Focus Construction in Èkiti and Ondó 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 Èkiti and Ondó 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; Orie, 2003).

1. Olú gbé ọmọ māmā
   Olu carry child mother
   Olu carried mummy’s child

Focus Constructions

a. Olú ni ó gbé ọmọ māmā
   Olu FOC RSP carry child mother
   It was Olu that carried mummy’s child

b. Māmā ni Olú gbé ọmọ rे
   Mother FOC Olu carry child RSP
   It was mummy whose child Olu carried

c. Ọmọ māmā ni Olú gbé
   Child mother FOC Olu carry
   It was mummy’s child that Olu carried

d. Gbigbẹ ni Olú gbé ọmọ māmā
   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 jé
   Olu steal pounded yam eat
   Olu stole pounded yam and ate it

i. Olú jí iyán jé 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 Òkiti and Òndo 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 Òkiti. Part three consists of focus construction in Òndo. Comparative analysis of focus construction in Òkiti and Òndo dialects forms the last part.

Focus construction in Òkiti dialect

Òkiti 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 Òkiti dialect, the sub-dialects are mutually intelligible in spite of the observed differences. Two sub-dialects; Adó and Òmuò dialects are selected for presentation and analysis in this paper because sub-Ókiti 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 Òmuò dialects is that focus marker takes different forms in the two selected sub- dialects. For instance, focus marker takes lììni forms in Adó and kil kin forms in Òmuò dialect. The focus markers lììni and kil 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 Òmò dialects. Constituent focus is generated in Adó and Òmò 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**

3a. Ajá je  àrò  Òjó jééjéé
dog eat meat Ojo ADVP
The dog ate Ojo’s meat gently

**Focus Constructions**

i. Ajá li ó je  àrò  Òjó jééjéé → Ajá li je  àrò  Òjó jééjéé
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 li ajá je  àrò  rè jééjéé → Òjó lajá je  àrò  rè jééjéé
Ojo FOC dog eat meat RSP ADVP → Ojo FOC dog eat meat RES ADVP
It was Ojo whose meat the dog ate gently

iii. Èròn Òjó li ajá je jééjéé → Èròn Òjó lajá je jééjéé
Meat Ojo FOC dog eat gently → Meat Ojo FOC dog eat gently
It was Ojo’s meat that the dog ate gently

iv. Jìjé li ajá je èròn Òjó jééjéé → Jìjé lajá je  èròn Òjó jééjéé
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. Jééjéé li ajá je èròn Ojo → Jééjéé lajá je èròn Ojo
Gently FOC dog eat meat Ojo → Gently FOC dog eat meat Ojo
Gently, the dog ate Ojo’s meat gently.

**Òmò dialect**

3b. Ajá je  àrò  Òjó jééjéé
dog eat meat Ojo ADVP
The dog ate Ojo’s meat gently

**Focus Constructions**

i. Ajá ki ó je  àrò  Òjó jééjéé → Ajá kó je  àrò  Òjó jééjéé
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 je èrùn rè jééjéé → Òjó kajá je èrùn rè 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. Èrùn Òjó ki ajá je jééjéé → Èrùn Òjó kajá je jééjéé
Meat Ojo FOC dog eat gently → Meat Ojo FOC dog eat gently
It was Ojo’s meat that the dog ate gently

iv. Jíje ki ajá je èrùn Òjó jééjéé → Jíje kajá je èrùn 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 je èrùn Òjó → Jééjéé kajá je èrùn 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 ò is deleted and its high-tone is merged with the vowel of the focus marker. This type of deletion is not possible in Òmọ̀ dialect. The subject resumptive pronoun ò is present in Òmọ̀ 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 rè as shown in examples 3 (aii and bi.i.). 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 Òkìtì dialect**

As earlier noted, sentence focusing is generated in Adó and Òmọ̀ 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 gbè ujjé
Ade carry food
Ade carries food

**Focus Constructions**

i. Adé gbè ujjé ni
Ade carry food FOC
The fact is that Ade carries food
b. Ẹúrẹ ti ku
    Goat PERF die
    The goat has died

Focus Constructions

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

c. Ọṣọlá gbé ọmọ
    Sola carry child
    Sola carried a child

Focus Constructions

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

Content Questions  

Answers

5a. Olú rí Ọjọ
    Olu see Ojo
    Olu saw Ojo

Content Questions

i. Olú rí Ìsí?
    Olu see CQW
    Olu saw who?
    Ojọ FOC
    It was Ojo

ii. Ìsí Olú rí?
    CQW Olu see
    Who did Olu see?
    Ojọ FOC
    It was Ojo

b. Akin sọn pòùn méji
    Akin pay penny two
    Akin paid two pounds

Content Questions

i. Akin sọn òlù?
    Pòùn méji ni
    Akin pay CQW
    Penny two FOC
    It was two pounds
ii. Olú sí Akin són? Póunj méjí ni
     CQP Akin pay Penny two FOC
     How much did Akin pay? It was two pounds

Ómùò dialect

Simple Sentences

6a. Adé gbé ujíjé
     Ade carry food
     Ade carries food

Focus Construction

i. Adé gbé ujíjé kin
     Ade carry food FOC
     The fact is that Ade carries food

b. Òúrè ti ku
     Goat PERF die
     The goat has died

Focus Construction

i. Òúrè ti 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 Ôjó
     Olu see Ojo
     Olu saw Ojo
Content Questions

i. Olu see CQW FOC
   Olu saw who?
   Òjó FOC
   It was Ojo

ii. CQW FOC Olu see
   Who did Olu see?
   Òjó 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. Kì òlú kì 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, Ìdànìrè and Ìlẹ-òlùjì. 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; *ì* and *ìn* in Òndó dialect, and both occur at the sentence final position as demonstrated below.
8. Olú ó gbé òma iye
   Olu HTS carry child mother
   Olu carried mother’s child

   **Focus Constructions**

a. Olú ó gbé òma iye í
   Olu RSP carry child mother FOC
   It was Olu that carried mother’s child

b. Iyè Olú ó gbé òma è í
   Mother Olu HTS carry child RSP FOC
   It was mother whose child Olu carried

c. Òma iyè Olú ó gbé í
   Child mother Olu HTS carry FOC
   It was mother’s child that Olu carried

d. Gbigbè Olú ó gbé òma iyè í
   Carrying Olu HTS carry child mother FOC
   The fact was that Olu carried mother’s child

9. Àiná ó dèn çan
   Aina HTS fry meat
   Aina fried meat

   **Focus Constructions**

a. Àiná ó dèn çan ín
   Àiná HTS fry meat FOC
   It was Aina that fried meat

b. Èan Àinà ó dèn ín
   Meat Aina HTS fry FOC
   It was meat that Aina fried

c. Dèndèn Àiná ó dèn çan 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 Ìkálẹ and Ìlajè reveals that focus markers have nasal feature; *nì* in Yoruba language and *ín* in Ìkálẹ and
Îlaje dialects. There is evidence in Yoruba language that *ni* changes to *li* when it co-occurs with oral vowels. One can also say that *in* changes to *i* 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 Òndó 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 Òndó dialect, their extraction positions are filled with resumptive pronouns; high tone syllable *ó* and *è* 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 òma iye
   Olu PRV carry child mother 1sg
   Olu carried mother’s child

**Focus Construction**

a. Olú ó ó gbé òma iye í → Olú ó gbé òma 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. Àína ó dén ën
    Aina PRV fry meat
    Aina fried meat

b. Àína ó ó dén ën ín → Àína ó dén ën ín
   Àína RSP PRV fry meat FOC → Àína RSP fry meat FOC
   It was Aina that fried meat

**Sentence focusing in Òndó dialect**

Sentence focusing involves giving prominence to a whole sentence by attaching the focus marker at the sentence final position as exemplified below.
Eye Prog push 2sg
You are shy

Focus Construction

i. Ojú é ti ṣin
Eye Prog push 2sg FOC
The fact is that you are shy

b. Olú tète wá
Olu ADVP come
Olu came quickly

Focus Construction

ii. Olú tete wá in
Olu ADVP come FOC
The fact is that Olu came quickly.

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

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF FOCUS CONSTRUCTION IN ÈKÌTÌ AND ÒNDÓ DIALECTS

There are lots of similarities and differences between the focus construction in Èkiti and Òndó 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 ìrọ̀n Òjọ̀ jééjéé
Dog eat meat Ojo ADVP
The dog ate Ojo’s meat gently

Focus Construction

i. Ajá li ọ jẹ ìrọ̀n Òjọ̀ jééjéé
Dog FOC RSP eat meat Ojo ADVP
It was a dog that ate Ojo’s meat gently

ii. Òjọ̀ li ajá jẹ ìrọ̀n rẹ jééjéé
Ojo FOC dog eat meat RSP ADVP
It was Ojo whose meat the dog ate gently

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 iii. Erọn Ôjó li ajá je jéjéjé
    Meat Ojo FOC dog eat gently
    It was Ojo’s meat that the dog ate gently

 iv. Ji jé li ajá je erọn Ôjó jéjéjé
    Eating FOC dog eat meat Ojo gently
    The fact was that the dog ate ojo’s meat gently

 v. Jéjéjé li ajá je erọn Ojo
    Gently FOC dog eat meat Ojo
    Gently, that the dog ate Ojo’s meat.

Ômùò dialect

13b. Ajá je erọn Ôjó jéjéjé
    Dog eat meat Ojo ADVP
    The dog ate Ojo’s meat gently

Focus Construction

 i. Ajá ki ó je erọn Ôjó jéjéjé
    Dog FOC RSP eat meat Ojo ADVP
    It was a dog that ate Ojo’s meat gently

 ii. Ôjó ki ajá je erọn rë jéjéjé
    Ojo FOC dog eat meat ADVP
    It was Ojo whose meat the dog ate gently

 iii. Erọn Ôjó ki ajá je jéjéjé
    Meat Ojo FOC dog eat gently
    It was Ojo’s meat that the dog ate gently

Ọndó Dialect

14. Olú ó gbé ọma iye
    Olu HTS carry child mother
    Olu carried mother’s child

Focus Constructions

 a. Olú ó gbé ọma iye i
    Olu RSP carry child mother FOC
    It was Olu that carried mother’s child
e. Iyè Olú gbé ọma è í
   Mother Olu HTS carry child RSP FOC
   It was mother whose child Olu carried

f. Ọma iyè Olú gbé í
   Child mother Olu HTS carry FOC
   It was mother’s child that Olu carried

g. Gbigbé Olú gbé ọma iyè í
   Carrying Olu HTS carry child mother FOC
   The fact was that Olu carried my mother’s child

15. Àïná ó dén èän
   Aina HTS fry meat
   Aina fried meat

Focus Constructions

a. Àïná ó dén èän ín
   Àïná HTS fry meat FOC
   It was Aina that fried meat

b. Ẹan Àïnà ó dén ín
   Meat Aina HTS fry FOC
   It was meat that Aina fried

c. Dèndèn Àïná ó dén èän 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 Èkiti dialect take níllí in Adó sub-dialect and kilkin in Ômùò sub-dialect with mid tone, while they take ilin forms with high tone in Ondó dialect. Sentence focusing in the two dialects is marked by the focus markers that have nasal feature. For instance, the sub-dialects of Èkiti such as Adó and Ômùò, employ ní and kin and Ondó dialect employs în. 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 ujije
   Ade carry food
   Ade carries food
Focus Construction

i. Ade gbé ujjé ni
   Ade carry food FOC
   The fact is that Ade carries food

b. Eúrẹ ti ku
   Goat PERF die
   The goat has died

Focus Construction

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

Ômùò dialect

17a. Ade gbé ujjé
   Ade carry food
   Ade carries food

Focus Construction

i. Adé gbé ujjé kin
   Ade carry food FOC
   The fact is that Ade carries food

b. Eúrẹ ti ku
   Goat PERF die
   The goat has died

Focus Construction

i. Eúrẹ ti 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. Ọlọ gbẹ ọmọ kin
Sola carry child FOC
The fact is that Sola carried a child

Ọndó Dialect

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

Focus Construction

i. Ojú é ti ọ in
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 in
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 Òkitì dialect, whereas they occur at the sentence final position in Ọndó dialect. Although Awobuluyi (1992) & Olumuyiwa (2009) was of the opinion that focus markers ɪ and in 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 markers in the standard dialect and its dialect as shown below.

19. Òlọfà Dialect

a. Olú kó ulé
Olu build house
Olu built a house

Focus Construction

i. Ulé ri Olú kó
House FOC Olu build
It was a house that Olu built
bi. Òjó mú eó ko ọmọ
   Ojo take money give child
   Ojo gave the child money

ii. Ọmọ ri Òjó mú eó kò
    Child FOC Ojo take money give
    It was a child that Ojo gave the money

20. Ègbá Dialect

ai. Olú kò ịlे
   Olu build house
   Olu built a house

Focus Construction

ii. Ìlè rè̀è Olú kò
    House FOC Olu build
    It was a house that Olu build

bi. Òjó mú owó fù ọmọ
   Ojo take money give child
   Ojo gave the child money

ii. Ọmọ rè̀è Òjó mú owó fù
    Child FOC Ojo take money give
    It was a child that Ojo gave the money

21. Kàbà Dialect

ai. Olú kò ịlè
   Olu build house
   Olu built a house

Focus Construction

ii. Ìlè kì Olú kò
    House FOC Olu build
    It was a house that Olu build

bi. Òjó mú owó fùn ọmọ
   Ojo take money give child
   Ojo gave the child money
ii. Òmọ ki Ôjó 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 Òndó
dialect through movement transformation. It is worth noting to explain that rightward
movement is not new in Yoruba language as demonstrated below.

22ai. Ọṣẹ ti o ṣe bá mi se kù
   Work Rel 2sg like do 1sg do remain
   The work you want to assist me to do remains

ii. Ọṣẹ kù ti o ṣe bá mi se
   Work remain Rel 2sg like do 1sg do
   It remains the work you want to assist me to do

bi. Ìlẹ ti ṣe màa sùn wà
   House Rel 2pl PREV sleep available
   The house where you will sleep is available

ii. Ìlẹ wà ti ṣe màa sùn
   House available Rel 2pl PREV sleep
   There is house where you will sleep

ci. Ìgbá ti a màa sòrò ń bọ
   Time Rel 1pl PREV talk Prog come
   The time that we shall discuss is coming

ii. Ìgbá ń bọ ti a màa 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 ô 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 Òndó dialect as shown
below.

**Adó Dialect**

23a Ajá je ṣe ron Ôjó jẹjẹjẹ
   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 li jẹ ẹron Òjó jééjéé
   Dog FOC eat meat Ojo ADVP
   It was a dog that ate Ojo’s meat gently

b. Sọlá lu Ìdòú
   Sọla beat Ìdou
   Sola beat Idowu

Focus Construction

i. Sọlá li ó lu Ìdòú
   Sola FOC RSP beat Idowu
   It was Sola that beat Idowu

ii. Sọlá li lu Ìdòú
   Sola FOC beat Idowu
   It was Sola that beat Idowu

Ọndó Dialect

24a. Lókiili ó jẹ ẹran Òjó jééjéé
   Dog HTS eat meat Ojo ADVP
   The sog ate Ojo’s meat gently

Focus Construction

i. Lókiili ó jẹ ẹron Òjó jééjéé í
   Dog RSP eat meat Ojo ADVP FOC
   It was a dog that ate Ojo’s meat gently

b. Sọlá ó na Ìdòwú
   Sọla HTS beat Ìdowu
   Sola beat Idowu

Focus Construction

i. Sọlá ó na Ìdowú í
   Sola RSP beat Idowu FOC
   It was Sola that beat Idowu
CONCLUSION

This paper is a comparative analysis of focus construction in Êkiti and Ondo 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 Êkiti dialect bear mid-tone and they occur in the medial position, whereas focus markers in Ondo 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 Êkiti dialect whereas, this is not applicable in Ondo dialect.

References


