

On Sentence-Final Particles in Tongugbe

Selikem Gotah
New York University

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1 Introduction

- (1) a. Kofi d̀̀ ǹ̀.
Kofi eat thing
'Kofi ate.'
- b. Kofi d̀̀ ǹ̀ à?
Kofi eat thing PRT
'Did Kofi eat?'
- (2) a. Ama ý Kofi.
Ama call Kofi
'Ama called Kofi.'
- b. Mékà-à ý Kofi ó?
who-FOC call Kofi PRT
'Who called Kofi?'

Question: How do we account for the final particles in (1b), a Yes-No question and (2b), a *wh*-question?

- In this talk, I examine the Sentence-Final Particles in Yes-No questions and *wh*-questions in Tongugbe, a dialect of Ewe (Kwa-Niger Congo).
- First, I will argue that the Sentence-Final Particle in Yes-No questions blocks T-to-C movement, as the SFP exhausts the C slot. Adopting the split-C hypothesis (à la Rizzi 1997), I show that the SFP heads an Int(errogative) Phrase.
- Second, I will argue that the Sentence-Final Particle in *wh*-questions also heads an Int(errogative) Phrase and that the leftward movement of *wh*-phrases is driven by a focus head.

Road map

- ◇ Sentence-Final particles in Yes-No questions
- ◇ Analysis
- ◇ Sentence-Final particles in *wh*-questions
- ◇ Analysis
- ◇ Conclusions

2.1 The Sentence-Final Particle in Yes-No questions

- The SFP *à* appears in Yes-No questions in several syntactic contexts. Below are some examples.

(3) a. Kofi dzó.
Kofi leave
'Kofi left.'

b. Kofi dzó à?
Kofi leave PRT
'Did Kofi leave?'

(4) a. Kofi lè ɲù.
Kofi COP day
'Kofi is awake'

b. Kofi lè ɲù à?
Kofi COP day PRT
'Is Kofi awake?'

(5) a. Kofi vâ~vâ gé.
Kofi RED-come PROSP
'Kofi will come.'

b. Kofi vâ~vâ gé à?
Kofi RED~come PROSP PRT
'Will Kofi come?'

(6) a. Kofi nò nù ɖǔ.
Kofi COP thing eat.PROG
'Kofi was eating.'

b. Kofi nò nù ɖú-m à?
Kofi COP thing eat-PROG PRT
'Was Kofi eating?'

(7) a. Ama bé yè-ɖù mɔ̀lù.
Kofi COMP LOG-eat rice
'Ama said she ate rice.'

b. Ama bé yè-ɖù mɔ̀lù à?
Kofi COMP LOG-eat rice PRT
'Did Ama say she ate rice?'

- (8) a. Ama mé-vá ò.
 Ama NEG₁-come NEG₂
 ‘Ama didn’t come.’
- b. Ama mé-vá ò à?
 Ama NEG₁-come NEG₂PRT
 ‘Didn’t Ama come?’

2.2 Analysis

- I adopt the split-C hypothesis (Rizzi 1997).
- The sentence-final particle in Yes-No questions heads an Int(errogative) Phrase (IntP) (à la Aboh 1998, 2004; Rizzi 2001).
- Inversion (T-to-C) is blocked in Tongugbe because the SFP exhausts C. Consider (9) below.

(9) a. Kofi lè ɲù.
 Kofi COP day
 ‘Kofi is awake’

b. *Lè Kofi ɲù à?
 COP Kofi day PRT
 Intended meaning: ‘Is Kofi awake?’

c. Kofi lè ɲù à?
 Kofi COP day PRT
 ‘Is Kofi awake?’

(10) a. Ama lè kpōé
 Ama COP short
 ‘Ama is short.’

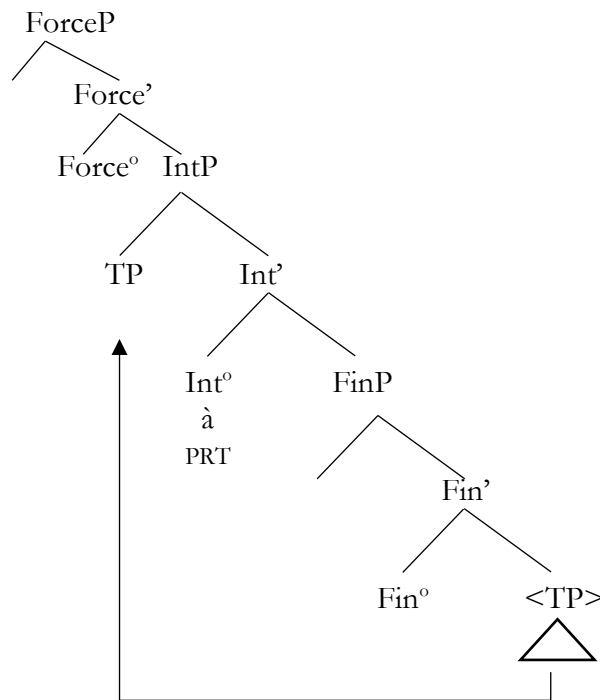
b. *Lè Ama kpōé à?
 COP Ama short PRT
 Intended meaning: ‘Is Ama short?’

c. Ama lè kpōé à?
 Ama COP short PRT
 ‘Is Ama short?’

- The copula, occupying the T slot, cannot move to the left periphery.

- The Sentence-Final Particle occupies the Int° at external Merge. The TP merges as complement of the Fin Projection and moves leftward to the specifier of the Interrogative Projection, as shown in (11). The leftward movement posited here is motivated by Kayne’s (1994) treatment of final complementizers. The configuration in (11) derives Yes-No questions.

(11) Structure for the derivation of Yes-No questions in Tongugbe



- Note that (11) is compliant with antilocality (Abels 2003), given that the TP does not move from the complement position of IntP.

3.1 Sentence-Final Particles in *Wh*-questions

- The Sentence-Final Particles *dé* and *ɔ/o* are employed in Tongugbe *wh*-questions. *dé* behaves like the Yes-No question SFP *à*. It does not cooccur with *wh*-phrases.

(12) Kofi *dé*?
 Kofi PRT
 ‘Where is Kofi’

(13) a. Kofi *lè* Ho.
 Kofi COP HO
 ‘Kofi is in Ho.’

b. Gánē nyó Kofi lè ò?
 Where FOC Kofi COP PRT
 ‘Where is Kofi?’

(14) Nùkā tā Kofi dzrē ɔ?
 what head Kofi sell.3SG PRT
 ‘Why did Kofi sell it?’

(15) Wókāwóé Ama vá ɔ?
 when Ama come PRT
 ‘When did Ama come?’

(16) È-bé nùkā ɔ?
 2SG-say what PRT
 ‘You said what?’

(17) Nùkā Ama flè ò?
 what Ama buy PRT
 ‘What did Ama buy?’

(18) Mékà nyó kpó ntsú yē nyè-mè-kpó ò ò?
 who FOC see man REL 1SG-NEG₁-see NEG₂ PRT
 ‘Who saw the man I didn’t see?’

(19) Mékà-à bé yè-mā-yì ò ò?
 who-FOC COMP LOG-NEG₁.POT-go NEG₂ PRT
 ‘Who said she wouldn’t go?’

3.2 Analysis

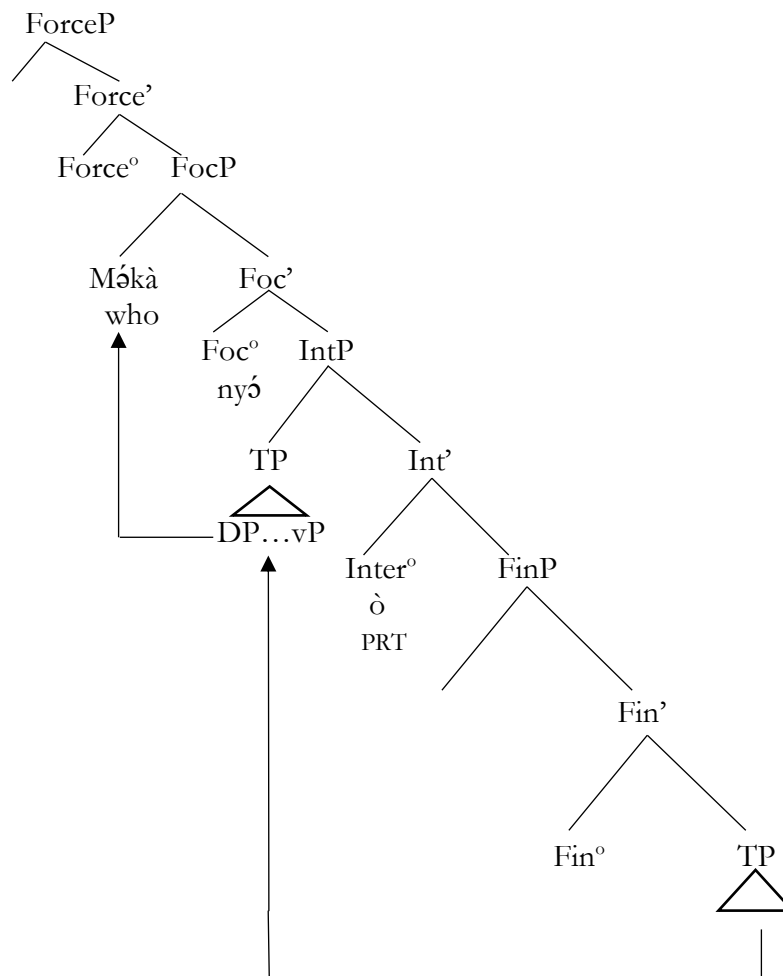
- Adopting the split-C hypothesis, I argue that the SFPs in *wh*-questions head the IntP. The TP moves to the specifier of IntP.
- Note that some of the *wh*-questions above have a focus projection, indicating that there is a focus movement operation in the derivation the *wh*-question.
- I argue that the *wh*-phrases are attracted by the focus head in the left periphery. I postulate a silent Focus Projection in *wh*-questions that do not show overt focus marker. The silent focus head attracts the *wh*-phrase.
- Example (20) shows that focus heads necessarily attract elements to the left periphery to check their focus feature, evidence that indeed the movement of *wh*-phrases to the left periphery is for focus reasons.

(20) a. Polisi-ó lé Kofi.
 Police-PL catch Kofi
 ‘The police arrested Kofi.’

b. Kofi nyó polisi-ó lé.
 Kofi FOC police-PL catch
 'The police arrested KOFI.'

- The analysis I propose here is analogous to the treatment of multiple *wh*-fronting in Slavic (Bošković 1998, 1999, 2002; Stepanov 1998, among others).
- In deriving Tongugbe *wh*-questions, the TP moves to spec, IntP to check the interrogative feature. The *wh*-phrase then subextracts to spec, FocP to check the focus feature. The structure for the derivation is illustrated in (21) below.

(21) Structure for the derivation of *wh*-questions in Tongugbe



- Obviously, the derivation put forward here violates the traditional freezing ban. The *wh*-phrase moves out of a moved TP.

- However, Boskovic (2018, 2021) provides evidence to the effect that the freezing ban only holds for successive-cyclic movement out of moved elements (Phases).
- My proposal does not involve movement out of phases, an indication that the freezing ban does not hold here.

4 Conclusions

- Tongugbe Sentence-Final Particles in Yes-No questions and *wh*-questions head an Interrogative Phrase (IntP) in the split-C system.
- The leftward movement of *wh*-phrases to the left periphery is focus driven.

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