FROM INTERROGATION TO TOPICALIZATION: PROTO-TIBETO-BURMAN *la IN KATHMANDU NEWAR*

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INTRODUCTION

This paper outlines the synchronic variation found in the discourse functions of the particle *la* in Kathmandu Newar and argues that from this synchronic variation we can reconstruct a pathway of reanalysis from an original clause-final interrogative function to a clause-initial topicalization function. In adjacency pairs such as those found in examples (1) and (2) below, the Kathmandu Newar clause-final speech act particle *la* marks a yes/no interrogative speech act. In the second pair part, the affirmative response repeats the verb phrase; the negative response repeats the negated verb phrase. As described by Kansakar (1977), interrogative utterances with the final particle *la* are marked with a fall in pitch.

(1) A: *ja   nɔ-e   dhun-ɔ   la*
        rice eat-INF finish-PRF.DJ **PRT**
        'Have you eaten yet?'

     B: *nɔ-e   dhun-ɔ*
        eat-INF finish-PRF.DJ
        '(I've) already eaten.'

(2) A: *ja   nɔ-e   dhun-ɔ   la*
        rice eat-INF finish-PRF.DJ **PRT**
        'Have you eaten yet?'

     B: *mɔ-nɔy-a-ni*
        NEG-eat-PST.CJ-yet
        '(I've) not eaten yet.'

There is good evidence that this interrogative yes/no particle *la* is a reflex of a Proto-Tibeto-Burman (PTB) interrogative particle **la*. Matisoff (1988:1347) sets up a Proto-Lolo-Burmese yes/no interrogative form **la* on the basis of Lahu *lâ*, and Written Burmese *lâ*, and extends this to PTB on the basis of Meithei *la*. The phonological correspondence for Newar initial *l-* and PTB initial **l-* is well attested, as is the vowel correspondence with PTB **a*: Newar *la* 'moon, month' < PTB **s-la/*g-la* (STC[1] #144), Modern Newar *lha* < *laha* 'hand' < PTB **lak/g-lak* (STC #86). Thus, the Newar form shows that the distribution of the PTB particle extends at least to the Kathmandu Valley.

In addition to yes/no *la*, there is another Newar sentence final particle *le*, which occurs in questions, often, but not exclusively, in content (*wh-*) questions (cf. Kölver and Shresthacarya 1994:195).

(3) *wɔ*   *gɔnɔ*   *wɔn-ɔ*   *le*
     3.ABS   where   go-PRF.DJ   PRT
     'Where did he go?' (Malla 1985:65)

(4) *wɔ*   *cæ*   *le?*
     3.ABS   why   PRT
     'Why is that?'

It may also co-occur with the yes/no particle *la*.

(5) *jhi-pĩ:*   *thɔnɔ* *chē:*   *cwɔ*   *wɔ-e*   *dhun-ɔ*   *la*   *le*
     1.PL.INCL   here   house   stay   come-INF   finish-PRF.DJ   PRT   PRT
     'Had we already come (back) to stay here at our house?'

Finally, there is another form *le* (variant *re*), which occurs in polite requests,

(6) *thɔnɔ*   *wa*   *re*
     here   come.IMPR   PRT
     'Come here/Will you come here?' (Malla 1985:65)

(7) *thɔ-the*   *yan-a*   *biu*   *le*
     this-like   do-CM   give.IMPR   PRT
     'Please do it like this.' (cf. Manandhar 1986:233).

(8) *chõ:*   *bhõte*   *co*   *le*
     2.ERG   paper.LOC   write.IMPR   PRT
     'Write this down on the paper!'

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1   STC stands for *Sino-Tibetan: a Conspectus*, Benedict 1972.

Thus, Malla (1985:65) cites three different utterance final forms: *la* 'simple question marker', *le* 'content questions', and *re(le)* 'persuasive particle'. Given the fact that initial *r-* is not a phonemic category for Kathmandu Newar, occurring only with Indic loan words, attributing the full three way contrast to Proto-Newar is problematic and needs further investigation. Nevertheless, the *la/le/le(re)* opposition in Newar shows interesting parallels with a *lâ/le/lê* opposition in Lahu cited by Matisoff (1988): *lâ* 'marker of yes/no questions' (p.1347), *le* 'marker of substance-questions' (p.1373), and *lê* 'particle that requests the assent or consent of the listener' (p.1374). If the Newar and Lahu particles turn out to be cognate, then we can reasonably assume that the particle system is of PTB origin (cf. DeLancey 1978).

THE TOPIC/FOCUS PARTICLE *la*

In addition to the Newar interrogative particle *la*, there is another discourse particle *la* that appears to have a distinct function. This particle is ubiquitous in colloquial conversations and is established enough to be present in dialogs and reported speech from late Classical to modern literary texts.[2] The first example (9) comes from a conversational text. The particle *la* follows a headless possessive relative clause NP, indicated via the relative marker *-pī* (for plural animate):

(9) *ɔle   chē-chā   phukkɔ̃ dū:-pī*   *la*
  > then   house-RDP   all   collapse-REL **PRT**
  'And so, as for all those whose houses had collapsed,

  tinikhya   chɔ-gu-lī: cwɔ̃-cwɔ̃:-gu   du   ka
  Tundikhel one-CL-LOC stay-stay.IMP.DJ-NOM be-IMP.DJ EMPH
  they were staying throughout the Tundikhel area.'

The intonation contour on the first clause does not show the falling contour characteristic of interrogation, and the subsequent clause is not the second pair part of an interrogation adjacency pair. There is no turn transition indicated at the end of the first clause and the second clause is a follow-up to the first clause which maintains the same speaker's turn. Thus, the particle highlights the preceding NP.

In looking at examples such as (9) above, the question arises as to whether the topic/focus form is related to the interrogative form, which we have seen as being of clear PTB origin. An alternative, of course, is that the interrogative *la*

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2   Examples from oral texts are written in phonemic transcription; examples from written texts are given in *devanāgarī* transliteration.

and the topic/focus *la* are merely coincidentally homophonous and have no historical relationship to one another. In this paper I argue that assuming a PTB interrogative function, the topicalizing function can be shown to be emergent from the interrogation function via specific stages in the reinterpretation of local discourse relations marked by the particle, all of which are evident in contemporary discourse. In other words, I will argue that a synchronic poly-functionality for the form *la* is evidence of a progressive extension of the PTB interrogative function towards a topic/focus function. We begin with yes/no interrogation.

EXTENDED FUNCTIONS OF YES/NO QUESTIONS

As illustrated in the opening examples above, in the canonical yes/no adjacency pair the cohesion of the first and second pair part is constructed via the repetition of the verb phrase in its affirmative or negative form. However, in many cases, the first pair part of a yes/no interrogative is not followed directly by the second pair part. Instead, the conversational dynamics may include material which intervenes between the question and its response. This less canonical interrogative function is well attested for Newar *la* in spoken discourse, as in example (10) below.

Example (10) comes from a three party conversation in which G is asking K and L about their childhood memories of the devastating earthquake of 1934. G initiates the sequence with a yes/no question addressed to K and L. However, instead of a yes/no response, G's question is immediately followed by another yes/no question by K. The question demonstrates a tentativeness in making a direct factual claim (understandably since the events happened more than 60 years ago) and attempts to clarify the scope of G's previous question as to whether there was electricity upstairs and downstairs, downstairs only, or not at all. In the overlapping discussion, K's tentativeness (as evidenced by the use of the particle *thē* 'like/seem/appear') contrasts with L's certainty. What is less canonical in conversation analytic terms is the fact that the first yes/no question is followed by a second question which addresses the scope of the previous question resulting in a dual-party discussion with overlapping turns. When K's question follows G's previous question, it functions simultaneously as interrogation, request for clarification, and delimitation of scope of assertion.[3]

(10)
>   G: *ɔ-bɔle*   *bizuli*   *mɔ-du-ni*   *la*
>   > that-time   electricity   NEG-be.IMP.DJ-yet   **PRT**
>   'At that time, wasn't there any electricity yet?'

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3   Brackets on succeeding lines mark overlapping talk at turn boundaries.

K: *bizuli   du-sa   kune-kune   dɔ-i   la*
> electricity be.IMP.DJ-COND downstairs-RDP be-NPST.DJ **PRT**
'If there was electricity, would it have been (only) downstairs?'

L: *ɔ-bɔle*   [*mɔ-khu*
that-time   [NEG-be.IMP.DJ
'Not at that time.'

K: [*tɔle-nɔ*   *bizuli*   *mɔ-du-ni*   *thɛ̃*
                 [upstairs-also   electricity NEG-be.IMP.DJ-yet like
                 'It's likely there wasn't any upstairs yet.'

L: *jhi-thae*   *ɔ-bɔle-nɔ*   [*bizuli*   *mɔ-du-ni*
1PL.INCL-place   that-time-and   [electricity NEG-be.IMP.DJ-yet
'At our place, there wasn't any electricity yet.'

K: [*bizuli*   *mɔ-du-ni*   thɛ̃-cwɔ̃:
                             [electricity NEG-be.IMP.DJ-yet like.stay
                             'It doesn't seem like there was any
                             electricity yet.'

Thus, while the interrogative particle *la* functions canonically to mark speech acts in which a speaker seeks information from an addressee about a state of affairs in the world, one of the states of affairs that a speaker may wish to know about could be whether some presupposition is, in fact, shared or not shared knowledge between speaker and addressee. When this kind of interrogation occurs we find that the interrogative function includes the clarification of presuppositions and the establishment of shared knowledge, incipient contexts for extending the function of the particle.

The form is also well established in written genres with dialogue and reported speech. The following example (11) is from the modern short story *Andhukār* 'Darkness' by Cittadhar Hṛdaya. Here we find that the interrogative function overlaps with a referent clarification function. The first interrogative "*wa-he lā*" 'That (stuff)?' functions as a clarification of the referent. Thus, when the two interrogatives are put in sequence, the expression of distaste introduced by the first interrogative, functions as context for the second interrogative *me-gu jī lā* 'Would something else be OK?' We can translate the sequence in a more colloquial English paraphrase as 'That stuff? Isn't there anything else?' where the topic function of the first interrogative becomes more apparent.

(11) "*bhapi*"   *suman-aṃ*   *vasaḥ-laḥ*   *hal-a*
      drink.IMP Suman-ERG medicine-water bring-PRF.DJ
      '"Please, drink," Suman brought some medicine.'

"wa-he   lā "
> that-EMPH **PRT**
"That (stuff)?"

keśar-aṃ   chayṃ   hī-kal-a
Keshar-ERG   head   turn-CAUS-PRF.DJ
Keshor twisted his head around.

"me-gu   jī   lā
> other-CL   be.ok.NPST **PRT**
"Would something else be OK?"

baidhy-aṃ   ma-jyū   dhāḥ-gu
doctor.ERG   NEG-be.ok.IMP.DJ   say -NOM
"The doctor has said 'No.'"

Another less canonical interrogative function for *la* occurs in a ubiquitous
tag question construction with the negative form of the verb 'to be': *mɔ-khu la*,
as in example (12) below.[4] Significantly, the occurrence of the tag question
does not entail a second pair part and accompanying speaker change. Instead, it
often seeks clarification and confirmation of shared knowledge, establishes
topics, and functions to support collaborative engagement in the discourse. In
the example below, from a third person oral narrative, the tag occurs as the
narrator is beginning the story and establishing the principal characters.

(12) *ka   laksmi laksmi-ya   mɔ-khu*
     EMPH   Laksmi Laksmi-GEN   NEG-be.IMP.DJ
     'OK..so.. Laksmi, Laksmi, no, (I mean)

     nɔrɔyɔn-ya   bya   ya-e   mal-ɔ   laksmi mɔ-khu   la
     > Narayan-GEN   marry   do-INF need-PRF.DJ Laksmi **NEG-be** **PRT**
     Narayan wanted to marry..Laksmi, right?

     laksmi bya   ya-e   maː-bɔle
     Laksmi marry   do-INF need.IMP.DJ-time
     and in wanting to marry Laksmi,...'

In sum, it is important to emphasize that the interrogatives here are
considered less canonical not because they are less frequent but rather because
they may occur without an immediately occurring turn boundary followed by an
affirmative or negative form of the verb phrase. Instead of an affirmative or
negative second pair part, the discourse following the particle may include a

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[4] This is exactly parallel to the Lahu question-tag *mâ hê? lâ* (see Matisoff 1988:973,
1077). [Ed.]

continuation by the same speaker, and elaborates or expands on the focus constructed via the interrogative form. In this sense, these functions illustrate one point on a graded continuum from canonical interrogation to the topic/focus function.

RHETORICAL REPETITION

A further extension of the particle's function occurs in rhetorical questions in which the interrogative form is followed directly by a corresponding repetition of the interrogative form in the second pair part. In example (13) below the first occurrence of *la*, by speaker G, is purely interrogative; it co-occurs with the politeness particle *le* reflecting the fact that G, a young woman, is asking her mother and uncle about their childhood. The second occurrence, by speaker K, is a repetition of the question followed by the answer. The construction is given emphatic stress and the particle *la* in the second case occurs with a rising intonation, rather than the falling intonation characteristic of interrogation.

(13)

    K: *bhatca yɔkkwɔ lɔskɔr du-gulĩː*
       little   much   group   be.IMP.DJ-because
       'Because there was a somewhat large group,

       bhatca gya-nɔ   mwal-ɔ
       little   fear-also   NEG.need-PRF.DJ
       (we) didn't need to be all that afraid.

       ekanta nɔ   mɔ-jul-ɔ
       lonely   also   NEG-become-PRF.DJ
       (No one) got left alone.'

    G: *gyan-pu-se   cwɔ̃ː   la   le*
    > fear-ADJ-SENS   stay.IMP.DJ   **PRT**   PRT
       'Was it dangerous?'

    K: *gyan-pu la   gyan-pu [sikkɔ gyan-pu*
    > fear-ADJ **PRT** fear-ADJ [very fear-ADJ
       'Dangerous? (It was) dangerous. Very dangerous.'

    L: *[tɔsɔkɔ̃ gyan-pu]*
                         [really fear-ADJ]
                        'Really dangerous.

gyan-pu-se	*jhi-pī:*	*jhijā-mijā*	*dā:*
fear-ADJ-SENS	1.PL.INCL	heebie-jeebies	stand.up

So dangerous, it gave us the heebie-jeebies.'

What is significant about an example such as (13) above is that the particle itself is no longer in the canonical position of an utterance final speech act particle in which clause final position is co-extensive with an utterance or turn boundary for the first pair part in an adjacency pair. Moreover, it does not co-occur with the falling intonation of interrogative utterances; instead, it co-occurs with a rising intonation. In example (13) above, the strategic use associated with the repetition of a previous utterance is emphatic and does not challenge the truth value of the proposition. Instead, repeating the proposition from the first pair part functions to establish a discourse focus for the proposition so that its truth can be emphatically asserted.

In other cases, repetitions can also create a discourse prominence in order to challenge a proposition. In the extended stretch of discourse in example (14) below, speaker B (stammering and inarticulate) interrupts a tape-recording session between M and R and accuses M of removing a paper used to gather up chicken droppings.

(14)

B: *wɔ ɔthī chae li-kɔy-a   biy-a-gu   kha-khi   ɔthī*
   that FILL why back-take-CM give-PST.CJ-NOM chicken-shit FILL
   'Why'd you go and take away that thing...chicken-shit ...thing.'

M: *suna chu*
   who what
   'Who? What?'

M: *bhɔ̃ li-kɔy-a   tal-ɔ   dhɔy-a-gu   la*
> paper back-take-CM put-PRF.DJ say -PST.CJ-NOM **PRT**
   Are you saying the paper (for cleaning chicken-shit) has gotten taken away?'

B: *ā*
   yea
   'Yea.'

M: *jī: thi-e   la   mɔ-thiy-a-ni*
> 1.ERG touch-NPST.CJ **PRT** NEG-touch-PST.CJ-yet
   'Touch it? (I) didn't touch (it)!'

B: *suna li-ka:-gu   cae cae li-kɔy-a-gu*
   who back-take.IMP.DJ-NOM why why back-take-PST.CJ-NOM
   'Then who took it; why did you take it?'

In the initial utterance by B, the use of the substance interrogative *cae* 'why' presupposes the proposition 'you took away the paper'. In response, the first occurrence of *la* by M illustrates the interrogative form functioning as a request for clarification, i.e. 'Are you saying that...'. In the second use of *la*, M establishes a new proposition using the lexically superordinate verb *thi-* 'touch' rather than repeating *li-ka-* 'take away.' Using the *la* particle, M establishes the proposition with the lexically superordinate term, and then emphatically refutes it, thus refuting B's initial accusation. The function of the form *la* here is that of interrogation and topicalization. In fact, the actual glossing of the function as "interrogative" or "topicalization" is problematic, which is exactly what we would expect to find in a case of poly-functionality resulting from progressive extension to new functions.

TOPICALIZATION

When not occurring in the second pair part of an adjacency pair, *la* occurs after an initial constituent and functions as a topic marker. In example (15) below, the first occurrence (in G's turn) is purely interrogative and co-occurs with the *le* particle. The second occurrence (in K's turn) illustrates a repetition/focus function. The three subsequent occurrences cannot clearly be identified as repetitions or even rhetorical questions, nor do they occur with the falling interrogative intonation. Their function in this discourse segment is to emphasize contrast. In the larger conversational context (not included because of space considerations), the speakers are describing how after an earthquake, they were able to get along fairly well in contrast to the many others who, because of the rubble and partially collapsed houses, had to sleep in open spaces away from the neighborhood. Thus, the use of the particle *la* functions to contrast the speaker's own situation with that of the less fortunate neighbors. Again, the segment opens with a question by G.[5]

(15)

    G: *jhi-pī: thɔnɔ chē: cwɔ̃ wɔ-e   dhun-ɔ   la   le*
    > 1.PL.INCL here house stay come-INF finish-PRF.DJ **PRT** PRT
        'Had we already come (back) to stay here at our house?'

    K: *thɔnɔ chē: la   khɔ: ni*
    > here   house **PRT** be.IMP.DJ EMPH
        'Here at this house, yes.

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[5] G's use of the inclusive plural suggests involvement and closeness, although she obviously was not present at the events that took place.

thɔnɔ chē   thahā   mɔ-wɔy-a
here   house upstairs NEG-come-PST.CJ
We didn't come upstairs (for fear of collapse).

jhi-pī: la   yɔ kkwɔ he   cwɔn-a   ni
1.PL.INCL PRT a lot   EMPH stay-PST.CJ EMPH
As for us, we stayed (out of the house) for a long time.'

jhi   la   bɔːca   chapor   du-gulī:
>   1.PL.INCL PRT average hut   be.IMP.DJ-NOM.ABL
'As for us, since we had an average sized hut (outside by the house),

bhɔti-ca   subidha   du   thē   cwɔ̄:   ka
little-DIM   facilities   be.IMP.DJ like   stay.IMP.DJ EMPH
it was like we had some of the comforts of home.'

Another clear example of the topicalization function is seen in (16) below,
which again comes from the modern Newar short story *Andhukār* 'Darkness'
by Cittadhar Hṛdaya (NS 1067 = 1947). The first occurrence is interrogative in
function; the second occurrence is clearly functioning as a topicalization device.

(16) *nhya va-a   lā   kha*
>   sleep come-PRF.DJ PRT be.true.IMP.DJ
'"Did you actually get any sleep?"

suman-aṃ   keśar-yā   lhāḥ   jvan-a/
Suman-ERG Keshar-GEN hand grab-PRF.DJ
Suman took hold of Keshar's hand.

nhyaḥ   aha
sleep   hah!
"Sleep! Hah!

jiṃ   sva-ye   lā   saṃsār-ay   da   he   ma-du
>   1.ERG   look-NPST PRT world-LOC   be   EMPH NEG-be.IMP.DJ
The way I see it, it doesn't exist."'

Finally, a clear case of the topic function can be found in example (17)
below, from an oral narrative. In the extended narrative segment given below,
the particle *la* occurs precisely at positions of topic switching; hence, its
functions appear to be correlated with discourse prominence. The narrative
segment begins with a description of Laksmi's unattractive and slovenly sister.
The first occurrence of *la* marks the shift to the description of the distraught
Brahman, whom Narayan has tricked into marrying Laksmi's unattractive older
sister so that Narayan may go ahead and marry Laksmi, the younger sister.

After a switch into the directly quoted speech of the Brahman, the second occurrence of the particle *la* occurs at the point when the older sister herself begins to talk by addressing the Brahman. Hence, the two occurrences of *la* correspond exactly to shifts in character focus. The segment begins with the narrator describing Laksmi's unattractive sister.

(17) *gɔnɔ   gɔnɔ   dhu   dwā dwā mū-kɔl-ɔ*
     where where dust pile pile gather-CAUS-PRF.DJ,
     'Wherever dust would pile up,

     ɔnɔ   ɔnɔ   leta-i-gu   makɔcaː gae-k-u-sa
     there there happy-NPST-NOM cobweb hang-CAUS-IMP.DJ-COND
     there she would be happy. If there were cobwebs draped about,

     gae-k-a-nɔ   leta-i-gu
     hang-CAUS-CM-also happy-NPST.DJ-NOM
     the hanging cobwebs would make her happy

     phor phor jul-ɔ   dha-e-wɔ
     dirty dirty become-PRF.DJ say-INF-and,
     When things became really filthy,

     ɔ-the   he   cwɔn-i-gu
     DEM-like EMPH stay-NPST.DJ-NOM
     she would likewise remain.

     ɔ-ya-gu   ju-sa   jɔkɔ cɔ̃ yaū
     DEM-GEN-CL become-COND just head light.
     It was only in these ways, that she would relax.

     e-juː-gu-nittī̃   *wɔ bhramɔn la*
  > DEM-become.IMP.DJ-NOM-result that Brahman **PRT**
     As a result, the Brahman,

     tɔsɔkɔ̃ he   dikɔ-dakɔ   juy-aː   dukhɔ juy-aː   a
     very   EMPH sadness-RDP become-NF sorrow become-NF now
     he became very very depressed,

     gɔe ya-e   mal-i   chu   ya-e   mal-i
     how do-INF need-NPST.DJ what do-INF need-NPST.DJ
     and being depressed asked, "What's to be done? "What's to be done?"

     chɔ̃   sɔpha sughɔr yan-aː   dhupe   dhū-nɔ   yan-aː
     2ERG clean   neat   do-NF, incense dust-also do-NF,
     when you're cleaning, or incense is burning,

kɔpa   syat-ɔ
head   ache-PRF.DJ
you get a headache,

chɔ   gɔ-ya   thae   cwɔn-e
2.SNG what-GEN place   stay-NPST.CJ
What sort of place do you intend to live in?

gɔ-ya-gu   yan-a   cwɔn-e   nhyā
what-GEN-CL   do-CM   stay-INF prefer
What would you prefer to be doing?"

dhaː-gu   dhaː-bɔle
say-NOM   say-time
he asked,

> *dɔ   la   dhuː dhuː dwā dwā du   thae*
1.DAT **PRT** dust dust pile pile be.IMP.DJ place,
"For me, a place with piles and piles of dust,

makɔpikā ga-thae   gɔnɔ gɔnɔ phor   jul-ɔ
cobweb   hang-place   where where dirty become-PRF.DJ
a place draped with cobwebs, wherever it is dirty,

gɔnɔ gɔnɔ chēː   lwapu ghoraghor lwapu
where where house.LOC quarrel strife   quarrel
wherever there is fighting in the house, bickering and strife;

jul-ɔ   ɔnɔ   chē   jɔkɔ ji-tɔ ɔnɔndɔ wɔː
become-PRF.DJ there house just 1-DAT peace   come.IMP.DJ
it's only in that sort of house that I find peace.'

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The essence of the argument presented here is that the PTB interrogative particle *la* has undergone a progressive extension of its discourse function as a result of occurrences in routine conversational exchanges. The discourse contexts for interrogation have functioned to invite further extensions in the range of uses for the particle from a canonical turn boundary interrogative function towards a within-turn, within-utterance, within-clause topic function. Fundamental to the argument is Vološinov's insight that an utterance should be considered a social communicative act such that even a "monologic" text such as a written paragraph or long oral narrative be viewed as *"a vitiated dialogue worked into the body of monologic utterance"* (1973:111 [1929], italics in original). This insight is fundamental to much of the subsequent work in grammaticization (cf. Traugott and Heine 1991).

In other words, the discourse organization and information structuring of the monologic text can be viewed as a function, in part, of an internalization of dialog. In purely cognitive terms, Vološinov's dialogism can be taken to suggest a speaker's internalized mental representation of an addressee's mental representation. It is on the basis of the speaker's obviously incomplete understanding of the addressee's degree of understanding that the discourse is partially structured. Thus, in part, it is the internalized representations of addressees' viewpoints that speakers "interact" with in making rhetorical choices and structuring information. In discourse terms, dialogism suggests, among other things, the ongoing collaborative engagement of participants in establishing topics and negotiating the boundaries of shared and non-shared knowledge. In the progressive extension of the Newar particle *la* from interrogation to topicalization, it is the speaker's internalized notion of how the discourse context is perceived by the addressee, and the social process of collaborative engagement, that functions as the local discourse context for the development of the particle *la*: (1) as a means for the speaker to seek information that s/he wishes to possess about the world at large, (2) as a means for seeking information that the speaker wishes to possess about the addressee's degree of shared knowledge in a discourse, (3) as a means of establishing shared knowledge between speaker and addressee, and (4) as a means of directing the addressee's attention towards a topical referent or proposition. It is in extended (monologic) narrative texts (example (17) above), that we find the most completely grammaticized occurrences of the particle's topicalization function.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABL	ablative	DIM	diminutive	NF	non-final
ABS	absolutive	DJ	disjunct	NOM	nominalizer
ADJ	adjective	EMPH	emphatic	NPST	non-past
CAUS	causative	FILL	filler	PRF	perfective
CJ	conjunct	GEN	genitive	PRT	particle
CL	classifier	IMP	imperfective	PST	past
CM	concatenation	IMPR	imperative	RDP	reduplication
	marker	INCL	inclusive	REL	relativizer
COND	conditional	INF	infinitive	SENS	sensory
DAT	dative	LOC	locative	SNG	singular
DEM	demonstrative	NEG	negative		

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