

Focus marking in Ìkálẹ̀ and the Final-Over-Final Condition

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Abstract

This paper investigates *ex-situ* focalization in Ìkálẹ̀, a Yorùbá dialect of Nigeria, which appears to violate the Final-Over-Final Condition (FOFC) due to its clause-final morphological focus marking. Starting with a description of focus realization in the language, I present data showing that the *ex-situ* focus construction in Ìkálẹ̀ poses a challenge to characterizing FOFC domain based on the extended projections. I show that Ìkálẹ̀ marks *ex-situ* focus sentence-finally, and that the sentence-final focus marker projects a FocP, which dominates a left-headed TP. I argue that such a FOFC-violating structure cannot be accounted for based on the extended projections' characterization of FOFC. It is best analyzed using the phase-based approach to FOFC's domain (à la Richards 2016, Erlewine 2017). I further propose that the analysis may be extended to two other Benue-Congo languages (Igede and Nupe) and two other dialects of Yorùbá (Òndó and Òkìtìpupa) that morphologically mark *ex-situ* focus sentence-finally.

Keywords: *Ex-situ* focus, FOFC, phases, spell-out, head-finality, extended projections

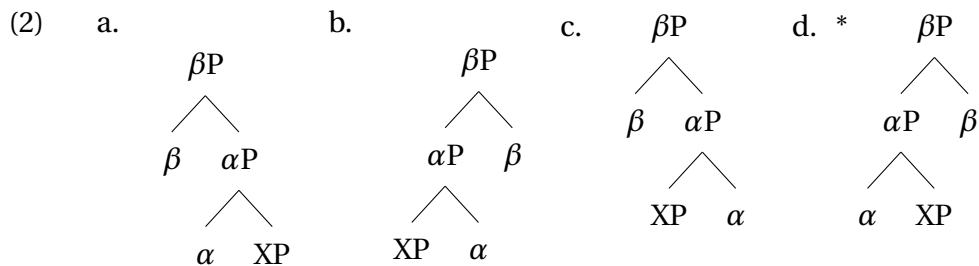
1 Introduction

The Final-Over-Final Condition (henceforth FOFC) has been proposed to be a universal structure-building condition which requires that only a head-final phrase can dominate a head-initial phrase $[_{XP} [_{YP} ZP \mathbf{Y}] \mathbf{X}]$. Cross-linguistics studies have shown that this condition holds in many languages (cf. Holmberg 2000, Biberauer et al. 2008, Biberauer and Sheehan 2012, Sheehan et al. 2017, i.a.). FOFC's generalization is given in (1)

- (1) **The Final-over-Final Condition (FOFC):**
A head-final phrase αP cannot dominate a head-initial phrase βP , where α and β are heads in the same *Extended Projection* (EP).

(Biberauer et al. 2014, p.206)

The generalization in (1) highlights two things: (a) FOFC conditions structure building, and (b) FOFC holds within a certain domain, i.e., FOFC does not apply to the entire utterance. It only applies within an extended projection.¹ So, based on the first part in the FOFC generalization in (1), only the structures in (2a) - (2c) are possible. (2d) is predicted to be ungrammatical because we have a head-final phrase dominating a head-initial phrase. In other words, any time we have a head-final phrase dominating a phrase, the latter must be head-final as well.



In the second part, the generalization in (1) shows that FOFC does not hold across an entire sentence. The domain of FOFC application is constrained to an extended projection. To make this clearer, consider the German example in (3) (Biberauer et al. 2008, p.99, ex. 12a). In (3), a head-final VP dominates a head-initial DP. Going by only the first part of (1), we might expect such a construction to violate FOFC. However, this is a grammatical sentence in German.

- (3) Johann hat [_{VP} [_{DP} den Mann] gesehen].
 John has DEF man seen
 'John has seen the man.'

(from Biberauer et al. 2008, p.99)

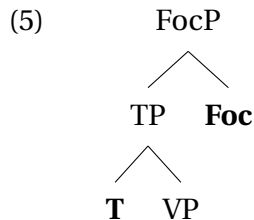
The reason for the grammaticality is due to the second part of the FOFC generalization above: FOFC holds within an extended projection (Grimshaw 2000, 2005). According to Grimshaw (2000, 2005), syntactic categories can be sub-grouped into extended projections which are motivated by the systematic relationships or dependencies observed among those syntactic categories. So, the verbal extended projection includes *VP*, *vP*, *TP* and *CP*, while the nominal extended projection includes *NP*, *DP*, *PP*, and by extension, any other projection within the nominal domain. The idea is that while the phrases within the verbal extended projection all bear [+V], the phrases within the nominal extended projection all bear [+N]. Therefore,

¹What we mean by *extended projections* will be discussed soon.

going back to the German example in (3), the VP and the DP belong to different extended projections. So, FOFC is not violated. This explains the grammaticality of such structures.

Importantly, the range of constructions or domains subjected to FOFC has expanded over the years. FOFC was first proposed for auxiliary-verb ordering in Finnish (Holmberg 2000) (see also Kiparsky 1996, Fuß and Trips 2002, Biberauer et al. 2010), but has since been argued to constrain the order of the nominal domain (Roberts 2017), adverbs (Sheehan 2017), adpositions (Biberauer 2017), extrapositions (Biberauer and Sheehan 2012), sentence-final particles (in Mandarin Chinese) (Erlewine 2017), and VP-nominalization (in West African languages) (Hein and Murphy 2022). This paper extends the coverage of FOFC to morphosyntactic focus marking. The paper presents novel data from Ìkálẹ̀, a southwestern dialect of Yorùbá (Benue-Congo, Nigeria). Focus marking in Ìkálẹ̀ involves a clause-final morphological marking plus syntactic re-ordering (4b). The presence of such a clause-final focus marker, which I argue to occupy the head of a clause-peripheral FocP, results in a head-final phrase dominating a head-initial phrase (TP) (5). The construction appears to constitute an exception to FOFC (see (1)).

- (4) a. Who did Adé see?
 b. [Tolú]_F Adé rí ___ *(rín).
 T. A. see FOC
 ‘Adé saw TOLÚ’.



There have been two different proposals on the treatment of apparently FOFC-violating clause-final particles (CFPs henceforth). The first proposal argues that FOFC-violating CFPs are in fact not a threat to FOFC because they can (a) have double or multiple function within a language, (b) be optional in their use, or (c) be acategorical, i.e., combine with different XPs which calls into question their categorial status (see Biberauer et al. 2014, Sheehan et al. 2017, a.o.). The second proposal is phase-based, i.e., FOFC only applies within the domain of a phase, i.e. the Spell-Out domain which excludes the phase edge (the specifier and the head of the phase). Thus, clause-final particles function as a phase head which explains why they seem to be an exception to FOFC. Their domain (complement) has undergone spell-out. This is the view by Erlewine (2017) for Sentence Final

Particles (SFPs) in Mandarin Chinese whereby “FOFC holds only within individual Spell-Out domains” (see also Richards 2016).

In this study, I argue that the phase-based approach to the characterization of FOFC domains best explains the clause-final ex-situ focus marking in Ìkálẹ̀. In contrast, I show that the clause-final focus particle in Ìkálẹ̀ is not *promiscuous* like most of the particles discussed by Biberauer and Sheehan (2012), Biberauer et al. (2014), Sheehan (2017), among others. We need more than just an explanation that is based on the (universal and language-specific) properties of such particles. We need a structural condition that predicts where such particles can occur, and why they usually do not violate FOFC.

For the sections that follow, section 2 provides a brief background on the syntax of Ìkálẹ̀ and then describes the ex-situ focalization strategy which produces FOFC-violating structures. Section 3 proposes an analysis which is based on phasehood and the Phase Impenetrability Condition (PIC). Afterwards, an alternative view is discussed. In section 4, I show how sentence-final ex-situ focus marking may be derived based on Kayne’s (1994) anti-symmetric syntax. I, however, reveal a few challenges for using such an approach to derive ex-situ focus in Ìkálẹ̀. Next, in section 5, I discuss how the proposal can extend to two other Benue-Congo languages (Igede and Nupe) and two other dialects of Yorùbá (Òndó and Òkìtìpupa) with similar sentence-final morphological focus marking. The last section 6 concludes the paper.

2 Background on Ìkálẹ̀ and its Focus realization

2.1 Basic syntax of Ìkálẹ̀

Although Standard Yorùbá has received much attention in the literature, its different dialects are mostly understudied. Often, the basic assumption is that the dialects of Yorùbá behave the same way as the standard variety. However, studies on the different dialects of the language have proven that this assumption can be misleading (Akinkugbe 1976, Adeoye 1979, Ajíbóyè 2001, Sheba 2007, Adeniyi 2010, Akintoye 2020, i.a.).² Based on Adeniyi’s (2010) grouping of Yorùbá dialects, Ìkálẹ̀ falls within the southeastern dialects of Yorùbá.³ The Ìkálẹ̀ dialect of Yorùbá is spoken predominantly in Òndó state, Nigeria.

Structurally, Ìkálẹ̀ is SVO in its word order (6), just like the standard variety (cf. Aremu 2021, ta). Preliminary work suggests that Ìkálẹ̀, just like Standard Yorùbá, has three level tones: high, mid and low. As far as I know,

²For the history and migration account of Ìkálẹ̀ speakers, see Sheba (2007).

³The data used in this study are from a series of interviews with my language consultants: Mr. Ayomide Akinlalu and his father, Pa Akinlalu. I am grateful to them.

tone does not play any significant role in the present study and analysis. But I will mark the tones on the words for the sake of the orthography and correct pronunciation.⁴

- (6) Adé áa pa ekún nẹ.
 A. FUT kill rat DEF
 ‘Adé will kill the rat.’

2.2 Focus marking in Ìkálẹ̀: an apparent exception to FOFC

In Ìkálẹ̀, focus may be realized in-situ or ex-situ. The in-situ strategy does not involve any overt focus marking, in the sense of morphological focus marking or syntactic re-ordering. It shares the same structure as a normal declarative sentence. This is exemplified with the in-situ object focus in (7b). The only way to recognize the logical focus is through the current question (7a) (cf. Roberts 1996, 2004, Beaver and Clark 2008, Velleman and Beaver 2016).

- (7) **Object question and in-situ answer**
- a. Nẹ́e Adé rí?
 who A. see
 ‘Who did Adé see?’
- b. Adé rí [Tolú]_F.
 A. see T.
 ‘Adé saw TOLÙ.’

The focus strategy that is of interest to us here is the ex-situ strategy. This involves both the morphological focus marking with the particle *rín* and the syntactic displacement of the focus constituent to the left periphery of the clause. For example, the same object *wh*-question as before can be answered by fronting the object to the left periphery in addition to the presence of *rín* in the clause-final position (8b). If the focus is in-situ, *rín* cannot occur (8c)

- (8) ***Rín*-marking with ex-situ focus**
- a. Nẹ́e Adé rí?
 who A. see
 ‘Who did Adé see?’
- b. [Tolú]_F Adé rí ___ **(*rín)**.
 T. A. see FOC
 ‘Adé saw TOLÙ.’
- c. Adé rí [Tolú]_F **(*rín)**.
 A. see T.

⁴For a study on the phonology of Ìkálẹ̀, see Ajobiwe (1992).

'Adé saw TOLÚ.'

Similarly, in long distance constructions, when the embedded object is fronted to the left periphery of the matrix clause, as in (9b), *rín* occurs clause-finally. However, if the embedded object focus remains in-situ, *rín* is absent.

(9) **Embedded object focus**

- a. Nèé Adé fọ fi Bọlá rí ní ojà?
 who A. say COMP B. see at market
 'Who did Adé say that Bọlá saw at the market?'
- b. [Tolú]_F Adé fọ fi Bọlá rí __ ní ojà *(**rín**).
 T. A. say COMP B. see at market FOC
 'Adé said that Bọlá saw TOLÚ at the market.'
- c. Adé fọ fi Bọlá rí [Tolú]_F ní ojà *(**rín**).
 A. say COMP B. see T. at market FOC
 'Adé said that Bọlá saw TOLU at the market.'

The same pattern is observed with respect to local and non-local subject focus. The only difference here is the presence of a resumptive pronoun *ó* when the subject focus is ex-situ (cf. (10b) & (11b)). Both the resumptive pronoun and *rín* do not occur in in-situ local and long-distance subject focus ((10c) & (11c)). In summary, *rín* is obligatorily associated with ex-situ focus.

(10) **Local subject focus**

- a. Nọọ jẹ ejíjẹ nẹ?
 who eat food DEF
 'Who ate the food?'
- b. [Adé]_F *(ó) jẹ ejíjẹ nẹ *(**rín**).
 A. RP eat food DEF FOC
 'ADÉ ate the food.'
- c. [Adé]_F (*ó) jẹ ejíjẹ nẹ *(**rín**).
 A. eat food DEF
 'ADÉ ate the food.'

(11) **Embedded subject focus**

- a. Nẹé Adé fọ fi *(ó) fẹràn Tolú?
 who A. say COMP RP love Tolú
 'Who did Adé say loves Tolú?'
- b. [Bọlá]_F Adé fọ fi *(ó) fẹràn Tolú *(**rín**).
 B. A. say COMP RP love T. FOC
 'Adé said that BÓLÁ loves Tolú.'

- c. Adé fò fi [Bólá]_F (*ó) fẹ̀ràn Tolú (*rín).
 A. say COMP B. love T.
 ‘Adé said that BÓLÁ loves Tolú.’

The data I have presented so far does not immediately indicate the actual structural position of *rín*. Based on the data here, *rín* could for example be at the CP periphery (12a) or the vP periphery (12b). In the next section, I argue that *rín* is higher than the vP periphery; it is in the clausal periphery.

- (12) a. [_{FOCP} DP [_{TP} [_{vP} [_{VP} ___]]]rín]
 b. [_{CP} DP [_{TP} [_{FOCP} [_{vP} [_{VP} ___]]]rín]]

2.3 Arguing for the structural position of *rín*

The first evidence for a CP-*rín* comes from fragment answers like the subject focus in (13b) which answers the *wh*-question in (13a). In the fragment answer, the TP is elided (see e.g. Merchant 2005). If *rín*'s structural position is clause-internal, i.e. at the vP periphery, then it is unclear why it is not elided. This can only be because *rín* was never inside of the ellipsis site (the TP) in the first place. The fragment answer had moved to its Spec.

- (13) **Subject fragment answer with *rín***
 a. Nòó jẹ ejijẹ nẹ?
 who eat food DEF
 ‘Who ate the food?’
 b. [_{CP} [_{Adé}]_F [_{TP} *_(ó) jẹ ejijẹ nẹ] *_(rín)].
 A. FOC
 ‘ADÉ ate the food.’

The same explanation applies to the object fragment answer in (14b). *Rín* survives TP ellipsis, and is believed to host the fragment answer in its Spec.

- (14) **Object fragment answer with *rín***
 a. Nèé Adé rí?
 who A. see
 ‘Who did Adé see?’
 b. [_{CP} [_{Tolú}]_F [_{TP} Adé rí ___] *_(rín)].
 T. FOC
 ‘TOLÚ Adé saw.’

An argument for CP-*rín* can come from the distribution of the focus marking itself. If *rín* occupies a low position, let's say the vP periphery, then this would predict that *rín* would only appear with local objects and maybe long-distance movement, but never with local subject focus movement. This is because the local subject's focus movement does not pass

through vP.⁵ It follows its normal derivation up to TP. However, we have seen that *rín*-marking is not excluded in local subject movement. It appears in all ex-situ focus contexts; whether subject or non-subject, local or non-local. This can only mean that *rín* is high enough to mark ex-situ focus subject.

An additional comparative evidence comes from focus marking in Standard Yorùbá. In Standard Yorùbá, the morphological focus marker *ni* immediately follows the fronted focus phrase. Consider the ex-situ object focus and subject focus data below. The word order with respect to the subject shows that the focus marker *ni* is higher than the TP. I assume the same high structural position for *rín* in Ìkálẹ̀; only that in the latter, the focus marker appears sentence-finally.

- (15) a. [Ìṣu]_F **ni** Adé jẹ __.
 yam FOC A. eat
 ‘Adé ate YAM’
 b. [Adé]_F **ni** *(ó) jẹ iṣu.
 A. FOC RP eat yam
 ‘ADÉ ate yam.’

Based on these evidence, I conclude that the sentence-final focus marker *rín* occupies a high position in the clause, above the TP. I assume this position to be the head of a clause-peripheral FocP.

3 *Rín*-marking and FOFC

In the subsection that follows (§3.1), I argue that the characterization of FOFC domain of application which is based on the extended projection cannot account for the observed ex-situ focus construction in Ìkálẹ̀. Instead, I propose a phase-based characterization of FOFC domain for ex-situ focus in Ìkálẹ̀ following Richards (2016) and Erlewine (2017). In the second subsection (§3.2), I present an alternative analysis based on Sheehan et al.’s (2017) explanation of the behaviour of sentence-final particles which they believed exempts them from FOFC. I discuss a few challenges that such an analysis faces, especially with respect to *rín* focus marking in Ìkálẹ̀.

⁵Unaccusative cases do not pose a challenge for the discussion here because the movement from a complement of V position to Spec,TP is an A-movement. So, it is different from A'-movement that we are treating here. Thus, before an unaccusative subject is focalized, it must have gone through A-movement to Spec,TP before undergoing A'-movement. Otherwise, we would be dealing with a case of an improper movement (Chomsky 1973) if we assume that the unaccusative subject A'-moves through vP, and then A-moves to Spec,TP.

3.1 A proposed analysis

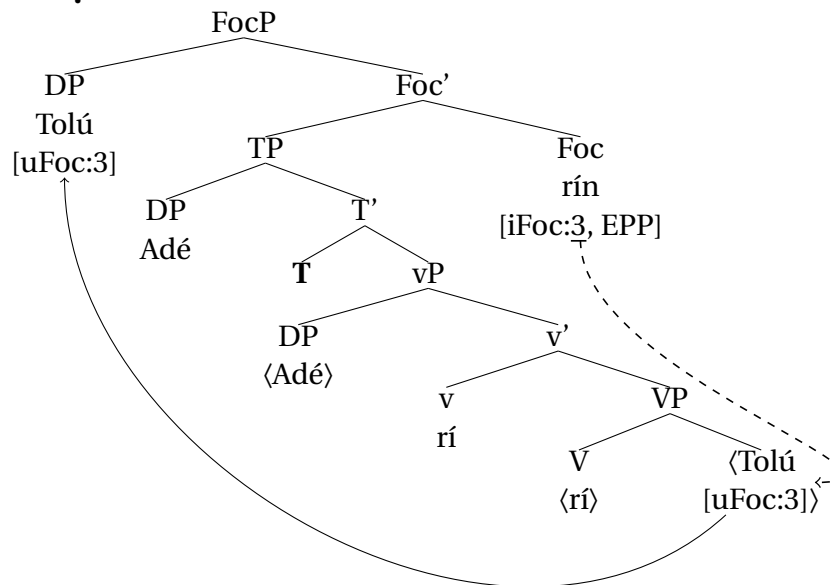
Similar to the German example in (3), we have seen that in Ìkálè, what might otherwise be a FOFC violation is instead grammatical. The repeated direct object ex-situ focus construction in (16) (repeated from (8b) above) shows that *rín*, a head-final element dominates a head-initial TP phrase. The CP peripheral position of *rín* has already been established based on the various tests in §2.3. The ex-situ focus structure is proposed below.

- (16) [Tolù]_F Adé rí ___ *(rín).
T. A. see FOC
'Adé saw TOLÙ'.

I assume the structure in (17) where *rín* heads a FocP (following Rizzi's (1997) split-CP hypothesis) above the TP. The fronted focus constituent occupies Spec,FocP in order to satisfy an EPP feature on the focus head. This movement occurs after agreement between the focus head and the focused constituent. The focus head is the probe with an interpretable unvalued feature which Agrees with the direct object as the goal with an uninterpretable but valued feature. Looking at (17), we have a structure where a head-final phrase, FocP, dominates a head-initial phrase, TP. This is a potential FOFC-violating structure. However, we have seen from the data presented above that such a structure is grammatical. The focus head starts out as an unvalued interpretable feature, and Agrees with the focus constituent that possesses a valued but uninterpretable focus feature.⁶ The unvalued feature on Foc causes it to probe for valuation. After it has been valued, the goal of the agreement operation (here the object) moves to Spec,FocP to satisfy the EPP on Foc.

⁶The number 3 in the feature specification is only an arbitrary index which represent feature valuation, and the same index between the probe (Foc) and the goal (object focus) means a shared feature value. Nothing hinges on the number. It can as well be 1,2, ..., or even *val*.

(17) **Ìkálẹ̀ ex-situ focus structure**



Unlike the case of the German example in (3), the characterization of FOFC domains based on extended projections cannot account for what we observe in ex-situ focus constructions in Ìkálẹ̀. The idea is that since FocP is one of the phrases within the split-CP (cf. Rizzi 1997), it is also part of the verbal extended projection. In fact, nothing hinges on the use of FocP instead of CP in our structure in (17). FocP and TP belong to the same extended projection, and we expect FOFC to hold between them under such circumstances. The fact that FOFC is violated raises the question of how to account for the grammaticality of such a structure. This is where the phase-based characterization of FOFC domains comes in.⁷

Following Richards (2016) and Erlewine (2017), the domain of FOFC application can be characterized by Spell-Out. The characterization of FOFC domain based on (18) allows for an inclusive treatment of apparently FOFC-violating structures like the ex-situ focus construction in Ìkálẹ̀.

(18) *Phasehood characterization of FOFC domains*

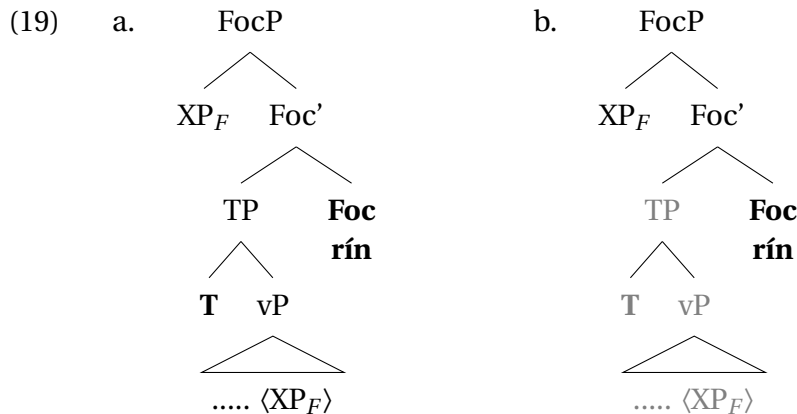
FOFC holds only within individual Spell-out domains.

(adapted & modified from Erlewine 2017, p.67)

Similar to Erlewine's (2017) proposal for sentence final particles in Mandarin Chinese, the assumption here is that the head of FocP in ex-situ focus

⁷There is an alternative explanation by Sheehan et al. (2017) and others, on why sentence-final particles like the one in Ìkálẹ̀ do not constitute a challenge for FOFC. See the next subsection for a brief overview of this explanation and the potential challenges it faces.

constructions, corresponds to the CP-level.⁸ The head initial TP is then the complement of the phase head, and therefore the Spell-Out domain of the phase. This is illustrated with the structures in (19).



Based on the traditional view of phases by Chomsky (2000, 2001), as in the PIC in (20), the Foc head and its Spec are the phase edge. They are not spelled-out until the merging of a higher phase; in a cyclic Spell-Out manner or at the end of the entire derivation (see Grohmann et al. 2017, on what happens to the very top of the tree in phasal Spell-Out theory).

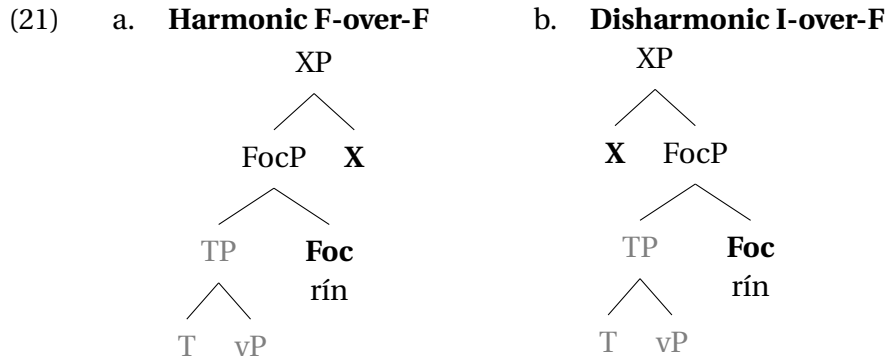
- (20) **Phase Impenetrability Condition** (Chomsky 2000, p.108)
 In phase α with head H, the domain of H is not accessible to operations outside of α , only H and its edge are accessible to such operations.

Since the FOFC domain is characterized by the Spell-Out domain, the structure in (19b) shows how head-initial TP is within this Spell-Out domain and is no longer accessible to outside operations. This explains why such a structure which may appear to violate FOFC, does not. It also shows why such head-final particles often appear at the periphery of the clause (cf. Erlewine 2017). This is only expected based on the theory of phasal Spell-Out.⁹ In summary, what we have here is a situation where the head-final FocP and the head-initial TP belong to different FOFC domains which are characterized by Spell-Out domains (cf. (18)).

⁸The idea here leans on at least two views to what counts as phasal domains. First is the traditional view which counts both the CP and the little vP as phases (Chomsky 1986, 2000, 2001, 2008, i.a.). The second is the contextual view to phases where phases are contextually determined (Bošković 2005, 2014, Gallego and Uriagereka 2007, Den Dikken 2007, Takahashi 2011, i.a.)

⁹See Erlewine (2017, pp.68-69) and Erlewine (2023) (on Singlish) for a proposal on how to deal with cases where FOFC applies across phase boundaries, like the auxiliary construction in Finnish (cf. Holmberg 2000).

After FocP is built, any potential head that is merged with FocP would always be FOFC-complaint. It does not matter whether it is head-final or head-initial. If the merged head is head-final, we would have a harmonic final-over-final structure (21a), and if it is head initial, we would have a FOFC-compliant disharmonic initial-over-final structure (21b).



3.2 An alternative analysis

Following Sheehan et al. (2017, and some references therein), an alternative approach to sentence-final particles that appear to produce FOFC-violating structures is that they are *acategorical*. In other words, they behave differently from proper categorial elements like nouns and verbs; they are "categorially deficient" according to Biberauer et al. (2009, p.712). Therefore the proposal is that such particles do not interact with the rest of the clausal spine, and therefore FOFC does not apply to them. One of the properties of these particles, according to Sheehan et al. (2017) is that they can be optional in their occurrence. For example, the question particle *ma* in Mandarin Chinese is said to be optional because prosody/intonation can indicate the interrogative force of the sentence (i.e Force⁰ can be null) (22). Thus *ma* only optionally doubles or affirm the interrogative force (cf. Biberauer et al. 2014).

- (22) Hongjian xihuan zhe ben shu (ma)?
 Hongjian like this CL book Q
 'Does Hongjian like this book?'

Biberauer et al. (2014, p.199) citing Li (2006, p.13)

Similarly, sentence-final particles may also have multiple functions in the languages in which they occur. For instance, the same particle can function as both a question particle and a disjunctive marker. Additionally, some (subclausal) particles may combine with different category XPs (see Sheehan 2017, ch.9, § 9.2.4). This is typical of the adfocal exclusive focus sensitive particle *only* which can adjoin to different categories. Consider

the adfocal exclusive particle *nùkàn* in Ìkálẹ̀ in (23). *Nùkàn* can adjoin to a DP (23a), a PP (23b), or even an adverb (23c). Although *only* is traditionally regarded as an adverb, the aforementioned property has been used to support the claim that (adfocal) exclusive particles are acategorial or syn-categorematic elements instead (see Bayer 2018, 2020, for discussion).¹⁰

- (23) a. Bọ́lá je [_{DP} usu **nùkàn**] lọ́rí igi láàná.
 Bọ́lá eat yam only on tree yesterday
 ‘Bọ́lá ate only YAM on the tree yesterday.’
 b. Bọ́lá je usu [_{PP} lọ́rí igi **nùkàn**] láàná.
 Bọ́lá eat yam on tree only yesterday
 ‘Bọ́lá ate yam only ON the tree yesterday.’
 c. Bọ́lá je usu lọ́rí igi [_{AdvP} láàná **nùkàn**].
 Bọ́lá eat yam on tree yesterday only
 ‘Bọ́lá ate yam on the tree only YESTERDAY.’

As much as this alternative approach presents interesting facts about the different behaviours of clause-final particles, it does not predict where and when FOFC violation is expected (cf. Erlewine 2017). Such an explanation (at best) only ties the exception of FOFC-violating structures with sentence-final particles to the properties of the particles. Moreover, some of the properties of the sentence-final particles discussed above are not attested with *rín*. For instance, *rín* is strict in its distribution. It appears whenever there is an ex-situ focus. It is not optional and does not have any other function in the dialect.

4 Ex-situ focus structure and the anti-symmetric syntax

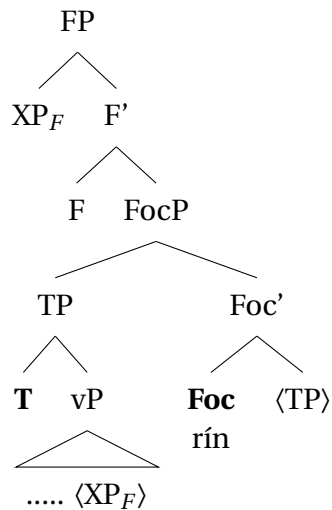
The structure that I proposed in (17) does not take the anti-symmetric approach to syntactic structures into consideration. The assumption in the anti-symmetric theory of syntax is that all languages have an underlying Specifier-Head-Complement order (Kayne 1994). This means that languages are head-initial universally. The surface variation in word order that exists in the languages of the world is therefore a result of different movement steps. In this section, I provide two derivations for Ìkálẹ̀ ex-situ focus based on Kayne’s (1994) anti-symmetry approach, and I show that they both come with a cost.

The first antisymmetry-compliant structure for ex-situ focus in Ìkálẹ̀ may look like (24). The focus phrase is head-initial with a TP complement which moves to the specifier of FocP. At this point of the derivation, the focus constituent (XP_F) is still in an in-situ position, and this does not result

¹⁰Sheehan et al. (2017) discussed other properties of clause-final particles which include the nominalization of such particles, the Malagasy cleft-like structure, etc. (See Sheehan 2017, ch.9 for a discussion on some of these particles)

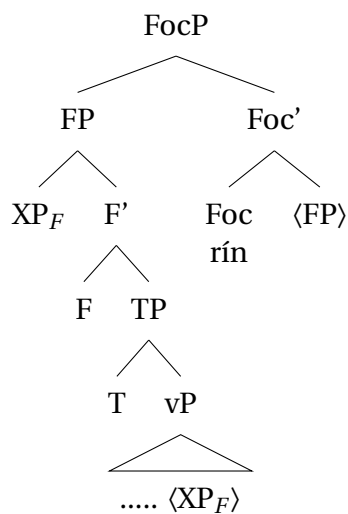
in the desired linearization. Since the normal position for the focus constituent (Spec,FocP) is occupied already, one option is to assume the presence of a functional projection (let's call this FP) above FocP whose Spec hosts the fronted focus constituent. This last movement of the focus to Spec,FP is theoretically surprising because it involves sub-extraction from a derived specifier (see Takita (2009), for a discussion of how this could be a problem cf. Huang (1982)).

(24) **Alternative structure one**



Alternatively, we might as well assume that the FP already projects above the TP, in order to host the internally-merged focus constituent in its specifier (Spec,FP), as in (25). Next, the focus phrase headed by a left-headed *rín* is merged. FP then moves to Spec,FocP in order to derive the correct linearization.

(25) **Alternative structure two**



These alternative (antisymmetry-compliant) derivations face at least three challenges. The first has to do with the nature and motivation of the projection, FP. Apart from providing a landing site for moved elements, there is no other motivation for FP. Assuming FP anytime there is a need for a landing position will only give room for unconstrained or unmotivated projections all over the place. Secondly, there is no (semantic or pragmatic) motivation for some of the movements in both structures. For example, in (24), the movement of TP to Spec,FocP does not correspond to the logical or semantic focus which normally moves to the same position in the left periphery. Additionally, the movement of the logical focus (XP_F) to Spec,FP would have to be motivated. The same thing can be said of the unmotivated movement steps in (25).¹¹ A third challenge that the alternative structures pose is the violation of Comp-to-Spec Anti-locality Constraint which disallows the movement of the complement of a head x to the specifier of x (Abels 2003). In other words, Comp-to-Spec anti-locality requires the movement of the complement of X to cross a head other than X itself. In (24), the movement of TP from Comp of FocP to Spec,FocP violates Comp-to-Spec anti-locality, and in (25), it is the movement of FP to Spec,FocP that violates Comp-to-Spec anti-locality.

5 Other sentence-final focus marking languages

Based on the discussion so far, a cross-linguistic prediction is that the analysis in this study should be able to extend to other languages with sentence-final morphological focus marking. Such languages would also exhibit what we might call apparently FOFC-violating structures. In this section, I discuss two of such languages: Igede and Nupe (both Benue-Congo, North-Central Nigeria), and also two other dialects of Yorùbá: Òndó and Òkìtìpupa (both Southeastern dialects of Yorùbá).

5.1 Two other dialects of Yorùbá

Two other closely related dialects of Yorùbá that also mark ex-situ focus clause-finally are Òndó and Òkìtìpupa. In fact, Òndó, Òkìtìpupa and Ìkálẹ̀ dialects are spoken in close proximity; in the same state, Òndó state, Nigeria. They share similar lexical items and structures. In Òndó dialect, the focus marker *ín* is realized sentence-finally in both subject and object ex-situ focus constructions. See (26b) & (26c) respectively.

(26) Òndó dialect of Yorùbá

¹¹That syntax can involve unmotivated movement steps has already been proposed in the literature. See, among others, Cinque (2010, 2023), Chomsky (2021).

- a. Tolú gbèn usu.
Tolu plant yam
'Tolú planted yam.'
- b. [Tolú]_F ó gbèn usu **ín**.
Tolu 3SG plant yam FOC
'TOLÚ planted yam.'
- c. [Usu]_F Tolú gbèn **ín**.
yam Tolu plant FOC
'Tolú planted YAM.'

(from Akintoye 2020, p.153)

The focus marker in Òkitipupa dialect of Yorùbá is also *ín*. Taking (27a) as the baseline, the examples in (27b), (27c) and (27d) show focus on the subject, the possessor, and the possessee respectively.¹²

(27) **Òkitipupa dialect of Yorùbá**

- a. Èkùn ó mà iye Şadé.
tiger HTS know mother Şadé
'The tiger knew Şadé's mother.'
- b. Èkùn ó mà iye Şadé **ín**.
Tiger 3SG know mother Şadé FOC
'It was the tiger that knew Şadé's mother.'
- c. Şadé èkùn ó mà iye è **ín**.
Şadé tiger HTS know mother 3SG.POSS FOC
'It is Şadé whose mother the tiger knew.'
- d. Iye Şadé èkùn ó mà **ín**.
Mother Şadé tiger HTS know FOC
'It was Şadé's mother that the tiger knew.'

(from Akintoye 2020, p.151-152)

The two dialects of Yorùbá have an SVO word order. So, if the sentence-final focus marker heads a FocP which in turn dominates a head initial TP, then this should result in a FOFC-violating structure based on the extended projection characterization of FOFC's domain. However, with the phase-based approach, the structure does not violate FOFC.

¹²Notice that there is a High Tone Syllable following the subject in all the examples except for example (27b) where it is functioning as a resumptive pronoun. There is a long line of the debate on the status of HTS and resumptive pronoun in the language. For example, Akintoye (2020) believes that it has a dual function in focus contexts where it functions both as an HTS and a resumptive pronoun. However, see Aremu (2024, §3.3) and Aremu (ta, §3.1.1) for a brief discussion on how the HTS should be treated as a floating high tone which undergoes a tonal sandhi with the high tone that is already present on the third person resumptive pronoun *ó* (see also Ilori 2010, Akintoye 2020, a.o.). For our purposes here, it does not play any significant role.

5.2 Two other sentence-final focus marking languages

In Igede, the focus marker *lẹ* appears sentence-finally, regardless of the category that is in focus. Consider the examples in (28), with the baseline sentence in (28a), and the ex-situ subject focus, direct object focus and DP-internal focus in (28b), (28c) & (28d) respectively.

- (28) **Igede** (from Akintoye 2020, p.153, gloss adapted)
- a. *Ìjọ jẹ ìnínà Iṣadé.*
tiger know mother Ṣade's
'The tiger knows Ṣade's mother.'
 - b. [*Ìjọ*]_F *á jẹ ìnínà Iṣadé lẹ.*
tiger 3SG know mother Ṣade's FOC
'THE TIGER knows Ṣade's mother.'
 - c. [*Ìnínà Iṣadé*]_F *ìjọ jẹ lẹ.*
mother Ṣade's tiger know FOC
'The tiger knows ṢADE'S MOTHER.'
 - d. [*Iṣadé*]_F *ìjọ jẹ ìnínà àmù lẹ.*
Ṣade's tiger know mother 3SG.POSS FOC
'The tiger knows ṢADE'S mother.'

Similarly, in Nupe, we have a *wh*-question context where the focus marker *o* also appears in the sentence-final position. Both the ex-situ object *wh*-question and the ex-situ adjunct *wh*-question in (29a) and (29b) are obligatorily marked with a sentence-final *o* respectively.

- (29) **Ex-situ non-subject *wh*-questions in Nupe**
- a. **Ké** Musa pa _____ *(**o**)?
what Musa pound.PST FOC
'What did Musa pound?'
 - b. **Kánci** Musa pa eci _____ *(**o**)?
when Musa pound.PST yam FOC
'When did Musa pound the yam?'

(Mendes and Kandybowicz 2023, p.301)

That the focus marker *o* is sentence-final is confirmed by the examples in (30). In these cases, *o* is 'distant from the trace of the *wh*-elements' (Mendes and Kandybowicz 2023, fn.1). The sentences involve local subject *wh*-question and embedded subject *wh*-question.

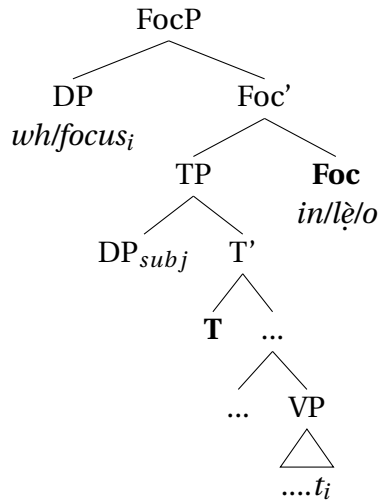
- (30) **Matrix and embedded subject *wh*-questions in Nupe**
- a. **Zě** á eci pa _____ **o**?
who PFV yam pound.PST FOC
'Who has pounded the yam?'

- b. **Zě** Gana gàn gànán *t* à du nakàn **o**?
 who Gana say.PST COMP FUT cook meat FOC
 ‘Who did Gana say will cook the meat?’

(Mendes and Kandybowicz 2023, fn.1)

Ignoring the possibility of other projections (like aspect phrase, vP, etc.) between TP and VP in these languages, we might assume the following structure in (31); which is similar to what we proposed for Ìkálẹ̀ above (cf. (17))

- (31) **A proposed structure for ex-situ focus in the four languages**



If we are right about the fact that the focus markers in Oòndó, Òkítìpupa, Igede, and Nupe occupy the head of FocP in the left periphery, then such a head dominating a head-initial TP should result in a FOFC-violating structure. However, considering our characterization of FOFC domain which constrains the application of FOFC to spell-out domains, we end up with structures that are consistent with FOFC. In other words, the head of FocP is a part of the phase edge, and has the TP as its spell-out domain. This explains why a structure like (31) would not constitute a FOFC violation.

6 Conclusion and implication

As more and more structures are analyzed with FOFC, the need for an adequate characterization of FOFC’s domain also becomes important. In this paper, I have argued, using Ìkálẹ̀ (plus two other languages and two other dialects of Yorùbá), that SVO languages that morphologically mark ex-situ focus sentence-finally are best accounted for using the phase-based characterization of FOFC’s domain. Based on the structure that such languages present in ex-situ focus construction [$_{FocP}$ [$_{TP}$ **T** VP] **Foc**], it is hard to account for what would have been a FOFC-violating structure based on the

extended projection characterization of FOFC's domain. Similarly, assuming a special treatment (i.e. exemption from FOFC) of such sentence-final particles based on their unique properties does not make our theory explanatorily adequate. Moreover, unlike the different clause-final particles discussed by Sheehan et al. (2017), the occurrence of the focus markers in these languages are only licensed by the need to mark ex-situ focus constructions. Therefore, adopting a phase-based approach to the characterization of FOFC's domain of application helps us to account for what might even be seen as syncategorematic elements that project a functional phrase within the articulated CP periphery.

Acknowledgments

To be added.

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