A Comparative Analysis of Focus Construction in Igede Language and Some Selected Dialects of Yorùbá: Oǹdó and Ìkálẹ̀

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Focus construction has attracted the attention of scholars such that many works have been done on the subject in Yorùbá language, its dialects and other languages. Research reveals that there has not been any work on the comparison between focus construction in Yorùbá and Igede languages which is the focus of this paper. The discussion on focus construction in Yorùbá and Igede languages is very necessary because the two languages belong to the same Benue-Congo language family. There is no doubt that there will be areas of similarities as well as differences in the grammar of the two languages. Although the structures of focus construction in the standard dialect of Yorùbá and Igede language are different, research shows that the structures of focus construction in Igede language and that of Oǹdó and Ìkálẹ̀ dialects of Yorùbá are identical. The data collection for the paper relies on the text materials and Journals on focus constructions in addition to informants who are native speakers of Yorùbá and Igede languages. Their ages range between 65 and 70, and they are fluent in the languages. This paper is a contribution to the existing works on the grammar of Nigerian indigenous languages. The paper adopts descriptive approach for the data analysis.

Keywords: *focus, construction, Igede, Yorùbá, comparison*

1. Introduction

Scholars, such as (Bolinger 1965; Schachter 1973; Awobuluyi 1978, 1988, 1992; Awoyale 1985; Bamgbose 1990; Balthasar 1999; Aarts 2001; Aboh 2003) have carried out different research works on focus construction in English language and other languages. Schachter (1973: 56) defines focus construction as a syntactic process that introduces a special marking into the S-structure of the element that is being focused, thereby creating a focused prominence. Balthasar (1999: 68) explains that focus consists of presupposed part; information that is deemed accessible to the addressee and an asserted part, that is, information that the speaker assumes to be shared by the addressee. Aarts (2001) defines focus construction as a special construction which enables a language user to highlight a particular string in a sentence. Yusuf (1989) views focus construction as a syntactic device whereby an NP in the sentence is made prominent by coding it sentence initially. A critical study of the definitions above implies that focusing has to do with making an element or a constituent prominent by coding it sentence initially.

There is a difference between focus construction in Yorùbá language and English language. Aarts (2001: 142) is of the opinion that cleft and pseudo- cleft are synonymous to focus construction. They are special constructions in English language which enable the users of the language to highlight a particular string of words in a sentence. They are easily recognized because they always start with the expression; "It is" in the case of cleft. There are two types of focus construction recognized by the Yorùbá scholars like (Awobuluyi 1978; 1988, 1992; Owolabi 1983; Awoyale 1985; Bamgbose 1990). The two are: Constituent Focusing and Sentence Focusing.

Opinions are divided on the status of focus construction. For instance, Awobuluyi (1978, 1988, 1992), Awoyale (1985) and Yusuf (1989) are of the opinion that focus construction in Yorùbá is a noun phrase while Owolabi (1981, 1983) and Bamgbose (1990) have a contrary opinion that focus construction is a complete sentence. Among the pieces of evidence given by Awobuluyi (1978) are; focus construction is a noun phrase because it functions as the complement of the verb *şe* and its structure is identical with that of relative clause. To him, focus construction functions as a qualifier with a noun as a head. Schachter (1973) and Svenonius (1987) have a similar observation in respect of English language. They independently explain that relative clause and Pseudo- cleft are identical since both of them have the same structure with a noun as the head. Owolabi (1983) and Bamgbose (1990) independently explain that for the fact that the structures of focus construction and relative clause are identical does not make them the same thing. These scholars are of the opinion that focus construction is a derived sentence. Akintoye and Ariyo (2015: 71) corroborate the position of Owolabi (1983) and Bamgbose (1990) by explaining that a relative clause is a qualifier or subordinate clause which expresses an incomplete statement and it requires a main clause or an additional clause before it can make a meaningful expression. It occurs always as a dependent clause. In addition to this, focus construction can co-occur with the question markers *Ǹjẹ́* and Ṣèbí as a complete sentence. These points are proofs that focus construction is a sentence. Awobuluyi (1992: 82) accepts that focus construction can at times behave as a sentence following his comments below:

> *Not withstanding that most Standard Yoruba focus constructions are basically noun phrases as shown in the preceding section and elsewhere, they also regularly function as sentences as shown by the fact that they can occur as a complete utterance and can also be nominalised with the complementizer pé, as only happens to sentences.*

Akintoye and Owoyele (2018) examine focus construction in Oǹdó dialect of Yorùbá and Èbìrà language and point out the similarities and differences observed between them. For instance, they observe that focus markers appear in the final position of the focus sentence in Oǹdó dialect of Yorùbá and Èbìrà language and that high tone syllable in between subject and verb is also attested in Oǹdó dialect of Yorùbá and Èbìrà language.

This paper examines focus construction in Yorùbá and Igede languages with the aim of pointing out the differences and similarities between their structures in the two languages. The comparison is possible because according to the scholars, languages that are genetically related are grouped into the same language families based on their similarities and differences which occur at different levels (Abiodun 2005: 5). The two languages belong to Benue-Congo language family, and there is a possibility for them to be grammatically similar and different. Although, the structures of focus construction in the standard dialect of Yorùbá and Igede language are different, research has shown that the structures of focus construction in Igede language and that of Oǹdó and Ìkálẹ̀ dialects of Yorùbá are identical. This is the motivation for the paper. The data collection for the paper relies on the text materials and Journals on focus construction in Yorùbá and other languages, and the informants who are the native speakers of Yorùbá and Igede languages. Their ages range between 65 and 70. The informants were so selected because they are fluent in the languages and they have spent most of their life time in Yorùbá and Igede lands. Descriptive approach is adopted for the data analysis.

The paper is divided into four sections. The first section is the introductory part. Section two discusses focus construction in Yorùbá language. Section three consists of focus

construction in Igede language. Section four which is the concluding part contains the comparison between focus construction in Oǹdó and Ìkálè̩ Dialects of Yorùbá and Igede Language.

2. Focus construction in Yorùbá language

Yorùbá tribe which occupieș the South-western part of Nigeria consists of six States which are; Èkìtì, Oǹdó, Ògùn, Ò̩șun, Ò̩yó̩ and Lagos as well as parts of Kwara, Kogí and E̩dó States. Yorùbá people trace their origin to Ilé-Ifè̩ and they believe Odùduwà to be their progenitor (Ogunsina 2006). Yorùbá language is used as a means of communication in daily interactions in the Yoruba speaking States. It is also used for Education, Politics, Religion, trade and Entertainment among others. Scholars like Adetugbo (1967), Akinkugbe (1976) and Awobuluyi (1998) have divided the dialects of Yorùbá into five groups or regions such as North West Yoùbá (NWY) which consists of È̩gbá, Ìbàdàn, S̩akí etc, South East Yorùbá (SEY) which is made up of Oǹdó, Ìlàje̩, Ìkálè̩, Ò̩wò̩ and Àkókó, Central Yorùbá (CY) which encompasses Èkìtì, Ifè̩, Ìjè̩șà Àkúré̩ and Mò̩bà, North- East Yorùbá (NEY) made up of Owé, Ìjùmú, Yàgbà and Ò̩wó̩rò̩, and lastly South West Yorubá (SWY) which is made up of Sàbe̩, Kétu and Ifè̩ (Togò). Focus construction is attested in these regional dialects of Yorùbá. Focus markers take different forms and occupy different positions in these regional dialects of Yorùbá. For instance, focus markers occur in the sentence media position in the Central Yorùbá, North East Yorùbá and NorthWest Yorùbá whereas, they occur in the sentence final position in the South East Yorùbá especially, Oǹdó and Ìkálè̩ dialects as demonstrated below.

(1)   a.   *S̩o̩lá ó bí o̩ma*   (Oǹdó dialect)
           S̩o̩lá HTS bear child
           'S̩o̩lá gave birth to a child.'
        b.   *S̩o̩lá ó   bí o̩ma ín*
           S̩o̩lá RSP/ HTS bear child FM
           'It was S̩o̩lá that gave birth to a child.'
        c.   *O̩ma S̩o̩la ó   bí í*
           Child S̩o̩la RSP/ HTS bear FM
           'It was S̩o̩lá that gave birth to a child.'

(2)   a.   *S̩o̩lá ó bí o̩ma*   (Ìkálè̩ dialect)
           S̩o̩lá HTS bear child
           'S̩o̩lá gave birth to a child.'
        b.   *S̩o̩lá ó   bí o̩ma ín*
           S̩o̩lá RSP/ HTS bear child FM
           ' It was S̩o̩lá that gave birth to a child.'
        c.   *O̩ma S̩o̩lá ó   bí ín*
           Child S̩o̩la RSP/ HTS bear FM
           'It was S̩o̩lá that gave birth to a child.'

Examples (1b) and (1c) indicate that focus marker has two forms; *í* and *ín* in Oǹdó regional dialect while (2b) and (2c) show that focus marker has one form *ín* in the regional dialect of Ìkálè̩ and they occur in the sentence final position. As earlier noted, research reveals that the

structures of focus constructions in South East Yorùbá made up of Oǹdó and Ìkálẹ̀ dialects and that of Igede language are identical, in the sense that their focus markers occur in the sentence final position. Since Oǹdó and Ìkàlẹ̀ are regional dialects of Yorùbá having identical focus construction structures with Igede language, they have been selected for the data analysis here.

As earlier noted, Oǹdó and Ìkálẹ̀ regional dialects are grouped under South East Yorùbá (Adetugbọ 1967; Akinkugbe 1976; Awobuluyi 1998). Oǹdó regional dialect is spoken in three dialect communities like Oǹdó, Ilẹ̀-Olújìí and Ìdànrè whereas, Ìkàlẹ̀ regional dialect is spoken in the dialect communities like Òkìtìpupa, Ọ̀ṣóòrò, Erínjẹ, Òde-Aye, Òde- Ìrèlè, Ìkòyo Ọmẹ̀n, Igbódìgò, Àyèká, Ìgbìsìn-Olóò, Àkótógbò, Àjàgbá, Ìyònsòn and Ìjì-Òsun. As far as its varieties are concerned, Ìkálẹ̀ dialect varieties are mutually intelligible. Because Ìkálẹ̀ dialect communities are many, it may not be possible to cover all of them in a single research like the current work. For this reason, the sub-dialects of Òkìtìpupa and Oǹdó have been selected to represent Ìkálẹ̀ and Oǹdó regional dialects respectively.

As earlier stated, focus construction is derived by moving the focused items to the sentence initial position. That is, a constituent is made prominent by moving it to the sentence initial position. Focus marker takes a singular form *ín* in a sentence focusing and it is added to a whole sentence in the final position (Sada 1991). Since focus markers in Ìkálẹ̀ and Oǹdó regional dialects occur in the sentence final position both in constituent and sentence focusing, this paper will concentrate on constituent focusing so as to avoid a mix-up as exemplified below.

(3)   a.   *Ẹkùn   ó   mà   iye   Ṣadé*   (Oǹdó dialect)
                Tiger HTS know mother Ṣadé
                'The tiger knew Ṣadé's mother.'

        b.   *Ẹkùn   ó   mà   iye   Ṣadé í*
                Tiger HTS/RSP know mother Ṣadé FM
                'It was the tiger that knew Ṣadé's mother.'

        c.   *Ṣadé ẹkùn ó   mà iye   ẹ̀   í*
                Ṣadé tiger HTS knew mother RSP FM
                'It is Sadé whose mother the tiger knew.'

        d.   *Iye   Ṣadé ẹkùn ó   mà ín*
                Mother Ṣadé tiger HTS know FM
                'It was Ṣadé's mother that the tiger knew.'

        e.   *Mímà   ẹkùn ó   mà iye   Ṣadé í*
                Knowing tiger HTS know mother Ṣadé FM
                'The fact is that the tiger knew Ṣadé's mother.'

(4)   a.   *Ẹkùn   ó   mà   iye   Ṣadé*   (Òkìtìpupa dialect)
                Tiger HTS know mother Ṣadé
                'The tiger knew Ṣadé's mother.'

        b.   *Ẹkùn   ó   mà   iye   Ṣadé ín*
                Tiger HTS/RSP know mother Ṣadé FM
                'It was the tiger that knew Ṣadé's mother.'

        c.   *Ṣadé ẹkùn ó   mà iye   ẹ̀   ín*
                Ṣadé tiger HTS knew mother RSP FM
                'It is Sadé whose mother the tiger knew.'

        d.   *Iye   Ṣadé ẹkùn ó   mà   ín*

Mother Ṣadé tiger HTS know   FM
'It was Ṣadé's mother that the tiger knew.'

e. *Mímà   ẹkùn ó   mà   iye   Ṣadé ín*
   Knowing tiger RSP know mother Ṣadé FM
   'The fact is that the tiger knew Ṣadé's mother.'

A critical study of examples (3) and (4) above reveals that the focused constituents possess NP features. When NPs in subject and genitival positions are moved, the extraction sites are filled with resumptive pronouns (RSP). The reason is that the standard dialect and the dialects of Yorùbá do not permit the positions of the subject and genitival NPs to be empty when they are moved, hence, the positions have to be filled with gap fillers (Sonaiya 1987). For instance, when subject NPs are moved in examples (3b) and (4b) above, the extraction sites are filled with the high tone syllable (HTS) *ó*.

There are divergent opinions on the status of the high tone syllable *ó*. Scholars like Awobuluyi (1992, 2001, 2006), Adesuyan (2006) and Olumuyiwa (2008) are of the opinion that when a subject NP is moved in a complex sentence in Oǹdó and Ìkálẹ̀ regional dialects, the extraction site remains unfilled. According to them, the high tone syllable *ó* that occurs in between the Subject NP and the verb remains in-situ and it functions as a preverb. However, scholars like Sonaiya (1987) and Oluseye (2005) have a contrary opinion that leaving the extraction site of a moved subject NP unfilled in a complex construction violates Extended Projection Principle (EPP) requirement. Sonaiya (1987) and Oluseye (2005) independently explain that the extraction site of a moved subject NP in a complex construction is filled with subject resumptive pronoun. Akintoye (2015) has a contrary opinion. He argues that although it is true that HTS *ó* occurs in between subject NP and verb in examples (3a) and (4a) as argued by Awobuluyi (1992, 2001), Adesuyan (2006) and Olumuyiwa (2008) and that the extraction site of a moved subject NP in a complex construction as shown in examples (3b) and (4b) above should be filled with a subject resumptive pronoun HTS *ó* so as to fulfil EPP requirement as suggested by (Sonaiya 1987 and Oluseye 2005), HTS *ó* as a preverb and the subject resumptive pronoun *ó* are adjacent to each other at the underlying level. Since HTS *ó* as a preverb and the subject resumptive pronoun *ó* are identical, he postulates that the HTS *ó* between the moved subject NP and the verb is derived by merger to perform dual functions; as a preverb and as a subject resumptive pronoun. Akintoye (2015) is of the opinion that it is left for a native speaker of Oǹdó and Ìkálẹ̀ regional dialects to apply the tacit knowledge he/she has about his/her dialect to know when the HTS *ó* functions as either a preverb or a subject resumptive pronoun. Since this paper is adopting a descriptive analysis, we will not delve into the arguments among the scholars mentioned above. In order to avoid ambiguity, the HTS *ó* is referred to as a subject resumptive pronoun in this paper.

When a genitival NP is moved, the extraction site is filled with a genitival resumptive pronoun as shown in examples (3c) and (4c) above. Since a verb does not possess an NP feature, it is nominalized by partial reduplication before moving to the sentence initial position as indicated in examples (3e) and (4e). When a nominalized verb is moved, its copy remains in-situ in the predicative position.

As earlier observed, the focus markers take different forms in the two regional dialects. For instance, the focus marker takes two forms; *í* and *ín* in Oǹdó dialect. The focus marker *í* co-occurs with oral vowels while *ín* co-occurs with nasal vowels as demonstrated below.

(5)   a.   *Tolú   ó   gbὲn usu*   (Oǹdó dialect)
              Tolú HTS plant yam
              'Tolú planted yam.'
      b.   *Tolú   ó   gbὲn usu í*
              Tolú RSP plant yam FM
              'It was Tolú that planted yam.'
      c.   *Usu Tolú ó   gbὲn ín*
              Yam Tolú HTS plant FM
              'It was yam that Tolú planted.'

Examples in (5) show that the focus marker *í* is the underlying representation but assimilates the nasal feature of the adjacent vowel as manifested in (5c). Focus marker takes one form *ín* in Ìkálὲ regional dialect and it occurs in all environments as demonstrated in examples (4b-e) above. One can possibly say that the focus marker *ín* has a wider distribution in the two regional dialects. In the sense that *ín* co-occurs with nasal vowels in Oǹdó dialect and with both oral and nasal vowels in Ìkálὲ dialect whereas, the focus marker *í* co-occurs only with oral vowels in Oǹdó dialect.

3. Focus construction in Igede language

Igede tribe is found in Benue State. The people trace their origin to Sábón Gídá Ọrà in Ẹdó State. Igede is the third largest tribe in Benue-State. They occupy two Local Government Areas; Òjú and Ọbí Local Government Areas in Benue State. They consist of six clans; Ọhia, Ovbiokhvarin, Evbiobe, Uhomora, Oke and Eme-Òrà. Igede language is a member of Benue-Congo language family, a sub-group of Niger-Congo family (Anyugo 2018). They can be found in Ògùn State, Cross-River State, Anambra State, Edo State and Èkìtì State[0]. As far as the speech forms of these clans are concerned, Igede language is mutually intelligible and since Igede dialect communities are numerous, it might not be possible to mention all of them in a paper like this. In this paper, the speech forms of the six clans shall be considered as the dialects of Igede for easy data presentation and analysis and the speech form of Òhia clan has been selected to represent other Igede communities.

      Focus construction is attested in Igede Language as observed in other Benue- Congo languages. Constituents are made prominent by moving them to the sentence initial position after which the focus marker will appear in the sentence final position as shown below.

(6)   a.   *Ịjò jέ   ìnínà Iṣadé*   (Òhịa dialect)
              Tiger know mother Ṣadé
              'The tiger knew Ṣade's mother.'
      b.   *Ịjò   á jέ   ìnínà   Iṣadé lὲ*
              Tiger RSP know mother Sade   FM
              'It was the tiger that knew Ṣade's mother.'
      c.   *Iṣadé Ịjò jέ   ìnínà   àmὺ lὲ*
              Ṣadé tiger know mother   RSP FM
              'It was Ṣadé whose mother the tiger knew.'
      d.   *Ịnínà   Iṣadé ịjò jέ lὲ*
              Mother Ṣadé tiger know FM

             'It was Ṣadé's mother that the tiger knew.'

e.   *Ọ̀jẹ́jẹ́   Ìjọ̀   jẹ́   ìnínà Iṣadé lẹ̀*
        Knowing tiger know mother Sadé FM
        'The fact is that the tiger knew Ṣadé's mother.'

In example (6) above, the focus marker takes *lẹ̀* form and it occurs in the sentence final position.

      Like Oǹdó and Ìkálẹ̀ regional dialects of Yorùbá, when the subject and genitival NPs are moved to the initial position in Igede language, their extraction sites are filled with resumptive pronouns. For instance, when the subject NP *Ìjọ̀* 'tiger' is moved, the extraction site is filled with the subject resumptive pronoun *à* as shown in example (6b). When the genitival NP Iṣadé is moved in example (6c), the extraction site is filled with the genitival resumptive pronoun àmù̀ 'her'. The verb *jẹ́* 'know' is nominalised before moving to the sentence initial position as shown in example (6e).

      It is observed that prepositions are internalised in Igede language as demonstrated below.

(7)   a.   *Ìṣadé má oyin Ọ̀hia*   (Ọ̀hia dialect)
             Ṣadé bear child Ọ̀hia
             'Ṣadé gave bith to a child in Ọ̀hia.'

        b.   *Olú jú kéfé*
             Olú be home
             'Olu is at home.'

         c.   *Ìwálé kò Kéfé Yalogoru*
             Wálé go house English
             'Wálé travelled abroad.'

A critical study of the simple sentences in Igede language shows that HTS is not attested between the subject NP and the verb as observed in Oǹdó and Ìkálẹ̀ dialects of Yorùbá.

4. Comparison between the focus construction in Oǹdó and Ìkálẹ̀ dialects of Yorùbá and Igede language

This section examines the similarities and differences between focus construction in Yorùbá and Igede languages. Because Yorùbá and Igede languages belong to the same Benue-Congo language family, some similarities are found between them. For instance, apart from moving the focused constituents to the sentence initial position, focus markers occur in the sentence final position in Oǹdó and Ìkálẹ̀ dialects and Igede language as demonstrated in examples (3), (4) and (6) above. In addition, when the subject and genitival NPs are moved in Oǹdó and Ìkálẹ̀ regional dialects of Yorùbá and Ọ̀hia speech form of Igede, the extraction sites are filled with resumptive pronouns. For instance, Oǹdó and Ìkálẹ̀ regional dialects of Yorùbá employ the high tone syllable *ó* as a subject resumptive pronoun and *è* 'his/her' as a genitival resumptive pronoun as shown in examples (3a.i), (4a.i) and (6a.i) on the one hand. On the other hand, Ọ̀hia speech form of Igede employs the high tone syllable *á* as a subject resumptive pronoun and *àmù̀* 'his/her' as a genitival resumptive pronoun as shown in examples (3a.ii), (4a.ii) and (6a.ii). Verbs are nominalised before they are focused in Oǹdó and Ìkálẹ̀ regional dialects of Yorùbá and Ọ̀hia speech form of Igede as manifested in examples (3a.iv), (4a.iv) and (6a.iv). This

process is in accordance with the assertion of Owolabi (1981), Yusuf (1990) and Awobuluyi (1992) that a verb should be nominalised by partial reduplication before it is focused or moved to the sentence initial position since it does not possess NP features.

The differences noticed between focus construction in Oǹdó and Ìkálẹ̀ dialects of Yorùbá and Ọ̀hia dialect of Igede are; first, the high tone syllable that occurs between the subject NP and verb in the simple sentences in Oǹdó and Ìkálẹ̀ dialects of Yorùbá is not attested in Ọ̀hia dialect of Igede as shown in examples (3a), (4a) and (6a) above. Second, focus markers differ in that while Oǹdó and Ìkálẹ̀ regional dialects of Yorùbá employ *í* and *ín* as focus markers, Ọ̀hia dialect of Igede employs *lẹ̀* as a focus marker. Also, prepositions are not conspicuous in Ọ̀hia speech form. According to the informant, it is not that prepositions are completely absent in Igede language, but they are internalized because the native speaker knows where they occur through the intuitive knowledge he/she has about his/her language as demonstrated below.

(8)　a.　*Ijohn hi iju kéfé*　　　　　　　　　(Ọ̀hia dialect)
　　　　　John put yam house
　　　　　'John put the yam at house.'
　　b.　*Ị̀nímà　mà　oyin Èkó*
　　　　　Mother bear child　Lagos
　　　　　'The mother gave birth to a child in Lagos.'

The internalization of prepositions is also attested in Yorùbá standard dialect and Ọ̀wọ̀ dialect of Yorùbá especially, if the deletion of such prepositions does not affect meaning according to Akintoye (2017) as shown below.

(9)　a.　*Ṣọlá dé sí oko*　　　　　　　　　(Yorùbá standard dialect)
　　　　　Ṣọlá get PREP farm
　　　　　'Ṣọlá got to the farm.'
　　b.　*Ṣọlá　dé oko*
　　　　　Ṣọlá get farm
　　　　　'Ṣọlá got to the farm.'
　　c.　*Olú　gbé ọmọ lọ sí　Èkó*
　　　　　Olú carry child go PREP Lagos
　　　　　'Olú carried the child to Lagos.'
　　d.　*Olú　gbé ọmọ lọ　Èkó*
　　　　　Olú carry child go Lagos
　　　　　'Olú carried the child to Lagos.'

(10)　a.　*Olú　í　ní　ulí*　　　　　　　　(Ọ̀wọ̀ dialect of Yorùbá)
　　　　　Olú be PREP house
　　　　　'Olu is in the house.'
　　b.　*Olú　í　ulí*
　　　　　Olú　be　house
　　　　　'Olu is in the house.'
　　c.　*Adé　á　ka　ghá　inú　ulí*
　　　　　Adé　Prev　Prev　come　PREP　house
　　　　　'Ade will be coming home.'

    d.   *Adé   á   ka   ghá ulí*
          Adé Prev Prev come house
          'Ade will be coming home.'

Although, nominalised verbs are attested in Igede language, they are derived by prefixation and assimilation processes as manifested below:

(11)   a.   *Òhuhu   ìnínà hu   oyin Yòjó lè̩*   (Ò̩hi̩a dialect)
             Carrying mother carry child Ò̩jó FM
             'The fact is that the mother carried the child.'
    b.   *Ò̩jé̩jé̩   ìjò̩ jé̩   ìnínà I̩sadé lè̩*
             Knowing tiger know mother S̩ade FM
             'The fact is that the tiger knew S̩adé's mother.'

In examples (11a) and (11b) above, the nominalised verbs; *Òhuhu* 'carrying' and *Ò̩jé̩jé̩* 'knowing' are derived by Phonological and Morphological processes. In the sense that after regressive assimilation in which the inserted vowel /i/ takes the features of the vowels of the adjacent verbs *hu* 'carry' and *jé̩* 'know', there is a prefixation of the bound morphemes *o* and *o̩*. This derivation also obeys vowel harmony principle such that the bound morpheme, [+ATR] *o* co-occurs with the [+ATR] high vowel /u/ while the bound morpheme, [-ATR] *o̩* co-occurs with the [-ATR] partial low vowel /e̩/ as illustrated below:

(12)   hu 'carry' → hihu 'carrying' → huhu → òhuhu   (Ò̩hi̩a dialect)
        jé̩ 'know' → jijé̩ 'knowing' → jé̩jé̩ → ò̩jé̩jé̩

This type of regressive assimilation is not strange to Yorùbá standard language whereby an inserted vowel /i/ assimilates the vowel feature of the main verb as demonstrated below:

(13)   *dú* 'to be black'   →   *dídú*   →   *dúdú* 'black'   (Yorùbá standard dialect)
        fun 'to be white'   →   *fifun*   →   *funfun* 'whiteness'
        tun 'to be new'   →   *titun*   →   *tuntun* 'newness'
        rin 'to be dropping' →   *rírin*   →   *rínrin* 'gradual dropping'
        burú 'to be wicked' →   *bíburú*   →   *búburú* 'wickedness'
        kúrú 'to be short'   →   *kíkúrú*   →   *kúkúrú* 'shortness'

5. Conclusion

This paper has examined the similarities and differences between focus construction patterns in Yorùbá and Igede languages. It is observed that the focus marker in Igede language and the regional dialects of Yorùbá like On̄dó and Ìkálè̩ dialects occur in the sentence final position. Apart from that, Igede language and On̄dó and Ìkálè̩ regional dialects of Yorùbá employ subject and genitival resumptive pronouns to fill the extraction positions of the moved subject and genitival NPs. A critical analysis of the grammar of Yorùbá and Igede languages shows that the similarities between focus construction patterns of the two languages are more than their differences. The reason for the many similarities has been traced to the fact that the two languages sourced their origin from Benue-Congo language family.

Abbreviations

FM   focus marker
NWY   north west Yorùbá
SEY   south east Yorùbá
CY   central Yorùbá
NEY   north east Yorùbá
SWY   south west Yorùbá
RSP   resumptive pronoun
HTS   high tone syllable
EPP   extended projection principle
NPs   noun phrases
ATR   advanced tongue root
PREP preposition

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