On account of resumption in Likpakpaanl long-distance wh-movement

Syntax and Semantics of African Languages – SASAL 1, DGfS 2022

Universität Tübingen

Samuel Owoahene Acheampong
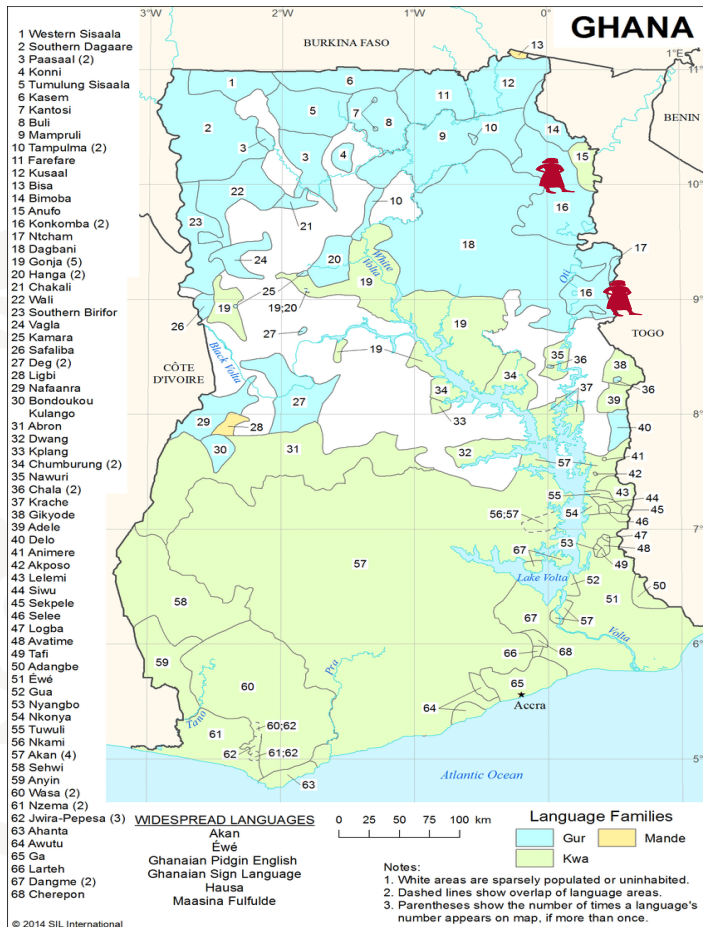
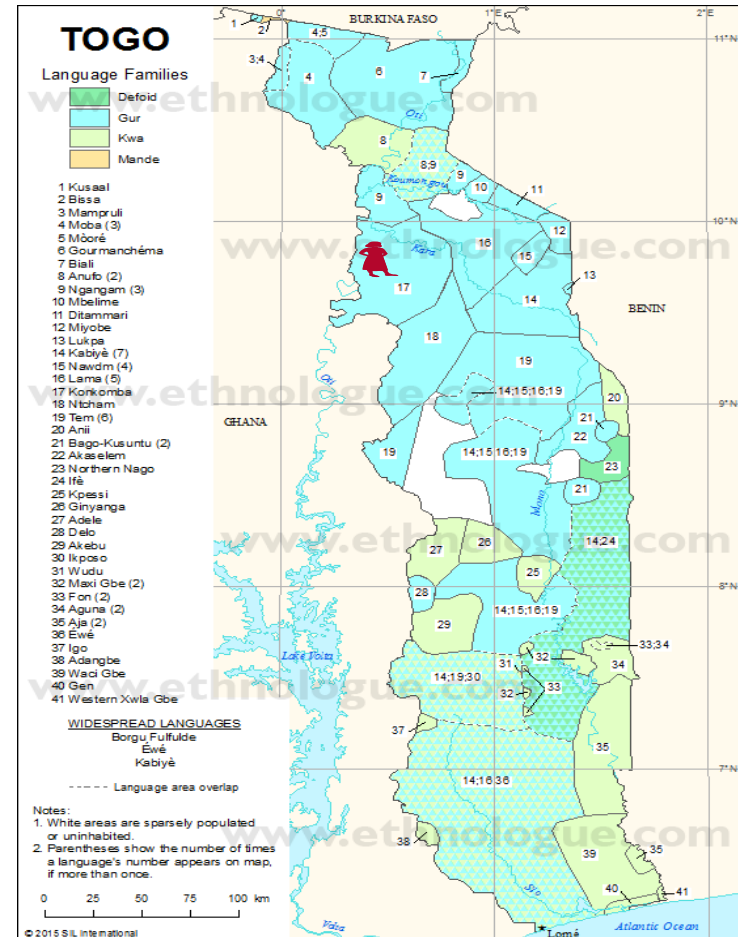Goethe Universität, Frankfurt am Main

23rd -25th February, 2022

1. Background to Likpakpaanl

1.1 Areal distribution of Likpakpaanl

❑ Likpakpaanl (Konkomba)- Gurma subgroup within the Oti-Volta branch of the North Central Mabia (Gur) languages (Manessy 1971; Naden 1989).

❑ Population: Ghana 1,033,000 (GSS, 2020), Togo, 108,000 (The Joshua project)

Source: SIL 2015

Key 🔴 :Likpakpaanl speakers

Source: SIL 2014

1.1 Likpakpaanl Clause Structure

❑ **SVO structure**. In the canonical clause structure (1a), the verb precedes the direct and indirect objects. Adverbials follow object arguments, as illustrated in (1b).

(1) a. **Pònípíír   bì   dàà   í-ŋuò.**
    P.   IPFV   buy   6-goat
    'Pònípíír is buying goats.'

   b. **Ì-tààn   gbààn   gà   ŋmɔ   tìmòòr   dìn.**
     4-horse   DEF   FUT   eat   14.grass   today
     'The horses will eat grass today.'

❑ Information-structural related constructions trigger the movement of elements out of their canonical positions

❑ Such A-bar movements license the spell-out of certain functional heads in the derivation such as Topic, Focus

Highlights of the talk

❑ **Observation**

Likpakpaanl wh-movement leaves a resumptive pronoun in case of subjects and leaves a trace when object wh-elements are moved.

❑ **Claims**

i. Wh-movement in Likpakpaanl leaves traces where possible.

ii. T has an EPP feature that requires the Spec-TP to always be overt. This leads to Spell-out of a resumptive pronoun (RP) in long-distance subject wh-movement.

Roadmap

Beyond this introduction, the rest of the presentation is structured as follows:

- Construction of simple wh-questions

- Long-distance wh-movement

- Evidence for long-distance movement of wh-questions

- Summary

2.1 Object wh-questions

❑ Object wh-phrases can occur either in-situ or ex-situ.

❑ In-situ object wh-constructions are unmarked (2a)

❑ Ex-situ object constructions are marked by movement to the left periphery and

projection of an overt focus head **lè** (2b)

(2) a. [$_{TP}$ **Mpòpììn** [$_{VP}$ **chùù**　　　**bà**　　[$_{PP}$ **lì-mùà-l**　　**nì**　]]]?

　　　　M.　　　　catch.PFV　　what　　　5-river-5　　LOC

　　　　　‘What has Mpòpììn caught in the river?’

b. [$_{FOCP}$ **Bà$_i$**　**lè**　　[$_{TP}$ **Mpòpììn**　[$_{VP}$ **chùù**　　　t_i　[$_{PP}$ **lì-mùà-l**　　**nì**]]]]?

　　　　what　FOC　　M.　　　　catch.PFV　　　　　5-river-5　　LOC

　　　　　‘What has Mpòpììn caught in the river?’

2. Simple wh-questions

2.2 Subject wh-questions

❑ Likpakpaanl SU wh-questions must not be marked by a focus marker.

❑ This suggests that SU wh-phrases in matrix clauses (3b) occur in-situ as shown by the lack of focus particle.

(3)   a.   [$_{TP}$ **John**   **nàn**   [$_{VP}$ **dàà**   **ì-nàà**   **gbààn**]].
               J.   PST   buy   4-cow   DEF
             'John bought the cows.'

     b.   [$_{TP}$ **Ŋmà**   (*__lè__)   **nàn**   [$_{VP}$ **dàà**   **ì-nàà**   **gbààn**]]?
            who   FOC   PST   buy   4-cow   DEF
            'Who bought the cows?'

❑ The wh-subject is in [Spec, TP] via movement from a predicate-internal position (Chomsky 1995).

2.3 Evidence for in-situ status of simple subject wh-questions

❑ Amaechi & Georgi (2019) use ATB movement and movement of coordinated wh-conjuncts to argue for a in-situ account of Igbo wh-subjects.

❑ ATB movement of object wh-phrases (4a) is possible since the two different gaps are assigned the same ACC case by their verbs.

❑ The wh-SU (4b) is ungrammatical though it obeys the **Parallelism Constraint (PC)** that requires ATB movement to take place from syntactically parallel positions. (Kasai 2004:181; Hein & Murphy, 2020).

(4) a. **Bà**$_i$ **lè**   **Wààpù**   **gèè** t_i **ààn**   **Mòkà**   **nàn** t_i ?

     what   FOC   W.   like.PFV   CONJ   M.   hate.PFV

     'What does Wààpù like and Mòkà hate?'

   b. *__Ɖmà__$_i$ **lè** t_i **gèè**   **bà**   **ààn** t_i **nàn**   **bà?**

     who   FOC   W.   like.PFV   what   CONJ   worry.PFV   what
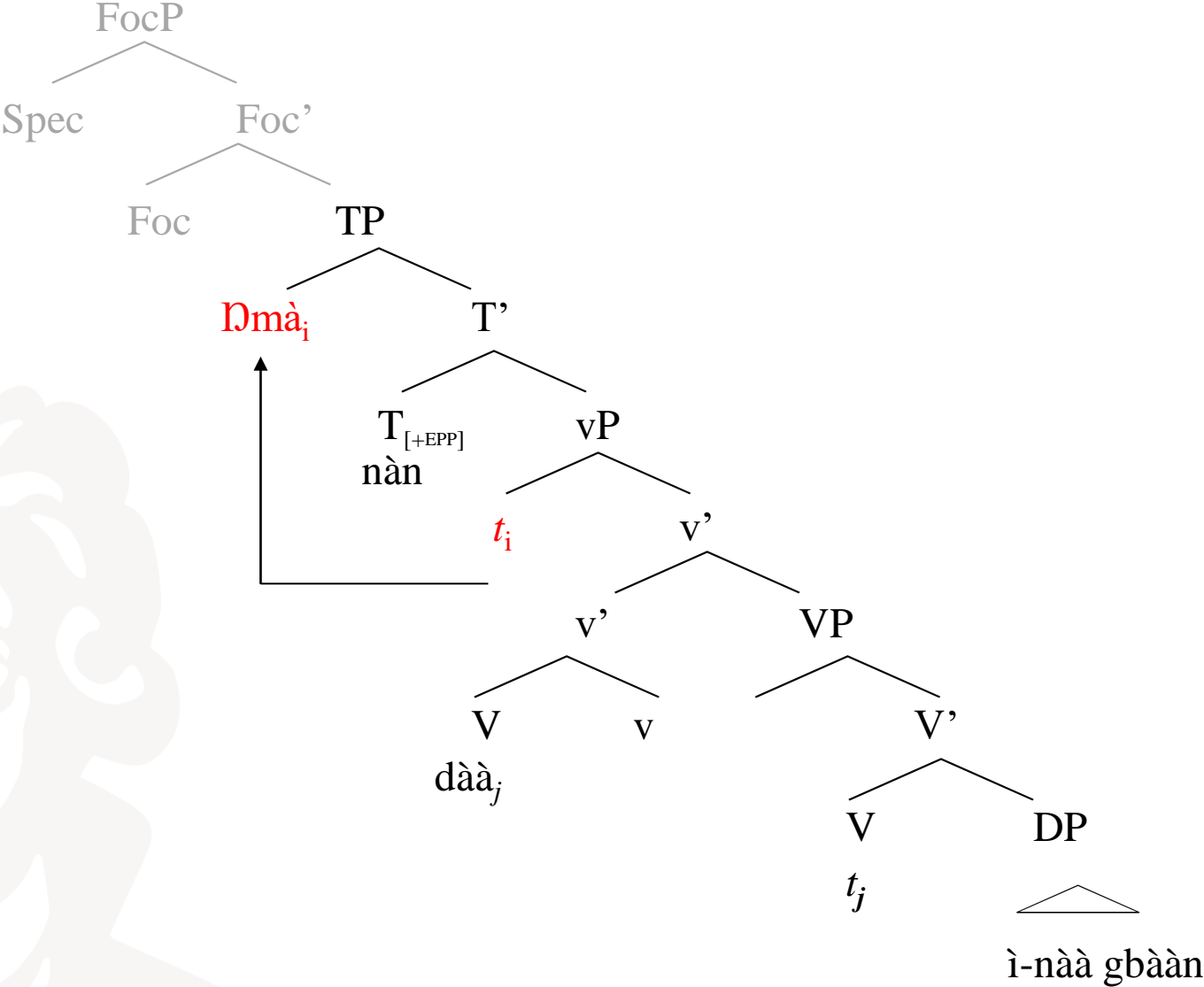
     Intended: 'Who likes what and hates what?'

❑ The ungrammaticality of (4b) is because Likpakpaanl wh-subjects cannot be moved out of Spec-TP in simple clauses.

2.3 An analysis of simple subject wh-questions

- ❑ I assume that the SU-wh phrase is base generated in vP and moves only to Spec-T for EPP reasons

- ❑ Syntactically, the EPP movement is evident since the subject precedes the tense marker.

- ❑ Movement of SU wh-phrase from Spec-TP to Spec-Foc is blocked by the EPP on T which overtly needs a DP element at all times.

- ❑ Once the EPP requirement on T is met no further movement occurs because there are no additional conditions to motivate movement of subject wh-phrase to FocP (Agbayani, 2000).

- ❑ The structure in (5) illustrates the syntax of subject wh-questions

(5)

FocP
- Spec
- Foc'
  - Foc
  - TP
    - Ŋmà$_i$
    - T'
      - T$_{[+EPP]}$ nàn
      - vP
        - t_i
        - v'
          - v'
            - V dàà$_j$
            - v
          - VP
            - V'
              - V t_j
              - DP
                - ì-nàà gbààn

3. Long-Distance wh-movement

3.1 Local embedded object and SU wh-questions

- ❑ Likpakpaanl embedded clauses are introduced by an obligatory overt C-head **ké**.
- ❑ Object wh-phrases can also undergo **local movement** in embedded clauses (6a) and Subject wh-phrases (6b) remain in the embedded Spec-TP
- ❑ Similar derivations were observed in object and subject wh-questions in matrix clauses

(6) a. [$_{TP}$ **Sànjà dàk** [$_{CP}$ **ké** [$_{FocP}$ **bà$_i$** *(**lè**) [$_{TP}$ **Amà gèè** *t_i*]]]]**?**
      S.   think.PFV   COMP   what FOC   A.   love.PFV
      'What does Sànjà think that Ama loves?'

   b. [$_{TP}$ **Sànjà lèn** [$_{CP}$ **ké** [$_{TP}$ **ŋmà** (***lè**) **gèè Amà**]]]?
      S.   say.PFV   COMP   who   FOC love.PFV A.
      Lit: 'Who does Sànjà say that loves Ama?'

3.2 Long-distance movement of wh-objects

❑ In long-disntance (LD) movement, **wh-objects** leave **traces** in their base positions (7)

❑ Such A-bar movement requires the displacement of the wh-phrase to the left periphery of the clause in Spec-FocP. (Rizzi, 1997; Sabel, 2000).

(7) a. [$_{FOCP}$ **Ɗmà$_i$** **lè** **Kàndò** **lèn** [$_{CP}$ t_i **ké** [$_{TP}$ **Wààjà** **gà** **tér** t_i]]]?

      who   FOC   K.   say.PFV   COMP   W.   FUT   help

      'Who did Kàndò say that Wààjà will help?'

b. [$_{FOCP}$ **Bà$_i$** **lè** **Wàpu** **dàk** [$_{CP}$ t_i **ké** [$_{TP}$ **Tàkàì** **kɔr** t_i]]]?

      what   FOC   W.   think.PFV   COMP   W.   slaughter.PFV

      'What does Wàpu think that Tàkài has slaughtered?'

❑ Long-distance movement of wh-objects involves successive cyclic movement of the wh-object (Chomsky, 2000).

❑ **Wh-subjects** leave an **obligatory resumptive** pronoun (RP) in the canonical position of the moved SU-wh phrase

❑ The RP shares the same number and animacy features with the moved subject wh-element (8) (Sells, 1984).

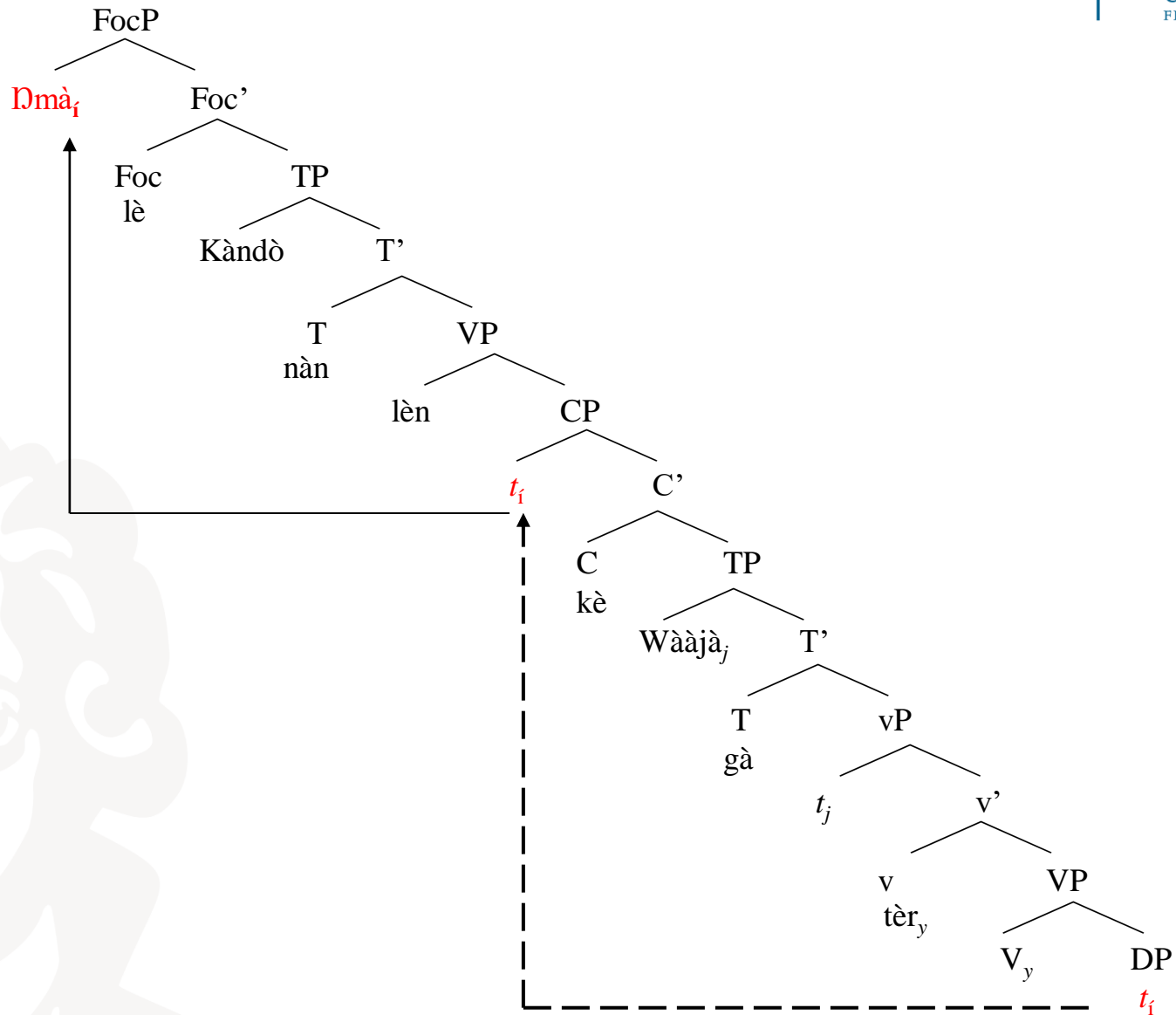❑ The RP co-references with its antecedent, which occurs in Spec-FocP of the matrix clause.

(8) a. [$_{FOCP}$ **Bà$_i$** **lè** [$_{TP}$ **Bínlù dàk** [$_{CP}$ t_i **kè** **nì$_i$/*t_i** **ŋmɔ** **ì-yùù** **gbàán**]]]?

     what FOC B. think.PFV COMP RP eat.PFV 4-millet DEF

     'What does Bínlù think that (it) has eaten the millet?'

b. [$_{FOCP}$ **Ŋmà$_i$** **lè** [$_{TP}$ **Kòfí lén** [$_{CP}$ t_i **kè** **ù$_i$/*t_i** **dàà** **chééché**]]]?

     who FOC K. say.PFV COMP RP buy.PFV 2a.bicycle

     'Who does Kofi say that (he) has bought a bicycle?'

c. [$_{FOCP}$ **Ŋmà-màm$_i$** **lè** [$_{TP}$ **Kòfí lén** [$_{CP}$ t_i **kè** **bì$_i$/*t_i** **dàà** **chééché**]]]?

     who-PL FOC K. say.PFV COMP RP buy.PFV 2a.bicycle

     'Who does Kofi say that (they) have bought a bicycle?'

3.3 Analysis of long-distance object and subject wh-questions

❑ The data show that whenever a wh-phrase is extracted in Likpakpaanl, it occupied Spec-FocP of the focus head **lè**.

❑ The movement of wh-phrases to Spec-FocP in the left periphery indicates movement.

❑ This extraction to Spec-FocP ensures that Rizzi (2006) **Focus Criterion (Foc-C)** which requires that a [Foc]-bearing element in a structure always occupies Spec-Foc is not violated.

❑ The Foc-C ensures that the moved wh-phrases in Likpakpaanl occupy the Spec-Foc & this triggers movement of wh-element to the specifier of FocP in the left periphery for full focus interpretation.

❑ After the movment to Spec-FocP **object wh-phrase** (9) leave a **trace** in the base position of while a **subject wh-phrase** (10) leaves a **resumptive pronoun** for EPP reasons.
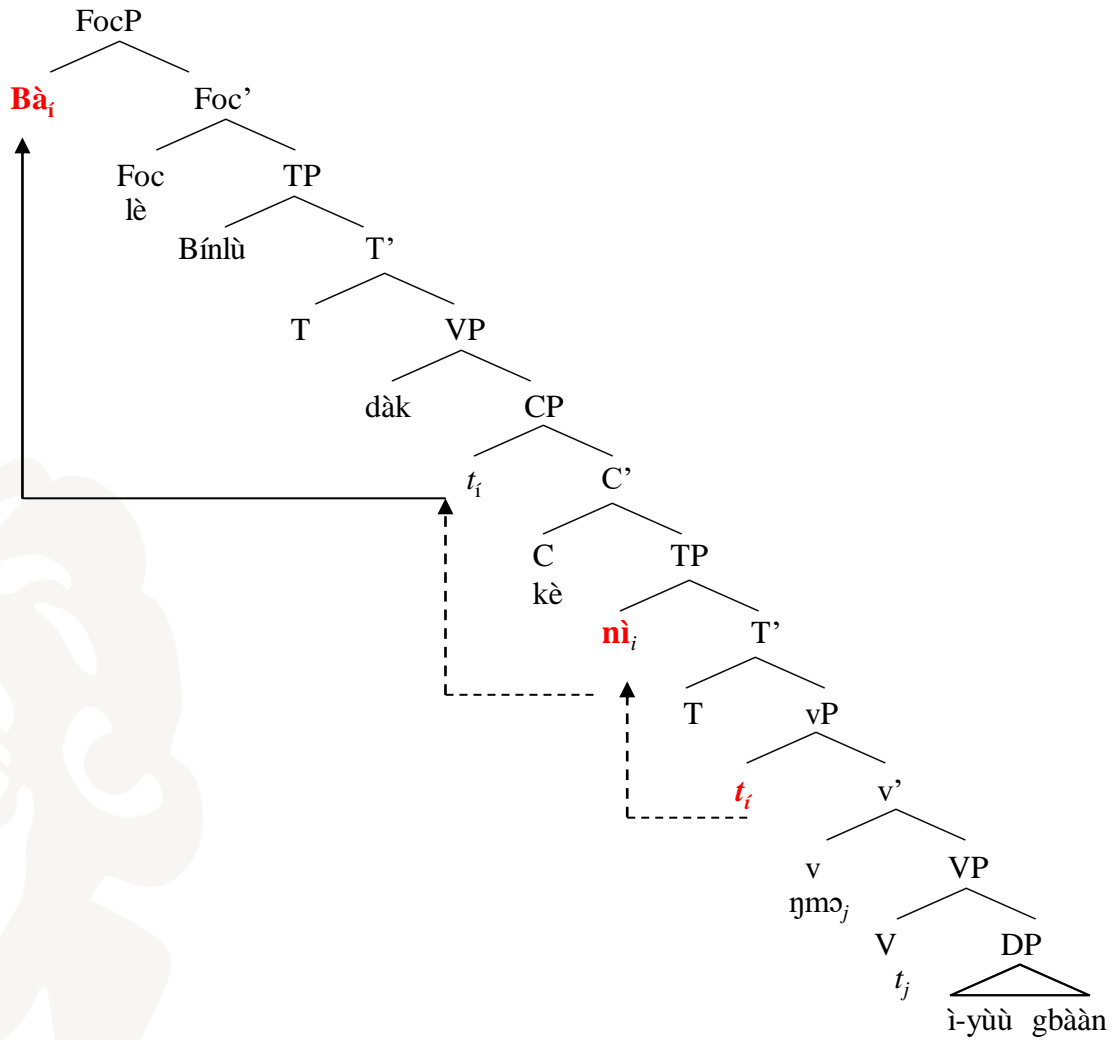
(9)

(10)

❑ Ross (1967) and subsequent works that followed have established a relation between resumption and islands (McCloskey, 2002).

❑ Ross notes that the adjunct island violation in (11a), is more acceptable if the dependency terminates in a resumptive pronoun (11b) (Ross 1967:433).

(11) a. *King Kong is a movie which$_i$ you'll laugh yourself sick [$_{CP}$ if you see t_i]

   b. King Kong is a movie which$_i$ you'll laugh yourself sick [$_{CP}$ if you see it$_i$]

❑ In the examples that follow, I demonstrate that resumption does not repair island violations in Likpakpaanl.

4. Evidence for long-distance movement of wh-questions

❑ Resumptives in Likpakpaanl are island sensitive and do not repair islands (see, Koopman & Sportiche, 1986, Issah, 2020 for similar observations in Vata & Dagbani respectively)

❑ This suggests that, in Likpakpaanl resumptives are the result of movement.

❑ A-bar dependencies with both resumptives (12a) and traces and (13) are island-sensitive.

Complex NP Constraint

(12) a.*[$_{FocP}$ **Ŋmà$_i$** **lè** **Chàtí tùk** [$_{DP}$ **tìbɔŋùnlkààr** [$_{CP}$ **ké** [$_{TP}$ **ù$_i$** **ŋùn**]]]?
　　　　who　FOC　C.　tell. PFV　　rumour　　　COMP　RP　hear.PFV
　　　Intended: 'Who has Chatí told a rumour that he heard?'

b.* [$_{FocP}$ **Bà$_i$** **lè** **Amà ŋméé** [$_{DP}$ **kí-gbààŋ** [$_{CP}$ **ké** [$_{TP}$ **ù-bò** **kàrn** **nì$_i$**/t_i]]]?
　　　　what　FOC　A.　write.PFV　2-book　　COMP　1-child　read.PFV　RP
　　　Intended: 'What has Ama written a book that a child has read (it)?'

Coordinate Structure Constraint

(13) a. *[$_{FocP}$ **Ŋmà$_i$**   **lè**   [$_{TP}$ **Mpópíín**   **gèè**   [$_{DP}$ **Wàjà**   **ní**   **ù**/t_i]]]]**?**

           what   FOC   M.   love   W.   CONJ   RP

        Intended: 'Who does Mpópíín love Wàjà and (him/her)?'

  b. *[$_{FocP}$ **Bà$_i$**   **lè**   [$_{TP}$ **Mpópíín**   [$_{VP}$ **kpà**   [$_{DP}$ **ì-ŋùò**   **ní**   **nì**/t_i]]]] **?**

           what   FOC   M.   have   4-goat   CONJ   RP

        Intended: 'What does Mpópíín have goats and it?'

❑ The resumption strategy in Likpakpaanl wh-movement does not eliminate island constraints as has been argued in the literature (Rizzi, 1990, Ross, 1967)

❑ Adopting the standard assumption of Ross (1967) that the presence of island effects is evidence of movement, suggesting that the use of resumptive pronouns in Likpakpaanl entails a movement derivation.

[wh-phrase$_i$ ***lé*** [$_{TP}$ . . . [$_{CP}$ ***kè*** [$_{TP}$ RP$_i$ [$_{VP}$]]]]

5. Summary

❑ Likpakpaanl wh-phrases (Subject & non-subject) move to Spec-FocP to satsisfy the **Focus criterion**: a focus feature on the Foc^o requires the moved wh-phrase in its specifier.

❑ There are two reflexes that accompany long-distance wh-movements; use of a

- o a **resumptive pronoun**
- o a **trace**

— in the canonical position

❑ The use of resumption and trace in Likpakpaanl is mutually exclusive: A-bar movement of wh-objects leave a trace while that of subjects leave a RP.

❑ **Resumption** is triggered to satisfy an **EPP feature** on T requiring that the Spec-TP position should be filled with a DP element at all times

❑ The RP is c-commanded by its antecedent (the moved wh-element) from which it gets full interpretation from and also shares number and animacy features.

References

- Amaechi, M. and Georgi, D. (2019) 'Quirks of subject (non-)extraction in Igbo', *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics*, 4(69), pp. 1–36.

- Chomsky, N. (2000) 'Minimalist inquiries: the framework', in Martin, R., Michaels, D., and Uriagereka, J. (eds) *Step by step: essays on minimalist syntax in honor of Howard Lasnik.* Cambridge: MIT Press, MA, pp. 89–155.

- Hein, J. and Murphy, A. (2020) 'Case matching and syncretism in ATB-dependencies*', 74 (317633480), pp. 254–302.

- Rizzi, L. (2006) 'On the form of chains: Criterial positions and ECP effects', *Current Studies in Linguistics Series*, 42, p. 97.

- Rizzi, L. (1997) 'The fine structure of the left periphery', in Haegeman, L. (ed.) *Elements of grammar.* Dordrecht: Kluwer, pp. 281–337.

- Ross, J. R. (1967) *Constraints on Variables in Syntax.* PhD Dissertation. MIT.

- Sells, P. (1984) *Syntax and semantics of resumptive pronouns.* University of Massachusetts Amherst.