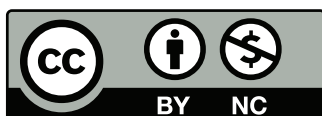


The morphosyntax of the exhaustive focus particle *na* in Cameroon Pidgin English (CPE)

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Abstract

The study explores *na*- ‘focus’ constructions in Cameroon Pidgin English. The data are drawn from existing literature on the language and my own intuitions about grammaticality, given that I am a speaker of the language. Some of the sentences were also submitted to selected speakers of the language for judgments on grammaticality. I begin the discussion with a cross-examination of constructions in which *na* has been analysed as a copula in the literature. I argue in line with Yakpo (2019) that in copula *na*-constructions, *na* remains a ‘focus’ (exhaustive) particle that helps identify its copula complement as focus. As such, I propose an analysis that gives them a pseudo-cleft account in which *na* has EPP features. The analysis of foci is done within the purview of Horvath’s (2010) Strong Modularity Hypothesis for Discourse Features, according to which the interaction between Information Structure (IS) and syntax is indirect and accounted for by interface considerations in the spirit of Reinhart (1995, 1997, 2006). I show that *na*-‘focus’ is necessarily associated with an exhaustive interpretation that identifies an entity (the focus) as maximal from the set of alternatives triggered by the process of focalisation. In terms of syntactic distribution, I propose that *na*-‘focus’ should be given a cleft-like interpretation in which case it heads an Exh(austive)P(hrase) and the element in focus is part of its complement. As such, foci occur inside TP in post-verbal *na*-‘focus’ constructions and in Spec-RelP in pre-verbal *na*-focus constructions. In both cases, *na* has EPP features following the uniformitarian analysis of particle-type languages. The only difference with other particle-type languages such as Gungbe, Duala and Tuki is that these features are checked at LF. I provide an account of predicate focus that is in line with Aboh’s (2006) and Aboh and Dyakonova’s (2009) parallel chains analysis in that both copies of the verb move and form two chains; one in the A’-position (V'_F and V) and the other in the A-position (V_{Asp} and V).



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Keywords: Cameroon Pidgin English, information structure, focus, Strong Modularity Hypothesis for Discourse Features.

About the author

Leonel Tadjó Fongang is a PhD student at the University of Yaounde I, Cameroon. He holds a masters degree in comparative linguistics from the same university. His research is inspired by the question ‘what determines morphosyntactic peculiarity and variation across varieties of English, French, English/French-based Pidgins and Creoles around the world and Grassfields Bantu languages of Cameroon?’ He is also interested in the interaction between discourse, semantics and morphosyntax and the cross-linguistic variation in this area.

1. Introduction¹

The study of Information Structure (IS) packaging has triggered an uncountable number of outstanding cross-linguistic investigations and publications over the last decades. This phenomenon, together with related notions such as focus, topic, givenness and evidentiality, has provided interesting insights in linguistic theorising and the study of interface phenomena. From a syntactic perspective, while the Cartographic approach (Rizzi 1997, 2004, 2007; Aboh 2004, 2010; Cinque and Rizzi 2010; Biloa 2012 *inter alia*) argues for a direct interaction between IS and syntax in the sense that IS-notions are represented in the narrow syntax as formal features that trigger syntactic rearrangement operations, others (Reinhart 1995, 2006; Zubizarreta 1998; Neeleman and Van de Koot 2008; Horvath 2000, 2007 and 2010 and Szendrői 2017) argue for an indirect interaction in which IS-related movement operations are accounted for by interface considerations. It is within the later framework that Horvath (2010) proposes the Strong Modularity Hypothesis for Discourse Features in which semantic interpretation is central in accounting for discourse-related movement operations.

In this paper, I argue that such an approach accommodates *na*-‘focus’² packaging in Cameroon Pidgin English, an English-based expanded pidgin spoken in Cameroon. I show that constructions in which *na* is used to focus a constituent necessarily have an exhaustive interpretation in the sense that *na* helps identify the maximal option amongst the alternative sets proposed by focalisation (Krifka 2007). As such, following Horvath (2010) and related studies (Durrleman & Shlonsky 2015 and Fominyam & Šimík 2017, for example), the particle projects an Exh(austive) P(hrase) in both in-situ and ex-situ constructions. Ex-situ constructions, I stress, are best accounted for in a cleft-like way so that foci associated with *na* are not realized in the Specifier of a focus phrase as in Cartographic terms, but rather within its complement. Particularly, I argue in line with a similar analysis adopted for the Awing focus particle *lá* in Fominyam & Šimík (2017) that *na* associates with the closest maximal projection it asymmetrically c-commands following the so-called closeness requirement on association with focus (Jacobs 1983), which dictates that a focus-sensitive particle be as close to its focus as possible (in terms of c-command). I further propose that the element in focus appears right-adjacent to the focus particle *na* in order to establish a pronoun-antecedent agreement relation between the moved foci and the relative pronoun *we* ‘that’. In such cases, I assume that there is a specific type of agreement between the focus constituent and the relative pronoun. This view is reminiscent of the fact that in English, the relative ‘who’, for example, must agree with [+human] NPs. I propose that such an agreement operation is local in CPE and must take place in a Spec-Head domain. As such, for Spec-Head local agreement to take place between foci and the relative pronoun in CPE, they must appear in the Specifier position of the Rel(ative) P(hrase) projection. The analysis of verb focus reveals that it is licensed only if the verb undergoes doubling as in other PCs (Pichi; Yakpo 2019 and Jamaican Creole; Durrleman 2008, for example) and many Bantu languages (Awing; Fominyam and Šimík 2017, Basa’a; Bassong 2014, Duala; Kengne 2015, and Tuki; Biloa 2012), in which case the parallel chain analysis applies in the sense of Aboh (2006) and Aboh and Dyakonova (2009), albeit with different movement motivations.

¹ Heartfelt thanks are due to Henry Fominyam, Alassane Kiemtoré, Thera Crane and three anonymous reviewers for NJAS, whose questions, comments and suggestions have helped improve the article significantly. Many of the ideas discussed in the paper were refined thanks to ALS5. I am particularly grateful to Enoch Oladé Aboh and Katharina Hartmann.

² I put the term ‘focus’ in quotations to differentiate between *focus* as understood by cartographers and proponents of the framework I have adopted in the paper.

The rest of the paper is organised as follows. Section 2 provides related information about CPE, paying particular attention to the use of *na* in copula constructions. Section 3 presents Horvath's (2010) Strong Modularity Hypothesis for Discourse Features as the cornerstone of my argument. Section 4 concentrates on focus marking in CPE. Section 5 spells out the core proposal, namely that *na* is a realization of a left-peripheral head Exh, which associates with the closest maximal projection, and semantically contributes to presupposed exhaustivity (Fominyam & Šimík 2017). Section 6 concludes the paper and draws some empirical as well as theoretical implications.

2. Setting the stage: Background on Cameroon Pidgin English

Cameroon Pidgin English, henceforth CPE, is an English-lexified expanded pidgin spoken in Cameroon in both the two Anglophone and the eight Francophone regions of the country. Otherwise known as Kamtok (Ayafor 2008) and, more recently, Cameroon Creole English (Ngefac 2016), it is a language that has enjoyed linguistic influence from English, French, Cameroon indigenous languages (Duala, Fula, Mungaka, Lamsoh, Bakweri *inter alia*), and other African languages including Yoruba, Igbo and Kikongo (see Ayafor 2008). Comprehensive descriptive accounts of the grammar of the language include Bazergui (1997), Ayafor (2008, 2016), Sala (2012), Nkengasong (2016), Ayafor and Green (2018) and Green and Ozón (2019). CPE has an SVO word order akin to its main lexifier language as shown in (1)³. Similar to Tok Pisin (Nose 2015), it does not have a grammatical voice. It can mark TMA through particles (for a recent and exhaustive list of these particles, see Schröder 2012) as (2) below shows or using the zero particle in which case the factative effect (Faraclas 1996) applies as in (3). Focus could be encoded in the language through the particle *na* as shown in (4) where a subject NP (4a) and an adjunct(4b) are focused. In this paper, focus is on the type of constructions instantiated in (4).

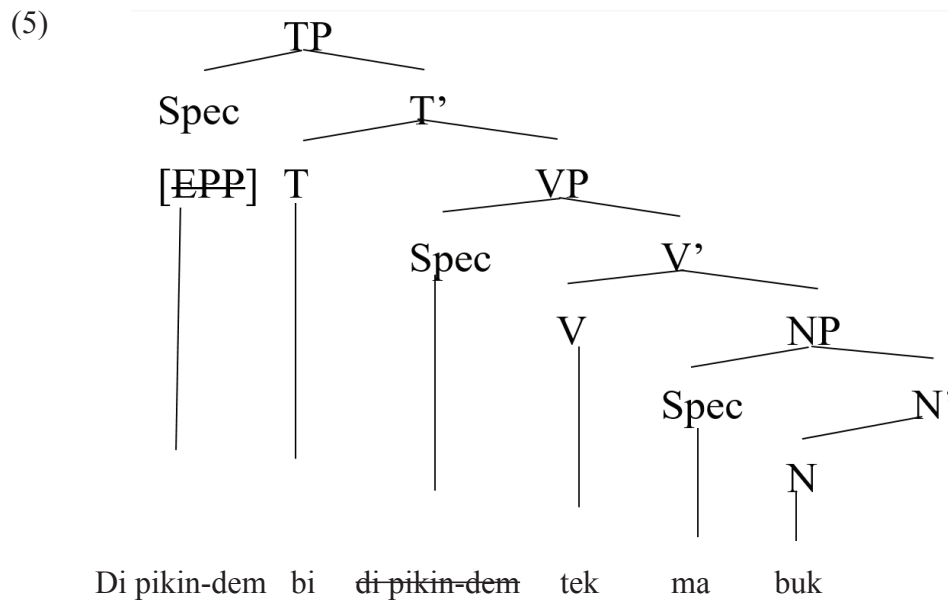
³ The data for the study are drawn from existing literature on the language and my intuition about grammaticality, given that I am a speaker of the language. Some of the sentences that are analysed in the paper were also submitted to selected speakers of the language for judgments on grammaticality. These speakers are teachers and have near-native, if not native, command of the language.

- (1)⁴ Di pikin-dem bi tek ma buk.
 DEM⁵ child-PL PST take POSS book.
 ‘These children took my book’
- (2) Wuna no bi de maket.
 2PL NEG PST COP market
 ‘You were not at the marketplace’
- (3) Ya wuman kam visit Pita
 POSS woman come.PST visit.PST Peter
 ‘Your wife paid a visit to Peter’
- (4) a. Q: Na wu kari ma bag? Ayafor o Sala?
 PRT who carry.PST POSS bag? Ayafor or Sala?
 ‘Who carried my bag? Ayafor or Sala?’
- A: Na Ayafor kari am
 PRT Ayafor carry.PST RES
 ‘It is Ayafor who carried it’
- b. Q: I kam yestede o tude?
 3SG come.PST yesterday or today?
 ‘When did he come, yesterday or today?’
- A: Na tude we i kom.
 PRT today REL 3SG come.PST
 ‘It is today that he came’

The sentence in (1) is an example of a simple sentence in the language in which the SVO word order is manifested. It can be argued that the subject *di pikin-dem* originates in the Specifier of the VP following the VP-internal-subject Hypothesis and moves to the specifier of T to satisfy the EPP and to be assigned case as the tree diagram in (5) below shows. Once the EPP features on T are checked, they are erased. I will return to this in section 5 when I account for the syntactic position of the exhaustive particle *na* in relation to moved foci.

⁴ The language enjoys no codified writing convention yet, as one can judge from existing literature. A variety of proposals have been in this connection (see for example Ayafor 1996, Sala 2009 and Ngefacs 2016). The one adopted in this study is proposed in Sala (2009).

⁵ The following glosses are used: 1/2/3 = first/second/third person, COMP = complementizer, COMPL = complement, COP = copula, DEF = definite, DET = determiner, DEM = demonstrative, FOC = focus marker, FUT = future, HAB = habitual, NEG = negation, PFV = perfective, PL = plural, POSS = possessive, PRT = particle (exhaustive particle), Q = question marker, REL = relative, RES = resumptive pronoun, SG = singular, TOP = topic marker. Following standard practice, ‘*’ and ‘#’ are used for cases for which we assume that the sentence was unacceptable due to ungrammaticality, or semantic/pragmatic reasons, respectively.



In (2), *bi* is the tense marker for the past (anterior). TMA markers, as Bazergui (1997) shows, appear in a rigid order in a pre-verbal position and never post-verbally. (3) instantiates a particular type of tense marking in which the semantics of the verb determines whether the past tense reading is licit or not. Faraclas (1996) refers to this as the factative effect.⁶ It is important to mention that the past tense reading could also be contextually inferred in other cases where the TMA markers are not overtly expressed. The analysis of the sentences akin to (4) constitutes the core issue the paper sets out to address. I will concentrate on this in section 5 of the paper. In the meantime, it is important to note that in both cases exemplified in (4), the input sentences have non-contextual alternative sets, and the answers serve to identify the maximal entity from the sets and give it a focus reading. Also note that the answers in (4) will be contextually illicit without the focus particle *na*. Further note that they will be contextually unacceptable if the sets of alternatives are not provided in the input sentences.

Before I provide a deeper analysis of the constructions in (4), it is important to pause and analyse other constructions in which *na* is used as in (6) to avoid ambiguity. As the sentences in (6) show, *na* can be used in copula constructions in the language. Following Yakpo (2019), I will argue in this paper that in equative and/or identificational clauses, for example, *na* remains a focus particle that helps identify its copula complement as the constituent under focus. As such, I propose an analysis that gives it a pseudo-cleft account in which case it has EPP features.

A handful of works have devoted some space to the study of copula constructions in PCs in general (see Mazzoli 2012; Nigerian Pidgin English, Migge 2002; the Eastern Maroon Creole, Durrleman 2008; Jamaican Creole and Yakpo 2019; Pichi) and in Cameroon Pidgin English in particular (Todd 1984; Bazergui 1997; Ayafor 2008; Ngefac 2016 and Ayafor, Green and Ozón 2017). As far as *na* is concerned, it has been identified in Nigerian Pidgin English, Ghanaian Pidgin English, Pichi and the Eastern Maroon Creole. Its equivalents include *a* in Jamaican Creole (Durrleman 2008) and *ta* in Papiamentu amongst others. Most of the previous studies seem to agree that focus particles can also be used in copula constructions. Particularly,

⁶ I thank the anonymous reviewer for comments related to this and for providing the link to have access to Yakpo's (2019) book.

they can be used in a variety of copula constructions involving equatives, as the sentences in (6) below show. (6a) is from Nigerian Pidgin English (Mazzoli 2013: 94)⁷. (6b) from Pichi (Yakpo 2019: 200), and (6c) from Cameroon Pidgin English.

- (6) a. Bill na beta student.
 Bill FOC good student.
 ‘Bill is a good student.’
- b. Mi na di chif no?⁸
 1SG FOC DET chief Q
 ‘I am the boss, right?’
- c. Ma fren na Atiku.
 POSS friend FOC Atiku
 ‘My friend is Atiku’

Migge (2002) argues that the overall make-up of the copula *na* in Eastern Maroon Creole is the result of substrate influence following observed similarities with Gbe. In this section, the focus is on the type of constructions presented in (6). I propose that although *na* could be compared to a copula in structures akin to (6), it necessarily triggers an exhaustive focus reading in a pseudo-cleft way. As such, it is dual in nature and function. It functions both as a copula with EPP features that require a subject in Spec-TP and as a ‘focus’ marker that identifies an entity (its complement) as focus.

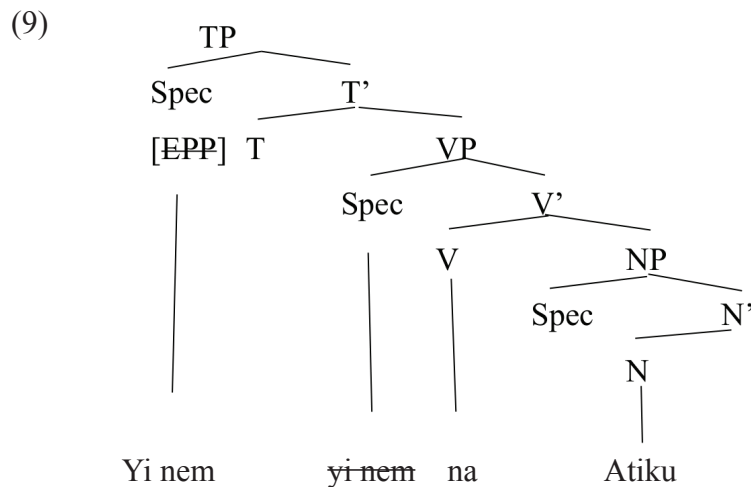
My proposal is rooted in Yakpo’s (2019) analysis of similar constructions. He argues that *na*-copula constructions are grammaticalised topic-comment structures in which the notional subject is topicalised, and the nominal functioning as the copula complement is under focus. Let’s consider the sequences in (6) above individually in order to substantiate the proposal. (6c), in Cameroon Pidgin English and probably in Nigerian Pidgin English, can only be the answer to a question such as (7) in a context where there is an open argument in relation to who X’s friend is. Contextually, a speaker is likely to be wondering why Atiku chose to help X but not him/her. The speaker then utters (7) to which the segment ‘amongst us’ can be contextually added. As such, the following sets of alternatives are contextually present: ‘you’, ‘Atiku’ and ‘none of the preceding’. The speaker in (6c) exhaustively points out that ‘Atiku (and no one else) is his/her friend’. After such a sentence, no more alternatives are possible. This is shown by the impossibility of adding the segment *yu na ma friend tsu* ‘You are also friend’ or *Ma fren na Pita tsu* ‘My friend is also Peter’ as shown in (8) which are contextually unacceptable. (6b) is also licit in a context akin to the one described for (6c). The speaker’s wish is to confirm that he is the *chif* ‘chief’ and nothing else. In all the three examples, it is not possible to add a segment similar to that added in (8) for (6c) below. So, I conclude that even in such constructions, *na* has some focus features that help identify an entity as the correct or the exhaustive answer to an input question. This view is couched in the definition of focus as not only triggering new information (information focus), but also involving alternative sets (see Krifka 2007).

⁷ Instead of the label COP in the original paper, I will use FOC for the sake of consistency.

⁸ The original writing convention has been changed to accommodate the one adopted in this study, in order to avoid inconsistency. The same holds for rendering the various functional categories.

- (7) Ya fren na who?
 POSS friend FOC who
 ‘Who is your friend?’
- (8) a. #Ma fren na Atiku. Yu na ma fren tsu
 POSS friend FOC Atiku. 2SG FOC POSS friend also
 ‘My friend is Atiku. My friend is also you’
- b. #Ma fren na Atiku. Ma fren na Pita tsu
 POSS friend FOC Atiku. POSS friend FOC Peter also
 ‘My friend is Atiku. My friend is also Peter’

I propose that *na* in the constructions in (6) is a copula: it has EPP features that require that its subject position be filled, as shown by the P-marker in (9), which is a representation of (6c) above. It originates inside VP, following the VP-internal subject hypothesis, and moves up to check the EPP under Spec-TP. Unlike in the ex-situ focus constructions exemplified in (4), its subject cannot be dropped, as the ungrammaticality of (10) shows. (10) can only be felicitous as the answer to a question such as *wu kari ma bag* ‘who carried my bag?’ and never in constructions similar to the ones in (6).



- (10) *Na Atiku

Yakpo (2019) argues for the same reality in Pichi. Drawing from his analysis, and having shown that *na* in the constructions in (6) is ‘selfish’ by virtue of being both a copula and a focus marker, I propose that a pseudo-cleft analysis best captures its interpretation. This is so because copulas that feature in pseudo-clefts have the same dual nature described above. This follows from the definition of cleft constructions as essentially being focus constructions. I therefore propose that the English translations of the sentences in (6) above should be similar to those in (11) below.



- (11) a. What Bill is is a good student (and nothing else)
 b. What I am is the boss.
 c. Who my friend is is Atiku.

The only difference will be that unlike in English clefts constructions, *na*-constructions do not license TMA particles. This observation has been made in works such as Todd (1984), Bazergui (1997), Ayafor (2008), Ngefacs (2016) and Ayafor, Green and Ozón (2017).

Further evidence comes from the interpretive difference between (12) and (13).

- (12) Yu bi de wusaid?
 2SG PST COP where?
 ‘Where were you?’
- (13) a. A bi de has
 1SG ANT COP house
 ‘I was home’
- b. A bi de na has
 1SG ANT COP FOC home
 ‘Where I was is at home’
- c. Na fo has we a bi de.
 PRT PREP home REL 1SG ANT COP
 ‘It is at home that I was’

The best answer to the question in (12) is (13a). (13b) and (13c) can only be felicitous in a context where alternatives are given *Yu bi de has o fo shop?* ‘You where home or at the shop?’, for example, just like in the English examples in (14).

- (14) Question: Where were you?
 Answer: I was IN THE HOUSE. —————> **New information**
 Where I was is IN THE HOUSE (and nowhere else) 
Exhaustive pseudo-cleft reading
 It is IN THE HOUSE that I was (and nowhere else) 
Exhaustive cleft interpretation

Just like in (12) and (13), the pseudo-cleft and cleft answers in (14) cannot be felicitous answers to the question in (14), unless alternatives are openly or contextually given. I draw from this to propose a pseudo-cleft interpretation of in-situ *na*-focus constructions. In such cases, *na* has focus as well as copula effects.

In section 4, I propose a deeper analysis of ex-situ focus constructions. For the sake of

proper understanding of the core proposal that will be made therein, I devote the next section to presenting Horvath's (2010) Strong Modularity Hypothesis for Discourse Features, which, I believe, is key to backing up the core proposal made in this paper.

3. Horvath's (2010) strong modularity hypothesis for discourse features as the cornerstone for the proposal

As I mentioned in the introduction, the cross-linguistic study of the interaction between IS and syntax has witnessed the growth of two schools of thoughts. One advocates for a direct interaction between the two in the sense that discourse-related facts such as topic and focus are manifested in the syntax through formal features that trigger syntactic displacement operations. This approach is generally referred to as the Cartographic approach (see Rizzi 1997, 2004; Cinque & Rizzi 2010 and Aboh 2004, 2010 among others). The other argues that the interaction between IS and syntax is mediated by interface phenomena, and, as such, is indirect. This latter approach stresses, for example, that the syntactic displacement of constituents is not motivated by formal features checking, as assumed under the Cartographic approach, but rather by the Stress Assignment in languages such as Hungarian (Reinhart 1995, 2006; Zubizarreta 1998; Samek-Lodovici 2005 and Szendrői 2017 *inter alia*). They propose an approach in which the interaction between IS and syntax is mediated by PF phenomena or prosody. Within this same school, Horvath (2010: 5) proposes a general constraint on the nature of potential formal features, (i.e., features that can play a role in syntactic derivations). She refers to this as the Strong Modularity Hypothesis for Discourse Features, which is presented in (15), where C_{HL} refers to the computational system.

- (15) The strong modularity hypothesis for discourse features
No information structure notions – i.e., purely discourse-related notions – can be encoded in the grammar as formal features; hence no “discourse-related features” are present in the syntactic derivation. They are available only outside the C_{HL} .

This hypothesis leads Horvath to propose that apparent discourse-feature-driven movements⁹ will, upon closer examination, turn out to be one of the following two types : (i) interface-driven (like the cases discussed by Zubizarreta 1998, etc.) or (ii) involve a truth-conditional operator (i.e., the discourse effect is not what drives the movement) whose semantic import is maximality (Horvath 2010:2). Following this, Horvath argues that the relevant distinction between in-situ focus and ex-situ focus in Hungarian, for example, is that the latter case involves the exhaustive identification of the particular subset of the contextually relevant set of alternatives for which the predicate holds (see Kenesei 1986; Kiss 1987 and Horvath 1997, 2000, 2010). As such, in (16a) below where focus is achieved by movement, exhaustive interpretation is exhibited. This contrasts with (16b), where the absence of exhaustive interpretation is related to post-V focus. (The examples are from Horvath 2010:12-14)

⁹ I thank the anonymous reviewer for related comments.

- (16) a. Mari csak [A FOGADÁSRÓL] késett el.
 Mary-NOM only the reception-from late-was away
 ‘Mary was late only for THE RECEPTION.’
- b. Megtudhatod (például) AZ INTERNETEN
 PERF.PRT-know-can-2SG for example the internet-on
 (vagy TELEFONON is).
 or phone-on also
 ‘You could find out about it (for example) on the internet (or also by phone).’

As (16a) shows, the presence of the focus-sensitive particle *csak* ‘only’ is licit for exhaustive interpretation. In (16b), the focus-sensitive particle that is licit is *is* ‘also’. This, Horvath argues, could constitute a test for exhaustive and non-exhaustive interpretations in the sense that while the former only licenses ‘only’, the latter can only tolerate both ‘even’ or ‘also’. The use of *is* ‘even/also’ in a construction in which exhaustivity is manifested through focus movement leads to ungrammaticality as (17) below shows.

- (17) *Mari még [AZ ESKÜVJÉRŐL] is késett el.
 Mary-NOM yet the wedding-her-from also late-was away

This approach has been adopted for the analysis of other languages and has proven to work. Novel evidence for Horvath’s claim comes from Jamaican Creole (18a) and Awing (18b). The Jamaican Creole example is from Durrleman and Shlonsky (2015:8). The Awing sentence is from (Fominyam & Šimik 2017: 18)¹⁰.

- (18) a. A [wan bami an wan bredrut] Mieri bai
 PRT one bammy and one breadfruit Mary buy
 ‘What Mary bought was (only) ONE BAMMY AND ONE BREADFRUIT’
- b. ló aṅwa’rǎ-ǎsé_F pá’a Ngwe a- nǎ- m- fǒṅǎ.
 PRT book-god REL.COMP Ngwe SM- PST N- read.
 ‘It is the Bible that Ngwe read.’

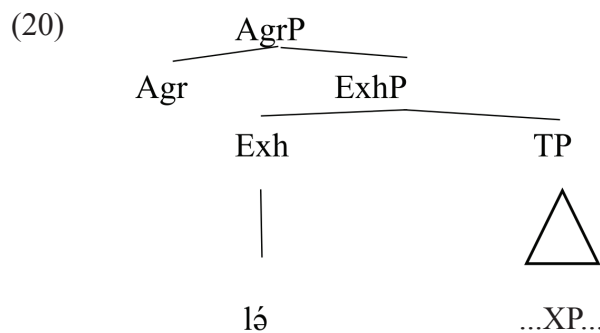
In the JC example (18a), ex-situ *a*-focus helps to identify the NP ‘one bammy and one breadfruit’ as the only (maximal) alternative for which the predicate holds. In (18b), the same reading applies and the NP ‘the Bible’ is identified as the only alternative for which the predicate holds. But, unlike in (18a) where syntactic position (left periphery/ex-situ) is the trigger of the exhaustive focus interpretation, the exhaustive interpretation of (18b) is not related to the syntactic position of the NP, but rather to the presence of the exhaustive particle *lǎ*, given that even in a

¹⁰ The reader can refer to these works for strong evidence for their claims.

mono-clausal construction in which it appears in-situ, the exhaustive reading is still manifested as (19) below shows (Fominyam and Šimík 2017: 18)

- (19) Ngwe a- nə- m- fónə ló aŋwa'rə-əséF
 Ngwe SM- P2- N- read PRT book-god
 'It is the Bible that Ngwe read'

This boils down to the fact that in Awing, semantic exhaustivity is not triggered by focus movement, but by *lá*-insertion. I will propose a similar analysis for CPE in the next section. In terms of syntactic position, Fominyam and Šimík (2017) argue that *lá* heads an Exh projection in-between T and Agr as shown in (20) below. They further propose that Exh selects a TP, and the "ExhP it projects can in turn be selected by Agr. The focused constituent with which *lá* associates is located within the TP" (Fominyam & Šimík 2017: 5). I will propose a quasi-similar analysis for CPE in section 5.



The next section examines particle focus in CPE and proposes that just like in Awing, *na*-focus necessarily has an exhaustive reading whether in-situ or ex-situ.

4. *Na*-focus constructions in CPE

In this section, I analyse *na*-focus constructions. I show that foci associated with the particle *na* are necessarily exhaustive in that the element in focus is identified as the only alternative for which the presupposition holds true. As such, I propose that *na*-focus constructions contain the truth-conditional and quantificational Exhaustive Identification (EI) operator in the spirit of Horvath (2010). For the sake of clarity, I start the discussion with an appraisal of the other means the language resorts to in expressing focus. This will be followed by an account of whether ex-situ focus in the language is related to movement to the left periphery or external merger to IP. The section ends with evidence for a pseudo-cleft analysis of in-situ focus, and a cleft-like analysis for ex-situ focus in CPE.

Yakpo (2019) argues that Pichi, which he believes shares a lot of features with CPE, has three ways of expressing focus. He refers to them as suprasegmental focus, particle focus and cleft focus. Although the first two strategies fall outside the scope of the present paper, some

remarks can be made. As far as the suprasegmental strategy is concerned, if we agree, following what is generally assumed in the literature, that the grammar of PCs is the result of substrate influence and that substrate languages in the case of CPE are African languages, then it becomes difficult to account for suprasegmental focus marking in CPE. This is so because phonological marking of IS in African languages is, up to now unclear, as Forminyam (2015) remarks (see also Bassong 2014 and Kengne 2015 for a similar argument). In these languages, IS-sensitive facts are either morphologically realised (formal particles) or syntactically manifested (internal merge or external merge). It becomes difficult to account for suprasegmental focus marking in CPE. If it is the case in Pichi, as Yakpo (2019) argues, it is probably the result of Spanish influence. If CPE has such a strategy, it probably results from English influence, given that English has such a strategy (see Krifka 2007).

On particle focus, Yakpo (2019) proposes that the particles *séf*, *sénwe*, *én* ‘and’ and *ó* are focus particles in Pichi. In my opinion, they can be classified under focus-sensitive particles. Ayafor (2008) and Sala (2012) identify *sef* in CPE as an emphatic marker when it appears in a reduplicated form. As I mentioned earlier, I will not provide a detailed account of these. What this paper sets out to analyse is the third type of focus Yakpo (2019) identifies in Pichi. He argues that there are three markers of cleft focus in Pichi. These are *na*, *nóto* and *es que*. The third one, *es que* (it’s that), he believes, is from Spanish and is employed to focus entire clauses. CPE lacks such a marker, so I will not comment on it further. *Nóto* is equivalent to the form *no bi* (it’s not) in CPE and *i no bi* (it is not) in Nigerian Pidgin English (Faraclas 1996). Yakpo’s proposal on the analysis of *na*-focus constructions is in line with the proposal made in this paper, namely that such constructions need to be given a cleft-like interpretation. In this section, I will concentrate on the type of focus they signal in CPE. In Pichi, Yakpo (2019) argues that it necessarily signals presentational and contrastive focus. I argue that it signals corrective and contrastive focus only with an exhaustive reading in CPE. As such, the correction or the contrast, depending on the case, is necessarily exhaustive. Evidence for this comes from the sentences in (21) below.

(21) (context: two girls enter a shop to buy pens. After some minutes, one of them asks the question in (21a))

- a. Yu tek for?
 2SG take.PST four
 ‘You took four?’
- b. Noho, na faiv we a tek am
 NEG PRT five REL 1SG take.PST RES
 ‘No, it is five that I took’

Contextually, the speaker who utters the answer in (21b) could have taken two, three, four or five pens. These constitute the set of contextual alternatives she has. From the question in (21a), the first speaker mistakenly identifies ‘four’ as the number of pens her friend has taken, and so is corrected by her friend’s answer in (21b). The negative form ‘*noho*’ is the signal for the corrective reading. As such, the first interpretation I can give to the focus construction containing *na* in (21b) is that it is corrective. But, in correcting the first speaker, the second speaker actually identifies the relevant alternative for which the predicate holds. In other words, she exhausts the

possibility for which the action of taking holds. (21b) therefore has an exhaustive reading. Interestingly, the second speaker's answer could also have been (22a-c), but not (22d). Recall that Horvath (2010) uses the focus sensitive particles 'only' and 'even/also' as tests for exhaustivity. She argues that exhaustive focus constructions accommodate the particle 'only', but not 'even/also'. This distinction, Fominyam and Šimik (2017) shows, applies to *lá*-focus in Awing. The same holds for *na*-focus in CPE, as the ungrammaticality of (22d-e) shows. They contain the focus sensitive particle *olso* 'also'. (22b-c), on the contrary are felicitous because they contain *onle* 'only' which, in Horvath's (2010) terms, is a marker of exhaustivity.

- (22)
- | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|----------|------|------|-------|-----------|-----|
| a. | A | tek | na | faiv | | | |
| | 1SG | take.PST | PRT | five | | | |
| | 'The number (of pens) I took is five' | | | | | | |
| b. | Na | onle | faiv | we | a | tek | am |
| | PRT | only | five | REL | 1SG | take.PST | RES |
| | 'It is only five that I took' | | | | | | |
| c. | A | tek | na | onle | faiv | | |
| | 1sg | take.PST | PRT | only | five | | |
| | 'The number I took is only five' | | | | | | |
| d. | #Na | olso | faiv | we | a | tek | am |
| | PRT | also | five | REL | 1SG | take.PST] | RES |
| | 'It is also five that I took' | | | | | | |
| e. | #A | tek | na | olso | faiv. | | |
| | 1SG | take.PST | FOC | also | five | | |
| | 'The number (of pens) I took is also five'. | | | | | | |

(22a/c) also show that the second speaker could have produced an answer in which the focus particle *na* appears in a position after the verb. In the literature, this position is generally referred to as the "immediate after verb position" in relation to focus. (see Kengne 2015 for examples in Duala and Van der Wal 2009 for examples in Makhuwa-Enahara). It is also referred to as lower position for focus (see Rizzi 2004). I draw from Rizzi (2004) and subsequent works' terminology to say that in CPE, *na*-focus in the after-the-verb position signals low exhaustive focus. This is so because even in such constructions, as the presence of the focus sensitive particle shows, *na* still gives rise to an exhaustive reading. In the next section of this paper, I will argue that it is the head Exh of an ExhP in both cases.

The fact that both *na* and the NP *faiv pen-dem* (five pens) in (21b) and (22a) originate in a position inside VP (22a) and is subsequently moved to the left edge of the clause is itself telling. It can be inferred from this that *na* and *faiv pen-dem* are externally merged inside VP and then moved out. Under the cartographic framework, it would be assumed that such movement is motivated by the Focus criterion (Rizzi 2004). Following Horvath (2010) and subsequent works, I believe instead that such a movement is motivated by the semantic import of strong exhaustivity. Stranding any of the two is impossible as the ungrammaticality of (23) below shows. In

(23a), *na* is stranded. In (23b), the NP *faiv pen-dem* is stranded. (23c) shows that left peripheral cleft-like focus must necessarily feature *na* for the sake of grammaticality.

- (23) a. *faiv pen-dem we a tek na am
 five pen-PL REL 1SG take.PST PRT RES
 ‘It is five pens that I took’
- b. *na we a tek faiv pen-dem
 PRT REL 1SG take.PST five pen-PL
 ‘It is five pens that I took’
- c. *faiv pen-dem we a tek am
 five pen-PL REL 1SG take.PST RES
 ‘It is five pens that I took’

The previous comment triggers another important question in relation to whether left peripheral *na*-focus is a result of external merge to IP or internal merge. In order to provide answers to this, consider (24) below.

- (24) a. Na Pita bi kari am
 PRT Peter PST carry RES
 ‘It is Peter who carried it’
- b. Na mango_i we a bi chop am_i
 PRT mango_i REL 1SG PST eat RES_i
 ‘It is mango that I ate’

In (24a), a subject NP is focused. The resumptive pronoun in the after-the-verb position is not coindexed to the subject, but rather to a contextual object which could be ‘my bag’. In (24b), an object NP is in focus. Interestingly, the resumptive pronoun right-adjacent to the verb is coindexed to the left edge NP. This could contradict Rizzi’s (1997) view that topics, but not foci can license a resumptive pronoun in an argument position that is coindexed to the moved foci. This issue has been observed in Anyi and Baule (Skopeteas, Ahoua, Adou & Koffi. 2015). A closer look at the CPE constructions that trigger this argument shows that the resumptive pronoun appears in a relative clause. As the anonymous reviewer rightly points out, this would be expected under Rizzi’s proposal. This also applies to (24a) in which it is possible to insert the relative pronoun *we* after Pita ‘Peter’. This could well be the result of English influence, given that English allows constructions in which the relative pronoun is contextually understood. An example of this is ‘The man I saw is rich’. Another interesting question relates to how the resumptive pronoun appears in the derivation of the sentence. On this, recall that one of the tests for movement in the literature is the presence of traces. It is generally assumed that when a constituent is moved in overt syntax, it leaves behind a trace that it asymmetrically c-commands. My intuition about grammaticality reveals that the resumptive pronoun can appear in a syntactic island. This

leads to the conclusion that it is base-generated within the relative clause. For the sake of space, I will leave this discussion for future research.

Further evidence in support of my claim that *na*-focus constructions induce exhaustivity comes from the semantics of cleft constructions. Velleman et al. (2012) argue that English cleft constructions convey two meanings. They assert that the prejacent is true and presuppose that any focus alternative stronger than the prejacent is false. Fominyam & Šimík (2017) refer to the latter inference as presupposed exhaustivity. Consider the example in (25), which is from Fominyam & Šimík (2017:42). As they comment, (25a) asserts that the prejacent, i.e., ‘Dave and Sue smoke’ is true, and presupposes that any stronger alternative, e.g., ‘Dave, Sue, and Lynn smoke,’ is false. In other words, (25a) exhaustively identifies the smokers: Dave and Sue smoke, but nobody else does. They hold that the presuppositional nature of the exhaustive inference is illustrated by (25b) and its continuations. While the prejacent, namely ‘Dave and Sue smoke’ is targeted by negation, the presupposition that no stronger alternative is true survives, as indicated by the infelicity of the continuation in (25biii).

- (25) a. It is [Dave and Sue]F who smoke.
 b. It isn’t [Dave and Sue]F who smoke, . . .
 (i) . . . it’s just Dave.
 (ii) . . . it’s Lynn.
 (iii) # . . . it’s Dave, Sue, and Lynn.

Let’s run a similar test for *na*-focus constructions to show that this is true for such constructions in CPE. Following Fominyam and Šimík (2017:43), If sentences with *na* express exhaustivity, they should be logically incompatible with continuations that deny the exhaustive inference.

- (26) Context: ‘What did your wife cook?’ ‘What is it that your wife cooked?’
 a. Ma wuman kuk achu an eru tsu
 POSS woman cook.PAST achu and eru too.
 ‘My wife cooked achu and she also cooked eru’
 b. #Na achu we ma wuman kuk an eru tsu
 PRT achu REL POSS woman kuk.PST and eru too
 Intended: ‘My wife cooked achu and she also cooked eru’

The fact that (26a) that does not contain the focus particle *na* is felicitous with the continuation ‘and she also cooked eru’ and that (26b) in which *na* has been used to front the NP ‘my wife’ is not is an indication of the fact that ex-situ *na* signals exhaustivity. The same also applies in constructions in which *na* remains right-adjacent to the VP, as shown in (27), which could be uttered in the same context as (26).

- (27) #Ma wuman kuk na achu an eru tsu
 POSS woman cook.PST FOC achu and eru too
 Intended: ‘My wife cooked achu and she also cooked eru’

The fact that the continuation in (26b) is also infelicitous in (27) where *na* appears in post-verbal position lends further support to the unified analysis of *na*, whether it is post-verbal or pre-verbal. Kiss (1998, as quoted in Aboh 2006:30) also gives a similar analysis for English cleft constructions in which they encode exhaustive focus. She argues that English clefts “represent a subset of the set of contextually or situationally given elements for which the predicate phrase can potentially hold; it is identified as the exhaustive subset of this set for which the predicate phrase actually holds” (Kiss 1998: 1, as quoted in Aboh 2006:30). This lends further support for the exhaustive interpretation of *na*-focus constructions in CPE.

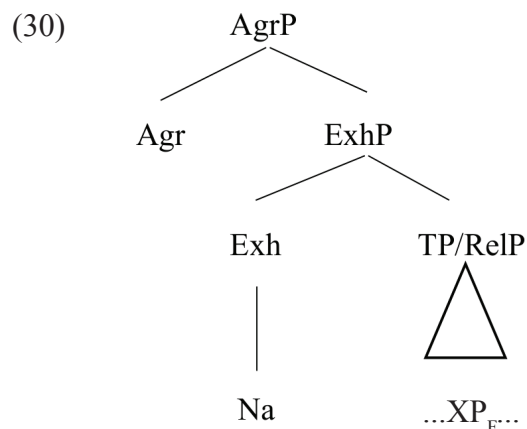
I have claimed so far that *na*-focus constructions should be given a cleft-like interpretation, in which case it shares interpretational similarities with English clefts. But what evidence do I have for such an analysis? Durrleman and Shlonsky (2015) argue at length that *a*-focus constructions in Jamaican Creole can never be clefts and extend their analysis to other creoles. They point out that JC *a*-focus constructions are not clefts for a variety of reasons. They are not bi-clausal, *a* is not a copula and so does not require a subject, and there is no sign of relativisation in such contexts as compared to English or French clefts. I have already given pragmatic evidence in support of my view that *na*-focus constructions should be analysed as clefts. They have the semantic import of exhaustivity. Aboh (2006), amongst others, uses this fact to support his argument that Gungbe verbal focus should not be analysed as predicate cleft constructions because they do not have the import of exhaustiveness. This same argument can be used to conclude that Jamaican Creole *a*-focus are cleft-like constructions given that Durrleman and Shlonsky (2015) do acknowledge that *a*-focus constructions have the semantic import of exhaustivity, same as English clefts. On their stand that *a*-focus constructions do not involve a copula, recall the assumed argument in the literature that focus particles in some creole languages are a result of grammaticalisation in the sense that that they originate as copulas. (See Migge 2002, for example). Besides, (24b-c); repeated here under (28a-b) shows that *na*-focus constructions in CPE are bi-clausal given the presence of the relativiser *we* which may be optional in some cases, as (24a), repeated here under (28c) shows.

- (28) a. Na mango_i we a bi chop am_i
 PRT mango_i REL 1SG ANT eat RES_i
 ‘It is mango that I ate’
- b. Na for skol we i bi de
 PRT PREP school REL 3SG ANT COP
 ‘It is to school that he was’
- c. Na Pita bi kari am
 PRT Peter ANT carry RES
 ‘It is Peter who carried it’

The same observations hold for Pichi, as Yakpo (2019: 233) shows. In the Pichi sentence he gives (29), the relativiser has a null spell-out.

- (29) Áfta na dán tén Ø a kán gón a Alemania
 Then FOC that time REL 1SG PFV go LOC Germany
 ‘So, it’s that time that I went to Germany’.

As such, CPE features a be-type copula (*na*), albeit one with focus features and a relative pronoun or complementiser, which, depending on the case, may have a null spell-out. The only difference with Germanic and Romance cleft constructions is that the be-like copula in the clefted part is not tensed and does not have ‘strong’ EPP features that require that its subject position be overtly filled. These properties, it can be argued, faded away or became abstract due to the process of grammaticalisation, in which the *na* has lost many of its copula effects. This analysis may be extended to Jamaican Creole *a*-focus, given that the literature shows it can be used as a copula, and that *a*-focus has a semantics akin to that of English-clefts. As such, while CPE ex-situ *na*-focus constructions are best analysed as clefts, in-situ constructions are best captured in a pseudo-cleft analysis (exhaustive interpretation). In the two cases, they trigger an exhaustive reading and as such, following Horvath (2010), I argue that they contain the truth-conditional and quantificational Exhaustive Identification (EI) operator. In line with a quasi-similar analysis for the particle *lá* in Awing, I propose that *na* heads an Exh projection in-between Agr and TP/RelP as shown in (30) below. I further propose that Exh selects a TP/RelP, and the ExhP it projects can in turn be selected by Agr. The focused constituent with which *lá* associates is located within the TP/RelP (see Fominyam & Šimík 2017: 5). I concentrate on this in the next section of the paper.



5. On the syntactic distribution of *na*-focus constructions

The previous section proposes that *na*-focus constructions be interpreted in a cleft-like way in which case they have the semantic import of exhaustivity. It was argued that *na* heads an Exh projection in-between Agr and T/RelP. In this section, I look into such a hypothesis. I first look into an existing and related proposal in relation to the syntax of the focus particle *a* in Jamaican Creole as proposed in Durreleman (2005) and in Durreleman and Shlonsky (2015). I will draw from this to propose an alternative treatment of such constructions.

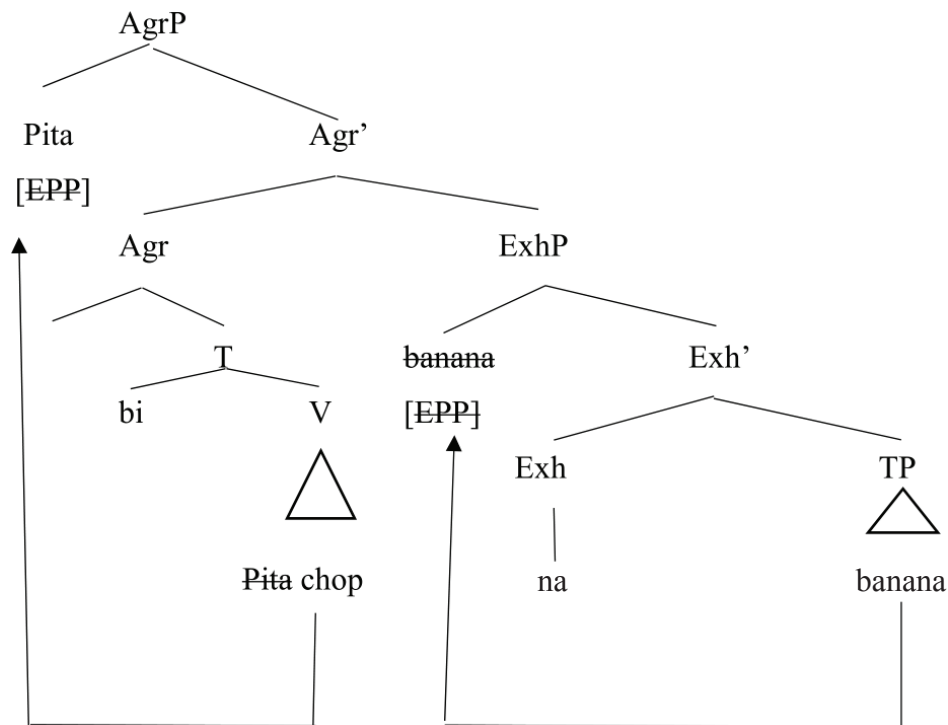
As already mentioned, Durreleman and Shlonsky (2015) examine *a*-focus constructions in Jamaican Creole and claim that they have the semantic import of exhaustivity. They argue that the focus particle *a* is merged to a constituent inside the clause and is subsequently moved to the left edge of the clause to satisfy the Exhaustiveness criterion, modelled on Rizzi (2006). In an earlier discussion (Durreleman 2005) sketching the fine structure of the left periphery in JC, she argues that *a* heads an XP in the pre-IP position that is located between TopP and FocP. She further argues that the exact nature of the projection whose head position hosts *a* remains to be determined (see Durreleman 2005: 154). I argue against such a projection based on the uniformity principle (Chomsky 1995). Recall that Rizzi's (1997) map of the left periphery has been tested and validated with cross-linguistic data. As such, it is generally assumed that the left edge of the clause is populated by a variety of projections including ForceP, FocP, TopP, ModP, IntP and FinP. Some of these projections may appear in a relatively different order in some languages and be recursive. As such, the structure of the left periphery of the clause appears to be uniform in terms of the number of projections that populate it. Languages probably only vary in the positions of these projections and their recursive nature.

It is also generally assumed that in languages in which focus particles are overtly realised, they occupy the head Foc of a FocP in the left periphery. (see Aboh 2010 for Gungbe, Biloa 2013 for Tuki, Bassong 2010, 2014 for Basa'a and Kengne for Duala). In such languages, the constituent in focus appears in the specifier position of the FocP as a result of the EPP, given that focus particles in such languages are said to have EPP features (Aboh 2004, 2010). So, instead of proposing a novel XP projection that violates Chomsky's uniformity principle, according to which particle-type languages like Gungbe should be analysed in a uniformitarian way (the particle heads a FocP), one could claim that in Jamaican Creole, *a* heads FocP and the constituent in focus moves at LF to check the EPP features on *a*. As such, the only difference between Gungbe-type languages and Jamaican creole-type languages is that these EPP features are checked at LF. Such an analysis is in line with the minimal requirement of economy of representation. The question that remains to be answered is where the constituent in focus lands (if movement) or externally merges to the IP.

Fominyam & Šimik (2017) propose an analysis for the Awing focus particle which I believe can accommodate the CPE and Jamaican Creole data. Let's first consider the post-verbal *na*-focus constructions in (31) and the proposed syntactic representation in (32).

- (31) Pita bi chop na banana
Peter PST eat PRT banana
'What Peter ate is banana.'

(32) Structural representation of post-verbal *na*-focus constructions.

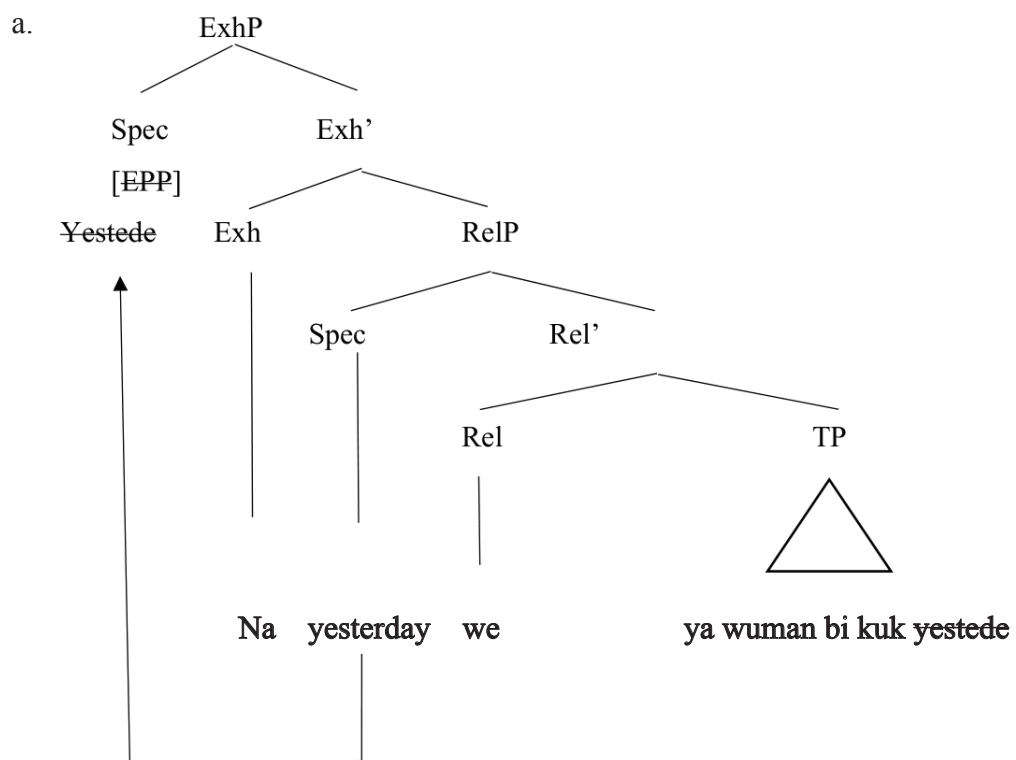


As the P-marker in (32) shows, the ExhP headed by *na* is located between AgrP and TP. I consider *banana* to fall under TP because it seems to be a reduced form of *na banana Pita bi chop* ‘It is banana that Peter ate’, where the fragment *Pita bi chop* is omitted by virtue of being reminiscent of the fragment that appears in pre-*na* position. ExhP, as I argued above, has EPP features following the uniformity principle on particle-type languages. As such, they are checked by LF movement of the constituent in focus, *banana*, to the left of the focus marker *na* just like in other particle-type languages. Once these features are checked, they are erased. The AgrP manifests agreement between the subject *Pita* and the TP *bi chop*. Following the VP-internal-subject hypothesis, the subject *Pita* originates as the Specifier of the VP and moves to Spec-AgrP to be assigned case and to satisfy the EPP. The P-marker above can accommodate any other structure in which post-verbal *na*-focus is achieved. The same applies to adjunct focus, PP focus and verb focus. In these cases, the constituents in focus (adjuncts, verbs or PPs) will appear in the same syntactic position as the NP *banana*.

For pre-verbal *na*-focus constructions or ex-situ *na*-focus constructions, the proposal is almost the same. Let’s consider the constructions in (33) below. (33a) is case of adjunct focus. (33b) instantiates the so-called predicate cleft constructions that require verb doubling (see DeGraff 1996 for predicate clefts in Haitian Creole and Bazergui 1997 for predicate clefts in CPE). As Aboh (2006) remarks, verb-doubling seems to be a feature of African languages for verbal focus. However, he argues that not all of them should be treated as predicate clefts. For a detailed account of this, I refer the reader to Aboh (2006). In the previous section, I provided empirical evidence in support of the analysis of verbal focus in CPE as clefts (see (4) and (24)). As such, the term ‘predicate cleft’ accommodates the CPE facts. (34a) is the structural manifestation of (33a), and (34b) that of (33b).

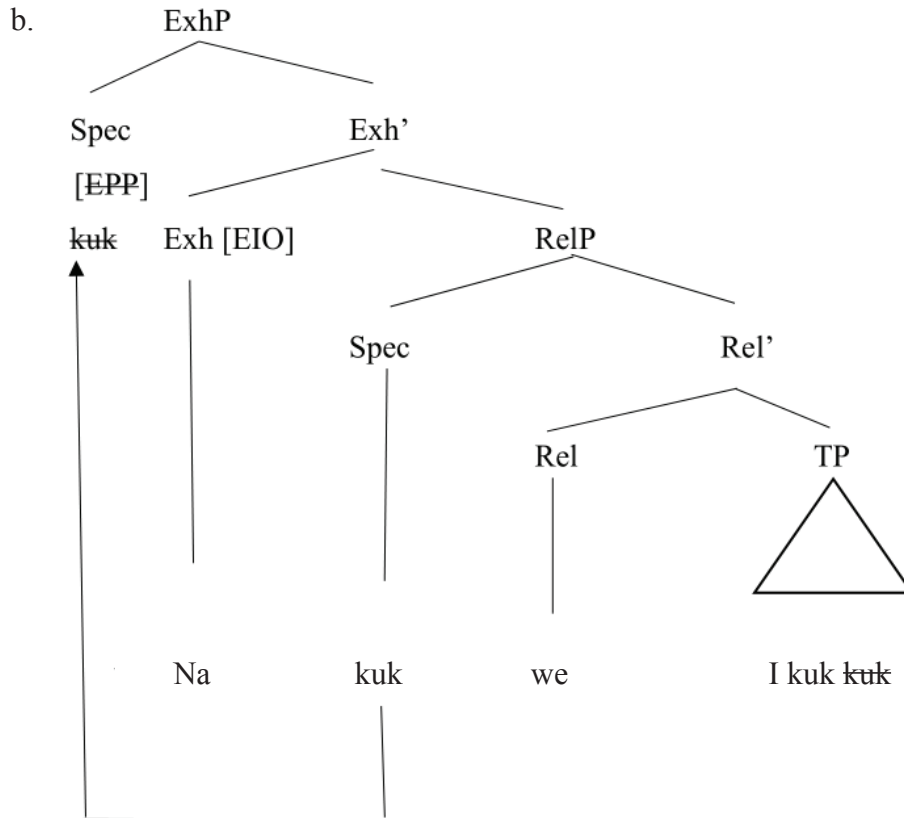
- (33) a. Na yestede we ya wuman bi kuk
 PRT yesterday REL POSS wife ANT cook
 ‘It is yesterday that your wife cooked.’
- b. Na kuk we i bi kuk.
 PRT cook REL 3SG ANT cook
 ‘She cooked, and nothing else.’

(34) *Structural representation of pre-verbal na-focus constructions in CPE*



(34a) is the structural representation of (33a), in which an adjunct is in focus. The constituent in focus originates in a position inside TP and is moved out to satisfy strong exhaustivity. It first lands in the specifier position of RelP in order to establish the pronoun-antecedent agreement relationship between the moved adjunct and the relative pronoun *we*. In such cases, I assume that there must be a specific type of abstract agreement between the focus constituent and the relative pronoun. This view is reminiscent of the fact that in English, the relative *who*, for example, must agree with [+human] NPs. I propose that such an agreement operation is local and must take place in a Spec-Head domain. As such, for Spec-Head local agreement to take place between the foci and the relative pronoun in CPE, the foci must land in the Specifier position of the Rel(ative) P(hrase) projection. Recall that cleft constructions are syntactically peculiar in that they are bi-clausal in nature and both clauses are separated/linked by a relative pronoun which could be overtly realised or not. Once the feature-checking relation between the head and

the element in Spec is achieved under RelP, the constituent in focus gets frozen (Rizzi 2007) in place and so cannot overtly move to check the EPP features of *na*. Adopting the uniformitarian approach I proposed for post-verbal *na*-focus constructions above, these features are checked through movement at LF, as the arrow indicates.

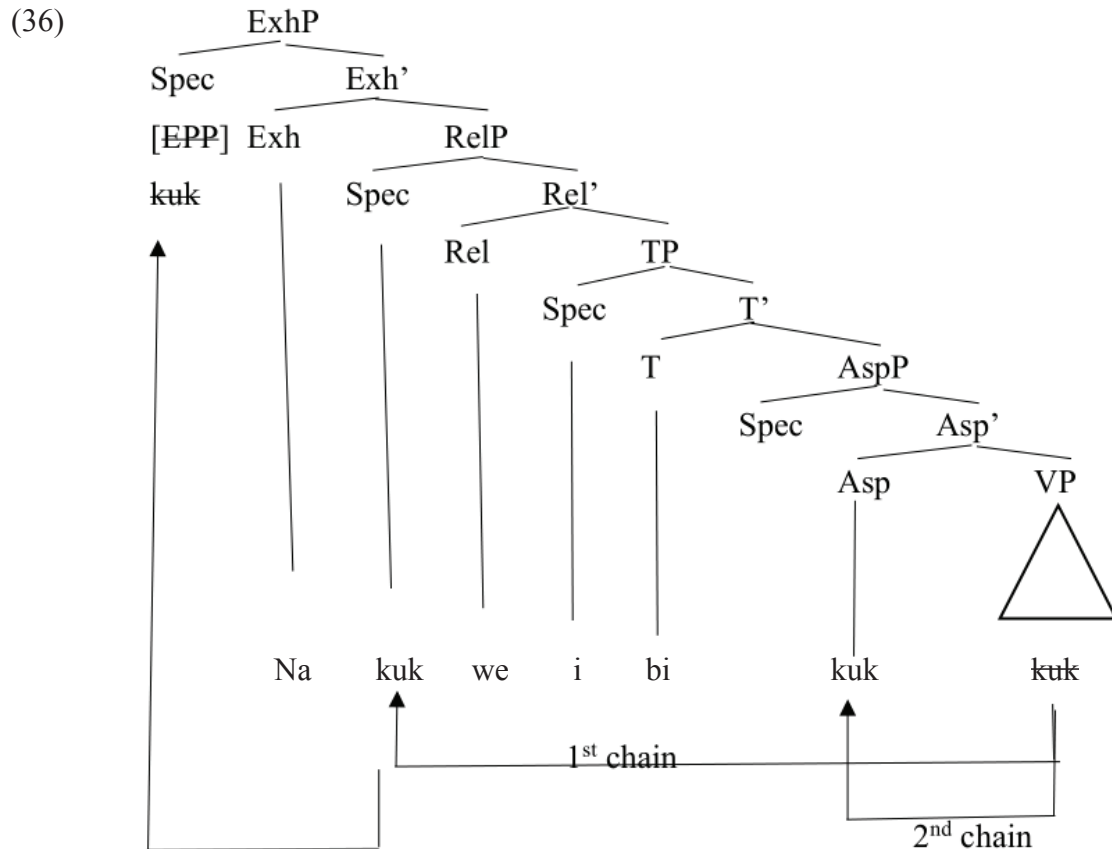


(34b) is the structural realisation of predicate cleft constructions in which the verb undergoes doubling. Aboh (2006) and Aboh and Dyakonova (2009) provide an analysis in which they propose that predicate fronting with doubling should be analysed as instances of parallel chains in the sense of Chomsky (2005, as described in Aboh 2006: 15). I believe such an analysis accommodates the CPE data for at least two reasons. First, the fronted verb cannot adjoin to TMA particles in Exh as the ungrammaticality of (35) below shows.

- (35) *Na bi kuk we i kuk
 PRT ANT cook REL 3SG cook.

Second, I believe the derivation in (36) below accounts for the case of predicate focus in (33). In (36), the EIO in Exh triggers movement of a non-finite copy of the verb to spec-RelP, forming the V'-chain involving the fronted verb and the copy in base position. The Agree-aspect-features of Asp attract V to Asp, creating the V-chain that consists of the raised verb under ASP and the lower copy of the VP. These movement operations result in two chains (kuk_F , kuk) and

(kuk_{ASP} , kuk), with no direct relation between (kuk_F) and (kuk_{ASP}). Under current minimalist assumptions, the copy internal to the lower phase VP is recoverable at the phase level memory and is deleted accordingly (Chomsky 2005, as quoted Aboh 2006: 44). The two higher copies must remain because they head different chains (). Exhaustive *kuk* then moves at LF to check the EPP features under ExhP.



6. Conclusion

In this paper, I have analysed *na*-focus constructions in Cameroon Pidgin English. I argued in line with Yakpo (2019) that in copula *na*-constructions, *na* remains a focus particle that helps identify its copula complement as focus. I proposed an analysis that gives it a pseudo-cleft account in which it has EPP features. The analysis of foci was done within the purview of Horvath's (2010) Strong Modularity Hypothesis for Discourse Features according to which the interaction between IS and the syntax is indirect and accounted for by interface considerations. I showed that *na*-focus is necessarily associated with an exhaustive interpretation that identifies an entity (the focus) as maximal (a truth conditional notion) from the set of alternatives triggered by the process of focalisation. In terms of syntactic distribution, I proposed that *na*-focus should be given a cleft-like interpretation in which case it syntactically falls under the head Exh of ExhP and the element in focus is part of its complement. As such, the focus constituent lands inside TP in post-verbal *na*-focus constructions and in Spec-RelP in pre-verbal *na*-focus constructions. In both cases, *na* has EPP features following the uniformitarian analysis of languages with particle focus constructions. The only difference with languages such as Gungbe, Duala and Tuki is that these features are checked at LF. I provided an account of predicate focus that is in line with Aboh's (2006) and Aboh and Dyakonova's (2009) parallel chain analysis where both copies of the verb move and form two chains; one in an A'-position (V'_F and V) and the other in an A-position (V_{Asp} and V).

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