

Conjunctive and Appositive Functions of *Òghun* in the Ìlàjẹ Dialect of Yorùbá

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Abstract

Ìlàjẹ is a south-eastern Yoruba dialect. Like other Yoruba regional dialect, Ìlàjẹ preserves the native speakers' intuition that can enhance research in Standard Yoruba. This paper provides a dialectal perspective of *òun* in Yoruba, by analysing *òghun*, (the Ìlàjẹ form for *òun*) as a homonym denoting a conjunction and a resumptive pronoun as well as the third person singular pronoun. The main data for the analysis came from Ìlàjẹ native speakers from Ayetoro, Ùlòghó and Ugbò communities in Ìlàjẹ Local Government Area of Ondo State. The paper employed the Phase Theory model of Chomskian Minimalist Program, though minimally explored in the phrasemakers for easier readership. The study affirms that *òghun* can function as the third person singular pronoun as well as a conjunction and an appositive resumptive pronoun. The antecedent of the resumptive pronoun is a topicalised nominal extracted from a focus construction. In the Focus Phrase, the topicalised nominal leaves behind a resumptive copy to be lexicalised as *òghun*. This happens because Ìlàjẹ cannot copy the saliency feature along with the *phi features* during topicalisation, in order to ensure the discourse saliency remains active within the focus construction. Therefore, this movement out of the focused position targets only the number and person features (*phi features*) while the stranding saliency feature in the focused position receives *òghun* as a mandatory default phonetic matrix. From the three functions accorded *òghun* in Ìlàjẹ, only the pronominal function is generally affirmed without any controversy in *òun*, its Standard Yoruba counterpart.

Keywords: *Ìlàjẹ-Yorùbá, òun, resumptive pronoun, pronoun stranding, appositive resumption*

Introduction

Ìlàjẹ is a south-eastern Yorùbá dialect spoken in Ìlàjẹ Local Government Area of Ondo State (Awobuluyi, 1998; Ajongolo, 2005). Basically, Ìlàjẹ pronominal system is very similar to that of Standard Yorùbá (Table 1). *Òghun* is one of the long pronouns in the dialect. The long pronoun forms are six in number apart from the fact that the forms of the second person plural and the third person plural are homophones; they use the same form, *àghan*.

Table 1: *òghun* as one of the long pronoun forms in Ìlàjẹ

Person	Singular	Plural
First	èmi 'I/me'	àwa 'we/us'
Second	ùwọ 'you'	àghan ¹ 'you(pl)'
Third	òghun 'he/she/it/him/her'	àghan 'they/them'

Japhet, 2013b:32

¹ Ìlàjẹ has a single PF form for second and third person plural pronouns while their meanings remain distinct.

A deeper look at the Ìlàjẹ pronoun forms as reported in the few known studies in the dialect has revealed a number of findings which include: evidence of the covert pronoun form, the third person singular object forms, the logophoric feature of the third person singular pronoun, negation forms of the pronoun, and the geometry determination of lexical entry of the pronominal features (Japhet, 2013a and b; 2017; 2018; Adesuyan, 2018; and Taiwo & Japhet, 2019). This study continues with the research on Ìlàjẹ pronouns, examining a special use of *òghun*², as an appositive third person singular pronoun. The body of the paper is divided into four sections. The first part discusses the research gap to be filled by the study, based on the categorial analysis of *òun* in Standard Yoruba. The second part provides evidence on the use of *òghun* as a conjunction in Ìlàjẹ. The third section shows the use of *òghun* as a pronominal appositive, while the fourth section reanalyses the appositive as a resumptive pronoun.

Theoretically, the analysis in this study was done with the Phase Theory model of the Minimalist Program using the phrase marker labels: TP (Tense Phrase), FocP (Focus Phrase), TopP (Topic Phrase) and [spec, TP] (specifier position of the Tense Phrase) (Bauke, 2011; Chomsky 2001; 2008; Citko, 2014; Felser, 2004).

Issues on the homonymic status of *òghun* and *òun* in Yoruba

Ajongolo (2005) has identified in Ào dialect of Yoruba, the homonymic use of *òghun* as a pronoun and a conjunction. This homonymic use of a single form for a conjunction and a pronoun is not new in Yoruba, where *òun* has been used as both conjunction and pronoun in Standard Yoruba (Yusuf, 1980).

Standard Yorùbá (Ilori, 2012:37)

1 (a)	Mo	ri	Òjó	òun	Dada
	Isg	see	Ojo	and	Dada
	'I saw Ojo and Dada'				
(b)	Adé	òun	Délé	wá	
	Ade	and	Dele	come	
	'Ade and Dele came'				

The above homonymic use of *òun* as a conjunction has been challenged. While the basic pronominal function of *òun* is without any controversy, its use as a conjunction is considered putative. (Ilori, 2004; 2012). In (1), *òun*³ is presented as a coordinating conjunction, joining *Òjó* and *Dada*; however, it is obvious in (2) that *òun* cannot be a conjunction where it co-occurs with the actual conjunctions: *àti* and *pélú*.

² *Òghun* is an Ìlàjẹ dialectal form of *òun* in Standard Yoruba. The paper is not on the difference in forms but the use of the same syntactic object denoted by these forms. Even Ilori (2012) which focuses on Standard Yoruba has to make use of both forms in his analysis. I only mention *òun* when it is compelling to do so (when referring to the behaviour of this syntactic object in Standard Yoruba).

³ This is Ilori's view. The paper is not directly written to contest Ilori's view. It focuses on the picture of things in Ìlàjẹ. One gets the true picture as one reads through.

Standard Yorùbá (Ilori, 2004:1)

- 2 (a) Èmi àti òun⁴ ni wón pè
 1sg conj. 3sg foc. 3pl call
 ‘It was me and him/her that they called’
- (b) Òun pèlú Bólá jọ jeun
 3sg conj. Bola together eat
 ‘He/she and Bola ate together’

In order to argue further that *òun* is not a conjunction as supposed in (1), Ilori (2012) provides other pronouns that occur in a similar position with *òun* without being considered as conjunctions. This is demonstrated in (3) and (4) where *ìwọ* is co-indexed with *Olú* in (3), and *ẹyin* is co-indexed with *bàbá* in (4) exactly the way *òun* is co-indexed with *Gbólá* in (5). Ilori (2004) argues that just as *ìwọ* (co-indexed with *Olu*) and *ẹyin* (co-indexed with *Baba*) are pronouns, *òun* (co-indexed with *Gbólá*) in (5) should also be a pronoun instead of being a conjunction.

Standard Yorùbá (Ilori, 2004:10)

- 3 (a) Olú_i, ìwọ_i àti Bólá ni kí ẹ wá o
 Olu 2sg conj. Bola foc. Comp. 3pl come emph.
 ‘Olu, it is you and Bola that should come’
- (b) Olú_i, ìwọ_i Ø⁵ Bólá ni kí ẹ wá o
 Olu 2sg conj. Bola foc. Comp. 3pl come emph.
 ‘Olu, it is you and Bola that should come’
- 4 (a) Bàbá_i, ẹyin_i pèlú Màmá nìkan ni mo pè
 Baba 2sg conj. Mama only foc. 1sg call
 ‘Father, it’s only you and mother that I called’
- (b) Bàbá_i, ẹyin_i Ø Màmá nìkan ni mo pè
 Baba 2sg conj. Mama only foc. 1sg call
 ‘Father, it’s only you and mother that I called’
- 5 (a) Gbólá_i, òun_i àti Dauda n jọ
 Gbola 3sg and Dauda prog. dance
 ‘Gbola, he and Dauda are dancing’
- (b) Gbólá_i, òun_i Ø Dauda n jọ
 Gbola 3sg and Dauda prog. dance
 ‘Gbola, he and Dauda are dancing’

Ilori’s (2012) does not only discard the conjunction function of *òun* in Standard Yoruba but also makes some generalisations for other south eastern Yoruba dialects where *Ìlàjẹ* is specifically cited.

⁴ The gloss suggests that. It was neither my personal opinion nor that of Ilori. The use of *àti* in (2) shows that *òghun* can no longer be a conjunction as it appears in (1). A dialect that does not make use of *àti* will take *òghun* as conjunction as expressed in Taiwo. I think Ilori’s argument is to refute the use of *òghun* as a conjunction.

⁵ This symbol means null. The conjunction phonetically null here.

Ilori (2012) writes thus:

Yorùbá dialects like Ào, Òmùò, and Òndó evidently have two homophonous òun in their lexicons, one of which is the 3sg pronominal found in the pronoun system of all Yorùbá dialects, SY⁶ inclusive. The other is a nominal conjunction which is conspicuously absent in the lexicon of SY and those of other related dialects, such as Ìlájẹ (Ilori, 2012: 60-61).

The quote above has vital implication on Ìlájẹ. As it categorises Ìlájẹ as one of the dialects where *òghun* is obviously absent as a conjunction.

Òghun as a conjunction in Ìlájẹ

In Ìlájẹ, *òghun* and *pélú* are the overt⁷ conjunctions. In addition to these, Ìlájẹ can covertly use *òghun*, as a conjunction, where the items being conjoined include the third person singular pronoun, *òghun*; this is necessary to avoid ambiguity between the overt use of the conjunction and its pronominal homophone, *òghun*. Therefore, the overt conjunction, *òghun*, is in complementary distribution with its covert counterpart (represented with Ø in (6)). Therefore, the covert conjunction is only used with long pronouns where it completely avoids ambiguity with the third person singular pronoun, *òghun*, as in (6).

- | | | | |
|-------|---------------|-------|-------|
| 6 (a) | èmi | Ø | ùwọ |
| | 1sg | conj. | 2sg |
| | 'you and I' | | |
| (b) | ùwọ | Ø | òghun |
| | 2sg | conj. | 3sg |
| | 'he and you' | | |
| (c) | èmi | Ø | òghun |
| | 1sg conj | 3sg | |
| | 'he and I' | | |
| (d) | àwa | Ø | àghan |
| | 1pl | conj. | 3pl |
| | 'They and we' | | |

As an overt conjunction, *òghun* has more restrictions than *pélú*, because *òghun* cannot join pronouns as shown in (6). On the other hand, *pélú* can be used in joining pronouns as well as nouns. The data in (7) show the use of *pélú* in joining nouns and pronouns, as in 7(a) and 7(b) respectively.

⁶ SY means Standard Yoruba.

⁷ Unlike Standard Yorùbá, Ìlájẹ does not have the overt conjunction, *àti*. The Ìlájẹ informant used in Ilori (2012) who attested *àti* in his/her data would have added that as part of the features learned from standard Yorùbá. The researcher of this paper has been working in Ìlájẹ since 2009; and as a native speaker who grew up in the riverine region where the population is almost 100% homogenously Ìlájẹ, he is aware of such misinformation from informants who no longer have command of the dialect.

7 (a) Adé pélú Tópe
 Adé conj Tope
 'Adé and Tope'

(b) èmi pélú ùwọ
 1sg conj. 2sg
 Intended: 'I and you'

It is important to note how Ìlàjẹ manages the use of the same form for a conjunction as well as a pronoun as shown in (8) below.

8 (a) Adé òghun Tópe
 Adé conj Tope
 'Adé and Tope'

(b) èmi òghun ùwo
 1sg, 3sg, 2sg
 'I, he and you' (a list of the three pronouns)

(c) èmi Ø ùwọ
 1sg conj. 2sg
 'I and you'

(d)*èmi òghun ùwọ
 1sg conj. 2sg
 Intended: 'I and you'

The use of *òghun* as a conjunction in Ìlàjẹ as shown in 8(a) reveals clearly that the conjunction and the pronoun are different lexical items which therefore should be taken strictly as homophones. This section clearly refutes Ilori's (2012) claim, which states that *òghun* does not function as a conjunction at all in Ìlàjẹ.

***Òghun* in an appositive pronominal use in Ìlàjẹ**

This section shows that *òghun* can also be used in appositive position in Ìlàjẹ, as it has been demonstrated in the use of *òun* in Standard Yorùbá in (5). However, the appositive use of *òghun* in Ìlàjẹ has a different distribution from what has been established for *òun*, its counterpart in Standard Yorùbá. First, while *òun* can co-occur with *àti* in 5(a)), *òghun* does not co-occur with any conjunction in Ìlàjẹ either overtly or covertly. Therefore, none of the two expressions in (9) is considered grammatical in Ìlàjẹ where *òghun* cannot co-occur with the conjunction, *pélú* either overtly (as in 9(a)) or covertly (as in 9(b)).

9 (a) *Adé_i òghun_i pélú Tópe
 Adé 3sg conj. Tope
 Intended: 'Adé and Tope'

(b) *Adé_i òghun_i Ø Tópe
 Adé 3sg conj. Tope
 Intended: 'Adé and Tope'

Second, appositive *òghun* is used in focus constructions, where *òun*, its counterpart in Standard Yorùbá cannot be allowed as demonstrated in (10).

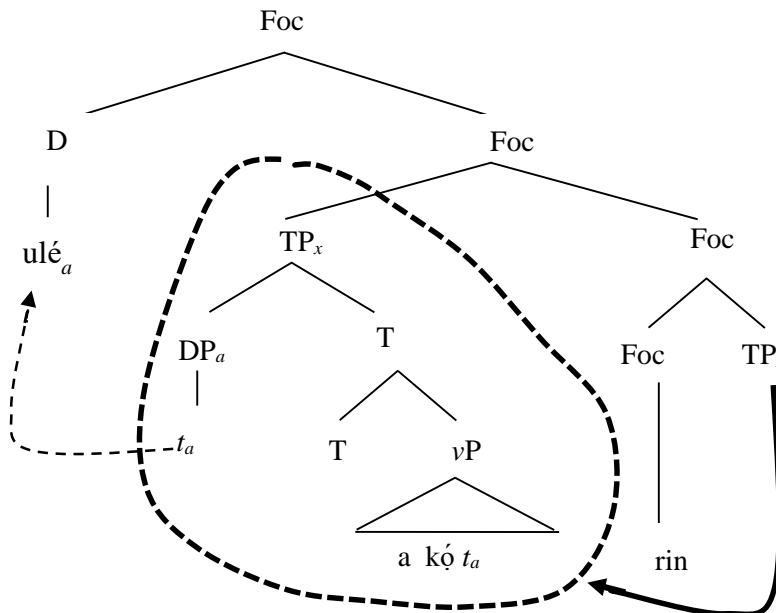
- 10(a) Èmi_i òghun_i àn-án pè rin
 1sg 3sg-appos. 3pl call foc.
 'It was me that they called'
- (b) *Èmi òun ni wón pè
 1sg 3sg-appos. foc. 3pl call
 Intended 'It was me that they called'

In 10(a), *òghun* occurs in Ìlàjẹ immediately after a focused item in a focus construction. Èmi (the focused item) and *òghun* are co-referents in the LF. However, the expression is ungrammatical in Standard Yoruba as shown in 10(b), because *òun*, the third person singular appositive (3sg-appos) cannot be co-indexed with *èmi*, its first person singular antecedent.

The expression in 10(a) is a focus construction, another syntactic environment, where *òghun* can be licenced in Ìlàjẹ as an emphatic appositive, a role that *òun* cannot take in Standard Yoruba. In Ìlàjẹ, the focus construction (henceforth, Focus Phrase or FocP) uses *rin* as the focus head (henceforth, Foc). This (Foc) head comes clause-final, because the entire Tense Phrase (TP) first raises to adjoin to *rin* in the pre-Foc position as in 11(b), before the focused item in the TP moves to [Spec, FocP] (the specifier position of the focus phrase).

- 11(a) Ulé a kó rin
 house 1pl build foc.
 'It was a house that we built'

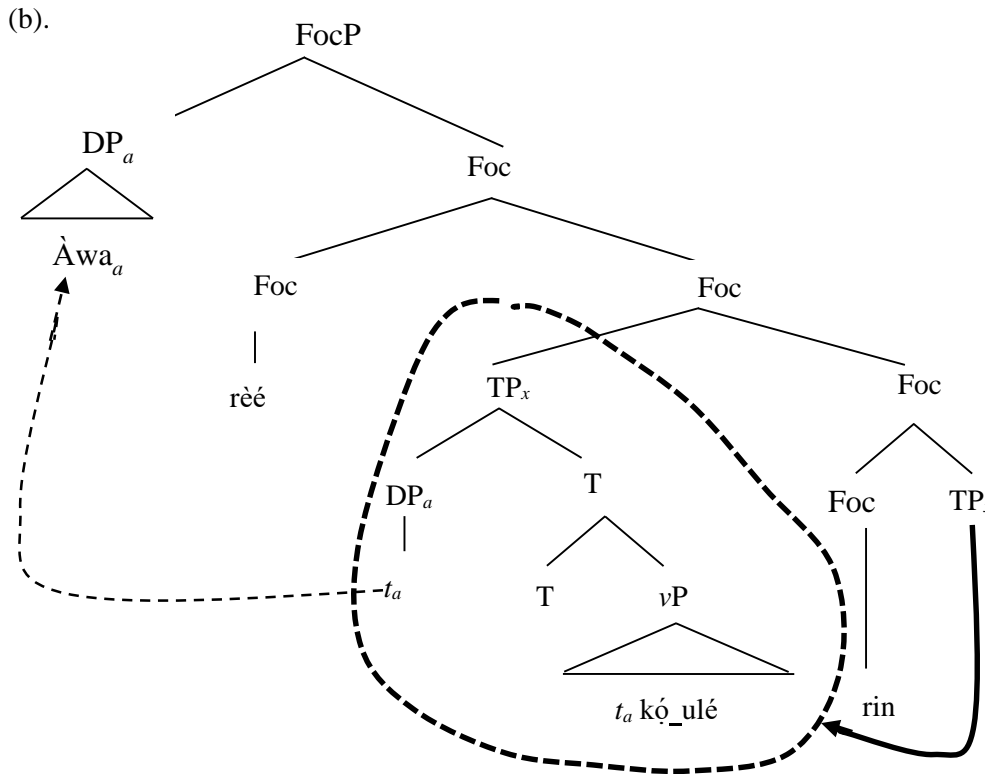
(b)



The structure in 11(b) slightly differs from the one in 12(b) where the item focused is from the subject position of the TP ([Spec, TP]). An extra focus marker, *rèé*, is adjoined to the Foc head, preceding the earlier adjoined TP. This additional *rèé* focus functor provides a

mandatory phonetic boundary between the specifier of the FocP and the vacated subject position in the TP.

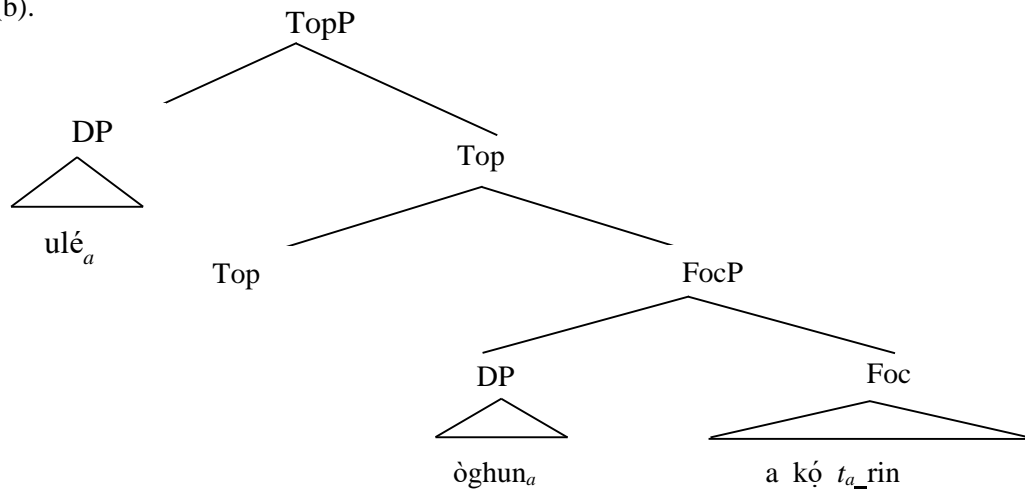
- 12(a) Àwa rée kó ulé rin
 1pl foc. build house foc.
 'We were the one who built the house'



How *òghun* is derived in its appositive position is discussed here. Topicalisation occurs as an additional emphasis placed on the focused item, where the topicalised item takes a co-referential appositive, *òghun*. To be formally described, topicalisation derives Topic Phrase (TopP) by merging the focus construction (FocP) with the functional category head, *Topic* (Top). In 13(b), *ulé* is topicalised by moving from the specifier position of the FocP to the specifier position of the newly formed TopP after the FocP has merged with the Top head. The occurrence of *rée* between *àwa* and *òghun* in 13(b) clearly shows the syntactic demarcation expected between *àwa* as a topicalised item in [Spec, Top] and its traces in the specifier positions of the lower phrases (FocP and TP).

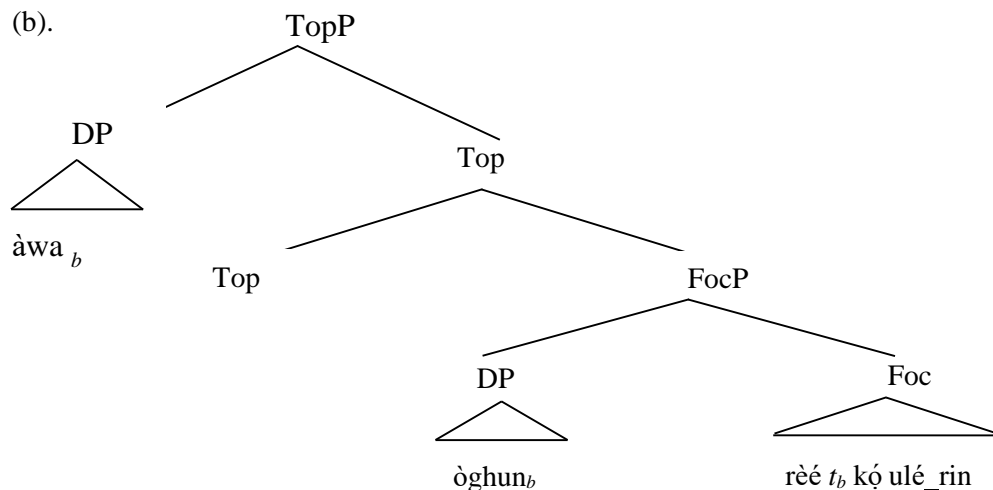
- 13(a) Ulé_a òghun_a a kó t_a rin
 house appos. 1pl build foc.
 'It was a house (not other thing) that we built'

(b).



- 14 (a) Àwa_b òghun_b rée t_b kó ulé rin
 1pl APPOS foc. 1pl build house foc.
 'We (not other persons) were the one that built the house'

(b).

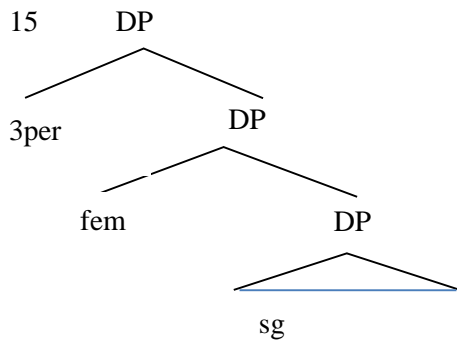


It is important to note that the movement from FocP to TopP (13-14) is different from the one from TP to FocP (11-12). While the movement into the specifier of FocP leaves behind a covert copy (trace) in the extracting point, the movement into the specifier of TopP leaves behind *òghun*. Here, *òghun* is an overt copy of the moved item because this *òghun* must be co-indexed with the item moved into the [Spec, Top]. Therefore, *òghun* is nothing but a resumptive, despite the fact that the concept of pronominal resumption has not been widely explored in Yorùbá syntax beyond the subject high tone element position and the stranding possessor position (Yuka, 2015:111; Ajiboye, 2005: 92, 115,116). Nevertheless, this study provides evidence of pronominalisation of phonetic gaps with resumptives which are derived

from partial movements where the PF matrices are forced on the stranded part of the partially copied nominals.

Òghun as a resumptive pronoun

The major question then is how much of the nominal is moved in order to determine how much of it is left stranded? The basic assumption on nominals is that they usually have their phi features evaluated which Heim and Kratzer's (1998) have shown that they can be structurally represented as adjoined features as typically shown in (15).



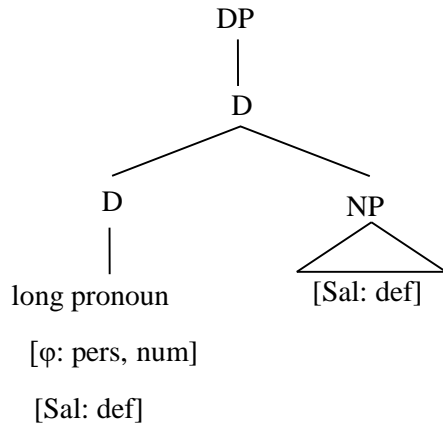
Adapted from (Heim and Kratzer, 1998, p.244).

Although, these features are bound to a unitary phonetic form in their PF realisations, a feature may still be selected out of the bundle for a particular morphosyntactic rule to apply (van Koppen, 2012). Taking the DP in (15) as a composite of systematically arranged bundle of features simply implies that a syntactic operation need not target the entire features of a syntactic object where nothing is left but a phonetically empty trace copy. In this case, the syntactic operation may target just some of the features in the syntactic object leaving other features stranded.

The question of what can be stranded in nominal movements has been traced to definiteness marking or a feature known as saliency (Felser, 2004; Frigerio, 2017). Such definiteness or saliency has also been associated with the determiners (von Heusinger, 2013; Ajiboye, 2005⁸), the demonstratives and pronouns (Frigerio, 2017; Taiwo & Japhet, 2019). Taiwo and Japhet (2019) use saliency morphosyntactic feature to distinguish Ìlàjẹ long pronouns from their corresponding short counterparts, showing that a long pronoun does not only have its phi features valued in person and number features, but also has its saliency feature being valued too. By this, Japhet (2020) identifies saliency as the common morphosyntactic feature in Yorùbá syntax, which makes the long pronoun behaves more like a noun than its short counterpart. This internal feature complexity of pronouns and determiner is represented in (16) adapting Déchaine and Wiltschko's (2002) pronoun decomposition hypothesis.

⁸ He uses this for the Yorùbá determiner, *nàà* (the).

16.



The structure in (16) identifies two bundles within the long pronoun (Japhet, 2020). These are the phi features bundle and the saliency bundle. Both bundles are targeted when movement copies the entire DP leaving a non-phonetic copy called trace. Such is the scenario during focusing, when the subject is moved out of the TP into [Spec, FocP], copying the entire DP as represented in figure (1).

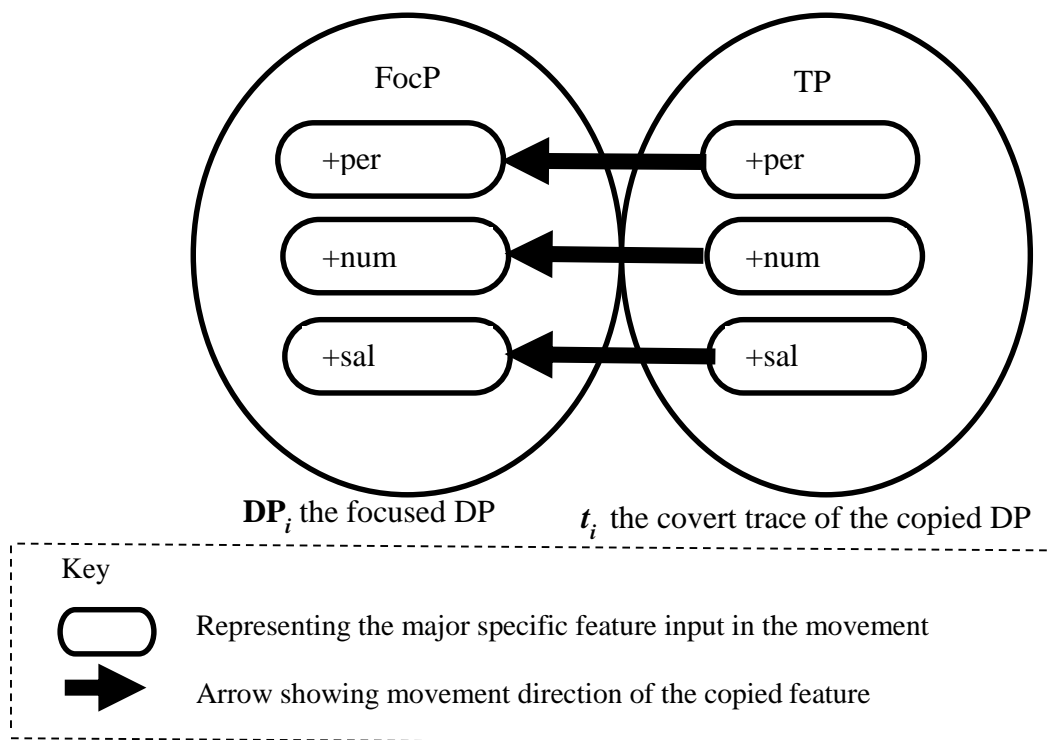


Figure 1. A diagram representing focussing through feature copying.

Adapted from Japhet (2020: 148)

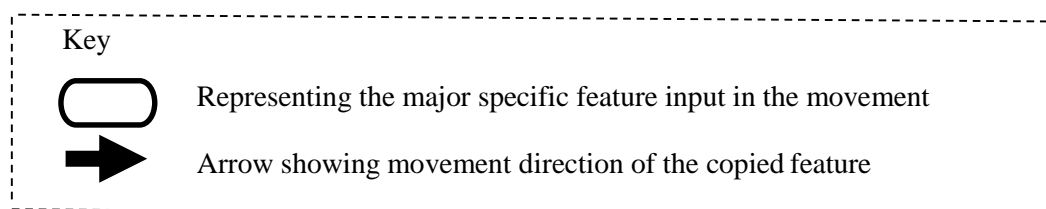
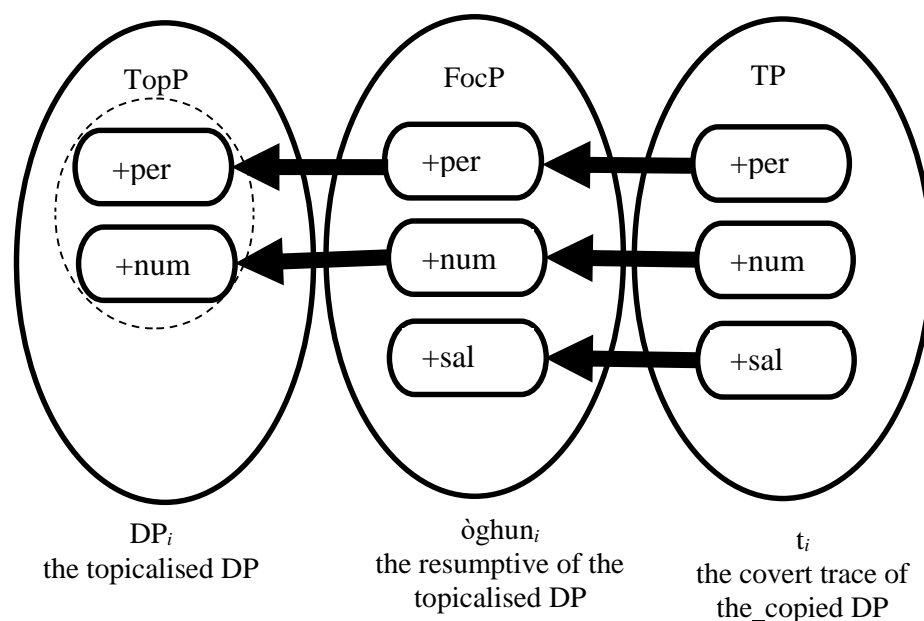
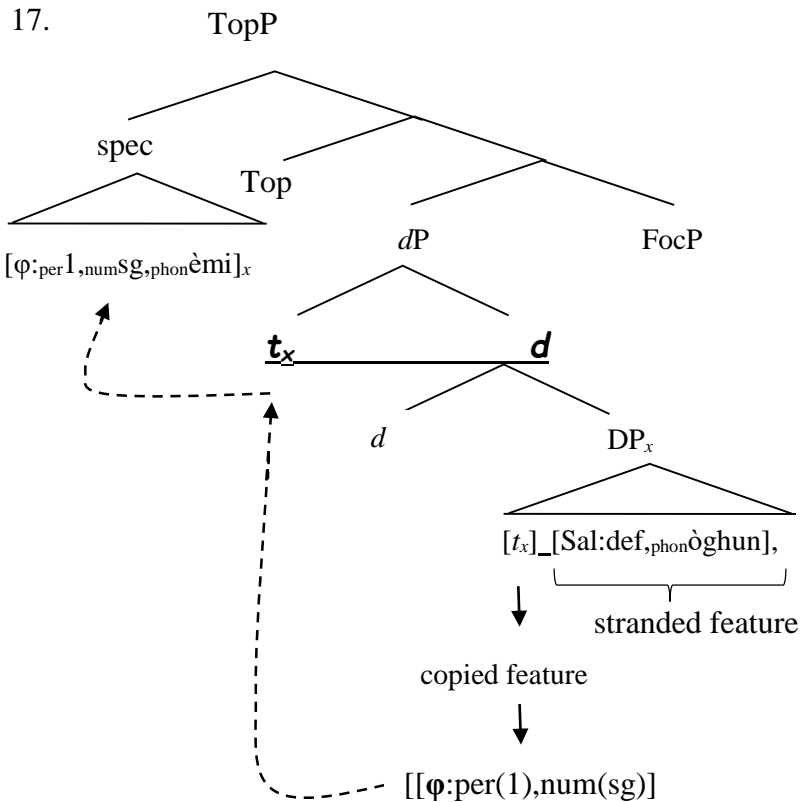


Figure 2. Diagram representing the derivation of *òghun* as a resumptive pronoun.
Adapted from Japhet (2020: 148)

On the other hand, the movement in topicalisation targets only the phi bundle in the specifier position of the FocP, while leaving stranding the saliency bundle which is spelled-out as *òghun*, as represented in figure (2). Stranding of saliency in the [Spec, Foc] is necessary because the position is so salient that it cannot be phonetically covert. Focussing is a saliency-triggered operation.

It is also pertinent to observe that the movement that derives *òghun* occurs within the DP at [Spec, Foc]. This DP is internally complex enough to allow movement through its specifier position. In this way, the DP develops a higher functional category *dP* which is structurally similar to Larson’s (1988) *vP* shell (Gavruseva, 2000). The *dP* shell has a light *d* head that selects a DP complement. Licit DP movements then have to go through the specifier of DP into the specifier of *dP*. This DP-internal movement affirms the A-bar position claim for the [Spec, DP] as an escape hatch for movements (Szabolcsi, 1983 and Tellier, 1988) as well as to validate evidence of DP phasehood (Citko, 2014).



Citko (2014:167)

Since this is a *dP* shell (where we have the DP phase⁹), the movement has to pass through the edges of the DP and the *dP* by raising through [Spec, DP] and [Spec, *dP*]. As shown in (17), the phi features comprising person and number values are copied from the DP. The movement leaves the saliency feature (being valued as definiteness) stranded in the DP. The copied phi features are pronounced, using the *èmi* phonetic matrix while the stranded part in the DP is made overt with *òghun*, which does not have to agree with its antecedent because it is a default phonetic matrix.

Conclusion

The findings of this study clarified the misconception on *Ìlàjẹ* not having *òghun* as a conjunction. It also reveals the appositive use of *òghun*, its syntactic derivation and spell-out. Three kinds of *òghun* were discussed: first, *òghun*, the long form of the third person singular pronoun; second, *òghun* as an overt conjunction; and third, *òghun* as an appositive pronoun. While *òghun* as a long pronoun is syntactically similar to *òun* its Standard Yoruba

⁹ With the DP phase taken as a phase where nominals can be spelled out Citko (2014), the resumptives should have been spelled-out before extracting the moved item out of the DP. Hence, the resumptive can satisfy the phase impenetrability condition of the spell-out within the phase.

counterpart, the two other types of *òghun* (the conjunction and the appositive resumption) have no equivalent form in Standard Yoruba.

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