget Gen Manidong Nom name Gen Macinanao
 ‘It is Macinanao’s name that Manidong forgets.’

b. *na vatvatekan ni Manidong o ngaran na ni Macinanao*
 PF-write Gen Manidong Nom name Gen Macinanao
 ‘It is Macinanao’s name that Manidong writes.’

Table 4.

	low in transitivity	high in transitivity
verbal morphology	∅	-an
subject/patient	Nom (si)	Nom (si)
agent	Gen (ni)	Gen (ni)

3.3.2.2 Thematic Structure

The classes of unergative and unaccusative verbs are not found in PF

constructions. The other two classes of verbs are those that subcategorize two and three entities. Sentences in (24) are examples of verbs that assign two theta roles – agent and theme. (25-27) are examples of verbs that assign three theta roles – [agent, theme, goal], [agent, theme, source], and [agent, theme, instrument], respectively. The case marking of the nominals in (24) is very consistent, the focused element, namely the patient, is always nominative case marked, and the other participant – agent is always genitive case marked.

(24) [agent, theme]

a. **kanen** ni Manidong o soli
 PF-eat Gen Manidong Nom taro
 ‘It is taro that Manidong eats/will eat.’

b. ya na nibakbakan ni Mapapu si Namet
 PF-hit Gen Mapapu Nom Namet
 ‘Mapapu has hit Namet.’ (Ho 1990: 70)
 ‘It is Namet that Mapapu has hit.’

c. ya na nirakat ni Mapapu o kois na
 PF-kill Gen Mapapu Nom pig his
 ‘Mapapu has killed his pigs.’ (Ho 1990: 70)
 ‘It is the pig that Mapapu has killed.’

d. naikakzra ni Manidong si Macinanao
 PF-like Gen Manidong Nom Macinanao
 ‘It is Macinanao who Manidong likes.’

For verbs that have the thematic structure of [agent, theme, goal] and [agent, theme, source], the case marking for the three nominal elements is the same. The focus element – theme - is nominative case marked, the agent is genitive case marked, and the source and goal are both marked with the same locative case marker – *ji*, as exemplified in (25) and (26). When verbs assign the theta roles of agent, theme, and

instrument in PF constructions, the case marking for the focus element, theme, is always nominative case marked, while the agent is genitive case marked, and the instrument is marked by the genitive case marker – *no*. The case marking for nominals of different theta roles and the verbal morphology of verbs with different thematic structures are both summarized in Table 5. The case marking for agent, patient, location, and instrument nominals is consistent without any exceptions. In the following subsection, the discussion covers the four event classes of verbs in PF construction and their interaction with the case marking of nominals and the verbal morphology.

(25) [agent, theme, goal]

na pararahen ni Manidong ji Macinanao o soli
 PF-mail Gen Manidong Loc Macinanao Nom taro
 ‘It is the taro that Manidong mails to Macinanao.’

(26) [agent, theme, source]

o vakong naniyamood ni Manidong ji Macinanao
 Nom book PF-borrow Gen Manidong Loc Macinanao
 ‘It is the book that Manidong borrowed from Macinanao.’

(27) [agent, theme, instrument]

na nizakat no ipangan ni Manidong o kois
 PF-kill Gen knife Gen Manidong Nom pig
 ‘It is the pig that Manidong killed with the knife.’

Table5. PF with verbs of different thematic structures

	[agent, theme]	[agent, theme, goal]	[agent, theme, source]	[agent, theme, instrument]
Verbal morphology	-an, -en, Ø	-en	Ø	Ø
agent	Gen (ni)	Gen (ni)	Gen (ni)	Gen (ni)
theme	Nom (o)	Nom (o)	Nom (o)	Nom (o)
goal	N/A	Loc (ji)	N/A	N/A
source	N/A	N/A	Loc (ji)	N/A
instrument	N/A	N/A	N/A	Gen (no)

3.3.2.3 Vendler event classes – stative, activity, achievement, and accomplishment

The example in (28) is one of a stative verb constructed in PF. As the term suggests, the focus element in PF is patient, which always takes the subject position and is always nominative case marked. The agent nominal in (28) is marked with genitive case marker – *ni*. When the theme/patient is replaced by an inanimate entity – *talili* ‘clothing’, it is also nominative case marked by *o*. For the activity verb, the theme/patient is nominative case marked and the agent is genitive case marked as the stative verb, as exemplified in (29).

(28) Stative verb

a. *naikakzra ni Manidong si Macinanao*
 PF-like Gen Manidong Nom Macinanao
 ‘It is Macinanao who Manidong likes.’

b. *naikakzra ni Manidong o talili*
 PF-like Gen Manidong Nom clothing
 ‘It is the clothing that Manidong likes’

(29) Activity verb

a. *na nizat ni Manidong o kois*
 PF-kill Gen Manidong Nom pig
 ‘It is the pig that Manidong killed.’

(30) Accomplishment verb

a. *o ciriciring no tao napacinanawan ni Manidong*
 Nom language of people PF-learn Gen Manidong
 ‘It is Yami that Manidong learns.’

For the accomplishment verb in (30), the theme/patient is the focus of the sentence in PF construction and is therefore nominative case marked while the agent is genitive case marked. An example of an achievement verb in PF construction is not to be found. However, a general pattern is observed. The focus nominal in the

examples in the other three classes of verbs is consistently case marked by the nominative case, and the doer of the action is consistently case marked by genitive case, as summarized in Table 6.

Table 6 Verbal morphology and case marking of the nominals

	Stative	Activity	Accomplish	Achievement
Verbal morphology	Ø	Ø	-an	N/A
Subject/agent	ni	ni	ni	N/A
Object/theme	si	Si	si	N/A

The case marking of the nominals of PF construction is very consistent without exception. The verbal morphology is considerably predictable, but a general rule as to how these PF affixes are assigned to verbs has not yet been established and might be a topic of future study. In the next section, our discussion shifts to the formation of location focus construction with different types of verbs.

3.3.3 Location Focus

LF constructions usually involve more than two participants. The nominal that denotes the location is promoted to the subject position and the verbal affix that agrees with the locative nominal is *-an*. The location in this section refers to either an animate or inanimate entity, such as goal, source, recipient, experiencer, etc.

3.3.3.1 Transitivity

For transitivity, a pair of LF sentences with different degrees of transitivity is provided for comparison in (31). The sentence in (31a) is lower in transitivity than (31b). The determination on the degree of transitivity is based on the affectedness of the object. The nominals that denote location – source or goal – are both marked by

the nominative case marker *si* in LF constructions; the agent is genitive case marked, and the theme/patient is marked by the case marker *so*, as summarized in Table 7.

Notice that this language marks source and goal with the same case marker. The LF affix has two variants – \emptyset and *-an*, which are the same as PF affixes. However, the distinction between PF and LF sentences can be determined through the thematic role of the subject nominal. In the following subsection, verbs that subcategorize locative entity are investigated.

- (31) a. na nanaon ni Manidong si Macinanao so ciriciring no tao
 LF-teach Gen Manidong Nom Macinanao CM language of people
 ‘It is Macinanao who Manidong teaches Yami with.’
- b. na nipanakawan si Macinanao so vakong ni Manidong
 LF-steal Nom Macinanao CM book Gen Manidong
 ‘It is Macinanao who Manidong stole a book from.’

Table 7. Verbal morphology and case marking of the nominals

	low in transitivity (eg. forget, like, teach)	high in transitivity (eg. write, kill, steal)
Verbal morphology	\emptyset	-an
subject/location	Nom (si)	Nom (si)
agent	Gen (ni)	Gen (ni)
theme	so	so

3.3.3.2 Thematic Structure

The presence of a locative nominal is required to construct an LF sentence. Therefore, verbs that have a thematic structure of [agent, theme, location], [agent, theme, goal], or [agent, theme, source] are discussed in this section. In (32), the location nominal occupies the subject position and is nominative case marked. The focus nominals in (33) and (34) denote goal and source, respectively, and are also nominative case marked. The agent of all three sentences is genitive case marked, and

the theme is *so* case marked. The verbal morphology and case marking of nominals are summarized in Table 8. The next subsection shifts to a discussion of the verbal morphology and case marking of nominals in the four event classes of verbs.

(32) [agent, theme, location]

ya ko nipiyakan**an** so among o pasalan ya
 I LF-eat CM fish Nom shore this
 ‘This shore is where I ate fish.’ (Deng 2005: 29)

(33) [agent, theme, goal]

si Macinanao naniparala ni Manidong so soli
 Nom Macinanao LF-mail Gen Manidong CM taro
 ‘It is Macinanao who Manidong mailed taro to.’

(34) [agent, theme, source]

si Macinanao nainpavood**an** ni Manidong so vakong
 Nom Macinanao LF-borrow Gen Manidong CMbook
 ‘It is Macinanao who Manidong borrowed a book from.’

Table 8 Verbal morphology and case marking of the nominals

	[agent, theme, location]	[agent, theme, goal]	[agent, theme, source]
Verbal morphology	-an	Ø	-an
agent	Gen (ko)	Gen (ni)	Gen (ni)
theme	so	so	so
goal	N/A	Nom (si)	N/A
source	N/A	N/A	Nom (si)
location	Nom (o)	N/A	N/A

3.3.3.3 Vendler event classes – stative, activity, achievement, and accomplishment

Examples of stative, activity, and achievement verbs in LF constructions are not found in the data that have been collected. However, the examples of accomplishment verbs in (35) and (36) have shown that the nominal that denotes the location or receiver of the theme is nominative case marked and the doer of the action is genitive

case marked in LF constructions. The entity that undergoes the action is either marked by the genitive case marker *no* or the *so* case marker depending on the thematic structure of the particular predicate. The verbal morphology and the case marking of nominals are summarized in Table 9.

(35) Accomplishment verbs

na nigesahan ni Manidong si Macinanao no vato
 LF-throw GenManidong Nom Macinanao Gen stone
 ‘It is Macinanao who Manidong throws the stone at.’

(36) si Macinanao na niparala ni Manidong so soli
 Nom Macinanao LF-mail GenManidong CM taro
 ‘It is Macinanao who Manidong mailed taro to.’

Table 9 Verbal morphology and case marking of the nominals

	Stative	Activity	Accomplishment	Achievement
Verbal morphology			-an, Ø	
Agent	N/A	N/A	ni	N/A
Theme	N/A	N/A	so/no	N/A
Location	N/A	N/A	si	N/A

3.3.4 Instrument Focus

Construction of an IF sentence involves promotion of the instrument nominal into the subject position. The presence of an instrumental nominal is necessary in order for the construction to take place. Therefore, IF constructions usually involve more than two participants. The affix *-i* is inflected on the verb to signal that the subject position has to be occupied by the instrument nominal.

3.3.4.1 Transitivity

Three IF sentences with different degrees of transitivity are listed in (37) for comparison. The sentence in (37c) is lower in transitivity than the sentences in (37a)

and (37b) due to the lack of high affectedness of its object. The instrument nominal is nominative – *o*, and the agent is marked with genitive case marker – *ni*. The affected object/patient in (37a) and (37b) is marked with locative case marker – *ji*, while the object/patient in (37c) is marked with nominative case marker – *si*. The instrument focus affix and the case marking of the nominals are summarized in Table 10. Notice that the focus instrument in all three examples in (37) appears in sentence initial position which is usually taken by the main predicate; and the instrument focus affix is not observed. This pattern is dissimilar to the usual IF construction whose main predicate is inflected with the instrument focus affix *-i* and the focus nominal is not in the sentence initial position. The examples in the following section on the thematic structure of verbs of IF constructions are different from the examples in (37). There might be other factors which have triggered the change of word order and will be discussed in later section.

- (37) a. o kawalan na nibakbak ji Macinanao ni Manidong
 Nom stick IF-hit Loc Macinanao Gen Manidong
 ‘It was the stick that Manidong hit Macinanao with.’
- b. o vato na niparahen ni Manidong ji Macinanao
 Nom stone IF-throw Gen Manidong Loc Macinanao
 ‘It was the stone that Manidong threw at Macinanao/It was the stone that Manidong used to throw at Macinanao.’
- c. o ciriciring no tao nainanao ni Manidong si Macinanao
 Nom language of people IF-teach Gen Manidong Nom Macinanao
 ‘It is Yami that Manidong teaches Macinanao with/It is Yami that Manidong uses to teach Macinanao.’

Table 10. Verbal morphology and case marking of the nominals

	low in transitivity	high in transitivity
Verbal morphology	Ø	Ø, -en
subject/instrument	Nom (o)	Nom (o)

theme/patient	Nom (si)	Loc (ji)
agent	Gen (ni)	Gen (ni)

3.3.4.2 Thematic Structure

'Instrument' usually refers to a tool that an agent uses to carry out an action as in (38) and (39); or a means of communication as in (40). The focused element in these examples is nominative case marked, and the agent is genitive case marked. The theme/patient is marked differently in (39) and (40), one is *so* case marked and the other is nominative case marked. The verbal morphology and the case marking of the nominals are summarized in Table 11. Notice that there are two nominative case marked nominals in (40) which is unusual and that the theme nominal in this example can also be treated as a location nominal referring to the recipient. The discussion of sentences with two nominative NP appears in a later section. In the following subsection, a discussion of the four event classes of verbs is provided.

(38) [agent, instrument]

ya ko ipivatvatek o ipivatvatek ya
 I IF-write Nom pen this
 'This pen is what I used for writing.' (Deng 2005: 30)

(39) [agent, theme, instrument]

o ipangan na nizakat so kois ni Manidong
 Nom knife PF-kill CM pig Gen Manidong
 'It is the knife that Manidong killed a pig with.'

(40) [agent, **theme**, instrument]

o ciriciring no tao nainanao ni Manidong si Macinanao
 Nom language of people IF-teach Gen Manidong Nom Macinanao
 'It is Yami that Manidong teaches Macinanao with/It is Yami that Manidong uses to teach Macinanao.'

Table 11 Verbal morphology and case marking of the nominals

	[agent, instrument]	[agent, theme, instrument]
Verbal morphology	-i	-i
Agent	Gen (ko)	Gen (ni)
Theme	N/A	Nom (si)
Instrument	Nom (o)	Nom (o)

3.3.4.3 Vendler event classes – stative, activity, achievement, and accomplishment

IF constructions, like LF constructions, usually involve more than two participants, and have more complicated thematic structures. The examples of stative, activity and accomplishment verbs are not found. The sentence in (41) gives an example of an achievement verb. The focused element is always nominative case marked, in this case, the instrument – *ipangan* meaning ‘knife’. The agent is genitive case marked and the theme/patient is *so* case marked. The verbal morphology and case marking of the nominals are summarized in Table 12.

(41) Accomplishment verb

o	ipangan	na	nizakat	so	kois	ni	Manidong
Nom	knife		IF-kill	CM	pig	Gen	Manidong
‘It was the knife that Manidong killed a pig with.’							

Table 12 Verbal morphology and case marking of the nominals

	Stative	Activity	Accomplishment	Achievement
Verbal morphology	N/A	N/A	N/A	∅
Agent	N/A	N/A	N/A	Gen (ni)
Theme	N/A	N/A	N/A	so
Location	N/A	N/A	N/A	Nom (o)

3.3.5 Summary

In this section, four focus constructions including AF, PF, LF, and IF are discussed in terms of different classification of verb types – number of predicate, degree of transitivity, thematic structure, and Vendler event classes (stative, activity,

accomplishment, and achievement). The data have shown that the focused element is always nominative case marked, the agent is always genitive case marked if it is not the focused element, the theme/patient is either marked by genitive case marker or the *so* case marker, nominals that have locative interpretation are always locative case marked, and instrument nominals are genitive case marked by – *no*. The case markings of these nominals are summarized in Table 13.

Table 13. Case marking of nominal in different focus constructions.

	AF	PF	LF	IF
Agent	Nom (si)	Gen (ni)	Gen (ni)	Gen (ni)
Theme/Patient	Gen (ni) / <i>so</i>	Nom (si, o)	Gen (ni) / <i>so</i>	Gen (ni) / <i>so</i>
Location	Loc (ji)	Loc (ji)	Nom (o)	Loc (ji)
Instrument	Gen (no)	Gen (no)	Gen (no)	Nom (o)

The case marking in Yami is consistent and predictable. The case marking for the focus nominal in different focus constructions is always nominative case marked. Non-focus nominals are marked according to their thematic role: non-focus agent nominal is genitive case marked, non-focus theme/patient nominal is *so* case marked in most cases, non-focus location nominal is locative case marked, and non-focus instrument nominal is genitive case marked. Only a few exceptions are found and require further investigation. First, the theme nominal is sometimes genitive case marked in some circumstances and *so* case marked in others. Secondly, there are sentences with two nominative NP in LF and IF constructions. Lastly, the main predicate is not inflected with the instrument focus affix *-i* in IF construction. In the following section, possible explanations for these exceptions are discussed and a reanalysis of the case system that might better explain the data is provided.

3.4 Possible explanations for exceptions and a re-examination of case system

The case marking on the patient/theme nominals show some variances, and the reason for these variances might be due to the semantic property of the verb or the definite feature of the nominals. Notice that the genitive marked theme nominal is only found with stative verbs which are low in transitivity. Furthermore, the *so*-nominal is indefinite, and the genitive nominal is always definite. The only difference between genitive and *so* case marked nominals is the presence or absence of the definite feature, as is illustrated by the minimal pair of existential clauses in (42).

(42) Existential Clauses (Ho 1990: 113)

- a. ya mian so kanakan do vahai
 Tns exist CM child Loc house
 ‘There is a child in the house.’
- b. ya mian o kanakan do vahai
 Tns exist Nom child Loc house
 ‘The child is in the house.’

The sentence with two nominative NP and the absence of an instrument focus affix on the verb of IF construction are two parts of the same problem. Notice that the example of IF sentences in (37) which lack an instrument focus affix have the focus nominal taking the sentence initial position, reduplicated in (43). In Yami, the sentence initial position is usually occupied by the main predicate and only the focus element is moved to sentence initial position. The focus here refers to the pragmatic focus. The speaker wants to focus the listener’s attention on the information and has therefore moved it to initial position, an action which might be referred to as topicalization. This type of focus should not be confused with the ‘focus’ of focus

construction. In other words, the examples in (43) are not IF constructions, but topicalizations of instrument nominals. When comparing examples in (43) with sentences with two nominative NPs in (14) and (39), reduplicated in (44) and (45) respectively, it is found that the focus NP is in sentence initial position (except in example (44)). It seems plausible to consider these sentences as a kind of topicalization which has moved the focus information to sentence initial position for pragmatic purposes. The function of Yami focus construction and this topicalization is very similar, but the case marking and the surface structure have shown that they are two different constructions. Therefore, in the following chapter the appropriateness of using the term ‘focus’ to refer to the subject of the sentence is discussed.

- (43) a. o kawalan na nibakbak ji Macinanao ni Manidong
 Nom stick IF-hit Loc Macinanao Gen Manidong
 ‘It was the stick that Manidong hit Macinanao with.’
- b. o vato na niparahen ni Manidong ji Macinanao
 Nom stone IF-throw Gen Manidong Loc Macinanao
 ‘It was the stone that Manidong threw at Macinanao/It was the stone that Manidong used to throw at Macinanao.’
- c. o circiring no tao nainanao ni Manidong si Macinanao
 Nom language of people IF-teach Gen Manidong Nom Macinanao
 ‘It is Yami that Manidong teaches Macinanao with/It is Yami that Manidong uses to teach Macinanao.’
- (44) [agent, theme, source]
 ya nimamood si Manidong ji Macinanao o vakong
 AF-borrow Nom Manidong Loc Macinanao Nom book
 ‘Manidong borrowed a book from Macinanao.’
- (45) [agent, theme, instrument]
 o circiring no tao nainanao ni Manidong si Macinanao
 Nom language of people IF-teach Gen Manidong Nom Macinanao

‘It is Yami that Manidong teaches Macinanao with/It is Yami that Manidong uses to teach Macinanao.’

The case assignment can be predicted from the thematic structure of the verb, and hence, sets of case markers in Yami should be considered as theta role markers that signal the theta roles of nominals, not the syntactic relationships of the sentence. The subject is determined by the verbal morphology. Once the verb is inflected by the agent focus marker, the subject of the sentence must be the agent which has to be nominative case marked. Once the verb is inflected by the patient focus marker, the subject of the sentence must become the patient and has to be nominative case marked. This generalization applies to all focus constructions. The unfocused elements are consistently marked with theta role markers, which are summarized in Table 14. Notice that agent is always genitive case marked in non-AF constructions; a *so* case marked agent has never been found in our data. The reason a *so* case marked agent does not exist is due to the semantic properties of an agent. An action is always carried out by an animate entity and usually, a human. In other words, an agent usually has the features of [+human, +animate, +definite]. A definite nominal is always marked by the genitive case marker *ni* as our previous examples have shown. This might be the reason why the unfocus agent nominal is always genitive case marked, and the unfocused patient/theme nominal is sometimes genitive case marked and sometimes *so* case marked. The patient/theme nominals do not necessarily have the definite feature as agent nominals do. This claim can be further justified by the locative theta role marker *do* and *ji*. The locative case marker *do* marks common nouns, while *ji* marks proper nouns. The case markers for nominals in Yami proposed by Rau and Tung should be revised and the revised version is shown in Table 15. Notice that instrument can only refer to tools or devices which are not proper nouns. Therefore, Yami lacks an instrument marker for proper nouns.

Table 14. Theta role markers for nominals in Yami

	Focus	Non-focus
agent	si/o	Gen (ni)
theme/patient	si/o	Gen (ni) or so
location (goal, source, etc.)	o	Loc (ji or do)
instrument	o	Gen (no)

Table 15 Yami case markers

	Nom	Gen	Loc	Instrument
common noun	o	no[+definite] so [-definite]	do	no
proper noun	si	ni	ji	X

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, focus constructions including AF, PF, LF, and IF are discussed from various aspects: number of predicate, degree of transitivity, thematic structure, and event type. The case marking on the nominals is found to be very consistent in different circumstances. In other words, the factors – degree of transitivity, number of predicates, and different event classes do not influence and alter the case marking on nominals. The agent is always genitive case marked in non-AF constructions; the patient is either genitive or *so* case marked in non-PF constructions; the nominals that denote location are always locative case marked; and the instrument nominals are always *no* (*no* is always treated as genitive case in previous literatures, but it should be distinguished the instrument case marker *no* should be distinguished from genitive case marker even they are homophones) case marked. This consistency leads us to re-consider the case system of Yami and suggests that the case assignment is highly related to the thematic structure of the verb. The case assignment not only signals the subject of the sentence, but also reflects the theta role of the nominals.