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Focus Construction in Èkìtì and Òndó Dialects of Yorùbá: A Dialectological Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Focus Construction in Yoruba language and its dialects has attracted the attention of many Yoruba scholars. But to the best of our knowledge, none has investigated this phenomenon in Èkìtì and Òndó dialects. This forms the focus of this paper. The data collection relies on the informants who are native speakers of the two dialects. They are between ages 60 to 80 and they have spent almost their life-times in the selected dialect communities. Descriptive approach is adopted for the discussion. Findings reveal that although, the two dialects belong to different Yoruba major groups; Central Yoruba and Southeast Yoruba, there are some similarities and differences in the syntax of the two dialects. These similarities and differences can mostly be reflected on their focus constructions. The concern of this paper is to consider the similarities and differences between the focus constructions in the two dialects.

Keywords: Prominence, Dialects, Focus, Construction, Sentence, Coding

INTRODUCTION

Lots of scholars have worked on focus construction in Yoruba and other languages. Schachter (1973) defines focus construction as a process that introduces a special marking into the s-structure of the element that is being focused, thereby creating a focusing prominence. Yusuf (1989) views it as a syntactic device whereby an Np in the sentence is made prominent by coding it sentence initial. Based on the definitions above, it is discovered

that prominence is an essential ingredient in focus construction whereby an element is being concentrated upon above others by bringing such an element to the sentence initial position. Many Yoruba scholars such as Awobuluyi (1978), Yusuf (1989), Ajiboye (2006), Akintoye (2015), Awoyale (1985) that have worked on focus construction in Yoruba language and its dialects affirm the two types of focus construction exist in Yoruba language; constituent focus and sentence focus. Constituent focus is realized by focusing a lexical item or phrase. This is possible by moving such a lexical constituent or phrase sentence initially which will also be accompanied by a focus marker *ni* as exemplified below Warner, 1971; Oyetade, 1995; Waterman, 1990; Orié, 2003).

1. Olú gbé ọmọ màmá
Olu carry child mother
Olu carried mummy's child

Focus Constructions

- a. Olú ni ó gbé ọmọ màmá
Olu FOC RSP carry child mother
It was Olu that carried mummy's child
- b. Màmá ni Olú gbé ọmọ rẹ
Mother FOC Olu carry child RSP
It was mummy whose child Olu carried
- c. Ọmọ màmá ni Olú gbé
Child mother FOC Olu carry
It was mummy's child that Olu carried
- d. Gbigbé ni Olú gbé ọmọ màmá
Carrying FOC Olu carry child mother
It was carrying that Olu carried mummy's child

All focused items possess nominal feature as shown in the examples above. A non-nominal item like a verb is nominalized by partial reduplication before it is focused. When subject and genitival NPs are moved from their original positions to the initial position, the extraction positions are filled with the presumptive pronouns. For instance, if a subject NP is moved, its extraction position is filled with the subject resumptive pronoun *ó* or the high tone syllable *ó* as shown in example 1(a) above. There are enough arguments on the status of the high tone syllable *ó* among the Yoruba scholars; Awobuluyi (1992, 2006), Oladeji (2003), Akanbi (2004), Olumuyiwa (2005), Oluseye (2005, 2009), Akintoye (2015). The current paper will not delve into this issue. We will treat the high tone syllable *ó* as a presumptive pronoun following Radford (1988) who explains that a sentence without a subject is incorrect. He bases his position on Extended Projection Principle (EPP) which does not allow the generation of a sentence without a subject. Sentence focusing is realized when a complete sentence is given prominence by attaching a focus marker to it at the final position as demonstrated below.

2. Adé na ajá Òjó
Ade beat dog Ojo
Ade beat Ojo's dog

Focus Constructions

- i. Adé na ajá Òjó ni
Adé beat dog Ojo FOC
The fact is that Ade beat Ojo's dog
- b. Olú jí iyán jẹ
Olu steal pounded yam eat
Olu stole pounded yam and ate it
- i. Olú jí iyán jẹ ni
Olu stole pounded yam eat FOC
The fact is that Olu stole pounded yam and ate it

The similarity between constituent focusing and sentence focusing is that prominence is very important and, any structure that is given prominence is accompanied by a focus marker *ni*. Having explained what focus construction means, this paper considers focus construction in Èkìtì and Oṅdó dialects of Yoruba. Although, the two dialects belong to two different major Yoruba dialect groups; Central Yoruba and Southeast Yoruba, findings reveal that there are some similarities and differences in the syntax of these dialects. These similarities and differences can be reflected on the focus constructions of these two dialects. Data collection for this paper relies on texts and journal materials on focus construction and informants who are native speakers of the two dialects. They are between ages 60 to 80 and they have spent almost their life-time in the selected dialect communities. The informants are so selected because it is assumed that their speech forms have not been corrupted by English language and Yoruba standard dialect. Descriptive approach is adopted for the data analysis. The paper is divided into four parts. Part one is the introduction. Part two contains focus construction in Èkìtì. Part three consists of focus construction in Oṅdó. Comparative analysis of focus construction in Èkìtì and Oṅdó dialects forms the last part.

Focus construction in Èkìtì dialect

Èkìtì dialect is one of the major dialects grouped under Central Yoruba Akinkugbe (1976), Oyelaran (1976), Fresco (1970), and Awobuluyi (1998). Although, there are many sub-dialects under Èkìtì dialect, the sub-dialects are mutually intelligible in spite of the observed differences. Two sub-dialects; Adó and Òmùò dialects are selected for presentation and analysis in this paper because sub-Èkìtì dialects are many and it is not possible to capture all of them in a work of this nature. Another reason for selecting Adó and Òmùò dialects is that focus marker takes different forms in the two selected sub-dialects. For instance, focus marker takes *li/ni* forms in Adó and *ki/kin* forms in Òmùò dialect. The focus markers *li/ni* and *ki/kin* are allomorphs of the same morphemes in each of the selected sub-dialects; they occur in exclusive environments (Akintoye 2015).

Like the standard Yoruba, both constituent and sentence focusing are attested in Adó and Òmùò dialects. Constituent focus is generated in Adó and Òmùò dialects by movement transformation (Akintoye 2006). The focused items are moved to the initial position and the focus markers occur immediately after the focused items as shown in the examples above.

Adó dialect

A

B

- 3a. Ajá jẹ ẹ̀rọ̀n Ọ̀jọ̀ jẹ́jẹ́jẹ́
Dog eat meat Ojo ADVP
The dog ate Ojo's meat gently

Focus Constructions

- i. Ajá lí ọ̀ jẹ ẹ̀rọ̀n Ọ̀jọ̀ jẹ́jẹ́jẹ́ → Ajá lí jẹ ẹ̀rọ̀n Ọ̀jọ̀ jẹ́jẹ́jẹ́
Dog FOC RSP eat meat Ojo ADVP → Dog FOC eat meat Ojo ADVP
It was a dog that ate Ojo's meat gently
- ii. Ọ̀jọ̀ lí ajá jẹ ẹ̀rọ̀n rẹ̀ jẹ́jẹ́jẹ́ → Ọ̀jọ̀ lajá jẹ ẹ̀rọ̀n rẹ̀ jẹ́jẹ́jẹ́
Ojo FOC dog eat meat RSP ADVP → Ojo FOC dog eat meat RES ADVP
It was Ojo whose meat the dog ate gently
- iii. Ẹ̀rọ̀n Ọ̀jọ̀ lí ajá jẹ jẹ́jẹ́jẹ́ → Ẹ̀rọ̀n Ọ̀jọ̀ lajá jẹ jẹ́jẹ́jẹ́
Meat Ojo FOC dog eat gently → Meat Ojo FOC dog eat gently
It was Ojo's meat that the dog ate gently
- iv. Jíjẹ lí ajá jẹ ẹ̀rọ̀n Ọ̀jọ̀ jẹ́jẹ́jẹ́ → Jíjẹ lajá jẹ ẹ̀rọ̀n Ọ̀jọ̀ jẹ́jẹ́jẹ́
Eating FOC dog eat meat Ojo gently → Eating FOC dog eat meat Ojo gently
It was eating that the dog ate ojo's meat gently
- v. Jẹ́jẹ́jẹ́ lí ajá jẹ ẹ̀rọ̀n Ojo → Jẹ́jẹ́jẹ́ lajá jẹ ẹ̀rọ̀n Ojo
Gently FOC dog eat meat Ojo → Gently FOC dog eat meat Ojo
Gently, the dog ate Ojo's meat gently.

Òmùò dialect

A

B

- 3b. Ajá jẹ ẹ̀rọ̀n Ọ̀jọ̀ jẹ́jẹ́jẹ́
Dog eat meat Ojo ADVP
The dog ate Ojo's meat gently

Focus Constructions

- i. Ajá kí ọ̀ jẹ ẹ̀rọ̀n Ọ̀jọ̀ jẹ́jẹ́jẹ́ → Ajá kó jẹ ẹ̀rọ̀n Ọ̀jọ̀ jẹ́jẹ́jẹ́
Dog FOC RSP eat meat Ojo ADVP → Dog FOC eat meat Ojo ADVP
It was a dog that ate Ojo's meat gently

- ii. Òjó ki ajá jẹ ẹron rẹ jééjéé → Òjó kajá jẹ ẹron rẹ jééjéé
 Ojo FOC dog eat meat RSP ADVP → Ojo FOC dog eat meat RSP ADVP
 It was Ojo whose meat the dog ate gently
- iii. Ẹron Òjó ki ajá jẹ jééjéé → Ẹron Òjó kajá jẹ jééjéé
 Meat Ojo FOC dog eat gently → Meat Ojo FOC dog eat gently
 It was Ojo's meat that the dog ate gently
- iv. Jíjẹ ki ajá jẹ ẹron Òjó jééjéé → Jíjẹ kajá jẹ ẹron Òjó jééjéé
 Eating FOC dog eat meat Ojo gently → Eating FOC dog eat meat Ojo gently
 The fact was that the dog ate ojo's meat gently
- v. Jééjéé ki ajá jẹ ẹron Òjó → Jééjéé kajá jẹ ẹron Òjó
 Gently FOC dog eat meat Ojo → Gently FOC dog eat meat Ojo
 Gently, the dog ate Ojo's meat gently.

A critical study of example 3(ai) shows that the subject resumptive pronoun *ó* is deleted and its high-tone is merged with the vowel of the focus marker. This type of deletion is not possible in Òmùò dialect. The subject resumptive pronoun *ó* is present in Òmùò dialect. But it contracts with the focus marker *ki* as seen in example 3 (bi.). When a genitival NP is moved to the initial position, its extraction position is filled with the genitival resumptive pronoun *rẹ* as shown in examples 3 (aii and bii.). The similarity between the constituent focus in the two dialects is that both dialects permit the contraction between the focus markers and the adjacent items as manifested in the examples under group (B) above.

Sentences focusing in Èkìtì dialect

As earlier noted, sentence focusing is generated in Adó and Òmùò dialects by giving a whole sentence prominence. This is accomplished by attaching the focus markers *ni* and *kin* to the focused sentence at the final position. Besides, the focus markers *ni* and *kin* also reflect in the responses of the content questions that require NPs answer as demonstrated below.

Ado dialect

Simple Sentences

- 4a. Adé gbé ujíjẹ
 Ade carry food
 Ade carries food

Focus Constructions

- i. Adé gbé ujíjẹ ni
 Ade carry food FOC
 The fact is that Ade carries food

- b. Èúré ti ku
Goat PERF die
The goat has died

Focus Constructions

- i. Èúré ti kú ni
Goat PERF die FOC
The fact is that the goat has died.

- c. Şólá gbé ọmọ
Sola carry child
Sola carried a child

Focus Constructions

- i. Şólá gbé ọmọ ni
Sola carry child FOC
The fact is that Sola carried a child

Content Questions

Answers

- 5a. Olú rí Òjó
Olu see Ojo
Olu saw Ojo

Content Questions

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| i. Olú rí Ìsì?
Olu see CQW
Olu saw who? | Òjó ni
Ojó FOC
It was Ojo |
| ii. Ìsì Olú rí?
CQW Olu see
Who did Olu see? | Òjó ni
Ojo FOC
It was Ojo |
| b. Akin sọn pọ̀n méjì
Akin pay penny two
Akin paid two pounds | |

Content Questions

- | | |
|--|--|
| i. Akin sọn ọ̀lú?
Akin pay CQW
Akin paid how much? | Pọ̀n méjì ni
Penny two FOC
It was two pounds |
|--|--|

- | | |
|---|--|
| ii. <u>Olú sí</u> Akin sọn?
CQP Akin pay
How much did Akin pay? | Pòùn méjì ní
Penny two FOC
It was two pounds |
|---|--|

**Òmùò dialect
Simple Sentences**

- 6a. Adé gbé ujíjẹ
Ade carry food
Ade carries food

Focus Construction

- i. Adé gbé ujíjẹ kin
Ade carry food FOC
The fact is that Ade carries food
- b. Èúrẹ̀ tí kú
Goat PERF die
The goat has died

Focus Construction

- i. Èúrẹ̀ tí kú kin
Goat PERF die FOC
The fact is that the goat has died.
- c. Şolá gbé ọmọ
Sola carry child
Sola carried a child

Focus Construction

- i. Şolá gbé ọmọ kin
Sola carry child FOC
The fact is that Sola carried a child

Content Questions

Answers

- 7a. Olú rí Òjọ
Olu see Ojo
Olu saw Ojo

Content Questions

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| i. Olú rí Lé kin?
Olu see CQW FOC
Olu saw who? | Òjó kin
Ojó FOC
It was Ojo |
| ii. Lé ki Olú rí?
CQW FOC Olu see
Who did Olu see? | Òjó kin
Ojo FOC
It was Ojo |
| b. Akin sọn pòùn méjì
Akin pay penny two
Akin paid two pounds | |

Content Questions

- | | |
|---|---|
| i. Akin sọn òlú?
Akin pay CQW
Akin paid how much? | Pòùn méjì kin
Penny two FOC
It was two pounds |
| iii. <u>Kí òlú</u> ki Akin sọn?
CQP FOC Akin pay
How much did Akin pay? | Pòùn méjì kin
Penny two FOC
It was two pounds |

Our observation in the examples (6) above is that sentence focus markers have nasal feature. A look at Òmùò dialect as revealed in examples 6(a ii, iii and b ii, iii) shows that focus marker *kin* only occurs in the sentence final position. When an item is moved to an initial position, it will only be accompanied by the focus marker *ki*. This means that Òmùò dialect does not permit the focus marker *kin* to occur in the medial position, even when the movement occurs in interrogative construction. Another point is that unlike Adó dialect where focus marker is not attested in content questions, Òmùò dialect permit the occurrence of focus marker in content questions as reflected in examples 7(a, aii, b ii). Unlike constituent focus which is generated by movement transformation, sentence focusing is generated by adjunction. The reason is that the focus markers are attached to a whole sentence at the final position as earlier noted.

Focus construction in Òndó dialect

According to Adetugbo (1967), Akinkugbe (1976), Oyelaran (1977), Fresco (1970), Òndó dialect is grouped under Southeast Yoruba This dialect is spoken in three sub-dialects such as Òndó, Ìdànrè and Ilẹ̀-olújíí. Òndó sub-dialects are mutually intelligible like the sub-dialects of Ekiti. For this reason, Òndó sub-dialect is selected for this paper. It is believed that this dialect will be a good representative of the other two sub-dialects.

Focus construction in Òndó is generated by movement transformation as observed in the standard dialect and Ekiti dialect. The focus marker takes two forms; *í* and *ín* in Òndó dialect, and both occur at the sentence final position as demonstrated below.

8. Olú ó gbé ọma iye
Olu HTS carry child mother
Olu carried mother's child

Focus Constructions

- a. Olú ó gbé ọma iye í
Olu RSP carry child mother FOC
It was Olu that carried mother's child
- b. Iyè Olú ó gbé ọma è í
Mother Olu HTS carry child RSP FOC
It was mother whose child Olu carried
- c. Ọma iyè Olú ó gbé í
Child mother Olu HTS carry FOC
It was mother's child that Olu carried
- d. Gbigbé Olú ó gbé ọma iyè í
Carrying Olu HTS carry child mother FOC
The fact was that Olu carried mother's child

9. Àiná ó dẹn ẹan
Aina HTS fry meat
Aina fried meat

Focus Constructions

- a. Àiná ó dẹn ẹan ín
Àiná HTS fry meat FOC
It was Aina that fried meat
- b. Ẹan Àiná ó dẹn ín
Meat Aina HTS fry FOC
It was meat that Aina fried
- c. Dẹndẹn Àiná ó dẹn ẹan ín
Frying Aina HTS fry meat FOC
The fact was that Aina fried meat

Examples (8 and 9) above show that the focus marker *í* and *ín* are allomorphs; they occur in complementary environments. For instance, the focus marker *í* co-occurs with oral vowels as indicated in examples (8) above while *ín* co-occurs with nasal vowels as demonstrated in examples (9). Research shows that the focus marker *ín* is the underlying form. A close study of Yoruba language and some of the dialects of Yoruba like Ìkálẹ̀ and Ìlájẹ̀ reveals that focus markers have nasal feature; *ni* in Yoruba language and *ín* in Ìkálẹ̀ and

Ìlàjẹ dialects. There is evidence in Yoruba language that *ni* changes to *li* when it co-occurs with oral vowels. One can also say that *ín* changes to *í* by assimilating the oral feature of the vowels adjacent to it as reflected in examples (8).

As noted in Yoruba language and its dialects, constituent and sentence focusing are also possible in Oñdó dialect. Constituent focus is derived by moving the lexical item which may be subject, object and genitival NP, nominal verbs and adverbials to the initial position as shown in examples (8, 9). As earlier noted in standard Yoruba dialect, when the NPs in subject and genitival positions are moved to the initial position in Oñdó dialect, their extraction positions are filled with resumptive pronouns; high tone syllable *ó* and *ẹ̀* respectively as shown in examples (8a, b and 9a).

A close look at examples (8 and 9) shows that the high tone syllable *ó* is present in all of them. There is a difference between *ó* in examples (8a, 9a) and other examples. While *ó* in examples (8b, c, d, 9b, c) functions as a preverb (PRV) because it appears in between the subjects and the verbs Awobuluyi (1993, 2003), *ó* in examples (8a, 9a) functions as a subject resumptive pronoun. The reason is because when a subject NP is moved the extraction cite will be filled with a subject resumptive pronoun Oluseye (2009) and Oladeji (2003).

Akintoye (2015) as earlier noted is of the opinion that *ó* in examples (8a, 9a) is generated by merger; a fusion of the preverb *ó* and the resumptive *ó*. According to him, Yoruba language does not permit generating a sentence with a subject. When a subject NP is moved, the extraction position is filled with the subject resumptive pronoun as earlier noted. It is assumed that both *ó* as a preverb (PRV) and as a subject resumptive pronoun are in their right positions. But both of them are merged because they have the same form as demonstrated below.

10. Olú ó gbé ọma iye
 Olu PRV carry child mother 1sg
 Olu carried mother's child

Focus Construction

- a. Olú ó ó gbé ọma iye í → Olú ó gbé ọma iye í
 Olu RSP PREV carry child mother FOC → Olu RSP carry child mother FOC
 It was Olu that carried my mother's child

11. Àiná ó dẹn ẹan
 Aina PRV fry meat
 Aina fried meat

- b. Àiná ó ó dẹn ẹan ín → Àiná ó dẹn ẹan ín
 Àiná RSP PRV fry meat FOC → Àiná RSP fry meat FOC
 It was Aina that fried meat

Sentence focusing in Oñdó dialect

Sentence focusing involves giving prominence to a whole sentence by attaching the focus marker at the sentence final position as exemplified below.

- 12a. Ojú é tì ọ
Eye Prog push 2sg
You are shy

Focus Construction

- i. Ojú é tì ọ ín
Eye Prog push 2sg FOC
The fact is that you are shy
- b. Olú tètè wá
Olu ADVP come
Olu came quickly

Focus Construction

- ii. Olú tètè wá ín
Olu ADVP come FOC
The fact is that Olu came quickly.

A sentence focus marker in Oñdó dialect takes *ín* form. Apart from that, there is no movement transformation noticed in generating sentence focusing. This means that sentence focusing in Oñdó dialect is also generated by adjunction.

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF FOCUS CONSTRUCTION IN ÈKÌTÌ AND OÑDÓ DIALECTS

There are lots of similarities and differences between the focus construction in Èkìtì and Oñdó dialects. A good study of the focus construction in the two dialects reveals that constituent focus in the two dialects undergoes movement transformation as shown in examples (3a, b, 8, 9) repeated as examples (13, 14 and 15) below.

- 13a. Ajá jẹ ẹron Òjó jééjéé
Dog eat meat Ojo ADVP
The dog ate Ojo's meat gently

Focus Construction

- i. Ajá li ó jẹ ẹron Òjó jééjéé
Dog FOC RSP eat meat Ojo ADVP
It was a dog that ate Ojo's meat gently
- ii. Òjó li ajá jẹ ẹron rè jééjéé
Ojo FOC dog eat meat RSP ADVP
It was Ojo whose meat the dog ate gently

- iii. Ẹ̀ṛṛṛn Ọ̀jọ́ li ajá jẹ́ jẹ́jẹ́jẹ́
Meat Ojo FOC dog eat gently
It was Ojo's meat that the dog ate gently
- iv. Jíjẹ́ li ajá jẹ́ ẹ̀ṛṛn Ọ̀jọ́ jẹ́jẹ́jẹ́
Eating FOC dog eat meat Ojo gently
The fact was that the dog ate ojo's meat gently
- v. Jẹ́jẹ́jẹ́ li ajá jẹ́ ẹ̀ṛṛn Ojo
Gently FOC dog eat meat Ojo
Gently, that the dog ate Ojo's meat.

Òmùò dialect

- 13b. Ajá jẹ́ ẹ̀ṛṛn Ọ̀jọ́ jẹ́jẹ́jẹ́
Dog eat meat Ojo ADVP
The dog ate Ojo's meat gently

Focus Construction

- i. Ajá ki ó jẹ́ ẹ̀ṛṛn Ọ̀jọ́ jẹ́jẹ́jẹ́
Dog FOC RSP eat meat Ojo ADVP
It was a dog that ate Ojo's meat gently
- ii. Ọ̀jọ́ ki ajá jẹ́ ẹ̀ṛṛn rẹ́ jẹ́jẹ́jẹ́
Ojo FOC dog eat meat ADVP
It was Ojo whose meat the dog ate gently
- iii. Ẹ̀ṛṛn Ọ̀jọ́ ki ajá jẹ́ jẹ́jẹ́jẹ́
Meat Ojo FOC dog eat gently
It was Ojo's meat that the dog ate gently

Òndó Dialect

14. Olú ó gbé ọ̀ma iye
Olu HTS carry child mother
Olu carried mother's child

Focus Constructions

- a. Olú ó gbé ọ̀ma iye í
Olu RSP carry child mother FOC
It was Olu that carried mother's child

- e. Iyè Olú ó gbé ọma è í
Mother Olu HTS carry child RSP FOC
It was mother whose child Olu carried
- f. Ọma iyè Olú ó gbé í
Child mother Olu HTS carry FOC
It was mother's child that Olu carried
- g. Gbigbé Olú ó gbé ọma iyè í
Carrying Olu HTS carry child mother FOC
The fact was that Olu carried my mother's child

15. Àiná ó dẹn ẹan
Aina HTS fry meat
Aina fried meat

Focus Constructions

- a. Àiná ó dẹn ẹan ín
Àiná HTS fry meat FOC
It was Aina that fried meat
- b. Ẹan Àiná ó dẹn ín
Meat Aina HTS fry FOC
It was meat that Aina fried
- c. Dëndẹn Àiná ó dẹn ẹan ín
Frying Aina HTS fry meat FOC
It was frying that Aina fried meat

The focus markers in the two dialects bear different tones and take different forms. For instance, the focus markers in Èkìtì dialect take *ni/li* in Adó sub-dialect and *ki/kin* in Òmùò sub-dialect with mid tone, while they take *i/in* forms with high tone in Oṅdó dialect. Sentence focusing in the two dialects is marked by the focus markers that have nasal feature. For instance, the sub-dialects of Èkìtì such as Adó and Òmùò, employ *ni* and *kin* and Oṅdó dialect employs *in*. These focus markers occupy the sentence final position by adjunction as demonstrated in examples (4, 9a, b) repeated as examples (16, 17 18a, b)

Ado dialect

- 16a. Adé gbé ujíjẹ
Ade carry food
Ade carries food

Focus Construction

- i. Adé gbé ujíjẹ ni
Ade carry food FOC
The fact is that Ade carries food
- b. Èúrẹ̀ tí kú
Goat PERF die
The goat has died

Focus Construction

- i. Èúrẹ̀ tí kú ní
Goat PERF die FOC
The fact is that the goat has died.

Òmùò dialect

- 17a. Adé gbé ujíjẹ
Ade carry food
Ade carries food

Focus Construction

- i. Adé gbé ujíjẹ kin
Ade carry food FOC
The fact is that Ade carries food
- b. Èúrẹ̀ tí kú
Goat PERF die
The goat has died

Focus Construction

- i. Èúrẹ̀ tí kú kin
Goat PERF die FOC
The fact is that the goat has died.
- c. Sọlá gbé ọmọ
Sola carry child
Sola carried a child

Focus Construction

- i. Ṣolá gbé ọmọ kin
Sola carry child FOC
The fact is that Sola carried a child

Oṅdó Dialect

- 18a. Ojú é tì ọ
Eye Prog push 2sg
You are shy

Focus Construction

- i. Ojú é tì ọ ín
Eye Prog push 2sg FOC
The fact is that you are shy
- b. Olú tètè wá
Olu ADVP come
Olu came quickly

Focus Construction

- i. Olú tètè wá ín
Olu ADVP come FOC
The fact is that Olu came quickly.

Some differences are noted in the focus construction of the two dialects. Focus markers occupy the medial position in Èkìtì dialect, whereas they occur at the sentence final position in Oṅdó dialect. Although Awobuluyi (1992) & Olumuyiwa (2009) was of the opinion that focus markers *í* and *ín* occur undelyingly in the sentence initial position but gets moved to the final position at the surface level, a critical scrutiny of Yoruba language and some other dialects of Yoruba indicates that medial position may be assumed to be the underlying position of the focus makers in the standard dialect and its dialect as shown below.

19. Ìlọfà Dialect

- a. Olú kọ ulé
Olu build house
Olu built a house

Focus Construction

- i. Ulé ri Olú kọ
House FOC Olu build
It was a house that Olu built

- bi. Òjọ mú eó ko ọmọ
Ojo take money give child
Ojo gave the child money
- ii. Ọmọ ri Òjọ mú eó kò
Child FOC Ojo take money give
It was a child that Ojo gave the money

20. Ègbá Dialect

- ai. Olú kọ ilé
Olu build house
Olu built a house

Focus Construction

- ii. Ilé rẹé Olú kọ
House FOC Olu build
It was a house that Olu build
- bi. Òjọ mú owó fú ọmọ
Ojo take money give child
Ojo gave the child money
- ii. Ọmọ rẹé Òjọ mú owó fú
Child FOC Ojo take money give
It was a child that Ojo gave the money

21. Kàbà Dialect

- ai. Olú kọ ilé
Olu build house
Olu built a house

Focus Construction

- ii. Ilé ki Olú kọ
House FOC Olu build
It was a house that Olu build
- bi. Òjọ mú owó fún ọmọ
Ojo take money give child
Ojo gave the child money

- ii. Omo ki Òjó mú owó fún
Child FOC Ojo take money give
It was a child that Ojo gave the money

The examples above are the pieces of evidence that focus markers in Yoruba language and its dialects occur in the medial position but get moved to the final position in Oñdó dialect through movement transformation. It is worth noting to explain that rightward movement is not new in Yoruba language as demonstrated below.

- 22ai. Iṣé tí o fẹ́ bá mi se kù
Work Rel 2sg like do 1sg do remain
The work you want to assist me to do remains
- ii. Iṣé kù tí o fẹ́ bá mi se
Work remain Rel 2sg like do 1sg do
It remains the work you want to assist me to do
- bi. Ilé tí e máa sùn wà
House Rel 2pl PREV sleep available
The house where you will sleep is available
- ii. Ilé wà tí e máa sùn
House available Rel 2pl PREV sleep
There is house where you will sleep
- ci. Ìgbà tí a máa sòrò n bọ
Time Rel 1pl PREV talk Prog come
The time that we shall discuss is coming
- ii. Ìgbà n bọ tí a máa sòrò
Time Prog come Rel 1pl PREV talk
The time is coming when we shall discuss

In examples (22) above, the underlined relative clauses are rightward moved from their original positions as shown in examples 12(ai, bi, ci) to the final position as reflected in examples 12(aii, bii, cii).

The subject resumptive pronoun *ó* always gets deleted if the subject NP is moved to the initial position in constituent focus and its high tone will be merged with the vowel of the focus marker in Adó dialect. But this operation is not possible in Oñdó dialect as shown below.

Adó Dialect

- 23a Ajá jẹ ẹron Òjó jéjéjéé
Dog eat meat Ojo ADVP
The sog ate Ojo's meat gently

Focus Construction

- i. Ajá li ó jẹ ẹron Òjó jééjéé
Dog FOC RSP eat meat Ojo ADVP
It was a dog that ate Ojo's meat gently
- ii. Ajá lí jẹ ẹron Òjò jééjéé
Dog FOC eat meat Ojo ADVP
It was a dog that ate Ojo's meat gently
- b. Şolá lu Ìdòú
Şola beat Idowu
Sola beat Idowu

Focus Construction

- i. Şolá li ó lu Ìdòú
Sola FOC RSP beat Idowu
It was Sola that beat Idowu
- ii. Şolá lí lu Ìdòú
Sola FOC beat Idowu
It was Sola that beat Idowu

Ondó Dialect

- 24a Lókiíli ó jẹ ẹran Òjó jééjéé
Dog HTS eat meat Ojo ADVP
The sog ate Ojo's meat gently

Focus Construction

- i. Lókiíli ó jẹ ẹron Òjó jééjéé í
Dog RSP eat meat Ojo ADVP FOC
It was a dog that ate Ojo's meat gently
- b. Şolá ó na Ìdòwú
Şola HTS beat Idowu
Sola beat Idowu

Focus Construction

- i. Şolá ó na Ìdòwú í
Sola RSP beat Idowu FOC
It was Sola that beat Idowu

CONCLUSION

This paper is a comparative analysis of focus construction in Èkìtì and Oṅdó dialects. Although the two dialects belong to two different major Yoruba dialect groups, research shows that the constituent focus in the two dialects is generated by movement transformation, while the sentence focus is generated by adjunction. The two dialects also employ focus markers with nasal feature to mark a sentence focus at the final position. Focus construction in the two dialects is different in the sense that the focus markers in the two dialects bear different tones and they occur in different environments. For instance, focus markers in Èkìtì dialect bear mid-tone and they occur in the medial position, whereas focus markers in Oṅdó dialect bear high-tone and occur in the final position. Another difference observed in this paper is that the type of deletion process affected the subject resumptive pronoun in Èkìtì dialect whereas, this is not applicable in Oṅdó dialect.

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