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On the focus strategies in Akan

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Abstract
This paper examines the focus strategies in Akan, a Kwa language of the Niger-Congo family, within the framework of the Minimalist Programme (MP). The aim is to revisit the two focus strategies in Akan (i.e., *ex-situ* and *in-situ* focus strategies). Akan focus constructions have received considerable attention in the extant literature; however, none of these works paid particular attention to the *in-situ* focus strategy attested in the language. Also, linguists working on Akan focus constructions hardly agree on what the focus markers in the language are. The data for the study were collected through introspective approach and informant method. With ample and illuminating data, the study revealed that both the *in-situ* and *ex-situ* focus strategies are attested in Akan. In addition, it was established that the particles *nà*, *né*, and *á* can be considered as the real focus markers in Akan. However, the particle *dèὲ* cannot be considered as a focus marker, contrary to the claims by some of the linguists working on Akan focus constructions.

Keywords: Akan, focus strategies, *in-situ*, *ex-situ*, focus markers, the Minimalist Programme

Public Interest Statement
This paper contributes to the discussion on the focus strategies in Akan. It seeks to bring to light the role that tone plays in Akan focus constructions for both the *in-situ* and *ex-situ* focus strategies in the language. It also adds to the ongoing debate on the focus markers in the language. The findings will no doubt suggest a revision of the curriculum for Akan, in terms of the functions of tones in focus constructions.

1.   Introduction

Languages have a way of emphasizing the particular aspect of the message that they intend to highlight or give prominence to. According to Ameka (2010, p. 141), "grammars of natural languages offer their speakers various constructional possibilities to express the same basic information content." And depending on the value judgment of the speaker, parts of the information may be highlighted through various means. One of the ways through which a speaker can package information is by means of focus constructions. In Akan, this is realizable through the use of overt focus markers like *nà* and *né*, as well as the use of prosody. Although Akan focus constructions have received considerable attention in the literature, some issues remain unresolved. A typical example is the controversies over the focus markers in the language. For instance, while Boadi (1974) refers to *nà* as the 'exclusive' focus marker and *dèὲ* as the 'non-exclusive' or 'potentially inclusive' marker; Saah (1998) refers to them as contrastive and non-contrastive markers respectively. Marfo (2005) also considers *dèὲ* as a focus marker but he is quick to add that the *dèὲ*-construction is equivalent to the English topic construction. On the other hand, Dakubu (1992) is of the view that *nà* is rather a topic marker in Akan. However, Bearth (1999) considers *nà* as a focus marker but he disagrees that *dèὲ* is a focus marker in Akan. To him, *dèὲ* should rather be considered as a topic marker, or at best, as 'a focus topicalization marker'. Given the ambiguity or fuzziness in the extant literature on the characterization of a focus marker in Akan, this paper seeks to examine these markers in order to ascertain the true status of each of the focus markers in the language. Apart from the use of the above-mentioned focus particles, there are other ways, in Akan, by which a constituent in a sentence can be given prominence over and above other surrounding constituents. For instance, by using the particles *né*, *á*, and *nì*, one can bring a constituent into focus. In addition, we can use prosody to show focus in Akan; yet, these forms have not been given much attention in the existing literature.

The paper is divided into seven (6) sections. Sections one, two, and three serve as preliminaries. Sections four and five present the issues on Akan focus constructions while section six concludes the paper.

2.   The Akan Language

Akan is a general name for a cluster of several distinct dialects spoken by the Akan people. The dialects include Akuapem (Akwapen), Asante, Akyem, Fante (Mfantse), Wassa, Bono (Brong), Kwahu, Akwamu, Assin, Twifo, Denkyira, Agona, Bremang, and Adanse (Dolphyne, 1988, p. xi). These dialects are broadly categorized into two: Twi and Fante (Dolphyne, 1988). Although the name 'Twi' is usually used in the literature to refer to the Asante and Akuapem dialects, it is actually an umbrella term for all the non-Fante dialects of the language. The Fante dialect also has identifiable sub-dialects including Gomua, Ekumfi, Nkusukum, Iguae, Breman and (sometimes) Agona (Osam, 2004). Three of these dialects, namely Akuapem-Twi, Asante-Twi and Fante have achieved literary status. Each has an orthography which reflects the peculiarities of that particular dialect, even though the dialects are mutually intelligible (Dolphyne, 1988, p. xi). Data for the study came from the Asante-Twi dialect; however, there was an instance whereby data from Akuapem-Twi and Fante were used for comparison.

3.   Defining Focus

Focus has been defined in various ways by various authors. As opined by Sornicola (1999, p. 376), there are no all-encompassing definitions for *focus* in the literature. This is because the term covers a whole spectrum of phonology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. Thus, a single definition may not be able to capture everything about focus. Nonetheless, while some of the definitions place much emphasis on 'newness' or 'unshared' information (see Jackendoff, 1972; Lambrecht, 1994; Kroeger, 2004; Ellis and Boadi, 1969), others are of the view that the focused elements are the most salient aspect of the information the speaker intends to put across (see Halliday, 1967; Eaton, 2002; Dik, 1997;

Ameka, 2010). Jackendoff (1972, p. 230) divides a sentence into two, depending on the information status it contains; *presupposition* and *focus*. Presupposition refers to the information in the sentence that is assumed to be shared by the speaker and the hearer, while focus refers to the information in the sentence that is assumed not to be shared by them. Lambrecht (1994, p. 206) also considers focus as "the new knowledge hitched to the topic post". In other words, it is the new information conveyed about the topic. According to Kroeger (2004) focus is the essential piece of new information that is carried by a sentence. And to Ellis and Boadi (1969, p. 7),

> "part of the information being conveyed is new (i.e. the focus/theme), and at the same time the speaker takes it for granted that some of the content is known to the hearer, or, it is assumed that an event involving an unspecified entity occurred (i.e. background information/presupposition/given/theme)".

All the definitions above relate focus to what the speaker considers to be new or partially new to the hearer, or the information that the speaker assumes not to be shared by him/her and the hearer. Contrary to the above definitions, Eaton (2002, p. 22) opines that it is inaccurate to describe focus as new information. To her, focus does not necessarily carry information that is new to the discourse (Eaton 2002, p.18). Likewise, Halliday (1967, p. 202) sees focus constructions as semantically different from non-focus sentences, in that focus sentences contain "points of prominence within the message". Halliday (1967) expresses the view that focus is used to describe the "part of a message which the speaker wishes to be interpreted as informative". This part of the message is not necessarily new information, but the "speaker presents it as not being recoverable from preceding discourse". Likewise, Dik (1997, p. 326) makes the following assertion:

> The focal information in a linguistic expression is that information which is relatively the most important or salient in the given communicative setting, and considered by S[peaker] to be most essential for A[ddressee] to integrate into his pragmatic information".

Dik's (1997) definition could imply that in focus constructions, it is the most prominent or salient information that is highlighted. In this paper, we will adopt Dik's definition, but also agree with Ameka (2010) that what is salient may involve a contrast or newness, but focal information need not be entirely new.

4.   The Focus Markers in Akan

As indicated earlier, there has not been any consensus on what the focus markers in Akan are. Thus, in this section, we are going to examine the status of each of the 'supposed' focus markers based on their role, structure and tone patterns; since tone plays a vital role in Akan focus constructions. Although the particle *nà* is the most frequently used focus marker in Akan, *né, á* and *dèè* have also been identified as focus markers in the language (see Boadi, 1974; Saah, 1988; Marfo, 2005). It appears that the particles *nà*, *né* and *á* have the same function, and thus, their constructions could be used interchangeably. For instance, any of the sentences in (2) can appropriately answer the question in (1).

(1)   Hwáń nà   ɔ̀-bá-à   há.
        who   FOC RP-come-PST here
        'Who came here?'

(2) a. Àfúá nà   ɔ̀-bá-à   há.

  Afua FOC RP-come-PST here
  'Afua is the one who came here.'

  b. Àfúá á.
  Afua FOC
  'It is Afua.'

  c. Àfúá né   ònípá â ɔ̀-bá-à   há.
  Afua be.FOC person REL RP-come-PST here
  'Afua is the person who came here.'

Each of the sentences in (2) indicates that *Afua* is the (only) person who went to the place in question. The *na*-construction, *ne*-construction, and *a*-construction in (2a), (2b) and (2c) respectively have the same meaning (semantically), although they have different structures and different focus markers. In (2a), it could be observed that the sentence begins with the constituent in focus, followed by the particle *na*, then the TP. The distribution of the particle *a*, on the other hand, is such that when it is used, the entire TP is covertly expressed as depicted in (2b). For the *ne*-construction, the sentence begins with the element in focus, followed by the verb 'to be' *ne* (which also serves as a focus marker), then a generic DP, which has the same referent as the DP in focus, then the relative clause introduced by the relativizer *a* as portrayed in (2c). The structure of the *ne*-construction appears more like SVO, with the constituent in focus as the subject. Thus, *ne* can be considered as a verb with a focus feature. This is similar to the particle *ni* in Yoruba (see Awobuluyi, 1978, 1992; Yusuf, 1990; Arokoyo, 2013). In fact, the fact that the verb *ne* usually admits the emphatic/strong pronoun at the subject position instead of the usual weak form indicates that the subject is in focus in such constructions, as depicted in (4c). It is worth noting that the verb *ne* has a non-focused variant, *yɛ* in the language. And to indicate that an element is in focus in the *yɛ*-construction, the particle *na* has to be introduced. The sentences in (3) and (4) throw more light on this assertion:

  (3) a. Pàpá nó   yɛ̀ ɔ̀héné wɔ̀ Èsáásé.
      man DET be chief at Esaase
      'The man is a chief at Esaase.'
    b. Pàpá nó   nà ɔ̀-yɛ́ ɔ̀héné wɔ̀ Èsáásè.
      man DET FOC RP-be chief at Esaase
      'It is the man who is the chief at Esaase.'

    c. Pàpá nó né   ɔ̀héné wɔ̀ Èsáásé.
      man DET be.FOC chief at Esaase
      'The man is the chief at Esaase.'

In example (3a) 'the man' is said to be a chief in a town called *Esaase*. It does not, however, exclude him as the only chief of the town in question. In fact, (3a) does not give any information as to whether or not he is the only chief in the town. Conversely, (3b) and (3c) indicate that *he* is the only chief of the town. There is no semantic differences between the meaning of (3b) and that of (3c); except that when the verb *ne* is used, the focus marker *na* cannot be used, and vice versa. This implies that while (3a) is not a focus construction, (3b) and (3c) are; and the pronominal system of Akan supports this assertion as indicated in (4).

(4) a. ɔ̀-yɛ̀   ɔ̀héné wɔ̀ Èsáásé.
       3SG-be chief at   Esaase
       'He is a chief at Esaase.'

   b. ɔ̀nó nà   ɔ̀-yɛ́   ɔ̀héné wɔ̀ Èsáásé.
      3SG FOC RP-be chief   at Esaase
      'It is he who is the chief at Esaase.'

   c. ɔ̀nó né   ɔ̀héné wɔ̀ Èsáásé.
      3SG be.FOC chief at   Esaase
      'HE is the chief at Esaase.'

It can be observed from (4) that while the non-focused subject takes the weak pronoun (i.e. the proclitic ɔ-), the focused pronoun in (4b & c) is the emphatic/strong form **ɔno**. This is an indication that indeed *ne* is inherently a focus indicator. There is another particle, **nı́ (or nı́é)**, that functions like the particle *ne*; yet, it has not been mentioned in the existing literature. This particle has very limited distribution in Akan. It behaves more like an intransitive verb. In other words, like the particle *a*, it requires no complement; and it always follows the constituent in focus. It is usually used to signify that the constituent in focus is closer to the interlocutors; thus, the speaker can point to it. Let us consider the examples in (5):

(5) a. Enti Èsáásé !héné nà ɔ̀-té   hɔ́   nó?
        Q Esaase chief FOC RP-sit there FCP
        'Is it the king of Esaase who is sitting there?'

   b. Dààbí, ɔ̀nó nà   ɔ̀-té   há   nó.
      no   3SG FOC 3SG-sit here FCP
      'No, he is the one sitting here.'

   c. Dààbí, ɔ̀nó ní.
      no   3SG be.this.FOC
      'No, here HE is.'

The sentences in 5 would arise when (in a gathering, for instance) one of the interlocutors points to someone and asks if he is the king of a town called Esaase, and the hearer points to another person, indicating that that person is rather the king of the town. In that context, any of the answers in (5b & c) can appropriately answer the question in (5a). We can also see that the particle *ní* can admit the citation form of the pronoun, indicating that it has a focus property in it. Apart from the above particles, the particle *dèè* has also been considered as one of the focus markers in Akan (see Boadi, 1974; Saah, 1998; Marfo, 2005). It has a similar structure like the *nà*-construction as portrayed in (6).

 (6) a. Kòfí bɔ̀-ò   Á!má.
        Kofi beat-PST Ama
        'Kofi beat Ama.'

    b. Kòfí_i dèɛ̀ ɔ̀_i-bò-ò   Á!má.
      Kofi FOC RP-beat-PST Ama
      'As for Kofi, he beat Ama.'

    c. Á!má_i dèɛ̀ Kòfí bò-ò   nò_i.
      Ama   FOC Kofi beat-PST RP
      'As for Ama, Kofi beat her.'

    d. Bó   dèɛ̀ Kòfí bò-ò   Á!má.
      beat FOC Kofi beat-PST Ama
      'As for beating, Kofi beat Ama.'

Like the *na*-construction, the *dèɛ̀*-construction begins with the pre-posed constituent followed by the particle *dèɛ̀*, then the TP. We can also see that the subject, the nominalized verb, and the object can all be pre-posed, followed by the particle in question. Nonetheless, *deɛ* is quite different from the other focus particles mentioned above in terms of its role and function. For instance, the *dèɛ̀*-construction cannot give an appropriate answer to the question in (1) (restated here as (7)).

    (7) a. Hwán_i nà   ɔ́_i-bá-à   há?
        who   FOC RP-come-PST here
        'Who came here?'

      b. #Kòfí_i dèɛ̀ ɔ̀_i-bà-à   há.
        Kofi FOC RP-come-PST here
        'As for Kofi, he came here.'

The question in (7a) is seeking to identify the specific person who went to the place in question, but (7b) is just giving us information about what *Kofi* did. It does not indicate that *it is Kofi who went to the place*. Therefore, it cannot be an appropriate answer to the question in (7a). (7b) would be appropriate for a question like *what did Kofi (also) do*; which implies that someone did something, and the speaker wants to find out about what Kofi did too. In fact, (7b) rather looks more like a topic construction than a focus construction in Akan. This gives credence to Marfo's (2005) remark that the *dèɛ̀*-construction is equivalent to topic construction in English (although he treated it as a type of focus construction in Akan). Also, structurally, the *dèɛ̀*-construction is quite different from the other focus constructions. For instance, even though each of the focus constructions in (2) can be converted to a cleft sentence by introducing an expletive and a verb *to be*, the *dèɛ̀*-construction cannot, as exemplified in (8).

    (8) a. ɛ̀-yɛ̀   Àfúá nà ɔ̀-bá-à   há.
        IMP-be Afua FOC RP-come-PST here
        'It is Afua who came here.'

      b. ɛ̀-yɛ̀   Àfúá á.
        IMP-be Afua FOC
        'It is Afua.'

      c. ɛ̀-yɛ̀   Àfúá né   ònípá â   ɔ̀-bá-à   há.
        IMP-be Afua be.FOC person REL RP-come-PST here

'It is Afua who is the person who came here.'

    d. *ɛ̀-yɛ̀   Àfúá dèɛ̀ ɔ̀-bà-à   há.
       IMP-be Afua FOC RP-come-PST here
       'It is Afua who came here.'

In addition, the only way focus constructions (especially, the *ex-situ* types) can be negated in Akan is by resorting to clefting (Abrefa, 2018). In other words, when negating an Akan focus construction, it is the verb of the cleft sentence (i.e. the verb *to be*) that is negated instead of the main verb. Thus, the sentences in (9a-c) can be the negative counterparts for the focus sentences in (2a-c) respectively, as well as the cleft sentences in (8a-c) respectively. But in negating the *dèɛ̀*-construction, it is the main verb that is negated as exemplified in (9e).

    (9) a. ɛ̀-ǹ-yɛ́   Àfúá nà ɔ̀-bá-à   há.
         IMP-NEG-be Afua FOC RP-come-PST here
         'It is not Afua who came here.'

       b. ɛ̀-ǹ-yɛ́   Àfúá á.
         IMP-NEG-be Afua FOC
         'It is not Afua.'

       c. ɛ̀-ǹ-yɛ́   Àfúá né   ònípá â ɔ̀-bá-à   há.
         IMP-NEG-be Afua be.FOC person REL RP-come-PST here
         'It is not Afua who is the person who came here.'

       d. * ɛ̀-ǹ-yɛ́   Àfúá dèɛ̀ ɔ̀-bà-à   há.
          IMP-be Afua FOC RP-come-PST here
          'It is not Afua who came here.'

       e. Àfúá dèɛ̀ ɔ̀-à-m̀-b-à   há.
         Afua FOC RP- PST-NEG-come here
         'As for Afua, she didn't come here.'

In addition, prosodically, the *deɛ*-construction differs from the *na* and *ne* constructions. For instance, there is a floating high tone associated with the Akan focus constructions. And depending on the dialect in question, it can dock on the first syllable of the verb or the resumptive pronoun at the subject position (Abrefa, 2018). In other words, for the *na* and *ne* constructions, irrespective of the underlying tones of the verb, the first syllable is said on a high tone in the Asante-Twi dialect. In the Akuapem-Twi and Fante dialects, it is the tone of the resumptive pronoun that changes from low to high. However, this is not the case with the *deɛ*-construction. For the *deɛ*-construction, there is no floating high tone that docks on any of the syllables mentioned above; the tones of the verb remain the same as the non-focus constructions as depicted in (10) through (12).

    (10) a. ɔ̀-bà-à   há.
         3SG-come-PST here
         'S/he came here.'

       b. ɔ̀nó nà   ɔ̀-**bá**-à   há.
         3SG FOC RP-come-PST here

'S/he is the one who came here.'

    c. ɔ̀nó né   nèà   ɔ̀-**bá**-à   há.
      3SG be.FOC the.one RP-come-PST here
      'S/he is the one who came here.'

    d. ɔ̀nó dèɛ̀ ɔ̀-**bà**-à   há.
      3SG FOC RP-come-PST here
      'As for her/him, s/he came here.'

It can be observed from (10) that while the *deɛ*-construction maintains the tones of the basic sentence in (10a), the focus constructions (i.e. both the *na*-construction and the *ne*-construction) change the tone of the first syllable of the verb from low to high. Let us compare what happens in Asante-Twi to what happens in Akuapem-Twi and Fante.

(11) a. ɔ̀-bá-à   há.
      3SG-come-PST here
      'S/he came here.'

    b. ɔ̀nó nà ɔ́-bá-à   há.
      3SG FOC RP-come-PST here
      'S/he is the one who came here.'

    c. ɔ̀nó né   nèà   ɔ́-bá-à   há.
      3SG be.FOC the.one RP-come-PST here
      'S/he is the one who came here.'

    d. ɔ̀nó dè   ɔ̀-bá-à   há.
      3SG FOC RP-come-PST here
      'As for her/him, s/he came here.'

(12) a. ɔ̀-bá-à   há.
      3SG-come-PST here
      'S/he came here.'

    b. ɔ́nó nà ɔ́-bà-à   há.
      3SG FOC RP-come-PST here
      'S/he is the one who came here.'

    c. ɔ́nó né   dzà   ɔ́-bá-à   há.
      3SG be.FOC the.one RP-come-PST here
      'S/he is the one who came here.'

    d. ɔ́nó dzè ɔ̀-bá-à   há.
      3SG FOC RP-come-PST here
      'As for her/him, s/he came here.'

The examples in (11) are from Akuapem-Twi while those in (12) are from Fante. In both Akuapem and Fante, it can be observed that the resumptive pronoun (RP) is said on a high tone in the *na* and *ne*-

constructions, but for the *de/dze*-construction, it is said on a low tone. In addition to the tonal differences mentioned above, usually when a pronoun occurs at the object position in a focus construction, the pronoun is said on high tone(s), but they are usually said on low tone(s) in the *deɛ*-construction as portrayed in (13); another indication that *deɛ* is different from the focus markers.

(13) a. Kòfí hùnù-ù yɛ̀ǹ.
   Kofi see-PST 3SG
   'Kofi saw us.'

   b. Kòfí nà ɔ̀-húnù-ù yɛ́ń.
   Kofi FOC RP-see-PST 3PL
   'Kofi is the one who saw us.

   c. Kòfí né   òbí   â   ɔ̀-húnù-ù yɛ́ń.
   Kofi be.FOC someone REL RP-see-PST 3PL
   'Kofi is the one who saw us'

   d. Kòfí dèɛ̀ ɔ̀-hùnù-ù yɛ̀ǹ.
   Kofi PART RP-see-PST 3PL
   'As for Kofi, he saw us.'

(14) a. Àfúá bo$-o$ me$.
   Afua beat-PST 3SG
   'Afua beat me.'

   b. Àfúá nà ɔ̀-bo@-o$ mé.
   Afua FOC RP-see-PST 3PL
   'Afua is the one who beat me.'

   c. Àfúá né   òbí   â   ɔ̀-bo@-o$ mé.
   Afua be.FOC someone REL RP-beat-PST 1SG
   'Afua is the one who beat me'

   d. Àfúá dèɛ̀ ɔ̀-bo$-o$ me$.
   Afua PART RP-see-PST 3PL

   'As for Afua she beat me.'

Due to the differences in the role, structure and tone patterns between the *deɛ*-construction and the focus constructions, we cannot consider the particle *deɛ* as having the same status as the particles *na*, *a*, *ne* and *ni*. In fact, the particle *deɛ* behaves more like a topic marker since it is usually used to comment on 'given information'. We shall therefore agree with Bearth (1999) that *deɛ* is not a focus marker in Akan. This conclusion leaves us with four complementary focus particles in Akan: *na*, *a*, *ne* and *ni*. Having identified the focus particles in Akan, let us now consider the focus strategies.

5.   The Focus Strategies in Akan

Cross-linguistically, two types of focus strategies have been identified in the literature: *ex-situ* and *in-situ* focus strategies (Ameka, 2010). The *ex-situ* strategy involves overt movement of the focus constituent but the *in-situ* strategy does not. Although what constitutes focus construction in Akan has been highlighted by different authors, most of the works on Akan focus constructions concentrate on the *ex-situ* focus strategy. Drubig (2000, p.4) states that Akan has a focus construction in which the focused constituent **obligatorily** (emphasis, ours) occurs in the left-peripheral position and is followed by the focus particle *nà*. Also, Kobele and Torrence (2006, p. 164) opine that focus in Akan is morphosyntactically marked by the presence of *na* in the left periphery of CP. It is obvious from the above definitions that focus in Akan is linked to the *ex-situ* movement (see also, Boadi, 1974 and Saah, 1988 for similar analysis). However, data at our disposal suggest that both strategies are attested in

Akan. Each of the strategies is discussed in the subsequent sub-sections.

5.1 The *ex-situ* Focus Strategy

As opined by Ameka (2010), the left periphery positions or pre-core positions of the clause are used for special purposes including marking focus; and this is evident in Akan as well. In Akan, usually the constituent in focus is placed at the sentence-initial position, followed by the focus marker, then the TP. In other words, the focus constituent is usually extracted from its canonical position and placed at the left periphery, followed by the focus marker. Theoretically, the focused constituent becomes the specifier of the functional head (F), and the TP becomes its complement. The most frequently focused constituent in Akan, like most other languages, is the Determiner Phrase (DP). The DP at the subject, object and adjunct positions can all be focused *ex-situ*. Apart from the DP, the nominalized verb as well as the post-positional phrase can also be focused ex-situ as exemplified in (15) and (16).

(15) a. Pàpá nó tèá-à   Yàẁ   ànɔpá   nó.
man DET shout-PST Yaw   morning DET

'The man disciplined Yaw in the morning.'

  b. Pàpá nó$_i$ **nà** ɔ́$_i$-téá-à   Yàẁ   ànɔpá   nó.
man DET FOC RP-shout-PST Yaw   morning DET
'It is the man who disciplined Yaw in the morning.'

  c. Tèá   nà   pàpá nó téá-à   Yàẁ   ànɔpá   nó.
shout FOC man DET shout-PST Yaw   morning DET
'The man (just) disciplined Yaw in the morning.'

  d. Yàẁ$_i$ **nà** **pàpá nó téá-à**   nó$_i$ ànɔpá   nó.
Yaw   FOC man DET shout-PST RP   morning DET
'It is Yaw whom the man disciplined in the morning.'

  e. Ànɔpá   nó nà pàpá nó téá-à   Yàẁ.
morning DET FOC man DET shout-PST Yaw
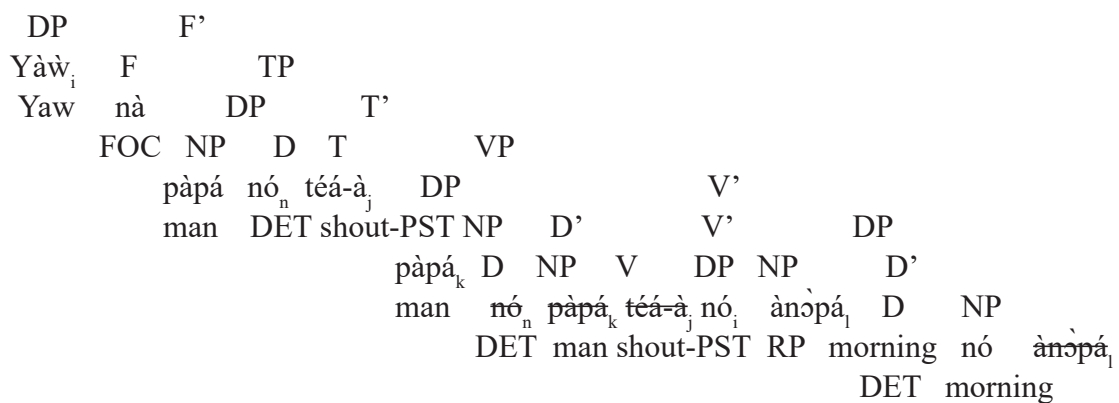'It is in the morning that the man disciplined Yaw.'

(16) a. Kòfí tè   dùá nó ásé.

Kofi sit.STAT tree DET under
'Kofi is sitting under the tree.'

  b. dùá nó ásé   nà Kòfí té.
tree DET under FOC Kofi sit.STAT
'It is under the tree that Kofi is sitting.'

  c. dùá nó nà Kòfí té   á!sé.
tree DET FOC Kofi sit.STAT under
'It is the tree that Kofi is sitting under.'

Example (15a) is a non-focus construction while (14b-e) are the focus constructions. The subject, nominalized verb, object, and adjunct are the focused constituents in (14b), (14c), (14d) and (14e) respectively. We can observe from (14b & d) that the canonical positions of the subject and object have been filled by resumptive pronouns, but the adjunct position is gapped, as seen in (14e). The reason is that, in Akan, when a constituent moves from an argument position, its canonical position is obligatorily filled with a resumptive pronoun (overtly or covertly); however, if a constituent moves from an adjunct

position, its canonical position is not filled. Likewise, (15a) is the non-focus construction while (15b & c) are the focus constructions. In (15b), we can observe that the entire PP has been extracted to the focus position. However, in (15c), it is only the oblique that has been pre-posed; leaving the head of the PP stranded at the original position. As can be realized from (14) and (15), all the constituents in focus have been pre-posed, followed by the focus particle. Thus, the basic sentence structure has been altered in all the focus constructions. They have changed from SVO to FOC$_{constituent}$ FOC$_{marker}$ SVO.
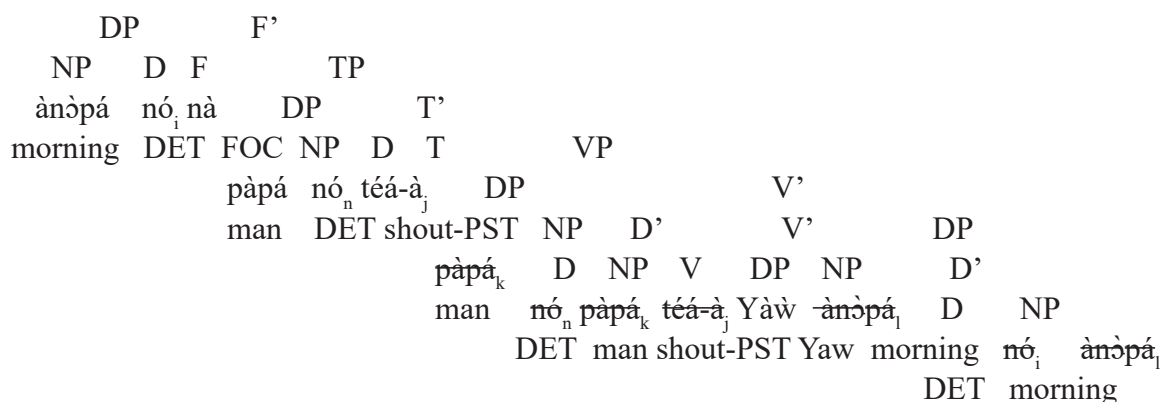
In terms of their meanings, (15a) for instance, does not add any pragmatic information about the incident. The only possible meaning we get from (15a) is that *the man* (that is, the actor) *disciplined Yaw* (the patient) in the morning. Conversely, apart from the basic denotative meaning we get from the construction in (15b), the sentence also connotes that the man did not discipline any other person apart from *Yaw*. In other words, among the possible candidates *the man* could discipline, *Yaw* is the only person he disciplined. This latter information is missing from the readings of (15a). Examples (15d & e) can be phrase-marked as (17a & b) respectively.

(17) a.　　FP

```
        DP              F'
      Yàẁ_i      F              TP
      Yaw      nà        DP           T'
               FOC  NP    D    T              VP
                    pàpá  nó_n  téá-à_j   DP                      V'
                    man   DET  shout-PST  NP     D'         V'            DP
                                          pàpá_k  D  NP   V   DP  NP        D'
                                          man   nó_n pàpá_k téá-à_j nó_i  ànɔpá_l  D    NP
                                                DET  man shout-PST RP  morning  nó   ànɔpá_l
                                                                                DET  morning
```

'It is Yaw that the man disciplined in the morning.'

　　b.　　FP

```
        DP              F'
      NP    D    F              TP
    ànɔpá  nó_i  nà      DP           T'
    morning DET  FOC  NP    D    T              VP
                    pàpá  nó_n téá-à_j   DP                      V'
                    man   DET shout-PST  NP     D'         V'            DP
                                          pàpá_k  D  NP   V   DP  NP        D'
                                          man   nó_n pàpá_k téá-à_j Yàẁ  ànɔpá_l  D    NP
                                                DET  man shout-PST Yaw  morning  nó_i  ànɔpá_l
                                                                                DET  morning
```

'It is in the morning that the man disciplined Yaw.'

One of the things we can say about the structures in (17) is that, as one of the assumptions of the MP indicates; lexical categories are fully inflected in the lexicon. In other words, all affixes are attached to the lexical items in the lexicon before any movement can take place (Marantz, 1995, p. 366). Also, movement occurs only for feature checking. Thus, the verb moves to check its tense feature, and the NPs move to check their case. That is why we see that the verb has moved from its base position to T to check its tense feature since T has a tense feature which is compatible with the tense feature of the verb (i.e. [+ past]). Thus, unlike the earlier theories like the GB theory where the tense markers are said

to hop or lower to the verb, the verb rather moves to check its tense feature under the MP. Likewise, the DP at the subject position (i.e. the Spec of VP) has to move to the Spec of TP for certain reasons: first, to satisfy the Extended Projection Principle (EPP), and also to check its strong feature (i.e., case), which is compatible with T.

In addition, although operation merge combines two elements (for instance X and Y) making one of them the head (in this case, it could be X or Y), according to Kayne's (1994) Linear Correspondence Axiom (LCA), the specifier is said to precede the head while the complement follows it (i.e. Spec – Head – Complement); and this is assumed to be a universal constraint. Thus, if a phrase has a structure where a complement precedes a head, it is assumed that the complement has undergone the process of movement. And since, in Akan, the head of the nominal group (i.e. the determiner) follows the complement (i.e. the NP) within the DP, it is assumed that the NP has moved from its canonical position to the new position. That is why in (17a & b) the NP is merged twice within the DP.

5.2   The *in-situ* Focus Strategy

For the *in-situ* focus strategy, the basic structure of the sentence is preserved irrespective of the constituent in focus (prior to spell-out). As opined by Van Valin and La Polla (1997), one important feature of focus in the unmarked structure is the use of prosodic features such as stress and intonational patterns. Likewise, Ameka (2010, p. 146) observes that in some Kwa languages the elements that are in focus in their default position may be marked either prosodically or morphologically. Akan uses prosody to mark the *in-situ* focused constituents as exemplified in (18) and (19). Like the *ex-situ* focus constructions, almost all the constituents in the sentence can be focused *in-situ*. However, unlike the ex-situ strategy, the focused verb does not need to be nominalized before it is focused.

(18) a. ɔ́-   ń-   kɔ́ fíé.
      3SG-IMP-go home
      'S/he should go home.'

   b. ɔ̀**nó**   ń- kɔ́   fíé.
      3SG/FOC IMP-go home
      'S/HE should go home.'

(19) a. Màà mé   nó bɔ̀-ɔ̀ mè.
      woman DET beat-PST 1SG
      'The woman beat me.'

   b. Màámé nó bɔ̀-ɔ̀   **mé**.
      woman DET beat-PST 1SG./FOC

      'The woman beat ME.'

   c. Màámé nó **bɔ̀-ɔ̀**   mé.
      woman DET beat-PST/FOC 1SG

      'The woman BEAT me.'

Examples (18a) and (19a) are the non-focus sentences, and (18b) and (19b & c) are their focus counterparts respectively. While the subject is in focus in (18b), it is the object and verb that are in focus in (19b & c) respectively. It can be observed from (18) and (19) that the structures for the focus and non-focus constructions are the same. Each of them has the SVO structure, yet there is a slight difference in meaning (pragmatically) between (18a & 19a) and their (b) counterparts. In (18b),

the speaker places emphasis on the subject; thus, the use of the emphatic pronoun (i.e. ɔnɔ) at the subject position. This differentiates the meaning of the two sentences in (18). That is, by emphasizing the subject in (18b), the speaker contrasts the entity in focus with other possible entities. Likewise, in (19b), the pronoun, **mé** (compare to the non-focused pronoun, mè, with a low tone), gives extra meaning to the construction. It contrasts the object DP with any other DP in a given focus sentence. Sentence (19a), for instance, does not exclude the object as the only person the woman beat, but (19b) gives that reading. To put it differently, unlike (19a), (19b) could mean that (contrary to what other people may think) the woman beat *me*, and only me. In such an instance, usually the pitches of the focused constituents are relatively higher (symbolized by bolding the element in focus) than the non-focused constituents. Likewise, (19c) places emphasis on the fact that the woman REALLY beat me. This meaning is slightly different from the *ex-situ* nominalized-verb focusing. Sentence (19b) can be phrase-marked as in (19):

(20) a.

'The woman beat ME.'

b.

'The woman beat ME.'
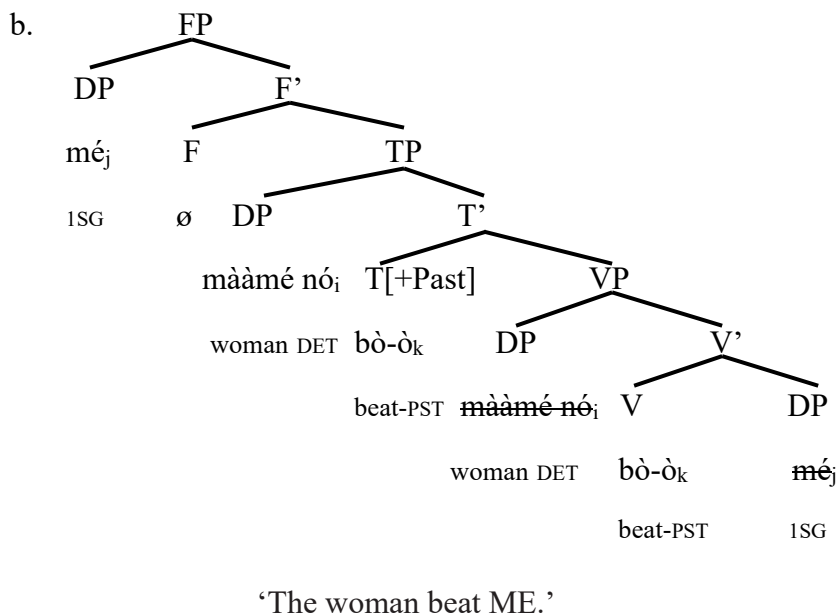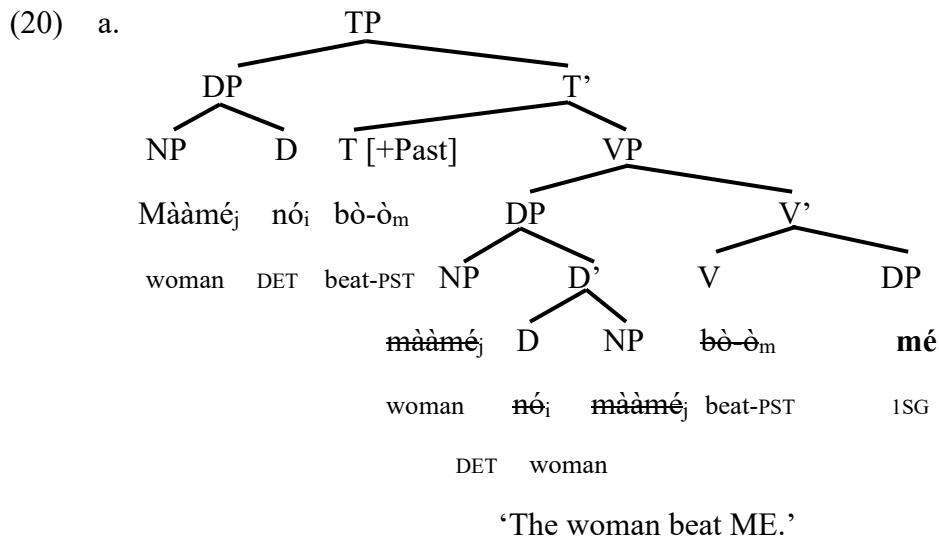
The tree structure in (20a) represents the *in-situ* tree structure prior to spell-out while (20b) represents the *in-situ* tree structure on the way to LF (i.e. after spell-out). The implication is that, although we do not see any overt movement in the *in-situ* strategy, theoretically, the focused constituent also moves

in the *in-situ* focus strategy. Within the MP, the only difference between the *in-situ* and the *ex-situ* focusing has to do with the timing of the movement of the focused constituents. In other words, both the *in-situ* focused constituents and the *ex-situ* focused constituents move to the focus position. However, while the *ex-situ* focused constituents move before spell-out, the *in-situ* focused constituents move after spell-out. Thus, movement of the *ex-situ* focused constituents affects pronunciation but that of the *in-situ* does not (Boskovic, 2013). It is also worth noting that unlike the *ex-situ* strategy, the focus marker for the *in-situ* strategy is not overtly realized.

6. Conclusion

With ample and illuminating data from the Asante-Twi dialect of Akan, it has been observed that both the *in-situ* and *ex-situ* focus strategies are attested in Akan. On the surface, the *in-situ* focus type is marked prosodically while the *ex-situ* focus construction is marked both structurally and morphologically by pre-posing the focus constituent, followed by the focus marker. However, with the help of the MP theory, it has been observed that both the *in-situ* and *ex-situ* focused constituents move to the focus position. The only difference between the two is the time at which each focused constituent moves; while the *ex-situ* focused constituents move prior to spell-out, the *in-situ* focused constituents move after spell-out. This explains why there is little difference in meaning between the *ex-situ* and *in-situ* focus constructions. It was also observed that there are two types of *ex-situ* focus constructions in Akan: (i) the ones in which the core elements are overtly expressed, and (ii) the ones in which the core elements are covertly expressed. And, regarding the focus markers, it was established that, contrary to the claims by some of the earlier researchers like Boadi (1974), Saah (1998), and Marfo (2005), *deɛ* cannot be considered as a focus marker because it differs from the other focus markers in terms of grammatical function, structure, and prosody. The particles *na*, *a*, *ne*, and *ni* are the authentic focus markers in Akan.

Conflicts of Interest
No organization or funders have a role in the design of the study; in the collection of data, analysis, or interpretation of data; in the writing of the manuscript, or in the decision to publish the results.

Disclaimer Statement
This is an aspect of a Ph.D. thesis submitted to the Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages, University of Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria, (2018). The work was supervised by Prof. Issa O. Sanusi (the co-author). The present paper is a modification of the concept of focus constructions discussed in the thesis.

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Authorship and Level of contribution

[1]Prof. Issa O. Sanusi is the one who proposed/suggested the topic for the study. He also supervised and helped in the analysis of the data.

[2]Kofi Busia Abrefa collected the data for the study, and also did the analysis under the supervision of Prof. Sanusi. Both authors agreed to publish the paper.

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