

**FOCUSING IN GHÒTÙÒ, EDO STATE, NIGERIA**

**BY**

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## Abstract

Focusing, a syntactic process, places communicative prominence on different constituents of the sentence. The Edoid group of languages is distinguished by the prevalence of focusing as strategy for determining information structure. Studies on Ghòtùò, an Edoid language, have concentrated on the sound system, classification and comparative studies with little attention given to focusing. This study was, therefore, designed to investigate the activation of focus construction in Ghòtùò with a view to describing focus markers, focusable constituents, derivations and interactions of focusing with other projections like the interrogative.

Chomsky's Minimalist Program was adopted as framework. Ethnographic design was used. Twenty four resident native speakers between the ages of fifty and seventy-nine, two from each of the twelve quarters of Ghòtùò, Owan North Local Government Area of Edo State, were purposively selected. Primary data were elicited through oral interview guided by Ibadan Syntactic Paradigms and Ibadan 400 Wordlist, while secondary data were sourced from primers and recorded audio clips. Data were subjected to inter-linear glossing, syntactic and qualitative analysis.

Ghòtùò has one optional focus marker 'ónhi', whose overt realisation contrasts the focused item from other constituent in the construction. Focusable constituents are categorised into subject determiner phrase, object determiner phrase, object of preposition, prepositional phrase, Verb phrase (VP) and emphatic pronoun. The non-focusable constituent is an adjectival phrase. Focusable and non-focusable constituents are identified with binary values [+ or -] emphasis and focus features. Constituents with [+emphasis] and [+focus] can be processed and preposed from non-focus to focus-licensing positions. Focus derivation involves two probes: emphasis and focus. Focused constituent is preposed clause initially to the specifier of Emphasis Phrase to check [+emphasis] licensing ForceP domain, and further moves to specifier of Focus Phrase to check focus. In object focusing, contrastive focus is licensed, targeting VP-Periphery and clausal periphery. Ghòtùò verb focus involves verbal duplication and fronting clause initially. Two types of chains derived from verbal position are Verb (V)-movement and Verb bar ( $V^1$ )-movement chain. V-movement chain corresponds to argument (A)-movement chain which is licensed whenever the verb targets Tense-Agreement head.  $V^1$ -movement chain is induced through movement to the specifier in ForceP. Hence, argument bar ( $A^1/V^1$ ) antecedent can bind only  $A^1/V^1$  copies clause internally and not vice versa. Focus interacts with emphatic and interrogative heads obligatorily, and with topic optionally. Constituents with [+emphasis] open ForceP domain for focus. Topic constructions involve 'given information' and 'comment'. In Topic-Focus interaction, topic's comment changes to focus 'background information'; topic is projected higher than focus. Constituent with [+focus] is added to that with [+interrogative] in Yes-No and content questions to derive new information.

In Ghòtùò, focusing plays a significant role in the understanding of speaker's coding of constituents as new or given information in the ForceP. Decoding discourse information hinges more on the constituents' information structural properties.

**Keywords:** Ghòtùò, Focus construction in Edoid language, Information structure in Ghòtùò.

**Word count:** 459

## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to:

**God** the head, òpó tó so ayé mi ró

Late Pa Johnson Adéyeyè and Felicia Morádéké Ìlòrí

Late Mrs. Adéníkèè Olúbùnmi Akinolá

Dr. Toyin and Mrs. Ibijoke Olatúnjí

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Deborah Omołará ÌLÒRÍ

2020

## **Certification**

I certify that this work was carried out by Ìlòrí, Deborah Ọmọlará in the Department of Linguistics and African Languages, University of Ibadan.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACC/Acc	Accusative Case
AGR/Agr	Agreement
AgrOP	Object Agreement Phrase
AgrP	Agreement Phrase
AgrSP	Subject agreement Phrase
Asp	Aspects
Asp <sup>I</sup>	Intermediate projection of Aspect
AspP	Aspect Phrase
AUX	Auxiliary
AuxP	Auxiliary Phrase
C	Complementizer
C <sup>I</sup>	Intermediate projection of C
CAT-F	Categorial Feature
CFC	Core Functional Categories
CHL	Computational System of Human Languages
CI	Conceptual-Intentional System/Interface
Compl	Complement
CP	Complementizer Phrase
CUC	Chain Uniformity Condition
CWQ	Content word questions
Dem	Demonstrative
DO	Direct Object
DP	Determiner Phrase
EC	Earliness Condition
EF	Edge feature
EmphP	Emphatic Phrase
EPP	Extended Projection Principle
Ex-DP	External Determiner Phrase
F	Feature
FF	Formal Feature
FI	Full Interpretation
FinP	Finite Phrase
Foc <sup>0</sup>	Focus Phrase Head
Foc <sup>I</sup>	Intermediate projection of focus head
FocM	Focus Marker
FocP	Focus Phrase
FUT	Future Tense/ Futurity
GB	Government and Binding Theory
Gen	Gender
HAB	Habitual Marker
HT	High Tone
I	Inflection head
I <sup>I</sup>	Intermediate projection of Inflectional head
IC	Inherent Complement
INFL	Inflection
Inter <sup>0</sup>	Interrogative head
Inter <sup>I</sup>	Intermediate projection of inter <sup>0</sup>
InterP	Interrogative Phrase
IO	Indirect Object

IP	Inflection Phrase
L	Lexicon
LAF	Language Faculty
LCA	Linear Correspondence Axiom
LF	Logical Form
LI	Lexical Item
LS	Lexical subarray
LT	Low Tone
Mod	Modals
Movt	Movement
MP	Minimalist Program
N	Numeration
NEG/Neg	Negation
NegP	Negative Phrase
NOM/Nom	Nominative Case
NP	Noun Phrase
Num	Number
OBJ	Object
Per	Person
PERF	Perfective marker
PF	Phonological Form
PIC	Phase Impenetrability Condition
PISH	Predicate Internal Subject Hypothesis
Phon	Phonology/Phonological
PL	Plural
PP	Prepositional Phrase
PPT	Principles and Parameters Theory
Pro	Pronoun/pronominal
PST	Past Tense
PQ	Polar Question
QM	Question Marker
Rel-M	Relative Marker
RP	Resumptive Pronoun
S	Sentence
SC	Static class
SD	Structural Description
SG	Singular
SO	Syntactic Object
Spec	Specifier
ST	Standard Theory
Subj	Subject
SVO	Subject Verb Object
Syn	Syntax/Syntactic
T <sup>i</sup>	Intermediate Projection of T
TBU	Tone Bearing Unit
TNS	Tense
TopP	Topic Phrase
TP	Tense Phrase
TRAP	Theta-Role Assignment Principle
<i>u</i> F	Unvalued/Uninterpretable feature
UG	Universal Grammar



UTAH	Uniformity of theta Assignment Hypothesis
V	Verb/Lexical Verb
V <sup>I</sup>	Intermediate Projection of V
vF	v(erb)-feature
VP	Verb Phrase
v	Light Verb
v <sup>I</sup>	Intermediate Projection of v
vP	Light Verb Phrase
VC	Visibility Condition
VH	Vowel Harmony
VP	verb Phrase
VPISH	VP-internal Subject Hypothesis
φ	Phi/formal (features)
()	Low Tone
∅	Null
θ	Theta

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## CHAPTER ONE

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Preliminaries

Language is peculiar to man and it is one of the unique characteristics of human beings. Apart from performing communicative functions, it also serves to distinguish a group of people from others who may share similar characteristics. Therefore, every speech community has ways of arranging words to form sentences which may differ from those of other speech communities. Speakers do not often structure sentence arbitrarily; rather, they follow the set rules of the language which is usually innate as native speaker competence. This implies that they have the knowledge of the sounds, morphemes and words of the language that enables them to build clauses that are adjudged grammatically and meaningfully. Clauses form the largest unit in linguistic analysis and tend to be parameterized across languages.

The concept of focusing has been discussed by several scholars like Chomsky (1978), Jackendoff (1972), Quirk et al. (1972), Dik (1978) and Ladd (1980) as focus related terms include comments by Bloomfield (1933), Kraak (1970), Schmerling (1976), Rheme (Prague School), New Information by Halliday (1976b) and Chafe (1970,1976) as cited in Carlos (1983). In generative linguistics, focus determines which part of the sentence contributes new information. Focus distinguishes one interpretation of a sentence from other interpretations of the same sentence that may not differ in word order, but may differ in the way in which the words are taken to relate to each other. Focus directly affects the semantics or meaning or what the speakers intend to convey. Focus is a universal category and is marked in various ways across languages. Prosodically (English Intonational Focus), Morphologically (Mandeng) or Structurally (English-Cleff, Focus, Yoruba). This work attempts a detailed analysis of the scope of focus constructions in Ghòtùò. This study is concerned with understanding focusing, how it is derived, what can be focused, examining the scholarly views on focusing and theoretical issues in Yoruba, a neighbouring language so as to bring out the theoretical flaws which further helped us to understand the concept of focusing as a syntactic process. Focusing is one of the most prominent syntactic processes often employed by most African languages as a way of bringing into prominence or emphasizing an item within the utterance.

## 1.1 The Language and the People

Ghòtùò is an Edoid language spoken in Ghòtùò in Edo state of Nigeria. Ghòtùò has been differently referred to as Otwa and Otuò. This is as a result of the white people especially the missionaries who first worked on the language. The language is spoken by about 100,000 natives (1963 Mid-Western Nigeria Census) in Ghòtùò town in Owan Local Government Area of Edo State (Crozier and Blench, 1992). But as of now, according to Felix (2017:2) the language is spoken by 16,303 speakers based on the 1991 National Population Census. Ghòtùò speakers are mostly farmers cultivating cocoa, palm oil, palm kernel and fruits like oranges. Their place is often referred to as the ‘food basket of Edo State’. However, with enlightenment coming on the wings of civilization, many of them are now professionals in various fields including academics, the civil service and major players in corporate Nigeria, (Adeniyi, 2009)

Ghòtùò is surrounded by Emai- Luleha- Ora cluster (South and South-West), Uoka and Oloma (South) Igwe, Sasaru and Ihevbe (East and South East), Adeniyi (2015). The culture and oral tradition reveal that the people possibly migrated from different parts of Yorùbá and Bini lands. This explains the significant Yoruba influence on the lexicon and grammar of the language. The Yoruba influence still persists today reflecting in many Ghòtùò speakers being bilingual in Yoruba as well as bearing Yoruba names as shown in the Ghòtùò obaship table below.

**Table 1: The Ghòtùò Qbaship**

DATE	WAR GROUP NAMES	NAME OF OBA	QUARTER
1792	Okhizotoiku/ Alufuotor	Idonije	Oluma
1802	Odeyenuma/ Aimueran-Ekpe	Okede	Òlhilhà
1812	Umakhihe/ Okhizumharen	Ushokhai	Ohigba-Amoya
1822	Obokhiomhe/ Umaikhe	Igele	Ikhueran-Iyeu
1832	Oboera/ Otuogbuma	Iloje	Uree-Imahun
1842	Okhisabor/ Okhisemhakhonre	Okhiria	Iziokha
1852	Okhizotoiku/ Alufutor	Isumekhai	Oluma
1862	Odeyenuma/ Aimueran-Ekpe	Akoghoró	Òlhilhà
1872	Umakhihe/ Okhizumharen	Enahoro	Osiokpa-Amoya
1882	Obokhiomhe/	Agbokhohi	Orakhe

	Umaikhe		
1892	Oboera/ Otuogbuma	Oseije	Imahun
1902	Okhisabor Okhisenaikhow	Akhiome	Oluma
1912	Okhizoteku Alufuotuo	Ohiomero	Amoya
1922	Odeyenma Amuerakpe	Akhiemie	Iyeu Ikhueran
1932	Umakhihee Okhizumore	Afemoudu	Orakhe Òlhillà
1942	Obokhiome Umaikhe	Ogbodo	Iziokha
1952	Obaire Otuogbuma	Akpata	Imafu Obo
1962	Okhisabor Okhisemaikhonin	Igbaruma	Oluma
1972	Odeyenma Aimueran-ekpe	Esekhomo	Amosa Eke
1982	Okhizotaiku Alufuotuo	Crisis	Crisis
1994	Umakhihee Okhizumaren	Ijee Elugbe	Iyeu Imakhize
2004 till now	Obokhiome Umaikhe	Segun Ojeabuo Kayode Ajakaye	Idesa Olila

Felix (2017:45 – 51)

Since 2004, there has been crisis as per the turn of which quarter is to rule and it has not been resolved, the case is still pending in court till now.

The Ghòtùò people are in twelve quarters and these twelve quarters are in pairs rotating the Obaship of Ghòtùò community in the order of seniority. Below is the order.

- 1) Olùmá with Àmhòhò
- Òlhillà with Óràkè
- Ámóyá with Òkhìgba
- Ìyeù with Imuoupè
- Iziokhà with Ìghèrà
- Obó with Uruè (Felix (2017))

So, Ghòtùò has six ruling houses. Each ruling house reigns for a period of ten years. Each ruling house takes turn in kingship affairs rotation.

History and the oral tradition reveal that the people are from different parts of Yoruba land as well as from Bini land. For instance Olùmá are believed to come from Edo or Bini according to their praise chant which says ‘Edo khè íbè dó khè’ meaning people who come



from Edo. Òlhillà, Óràkhè and Iziokha are praised as ‘inhinhi kpó wùè’ meaning people who settle near Òkpè a town in Akoko Edo area. Ámóyá as ‘àbàdà ígùà people meaning people who come from Ibadan a town in Oyo State. Iyèù are praised as ‘ìpelè lujè people wà dó o’ meaning people who come from Ìpelè near Ìsùà Akoko in Ondo State. Obó generally called Imafu are praised as ‘òghòghò lu gbò’ meaning people who come from Òwò in Ondo State. This reveals the riddle behind the great influence of Yoruba on the people and the language as a whole.

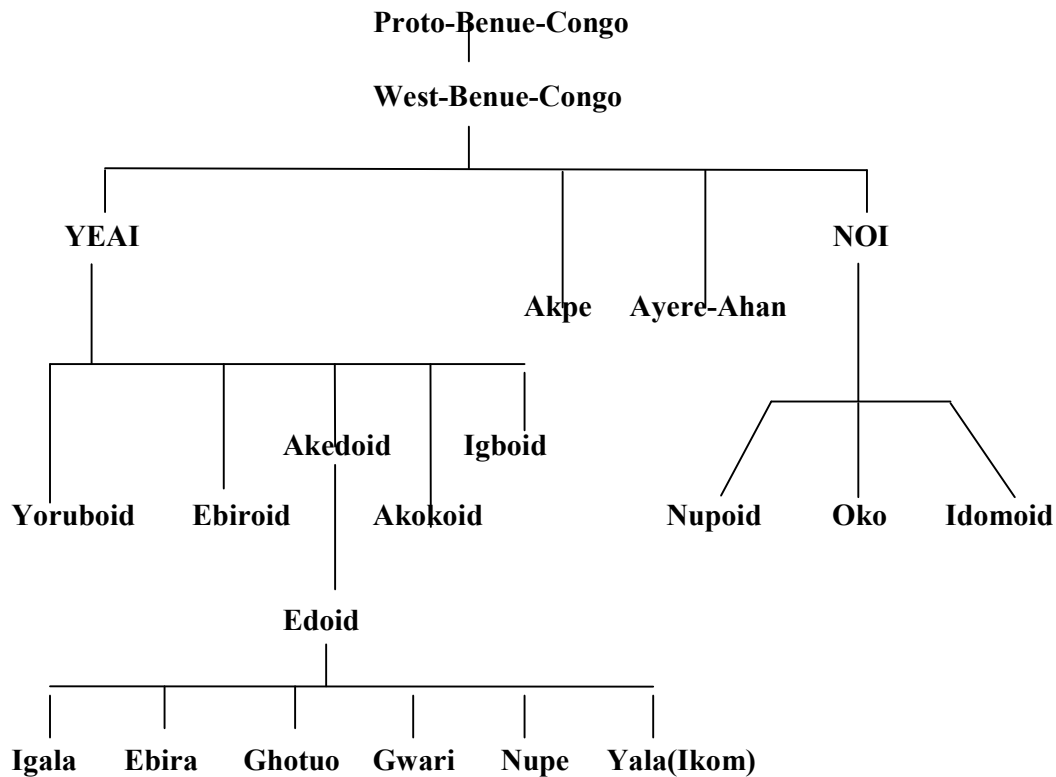
## **1.2 The Ecology and Classification of Ghòtùò**

Ghòtùò is an Edoid language spoken in Ghòtùò, Edo State in Nigeria. Ghòtùò falls under the North-Central Edoid group, one of the four groups of Edoid speaking peoples in Edo State. The other groups are Delta Edoid, Southern Edoid and North Western Edoid. The North-Central Edoid area extends from Benin City to the foot of the Afenmai (formerly Kukuruku) hills. The North-Central and North Western Edoid peoples live side by side even within the same village. Ghòtùò has to its South, Afuze and Uzebba approximately 27 and 30 kilometers away respectively Adeniyi (2009) cited by Ilori (2014). Other neighboring villages are Igue, Arokho, Akẹ and Ikhin.

Ghòtùò is one of the Edoid languages that belong to the New Benue -Congo family (Williamson, 1984). Following Greenberg’s 1963, Kwa was splited and the Eastern Kwa was combined with Benue – Congo to form the New Benue Congo. West Benue Congo corresponds to the former Eastern Kwa, spoken over the greater part of Southern Nigeria, extending further North in the West than in the East and overlapping into Benin (Williamson and Blench, 2000:31) cited by Adeniyi (2015).

Ghòtùò belongs to the YEAI group, where Ghòtùò belongs to the Akekoid (Elugbe, 2012). Further classifications within Akekoid places Ghòtùò under North Central Edoid along with languages such as Edo, Esan, Emai, Luleha, Ora, Yekhee (Etsako) and Ososo (Crozier and Blench, 1992).

**Figure (2): Internal Classification of West Benue-Congo reflecting proposal of Bankale (2006), Blench (2011), and Elugbe (2012, 2013).**



### 1.3 The Sounds System of Ghòtùò

There are some works on the phonology of Ghòtùò that discuss in detail both consonant and vowel sounds of the language.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the researcher assumed that those works would be adequate to equip us with necessary information on consonants and vowels of the language.

Ghòtùò, being one of the languages that have not been reduced to writing till now, though an attempt was made by Elugbe in 1975 to form an orthography for the language, but up till now, it has not been put in use. So, this work has suggested the orthography below for the Ghòtùò sound system following already established orthographies based on the IPA approved format using Roman Scripts.

IPA	Orthography	As in	Gloss
[p]	p	òpià	matchet
[b]	b	àbò	mat
[t]	t	ota	stick

<sup>1</sup> Elugbe (1973, 1985, 1986, 1995), Oyelowo (1988), Adeniyi (2009, 2015) among others give detailed information on the phonology of Ghòtùò.

[d]	d	oode	blood
[k]	k	òku	sea
[g]	g	ùgi	basket
[kp]	kp	èkpà	skin
[gb]	gb	ògbà	thirty
[f]	f	efamhe	urine
[v]	v	òvò	sunshine
[v̄]	vb	uvbi	root
[s]	s	isò	faces
[z]	z	uze	axe
[ʃ]	sh	eshòkò	grinding stone
[ʒ]	ʒ	izèmhi	work
[ʝ]	j	èèjè	fish
[tʃ]	ch	échàà	laughter
[x]	kh	okhua	horn
[ɣ]	gh	gháwà	dog
[m]	m	àmè	water
[m̄]	mh	úmhè	red
[n]	n	ná	give
[n̄]	nh	enhà	meat
[ɲ]	ny	aanyò	alcoholic drink
[h]	h	ohi	back
[l]	l	lè	go
[l̄]	lh	òìlhà	yam
[r]	r	vàrè	arrive
[w]	w	ùwè	salt
[w̄]	wh	whà	plan
[j]	y	iyèè	lies
[j̄]	yh	yhà	run

The inventory of vowel sounds is listed below

IPA	Orthography	As in	Gloss
[i]	i	ibià	children
[e]	e	é	eat
[ɛ]	ẹ	sẹ	split

[a]	a	kpá	vomit
[ɔ]	ɔ	okà	corn
[o]	o	mó	what
[u]	u	uki	moon

There are no nasal vowels in Ghòtùò: The oral vowels are seven and all the vowels are nasalized after nasals and after /h~/.<sup>2</sup>

#### 1.4 Ghòtùò Tone System

Ghòtùò is a terraced level tone language having three distinctive tones and a downstep, Elugbe (1985). The three tones are high, mid and low, their distinctiveness is observed in lexical items and in tense patterns. Let us consider the following examples;

2a)	òkpà	‘cock’
	Òkpa	‘one’
	Ọkpá	‘lamp’
b)	Ọ dẹ	‘he bought’
	Ọ dẹ̀	‘he is buying’
	Ọ dẹ́	‘he should buy’

The above examples show that the different tones are lexically and grammatically significant.

#### 1.5 Statement of the Problem

This research work is as a response to the current calls for the description, documentation and globalization of endangered African languages for sustainable development. It is a mean of utilizing African languages as local tools for solving human socio-economic problems.

Ghòtùò, an endangered language of less than twenty thousand speakers has not been widely studied. There is a dearth of linguistic literature on the language especially in the area of syntax. Existing studies concentrated on the phonology of Ghotuo (Elugbe 1973), Oyelowo (1988), its classification (Elugbe 2012, 2013), comparison (Elugbe 1973, 1989, 2012) and tone (Elugbe 1985), Adeniyi (2009,2015).

Aside (Salami 1992) and (Ilori 2014) who examined the Noun Phrase of Ghotuo, there is hardly any study on the syntax of the language. In other words, there is a dearth of

<sup>2</sup> The close vowel /i/ and /u/ becomes non-syllabic when they are preceded by a consonant and followed by another vowel e.g /fià/ → [fya<sup>^</sup>] ‘look for’, /léè/ → [lwe<sup>^</sup>] ‘press into pulp’, /igúò/ → [gwò<sup>^</sup>] ‘vibrate’

literature on the syntax of the language. In order to contribute towards filling this gap, this study investigates the syntax of focusing.

Nothing has been done on focusing in the language. Hence, this study employs the Minimalist Program (MP) to comprehensively analyse the structures of focus construction in the language. And moreover, since Ghotuo is one of the Edoid languages that is endangered, there is need to document its syntactic structures for future reference hence the need for this study within the theoretical framework of MP.

### **1.6 Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this study is to provide a comprehensive discussion of focus construction (as placing a communicative prominence on a certain constituent) by demonstrating its syntactic formation, derivation as well as its theoretical principles with respect to our theory of analysis.

In line with this, the following objectives are outlined to provide adequate description and explanation of the projection of focus construction in Ghòtùò by looking at:

- i. The factor(s) that determine or control focus marking.
- ii. The focus phrase as well as the scope of focusing in the language.
- iii. The syntactic operation(s) involved in focus constructions in Ghòtùò.
- iv. The formal constraint(s) that operate on focus constructions in Ghòtùò.

### **1.7 Research Questions**

In a research of this nature, it would not be out of order to design research questions that would guide and give the work a focus. Hence, the following questions were designed to achieve this purpose.

- i. What factor(s) determine or control focus marking?
- ii. What is the scope of focusing in Ghòtùò?
- iii. What are the syntactic operation(s) and the distribution properties of focusing in the language?
- iv. What are formal constraints that come to play in the derivation of focus constructions in the language?

### **1.8 Scope of the Study**

The syntax of any language has many phenomena like Noun Phrase, Verb Phrase, Tense and Aspect, Focusing, Negation, Relativisation and so on. Each of these phenomena is a universal phenomenon but the application and realisation in language differs (parametric

variation). Ghòtùò is one Nigerian Language that has not received much research attention especially in the area of syntax.

This research work is designed to examine the status of Focus Construction as a syntactic projection in Ghòtùò. However, there exist limitations to this study as there are relatively few literatures on the grammar of the language. This may be as a result of the fact that little attention has been given to the language by linguists, so as to ascertain its behaviour in terms of grammar. As a result we are limited to only those works available in English. This work seeks to make explicit descriptive analyses of focus construction in Ghòtùò.

### **1.9 Justification for the Study**

. A few works have been done on Ghòtùò as a language and this work is not, and cannot, be taken as pioneering work in the study of the syntax of the language as there has been at least two works which focus on syntax as I have earlier mentioned.

With the trend of things, this work intends to look at the focus construction projections; the scope, the condition of use, what can be focused in Ghòtùò as well as the syntactic operation of focusing in the language employing minimalist approach. The rationale behind the choice of MP as the theoretical tool is that in this age of information technology, there is need for language description using computational model. Thus, describing syntax of Ghòtùò language using this model would facilitate the use of the language in information and communication based technologies.

### **1.10 The Word Order of Ghòtùò**

Word order is one of the ways in which languages differ (parametric variation) from one another, and this difference has to be stored in the cognition of language speakers for it is what reduces language to learning the correct set of words and making choice(s) from a predetermined set of options (Carnie, 2006). Rosenbaum (1968: 44-50) when given intricate insight to the constituents of Noun Phrase says, every sentence is assumed to consist of three major constituents. The deep structure arrangement of the major constituents – Noun Phrase (as subject) auxiliary and verb phrase.

Syntactically, Ghòtùò is a configurational language base on the fact that it exhibits a fixed Subject- Verb – Object order within its IP/TP domain. Any word order that deviates from this basic order is a function of discourse that trigger displacement operations to the clausal left periphery. Such discourse may be for emphasis, questioning and so on.

Ghòtùò is a configurational language. This is so because the word order is not determined by syntactic function and the position of subjects and objects is not fixed. The

language is said to have free word order in the sense that it may have hardly any restriction on the order among verbs arguments and adjuncts, yet word order is restricted according to the position of the topic and the focus. In a nutshell, the language exhibits a free word order of the arguments and the verbs, but it is fixed with respect to focus structure and topic structure which is why the language is referred to as discourse-configurational language. Consider the examples below;

- 3)                    Ọmọhí ọ      é ghoòhì ọ  
                          Man   the eat   food   the  
                          ‘The man eats/ate the food’
- [IP Ọmọhí ọ [INFL [VP é ghoòhì ]]]
- 4)                    Ọkposo ọ      dẹ      ẹwe  
                          Lady   the   buy   goat  
                          ‘The lady buys/bought a goat’
- [IP Ọkposo ọ [INFL [VP dẹ ẹwe ]]]
- a.                    Ọmùà lẹ      dẹ      òìlhà  
                          Ọmùà will buy   yam  
                          ‘Ọmùà will buy yam’
- b.                    Ọ              dẹ              ghobè  
                          He   buy(+BE) book  
                          ‘He is/was buying a book’
- c.                    Ọ              dẹ              ghobè  
                          He   buy(+HAVE) book  
                          ‘He has/had bought a book’

The constructions in (3&4) above are examples of ordinary/neutral sentences in Ghòtùò with a subject-verb-object order. The sentences (4a-c) show that INFL-related features like tense and aspect are encoded by tones and free morpheme ‘lẹ’ that occur between the subject and verb in the fixed order tense – aspect. Ghòtùò lacks agreement or inflectional morphology. Nouns are never inflected for case while verbs are not also inflected for person/number and tense or aspect. In agreement with Olaogun (2016) the only indicator of the grammatical function of a given D is its syntactic position. This being so, a neutral sentence in Ghòtùò involves a sequence of :

Complementation > Subject > Tense > Aspect > Verb > Object.

## **1.11 Summary**

This introductory chapter has given a number of preliminary pieces of information required to explicitly understand this study. The information comprised of the native speakers, the geographical location, genetic classification and the information regarding the previous work on the language, research questions that the thesis attempted to answer and the methodology adopted for the study are also dealt with.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Preliminaries

This chapter examines the previous work done in Ghòtùò and the scholarly work on Focusing as a syntactic process. The views of other scholars were examined so as to show the relatedness or otherwise of their views with what is obtainable in focusing in Ghòtùò.

#### 2.1 Previous works in Ghòtùò

Ghòtùò, being an endangered language of less than twenty thousand speakers has not been widely studied. There is not much previous work on the language especially in the area of syntax. All that has been done on the language had been on the phonological aspect of the language. The two works done on the syntax aspect of the language to the best of our knowledge was done by Salami (1992), titled ‘The Syntax of Ghòtùò Noun Phrase’ and Ilori (2014) ‘A Descriptive Analysis of Òtùò Noun Phrase’ both were MA projects. Both dealt with the same syntactic aspect Noun Phrase. Salami used GB as her theoretical framework while Ilori did descriptive analysis. The reason for descriptive analysis then was that Ghòtùò is a virgin language that has not been explored, so, confronting it with model theory may not be too good to judiciously study the language properly.

Moreso, Salami (1992) in her work claims that the language has no marker for focus construction, but careful examination of the language reveals that there is a marker ‘ònhì’ though optional, but whenever it appears in an expression to focus any item, it is to show contrast as will be seen in the course of this study. Also, Ilori too claims occurrence of this marker with certain constituents, that the marker is covert when it comes to predicate focusing (Ilori, 2014). But as will be seen in this work, we discover that there is no such restriction from careful examination of the language. So, these and other arguments on focus constructions cross-linguistically motivate this particular work and our choice of the theoretical framework used, that is Minimalist Program (MP).

#### 2.2 Definition of Focusing

Focus is a grammatical means of marking the organization of information in discourse. It divides sentences into a focus and an open proposition corresponding to background information. Focus selects a value for the variable in the open proposition from a set of contextually relevant alternative propositions (Rooth, 1996). Focus Construction is a way of rendering a constituent of a sentence emphatic; it denotes the information in the

sentence that is assumed by the speaker not to be shared by him and the hearer. Focus directly affects the meaning of a sentence. Different ways of pronouncing the sentence affects the meaning or what the speaker intend to convey.

Focusing has been defined as the syntactic process of placing semantic prominence on an entire construction or part of a construction. Radford (2009:325) sees a focused constituent typically represents new information that is information not previously mentioned in the discourse and unfamiliar to the hearer. Schater (1973) views focusing as a syntactic operation correlated with the semantic process of foregrounding once part of a sentence at the expense of the rest. Susie (1996) sees focus as a grammatical means of marking the organization of information in discourse. Dik (1978:19) argues that the focus represent what is relatively the most important information in the given setting. Information focus is one kind of emphasis whereby the speaker marks out a part which may be the whole of a message block, Halliday (1967:202). Baker (1995) defines it as a construction that is specifically designed to serve an identificational function while Lambrecht (1994:206) defines focus as the new knowledge hitched to the topic post that is the new information conveyed about a topic. He goes further to say that the focus is that portion of a proposition which cannot be taken for granted at the time of speech. It is the unpredictable or pragmatically non-recoverable element in an utterance. The focus is what makes an utterance into an assertion. Focus shows contrast between given and new information. It is an unpredictable part of the proposition.

In nutshell, in focusing, an extra amount of stress tha is emphasis is given to a particular constituent in the sentence, making it the only possible focus of the sentence with the effect that all the other constituents of the sentence is interpreted automatically as presupposition. It is a fact that focus has to do with the speaker passing information that he feels new to the hearer or trying to make a particular constituent important or emphatic. It assigns prominence to the part of the message which the speaker wants to emphasize. The newness of the information does not mean that it has not been mentioned before but that the speaker presents it in a special way to call more attention to it by laying emphasis on that particular constituent. Below are some examples of focus in English, Yoruba and Ghòtùò;

- |     |                                   |         |
|-----|-----------------------------------|---------|
| 5a) | John bought the house.            | English |
| b.  | It is JOHN who bought the house.  |         |
| c.  | It is THE HOUSE that John bought. |         |

- 6a) Adé ra iwé Yorùbá  
 Adé buy book  
 ‘Adé bought a book’
- b. Adé ni ó ra iwé  
 Adé FOC MTS buy book  
 ‘ADÉ bought a book’
- c. Ìwé ni Adé rà.  
 book FOC Adé buy  
 ‘ Adé bought a BOOK’
- d. Rírà ni Adé ra iwé  
 buying FOC Adé buy book  
 ‘ Adé BOUGHT a book’
- 7a) Ọmùà nhéghe òhò Ghòtùò  
 Ọmùà cook soup  
 ‘Ọmùà cooked soup’
- b. Òhò ọ̀nhi Ọmùà nhéghe  
 soup FOC Ọmùà cook  
 ‘Ọmùà cooked SOUP’
- c. Ọmùà ọ̀nhi ó nhéghe òhò  
 Ọmùà FOC she cook soup  
 ‘ÒMÙÀ cooked soup’
- d. Nhéghe ọ̀nhi Ọmùà nhéghe òhò  
 cook FOC Ọmùà cook soup  
 ‘Ọmùà COOKED soup’

From the above examples, subjects were focused in (6b&7c), a resumptive pronoun is left at the extraction site which is a copy of the moved subject. Examples (6c&7c) are instances of object focusing, the objects received the contractive force that contracts the object from every other constituents in the sentence. Examples (6d&7d) are instances of verb focusing. In (6d) the verb that is being moved was nominalised before it can occupied the Spec of foc but in (7d) the verb was not nominalised rather it remained the same form like as it was before extraction. I am of the opinion that there may be two category of verb in Ghòtùò, nominalised (though non – overt) and non-nominalised verb. So it is that only the nominalised forms that can operate in focusing operation in Ghòtùò.

### 2.3 Scholarly views on focusing

Several scholars have at some points in time proposed some theoretical and descriptive analysis for focusing though mainly in Yoruba. Awobuluyi is one of the

pioneering scholars on focusing. His view seems to be contentious as presented in Awobuluyi (1976, 1978, 1987) among others. He views focus construction as noun phrase. His arguments on this are briefly presented below;

- i. Focus constructions function as complement of the verb *Ṣe* ‘to be’. He argues that *Ṣe* does not take sentential complements but takes focus phrase as complement. Thus, focus constructions are noun phrases.
- ii. Obligatory nominalization of focused predicate i. e. whenever predicate is to be focused, it must be partially reduplicated and attached just like every other nouns sentence initially.
- iii. The “ni-phrase” in focus constructions acts semantically like qualifier by narrowing down the range of possible head nouns one has in mind.
- iv. Short pronouns do not undergo focusing. They are unspecified. Therefore cannot collocate with qualifiers. This further shows that the “ni-phrase” is actually nothing but qualifier.

Owolabi (1987) and many others assume that focus constructions are sentences.

His own arguments are stated below;

- i. The fact that focus constructions can be modified by sentential adverbs like “*ṣé* – is it the fact”, “*àṣé* – I didn’t realized that”, and sentence adverbials like “*síbèsibè* – nevertheless”, “*ní tòótó* – truly”, show that focus constructions are sentences.
- ii. “*Ṣùgbón* –and, *àmó* – but, and *sì* – and” are used only to conjoin sentences in Yoruba. They also; conjoin focus constructions, this shows that focus constructions are sentences.
- iii. “*Àti* – and, *pèlú* – and” connect NPs and nominals only. It goes then that if focus constructions are NPs, they should be connected as such.
- iv. There is similarity between the simple sentence structure of Nominal – Verb – Nominal and focus constructions.

Taiwo (2008) is one of the adherents of Owolabi’s school of thought. Theoretically, his view defers in respects of the antecedent relation and trace of the focused NP. Traces of the preposed NP can either be overt or covert. Ilori (2010) assumes that short pronouns are focused in situ, hence, his treatment of focus constructions shows that he belongs to Owolabi’s school of thought. He is of the opinion that the High Tone Syllable (HTS) which has provoked much scholarly debates in literature and previously assumed to be the trace of focused NP (subject) is a tense marker that marks past/present tense in Yorùbá. Awoyale (1990, 1995) establishes the fact that “ni” the focus marker is a case assigner in contrast to

Awobuluyi's claim that focus marker cannot assign case in the language. He says the focus marker assigns Emphatic Case to the Spec of FocP and this conditions alpha movement either in syntax or at the Logical Form Component of focus constructions. The researcher is going to go along with Awoyale's view on this focus marker as I shall establish this in the course of my analysis in this research work. More so, going by Owolabi, Focus construction is a sentence and not a phrase as proposed by Awobuluyi.

## 2.4 Theoretical views on Relativisation

Chomsky (1965) proposes **Matching theory** views relativisation as involving embedding of a simple sentence in an NP functioning within the matrix sentence such that the matrix sentence NP is exactly matched by another NP within the accompanying embedded sentence. Consider for instance the example below;

- 8a)                   Ovbàghì  nhi  omohí  o  dé  rò  jémi  
                       House  Rel  man  the  buy  be  good  
                       'The house which the man bought is good'
- b)                   Òìlhà  nhi  mhi  fùè  
                       Yam  Rel  I  cook  
                       'The yam that I cook'

From the above examples it can be seen that the NPs in the embedded sentence are matched with the NPs in the matrix sentence. This theory requires that the two NPs must be identical but this theory may not be adequate enough to properly account for the derivation process of relativisation in the language as we will show it later in the following section.

Another theory is **Promotion Theory** by Schacher (1973), which assumes that relativisation consists of a null NP head in which a simple embedded sentence is the qualifier. An NP from the embedded sentence is then promoted to fill the head. For instance

- 9)                   [ ...[ mhi  fùè  òìlhà ] ]  
                       I  cook  yam

Òìlhà the object of the verb fùè 'cook' in the embedded clause is then promoted to the null subject position of the matrix clause to derive (10) below.

- 10)                   [ Mhẹmhẹ [nhi [mhi  fùè  òìlhà ] ] ]  
                       I-emph Rel I  cook  yam  
                       'I am the one who cooked yam'
- 11)                   [Òìlhà [nhi [mhi  fùè  ~~òìlhà~~ ] ] ]  
                       yam Rel I  cook  yam  
                       'It is yam that I cooked'

But the two above mentioned theories have their shortcomings in that there is selectional compatibility. Consider this example

- 12)            [Ovbàghì [nhi [òmòhí ọ dẹ] ] rò jémi]  
                  House    Rel    man    the buy    be    good  
                  ‘The house which the man bought is good’

The above example can have the following simple declarative sentences which are not identical or exactly matched.

- 13a)            Òmòhí ọ dẹ    ovbàghì  
                  Man    the buy    house  
                  ‘The man bought a house’

- b)            Ovbàghì rò dżémi  
                  House    be good  
                  ‘The house is good’

Beside this, predicate relativisation which often do not require promotion of any kind but movement has no place in those grammars. Consider this example;

- 14)            Lẹ [nhi [Òmùà lẹ] ]  
                  Go Rel    Òmua    go  
                  ‘The fact that Òmùà went’

Awobuluyi’s insertion theory of (1976) is another that assumes that relative clauses are stored in the lexicon just like lexical items with definable features. Such prefabricated structures could be lexicalized partially derived strings. We observed that, this hypothesis runs counter intuitive because what are called lexical items must be redefined as it seems. More so, language is not acquired in this way, because, the hypothesis requires that one knows the features of a complete complementiser to know what qualifies NPs.

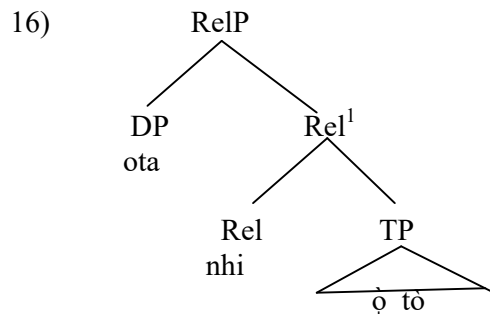
Bamgbose (1975) is an adherent of promotion theory. He identified some constructions like predicate relative clause as ambiguous in respect to factive and non-factive meaning. He identifies restrictive and non-restrictive relativisation as the two major classes of relativisation especially in Yorùbá.

As can be seen, the previous works on this syntactic process have been motivated both descriptively and theoretically. On headedness, relativisation is viewed as a projection of the ‘head NP’ which ‘nhi mhi fùè’ is attached to as seen below;

- 15a)            Òìlhà    nhi    mhi    fùè  
                  Yam    Rel    I    cook  
                  ‘The yam that I cooked’

- b) Ota nhi ọ̀ tò  
 Tree Rel it burn  
 ‘The tree that is burning’
- c) Ovbàghì nhi ọ̀mọ́hí ọ̀ dẹ́  
 House Rel man he buy  
 The house that the man bought’

However, constructions like above show that relative marker actually clause typed the expression as seen below;



Sentence relativisation is however not possible in the language under investigation like in focusing where sentence can be focused just like that of the constituents.

Within the context of MP, ‘nhi’ is operator head and operator heads have some features which often trigger movement into Spec. This informed why an insertion theory is bound to fail.

Radford (2009) views movement as copying and deletion. This poses a serious threat to MP as it is. Collins (2011) and Ilori (2010) view movement as copy and paste processes. To assume Ilori’s opinion simply explain language acquisition process. A child only makes copy of lexical items in series of merge operations. Trace copies are not focalized in the LF. Unfocalized copies are marked with the bracket ‘< >’<sup>3</sup>.

## 2.5 Scholarly views on interrogatives

Yusuf (1992) observes that Yes/No questions in Yoruba and other related languages are syntactically uninteresting. It only involves adjunction of question particles or markers to sentence initially or finally sometimes, unlike in English and some other related languages where auxiliaries are inverted with other mechanisms like Do-support for the application of

<sup>3</sup>Collins (2011) has the detail.

Aux-NP inversion rule. This implies that there is no movement applied in most languages patterning like Yoruba as well as Ghòtùò.

Cheng (1991) who assumes clause-typing hypothesis proposed that the typological distinctions among languages with respect to the formation of wh-questions can be attributed to the availability of question particles and wh-words. To Cheng, economy of derivation predicts that no language has the option of alternating between the two methods of clause typing and thus, there are no languages with ‘optional movement’ of wh -words. Invariably, movement of wh-words is sufficient to type a clause as a wh-question. Cheng (1991) fails to realize why wh-items had to move *ex-situ* in some languages and *in-situ* in some other languages. In this connection and on the basis of evidence available in Ghòtùò, we suffice to say that this claim cannot be generalized for most languages, in particular African languages.

Ilori (2010) notes that Yes/No questions i.e. PQs in Yorùbá involve merging of convergent IP derivation with question particles Ñjé/Şé which regularly occur clause initially and clause finally to project question phrase in Yorùbá. He assumes that the Spec, QstP is not projected despite the interpretable phi-features ( $\phi$ - features) of the Qst<sup>0</sup> which must be checked before LF. But in Igala, a Mid-tone question marker is merged to a convergent IP at the clause left periphery before IP-raising to Spec, QstP to derive the surface word order.

Challenging this popular world view, i.e. the earlier analyses of PQs and CWQs as projections of different heads, Nkemnji (1995) and Aboh & Pfau (2011) propose a reanalysis of the two question types as projections of one and only one functional head, Inter<sup>0</sup> under ForceP in the left periphery. The claim is that there must be identical question marker for both content word questions and polar questions before an analysis which unifies the separate projections can be attained. Our claim however deviated from their claim because it makes it difficult to account for the richness of the vast majority of languages of the world. Thus, this claim does not have in mind universality. Similarly, simplex sentences containing QVs are not considered.

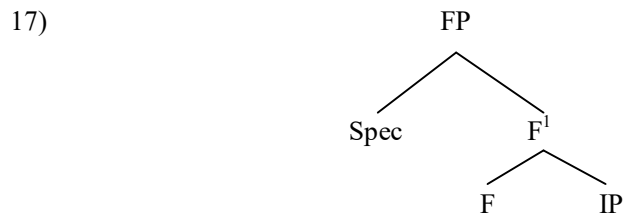
Olaogun’s (2012) clausal typing hypothesis and the syntax of interrogative also challenge the traditional analysis in a quest to propose a unified analysis for the Amgbé languages. He also notes that the wh-words are not typing particles as earlier claimed by Cheng (1991) but they are meant for interpretive purpose. Yet, his claim is much similar to Aboh and Pfau (2011) in respect of identical question markers for both PQs and CWQs.



## 2.6 Focus Phrase

The focus phrase like complementizer phrase and Inflectional phrase, is a functional projection and is headed by a functional head, the focus marker which could be optional in some languages. The focus phrase is the root node that houses the fronted constituent and the focus marker. The focused constituent is housed in the specifier of focus phrase position.

Radford(2004:453) argues that focusing denotes a movement operation by which a constituent is moved into a focus position at the beginning of a clause in order to highlight it while Balyere (1999,2004) state that when a constituent is focused, it is moved from its original position to the sentence initial position. This sentence initial position is what is referring to as the Spec of FP. In the GB account (Yusuf 1983, Awoyale 1985, Carstens 1986 and Sonaiya 1986) the construction is claimed to be movement derived. The structure below illustrates the structure of the FP



Focusing is an example of movement transformation known as ‘Move  $\alpha$ ’. The constituent to be rendered emphatic is preposed that is moved to the Spec of FP. Following GB’s account of D- Structure and S- Structure, it is assumed that in the derivation of Focus Constructions, the D- Structure mapped onto the S- Structure by movement. According to the X-bar Theory, the structure of phrases and sentences must be respected at the D-structure. In Ghòtùò, it is also observed that the derivation of focus construction is by movement and this is shown in section 3.5

## 2.7 Types of Focus Construction

Some attempts have been made to typologise the different kinds of focus that occur in a natural language<sup>4</sup>. From a formal point of view, focus may be distinguished on the basis of the scope of the marker over a syntactic unit or the type of grammatical unit it is attached to. The syntactic scope of the item may correspond to but may also be different from the pragmatic scope of the focus device. Thus, we can then talk of argument focus where the syntactic scope of the focus marker is over a nominal or adverbial argument in the sentence, or a predicate or verb focus where the scope is over the verbal or predicate element, or

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<sup>4</sup> Watters 1979, Dik et al 1981, Culicover and Rochemont 1983 give detailed information on the typology.

sentence focus where the syntactic scope of the marker is over the whole proposition or sentence. Some languages may use the same marker for the different types of syntactic focus while other languages may have different markers for each type.

Other typologies of focus relate to the function of the focused element in the communicative situation. Thus, it may be **identificational**, that is; introducing a new participant into the discourse. **Identificational focus** presents an alternative that is specifically identified out of a group. According to Kiss (1998, p.245) identificational focus expresses exhaustive identification and occupies the specifier of a functional projection. It is the type of focus that involves movement; it is realized as a cleft constituent. Identificational focus is non-presupposed. Consider the following examples;

- 18) Mary egy kalapot nézty ki magának Hungarian  
 Mary a hat.ACC pick out herself. ACC  
 ‘It was a hat that Mary picked for herself’
- 19) Ọṣẹ (ọ̀nhì) ọ gbé na mhè Ghòtùò  
 Cricket FOC he kill for me  
 ‘He killed a CRICKET for me’

The Hungarian example contains preverbal identification focus in which Mary picked a hat and not any other thing from all other items that was available. This can also be seen from Ghòtùò in example above that ọṣẹ ‘cricket’ is what was killed not something else. Sometimes, this kind of focus also appear to be a response to some kind of questions. Identificational focus in English is indicated by cleft constructions<sup>5</sup>. Consider the following sentence;

- 20a) It was Kate that he introduced to John last year.

This could be a response to the question:

- b) Who did he introduce to John last year?

The response in (20a) indicates that it was **Kate** and no one else that was introduced to John last year. The speaker has committed himself to singling out **Kate** as the person introduced and no one else.

More examples from Yoruba (21), Igbo (22) and Ghòtùò (23);

21. a. Ta ni ó ra ìwé ?  
 ‘Who bought a book?’

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<sup>5</sup> See Kiss, 1998 for more information. The example is also taken from p. 249



25. a. Ońyé tà – rá ánú? Igbo  
Who eat-PST meat  
'Who ate the meat?'
- b. **AZUBUIKE** bu ya tà – rá ánú  
Azubuike FM him eat-PST meat  
'AZUBUIKE was the one that ate the meat.'
- 26a) Été wè yò? Gungbe  
What Foc happen  
'What happen'
- b) **Súrù** wè kù mótò bíọ àximè bò hù mè  
Súrù Foc drive car enter market and kill person  
'SÚRÙ drove a car in the market and killed some people'
- c) **Nú** ǎé wè xá mì  
thing Det Foc happen 1sg  
'SOMETHING happened to me'
- 27a) Ọnhí ọfú èèjè? Ghòtùọ  
Who cook fish?  
'Who cooked fish?'
- b) **Ọmùà** ọnhí ọ ọfú èèjè  
ọmùà Foc she cook fish  
'ỌMÙÀ cooked fish'.

The new information in examples (24 - 27) are; '**Lagos, Azubuike, Súrù, Nu and Ọmùà**'. The information which was unknown to the interlocutor. Going by Halliday (1967) emphasis is placed on these items as a part of the whole message block, so they are the new information presented.

**Contrastive Focus-** In this kind of focus, the information provided is contrary to the belief of the interlocutor. It has to do with the presence of relevant alternatives present in a proposition. It can be expressed with both pseudo cleft and cleft constructions. This type according to Dik et al (1981) may be of many kinds. For example, it may be corrective – correcting a presupposition of an interlocutor, replacive – replacing an assumption of an interlocutor, or selective – singling out an item for emphasis etc. the common element of the different kinds of contrastive focus for Dik et al. is that the focus information is presented to be different from an assumption that may be made in the communicative content. In other word, the information provided is contrary to the belief of the interlocutor. Consider the following examples in English, Hausa, Igbo and Ghòtùọ;

28a)	Should we play chess or scrabble?	English
b	Let's play scrabble.	
29a)	Kòòfii zaa kà shaa koo kùwa shaayii? Coffee fut 2sg drink or else tea 'Will you drink coffee or tea'	Hausa
b)	Zan shaa shaayii fut.1sg drink tea 'I will drink tea'	
c)	Naa aikàà da littaa-fi-nFOC nee (bàà takada-r- ba) 1sg perf sent book-DEF FOC NEG letter-def NEG 'I sent the BOOK, (not the letter).'	
30. a.	Ì chò – rò nkea ko nke ọzọ? You want-PST this one or that another 'Do you want this one or that one?'	Igbo
b.	Nkea bu nke chòrò this one FOC this want-PST 'It is THIS ONE that I want'	
31a.	Oilha (ọnhi) Ọmùà é ọwèni Yam FOC Ọmùà eat yesterday 'Ọmùà ate YAM yesterday'	Ghòtùò
b.	Òhò ọnhi Ọmùà nhéghe soup FOC Ọmùà cook 'Ọmùà cooked SOUP'	
c.	Ọmùà ọnhi ó nhéghe òhò Ọmùà FOC she cook soup 'ỌMÙÀ cooked soup'	
d.	Nhéghe ọnhi Ọmùà nhéghe òhò cook FOC Ọmùà cook soup 'Ọmùà COOKED soup'	

The examples above indicate a choice between two or more choices. Example (28b) indicate that they would play scrabble rather than chess, (29b) indicates that tea rather than coffee will be taken while (29c) also indicates that it was the book and not anything else that was sent. As shown in (31a), even though the realization of focus particle in Ghòtùò focus construction can be optional, its mandatory occurrence will only contrast the focus element from every other possibilities. The focus marker '**ọnhi**' in (31a) automatically contrasts the possibility of eating **òilhà** yam not any other thing. Ghòtùò operate selective contrastive

focus for every item focused is singled out specifically for emphasis as seen in the examples (31a-d).

## 2.8 The Focus Marker

The morpho-syntactic manifestation of focus in Kwa languages usually involves the fronting of the focused constituent in a clause. This fronted element is usually marked by a morpheme which is described as a focus marker. Naturally, the details of the syntactic operation, the conditions of use, the scope as well as the meanings of the markers vary from language to language. The Focus Marker is that element that heads the focus phrase. The focus marker is optional in some languages. The status of the focus marker has been a case of so much controversy. Sometimes, it is regarded as a copula verb, a mere expletive or a focus marker, Awobuluyi (1992:71). He further says that the standard Yoruba ‘ni’ does not function as a copula verb but as focus maker, he however disagrees with Awoyale that focus marker is a case assigner. He sees the whole structure of focus as a Noun Phrase. According to him, Focus Constructions pattern with Noun Phrases rather than sentences, so the issue of it assigning Case does not arise.

Awoyale (1990:69) however treats focus as a Case feature because there is a distinct marker for it. He says the Focus Marker assigns Focus Case to the Specifier of FP position and that this conditions alpha movement either in the syntax or at the Logical Form Component of Focus Constructions. The focus marker primarily foregrounds information. Yusuf (1990) represents something of a cross between those who hold that the element in question is some kind of marker, particle or expletive and those who believe that it is a verb cited by Arokoyo (2013). Different languages have different particles as focus markers. For instance Hausa has **nee/cee/nèe** for masculine/feminine/plural with polar tone respectively as focus markers. These markers changes forms depending on gender and number. **Nee** is used as an abbreviation for the complete paradigm of the focus markers where the focus marker is optional, nee will be used when the focused constituent is masculine, cee when it is feminine and nee when it is plural, Hartman (2006:10). Below are examples from Hausa.

- 32) Biyà-n            ha aaji-n FOC (nee) Tankò ya yi.  
 Paying-GEN tax-DEF FM T. 3sg.rel.perf make  
 ‘It was pay the taxes that Tanko did’
- 33) Hàdizà (cee)    ta                            ci    lambàà.  
 H. FM 3sg.fem.rel.per eat prize  
 “Hadiza won the prize”

- 34) Su Audù dà Muusaa (nèè)  
 3pl A. and M. FM 3pl-perf.  
 “Who went to America?” Arokoyo (2013: 17)

Batonu is a noun class language, the focus marker ‘a’ is affixed to the class marker. The language attests seven noun class markers; **wi**, **te**, **mẹ**, **ge**, **ye**, **ni** and **si** respectively. The class markers that originally have different vowel endings are affixed with **a** to mark focus. For example;

- 35a) Gbenu wí u wéke té kò rá  
 Thief CM she pot FM break  
 “The thief broke the pot”
- b) Gbenu wá u wéke té kò rá  
 Thief FM she pot CM break  
 “It was the thief that broke the pot”
- c) Wéke tá gbenu wí kò rá  
 Pot FM thief CM break  
 “It was the pot that the thief broke”
- d) Boo gé nim-mẹ nọra.  
 Goat CM water CM drink  
 “The goat drank water”
- e) Boo gá nim-mẹ nọra  
 Goat FM water CM drink  
 “It was the goat that drank water”
- f) Nim-má boo gé nọra  
 Water FM goat CM drink  
 “It was the water that the goat drink” Arokoyo (2013:18)

From the examples (35a-f) above, we can see the class markers, *wi*, *te*, *ge* and *mẹ*, changing to *wa*, *ta*, *ga* and *ma* to mark focus in the language.

In Yorùbá ‘ni’ is the focus marker, the focused constituent occupies the Spec of FP position in the sentence and is immediately followed by the focus marker. For example;

- 36a) Ade’ ra iwé  
 Ade buy book  
 “Adé bought a book”
- b) Adé ni o ra iwé  
 Ade FM 3sg buy book  
 “ADÉ bought a book”

- c)            Ìwé ni Adé rà  
 Book FM Ade buy  
 “Adé bought a BOOK”
- d)            Rírà ni Adé ra ìwé  
 Buying FM Adé buy book  
 “Adé BOUGHT a book”

In Ghòtùò “**ònhì**” is the focus marker and it is optional that is may or may not be used for emphatic or focus construction. Any time it is used it is to make contrast between the focused constituent and other constituents in the structure or to contrast new information. Like Yorùbá, the focus constituent occupies the Spec of FP and is immediately (optionally) followed by the focus marker. In a nutshell, Ghòtùò operates both overt and non-overt marker in the realization of its focus construction. Consider the following examples from the language;

- 37a)            Òmùà é oilha òwèni  
 Òmùà eat yam yesterday  
 “Òmùà ate yam yesterday”
- b)            Òmùà (ònhì) ó é oilha òwèni  
 Òmùà FOC she eat yam yesterday  
 “ÒMÙÀ ate yam yesterday”
- c)            Oilha (ònhì) Òmùà é òwèni  
 Yam FOC Òmùà eat yesterday  
 “Òmùà ate YAM yesterday”
- d)            Òwèni (ònhì) Òmùà é òilhà  
 Yesterday FOC Òmùà eat yam  
 “Òmùà ate yam YESTERDAY”
- e)            É (ònhì) Òmùà é oilha òwèni  
 Eat FOC Òmùà eat yam yesterday  
 “Òmùà ATE yam yesterday”

From the examples above, we can see that the realization of focus marker is optional, also, in focusing verb or verb phrase, we observe that the adjoining of the focused verb at the Spec of FP leaves its copy at the construal site.<sup>7</sup> without being nominalized. Unlike Yorùbà whereby the verb has to be nominalized before it can be focused marked.

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<sup>7</sup> According to Dechaine (2002), the requirement is that there be a full copy of the focused verb or VP in the construal site is attributed to a PF condition. Focus is disanaphorical; consequently, the construal site is anaphorical and reduced in some



## 2.9 Ghòtùò Noun Class System

Ghòtùò is also a noun class language, it has a prefixal noun class system, Elugbe (1983), the noun agrees only in number with its complement. There must be this agreement in the noun phrase structure or else it will bring about ill – formed<sup>8</sup>. Noun class system is a feature of many African languages in particular languages in the Niger-Congo family. A noun class language is defined as one which has noun class systems in which there is obligatory agreement on all the modifiers in the phrase. This implies that the language has operational class system where the nouns of the language are classified based on the number of classes found in the language. ‘A noun class system is a grammatical system that some languages use to overtly categorise nouns. Noun classes are often based, at least in part, on characteristics such as gender, animacy, shape and so on of the referents of some nouns in each class, and distinguished by an affix on the noun or by a clitic or word in the noun phrase, and agreement affixes on the nouns phrase constituents and on the verb.

According to Welmers (1973:184) a noun class language may be classified into two groups namely;

- a) Vestigial/ Decadent Noun Class Languages
- b) Functional Noun Class Languages.

Vestigial/ Decadent noun class languages are so-called due to the fact that such languages ‘have lost some of the more complex characteristics of a system more like that of Bantu’. The systems have been impoverished considerably and are rather less functional compared to the usual patterns of noun class systems. On the other hand, Functional noun class languages are languages that whose noun class systems are still grammatically functional in some respect using morphological properties systematically grouping the class affixes into a system of singular and plural markings, and still showing some pronominal-like concordial i.e. agreement marking relations between the subject and the verb of the sentence. Bantu languages have often been classified into this group.

The problem associated with most of the languages of the world is that the semantic distinctiveness of each of the classes has been less productive. In Ghòtùò, the semantic distinctiveness has been reduced to the minimal. Heine (1982) noted that noun class system is common among the languages of the world. Despite this fact, it is by no mean universal. Nurse and Hinnebusch(1993) note that the need to borrow new words, some of which are

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way. The verbal category cannot be empty, but there is no equivalent in Ghòtùò to the English do/ do so; therefore, a full copy is the only alternative.

<sup>8</sup> The head nouns govern the choice of prefix especially in the demonstratives.

phonologically similar to the words in the target language, into the different classes have greatly damaged the semantics of the classes.

Nkemji (1995: 42) notes that ‘there is a certain dependency relation noticeably that holds between nouns of a given class and the kinds of agreement that show up on nominal modifiers...’ Regarding the language under investigation as we have noted before, class markers show up for certain kind of concord within the DP associating the nouns to a class and also every other nominal modifiers which are likely to modify the noun. Nkemji noted that such dependency can be viewed from two different perspectives. On the one hand, one can also assume that ‘class is like a feature (part of the building blocks) on noun and that the feature value percolate on the head of the noun, so that the nouns end up being specified for a particular class with no special affix attached to it. But it is important to note that these views are problematic. Because, the views did not specify how they are treated in syntax. Nkemji treated class markers as syntactic functional head represented as ClassP. He also noted that the term class refers to not just the class but it subsumes other properties like ‘person, number and case’. This implies that “Agree” is licensed by the property of the class marker heading the ClassP, and stressing the DP internal agreement system similar to the clause domain. In essence, class markers have not just syntactic relevance but also syntactic and semantic relevance in derivation.

Demuth (2000) examines the class noun system in Bantu and acquisition of loan words. He notes that noun classification ‘tends to be realized as grammatical morphemes rather than independent lexical items. In Ghòtùò, class markers are affixed word initially. Apart from that, he also noted that class markers function as part of larger concordial agreement systems, where nominal modifiers, pronominals and verbs are all morphologically marked with the same class (gender) feature. This is true to some extent in Ghòtùò. Verbs do not display the class markers and lexical items like nouns, adjectives and other nominal modifiers are not marked with gender feature. However, class markers mark nouns and nominal modifiers with singularity and plurality agreement. Class number agreement is a feature which is phonetically realized on all the lexical items modifying the noun and the noun as well. It is observed in Ghòtùò that class system is no longer productive semantically but the classes are still grammatically productive. This observation is similar to the Bantu noun class system which also grammatically productive but semantically productive to some degree. He also notes that many Bantu languages today have lost some of the nominal class distinctions thought to have existed in the proto- Bantu and so is the case with many of the

Edoid languages like Ghòtùò. Following Dixon (1986) the following may be identified as distinguishing properties of a noun class language;

- 1) They typically comprise a closed set of two to twenty classes into which all nouns in the language are divided.
- 2) Typically, few or no nouns can occur in more than one class.
- 3) Expression of noun class is obligatory in all contexts.
- 4) Class may be marked on the noun itself, but will also always be marked on other constituents in the noun phrase or in the sentence agreement with the noun.

A noun in Ghòtùò is made up of a stem and a prefix. Stems are usually of the structure –V, –CV, –CVV, or –CVCV. Prefixes are V-, VV- and CV-. The most common stem type is –CV, while the most common prefix is V-. Example;

V – CV	VV – CV	CV – CV
Ò – kà ‘maize’	èè - zè ‘fish’	Gha – wà ‘dog’
O – dí ‘wall’	uù – ghi ‘rope’	Gho – bọ ‘hand’
V – CVV	V – CVCV	
I – bià ‘children’	Ò – kàkà ‘grasshopper’	
Ò – viè ‘priest’	O - vbàghi ‘house/room’	
I – vùà ‘grasscutter’	I – zèmhì ‘work’	

In Ghòtùò, nouns may be classified according to singular/plural prefix pairings. The pairing prefixes are a vestige of an earlier more productive noun classification system, inherited from Proto-Edoid (Elugbe 1989). Even now, prefix pairing cannot be fully predicted from the phonology. For example, most nouns that have a singular u-prefix have a pairing plural i-prefix.. Nouns with a singular o- prefix have (broadly speaking) a pairing plural i-prefix if the stem vowel is close (or high), and e- if the stem vowel is non-close. Similarly, o-singular prefix nouns have a pairing plural e-prefix unless the stem vowel happens to be close – which is rare. These are all phonologically based generalisations. However, when it comes to body parts, for example, such phonologically based predictions break down, and the same is true of prefix pairings involving singular prefixes a- and ghV-. Also, in some cases, the plural form of a noun is determined not by the phonological shape of the singular prefix (and stem vowel in some cases) but rather by the predetermined grammatical class of the noun. Such pairings must be learned individually as they cannot be generalised from their phonological shape. The following singular/plural class pairings have been identified in Ghòtùò.

Singular/ Plural Prefix Pairings

**u- / i-**

singular	plural	word
ù- ghì	ì- ghì	basket
ù- kì	ì- kì	moon
ù- yà	ì- yà	tail
ù- dì	ì- dì	grave
u- té	i- té	a cock's comb
u- kó	i- kó	cup
ù- lògbo	ì- lògbo	a metal pipe
ù- tèkù	ì- tèkù	a short log

**o- / i-**

ò- zìgha	ì- zìgha	thief
o- vù	i- vù	a kind of fruit
ò- viè	ì- viè	priest / ruler
o- zìzi	i- zìzi	shadow
o- rùà	i- rùà	hunter
o- lógbò	i- lógbò	cat
o- dí	i- dí	wall
ò- ghùmhi	ì- ghùmhi	slave

**a- / i-**

(mainly man-made object)

a-Kpólo	i- kpólo	pocket / bag
à- bi	ì- bi	a kind of mat
à- ghò	ì-ghò	pocket knife
à- gba	ìgba	barrel (container)
a- gbádá	i- gbádá	a big flowing dress
à- ghùèrẹ	ì- ghùèrẹ	blacksmith
à- zẹ	ì- zẹ	witch
à- bàdà	ì- bàdà	a kind of cloth
à- mẹ	ìo- mẹ	water

**gha- / i-**

(small birds and insects around the home)

gha- cà	i- cà	housefly
gha- hìhì	i- hìhì	ant
gha- kógha	i- kógha	bat
gha- vbẹvbẹ	i- vbẹvbẹ	cockroach
gha- hígba	i- hígba	swallow (bird)
gha- ghó	i- ghó	louse
ghà- mùmù	ì- mùmù	soldier ant

**gha- / io-**

gha- wà	io- wà	dog
gha- fẹ	io- fẹ	bird
gha- zẹ	io- zẹ	a beaded gourd
gha- bè	io- bè	a native clay pot

**gho- / i-**

gho- rù	i- rù	cap / hat
gho- rìrà	i- rìrà	weed
gho- sà	i- sà	debt
ghò- kì	ì- kì	market

**o- / e-**

o- ghùà	e- ghùà	farm
o- fè	e- fè	rat
o- tà	e- tà	tree
ò- hò	è- hò	soup/ sauce
o- vbàghì	e- vbàghì	room / house
ò- hòghì	è- hòghì	navel

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o- fá	e- fá	a line
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**ọ- / e-**

ọ- lọ	è- lọ	tortoise
ọ- kà	e- kà	corn / maize
ọ- kpà	è- kpà	cock
ọ- khòà	è- khòà	wallgecko
ọ- ìhì	e- ìhì	another
ọ- kpá	e- kpá	lamb
ọ- mọkà	è- mọkà	orange
ọ- mọhà	e- mọhà	young girl
ọ- óghọ	e- óghọ	lizard
ọ- kọ	è- kọ	hill / mountain

**ẹ- /e-**

ẹ- bọ	e- vbọ	giant rat
ẹ- kọ	è- kọ	pap (solid)
ẹ- kpà	è- kpà	skin / bag
ẹ- gba	è- gba	hoe
ẹ- rùè	e- rùè	deer

**gho- / e-**

gho- bè	e- bè	book / leaf
gho- tò	e- tò	hair

**ẹẹ- / ee**

ẹẹ- fùè	ee- fùè	finger nail
ẹẹ- kẹ	ee- kẹ	egg
ẹẹ- mhà	èè- mhà	sore

**ẹẹ- / a-**

ẹẹ- kọ	à- kọ	tooth
ẹẹ- ò	à- ò	eye

**gho- /a-**

gho- bọ	a- bọ	hand
ghò- vò	à- vò	leg

èè- hò	ààhò	face
oo- de	aa- de	blood
o- ìmhì	a-ìmhì	corpse

The ẹẹ- singular prefix is a reflex of Proto-Edoid \*dhI-. It corresponds to de Wolf's (1971) Proto-Benue-Congo \*li-. Ghòtùò reduced this to lh and added a prothetic I- (i- ~ I-) at the beginning; thus ẹ-lhẹ-kẹ was the old people's 'egg' and now simply ẹ-ẹ-kẹ with the loss of the \*lh. Some languages of the Okpamheri subgroup of NWE (for example Ibilo) have retained this lh and still added the initial vowel. The example of Ghòtùò, in which \*lh has been lost as a prefix consonant while a reflex of \*gh is retained, suggests that \*gh may be a more durable consonant prefix than \*lh – at least in Ghòtùò. This scenario applies to all double-vowel prefixes both singular and plural. Thus the io- (from earlier ilho-) plural prefix is definitely cognate with Oloma lhẹ- as in gha-wá 'dog', io-wá 'dogs'.

There are many words whose prefixes are not paired. Both in the singular and in the plural, these nouns have exactly the same prefix. These we call static class (SC) nouns. They are very numerous and we believe their frequency is evidence that the class system, which is a reflex of the Proto-Edoid gender system, itself a reflex of the Proto-Benue-Congo gender system, is in decay.

<b>SC</b>	<b>i-</b>	
	i-lhé	insult, abuse
	i-shá	sex organ (general word)
	i-gho	junior masquerades
	i-ni	elephant
<b>SC</b>	<b>e-</b>	
	é-vó	grass for roofing a house
	e-á	laughter
	e-hóghí	ear
	é-hói	maggots
	e-nhú	pounded yam
<b>SC</b>	<b>ẹ-</b>	
	ẹ-khó	shame, shyness
<b>SC</b>	<b>a-</b>	
	á-fẹ	home, house
<b>SC</b>	<b>o-</b>	
	o-fa	stinginess

SC	<b>u-</b> u-sọ	head
SC	<b>ghi-</b> ghí-kpo ghi-dá	forehead up, sky
SC	<b>gha-</b> ghá-kpa	bald pate
SC	<b>gho-</b> gho-họu gho-é gho-kú	the main source or location of an object path, road waist

We see here that although noun classes do not reflect a strict semantic basis (not even Bantu is semantically perfect in that sense), there are relics of semantic correlation in some of the classes.

It can be deduced from the above examples that Ghòtùò has four noun classes (contrary to Ilori 2014), this assumption is based on the plural prefix morphemes which are those with ‘i-, e- and a-’ morphemes and the static class. But as can be seen from the same above examples that ‘a-’ class is not too productive like the other two classes ‘i- and e-’. We perceive also that there is inconsistency vowel harmony<sup>9</sup> since all the vowels can co-occur. Although, there are three vowels as prefix for the plural forms, any vowel can be prefix for singular form and as a result can co-occur with any of the three vowels which are the plural prefix in the language. We also observe tone assimilation in the noun class, for the prefix of the plural forms automatically assimilates the tone of the prefix of the singular forms.

Noun classes in Ghòtùò cannot be called examples of gender because the different classes control only number agreement with modifiers. All singular classes control the same agreement marker and all plural classes also reflect the same agreement marker. All this is reflected in the examples below.

#### The Demonstratives

38a.	o- tá	nhò	‘this tree’
	e- tá	nhò	‘these trees’
	gho- vọ	nhò	‘this leg’

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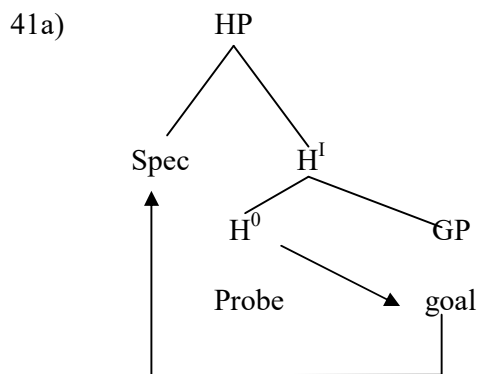
<sup>9</sup> Vowel harmony is a phonological phenomenon whereby vowels divide themselves into sets such that only members of one set can co-occur with members of that set and hardly occur with members of other set.

	a- vọ	nhò	‘these legs’
b.	o- tá	nhì	‘that tree’
	e- tá	nhì	‘those trees’
	gho- vọ	nhì	‘that leg’
	a- vọ	nhì	‘those legs’

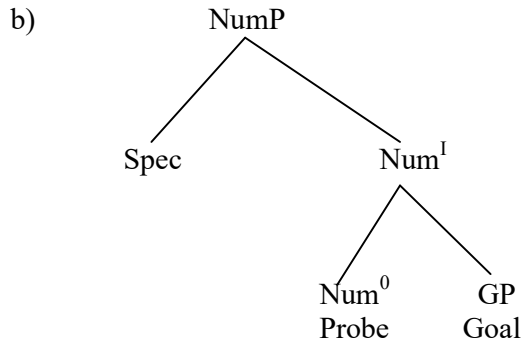
In a nutshell, the noun agrees in number with its complement. There must be this agreement in the Noun phrase structure or else it will bring about ill – formed. For instance;

- 39) Évbàghi ògbére  
House(pl) many  
‘many houses’  
\*Óvbàghi(sg) ògbèrè
- 40) Èwè ìgbe  
Goat(pl) ten  
‘ten goats’  
\*èwè(sg) ìgbe

From the example provided above, it is obvious that the kind of class marking system found in Ghòtùò is Vestigial one where the class is partly marking some features of the class. One of such features is number. Number feature in the Minimalist is part of the phi-features notably present on DP for valuation purposes with the goal in head to head configuration as shown below. It has also been identified as the functional layer within the nominal domain DP which encodes the  $Fin^0$  in the Force-Fin system, Aboh (2004) . As a Probe head, it has the number feature assigned or valued on nouns/ DPs which is the Goal;







The schema in (41a) presents the head of the phrase  $H^0$  as a probe searches into its domain for a goal which may value its features through agree. The probe also has an EPP requirement to satisfy, which licenses the agree relation between the probe,  $H^0$  and the Spec in Spec-Head configuration. In similar configuration of (41b), the  $Num^0$  is the head and a probing head which licenses Number features encoded as either singular/ plural or count/ non- count feature on the nominal DP depending on the language.

This number feature forms part of the agreement displayed by the class markers in Ghòtùò. This being so, the class marker may systematically mark a given DP as either [+/- plural] to be displayed by every other lexical items in the phrase as a form of concord.

Also in Ghòtùò, the tense and aspectual categories of verb are marked with tone (Elugbe 1989: 299).

## 2.10 Tense and Aspect in Ghòtùò

### 2.10.1 Tense

Tense indicates the *when* of events. It is used to mark the temporal proximity of an event to the time of speech (Taiwo and Angitso 2013). In Ghòtùò, tense and aspect are marked using tone. The equivalence of the English present and past tenses are unmarked in Ghòtùò. The context of occurrence determines whether it is past or present, while the future is marked with *lè*. We propose a contextual tense and future tense for the tense system of the language. These are exemplified in (43) below:

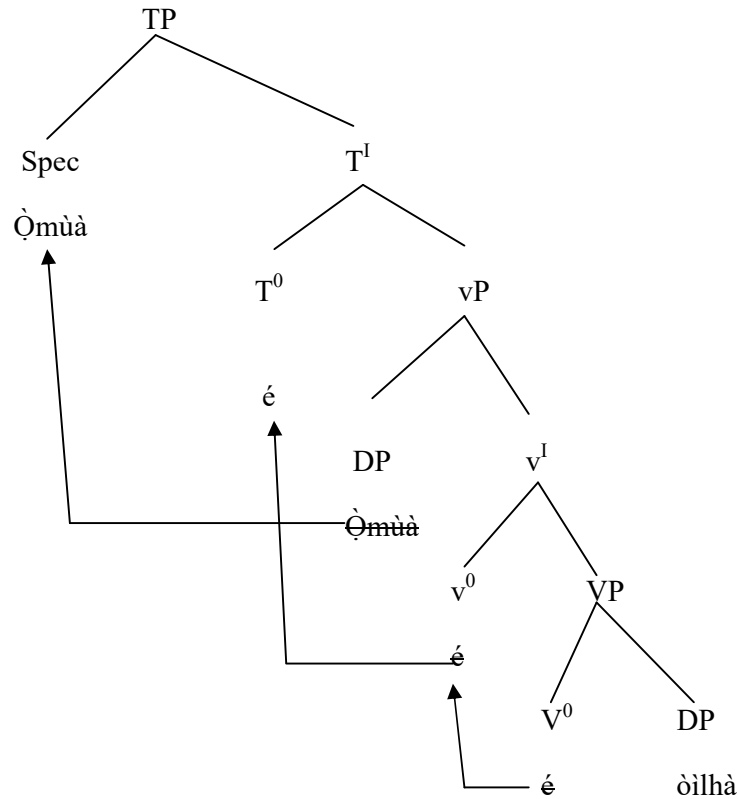
42a)                    Òmùà é oilha  
                          Òmùà eat yam  
                          “Òmùà eats/ate yam”

b.                        Òmùà nhéghe òhò  
                          Òmùà cook soup  
                          ‘Òmùà cooks/ cooked soup’

- 43a)                    Òmùà lè dé òìhà  
                          Òmùà will buy yam  
                          ‘Òmùà will buy yam’
- b.                        Igó lè lé ìsùkùù  
                          Igó will go school  
                          ‘Igó will go to school’.

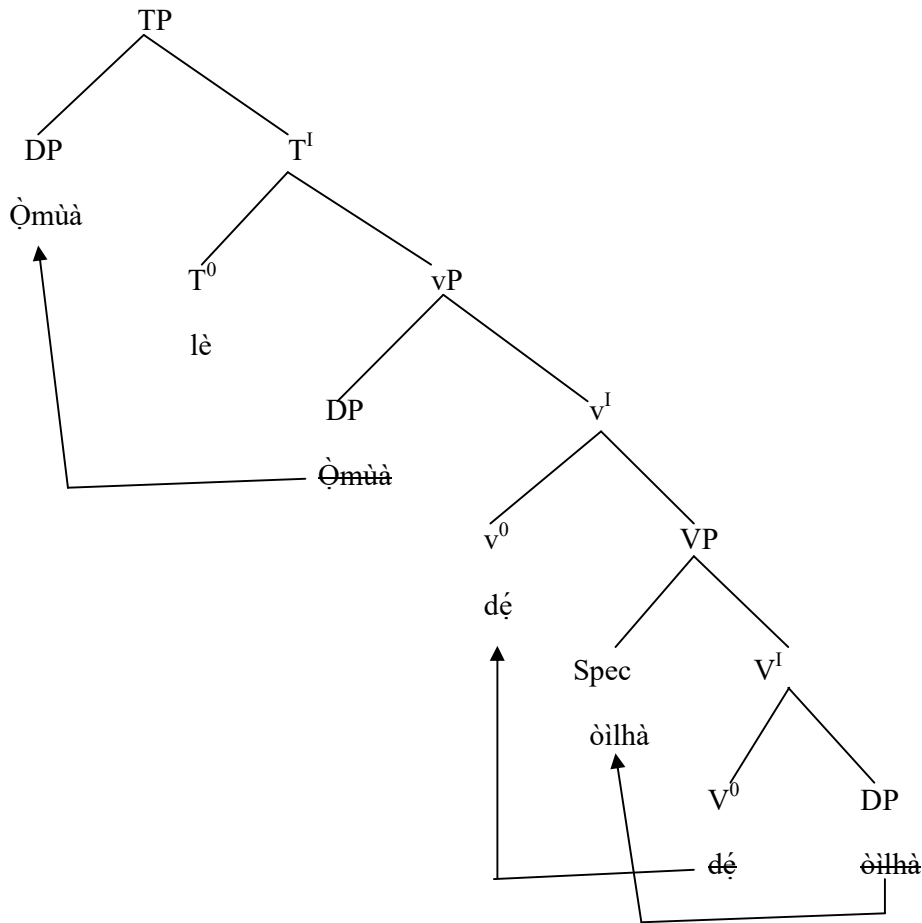
(42a&b) indicates both present and past tenses. Present tense is where the time of utterance is equal to event time. The verbs in (42a&b) do not have any affix or auxiliary attached to them indicating tense. But semantically, they express present tense because the action is viewed as taking place at the same time when it is being reported. In expressing the past, it is believed that event has taken place at some point prior to the speech time. In (43a&b), the auxiliary verb *lè-* joined to the verb marks the future tense. In this case, event is anticipated to take place at some point ‘later’ from the moment of speech. To concretise the discussion so far, (a) could be derived by merging the lexical V *é* ‘eat’ with the DP *òìhà* ‘yam’ to form the VP *é òìhà* ‘eat yam’. The derived VP is merged with a null performative light verb to form  $v^I$ . The [vF] on the light verb attracts the lexical verb to adjoin to it. Subsequently, the EPP on the light verb requires that its spec has to be filled by a subject DP. Therefore, *Òmùà* is selected from the numeration and externally merged with structure to derive  $vP$ . Since  $vP$  is a phase, its domain is sent to the interface levels - PF and LF for appropriate interpretation where it will no longer be accessible for further syntactic computation. The derivation continues to generate the remaining part of the structure.  $vP$  is merged with a null T to form TI. The vF on T triggers the lexical V occupying head  $v$  to move and adjoin to it. It also probes for the closest c-commanding goal in its domain and finds the DP in Spec  $vP$ . The probe and the goals values their [-interpretable] features and delete them. The EPP feature on T triggers the DP *Òmùà* to occupy its spec position. This postulation is schematised below ignoring the fact that computation will continue to build the remaining part of the structure by merging TP with a null  $C^0$  which marks the force of the sentence.

44)



In the case of future tense (44a), the verb **dé** ‘buy’ is merged with the DP **òilhá** ‘yam’ to form  $V^I$ . **Òilhá** ‘yam’ is remerged with  $V^I$  to form VP. It occupies the spec VP where it could value its case features. VP is merged with the light performative verb ( $v$ ) to form  $v^I$ . The  $vF$  on the light verb attracts the lexical verb **dé** to adjoin to it. Thus, it searches for a goal in its local domain to value its [+interpretable] feature. This is realised on the DP (**òilhá** ‘yam’). The strong EPP feature on the light  $v$  which requires it to have a subject selects the DP **Òmùà** and merge to the already formed  $v^I$  to form VP. It also receives  $\theta$ -role agent from the light verb. Following PIC, the domain of the phase H which is VP is sent to the interfaces for appropriate interpretation. The derivation proceeds with the merging of the FUT tense maker, the *lè* auxiliary to  $vP$  to form  $T^I$ . T being a probe searches for the closest c-commanding goal in its domain and realizes this on the DP **Òmùà**. They value their unvalued features and delete them. The EPP feature on T that requires it to have a subject attracts the DP goal to be merged to Spec T. This is schematized below.

45)



Following the phase theory on which the analysis is based, TP is not a phase but one of the CFCs.

### 2.10.2 Aspect

Aspect has been defined as the internal temporal constituent of an action or situation. It indicates whether an action is ongoing, frequent or completed. Hence, it is categorized into three: Neutral, perfective and imperfective aspects. Ghòtùò attests to three aspectual forms: the neutral is unmarked as an underlying form of the remaining two since Ghòtùò aspectual system is tone based as exemplified in (46a, 47a and 48a) below. That is, tone explicitly plays a significant role in distinguishing the perfective from the imperfective. The perfective indicates that an action has been completed with a location in time while the imperfective indicates that an action is yet to be completed either in the past or present. In Ghòtùò, both categories are marked with tones with no attachment of any affix. The perfective either present or past, singular or plural is marked with mid tone on the main verb as in (46c, 47c,

and 48c) while the imperfective which is categorized into habitual and progressive/continuous whether present or past, singular or plural is marked with low ( ̀ ) tone on the main verb as well as typified in (46b, 47b and 48b).

- 46a            Ọ    ẹ́    ghobè  
                   He buy book  
                   ‘He buys / bought a book’
- b.                Ọ            ẹ̀            ghobè  
                   He buy(+BE) book  
                   ‘He is/was buying a book’
- d.                Ọ            ẹ̀            ghobè  
                   He buy(+HAVE) book  
                   ‘He has/had bought a book’
- 47a.            Mha    gbé        ini  
                   We kill elephant  
                   ‘We kill/killed an elephant’
- b.                Mha    gbè        ini  
                   We kill(+BE) elephant  
                   ‘We are/were killing an elephant’
- c.                Mha    gbe        ini  
                   We kill(+HAVE) elephant  
                   ‘We have/had an elephant’
- 48a.            Igó    dáḽe    isùkùù  
                   Igó go school  
                   ‘Igó goes/went to school’.
- b.                Igó    dàḽe    isùkùù  
                   Igó go(+BE) school  
                   ‘Igó is/was going to school’.
- c.                Igó    daḽe    isùkùù  
                   Igó go(+HAVE) school  
                   ‘Igó will go to school’.

It should be noted here that the inherent tone of most mono-syllabic verb in Ghòtùò is high tone ( ́ ), as can be seen from (a) examples. But when tense and aspect the two major properties of verb interact with verb in order to show the tense and aspect then we will have the forms of (b) examples for progressives/continuous and the likes of (c) examples for perfectives/completives. The inherent tone of the verb will be deleted and a new separate tone of either low or mid will replace the deleted tone in order to express the aspectual form of a

verb as seen in the examples above. The number of the DP in the clause determines the number of the verb, that is whether singular or plural.

### 2.11 The DP-Hypothesis

This theoretical assumption was formally advanced by Abney (1987) to explain the syntax of nominals in natural languages. Basically, the DP proposal seeks a unified account of the internal structure of nominals which is intended to take care of noun phrases where lexical determiners linearly occur before nouns, e.g. English *this/that boy*. Prior to Abney (1987), the standard conventional assumption was that nominal phrases are projections of N, such that N is the distributional equivalent of [Det N] and all other nominal structures. However, beginning from Lyons (1977), various scholars (of English linguistics especially) began to present pockets of arguments to the contrary, most of which were supported weakly by language-internal evidence from English<sup>10</sup>. The core of their argument is that determiners in English, from a structural point of view, would be better treated as heads of nominal constructions where they occur rather than treating them as noun modifiers.

The view was however challenged by other scholars like Zwicky (1985) who reject the claim on grounds of [Det N] equivalence, bare plurals, and proper nouns. She maintained that N is the head of [Det N] construction<sup>11</sup>. In his popular MIT dissertation, Abney (1987) introduced a new dimension into the issue in his DP-Analysis. He argued that D (roughly interpreted as Determiner but technically not similar to lexical determiners) is not lexical but a core functional item that heads the noun phrase just as I and C are functional heads of IP and CP respectively. He attempted a cross-linguistic generalization of his claim by drawing conceptual evidence from other languages namely Yup'ik, Mayan, Greek, German, Hungarian, Spanish, and Turkish, and so on. He concludes that D is the noun phrase Infl item (Abney 1987:48). Consequent, upon the claim that D is a functor and not a lexical category per se, Abney assumes lexical determiners, quantifiers, pronouns, and genitive marking items are instantiations of that D, not only in English, but cross-linguistically<sup>12</sup>. This claim automatically makes every nominal phrase in which those items function as DP, since it is the D that is assumed to project as head in such structure.

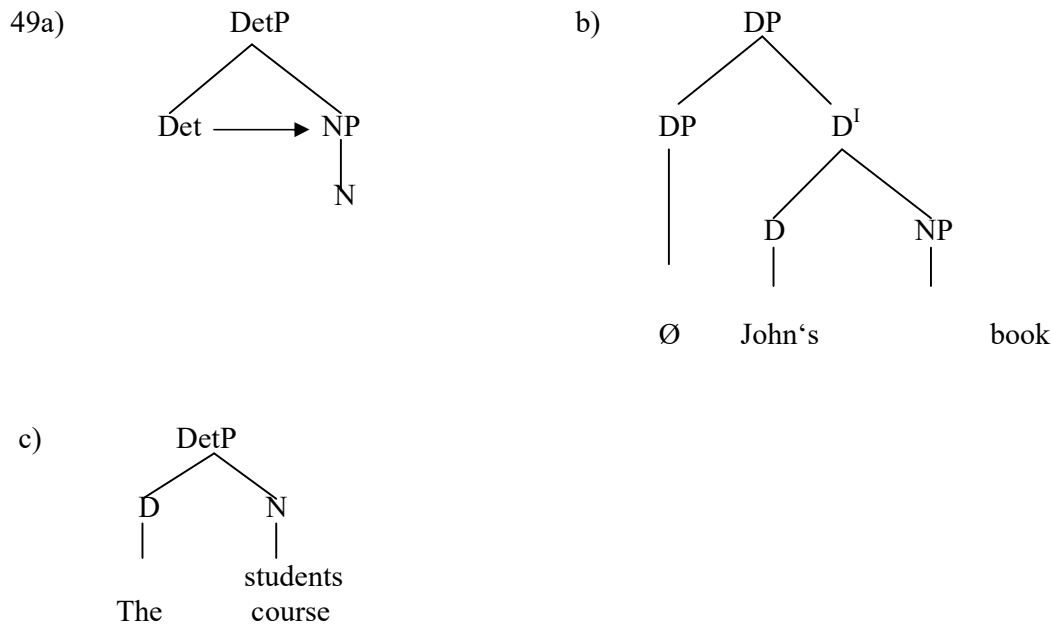
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<sup>10</sup> These scholars, according to Déchaine (1993: 59), include Brame (1981, 1982), Szabolsci (1981, 1987), Reuland (1983,1986), Hudson (1984), Kornfilt (1984), and Hellan (1986). Others after Abney (1987) are Horrocks & Stavrou (1987), Hale (1988), and Grimshaw (1991), among others

<sup>11</sup> Zwicky (1985) 'Heads' in *Journal of Linguistics*, Volume 21 pp. 1-29.

<sup>12</sup> Abney (1987) was not all that affirmative on this for every human language. However, other subsequent works on the same issue (e.g. Abney 1988) and especially works by other various scholars, within the MP framework have assumed it for all. See Radford (1997a, 1997b).

Similarly, bare noun expressions are seen as DPs projected by a null ( $\emptyset$ ) D head, while pronouns are regarded as Ds used without complements. These are the underlying assumptions of the DP analysis, which eventually metamorphosed into what is now known as the DP hypothesis in the MP. The assumed advantage of the DP-hypothesis over the traditional/conventional standard analysis is that it provides a unitary characterization of the syntax of nominals, as all nominal and pronominal expressions are now seen as projections of a functional D head constituent which may be overt or covert. This D head is said to select N via certain Agreement features, which D and N share, to project DP. The agreement features identified by Abney include case and the phi-features like number, person, gender, etc. (49a-c) illustrates the DP hypothetical structures as originally conceived by Abney (1987:79).



(Radford 1997b:96 based on Bare Phrase Structure)

Although, other scholarly works after this in theoretical syntax have continued to argue in favour of the DP-hypothesis. Chomsky (1993:47) appears evasive on the issue:

I continue to put aside the question whether case should be regarded as a property of N or D, and DP-NP distinction generally.

Chomsky (1995b) seems to be more sympathetic to the DP cause.

If  $XP = DP$ , then its head D is a clitic, either demonstrative or pronominal, which attaches at a higher point (determined either generally or by specific morphological properties). If  $XP = NP$ , then N must incorporate to V. Clitics then are bare Ds without complements, and noun incorporation must be restricted to “non-referential NPs” ... assuming the quasi referential,

identical character of a noun phrase to be a property of the D head of DP, NP being a kind of predicate. Within DP, the N head of NP must raise to D...

(Chomsky 1995b: 337)

Although the DP-hypothesis is widely accepted, the present study adopts a critical but objective application of its claims. We base our analysis on the assumption that every nominal expression in Ghòtùò may not necessarily be a DP until otherwise proved. This approach is informed by two language-internal facts: first, lexical determiners and pronouns, whenever they occur with N, consistently occur at post-N positions in Ghòtùò which is non-controversial head-first language. Apart from the issue of word order, case and phi-feature agreement can be used to capture the syntactic relationship between D and N in the language simply because items in these categories are marked for such agreement features especially person and number.

Determiners are the range of referential words which serve to delimit the referential scope of nominals in Ghòtùò. Like Yoruba and some other Nigeria languages, determiners occur post nominally in Ghòtùò.

## **2.12 The Semantics and Syntax of Determiners**

The referential force of a noun within the nominal phrase is articulated through the kind of determiner that occurs with it. As a result of this, the type of determiners found in Ghòtùò, their semantic features and their syntactic distribution in relation with other determiners and nouns will be exhaustively examined.

### **2.12.1 The Semantics of Determiners**

#### **2.12.1.1 Definiteness**

A unifying referential force of determiners is definiteness. The elements that realize the head of the functional category, D serves to delimit the referential scope of nominal expressions the collocate with. Definiteness of determiners implies their ability to distinguish an entity from a mass of like- entities by giving such entity ( a nominal expression) a unique reference. Almost always by determiners, a distinction is easily made between this X and that X, these X and those X, my X and your X and so on. Consider these examples;

50a) Ghawá nhì  
dog(sg) that  
'That dog'



- b) Iowá  nhì  
dog (pl) that  
'Those dogs'
- c) Ghawá  nhò  
dog (sg) this  
'This dog'
- d) Iowá  nhò  
dog (pl) this  
'These dog'
- e) Ghawa  mhe  
dog (sg) me  
'My dog'
- f) Ghawá  yhe  
dog (sg) you(sg)  
'Your dog'
- g) Ghawá  
'A dog'
- h) Ghawá  ó  
dog (sg) the  
'The dog'
- i) Iowá  igbe  
Dog (pl) ten  
'Ten dogs'
- j) Iowá  ògbèrè  
dog (pl) many  
'Many dogs'

As earlier discussed, Ghòtùò is a noun class language that has a prefixal noun class system which must agrees in number with its complement. Looking at the demonstratives (50a-d), one may say that they are not DP but NP, because the demonstratives remain the same for both singular and plural forms but the N changes to show the plurality. But from the other examples we see that despite the plurality features of N, the D is what actually determines the meaning in as much as expressions like (54k & l) are ill-formed in the language.

- k) \* Ghawá  ògbèrè  
dog(sg) many  
'many dog'

- l) \*Ghawá igbe  
 dog(sg) ten  
 ‘Ten dog’

From the examples above, it reveals that all determiners in Ghòtùò, by virtue of transferring the semantic interpretation of uniqueness/ definiteness onto nominal, be specified [+definite].

Each occurrence of Ghawá conveys a unique entity. In (50a- d) proximity to the deictic centre as well as the singular or plural reading marks its uniqueness. The possessive phrases in (50e-f) identify two different entities; while (50e) identifies the dog which I own, (50f) refers to someone else’s. The ones referred to in (50g & h) have non-specific reference, as in (50g), as opposed to specific reference as in (50h), and are therefore unique. All these evidences established the definiteness of determiners in Ghòtùò.

### 2.12.1.2 Specificity

This simply means that the DP in question is actually refers to an entity that has been pre-established in the discourse. This way, both the speaker and addressee necessarily are on common grounds with reference to the entity being discussed. In Ghòtùò, there are two kinds of determiners in this regard. One is overtly realized ‘*Ó*’ while the other is non-overt. Nominal expressions that ‘*Ó*’ introduces are interpreted as ‘Specific Nominal Expressions’. By extension, such expressions are definite nominals. Consequently, *Ó* is the definite marker with the [+ specific] feature value. On the other hand, bare nominal phrases are interpreted as non-specific nominals in virtue of not being previously established in the discourse. Consider the expressions below.

- 51a) *Ómohí ó dé òìlà*  
 Man the buy yam  
 ‘The man buys/bought yam’
- b. *Ómohi dé òìlà*  
 Man buy yam  
 ‘A man buys/bought yam’

The *ómohí* ‘man’ in (51a) is specific and this is shown by the *Ó*, the specificity marker in the language. Unlike the *ómohi* in (51b) which was made via a null marker, the non-specific determiner, which makes it to be any man not a particular or specific man like in (51a).

### 2.12.1.3 Deictic Effect

Yule (1996) notes that the word deixis is a Greek term which means ‘Pointing via language’. Words used to accomplish this purpose are termed deictic expressions. The interpretation of deictics depends largely on the speaker and hearer, who must share the same context for proper semantics. He identifies, as the basic distinction between deictic expressions, ‘nearness’ versus ‘distance’ away from the speaker. Yule’s submission is underscored by Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams (2011) who explain deixis to be an aspect of pragmatics. According to them, deixis relates to how reference to certain words and expressions in human languages is dependent on situational context of utterances. Deictics require situational information for listener to make a referential connection and understand what is intended. The speaker’s location may be conceived as the deictic centre. It is the cognitive location from which the basis of the speaker’s ‘pointing’ speech act proceeds.

The set of determiners that express the semantic values of nearness to distance from the speaker in Ghòtùò are the Demonstratives. The near- speaker deixis, called Proximal deixis is ‘**nhò**’- this/these for both singular and plural. The away- from- speaker or Distal deixis is ‘**nhí**’ – that/ those.

### 2.12.1.4 Demonstratives

This set of determiners serves to single out entities in the world via their proximity to the speaker from the deictic centre. Specified item(s) or person(s) close to the speaker are identified by proximal demonstratives, whereas those far from the speaker are identified by distal demonstratives (Oshindoro & Taiwo 2016). There are two demonstratives in Ghòtùò; *nhi*- distal demonstrative stands for ‘that’ and ‘those’ while *nhò*- proximal demonstration stands for ‘this’ and ‘those’. Ghòtùò being a language that operates noun class, the different classes control only number agreement with modifiers. All singular classes control the same agreement marker and all plural classes also reflect the same agreement marker. Consider these examples;

- |      |           |            |  |
|------|-----------|------------|--|
| 52a) | Ghawá     | nhì        |  |
|      | dog(sg)   | distal-sg  |  |
| b)   | Iowá      | nhì        |  |
|      | dog(pl)   | distal- pl |  |
| c)   | Òzighà    | nhò        |  |
|      | theif(sg) | prox-sg    |  |

- d)            Ìzìghà    nhò  
                 thief(pl) prox-pl

Noteworthy in the above instantiations is that pluralisation is by prefix vowel alternation. The numbers of the nouns as complement of the determiner will determine whether **nhì** will be that or those, and **nhò** will be this or these.

More examples			
53a.	o- tá	nhò	‘this tree’
	e- tá	nhò	‘these trees’
	gho- vọ	nhò	‘this leg’
	a- vọ	nhò	‘these legs’
b.	o- tá	nhì	‘that tree’
	e- tá	nhì	‘those trees’
	gho- vọ	nhì	‘that leg’
	a- vọ	nhì	‘those legs’

#### 2.12.1.5 Genitival Pronouns

Genitival or possessive pronouns are another set of determiners (Longobardi, 2001:580). They encode possession.

- 54a)            Ìtişà    wha  
                 Teacher you(pl)  
                 ‘Your teacher’
- b)              Ìtişà    yhe  
                 Teacher you(sg)  
                 ‘Your teacher’
- c)              Ìtişà    mhe  
                 Teacher me  
                 ‘My teacher’
- d)              Ìtişà    yha (speaker inclusive)  
                 teacher us  
                 ‘Our teacher’
- e)              Ìtişà    mha (speaker exclusive)  
                 Teacher us  
                 ‘Our teacher’

From the above examples, the pronouns are used to differentiate the teacher in question from any other teachers.

### 2.12.1.6 Quantifiers

**Ògbèrè** ‘many’ and **gbei** ‘all’ are the quantifier determiners in Ghòtùò. They do not convey singular entity rather plural entity. This means that their noun complement must be in plural form else it will be unacceptable in the language. Consider these examples;

- 55a)           Évbàghi   ògbèrè  
                  House(pl) many  
                  ‘many houses’
- b)               \*Óvbàghi   ògbèrè  
                  House(sg) many  
                  ‘many house’
- c)               Mhamha    gbei  
                  Us(Emp)   all  
                  ‘All of us’
- d)               \*Ò           gbei  
                  S/he/it    all  
                  ‘All of s/he/it’

From the examples above, it showed the ungrammaticality of (55b&d), Óvbàghi is singular noun, so can not go with ògbèrè which is a plural specifier. Also Ò is a third person singular pronoun that can not go with gbei.

### 2.12.1.7 The Ordinals

Quirk & Greenbaum (1973) make a distinction between numeral and general ordinals. The former, according to them, include the regular counting words like first, second, third, fourth, whereas the latter is restricted into first and last. Consider these examples;

- 56a)           Ìsíbí    evá  
                  Spoons two  
                  ‘Two spoon’
- b)               Èwè    Igbe  
                  goats   ten  
                  ‘Ten goats’

## 2.12.2 The Syntax of Determiners

### 2.12.2.1 The Null Determiner

The functional D-element that realizes the head of the nominal phrase may be non-overt, that is, phonetically null. On the DP-hypothesis account, nominal phrases containing nouns that occur without an accompanying determiner are nevertheless assumed to be headed by a Determiner, the null D or [øD] (Abney 1987). The reality of the null D has been

variously discussed and documented (Adger 2002, Longobardi 1994, Pereltsvaig 2007, etc.), for nouns often appear in bare forms without overt determiners. Making a generalization about a universal property of nominal phrases, Longobardi (1994:632) opines that the only nouns in argument function allowed to appear without determiner are proper nouns, pronouns, plural and singular mass nouns. Adopting the DP-hypothesis as a working theoretical statement implies a reformulation and re-analysis of the nominal phrase.

Longobardi (1994) opines that D codes a reference feature, namely [uReferential], and argument nominal expressions have to check this feature subject to N-movement parameterization; if it proceeds overtly or covertly. Bernstein (2008) also maintains that determiners represent the core of referentiality. She further states that  $D^0$  could be conceived as the counterpart of Force<sup>0</sup> in the nominal domain (c.f. Rizzi 1997, Aboh 2004). With  $D^0$  as the locus of referentiality, bare nouns like proper names will have to raise to Spec.DP to check the [Referential] on  $D^0$ . This implies that  $D^0$  marks the relevant head responsible for the interpretation of the reference of a nominal phrase.

It is important to stress that under the DP-hypothesis account, the noun owes its reference to  $D^0$  whether or not the determiner is phonetically realised. This understanding informs the structure provided below where the parenthesis implies optimality.

57a) [DP [(D<sup>0</sup>) NP]]

In Ghòtùò, bare nouns may or may not occur with determiners. In this connection, I propose that when proper names like Igó appear in the DP without an accompanying determiner, they raise to Spec. DP to check the [Referential] on  $D^0$  witness (b) below;

b) [DP Igó [<sub>ø</sub>D [<sub>uRef</sub>] NP t<sub>i</sub>]]

In (57b) where the noun occurs without the specific determiner,  $D^0$  is occupied by the null D or  $\emptyset$ D.  $N^0$  raises across  $D^0$  to Spec. DP in order to get reference by checking the [Referential] feature on  $D^0$ .

The argument that there exists a Null determiner ( $\emptyset$ D) gets more credence when we look at languages where proper nouns have to appear with an overt article. Evidence from Greek is positive proof of the DP-hypothesis. In the language, proper names are always accompanied by a determiner.

58) **Greek**

O Giorgos ephuge  
 The George left  
 ‘George left’

Adger (2002:214)

In Greek, nouns regardless of their category must appear with determiner (Adger 2002). In (58), the derivation would crash if D<sup>0</sup> was left empty. The proper name Giorgos takes the definite determiner for the expression to converge.

### 2.12.2.2 The Article in Ghòtùò

There are two articles in Ghòtùò. The definite article which is Ọ́ ‘the’ is overtly realized in the language and is post nominal but the second which is indefinite is non-overt i. e. phonetically null. Works that assume the DP analysis regularly have to postulate a null determiner, for nouns often appear in bare forms, without overt determiners. Consider these examples;

- 59a) Ịmòtó ọ́  
car the  
‘The car’
- b) Ọmọhí ọ́  
man the  
‘The man’
- c) Ọmọhí  
man  
‘A man’
- d) Ọkpahèn  
old person  
‘An old person’
- 60a. Ọmọhí ọ́ dẹ òìlhà  
Man the buy yam  
‘The man buys/bought yam’
- b. Ọmọhí dẹ òìlhà  
Man buy yam  
‘A man buys/bought yam’

It is observed from the examples (59a&b) above that the article ‘Ọ́’ is phonetically realized and its presence makes the noun ‘man’ specific in the sense that, it limits the scope of its meaning by talking about a particular man. In examples (59c&d) the article is phonetically null which make the DPs ‘Ọmọhí and Ọkpahèn’ not specific or definite for it could be any man or any old person. The realization of the article overtly is what differentiate (59b&c) as seen in (60a & b) above.

### 2.13 Theoretical Framework

This research work employed Minimalist Program (MP) for its analysis. The Minimalist Program, like other earlier theories in the generative tradition, sees language as a faculty in the human cognitive system which makes use of diversified but connected operations networked around the basic principles of UG. UG represents fixed general principles that obtain in all natural (human) languages, which differentiate them from artificial languages such as Basic, Prolog, and so on found in mathematics and computing. UG also consists of parameters which are assumed to be subject to language specific or typological variations which may make particular languages A, B, and C differ in some respect from one to the other. This ideology underlaid the concept of principles and parameters right from Chomsky (1981 to 1993), when the minimalist ideology took over. The minimalist concept was borne out of the realization that grammars are not as complex as they were made to be in earlier generative approaches for instance Government and Binding (GB) or Principles and Parameters Theory (PPT), which were characterized by postulations of various complex theories and sub-theories of connected structures and principles. Rather, grammars are minimally complex systems of some perfect optimal design controlled by a man-specific genetically endowed language faculty or acquisition device, which creates syntactic structures designed to perfectly interface with other components of the mind namely the speech and thought systems (Chomsky 2001, 2002).

The fact that UG is minimally complex, according to Chomsky (1981), is evident in the tremendous ability displayed by young children in acquiring language in a remarkably short period of time, which in itself fulfills the learnability criterion of adequacy for any linguistic theory. Therefore, in order to be able to capture the fact of the neurophysiological mechanism underlying the linguistic competence of man, which makes it possible for young children to acquire language in a short period of time, the construction of the theoretical apparatus or algorithm for describing grammars should reflect this fact by making use of very small in degree and simple ideological apparatus for syntactic derivations. The main aim is to make the descriptive apparatus of grammars as simple as possible. This ideology makes minimalist grammar differ considerably from other earlier grammars in the generative tradition in that it makes use of very small and simple enough theoretical apparatus for the description of basic syntactic derivation and other relatively complex ones e.g. derivations via movement. Only two structural levels of linguistic representation (the two interface levels of Logical Form (LF) and Phonetic Form (PF)) are recognized in MP. This ruled out the D-



structure and S-structure levels of GB and PPT. Similarly, phrase structure rules with their notion of ‘consist of’ inherent in earlier generative models are jettisoned in favour of minimal computational operations namely *select*, *merge*, and *move* which are used for syntactic processing within the computational system. In the same vein, the projection principle which relates lexical properties to the syntactic levels of D- and S-structures alongside the X-bar structure was also removed and replaced with bare phrase structures which disallows vacuous projections in syntax.

In conclusion, the basic guiding principle of the MP is: minimize the theoretical and descriptive apparatus of grammar by avoiding unnecessary complex formulations in favour of very simple syntactic operations which are susceptible to recursion if the need arises in the course of derivation.

#### **2.14 Organization of Grammar in the MP**

The structure of the minimalist grammar is woven around three connected systems namely the lexicon, the computational system, and the two interface system of output representation, that is, the semantic/LF component and phonetic/PF component. These are assumed to be the primitive substantives of the grammar of every natural language, at least within the context of MP. To form a clause within this grammar, relevant word items are selected from the lexicon and merged or combined in a pair wise fashion to form larger syntactic units or linguistic expressions which serve as inputs to the two interface output components of LF and PF. The semantic component maps/converts the derived linguistic expression into corresponding semantic form/representation, that is, the output of grammar at the meaning end, while the PF component produces the phonetic spell-out for the derived expression by mapping them into a Phonetic Form representation which is the output of grammar at the sound end.

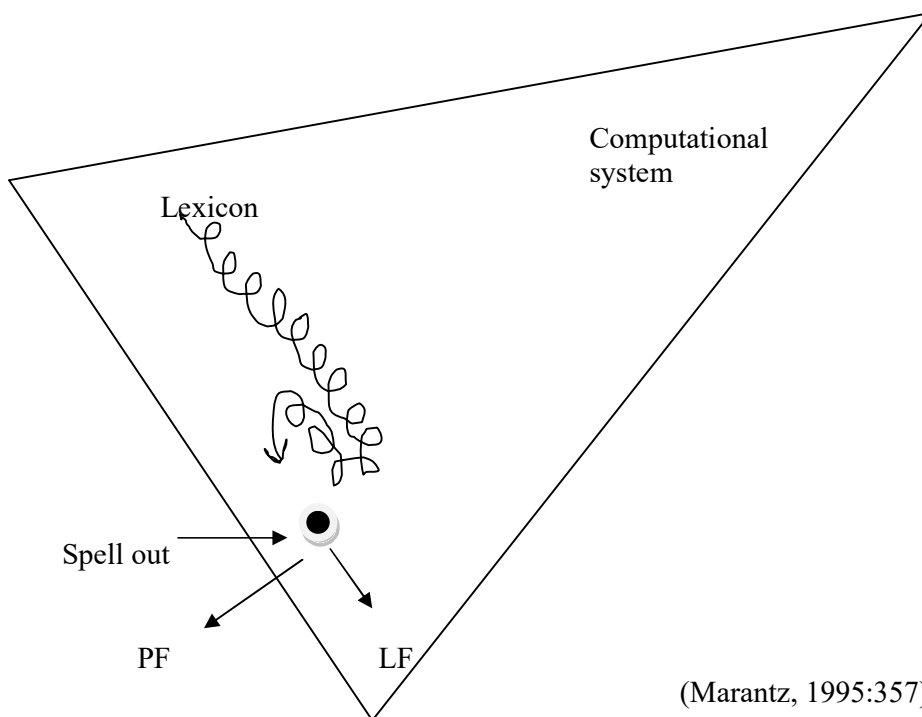
Derived linguistic expressions are said to converge or crash at LF and PF based on the formal/grammatical features that each of the word items used in the derivation has which must be in harmony with those of others. Spell-out is the stage or point where semantic and phonetic features are separated for interpretation at PF and LF. Chomsky (1995:219) puts this formally by saying,

... take L to be a generative procedure that constructs pairs  $(\pi, \lambda)$  that are interpreted at the articulatory-perceptual (A-P) and conceptual-intentional (C-I) interfaces respectively as “instructions” to the performance system.  $\pi$  is a PF representation

and  $\lambda$  is the LF representation, each consisting of “Legitimate objects” that can receive interpretation ...

This implies that the Lexicon feeds the computation component with word items and relevant syntactic information about them by specifying their formal features/syntactic properties. The computation system processes the information by selecting and merging the word items appropriately to construct well-formed linguistic expressions which are then moved into the working area to feed the two output interfaces (PF and LF) as *specific instructions* for spell-out and interpretation. It is at this point that the formal/grammatical features of words in any syntactic derivation are checked against one another. While any syntactic derivation whose features check appropriately converges at PF and LF, structures where features of items fail to check as they should simply crash at these twin output interfaces. This working structure of the MP is captured diagrammatically by Marantz (1995:357) and Napoli (1996:391), as represented below;

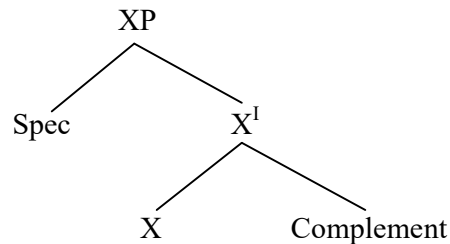
61)



## 2.15 The Lexicon

The lexicon is assumed to be a mental dictionary, where all possible word items of L are listed in the minimalist grammar. The minimalist lexicon specifies the grammatical properties (phonological, semantic and syntactic properties) which are characterized in terms of formal features (features which play some kind of roles in morphology/syntax) for each

word item on its list. This is the alternative put in place in the MP to replace the concept of structural case assignment. In other words, lexical items already have their case markings/properties, among other features, right from the lexicon. Therefore, lexical items in the MP are complexes of features listed in the lexicon (Chomsky 1995b:243). Let us consider the diagram below;



Three major sets of grammatical/formal features are carried by word items in the minimalist grammar, namely head-features, specifier-features, and complement-features. Head-features provide information on the inherent grammatical properties of a word item. These include its categorial designation (N/D, V, T,...), case form (Nom, Acc...), phi-features (number, person, gender, agreement) and other morphological/inflectional trappings that contribute to the syntax of such item. Specifier features indicate the likely kind of specifier that such item allows just as complement features supply relevant information on the possible kinds of complement it selects. A complement is an expression which merges with a head thereby projecting the head into a larger structure. A specifier is an expression which merges with an intermediate projection (X-bar). While X-bar is a projection of some head word (X). All of these features are checked in the process of computation and only linguistic expressions whose features check properly can converge at LF and PF. Uninterpretable features, i.e. features with no semantic content with which they can make contribution to the meaning of an expression, are eliminated at LF. By implication, only interpretable features survive computation.

## 2.16 The Computational Component

The MP concept of computation ( $C_{HL}$ ) is that of a system that relates sound form ( $\pi$ ) and meaning ( $\lambda$ ) using minimal operations to construct a linguistic relationship between the two. In order to construct a well-formed linguistic relationship between  $\pi$  and  $\lambda$ , the computation system makes sure that the linguistic expression ( $\pi, \lambda, \cdot$ ) of L satisfies output conditions at PF and LF. This is achieved by making sure that  $\pi$  and  $\lambda$ , are compatible, i.e. their derivation is based on the same lexical choices. Therefore, MP sees computation

... as mapping some array  $A$  of lexical choices to the pair  $(\pi, \lambda)$  [where ... $A$  is a variable which] ... must indicate what the lexical choices are and how many times each is selected by  $C_{HL}$  in forming  $(\pi, \lambda)$ .

(Chomsky 1995:225)

One vital implication of this is that, in the process of computation,  $C_{HL}$  can access a particular lexical item more than once to generate syntactic objects depending on the structure intended. However, separate applications of operation *select* on an item must be distinguished at LF.

Basically, the  $C_{HL}$  operation is recursive. It constructs syntactic objects, not only from two new lexical items, but also by merging new items with already formed syntactic objects. Syntactic objects are assumed to be some kind of re-arrangement of the properties of the lexical items used to construct them. Three minimal operations are used by the computational system to achieve its mandate, i.e. relating  $\pi$  and  $\lambda$ . These operations are *select*, *merge*, and *move*.

### 2.17.1 Operation Select

This is a procedure that picks out word items from the lexical resources of  $L$  and introduces them into a derivation. Items are not selected together at the same time but one after the other with each serving as a syntactic object in the derivation. However, already constructed derivation is also seen as a syntactic object to which another lexical choice can be merged.

### 2.17.2 Operation Merge

This is an operation that combines two separately selected lexical items to construct a new single unit of syntactic object. It also applies on already constructed units of syntactic objects to form larger units out of those already constructed. For instance, *merge* can apply on two objects  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  to derive/form a new unit of syntactic object  $K$  where  $K$  is fixed for the set  $\{\alpha, \beta\}$ . In other words,  $K$  must have the form  $\{\gamma, \{\alpha, \beta\}\}$  where  $\gamma$  is a type of  $K$ . Chomsky (1995b:243) puts this concept formally as:

$K = \{\gamma, \{\alpha, \beta\}\}$  where  $\alpha, \beta$  are objects  
and  $\gamma$  is the label of  $K$ .

This implies that  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are the constituents of  $K$  or that  $K$  is constituted from the pair  $(\alpha, \beta)$ . However,  $\gamma$  is a label type of  $K$  which may turn out to be either  $\alpha$  or  $\beta$  depending on the one that projects out of the two. In other words, if  $\alpha$  projects, then  $\gamma = \alpha$ , but if  $\beta$  projects,  $\gamma = \beta$ .

Simply put, the item that projects out of the two determines the label of the new syntactic object formed. Let us illustrate this with the structural schema in (4) below.



In (62a),  $\alpha$  projects as the item that determines the label of the new syntactic object  $\alpha_2$ . However,  $\beta$  projects in (62b) to determine the label  $\beta_2$ . The item that projects is regarded as the head of the new construct. In conclusion, therefore, *merge* is an operation that takes a pair of syntactic objects,  $SO_i : SO_j$ , and replaces them by a new combined syntactic object,  $SO_{ij}$  (Chomsky (1995:226)).

### 2.17.3 Operation Move

Movement in the MP is radically different from the general concept of *move  $\alpha$*  in other earlier models of generative grammar (e.g. PPT). In the latter, *move  $\alpha$*  is an operator that moves any item anywhere subject to bounding or island constraints (Ross 1967) and other conditions like government and the empty category principle (ECP). On the other hand, movement in the MP is primarily motivated by feature checking which is subject to some minimal economy conditions, e.g. the Minimal Link Condition (MLC). Basically, two movement operations are assumed in the MP. These are Move- F(eature) otherwise known as the feature-checking theory of movement, and O(perator) movement which incorporates A(rgument) and A-bar movements. These operations are sketched out in the following subsections.

### 2.17.4 Move-F

This is a computational system internal movement mechanism which is triggered only by the need to check the formal features of syntactic objects selected and merged for the processing of syntactic derivation. Lexical items are assumed to move along with their features, which of course are the primary target of Move-F, in order to check off those features against those of the heads of target projections. As earlier mentioned, MP assumes that lexical items carry three sets of grammatical features, namely head-features, which determine the intrinsic grammatical properties (e.g. categorial feature) by which an item could be identified as different from every other item; complement features which indicate the kinds of complements an item will select; and specifier features which describe the kind of specifier that a syntactic object head takes. Generally, features are assumed to be

morphological, i.e. they are somewhat inflectional in nature, and are described relatively in terms of strength, such that a particular feature of a particular item may be strong or weak. For instance, categorial features are assumed to be strong.

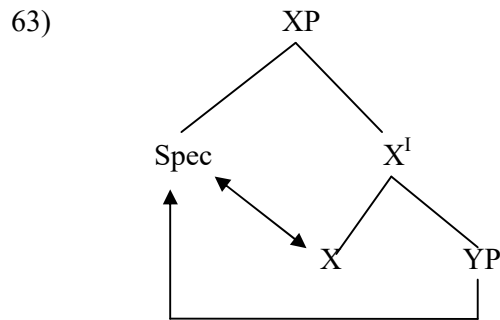
Similarly, some of the formal features are assumed interpretable while others are not interpretable, especially at LF. Interpretable features enter the derivation already valued. Features which enter the derivation unvalued are uninterpretable. Interpretable features, which include categorial- and phi features, are those that have semantic content by virtue of which they contribute to the meaning and overall interpretation of the structural derivation. Uninterpretable features, such as specifier- and complement-features, are the opposite. Essentially, a derivation that will converge at LF must contain only the (semantically) interpretable features. Any uninterpretable feature present at LF will make the derivation crash.

In a nutshell, every convergent derivation must be made up of syntactic objects that carry compatible features. Any incompatible feature disrupts structural harmony, blocks convergence, and causes the resultant phrase/clause to crash. In order to ensure compatibility of features carried by lexical items, the computation system checks their features against one another by invoking the features-checking movement operation, which raises just the F(eature) alone. However, in the process of raising F, the item carrying F is pied-piped to F as a kind of *minimal extra baggage* required for convergence. As a minimal economy requirement, especially for overt movement, F has the mandate to carry along just enough material needed for convergence. Chomsky (2011:226) gives a vivid description of how this operation works when he said,

I assume, then, that the operation move raises F and derivatively raises FF (F) as well, carrying along a phrase containing F only when the movement is overt, as required for convergence... Thus raising without pied-piping is more economical in some natural sense, but that is irrelevant if the derivation does not converge ... if all features of some category  $\alpha$  have been checked, then  $\alpha$  is inaccessible to movement, whether it is a head or some projection. But if some feature F is as yet unchecked,  $\alpha$  is free to move. Economy conditions exclude 'extra' moves and anything more than the minimal pied-piping required for convergence. In covert movement, features raise alone.

There are two feature-checking configurations in the MP. These are the Spec- Head and Head-Head checking relations. The Spec-Head feature-checking relation concerns the specifier feature of a head which attracts the feature of another syntactic object from its

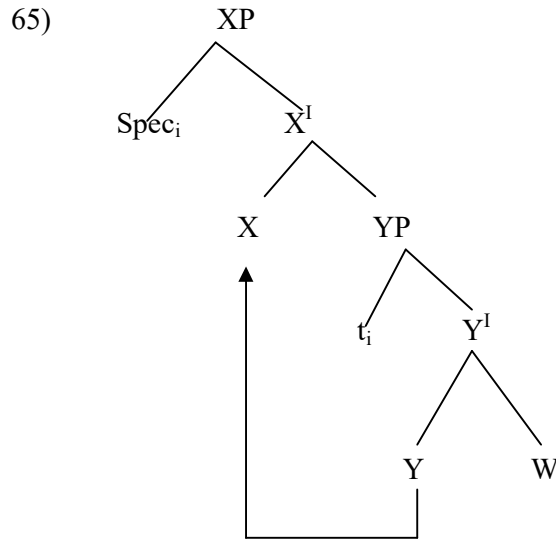
original theta-marked position into Spec-Head for feature-checking purpose. In the process, the specifier feature of the head is checked by the moved item, and the case feature of the moved item is in turn checked by the head. A good illustration of this configuration could be seen in the checking relation between subjects of clauses and I heads of IPs. The subject is attracted from its VP-internal q-position to Spec-I where it checks the spec-feature of I, and I in turn checks the nominative case-feature of the moved subject, as shown in (63) below.



In (63) above, the Spec-Head checking relation is mutual between the head and its specifier. It is this same configuration that takes care of complement-feature checking of objects against V heads in an operation in which the object of V moves to Spec VP to check the complement feature of V and V in turn checks the accusative case-feature of the raised object. On the other hand, Head-Head movement configuration does not involve specifiers or complements. Rather it is an operation that moves one head item into another head position simply because the item in the latter position possesses an unchecked feature that attracts the unchecked feature of the former. This is used to take care of  $X^0$  categories only (i.e. N, V, D, I, C, etc.), both lexical and functional. Two good examples of the Head-Head movement are found in English I to C and V to I movements. For instance, the interrogative feature of C is assumed to be strong in English, so it often attracts Aux items from I(nfl) into COMP to derive polar interrogative expressions like(64) below.

64) [CP [C will<sub>i</sub>] [IP You [I t<sub>i</sub>] [VP marry me ] ] ]

The framework of the Head-Head configuration is informally represented as in (65) below.



Finally, it is imperative to note that grammatical features are checked in the course of every computational derivation. In the process, all uninterpretable features are erased once checked because they play no role in the interpretation of syntactic derivation since they have no semantic content. This leaves only the interpretable features surviving the corresponding LF representation. Phonetic features are assumed to be processed separately by the PF component, hence they by no means whatsoever input into the LF component. As earlier hinted, the uninterpretable features are specifier-, complement, and case-features while the interpretable are the phi-, tense-, and categorial- features. Radford (1997b:72) put these move succinctly:

If there is a match between *checker* and *checked* in respect of any given feature, the relevant specifier- or complement feature is erased (because specifier- and complement features are uninterpretable), and the corresponding head feature is erased if it is uninterpretable (but is not erased if interpretable). If there is a mismatch between *checker* and *checked* in respect of some feature, the relevant feature cannot be erased from either.

Similarly essential is the fact that elements with strong features (e.g. case) move overtly to get those strong features eliminated prior to spell-out. Although, such overt movement is costly because it violates procrastinate, they are inevitable for convergence.

### 2.18 Economy Conditions on F-Movement

Initially (Chomsky 1993), there were three general economy conditions put in place to guide movement in the feature-checking configuration. These are Greed, Procrastinate, and Last Resort.



**Greed** specifies that the only reason why constituents (syntactic objects) move is to satisfy their own morphological requirement of checking their own features only. This principle in MP is captured technically, according to Chomsky (1993), it specifies that movement is licit only if features of a moved constituent are checked or valued and then copied. Simply, a constituent may move only to satisfy its self-interest. i.e. it allows constituents to move on the grounds of satisfying and checking individual properties by verifying them through the process of Feature Checking (but now Valuation). For instance, a Probe  $\alpha$  will agree with a Goal  $\beta$  only to satisfy its selfish interest or value some of its unvalued features. If one does not adhere to this principle or simply, if features are not checked/valued, derivation may Crash. Therefore, movement is motivated only by selfish reasons which is to satisfy the needs of the moving constituent i.e. feature checking/valuation, Marantz (1995: 358).

**Procrastinate** is a condition put in place to prohibit overt movement, as overt movement is assumed to be costly while covert movement is cost free. In the Minimalist Program (MP), procrastinate emphasizes on the timing of valuation of some features. There are some strong features and weak features which must be valued before there can be convergence. This principle is used to simply say that if valuation of some certain features in movement can wait let it wait. Some operations may proceed overtly. It is often assumed in MP that features are in two flavors; Strong and Weak features. Formal features (morpho-syntactic) are strong features which are the phonological features relevant for interpretation at the LF interface. They must be valued overtly before the Spell-Out. But weak features are relevant at the LF interface, they will not proceed overtly. Procrastinate simply assumes that ‘grammar is lazy’ in that one doesn’t check a feature unless there is a need for checking. And, since weak features will not proceed overtly, it must be checked later on in the derivation i.e. procrastinate specifies that they will be checked covertly. It has to wait till the Interface.

**Last Resort** assumes movement operations are driven by the necessity that the item involved must be moved otherwise computational derivation will not converge. Last resort principle is a rescue operation principle in situations where a derivation is liable to crash because of lack of full interpretation. The FL principle is also called the interface condition. Full Interpretation is the convergence condition, ensuring the legibility of syntactic expressions at the interfaces by barring features that are without an interpretation at the two interface levels, Phonetic Form (PF) and Logical Form (LF). Such uninterpretable features include Case features on nouns and verbal agreement features. *Last Resort* is a kind of inertia to the system, ruling out vacuous steps in derivations. This means that all other possible resorts

have failed. The basic idea in *Last Resort* is that operations are driven by necessity therefore the only available rescue operation is Movement.

**Shortest Move:** This principle specifies that movement of a constituent to the next related position from its source position must be in smaller hoops, Marantz (1995: 355). It emphasizes strict cyclicity, a condition for movement in GB. Shortest move prevents an item from double crossing a node of similar features if the node is empty, and blocks any (other) movement if the node is filled. It is more local than the strict cyclicity condition in GB. Generally, in minimalism, displacements of syntactic objects are triggered by features which have to be checked/ valued and O movement must proceed through successive cyclic movement, that is, movement should be a step after the other.

In other words, some morphological necessities make it imperative for certain features to be checked in the checking domain of some heads, thereby forcing such features to move along with the items carrying them to the checking domains. If not, the intended derivation will fail to converge. In actual sense, Chomsky (1993) sees Greed as a self-serving Last Resort. However, probably for the obvious reason of similarities in Greed and Last Resort, Chomsky (2011) reformulates the feature-checking movement as *Attract*. *Attract*, which subsumes Greed, Last Resort, and the minimal link condition, is therefore conceived as a movement of a set of features from one category position to another given minimal closeness of the extraction and landing sites, and feature compatibility between the head and the feature attracted. Chomsky (2011:297) codes *Attract* as:

K attracts F if F is the closest feature that can enter  
into a checking relation with a sub label of K.

While the Last Resort component of *Attract* is evident in the fact that elements move only when attracted by features of the target that must be checked, Minimal Link Condition (MLC) in *Attract* is formally coded as;

K attracts  $\alpha$  only if there is no  $\beta$ ,  $\beta$  closer to K than  $\alpha$ , such that K  
attracts  $\beta$ . (Chomsky 2011:311)

MLC clearly requires all checking movement relations to be local. However, if there is any item that appears far higher from its source position, then it must have got there through step-by-step, local movement relations. This is what is also termed *cyclic movement* following the shortest-move principle, which disallows long distance movement by fiat:

... a constituent must move to the first position - that is, the  
hierarchically closest position in an upward direction --of the

right kind from its source position. Shortest move prevents movement from passing over an intervening node of the right kind, whether that intervening node is lexically filled or empty.  
(Napoli 1996:394)

Consequently, the current version of the MP (i.e. Chomsky 2011) has only two major economy conditions. These are *Attract* and *Procrastinate*, which prefer derivations to delay movement until after Spell-out such that movements that do not affect PF are preferred over those that affect it. Therefore, only these two together with other theory internal guiding principles are assumed for this present study.

### 2.19 O(perator) and A(rgument) Movement

The term operator is used in syntax to denote interrogative and negative expressions which have the syntactic properties that trigger auxiliary inversion – ‘what have you done?’ and allow a polarity item like partitive existential any to occur in the scope – ‘what can anyone do?’, ‘Nothing can anyone do’. Operator movement therefore is an operation that moves an operator expression into the specifier position within CP driven by the operator feature (Chomsky 2011:325). When it applies to expressions that contain wh-operator, it is more specifically referred to as wh-movement, which derives content-word questions (Radford 1997b:130-132). According to Chomsky, the processing of this kind of movement is not at par with the feature-checking movement, as raised operator expressions land in Spec-CP in a streak of movement that appears superficially long distant.

However, this movement does not violate the Minimal Link Condition/Shortest-move of Attract since spec-CP is the smallest/shortest minimal/possible link with which the operator expression can form a chain. The idea then is: move the smallest constituent possible to the smallest distance possible. In this context, the head C constituent of the CP in question carries an interrogative/negative specifier feature while the operator expression carries an interrogative/neg head feature which compels it to move into that nearest spec-CP to check off the interrogative/negative specifier feature carried by the C head, since spec features are uninterpretable. Wh-items such as **nyi** ‘where’, **mó** ‘what’ and others are examples of interrogative operators while **ǒnhi** ‘who’ is the focus marker. These operators are attested in Ghòtùò. Consider these examples:

Wh-items in Ghòtùò

- 66a) **Ahi** rá mha afẹ?  
How get we home?  
‘How are we going to get home?’

- b) **Ahi** Olú rí?  
How olu QM?  
'How is Olú?'
- c) **Èghèghè òkpá** ghóhi ó rí bié?  
Time which food the QM ready?  
'When will the food be ready?'
- d) **Èghèghè òkpá** mhi rí varé?  
Time which I QM come?  
'When should I come?'
- e) **Ọnhí** Olú mhé?  
Who Olú see?  
'Who did Olú see?'
- f) **Ọnhí** ọ fúè èèjè?  
who he cook fish?  
'Who cook the fish?'
- g) **Nyi** Olú rí é òìlhà?  
Where olú QM eat yam?  
'where did Olú eat yam?'
- h) **Enhinhi** Ọmùà rí fié?  
Why Ọmùà QM cry?  
'Why is Ọmùà crying?'
- i) **Mi** Olú dé?  
What Olú buy?  
'What did Olú buy?'
- j) Olú dé **mó**?  
Olú buy what?  
'Olú bought what?'

Focused items in Ghòtùò

- 67a. Ọmùà nhéghe òhò  
Ọmùà cook soup  
'Ọmùà cooked soup'
- b. Òhò ọnhí Ọmùà nhéghe  
soup FOC Ọmùà cook  
'Ọmùà cooked SOUP'
- c. Ọmùà ọnhí ó nhéghe òhò  
Ọmùà FOC she cook soup  
'ỌMÙÀ cooked soup'

A(rgument) movement, as used in this context, encompasses both A- and A-bar movements. Arguments are nominal expressions which function as participants that play

thematic roles assigned by verbs in the predicate structure of sentences. A-movement refers to the syntactic movement of a nominal expression from one argument position to another within the same sentence structure. On the other hand, A-bar movement is the movement of a nominal expression from an argument or theta-marked position to a non –argument position such as spec-CP. Therefore, while A-movement takes care of subject to- subject raising in passive structures for languages that attest them, A-bar movement captures the structure of topicalized, focused, and relativized arguments, which are usually moved into non-argument positions. A-bar movement is crucial to our analyses in this study since Ghòtùò does not have passive structures but focus constructions.

## 2.20 Phases in MP

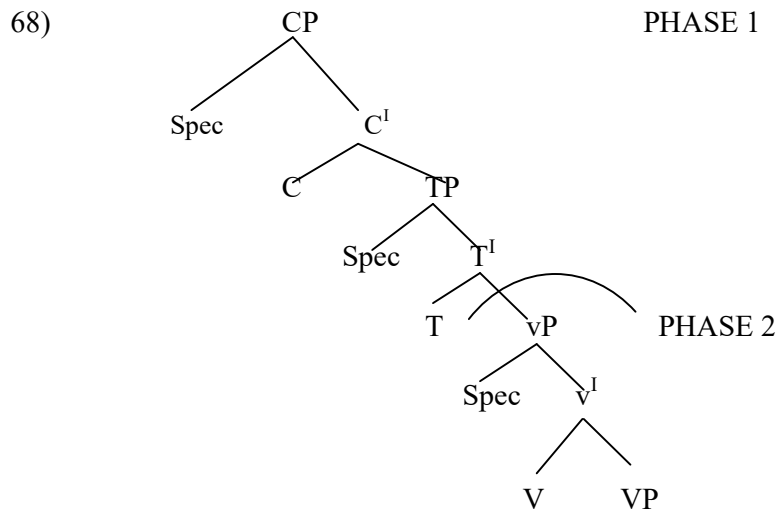
Since its inception in MP defining ‘Phase’ is still an unresolved issue. Phase derivation is the latest improvement in the Chomsky’s MP. Chomsky (2005:5) says that Phases are independent at the interface, and are also propositional. Phases are the subarrays of the numeration. He also sees Phase as the Lexical Subarrays (LA) which are chunks of the numeration and are exhaustible. When a lexical subarray is exhausted, the derivation continues with the next just to minimize the memory in use i.e. the memory may forget some part of the derivation which are said to have undergone transfer. Similarly, Hornstein, Nunes and Grohmann (2005:355) observe that the computational system activates a subarray  $\delta_1$  from the numeration and builds a phase PH, using all the lexical items listed in  $\delta$  ...a derivation is complete only after all subarrays have been exhausted and a phase is complete iff the head of the phase is saturated. By saturation we mean that the lexical subarray is exhausted.

Richards (2010) says that a phrasal array defines the domain in which merge is predictable. Domain of a phase head is the probing area c-commanded by the phase head from where the head could form an Agree relation with a goal. In this sense Phases are simply heads of projections whose arrays can be shipped to the interfaces, an idea which reminds us of the GB’s Islands. The domain of a phase head include its c-commanding search area made available by the non-phasal heads which is the part that is shipped to the interfaces. Under Chomsky’s proposal, CPs and transitive vPs (i.e. a vP with an AGENT or EXPERIENCER external argument denoted as vP) are Phases.

Richards (2010) notes that Phases (i.e. C and v) represent the points at which an already formed syntactic object is accessed and evaluated by the interface components. Syntactic structures are built up in Phases where at the end of each Phase, the adjudged

propositional domains in a derivation are frozen for any Probe (which is the basis for Uriagereka's (1999) Multiple Spell-Out) to attracts. Any part of an already formed syntactic structure undergoes Transfer. *Transfer* is a process of moving derivation to the twin interfaces, LF and PF for further operations and relevant parts of the structure (domains) are inaccessible, Chomsky (2001).

In Phase derivation, Wang (2012) notes that Phases are primarily based on *economy* principle and efficient computation of the language faculty. The Phases are shown below in (68). PHASE 1 is the CP and its domain, while PHASE 2 is the vP and its domain.



Note this fact that the relationship between a probe H and a goal G must be very local. As a way of reducing computational complexities, Chomsky (1999: 9) cited in Radford (2009:379) observes that language faculty can only process limited amount of structure in its **active memory** which is primarily motivated only to reduce computational burden

A Phase should be as small as possible to minimize memory, Chomsky (1999). A condition where a phase's operation has been fully satisfied and frozen i.e. inaccessible to an external Probe P is regulated by Phase Impenetrability Condition (PIC). PIC is defined in Chomsky (2000: 108);

**Phase Impenetrability Condition (PIC)**

In a phase  $\alpha$  with head H the domain of H is not accessible to operations outside  $\alpha$  only H and its edge are accessible to such operations.

(Chomsky, 2000:108)

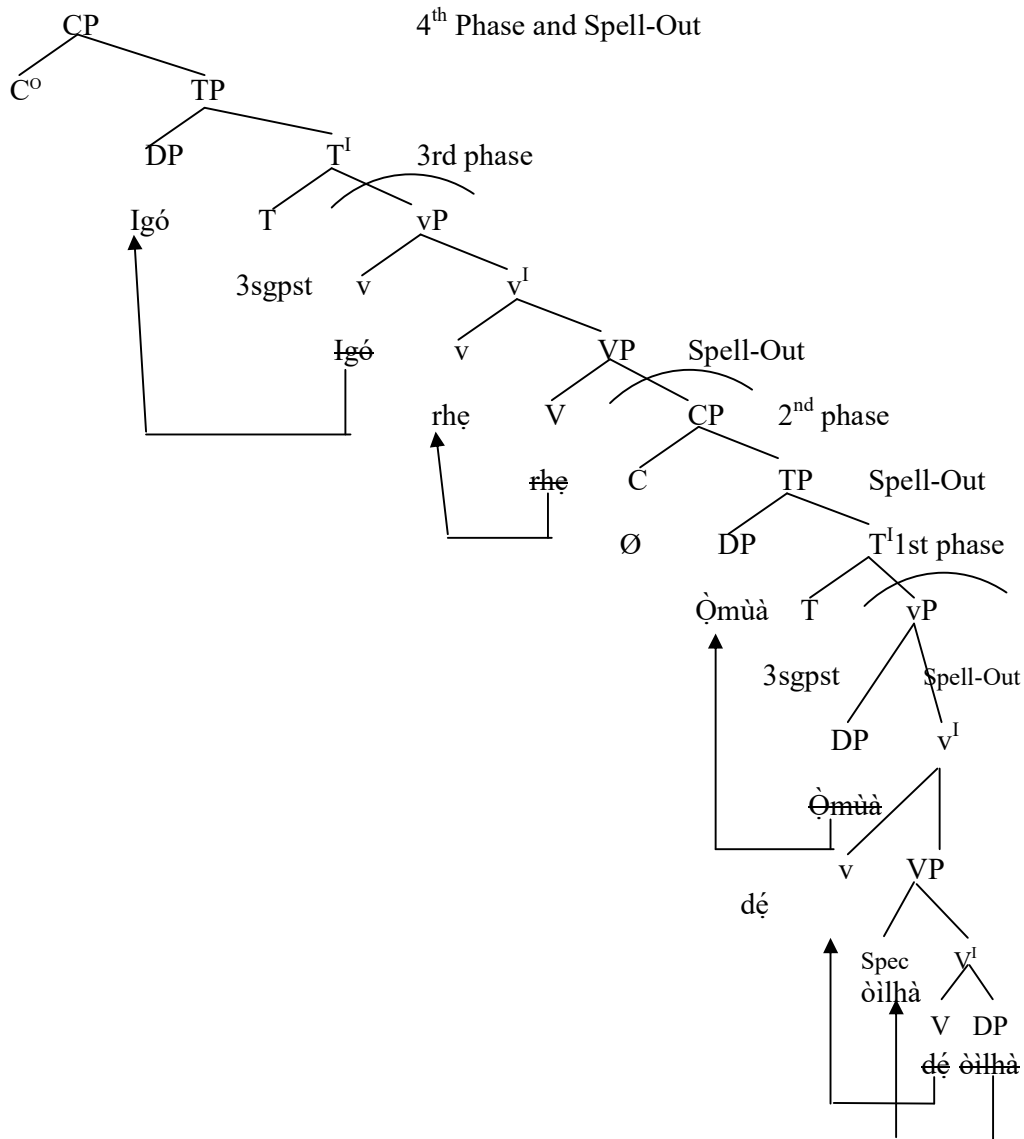
Only those parts handed over to the twin interfaces will undergo transfer i.e. it does not involve the Phase head and its Spec which are not in the domain of transfer. By ‘domain’ we mean the complement of the phase head which undergoes transfer.

A probe P, under phase derivation, will not stop probing down in its c-commanding domain until it finds an appropriate  $\theta$ -complete active goal which it *tracks*, the term used to describe the situation where it finds the suitable goal with [*uF*]) to agree with, otherwise the derivation will crash. To properly demonstrate this, consider the derivation of the sentence below;

69. Igó rɛ Ọmùà dẹ òìhà  
 Igó say Ọmùà buy yam  
 ‘Igó said that Ọmùà bought yam’

The V *dẹ* merges with *òìhà* (*òìhà* being a DP headed by a null determiner) to form V-bar *dẹ òìhà*; since  $\theta$ -role is assigned under merge, the V *dẹ* assigns the  $\theta$ -role patient to the DP *òìhà*. The DP *òìhà* moves to spec VP to enter into checking relationship for <CASE> valuation forming a VP. The resulting VP is merged with a causative light *v* to form *vI*. The light verb values the ACC case of the DP *òìhà* and its *vP* triggers the movement of the lexical verb *dẹ* from its original position in V to *v*. To satisfy the EF feature on *v*, the DP *Igó* is externally merged with the *vI* to form *vP* resulting in the structure in (70) below:

70.



Having formed a vP with (a thematic external argument) which is the head of a phase with its complement VP, the VP constituent undergoes transfer to the PF and LF interfaces and cease to be accessible to further syntactic operations. This implies that the lower copies of moved items will receive a null spell-out in the PF component while uninterpretable features which have been deleted are removed from the structure and sent to LF component. Consequently, only the DP *òilhá* is given an overt phonetic spell-out by PF. The left edge of the phase is not spelled-out and remains [-interpreted] to allow long distance movement until the next phase is complete. Thus an element moved to the spec-head of a phase will be able to continue to move. This is called *Escape hatch* (Cook and Newson 2007:307). By “Escape hatch” Chomsky means a projection providing an emergency exit from an enclosed derivation, in



proposition and not always on permanent basis. In other ways, propositional projection(s) provide assisting grounds for movement. The operation continues with the movement of the DP *Òmùà* entering into a checking relationship with the head of TP to value its  $\phi$  and EPP features after which it moves to satisfy EPP.

In summary, the assumption that structures are derived in phases for economy purposes has helped to reduce computation complexities. Therefore, phasal analysis would provide the most optimal and economic way to account for the complex structures that exist in Ghòtùò language.

### 2.21 Feature Checking and Movement Type in Focus Construction

One of the ‘big fact’ about human languages is that sentences show displacement properties in the sense that expressions that appear in one position may be interpreted in another position. The question now is, why natural languages have movement? The possible answer is that movement exists because it is required by the interface system. The existence of movement is somehow tied to the role of lexical features play at the interfaces. Movement is just a response to overcome the lack of optimality for it is through movement operations that [-interpretable] features get eliminated. So, the checking operation that licensed by movement is actually elimination of [-interpretable] formal features. Moreso, given that every operation must be licensed, movement must then comply with the Last Resort Condition;

#### **Last Resort**

A movement operation is licensed only if it allows the elimination of [-interpretable] formal features.

Norbert, H. et al. (2005:293)

Feature checking is triggered by the need to eliminate [-interpretable] features from the computation. Nominal elements could enter the derivation with their features already specified, and the appropriateness of a particular Case-bearing element in a given structure would be enforced by a checking procedure matching such Case-feature with the Case-feature of a local head. If no appropriate matching is possible, the derivation then crashes at LF. This checking procedure matching is what Radford (2009:241) called agreement which says;

#### **Agreement**

When a probe (like T) agrees with a goal in its local domain

- i. the unvalued (person/number)  $\phi$ -features on the probe will be valued (i.e assigned a value which is a copy of that on the goal).
- ii. the unvalued case feature on the goal will be valued (i.e assigned a value

dependent on the nature of the probe, e.g nominative if the probe is a finite T)

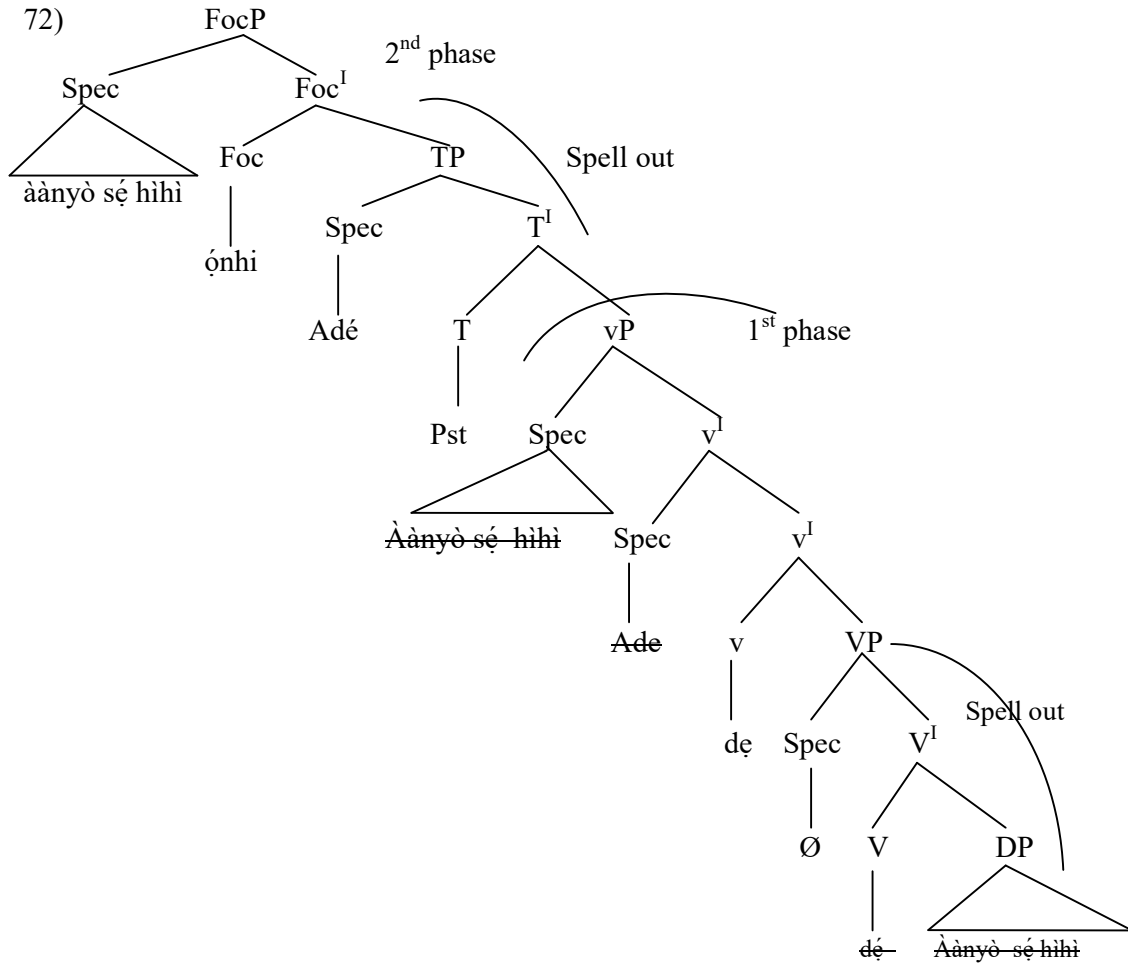
For a clear understanding of the concept, consider the example below

71a) [FocP Àànyò sé hihì [Foc (ónhì) [TP Adé ~~àànyò sé hihì~~ dé ~~àànyò sé hihì~~ ] ] ]  
 Wine of palm FOC Adé ~~wine of palm~~ buy ~~wine of palm~~  
 ‘Adé bought PALM WINE’

b) [FocP Oba sé Òtùò [Foc (ónhì) [TP inhò Igó ~~oba sé òtùò~~ sùè ~~oba sé òtùò~~ ] ] ]  
 King of Òtùò FOC mother Igó ~~king of òtùò~~ greet ~~king of òtùò~~  
 ‘Igó’s mother greeted KING OF ÒTÙÒ’

In the above data, only the verbs, the null copies and the emphatic markers are transferred to the interface levels. The case features of the objects have already been valued prior to movement which satisfies the derivation Morpho-syntactically. In (71a) it is proposed that “**Inhò Igó**” occupy the edge of TP as a “Big DP”.

Movement of [+Foc] words from the object position in Ghòtùò as shown above are in phases. The issue of phases has ensured the reinforcement of cyclic movement in grammar and gradual formation of constructions, especially as regards Earliness Condition (EC) where spell out comes after the complete projection of a phase head. The Multiple Specifier Hypothesis (MSH) put forward by Chomsky (1999) is vital and instrumental in this object movement because it accommodates the items in the course of movement. In the above data also, the movement of the object does not displace the logical subject, but uses the multiple specifier hypothesis to enter the  $\nu$  projection as it is shown in the diagram below ;



From the above examples (71a&b), the objects of the sentences were moved to the left periphery of the clause to give them patient to *àànyò sé hìhì* 'palm wine' under merge. The structure is merged with null light verb to form  $v^I$ , The strong prominence. It is observable that whenever an object (DP or PP) of the sentence is focused, a SO, *ónhi*, is introduced in the clause to link the focused element with the main clause. Example (72) is used below to demonstrate how the structure is computed. The DP *àànyò sé hìhì* 'palm wine' is merged with *dẹ* 'buy' to form VP. *dẹ* 'buy' assigns  $\theta$ -role feature of the  $v$  attracts the lexical V to adjoin to it. To satisfy the EPP feature of the light  $v$ , the subject DP Adé 'personal name' is selected from the LS and merged with  $v^I$  to form another  $v^I$  to permit multiple spec so as to create an escape hatch for the OBJ DP. The OBJ DP is therefore merged with the  $v^I$  to form vP. Since vP is a phase, its complement domain is sent to the interface levels for appropriate interpretation of subject to PIC. Computation proceeds with the merging of vP with  $T^I$ . The lexical V moves from  $v$  to T to check its T features. T probes downwards for the

closest goal in its c-commanding domain<sup>13</sup> to value its  $\phi$ -features. The search is satisfied by the DP occupying spec  $vP$ . They value their unvalued features and delete the unvalued ones. The EPP feature of T which requires it to have a subject then attracts the DP to move to spec T via internal merge. TP is not a phase, hence, computation continues with merging of TP with  $Foc^0$  overtly realized as ‘*ónhi*’ in Ghòtùò. Foc has EPP feature which requires it to have a subject so it attracts the OBJ DP from the spec  $vP$  to occupy its spec, thus, forming FocP. The remaining part of the clause is then sent to the interface levels for appropriate interpretation.

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<sup>13</sup> According to MP assumptions, search has to be minimal. In other words, the goal has to be as close as possible to minimise search

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Preliminaries

This chapter discusses the means through which the data for this research work were elicited. The process of the analysis of the data, the quality of the various mean, the reason for the adoption of such means and the native speaker informants used will be explained. The theoretical framework adopted for this research work will also be explained as applicable to this work.

The study attempts the description of the syntax of focus construction in Ghòtùò language. It adopts the Minimalist Program (MP) as its theoretical orientation. The choice of MP is because of its quest to offer linguistic inquiry that will satisfy the criteria of naturalness, parsimony, simplicity, elegance, explanatoriness and economy (Horstein, Nunes, Grohmann (2005:5,6)). The main thrust of MP is that linguistic operations, derivations and representations are subject to economy conditions. The two cornerstones of MP are methodology economy and substantive economy. These linguistic economic notions promote research strategy that could be operationally explained thus; 'look for the simplest theory whose operations have a least effort flavour' (2005:8)

MP holds the view that linguistic theory should contain as few non-derived assumptions as possible. It views grammar as a cognitive system. A fundamental assumption is that lexical items are entered into the lexicon with all the required features wired into them (phonological, syntactic and semantic features). These features will enable them to project maximally in the numeration through operation merge to derive syntactic object.

#### 3.1 The Data

Data are the symbols, numbers and or alphabetical characters used to describe one or more attributes such as age, sex, volume, growth rates, temperature, and so on of an entity. Data can be obtained by observing, counting, measuring, weighing and so on which are then recorded. It is also regarded as the building blocks of information.

The terms data and information are often used interchangeably in everyday speech as meaning the same thing, but in reality, they have distinct meanings. They are the input raw materials from which information is produced. Information can therefore be defined as data that have been assembled, processed and interpreted.

The data used in this study were elicited from native speaker informants and existing relevant works on the language. The people interviewed ranged from youth, especially senior secondary school students, to older people of above seventy years of age. Though, there is greater influence of pidgin and Yoruba on the people and the language. The youth are influenced by pidgin and the older ones by Yoruba language but many of the older ones still have the command of the language. This influenced the choice of research's choice of choosing the native speakers used. Out of the many people interviewed, twenty-four were purposefully selected. The twenty-four comprises two native speakers from each quarter of the twelve quarters. The age of the people selected ranged from age fifty to seventy-nine. The purpose of this selection is for authenticity of the data.

The data collected for the purpose of this research was field based. Field trips were made three times to Ghòtùò community, and each trip lasted for minimum of two weeks. For the collection of the data, Ibadan 400 word list and The Ibadan Syntactic Paradigm, West African Language data sheet (Krupp Dakubu 1980), Awobuluyi's syntactic check list for Akoko languages and structured sentences were used. Ibadan 400 word list and West African language data sheet were used to capture the lexicons of the language while The Ibadan Syntactic Paradigm, Awobuluyi's syntactic check list and structured sentences were used to elicit sentences in the language. Ghòtùò is close to Akoko and the people claim to have originated from different parts of Yoruba land, especially Akoko. This is the reason for the use of Awobuluyi's syntactic check list.

Data were also elicited from proverbs, folktales, oral tradition, wise sayings as well as simple conversational dialogue in order to critically examine their syntactic structures. Focus group with structured sentences was also employed. The method employed is based on structured interview. Same questions were given to different informants and the choice of alternative responses was restricted to predetermined lists created for this purpose. The existing relevant works on the language were mainly on phonology. There were just two existing work on the grammar of the language.

### **3.2 The Respondents**

These are the native speaker informants used for this research work. A whole lot of people were interviewed but twenty-four were purposefully selected. Almost all of these twenty-four declined that their names be put in record. So, few names or no name will be mentioned. This act of declining is the reason why the research also adopted participant observation method as one of the tools to elicit necessary information.

Mr Arogundade is the eldest of all the informants used. He was seventy-nine then. A retired civil servant from Ámóyá quater. He retired as secretary from the judiciary court in Ghòtùò town. He was the person who narrated the history of the people even before the researcher could lay hand on Felix (2014). There is variation in the both account. Felix is of the opinion that the people came from Bini but Pa Arogundade claimed that the people are from differnt part of Yoruba land and he back it up with evidence from their praise chants.

### **3.3 Focus Group Discussion**

A focus group is a small, but demographically diverse group of people whose reactions are studied. Focus groups are group discussions conducted with the participation of 7 to 12 people to capture their experiences and views regarding specific issues closely related to research question(s). A focus group is a qualitative research because it asks participants of open – ended responses conveying thoughts or feelings.

Focus groups are led by a moderator who is responsible to ensure that the group discussions remain focused on the research area. Advantages of focus groups include the possibility of obtaining primary data through non-verbal channel as well as, verbal channel and approaching the research area from various perspectives.

The researcher purposefully selected twelve participants, one from each quarter. The people selected were older people range from fifty years and above. The group comprised of four females and eight males. Traders, farmers, civil servants as well as retired civil servants were people selected. These people have lived for nothing less than thirty-five years in their home land. They were both literate and illiterate. The discussion was done in the cool of the day when the participants had returned from their various daily activities.

The discussion started with simple conversational dialogue after which the structured sentences that had been prepared by the researcher was introduced. Afterwards, proverbs, folktales, short stories and wise saying were also elicited from the participants. All these were done orally and being recorded by the researcher. The recorded interview was transcribed and the structures needed for this work were elicited.

### **3.4 Oral Tradition**

Oral tradition, or oral lore, is a form of human communication wherein knowledge, art, ideas and cultural material is received, preserved and transmitted orally from one generation to another. The transmission is through speech or songs and may include folktales,

ballads, chants, prose or verses. The researcher visited the community during their festive period when the community was in the peak of their various celebration. Different age groups celebration and performance were captured and analysed. Cultural songs, folktales, ballads and chants were presented. The sentence structures of all these were examined and employed in this research work.

### **3.5 Conversational Dialogue**

A dialogue is a literary technique in which writers employ two or more characters to be engaged in conversation with one another. In literature, it is a conversational passage or a spoken or written exchange or conversation in a group or between two persons directed towards a particular subject.

The researcher employed participant observation method. The people were aware of the presence of the researcher in their midst but unconscious to the fact that they were being recorded. The researcher analysed the structure of these conversations for the purpose of this work.

Besides all these, simple conversation between parents and their children were also recorded and necessary information needed were elicited. Trips were made to markets, churches, motor parks and Oba's square to capture the utterances employ in these places.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### FOCUSING IN GHÒTÙÒ

#### 4.0 Preliminaries

Different languages of the world employ various methods to formally express focus. Some languages express focus morphologically by using distinct morphemes or particles while others employ prosodic means. English language is an example of the latter, while most African languages including Ghòtùò illustrate the former. According to Gundel (1988) and Givon (1991), it is not often the case that a language or languages would only use one means, say, morphology, to signal focus information. Therefore, word order variation and special syntactic constructions such as cleft sentences are also used to indicate focus. The discussion in the following sections will look at the projections of different constituent that can be focused as well as the relationship that exists between focusing and topicalisation.

#### 4.1 The Focus Constituents in Ghòtùò

The units that can be focused or undergo focusing is the constituent of focus. It is the unit where the new information lies. It is the constituent that is emphasized and brought to focus. It is the unit that is moved to the Spec of FP position. Only maximal projections that is, phrases can be focused. DPs are the most easily focused constituent, which could be subject DP, object DP or object of preposition. When the object DP of preposition is focused the preposition which is the head of the phrase remains at the extraction site (preposition stranding) if the phrase is functioning as a complement but if it is an adjunct, the preposition is fronted with its object DP (pied piping). Prepositional phrase and verb phrase can also be focused. Unlike Yoruba and some other African languages, in Ghòtùò when verb phrase is moved to be focused, it leaves exact copy of itself at the extraction site and moves to the Spec FocP position without being topicalised. Adjectival phrase cannot be focused, for Ghòtùò does not allow adjective as a complement of NP rather the N will be relativized which will bring about relative clause. Both the noun and its relativized clause can be focused. Consider the following examples;

- 73a) Igó gbé ofè udo óvbàghi ó òwèni  
Igó kill rat inside room the yesterday  
'Igó killed a rat inside the room yesterday'
- b) Igó (òhì) o gbé ofè udo óvbàghi ó òwèni  
Igó FOC 3sg kill rat inside room the yesterday  
'IGÓ killed a rat inside the room yesterday'

- c) Ofè (ónhi) Igó gbé ofè udo óvbàghi ó òwèni  
Rat FOC Igó kill ~~rat~~ inside room the yesterday  
'Igó killed a RAT inside the room yesterday'
- d) Gbé (ónhi) Igó gbé ofè udo óvbàghi ó òwèni  
Kill FOC Igó kill rat inside room the yesterday  
' Igó KILLED a rat inside the room yesterday'
- e) Udo óvbàghi ó (ónhi) Igó gbé ofè ~~udo óvbàghi ó~~ òwèni  
Inside room the FOC Igó kill rat ~~inside room the~~ yesterday  
'Igó killed a rat INSIDE THE ROOM yesterday'
- f) Óvbàghi ó (ónhi) Igó gbé ofè udo ~~óvbàghi ó~~ òwèni  
Room the FOC Igó kill rat inside ~~room the~~ yesterday  
'Igó killed a rat inside THE ROOM yesterday'
- g) Òwèni (ónhi) Igó gbe ofè udo óvbàghi ó ~~òwèni~~  
Yesterday FOC Igó kill rat inside room the ~~yesterday~~  
'Igó killed a rat inside the room YESTERDAY'
- h) Igó nhi mhi mhe (ónhi) ~~Igó nhi mhi mhe~~ o nhéghe òhò ó  
Igó who I see FOC ~~Igó who I see~~ 3sg cook soup the  
'IGÓ WHO I SAW cooked the soup'
- i) Vbévbé<sub>i</sub> (ónhi) u<sub>i</sub> gbé ofè  
You(Emph) FOC you kill rat  
'YOU killed a rat'

From the examples above, it is seen that subject can be focused as seen in (73b) where **Igó**, the subject of the sentence (73a) is focused which contrast it from other possible constituents. In (73c) the object of the sentence **ofè** 'rat' is focused while the verb **gbé** 'kill' is focused (73d). Here, the moved verb leaves its exact copy at the extraction site, the moved verb is not nominalised. The prepositional phrase **udo óvbàghi ó** 'inside the room' is focused in (73e) while only the DP **óvbàghi ó** 'the room' from the prepositional phrase is focused in (73f) and the **òwèni** 'yesterday' which an adverbis focused in (73g). Relative clause with the DP it qualifies is focused in (73h). It should be noted here that in Ghòtùò, DP cannot have adjective as its qualifier, such DP will only be relativised such that, the DP will have relative clause as its qualifier as seen in (73h) where the whole of **Igó nhi mhi mhe** 'Igó that I saw' is focused. This will be further discussed later.

In examples (73b&h), there is introduction of **o** '3sg' after the focus marker, whenever subject of a sentence is focused, this '**o**' which is a copy of the focused subject occupies the original position of the focused subject.

Also in Ghòtùò, pronouns can be focused, although not all pronouns only the emphatic ones can be focusd non-emphatic cannot be focused. This will be later discussed as well.

#### 4.1.1 Subject Focusing

The focused constituent here is the subject NP. In most languages, the structure is such that the subject comes at the nominal sentence initial position, followed by focus marker and finally the cleft sentence, which is sometimes introduced by the resumptive pronoun, the trace of the focused NP. Resumptive pronouns are traces with phonetic content; they are restricted to contexts where traces occur. This is a form of syntactic construction where an argument in the sub-array of items selected from the lexicon in the derivation of a construction and merged as the constructions logical subject is given a position of matrix scope: a position where it gets the interpretation of having been assigned semantic prominence. Schachter (1991) views focusing as a syntactic operation correlated with the semantic process of foregrounding one part of a sentence at the expense of the rest. This is not a new grammatical process especially among African languages. The Argument is moved from the subject position to a non-argument position traditionally known as the CP, but following the split CP hypothesis is known as FocP. In fact Kiss (1998) asserts that "syntactically, the constituent called identificational focus itself acts as an operator, moving into a scope position in the specifier of a functional projection, and binding a variable." Examples of Focused Argument in Ghòtùò are:

- 74a) Igó (òñhi) o gbé ofè udo óvbàghi ó òwèni  
 Igó FOC 3sg kill rat inside room the yesterday  
 'It is Igó who killed a rat inside the room yesterday'
- b) Òsẹ (òñhi) ọ gbé ẹsẹ na mhẹ  
 Cricket FOC he kill ~~cricket~~ for me  
 'It was a cricket that he killed for me'
- c) Vbévbé (òñhi) u gbé ofè  
 You Foc you kill rat  
 'It is you who killed a rat'

The data above indicates that “**Òñhi**” is the Focus Marker (FM) in Ghòtùò but optional. It is introduced into the derivation via external merge. As a probe it attracts any constituent with matching focus features that are valued to move and merge to it. Semantically, it is the syntactic object that narrows the semantic scope of a clause to a

specific item of the entire clause. This effect is made available to the LF after the focus feature has been valued and the derivation transferred.

From the data above, the nominal items moved from the subject position have moved basically for scope. The edge of the highest head receives the matrix scope in Focus constructions. Since the nominal items occupy the scope position, the emphasis of the construction is placed on them by the marker that optionally occurs within the defined semantic perimeters of the FC. In (74c), the movement of the pronoun is partial in the sense that overt resumptive pronoun is left at the extraction site to take care of the A-chain of the construction, while the antecedent takes care of the A<sup>1</sup>-chain. It can be seen from the example that only emphatic pronominals can be focused, non-emphatic ones can not undergo focusing in the language.

The formation of these clauses in spite of their functions entails the normal computation processes of selection and merger. From (74a) above, the movement in subject focusing involving proper nouns in Ghòtùò is partial and not complete<sup>14</sup>. The subjects move leaving behind partial copies which is always a Resumptive pronoun, overtly realized at the extraction site when the derivation is transferred to the interface levels.

However, in Ghòtùò the agree criterion make it compulsory for a potential goal to have all the features that are required by a probe in valuation, valued before entering into the derivation. This implies that a goal can only value the features of probes with which they agree with. The subjects above move for greed: to satisfy the individual craving for semantic prominence. The features of person and number are valued in the course of their movement.

Focusing in Ghòtùò does not tamper with the thematic requirement or structure of the verb. It is also mandatory for the theta requirement of a predicate to be saturated in before Focus movement can take place. If for instance the agent thematic structure of the verb is not saturated, there will be no potent subject to be focused, therefore the derivation will crash. In fact the saturation of thematic requirement is the first step to valuation of morpho-syntactic then morpho-semantic<sup>15</sup> features in the language. In essence, an item to be focused cannot be selected directly from the numeration and merged to the Foc-head, it must have already existed in the derivation of the minimal sentence.

Towards the close of every derivation, TP is merged to an abstract Foc head. At this level the question would be does the Foc head need to merge to another phase head to be

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<sup>14</sup> Emphatic Pronominals in Ghòtùò always have appropriate or corresponding copies that is left at the extraction site that is phonologically overt.

<sup>15</sup> By morpho-semantic features here, it is meant by the focus feature.

transferred to the interface levels since what is transferred is the complement of the phase head, leaving the head and its Edge feature accessible for further computation. Therefore, the completion of the FP projection automatically makes it viable for the derivation to be transferred to the spell out levels. One does not need another phase head since the Foc head is an inherent constituent of the phase head C which has the license to explode from the split CP hypothesis. In Minimalism, movement of an item from one position to another is possible on the condition that there is an appropriate probe that has attracted it as an appropriate goal to move from the original site to the new site. This implies that the probe enters the derivation last and causes the goal to move to merge at its left edge.<sup>16</sup> The probe must c-command the goal, which will c-command the probe after movement.

#### 4.1.2 Predicate/ Verb Focus

Traditionally, the predicate is regarded to be all the constituents that come after the Subject NP. In general terms, this would include the verbs and its complements/adjuncts. Complements and adjuncts could be Noun Phrase, prepositional phrase, adverbial phrase or complementiser phrase.

According to Jackendoff (1977), only the constituents that share the feature [-V] can be focused. Consequently, in order to focus a verb in most languages, such as verb has to be nominalised at the focused landing site but a copy is still left at the extraction site. Nominalization of the verb involves different morphological processes. In Yoruba, the verb undergoes partial reduplication while in Igbo, it is a case of partial reduplication and affixation. The requirements of predication inversion force nominalization of focused verbs and VPs in Yorùbá (Déchaine 1988: 4-6). In order to be raised to Spec., Infl., the predicate must be of a type that can occupy an argument position, specifically, a nominal.

Predicate focus is attested in Ghòtùò, the focused verb is moved to the sentence initial position, there is a copy in-situ, but the focused verbs are not nominalised. The movement of this focused constituent is an A<sup>I</sup>-movement. The focused verb is extracted from

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<sup>16</sup> “Given the way trees are built, the goal will always enter the derivation first because the probe would not c-command it otherwise (most assume asymmetric c-command, so a probe does not c-command its sister, but it does c-command everything dominated by its sister). Here again, accounts differ, but in at least some accounts, the probe must be satisfied (enter an Agree relation) the moment it is introduced into structure, so that its goal better be reachable at the moment in the derivation that the probe is added. If the probe has an EPP property associated with the features on it that it must match, then the next operation after the merge of the probe is internal merge, that is to say, the probe needs a copy of the goal to be merged just above it to satisfy the EPP feature/property.”(Safir, 2012, April 30:Personal communication)

its base-generated site and moved to the focus position, Spec., FocP and it does not require nominalisation. Consider the following examples;

- 75a) Gbé (ónhi) Igó gbé ofè udo óvbàghi ó òwèni  
 Kill FOC Igó kill rat inside room the yesterday  
 ‘Igó KILLED a rat inside the room yesterday’
- b) É (ónhi) Ọmùà é oilha òwèni  
 Eating FOC Ọmùà eat yam yesterday  
 “Ọmùà ATE yam yesterday”

From the above examples, we observe that the movement of any constituent to Spec. FocP is for feature checking, for such constituent receives prominence or emphasis over other constituents in the sentence. In Ghòtùò, such movement and the obligatory appearance of focus maker is for contrasting. The element focused is moved so as to contrast it from other possible constituent that may or may not be present in the sentence.

**Gbé** ‘kill’ and **é** ‘eat’ are verbs in their base site, but when moved to Spec. FocP for their contrastive feature checking become nominal elements in as much as that the element moved must carry [+N] feature, though without being nominalised.

#### 4.1.3 Object Focusing

The focused constituent here is the object DP. It is a subcategorized position of either the verb or the preposition. Object DPs being complement DPs are assigned  $\Theta$ -roles by the verb or preposition which heads the phrase in fulfillment of the Projection Principle. In focusing, the object DP is moved from its argument position (A-position) to Spec of FocP, a non-argument position (A-bar position) for feature checking. The movement to A-bar position is to fulfill the Theta criterion, which state that

Each argument bears one and only one  $\Theta$ -role and each  $\Theta$ -role  
 is assigned one and only one argument.

Chomsky (1981:36)

A possible question will be what happens in Ghòtùò object focusing. It will be stated that object focusing is different from the subject focusing in Ghòtùò. The movement here is based on the stipulations initiated by the concept of phases in Minimalism. Movement here is through the specifier of the phase heads identified in grammar (v, C - (Foc, Top, Q)) at the

clausal level and DP, PP at the phrasal level<sup>17</sup> to escape the wrath of early spell out. For instance:

- 75a) [FocP Òṣẹ [Foc(ónhi) [TP ọ ~~ṣẹ~~ gbé ~~ṣẹ~~ na mhè ] ] ]  
 Cricket FOC he ~~ericket~~ kill ~~ericket~~ for me  
 ‘He killed a CRICKET for me’
- b) [FocP Ofè [Foc(ónhi) [TP Igó ~~ofè~~ gbé ~~ofè~~ udo óvbàghi ó òwèni ] ] ]  
 Rat FOC Igó ~~rat~~ kill ~~rat~~ inside room the yesterday  
 ‘Igó killed a RAT inside the room yesterday’
- c) [FocP Óvbàghi ó [Foc(ónhi) [TP Igó ~~óvbàghi-ó~~ gbé ofè udo ~~óvbàghi-ó~~ òwèni ] ] ]  
 Room the FOC Igó ~~room-the~~ kill rat inside ~~room-the~~ yesterday  
 ‘Igó killed a rat inside THE ROOM yesterday’
- d) [FocP Udo óvbàghi ó [Foc(ónhi) [TP Igó ~~udo-óvbàghi-ó~~ gbé ofè ~~udo-óvbàghi-ó~~ òwèni ] ] ]  
 Inside room the FOC Igó ~~inside-room-the~~ kill rat ~~inside-room-the~~ yesterday  
 ‘Igó killed a rat INSIDE THE ROOM yesterday’
- e) [FocP Àànyò sé hihì [Foc(ónhi) [TP Adé ~~àànyò-sé-hihì~~ dé ~~àànyò-sé-hihì~~ ] ] ]  
 Wine of palm FOC Adé ~~wine-of-palm~~ buy ~~wine-of-palm~~  
 ‘Adé bought PALM WINE’
- f) [FocP Oba sé Òtùò [Foc(ónhi) [TP inhọ Igó ~~oba-sé-òtùò~~ sùé ~~oba-sé-òtùò~~ ] ] ]  
 King of Òtùò FOC mother Igó ~~king-of-òtùò~~ greet ~~king-of-òtùò~~  
 ‘Igó’s mother greeted KING OF ÒTÙÒ’

In the above data, only the verbs, the null copies and the emphatic markers are transferred to the interface levels. The case features of the objects have already been valued prior to movement which satisfies the derivation Morpho-syntactically. In (75f) it is proposed that “**Inhọ Igó**” occupy the edge of TP as a “Big DP”.

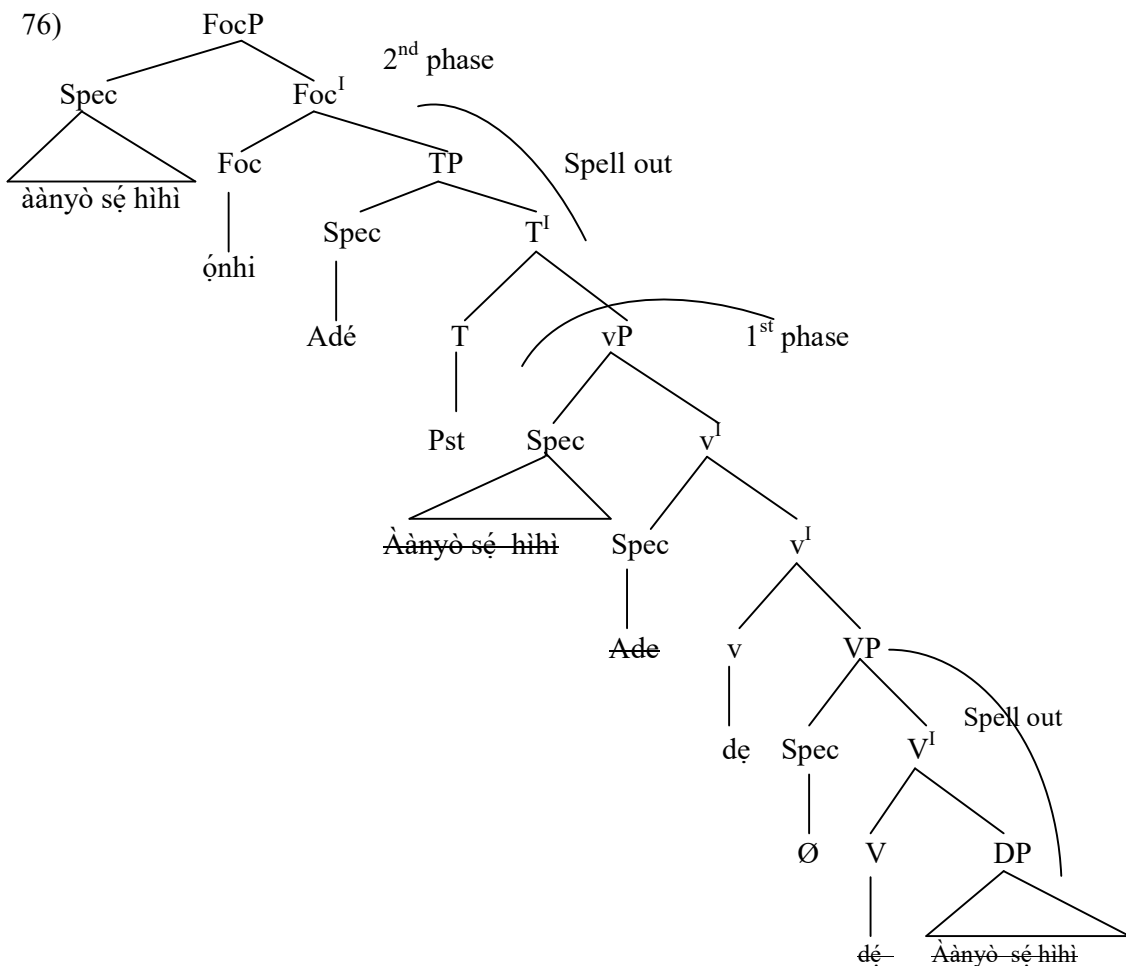
Movement of [+Foc] words from the object position in Ghòtùò as shown above are in phases. The issue of phases has ensured the reinforcement of cyclic movement in grammar and gradual formation of constructions, especially as regards Earliness Condition (EC) where spellout comes after the complete projection of a phase head. The Multiple Specifier Hypothesis (MSH) put forward by Chomsky (1999) is vital and instrumental in this object movement because it accommodates the items in the course of movement. In the above data

<sup>17</sup> Radford (2004) treats these items as phase heads in addition to C and *v* proposed by Chomsky especially in accounting for operation conditions such as quantifier floating and preposition stranding in English and other related languages.

also, the movement of the object does not displace the logical subject, but uses the multiple specifier hypothesis to enter the v projection as it is shown in the diagram below

In this form of movement, all the items that have to be focused inherently possess [+Foc] feature which has been in them right from the pre-syntactic computation of the word. With interpretable features that are not to be valued within the minimal sentence, the movement of the objects in the data above through the Edges of phase heads (v and C) is just a way of escaping the wrath of early spell out (PIC). This eventually makes it easier for the matrix Foc head to track its goal, using the likely phase route instead of probing the minimal clause(s)

The features to be valued here in this form of movement, though assuming the normal probe-goal relationship are interpretable and therefore necessary at the LF for Full Interpretation. In this regards, such features are not deleted after they have been valued prior to transfer to the interface levels. A typical schema illustrating a typical object Focus movement can be drawn using (75e) above as:





In (76) above, the objects of the sentences were moved to the left periphery of the clause to give them patient to *àànyò sé hìhì* ‘palm wine’ under merge. The structure is merged with null light verb to form  $v^1$ , The strong prominence. The focused items include DPs (76a,b,c,e&f) and PP (76d). It is observable that whenever an object (DP or PP) of the sentence is focused, a SO, *ónhi*, is introduced in the clause to link the focused element with the main clause. (76e) is used below to demonstrate how the structure is computed. The DP *àànyò sé hìhì* ‘palm wine’ is merged with *dé* ‘buy’ to form VP. *dé* ‘buy’ assigns  $\theta$ -role feature of the  $v$  attracts the lexical V to adjoin to it. To satisfy the EPP feature of the light  $v$ , the subject DP Adé ‘personal name’ is selected from the LA and merged with  $v^1$  to form another  $v^1$  to permit multiple spec so as to create an escape hatch for the OBJ DP. The OBJ DP is therefore merged with the  $v^1$  to form  $vP$ . Since  $vP$  is a phase, its complement domain is sent to the interface levels for appropriate interpretation of subject to PIC. Computation proceeds with the merging of  $vP$  with  $T^1$ . The lexical V moves from  $v$  to T to check its T features. T probes downwards for the closest goal in its c-commanding domain<sup>18</sup> to value its  $\phi$ -features. The search is satisfied by the DP occupying spec  $vP$ . They value their unvalued features and delete the unvalued ones. The EPP feature of T which requires it to have a subject then attracts the DP to move to spec T via internal merge. TP is not a phase, hence, computation continues with merging of TP with  $Foc^0$  overtly realized as ‘*ónhi*’ in Ghòtùò.  $Foc$  has EPP feature which requires it to have a subject so it attracts the OBJ DP from the spec  $vP$  to occupy its spec, thus, forming  $FocP$ . The remaining part of the clause is then sent to the interface levels for appropriate interpretation.

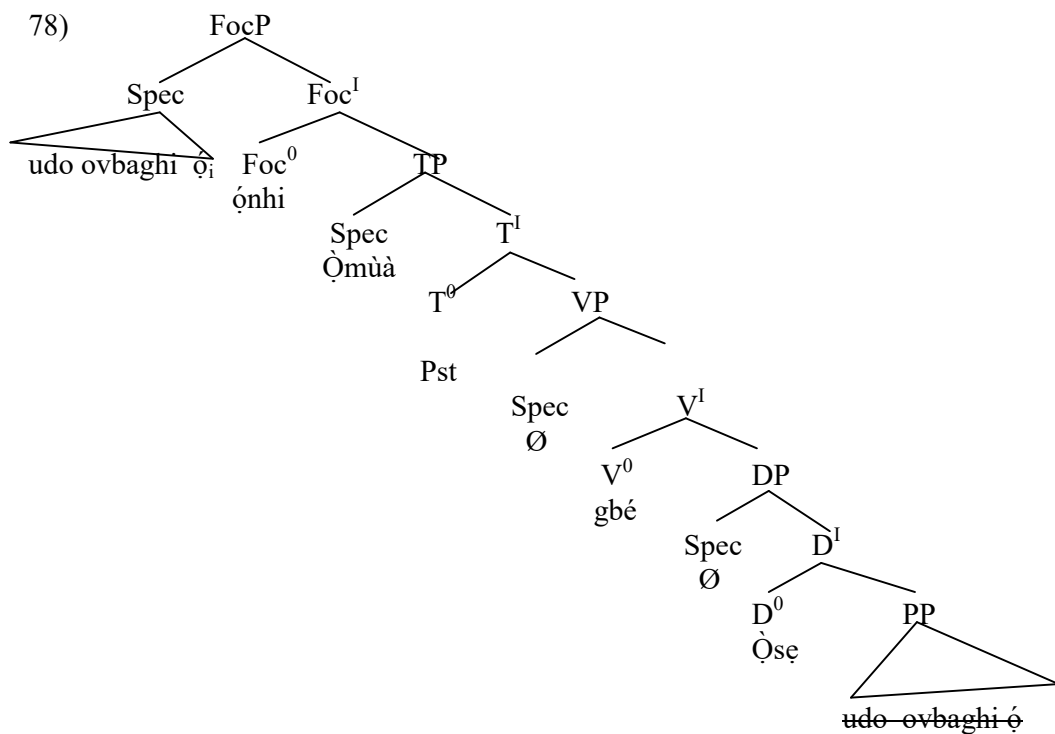
#### 4.1.4 Object of Preposition Focus

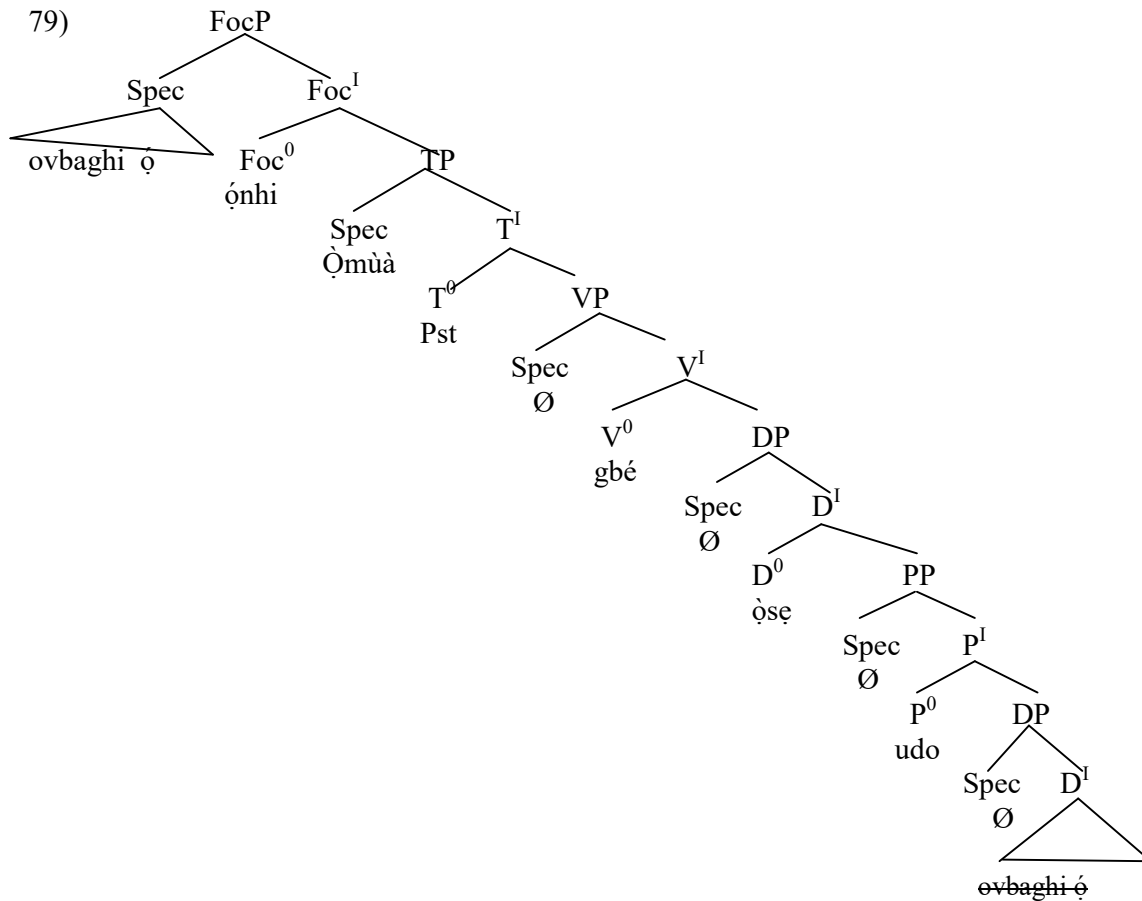
Objects of prepositions are also subject to the focus rule. DP object of preposition is a sub-categorized complement of preposition and is assigned  $\Theta$ -role by its governor, the preposition. This DP object is moved from its argument position (A- position) to a non-argument position (A-bar position) in the Spec of  $FocP$  for feature checking. This means that the complement of the preposition is preposed to the Spec  $FocP$  in order to check its feature. Consider the examples below;

- 77a)            Òmùà gbé òsè udo óvbàghi ó  
                   Òmua kill cricket inside room the  
                   ‘Òmùà killed a cricket inside the room’

<sup>18</sup> According to MP assumptions, search has to be minimal. In other words, the goal has to be as close as possible to minimise search

- b) Udo óvbàghi ó (ònhì) Òmùà gbé òşę ~~Udo óvbàghi-é~~  
 Inside room the FOC Omua kill cricket ~~Inside room-the~~  
 ‘Òmùà killed a cricket INSIDE THE ROOM’
- c) Óvbàghi ó (ònhì) Òmùà gbé òşę udo ~~Óvbàghi-é~~  
 Room the FOC Omua kill cricket inside ~~Room-the~~  
 ‘Òmùà killed a cricket inside THE ROOM’
- d) Ọ gbé òşę na Igó  
 He kill cricket for Igó  
 ‘He killed a cricket for Igó’
- e) Igó (ònhì) ọ gbé òşę na Igó  
 Igó FOC he kill cricket for Igó  
 ‘He killed a cricket for IGÓ’





Looking at the examples above, we discover that the status of the PP in relation to the head matters. Two types of structure movements are presented above. The case of preposition stranding (79c&e) where only the objects of the prepositions are moved to the Spec FocP for feature checking leaving the prepositions stranding. The other type is pied piping, a situation whereby the preposition is moved along with its object DP to the Spec FocP. Unlike some languages when the PP is an adjunct, the preposition gets deleted entirely when the DP object is fronted for feature checking. In Ghòtùò whether the PP is adjunct or not, if the preposition got entirely deleted, such a derivation will crash. So, it is either the preposition is stranding or pied pipied to the Spec FocP for the grammaticality of the sentence.

#### 4.1.5 Pronouns Focusing

Pronoun is one of the functional categories in Ghòtùò whose behaviour in syntactic structures cannot all be equated with the nouns<sup>19</sup>. Pronouns have been variously defined. Crystal (2008:391) notes that pronoun is a term used in the grammatical classification of words, referring to the closed set of items which can be used to substitute for a noun phrase or a single noun. He also notes that in government-binding theory, the term pronominal is used for a type of noun phrase (along with anaphor and R-expressions) of particular importance as part of a theory of binding. It should be noted that the use of pronominal will not clearly distinguish the class of pronoun that we are concern here. Besides, that definition of pronominal shows that it is more of nouns in many regards and since pronouns are context sensitive before their semantic properties can be realized, they are –N. More so, new findings have shown that pronouns do not replace nouns or noun phrases; it replaces a DP see Abey (1987) and Szabolcsi (1983) among others. Therefore, the term pronominal is not appropriate to describe one particular pronoun we are considering in this work i.e. emphatic pronoun.

Ilori (2010: 308) defines pronouns using feature specification as, “Pronouns are [+ Functional, + Referential, + Nominal]”. This means that they are closed class and they do not permit adding new words to the class, and they do not have grammatical content of their own rather they refer to some other elements within or outside the discourse. There are various classifications based on semantic and or syllabic (phonological) properties to distinguish them from one another. For instance, Awobuluyi (1978) classifies Yoruba pronouns into polymorphic nouns i. e. the short pronouns on the one hand motivated on the ground of the morphological forms assumed at different syntactic position. On the other hand, the long pronouns are classified as human nouns which behave more like the undisputable nouns. Bamgbose (1967) use the term ‘pronominal’ for the so-called long pronouns in Yoruba. According to him, a pronominal is a noun which resembles a pronoun by having a system of number and of person. However, the term pronominal is a cover term for both the so-called short pronouns, long pronouns and other nominal items behaving in same manner in modern linguistics. Ilori (2010) refers to the two groups as personal pronouns and he further classified them into short pronouns and emphatic/ long pronouns, where the long forms are derived

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<sup>19</sup> Awobuluyi (1978) classified short pronouns as a kind of noun i.e. polymorphic nouns, based on their syntactic distribution similar to that of nouns. Nouns may occur as subject, object and qualifier in a sentence

from the short through prefixation, this is similar to Awobuluyi's (2013) classification i. e. the short pronoun on the one hand and the long pronoun on the other hand.

One major distinction between the two groups is the fact that the long pronouns participate in the focusing whereas the short one does not. This raises the question regarding the involvement of pronouns in focus constructions. However, opinions are polarized on how pronouns can be focused. It is assumed that pronouns in Yoruba can be focused but focusing pronouns involve the use of long pronoun to focus the short form invariably. The short form is interpreted as the 'trace' of the long which has properties licensing it for movement into Spec. FocP.

Ghòtùò has two kinds of pronouns but this is not based on the number of syllable found in the forms of the pronouns. We have classified them as Unemphatic and Emphatic pronouns in place of pronouns and pronominals respectively. The two are actually pronouns but differentiated by emphasis and nominal features. The term, pronominal attributes more of nominal features than the features of pronoun to the emphatic one. Using the term short and long would be inappropriate for the two groups in that there is no morphological similarity between them both in shape and form as attested in Yoruba. We cannot say that one is derived from the other. Pronominals in Ghòtùò are both emphatic and non-emphatic pronouns. The non-emphatic are monosyllabic and cannot have a qualifier in the nominal group. Emphatic on the other hand are bi-syllabic and can have qualifier in the nominal group. Below are the tables showing pronominals in Ghòtùò.

#### 4.1.5.1 The Non-Emphatic Pronouns

##### Subject Pronouns

	Singular		Plural	
1 <sup>st</sup> Person	Mhi	'I'	Mha	'we'
2 <sup>nd</sup> Person	U	'you'	A	'you'
3 <sup>rd</sup> Person	Ọ	'she/he/it'	E	'they'

##### Object Pronouns

	Singular		Plural		
1 <sup>st</sup> Person	Mhẹ	'me'	Mhà	'us'	(speaker exclusive)
			Yha		(speaker inclusive)
2 <sup>nd</sup> Person	Yhẹ	'you'	Whà	'you'	
3 <sup>rd</sup> Person	Ọ	'him/her/it'	Yhà	'them'	

#### 4.1.5.2 The Emphatic Pronouns

	Singular		Plural	
1 <sup>st</sup> Person	Mhẹmhẹ	'I'	Mhàmhà	'we'

2 <sup>nd</sup> Person	Whẹwhẹ	'you'	Wháwhá	'you'
3 <sup>rd</sup> Person	Nhínhín	'he/she/it'	Yháyhá	'they'

The non-emphatic pronouns in Ghòtùò cannot be conjoined together using conjunctions in the manner in which nouns and emphatic pronouns of the language can be used. Their primary features distinguishing them as a distinct class is their inability to merge with class marker i.e. focus marker just like the way nouns and emphatic pronouns do, any attempt to combine them will yield ungrammatical utterance in the language. Consider the examples below;

- 80a) U gbé ofè  
You kill rat  
'You killed a rat'
- b) Vbévbé (ónhi) u gbé ofè  
You(Emph) FOC you kill rat  
'YOU killed a rat'
- 81a) Ọ dé èḍzè  
He buy fish  
'He bought a fish'
- b) Nínhí (ónhi) ọ dé èḍzè  
He FOC he buy fish  
'HE bought a fish'
- 82a) Ọ gbé mhẹ  
He beat me  
'He beats me'
- b) Mhẹmhẹ (ónhi) ọ gbé Mhẹmhẹ  
I FOC he beat I  
'He beat ME'
- 83) \*Ọ (ónhi) ọ gbé  
He FOC he beat

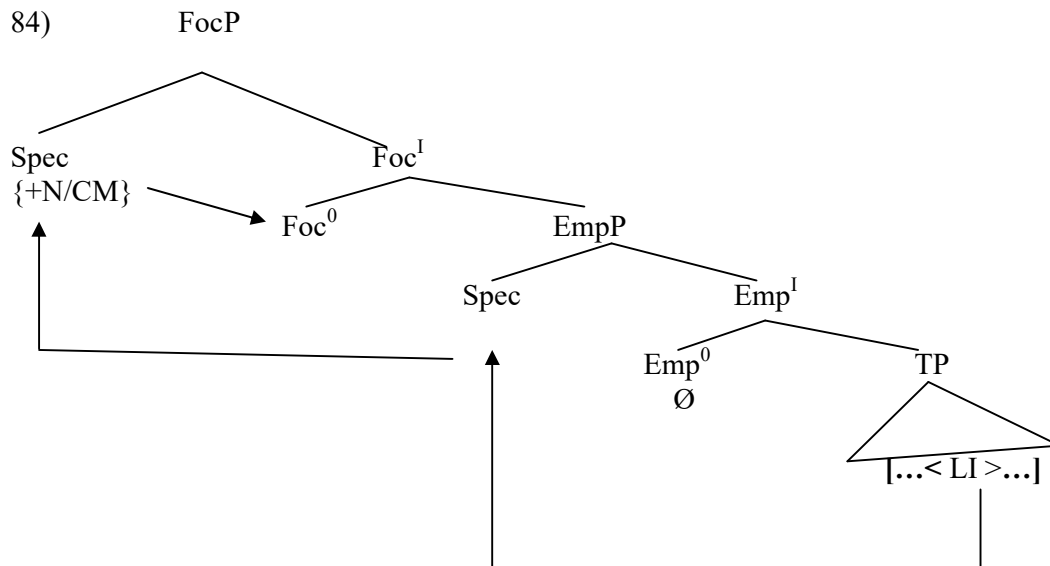
These emphatic pronouns (due to some properties which they display) are similar to nouns in the language. Morphologically, the emphatic pronouns cannot be used derivationally i.e. the short pronouns cannot be prefixed to derive them or to derive another word from them. Thus, this class constitutes a close class of pronouns<sup>20</sup>. As can be observed from the

<sup>20</sup>This is unlike the case with Yoruba. See Awobuluyi (2008) for more. His initial argument holds the view that long pronouns are derived from the short pronouns simply by deleting the initial vowel. However, he revised his claim that the long forms are derived from the short pronouns through prefixation

table above, the emphatic pronouns have systems of person and number as the basic feature and these make them similar to the unemphatic pronouns. These features differentiate them from the real nouns of this language i.e. they are not nouns and should not be equated as one. Although, like nouns class marker are also used with them. They have emphatic feature as an additional property which is not a possible reading on the unemphatic pronouns. This is the main property differentiating these pronouns from the unemphatic ones.

As illustrated above, overt realization of Foc marker is optional. It should also be noted that there is DP-resumption in the language, for whenever the subject of the verb is fronted for emphasis or delimiting it away from the rest of the clause as new information, there is always an equal copy (in number and person) of the fronted item in form of unemphatic one at the extraction site co-index with the fronted item. But when it is the object of the verb that is fronted there will only be a null copy of it only its trace will be co-index with it.

Only the emphatic pronouns can be focus the unemphatic cannot in Ghòtùò, this is due in part to the features absent in the unemphatic ones. These features [+N], [+emphatic], [+pronominal] and [+referential] are present in emphatic pronouns [+pronominal] and [+referential] are available on unemphatic pronouns. So, the structural position for focused element, i.e. Spec FocP is a nominal or simply put a DP position. Whether the item displays class marker overtly or not, the element will automatically become a noun or a DP as shown below,



We propose that Spec FocP requires that the item which can be focus must carry [+N] feature which can be marked by the inherent nominal property of the item if it a noun or emphatic pronoun since they have strong [+N] by virtue of being referential.

#### 4.1.6 Question-Focusing in Ghòtùò

This form of Focusing involves the placing of semantic prominence on Q items in a grammatical construction. In this form of focusing, there is a known effect of having a focused answer to a question that is focused. Typically, it is the movement of a Q-pronoun from a clause internal position, to a position outside the minimal sentence where it values the Q feature in relation with the Q-head of the Force phrase (ForP) and proceeding to value its Focus features.

The Q-words involved in this form of movement possess [+Forc, +Foc] features composition. They are bound to agree with different probe(s) outside the minimal sentence after they have been rendered inactive as goals to probes within the minimal clause. If a goal agrees with more than one probe on different features, such features can be evenly valued if and only if there is no intervening constituent with the status of a goal with similar feature composition between the heads and the goal. This in other words is the reinforcement of minimality in valuation. English language has managed to escape this tricky situation because it uses a supra segmental tool of intonation in Focusing. Ghòtùò uses an optional/overt Foc-head in focusing and an abstract Forc-head which evidence indicate that it comes before the Q-word from bottom up. Despite the fact that it is not overt, its features are perceived as valued since such constructions always converge without crashing. Examples of non-focused Q-constructions in Ghòtùò are:

- 84a)            [ForcP Ahi [TP mha Ø rá afe ] ]?  
                  [ How [ we get house ] ]?  
                  ‘How are we going to get home?’
- b)                [ForcP èghèghè òkpá [TP ghóhi ó rí bié ] ]?  
                  [ Time which [ food the QM ready ] ]?  
                  ‘When will the food be ready?’
- c)                [ForcP ɔ̃nhi [TP Olú Ø mhé ] ]?  
                  [ Who [ Olú see ] ]?  
                  ‘Who did Olú see?’
- d)                [ForcP nyi [TP Olú rí é òilhà ] ]?  
                  [ Where [ olú QM eat yam ] ]?  
                  ‘where did Olú eat yam’



- e) [ForcP **enhinhi** [TP **Òmùà** rí fié ] ]?  
 [ Why [ **Òmùà** QM cry]]?  
 ‘Why is **Òmùà** crying?’
- f) [ForcP **mi** [TP **Olú** Ø dé ] ]?  
 [ What [ **Olú** buy]]?  
 ‘What did **Olú** buy?’

The Focused form would be:

- 85a) [FocP **ahi** [ForcP ~~**ahi**~~ [TP ~~**ahi**~~- mha Ø rá afe ] ] ]?  
 [ How [ ~~**how**~~ [ ~~**how**~~ we QM get house] ] ]?  
 ‘How are we going to get home?’
- b) [FocP **èghèghè òkpá** [ForcP ~~**èghèghè òkpá**~~ [TP ~~**èghèghè òkpá**~~ ghóhì ó rí bié ] ] ]?  
 [ Time which [ ~~**time—**~~ ~~**which**~~ [ ~~**time—**~~ ~~**which**~~ food the QM ready]] ]?  
 ‘When will the food be ready?’
- c) [FocP **èghèghè òkpá** [ForcP ~~**èghèghè òkpá**~~ [TP ~~**èghèghè òkpá**~~ ghóhì ó rí bié ~~**èghèghè òkpá**~~ ] ] ]?  
 [ Time which [ ~~**time—**~~ ~~**which**~~ [ ~~**time—**~~ ~~**which**~~ food the QM ready ~~**time—**~~ ~~**which**~~ ] ] ]?  
 ‘The food will ready when?’
- d) [FocP **onhi** [ForcP ~~**onhi**~~ [TP ~~**onhi**~~-Olú Ø mhé ] ] ]?  
 [ Who [ ~~**who**~~ [ ~~**who**~~ Olú QM see ] ] ]?  
 ‘Who did **Olú** see?’
- e) [FocP **nyi** [ForcP ~~**nyi**~~ [TP ~~**nyi**~~- Olú rí é òìhà ] ] ]?  
 [ Where [ ~~**where**~~ [ ~~**where**~~ olú QM eat yam]] ]?  
 ‘where did **Olú** eat yam’
- f) [FocP **nyi** [ForcP ~~**nyi**~~ [TP ~~**nyi**~~- Olú rí é òìhà ~~**nyi**~~-o ] ] ]?  
 [ Where [ ~~**where**~~ [ ~~**where**~~ olú QM eat yam ~~**where**~~]] ]?  
 ‘**Olú** ate yam where?’
- g) [FocP **enhinhi** [ForcP ~~**enhinhi**~~ [TP ~~**enhinhi**~~- **Òmùà** rí fié ] ] ]?  
 [ Why [ ~~**why**~~ [ ~~**why**~~ **Òmùà** QM cry]] ]?  
 ‘Why is **Òmùà** crying?’
- h) [FocP **mí** [ForcP ~~**mi**~~ [TP ~~**mi**~~ Olú Ø dé ] ] ]?  
 [ What [ ~~**what**~~ [ ~~**what**~~ Olú QM buy]] ]?  
 ‘What did **Olú** buy’
- i) [FocP **mí** [ForcP ~~**mi**~~ Ø [TP **Òmùà** fùè ~~**mó**~~ ] ] ]?  
 [ What [ ~~**what**~~ QM [ **Òmùà** cook ~~**what**~~ ] ] ]?  
 ‘**Òmùà** cook what?’

From the data above, the Q words are shown to have moved comfortably because they have valued their morpho-syntactic features in the minimal sentence. The primary motivation for their movement is for valuation of their Q-features and scope, in due compliance with

movement principles. Focusing of Q-words involves the movement of the Q-pronoun from the minimal clause, first to the edge of Forc-head and thereafter to the Edge of the Foc-head in the hierarchy of Ghòtùò therefore, the FocP is higher in the tree than the ForcP, implying that movement of a Q-words first values [Q] features before [Foc] features as it can be seen in the data above.

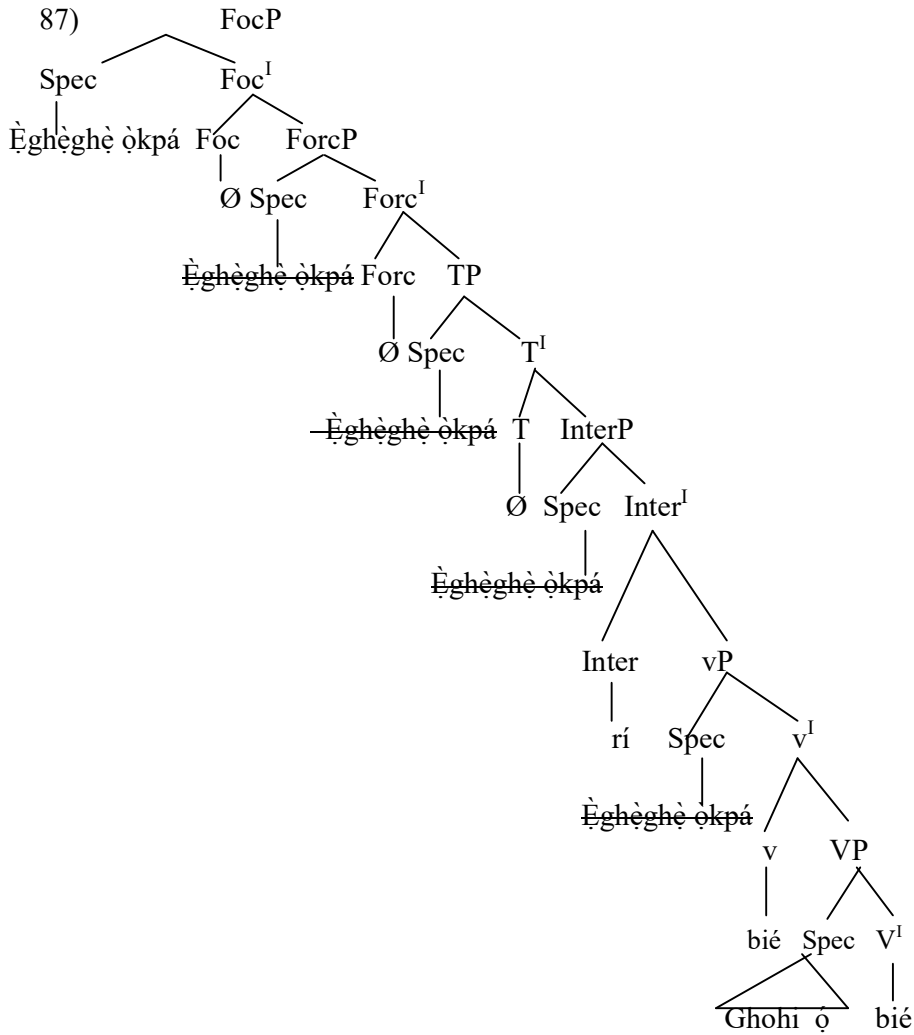
Q focusing is from the subject position is a covert movement in Ghòtùò. This makes the movement less expensive since the features to be valued are interpretable and will not cause the derivation to crash. It is at the LF because one can hardly notice that there is actually movement from the [spec, ForcP] to the [Spec, FocP] – a sneaky movement. This is also an effect of internal merger which in some cases is less felt and expensive when compared to overt movement.

An important issue arises here considering the fact that C is identified as a phase head which transfers its complement to the interface levels after derivation. In the split CP hypothesis, three heads have been identified and two happens to occur in the construction above. Which of the split projection is a less active phase head and what is responsible for the neutralization of the head? The submission here is that Ghòtùò like any other described language has hierarchy in computation. Derivation in MP is upwards, therefore the more propositional heads encountered in derivation, and the more complete the proposition and possible interpretation; only the heads and Edge syntactic objects are accessible for further computation. So it continues to the highest, therefore, there is no less active phase head in Ghòtùò and each phase head has the liberty to transfer its complements to the interface levels if it has a complement that is awaiting transfer. For example:

- 86a) [FocP èghèghè òkpá [ForcP ~~èghèghè òkpá~~ [TP ~~èghèghè òkpá~~ ghóhí ó rí bié ] ]]?  
 [ Time which [ ~~time~~ ~~which~~ [ ~~time~~ ~~which~~ food the QM ready ] ]]?  
 ‘When will the food be ready?’
- b) [FocP mí [ForcP ~~mí~~ [TP ~~mí~~ Olú Ø dé ] ]]?  
 [ What [ ~~what~~ [ ~~what~~ Olú QM buy ] ]]?  
 ‘What did Olú buy’
- c) [FocP nyi [ForcP ~~nyi~~ [TP ~~nyi~~ Olú rí é òìhà ] ]]?  
 [ Where [ ~~where~~ [ ~~where~~ olú QM eat yam ] ]]?  
 ‘where did Olú eat yam’

From the data (86a-c) above, the Q-words cannot be affected by PIC because the affecting domain of PIC is the complement of the phase head. The Q-words are in the specifier position therefore they are immune to the effect of PIC.

For illustrative purposes, example (86a) can therefore be schematized thus:



From the schema (87) above, if the Forc head transfer the computation to the interface levels, it will not affect ‘Èghèghè òkpá’ because it is within its “safety bounds”. “Safety bounds” is used here because it is not within the transfer domains of the phase head. The defined transfer domain of the phase head remains the complement of a phase head. The schema also illustrates that the movement to the edge of the Foc-head is almost unnoticed.

#### 4.2 Characteristics of Focus in Ghòtùò

Focused expressions have a number of syntactic, semantic and phonological characteristics that differentiate them from other neutral sentences in Ghòtùò. Consider the sentences below;

- 88a. Igó gbé ofè udo óvbàghi ó òwèni  
 Igó kill rat inside room the yesterday  
 ‘Igó killed a rat inside the room yesterday’

- b) Igó ònhi o gbé ofè udo óvbàghi ó òwèni  
 Igó FOC 3sg kill rat inside room the yesterday  
 ‘IGÓ killed a rat inside the room yesterday’
- c) Ofè ònhi Igó gbé ofè udo óvbàghi ó òwèni  
 Rat FOC Igó kill ~~rat~~ inside room the yesterday  
 ‘Igó killed A RAT inside the room yesterday’

Example (88b&c) are derived from example (88a) where the focused element immediately precede the focus marker ‘**Ònhi**’. (88a) is a neutral/ordinary sentence and it exhibits the subject-verb-object word order and contains no focus marker, sentences (88b&c) are examples of focus sentences in Ghòtùò. The following pieces of evidences can be deduced from this;

- The subject **Igó** has moved leftward to the position immediately to the left of ònhi
- The word order has changed from SVO to S ònhi VO
- The direct object **ofè** is raised to the left of ònhi also changing the word order to O-ònhi – SV

So, in both (88b&c) the expressions received a focus reading and the moved elements are seen as salient.

- 89 a. \*ònhi Igó gbé ofè udo óvbàghi ó òwèni  
 FOC Igó kill rat inside room the yesterday  
 ‘IGÓ killed a rat inside the room yesterday’
- b. Igó Ø o gbé ofè udo óvbàghi ó òwèni  
 Igó FOC 3sg kill rat inside room the yesterday  
 ‘IGÓ killed a rat inside the room yesterday’
- c. Igó ònhi o gbé ofè udo óvbàghi ó òwèni  
 Igó FOC 3sg kill rat inside room the yesterday  
 ‘IGÓ killed a rat inside the room yesterday’
- d. \*Ofè ònhi Igó ònhi o gbé ofè udo óvbàghi ó òwèni  
 rat FOC Igó FOC 3sg kill ~~rat~~ inside room the yesterday  
 ‘Igó killed A RAT inside the room yesterday’

The left adjacent position to **ònhi** must be reached at PF, the violation of this principle brings about the ungrammaticality of example (89a). The grammatical sentence in (89b) demonstrates that there could be leftward movement in the absence of focus marker **ònhi** as long as there is the **O** the 3sg pronoun which is an indicator that something has been moved, is present. The language also does not allow multiple foci as can be seen from the ungrammaticality of sentence (89d). The language as well does not allow a focus in-situ strategy as exemplified in sentence (90) below

90. Igó gbé ofè udo óvbàghi ó ọwẹ̀nì  
 Igó kill rat inside room the yesterday  
 ‘IGÓ killed a rat inside the room yesterday’

Lastly, there is no focal stress focus strategy in Ghòtùò as is the case in English. For example

- 91a. THE POET intoned the sonnet.  
 b. The poet intoned THE SONNET.

Both the poet and the sonnet (the subject and the object) bear the focal stress. This kind of focus strategy is absent in Ghòtùò. In nutshell, focusing is ultimately realised in the language by movement of the focused element to the left adjacent position to **ọ̀nhi** as shown in the examples above.

### 4.3 Topicalisation in Ghòtùò

Topicalisation is a syntactic device that moves constituents (noun phrases in particular) from within a convergent IP derivation to the clause initial position for emphasis. The topicalised item in its new position is immediately followed, not by any free morpheme as in focusing but, by a brief pause usually represented by a comma before the remaining part of the IP from which the topicalised item is extracted follows (Crystal 1985:311 and Radford 1988:530). Awoyale (1995:121) claims that the brief pause which immediately follows topicalised nominals is the functional head of the topic projection. Every topicalised constituent leaves a gap or trace in the IP from which it is raised to the clause-initial position for emphasis.

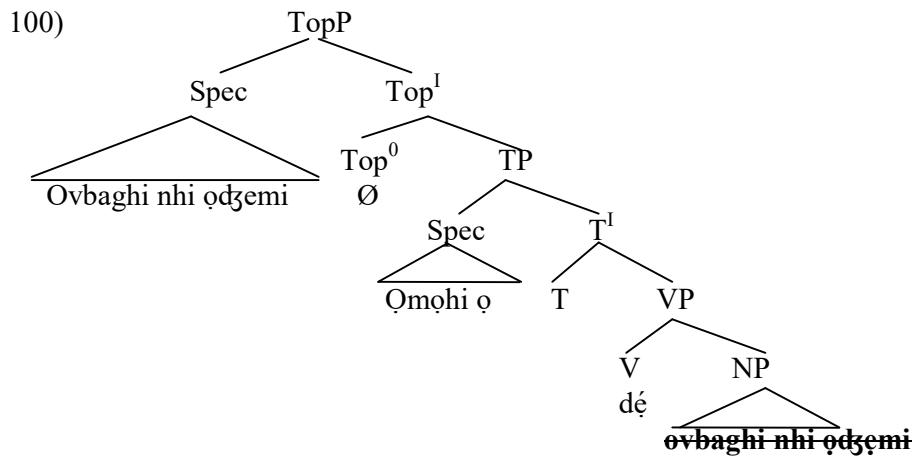
Ghòtùò has no phonetically visible, free or bound, morpheme that marks or localizes emphasis within its CP. Emphasised constituents, mostly noun phrases, are simply extracted from a convergent IP derivation and moved to the clause initial position as a topic. When a verb is to be topicalised, such verb is copied without being nominalised then moved to spec-TopP for emphasis. Below are examples of Ghòtùò topic expressions where the topicalised constituents are highlighted.

- 92) **Ọ̀mọ̀hí ọ** ~~Ọ̀mọ̀hí~~ ẹ̀ dé ọvbàghi nhi ọ̀džémi  
 Man the ~~man~~ ~~the~~ buy house that good  
 ‘The man bought a good house’
- 93) **Ọ̀vbàghi nhi ọ̀džémi** ọ̀mọ̀hí ọ dé ~~Ọ̀vbàghi~~ ~~nhi~~ ~~ọ̀džémi~~  
 House that good man the buy ~~house~~ ~~that~~ ~~good~~  
 ‘A good house, the man bought’

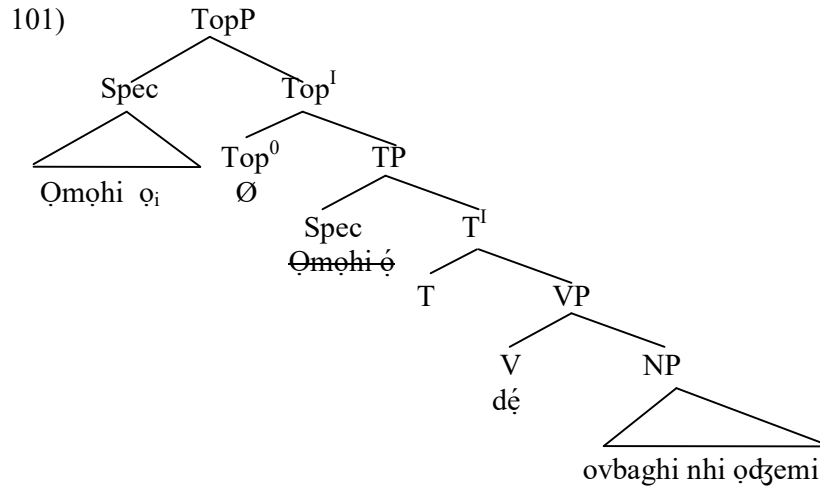
- 94) **Ovbaghi** nhi omohi o de ~~Ovbaghi~~ odzemi  
 House that man the buy ~~house~~ good  
 ‘The house, the man bought is good’
- 95) **fuè** mhi fuè òìlà  
 cook 1sg cook yam  
 ‘Cooking is what I actually did to the yam’.
- 96) **Lé** Òmùà lé odzemi  
 go Omua go good  
 ‘The fact that Omua went is good’
- 97) Mhi nhèhè u ibiá  
 I know you children  
 ‘I know you children’
- 98) **Vbavba ibiá** mhi nhèhè ~~Vbavba~~ ~~ibiá~~  
 2pl-emph children I know ~~2pl-emph children~~  
 ‘You the children, I know’
- 99) **Mhèmhè** Igó  
 I Igó  
 ‘I, Igó’

Given the structural evidence available in above examples, we propose that Ghòtùò has a strong but phonetically null Top head  $\emptyset$  which projects an independent TopP at the CP layer. As a result, the strong specifier features of the null Top attract nominals to spec-TopP for feature checking, and that explains why topicalised constituents are always found at the clause initial position. This Top projection is illustrated in (100) below.

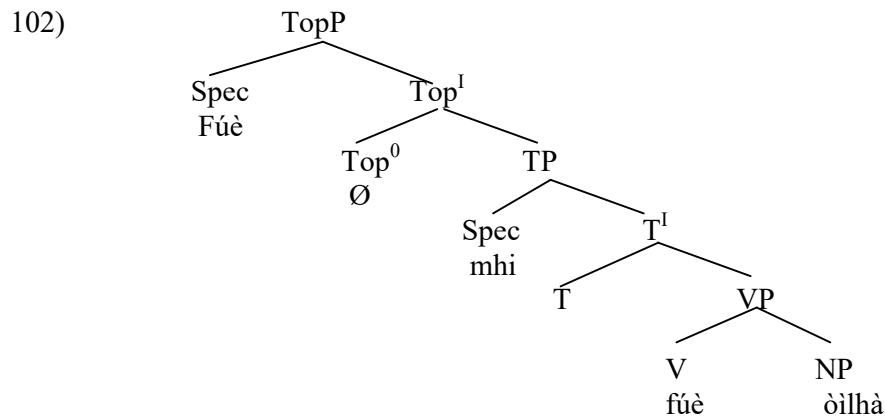
#### 4.3.1 Object Topicalisation



### 4.3.2 Subject Topicalisation



### 4.3.3 Verb Topicalisation



### 4.4 Differences Between Focusing and Topicalisation in Ghòtùò

Focusing and topicalisation are very similar in processes. Both of them require a movement to the left peripheral position, that is the spec position of their functional heads. Also, as the probe Foc can attract any constituent to its specifier position, so also the top probe can do likewise. But, the main and noticeable difference between focusing and topicalization is the overt realization of focus marker (although it is optional) while there is covert realization of top marker or null top head. See the examples below:

- 103a) Igó gbé ofè udo óvbàghi ó ọ̀wẹ̀nì  
 Igó kill rat inside room the yesterday  
 'Igó killed a rat inside the room yesterday'

- b) Igó (ónhi) o gbé ofè udo óvbàghi ó òwèni  
 Igó FOC 3sg kill rat inside room the yesterday  
 ‘IGÓ killed a rat inside the room yesterday’
- c) Ofè (ónhi) Igó gbé ofè udo óvbàghi ó òwèni  
 Rat FOC Igó kill ~~rat~~ inside room the yesterday  
 ‘Igó killed a RAT inside the room yesterday’
- d) Gbé (ónhi) Igó gbé ofè udo óvbàghi ó òwèni  
 Kill FOC Igó kill rat inside room the yesterday  
 ‘ Igó KILLED a rat inside the room yesterday’

104a) **Ọmọhí ọ** ~~Ọmọhí ọ~~ dé ovbàghi nhi ọdžémi  
 Man the ~~man—the~~ buy house that good  
 ‘The man bought a good house’

b) **Ovbàghi nhi ọdžémi** ọmọhí ọ dé ~~Ovbàghi nhi ọdžémi~~  
 House that good man the buy ~~house—that good~~  
 ‘A good house, the man bought’

c) **Ovbàghi** nhi ọmọhí ọ dé ~~Ovbàghi~~ ọdžémi  
 House that man the buy ~~house~~ good  
 ‘The house, the man bought is good’

d) **fúè** mhi fúè òìlhà  
 cook 1sg cook yam  
 ‘Cooking is what I actually did to the yam’.

From the examples above, we see the optional overt realisation of foc marker in examples (104b-d) while there is non-overt realisation of of top marker in examples (104a-d). The topicalised constituents are written in bold print.

Moreso, whenever subject DP or pronoun is focused, it leaves a copy at the extraction site but for topicalisation, there is nothing of such as seen from the examples below;

105a) Igó gbé ofè udo óvbàghi ó òwèni  
 Igó kill rat inside room the yesterday



‘Igó killed a rat inside the room yesterday’

- b) Igó (ónhi) o gbé ofè udo óvbàghi ó òwèni  
Igó FOC 3sg kill rat inside room the yesterday  
‘IGÓ killed a rat inside the room yesterday’

106a) U gbé ofè  
You kill rat  
‘You killed a rat’

- b) Vbévbé (ónhi) u gbé ofè  
You(Emph) FOC you kill rat  
‘YOU killed a rat’

107a) Ọ dé èdžè  
He buy fish  
‘He bought a fish’

- b) Nínhí (ónhi) ọ dé èdžè  
He FOC he buy fish  
‘HE bought a fish’

108) **Ọmọhí ọ** ~~Ọmọhí ọ~~ dé ovbàghi nhi ọdžémi  
Man the ~~man—the~~ buy house that good  
‘The man bought a good house’

109a) Mhi nhèhè u ibiá  
I know you children  
‘I know you children’

- b) **Vbavba ibiá** mhi nhèhè ~~Vbavba—ibiá~~  
2pl-emph children I know ~~2pl-emph children~~  
‘You the children, I know’

c) **Mhẹmhẹ** Igó  
I Igó  
‘I, Igó’

Examples (108, 109c&d) are topicalised expressions but there is no copy of the topicalised constituent at the extraction site, unlike examples (105b, 106b, 107b) where a copy of the focus constituents can be seen at the extraction site.

On a final note, both focusing and topicalisation cannot co-occur in a sentence, since both are competing for the same structural position that is the spec position of their various heads.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### RELATIVISATION AND INTERROGATIVE PROJECTIONS

#### 5.0 Preliminaries

This chapter examines the syntax of relative clauses as well as interrogative in Ghòtùò. Both interrogative and relative head are operators in Ghòtùò but they interact for various purposes in the language. This chapter also examined the syntax of interaction of various operators in Ghòtùò.

#### 5.1 Relativisation

Relativisation is a common phenomenon in natural languages in which sentences are transformed from the basic kernel sentences to the complex ones. It is the process of inserting a relative clause in front of the Noun Phrase which precedes it. A clause is then relativised when an NP within it is identical with the antecedent NP of the matrix clause and thereby changing to an appropriate relative pronoun simply because such relative pronoun, as well as the NP that comes before it is co-referential. According to Jacobs and Rosebaum (1970:211), to generate a relative clause, a sentence is embedded in a noun phrase which contains another noun phrase. Both this noun phrase and the embedded sentence are dominated by the same higher noun phrase, such constructions are called relative clause, a term referring to the function played by the embedded sentence.

#### 5.2 Relativisation in Ghòtùò

Relativisation is the syntactic process of forming a relative clause construction. A relative clause is a subordinate clause in a complex IP projection that contains a constituent which has a kind of anaphoric link with another constituent serving as its antecedent in the main clause, such that the meaning of the complex clause involves two occurrences of a variable. For instance in the Ghòtùò relative clause expression in (110&111) below;

- 110a)            Mhi mḥe ovbaghi ó  
                  I know house the  
                  ‘I know the house’
- b)                Ọmọhi ó zẹ ovbaghi  
                  Man the build house  
                  ‘The man built a house’
- c)                Mhi mḥe ovbaghi nhi ọmọhi ó zẹ  
                  I know house Rel man the build  
                  ‘I know the house which the man built’

111a) Òìlhà [ nhi [ mhi fùè [ òìlhà ] ] ]  
 Yam rel 1sg cook  
 ‘The yam which I cooked.’

b) Ọmọhi nhi vare ọwẹ̀nì  
 Man Rel com yesterday  
 ‘The man who came yesterday’

The semantic interpretation of (111a) could be given as: **mhi fùè x** ‘ I cook x’; where *x* is òìlhà ‘yam’. However, following the Uniform Theta Hypothesis (UTAH) of Baker (1988) some how predictable from the co-indexing of òìlhà and its trace, we shall assume that *x* is base generated in the embedded clause before being raised overtly to the relative clause initial position.

Ghòtùò has an invariant relative clause marker/introducer **nhi**. This item is merged to a convergent IP derivation, which serves as the nucleus/embedded clause, to form a **nhi clause** projection. The **nhi-clause** functions as a kind of clausal modifier which immediately follows the relativised item, mostly nominal expressions in the complex IP. We posit that Ghòtùò relativised items originated within the **nhi-clause** before being raised or adjuncted to the pre-**nhi-clause** position. For instance, in (111a), the relative nucleus clause is **Mhi fùè òìlhà**. It becomes **nhi mhi fùè òìlhà** after the relative head was merged to it. Then the direct object of the V **fùè** i.e. **òìlhà** being the item relativised is moved to pre-**nhi clause** position (spec-RelP) with its trace still visible within the **nhi-clause**. The structural implication of this is that Ghòtùò relative clause marker **nhi** projects RelP with strong head and specifier features that must be checked for RelP to be convergent, and one of its Spec features is [+Nominal] which happens to be the head feature of **òìlhà**. Other items that occupy spec-RelP in Ghòtùò are relativised nominal copies of verbs and emphatic pronouns, as in (112) below;

112a) fùè [ nhi [ mhi fùè òìlhà ] ]  
 cook Rel 1sg cook yam  
 ‘Cooking is what I actually did to the yam’.

b) Lẹ́ [ nhi [ Ọmùà lẹ́ ] ]  
 go Rel Ọmua go  
 ‘The fact that Ọmùà went’

c) Mhi nhẹ̀hẹ̀ u ibiá  
 I know you children  
 ‘I know you children’

d) [Vbavba ibia] [ nhi [mhi nhẹ̀hẹ̀ vbavba — ibiá- ] ]  
 2pl-emph children Rel I know 2pl-emph children  
 ‘You the children whom I know’

- e) Mhẹmẹ nhi Igó  
 I that Igó  
 ‘I who is called Igó’

Looking at example (112a), verbal relativisation, it is observed that the verb moved to the Spec position so as to be relativised without being nominalised but leave behind its exact copy at the extraction site.

### 5.3. Other Operators in Ghòtùò

#### 5.3.1 Negators

A negator is a functional element used to deny a proposition. According to Dahl (1979:80), Neg(ator) is used

... for converting a sentence S1, into another sentence S2, such that S2 is true whenever S1 is false, and vice-versa.

Generally, negators in most languages are Infl items which linearly precede the predicate that they are used to deny. However, there are other languages where Neg is not solely realized in Infl<sup>21</sup>. In Ghòtùò, tone plays a very important role, the neg element is a low tone realized at Infl as a kind of prosodic modification on the subject noun phrase. The prosodic neg particle is a low-tone that targets and phonemically supercedes the tone of the final vowel of the subject noun phrase by changing it to an obligatory low-tone irrespective of the original tone of such a vowel. With this, it prepares the ground for the over-all negation of the clause by switching off the affirmative notion of the declarative proposition to a negative proposition. For instance, if the subject of an affirmative clause is a noun or noun phrase whose final vowel carries the mid- or low-tone, the tone obligatorily changes to low for negation. This syntactic tonal modification is evident in the following examples.

- 113a) Òmùà dé ghobè  
 Òmùà buy book  
 ‘Òmùà buys/bought a book’

- b) Òmùà dẹ ghobè  
 ‘He has bought a book’

- c) Òmùà dé ghobè  
 ‘Òmùà didn’t buy a book’

- 114a) Igó dẹ ghobè  
 ‘Igó is buying a book’

<sup>21</sup> For instance, English not is now assumed to be a VP adjunct that is adjuncted to vP (Chomsky 1995:327-330; Radford & Atkinson et al. 2001:342-344). See Östen Dahl (1979) for other types of negators and negation structures.

- ‘He didn’t buy a book
- b) Igó dẹ ghobe  
‘Igò should buy a book’
- c) Igò dẹ ghobè na mhẹ  
Igò buy book for me

Similarly, where short pronouns are used as subjects, the mid- or high-tone on their single syllables changes to low for negation as in examples below;

- 115a) Mha gbé ini  
We kill elephant  
‘we kill/killed an elephant’
- b) Mha gbè ini  
‘we are killing an elephant’
- c) Mhà gbe ini  
‘we have killed an elephant’
- d) Mha gbe ini  
‘we should buy an elephant’
- e) Mhà gbé ini  
‘we didn’t kill an elephant’
- 116a) Ọ dẹ ọmọká  
He buy orange  
‘He buys/bought an orange’
- b) Ọ dẹ ọmọka  
‘He didn’t buy an orange’
- c) Ọ sẹ váre  
He not yet come  
‘He has not yet arrived/come’

#### 5.4 Interaction of Relativisation with other operators

Awobuluyi (1975, 1976) claim that both focusing and relativisation are derived in the same way, that is, they are similar in meaning and structure. He is of the opinion that predicate focus involves nominalization just like in relativisation in Yoruba. But this is not so in the language under investigation, for both processes, the predicate will just move to the Spec Position leaving the exact copy of itself at the extraction site and both the moved constituent and the trace will be co-indexed as seen below;

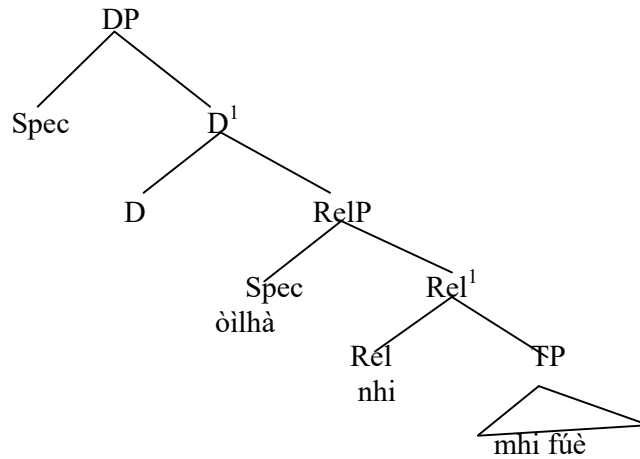
- 117a) fùè [ nhi [ mhi fùè òìlhà ]  
 cook Rel 1sg cook yam  
 ‘Cooking is what I actually did to the yam’.
- b) Lè [ nhi [ Òmùà lè ] ]  
 go Rel Òmua go  
 ‘The fact that Òmùà went’ (Relativisation)
- c) É [ (ónhi) [ Òmùà é oilha òwèni ] ]  
 Eating FM Òmùà eat yam yesterday  
 “ Eating was what Òmùà did to the yam yesterday”  
 (Focusing)

Focus constructions are said to narrow the range of references to the specific one concerned. Thus, **òìlhà** ‘yam’ in (117c) is narrowed down to òìlhà concerned by ‘**ónhi Òmùà é**’ just like(117a) by ‘**nhi mhi fùè**’. (117a&b) are said to be composed of **nhi** the marker and the relativised clause. We want to submit here that both projections are CPs. But focus construction entails information structure interpretable semantically not only with syntax but also with the context. As claimed before, the so called semantic similarity is informed by what is considered as heads .

- 118a) Oilha [ (ónhi) Òmùà é [ ~~òìlhà~~ [òwèni] ] ]  
 Yam FM Òmùà eat ~~yam~~ yesterday  
 “ It was yam that Òmùà ate yesterday”
- b) Òìlhà; [ nhi [ mhi fùè [ ~~òìlhà~~ ] ] ]  
 yam rel 1sg cook yam  
 ‘The yam which I cooked.’

As for finiteness of semantic information, focus heads select TP complement and such constructions are informative enough and complete than being equated with DPs. The kind of information expressed in relativisation requires the TP complement for the adjectivised reading. Similarly, the whole of the RelP still functions as complement of D-head as shown below in (119)

119)



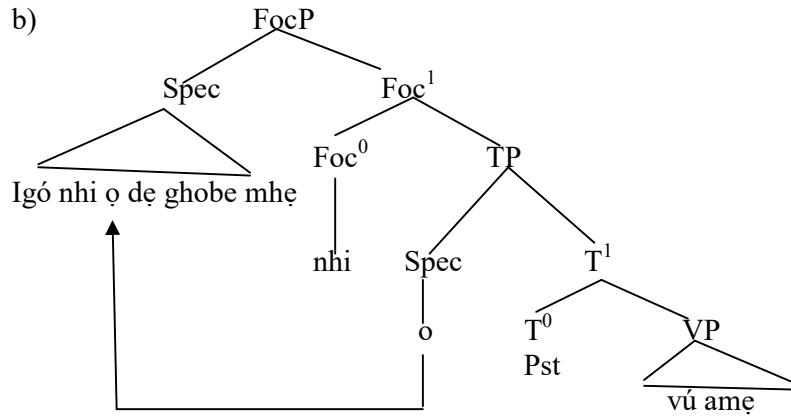
Also, the so called semantic narrowing is informed by the induced emphasis from checking relationship between foc head ọnhi and the Spec item. It is observed from the language that sentences cannot be relativised as it is in focusing for relative clause always qualifies the N/NP but ọnhi-phrase can never be a qualifier. We can then say that focusing clearly show that FocP is a CP projection rather than NP/DP. Whenever the two markers i.e. Rel marker and Foc marker occur in a sentence where both processes are at play, then the focus marker **ọnhi** will not be in its full shape but as *nhi* or *nhọ*. Consider these examples;

- 120a)        Igó ọnhi ọ dẹ ghobe mhe nhọ vú amẹ  
 Igó Rel she buy book my Foc fetch water  
 'That Igó who bought that my book fetched water'
- b)            Igó ọnhi ọ dẹ ghobe mhe nhi vú amẹ  
 Igó Rel she buy book my Foc fetch water  
 'That Igó who bought that my book fetched water'

From the above examples, we discover that ọnhi the focus marker has strong feature than relative marker in the language, for the marker can focus two constituent at the same time as seen in (120) where both the matrix and the embedded clause are focused at the same time taken the shape 'nhi'. But whenever it takes the form nhọ, it focuses one single constituent as seen in (120a) where only the embedded clause is focused. Consider the derivation below;

121a) [FocP Igó ọnhi ọ dẹ ghobe mhe [ Foc<sup>0</sup> ọnhi [TP Igó ọnhi ọ dẹ ghobe mhe ọ vú amẹ] ] ]





From the above example, it is observed that the basic clause is **Igó vú amẹ**, then Igó is relativised to derived **Igó ò dè ghobè mhe vú amẹ**. Now, for the emphasis on both clauses **nhi** the variant of **ònhi** the Foc marker is merged in order to check its head feature which now give **nhi Igó ò dè ghobè mhe vú amẹ**. The relativised clause has to fronted leaving a trace in form of a resumptive pronoun which is co- index with it for it feature checking as shown in (121) above.

More so, tone plays important role in the language under investigation, for negation is marked with low tone. Consider these examples;

- 122a)        Ò    dè    ghobè  
               He buy book  
               ‘He buys/bought a book’
- b)            Ò̄    dè ghobè  
               ‘He has bought a book’
- c)            Ò    dè ghobè  
               ‘He is buying a book’
- d)            Ò    dè ghobe  
               ‘He should buy a book’
- e)            Ò̄    dè ghobè na mhe  
               He buy book for me  
               ‘He didn’t buy a book for me’
- f)            Mhà gbé ini  
               ‘we didn’t kill an elephant’
- g)            Ò̄    dè òmòka  
               ‘he didn’t buy an orange’

The language permits the interaction of the three operators to co-occur in a single sentence without altering the meaning of such sentence. Consider the example below;

- 123)            Igó  nhi  ọ  dẹ  ghobe  mhe  nhi  ọ      ré  
                   Igó  Rel she buy  book  my  Foc she(neg) come  
                   ‘That Igó who bought that my book didn’t come’.

Of the three operators, focus marker is the only one that has the feature to focus two constituent at the same time. The relativisation only applied on Igo and nothing else, while negation applied on the fact of ‘Igó not come’ and not on ‘Igó not buy the book’. We then observed that when the three operators co-occur, Rel marker enters the derivation first to relativised the DP, then negator to negate the clause before the Foc marker finally comes in so as to place emphasis on the entire structure. So, the basic derivation of sentence (126) is shown below;

- 124a)            Igó  varé  
                   ‘Igó came’
- b)                Igó  nhi  ọ  dẹ  ghobe  mhe  varé  
                   ‘Igo who bought my book came’
- c)                Igó  nhi  ọ  dẹ  ghobe  mhe  ọ  ré  
                   ‘Igó who bought my book didn’t come’
- d) .              Igó  nhi  ọ  dẹ  ghobe  mhe  nhi  ọ  ré  
                   ‘That Igó who bought that my book didn’t come’

From our analysis we observe that the head in relative clause is not an NP/DP but the relative marker itself and Relativisation is a projection of CP not of IP. This goes along with the definition of merge as projections of the head. The language does not take adjective as modifier. It is also established that ‘onhi’ the focus marker has stronger feature than the ‘nhi’ the relative marker for whenever they co-occur in a sentence onhi has the power to focus both the matrix and the embedded clause at the same time.

### 5.5 Imperative Clauses

Imperative clauses are used generally to issue command. This follows from the observation that every clause has force which marks its type. One of the characteristics of imperatives in English language is that the subject is usually not given a phonetic spell-out but is actually understood. To a great extent, Ghòtùò imperatives patterns along that of English in that the subject of imperative clauses may or may not be given a null spell-out at PF, while the structure defers in some other ways. This study adumbrates two reasons for the

omission of the subject. First is the idiosyncrasy of the native speaker and secondly, for pragmatic reasons such as emphasis.

It is possible to have overt subject only in emphatic imperatives, the Ex-DP is never realized overtly in some contexts as shown below. It has an understood feature of [2nd] Person. In some context where it is overtly realized the DP is inherently accusatives that is, it is dubbed as Dat(-ve) and it is licensed by the force head [+Imp] in the split-C system thereby preventing the derivation from crashing at the interfaces; LF and PF.

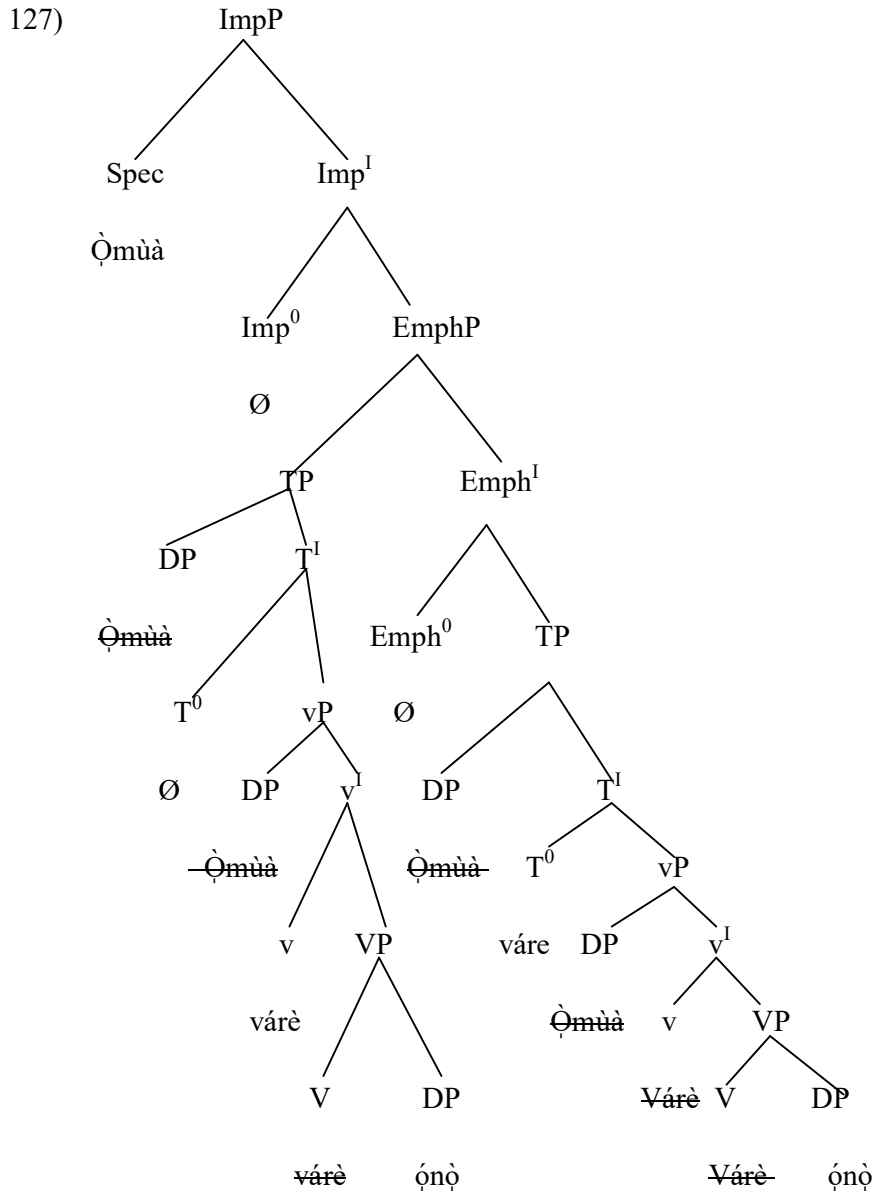
- 125a) [ImpP Ø [TAgrP itọ ]]  
 [ImpP Ø [TAgrP sitdown] ]  
 ‘Sit down!’
- b) [ImpP Ø [TAgrP vò hi ] ]  
 [ImpP Ø [TAgrP get out ] ]  
 ‘Get out!’
- (c) [ImpP Ø [TAgrP Ọmùà v́àrè ọ̀nọ ] ]  
 [ImpP Ø [TAgrP Ọmùà come overhere ] ]  
 ‘Ọmùà come over here!’
- (d) [ImpP Ø [TAgrP Igó zọ̀mọ ínhì níkà ] ]  
 [ImpP Ø [TAgrP Igó leave child that alone ] ]  
 ‘Igó leave that child alone!’
- (e) [ImpP Ø [TAgrP whẹwẹ fò ighohi yẹ hẹhẹhẹ ] ]  
 [ImpP Ø [TAgrP you(Sg-Emph) finish food you on time ] ]  
 ‘You finish your food on time!’
- (f) [ImpP Ø [TAgrP du koko ọ̀ vhení nìrè ] ]  
 [ImpP Ø [TAgrP take cup the away ] ]  
 ‘Take the cup away!’
- (126a) [ImpP whà na [TAgrP á rìgẹ ba ọ̀mọ́hí ọ̀ ] ]  
 [ Let [ us(DAT) stay with man the ] ]  
 ‘Let us stay with the man!’

- (b) [ImpP *whà na* [TagrP *á itọ* ] ]  
 [ Let [ us(DAT) sit down ] ]  
 ‘Let us sit down!’
- c) [ImpP *whà na* [TagrP *Ìjóní vǎrè ọ̀nọ̀* ] ]  
 [ let [ John come here]]  
 ‘Let John come here!’
- d) [ImpP *whà na* [TagrP *mhi zìò* ] ]  
 [ let me hear word ] ]  
 ‘Let me hear word!’

As observed from the data (125a-f) above, the  $\text{Imp}^0$  is parametrically unspecified overtly in direct commands. The structure does not have overt imperative markers marking the derivation with the appropriate discuss Force, yet understood as imperatives.

Demonstrating the derivation using example (126c) above, the DP *ọ̀nọ̀* ‘this place/here’ is merged with the V *vǎrè* ‘come’ to form VP. The VP is in turn merged with the light *v* to form  $v^1$ . The strong  $vF$  on *v* attracts the lexical V *vǎrè* ‘come’ to adjoin to it. To satisfy EPP requirement of the light *v*,  $v^1$  is externally merged with the DP *Ọ̀mùà* to form  $vP$ . The  $vP$  is merged with a null T to form  $T^1$ . T probes for the closest goal and finds the active DP in the spec of  $vP$ . Consequently, they value their unvalued features. The EPP feature on T attracts the DP to occupy its spec. The null Emph head is externally merged to TP to satisfy its c-selection condition. The reason for positing null Emph head is to show that the DP SUB may be numerated for emphasis. Then to satisfy the EPP feature on the Emph head, the entire TP is pied-piped to spec EmphP. This is appropriate because if the TP is merged with the null Emph head, it will probe and attract the DP, *Ọ̀mùà*, to occupy its spec. Thus, the complement domain of Emph head will undergo transfer. Consequently, PIC will block the movement of the verb to the Imperative head forcing the derivation to crash. Pied-piping the TP provides escape hatch for the V to move to the  $\text{Imp}^0$  to value its imperative features.

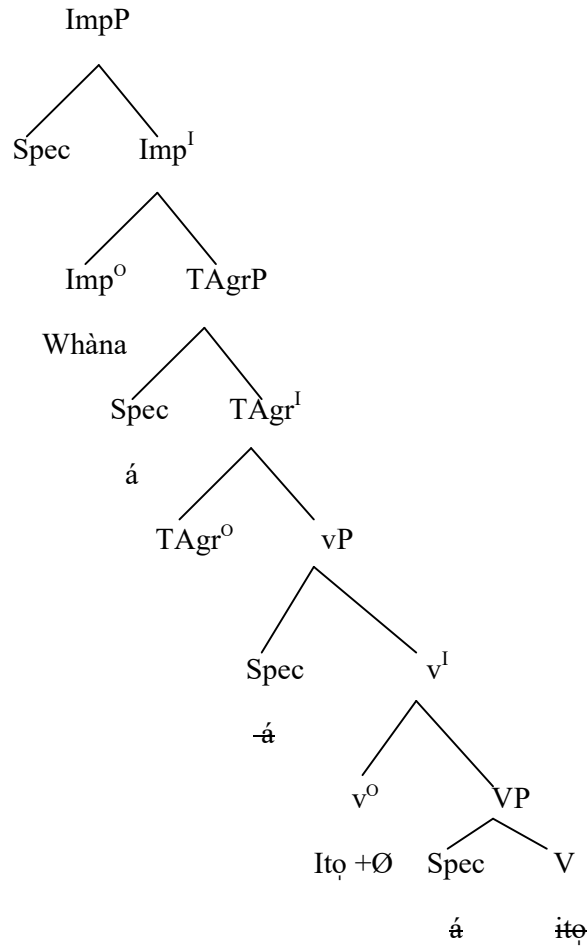
Computation continues with the merging of Imp head to the spec EmphP via external merge to project  $\text{Imp}^1$ . The head  $\text{Imp}^0$  being a probe searches for the closest goal with [+Imp] feature to move to its spec. *Ọ̀mùà* satisfies this condition and is attracted to spec ImpP. The strong  $vF$  on  $\text{Imp}^0$  attracts the V to adjoin to it and the derivation converges as shown in the diagram below.



In (126a-d) however, there is an imperative marker and overtly realized. The derivation could have crashed at the meaning interface but rescued through the ForceP which makes the sentences interpretable at the LF. Being theme DP, the subject DP entered the derivation at [Spec, VP] where its theta properties were assigned. But  $\acute{a}$  rises to [Spec, vP] where valuation of unvalued features were delayed. It had to rise to [Spec, TAgRP] where it enters into Agree relation with TAgR<sup>0</sup> and finally its person, number and consequently case feature were valued for the derivation to converge. The Imp<sup>0</sup> is an active but a weak head. It cannot attract DPs into its Spec, if it does the derivation could crash at the meaning interface. Imp<sup>0</sup> does not have [EF] which makes it a weak head H. Imp<sup>0</sup> satisfies Agree condition because it has no [EF] as a Phase Head. Then the whole convergent ImpP derivation then

undergoes transfer to the interface. Hence it is frozen for further activity, Activity Condition is respected. The clausal architecture is shown on the tree below:

128)



## 5.6 Interrogative Projections

Hornstein, Nunes and Grohmann (2005:261) note that ‘the semantics of questions is generally assumed to be revealed by the appropriate answers they elicit’. Thus, on the basis of the kind of answers provided to question structures, two main types of question formation are usually discussed in literature. These include; (i) Content Word Questions (CWQ) and, (ii) Polar Questions (PQ). With regards to the aforementioned traditional major classes, the following structures in (131b & 132b) are understood as interrogative counterparts of those in (129a & 130a) in Ghòtùò

- 129a                   Ébè        ó    aghagha  
                           Book(pl) the   lose  
                           ‘The books are missing’
- b)           Ébè        ó    ághagha?  
                           Book(pl) the   lose  
                           ‘Are the books missing?’
- 130a)                   Olú   dẹ    òìlà  
                           Olú   buy   yam  
                           ‘Olú bought yam’
- b)           Mi    Olú   dẹ?  
                           What Olú   buy  
                           ‘What did Olú buy?’

Constructions like (129b) are called PQ (or Yes/No-questions) because of the nature of responses such question structures would trigger i.e. either a Yes or a No. Those questions like (130b) are examples of CWQ. They are so-called because such would require more than a Yes/No for answer and they involve wh-operators. In Ghòtùò, some of the CWQ operators are both base generated in-situ and ex-situ while some are only ex-situ. Some have forms different from the form they have ex-situ while some have a similar form both in-situ and ex-situ. The table below shows the Wh-words in Ghòtùò:

**Ghòtùò Wh- Words**

Ex-situ	In-situ	Gloss
Mi	Mó	What
Òkpàá	Òkpàá	which
Enhinhi	Enhinhi	Why
Nyi	nyi ó	Where
Èghèghè òkpá	ghèghè òkpá	When
Ahi	Ahi	How
Qnhi	Qnhó	Who

The syntactic derivation of these CWQ are exemplified below:

- 131a)            Mi    á    zù    é?  
                  What you call they  
                  ‘What do they call your name/What is your name?’
- b)                Mi    Olú    dẹ?  
                  What Olú buy  
                  ‘What did Olú buy?’
- c)                Ọ̀mùà    fúé    mó?  
                  Ọ̀mùà    cook what  
                  ‘Ọ̀mùà cooked what?’
- d)                Igó    dẹ    mó?  
                  Igó    buy what  
                  ‘Igó bought what?’
- 132a)            Igó    ọ̀kpàá?  
                  Igó    which  
                  ‘Which Igó’
- b)            Ibàtà    ọ̀kpàá    rí    sẹ    Olú?  
                  Shoe    which QM of    Olú  
                  ‘Which shoe is Olú’s?’
- 133a)            Enhinhi    Ọ̀mùà    rí    fié?  
                  Why            Ọ̀mùà QM cry  
                  ‘Why is Ọ̀mùà crying?’
- c)            Enhinhi    ọ    rí    òràhọ?  
                  Why    she QM frown  
                  ‘Why is she frowning’
- 134a)            Nyi    Olú    rí?  
                  Where Olú QM  
                  ‘Where is Olú?’



- b) Nyi Olú rí é òìlhà?  
Where Olú QM eat yam  
'Where did Olú eat yam?'
- c) Olú ríhẹ nyi ó?  
Olú QM sleep where  
'Olu slept where?'
- d) Òmùà rí nyi ó?  
Òmùà QM where  
'Òmùà is where?'
- 135a) Èghèghè òkpá ghóhi ó rí bié?  
Time which food the QM ready  
'When will the food be ready?'
- b) Èghèghè òkpá mhi rí varé?  
Time which I QM come  
'When should I come?'
- c) Olú varé ghèghè òkpá?  
Olú come time which  
'Olú came when?'
- d) Òmùà dé òìlhà ghèghè òkpá?  
Òmùà buy yam time which  
'Òmùà bought yam when?'
- 136a) Ahi Olú rí?  
How Olú QM  
'How is Olú?'
- b) Ahi mha rá afe?  
How we get house  
'How are we going to get home?'

- 137a)            Ọ̀nhi    Olú    mhẹ́?  
                     Who    Olú    see  
                     ‘Who did Olú see?’
- b)                Ọ̀nhi    ọ    dé    òìlhà?  
                     Who (pro) buy yam  
                     ‘Who bought yam’
- c)                Ọ̀mùà    gbé    ọ̀nhó?  
                     Ọ̀mùà    beat    who  
                     Ọ̀mùà    beat who?’
- d)                Olú    mhẹ́    ọ̀nhó?  
                     Olú    see    who  
                     ‘Olú saw who?’

It is expedient to initially note that the interaction that holds between the content question words in Yorùbá language and focus construction cannot hold in this language. There is no obvious interaction between the two operators. (131a-d) are instances of the derivation of English ‘what’ in Ghòtùò. “Mi” in-situ is realized as “mo” ex-situ. “Ọ̀kpàá” which in (135), “enhinhi” why in (133) and “ayi” how in (136) have the same form both in-situ and ex-situ. From the examples above, it is discovered that a high tone “Ó” is added to the wh-word at the in-situ, as can be seen with where “nyi o” at in-situ to change the form at the ex-situ. In the light of this, we take (134) as the underlying form for the entire content question words in-situ in Ghòtùò. The high tone syllable (henceforth HTS) is a dynamic tone bearing unit that can be assimilated but the tone is static. This simply motivates the uniform shape of the content question words in-situ. The analysis so far is illustrated in the derivation of “Mi” what as in (131) and “ọ̀nhi” who as in (137). There is deletion of “i” to accommodate the “ó” that is why we have ‘mo’ as in data (131c&d). Vowel harmony also plays a vital role in the derivation of the content question words such as ‘ọ̀nhó’ ‘ò̀kpàá’ and ‘mo’ in which +ATR vowels co-occur while –ATR vowels also co-occur. There is no cross-featural occurrence in ‘ọ̀nhi’ to derive ‘ọ̀nhó’ in as shown below.

138.            Ọ̀nhi + ó    —————> \*Ọ̀nho    —————> Ọ̀nhó

## 5.7 The Syntax of Interrogatives in Ghòtùò

Assuming the Split-CP analysis, the question phrase cartographically is a projection of the functional head  $\text{Inter}^0$ .  $\text{Inter}^0$  activates interrogative force through its edge features [EF] with which it attracts [+wh] operator from the complement TAgP into its Spec.  $\text{Inter}^0$  probes into its c-command domain and attracts the appropriate item for the derivation to converge and subsequently shipped the derivation to the interfaces, LF and PF for Spell-Out. This is specified under Wh-Attraction Condition stated below taken from Radford (2009: 216).

### **Wh-attraction Condition** (Radford, 2009: 216)

The edge feature on a C attracts the smallest maximal projection containing the closest wh word to move to spec C.

According to Radford (1988:462), questions in natural languages can be classified into Yes/No questions and wh-questions. Generally, the term wh-question is so-called because of the presence of wh-word which for most times serves as interrogative word. The interrogative words in Ghòtùò are shown in the table above and exemplified in (131-137).

Ghòtùò operate both wh - ex-situ and in-situ. It has a lexical head which heads the InterP which could also be realized non-overtly. Thus, wh-operators are pre-posed into the [Spec, InterP]. We observe that  $\text{Inter}^0$  'rí' is an active head whose strong features must be checked under Agree relation. And the question marker (QM) often shows up immediately the wh-word is pre-posed to the [Spec, InterP]. The  $\text{Inter}^0$  has strong features which must be valued before the covert syntax interface if not the derivation will crash at LF.

We observe that whenever wh-word is attracted under Agree, it always trigger an emphatic feature dubbed as [Emph]. This is often activated before movement into the [Spec, InterP]. Invariably it implies that the operator enters the numeration with this feature; it couldn't have been that it was assigned at [Spec, InterP]. Thus, we propose that the wh-word is first focused and attracted to [Spec, FocP] before being raised to [Spec,  $\text{Inter}^0$ ] for valuation of [ $u$ F] on  $\text{Inter}^0$ . i.e. Wh-word with question feature [QF] is first moved to [Spec, FocP] to value the unvalued interpretable [+ $u$ F] features of  $\text{Foc}^0$  from the  $v$ P internal. Consider the examples below;

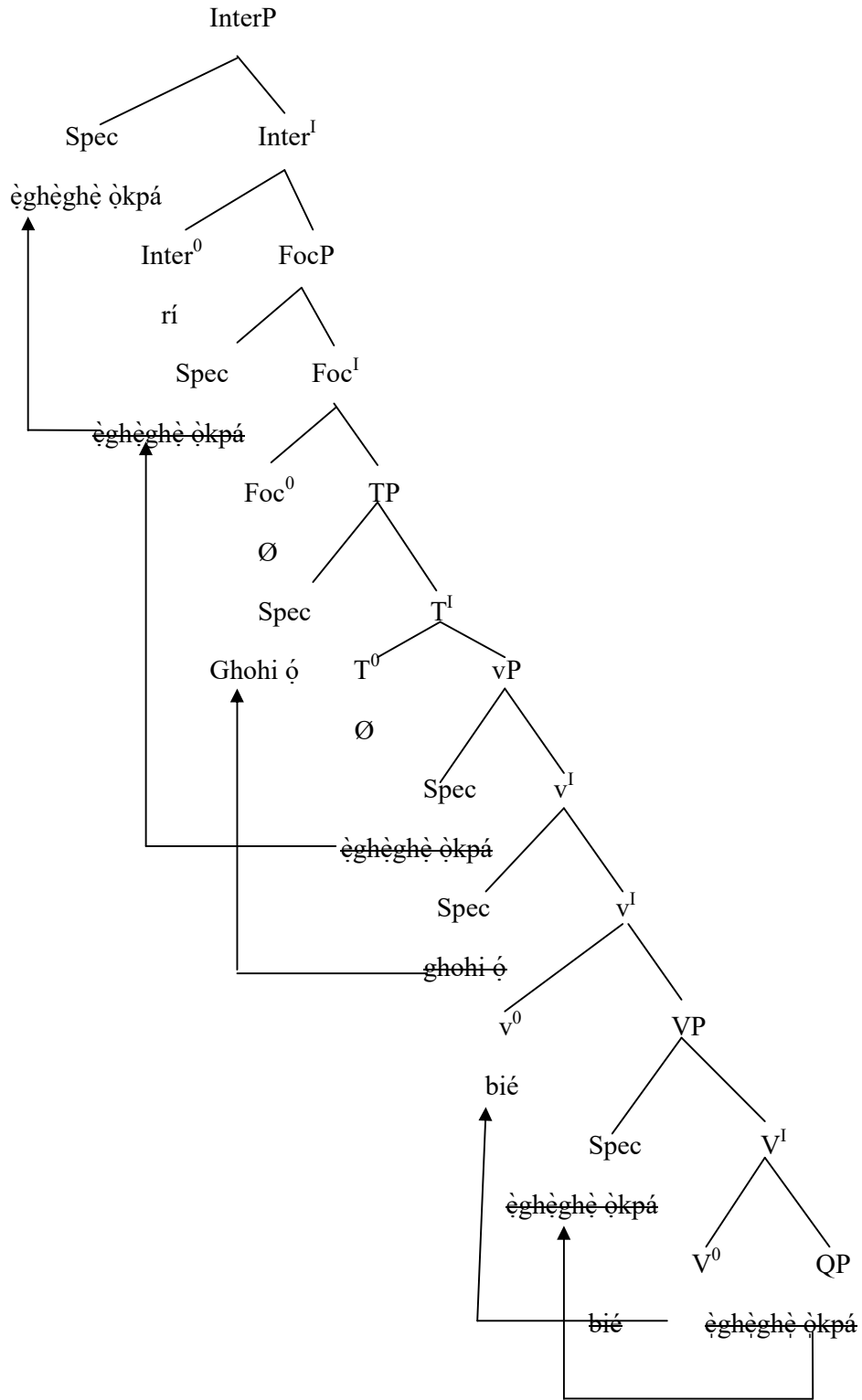
- 139) [<sub>InterP</sub> èghèghè òkpá [<sub>TP</sub> ghohi ó rí [<sub>VP</sub> ~~èghèghè òkpá~~ bié [<sub>VP</sub> ghóhi é rí bié èghèghè òkpá ] ] ]?  
 [ Time which [ food the QM [ ~~time—~~which ready [ ~~food—the~~ QM ready ~~time—~~which ] ] ]?  
 ‘When will the food be ready?’
- 140) [<sub>InterP</sub> ahi [<sub>TP</sub> mha Ø [<sub>VP</sub> ~~ahi-~~ mha rá [<sub>VP</sub> ~~mha~~ Ø rá afe ahi- ] ] ]?  
 [ How [ we QM [ ~~how~~ we get [ ~~we-~~ get house how ] ] ]?  
 ‘How are we going to get home?’
- 141) [<sub>InterP</sub> onhi [<sub>TP</sub> Olú Ø [<sub>VP</sub> ~~onhi~~ mhé [<sub>VP</sub> ~~Olú~~ Ø mhé onhi ] ] ]?  
 [ Who [ Olú QM [ ~~who~~ see [ ~~Olú—~~QM see ~~who~~ ] ] ]?  
 ‘Who did Olú see?’
- 142) [<sub>InterP</sub> nyi [<sub>TP</sub> Olú rí [<sub>VP</sub> ~~nyi-~~ é [<sub>VP</sub> ~~Olú—~~rí é òllhà nyi-é ] ] ]?  
 [ Where [ Olú QM [ ~~where~~ eat [ ~~Olú-~~QM eat yam ~~where~~ ] ] ]?  
 ‘where did Olú eat yam’
- 143) [<sub>InterP</sub> enhinhi [<sub>TP</sub> Òmùà rí [<sub>VP</sub> ~~ehinhi-~~ fié [<sub>VP</sub> ~~Òmùà~~ rí fié enhinhi ] ] ]?  
 [ Why [ Òmùà QM [ ~~why~~ cry [ ~~Òmùà~~ QM ery ~~why~~ ] ] ]?  
 ‘Why is Òmùà crying?’
- 144) [<sub>InterP</sub> mí [<sub>TP</sub> Olú Ø [<sub>VP</sub> ~~mi~~ dé [<sub>VP</sub> ~~Olú~~ Ø dé mó- ] ] ]?  
 [ What [ Olú QM [ ~~what-~~ buy [ ~~Olú-~~ buy ~~what~~ ] ] ]?  
 ‘What did Olú buy’

The derivation proceeds along this line. Using (135a) for illustration, the LIs in the Numeration are given above in (139) and the projection in (145) below. Assuming the VPISH analysis, first , **èghèghè òkpá** ‘when’ merged with the verb **bié** ‘ready’ to form lexical VP projection **bié èghèghè òkpá** ‘ready when’. Then the VP merges with the light verb while the DP object raises to [Spec, VP] to derive v<sup>1</sup>. Then the v<sup>1</sup> merged with Spec and form vP. So, the VP circle is ready and thus undergoes transfer to the interface i.e. it becomes frozen to a Probing head. And only the Edge and the head are available for further computation. Phase Impenetrability Condition (PIC) is satisfied. The vP proceeds in the computation, it merged with T<sup>0</sup> to derive T<sup>1</sup>. T<sup>0</sup> is an active *Probe* which probes down into its c-commanding domain

and *attracts* the *Goal* in [Spec, vP] to [Spec, TP] for valuation. Both the probe and the goal in this agree relation enters agreement to satisfy some of their unvalued features' requirement and not because of Greed.

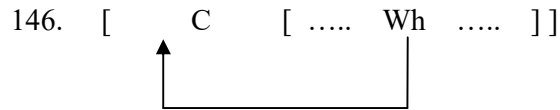
The T<sup>1</sup> merged with Spec and thus project the TP. The T<sup>0</sup> has [EF] and [-uF] which must be assigned values if not the derivation will crash. T<sup>0</sup> probes into its domain and the Ex-DP **ghohi ó** is attracted to [Spec, TP] and its [case] was valued. The convergent TP was merged with Foc<sup>0</sup> headed by a null head. The Foc<sup>0</sup> has [EF] and the DP at [Spec, TP] has [Emph] which must be checked in the overt syntax. The Foc<sup>0</sup> probes into its domain and sees an active goal. The probe and the DP goal enter an agree relation, the DP is attracted to [Spec, FocP]. The TP circle is now ready for transfer. It is frozen and PIC is satisfied. The derivation is merged with Inter<sup>0</sup>, which is the locus of the illocutionary force. It marks the derivation with the appropriate force i.e the interrogative force. The Foc<sup>0</sup> and its edge are still available for further computation. Thus, the FocP is merged with Inter<sup>0</sup> which has [EF] that must be satisfied. The Inter<sup>0</sup> probes into its domain and finds the DP **ghohi ó** at [Spec, FocP] with [+QF], the probe Inter<sup>0</sup> attracts the DP and the features are valued. This is represented in (145) below. The crossed items are the *trace copies* in the movement chains;

145)



The movement proceeds by Shortest Move which emphasized that a constituent must move up to the next related position from its source position, Marantz (1995: 355). i.e. movement must be in small hoops; cyclic movement which also satisfies the Wh-attraction condition stated above.

The claim here is that, movement creates two members of a Chain. When a Wh-word is attracted by a Probe  $\alpha$  it leaves a copy which is not legible to PF interface. copies don't move to [Spec, InterP]. It is the case that the Copy of the moved constituent is not Spell-Out, as it is defective for the PF interface. It cannot be linearized. This is illustrated below.

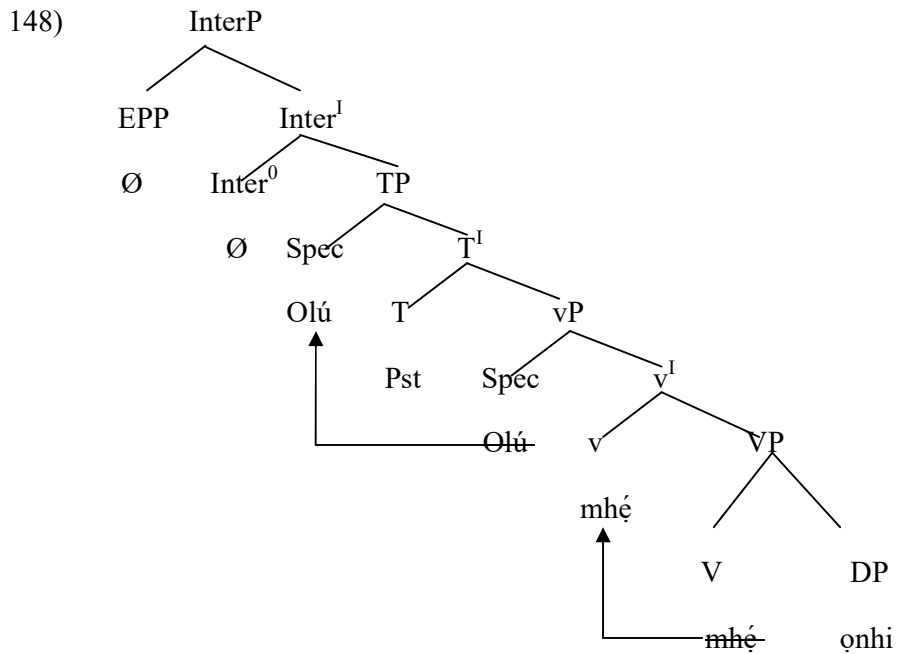


As can be seen from above, wh-questions involving overt movement of wh-operator to spec of InterP is accounted for. Hence, it is pertinent to account for interrogative wh-question involving covert movement of wh-word as earlier explained. In this case, the wh operator remain in-situ. Therefore, Ghòtùò exhibit optional wh-movement. Consider the examples below;

- 147) [TP Olú mhé ɔnhó ?]  
 [TP Olú see who]  
 ‘Olú saw who?’

This example shows that the wh-word **ɔnhi** remains in situ, yet, the derivation converges. The question then is how can one account for this structure using the phase theory? Similarly, the structure could be derived by successive application of select and merge as is the case with other derivations as follows. The verb **mhé** ‘see’ is merged with the wh-word **ɔnhi** to form the VP **mhé ɔnhi** ‘see who’. The VP is in turn merged with a null light *v* to form vI. The light *v* attracts the lexical V **mhé** ‘see’ to adjoin to it leaving a null copy at its extraction site. More so, the light *v* has EPP feature which requires it to have a subject. **Olú** ‘a personal name’ is selected from the numeration and merged to  $v^I$  to form vP. In this case, **ɔnhi** ‘who’ the OBJ of **mhé** ‘see’ need not move to the spec of vP since it does not need to escape the phase. The structure is sent to the interface levels for appropriate interpretation. Hence, the derivation continues with merging of T to vP to form  $T^I$ . T enters the derivation with abstract  $\phi$ -features yet to be valued and probes downwards for the closest goal in its C-commanding domain. The Ex-DP, **Olú** meets this requirement. Consequently, it values its abstract  $\phi$ -features on T via Agree and deletes them. Similarly, T values its  $\phi$ -features on the DP and attracts it to occupy spec T to satisfy its EPP features. The derived structure is merged with the null Interrogative marker to form InterI. It is believed that in interrogative wh-clauses,  $Inter^0$  has weak EF and EPP feature. Hence, the wh-word has the option of either moving to

spec InterP or remaining in situ. Since, this is an in situ case, the head  $\text{Inter}^0$  checks the Q-features of the wh element in the OBJ position of the sentence through long distance checking. Since, EPP feature is weak in interrogative wh-clauses, it fails to attract the wh word to occupy spec InterP. The above contention is represented in the diagram below:



In null shell, Wh words in ghòtùò can be preposed to spec C or left in situ and yet result to the same LF output. This study views the ex- situ WH interrogative sentences differs from its in- situ counterparts only pragmatically, i.e. to give emphasis to the preposed element which is in line with the motivation for focusing elements of a sentence.

Having examined the derivation of CWQ, we shall proceed further to look at the derivation of polar questions (hence PQ) in Ghòtùò. PQs are so called because they required either a YES or a NO as alternative responses to questions asked by the speaker or interlocutor. As illustrated above in the data presented in (131a&b), PQs are headed by an invariable High-Tone QM consistently stranded. It requires a TBU, which is the lexical verb but if the lexical verb is of high tone then it goes to the nominal DP. Invariably, PQ constructions generally do not involve wh –words. Examples in Ghòtùò include;

- 149a)                   Ébè       ó    aghagha  
                           Book(pl) the lose  
                           ‘The books are missing’



b)                   Ébè       ó       ághagha?  
 Book(pl) the       lose  
 ‘Are the books missing?’

150a)               U       nhẹhẹ   Olú  
 you   know   Olú  
 ‘You know Olú.

b)                   U       nhẹhé   Olú?  
 You   know   Olú  
 ‘Do you know Olú?’

151a)               U       mhẹ     Igó  
 You   see     Igó  
 ‘You see/saw Igó

b)                   Ú       mhẹ     Igó?  
 You   see     Igó  
 ‘Have you seen Igó?’

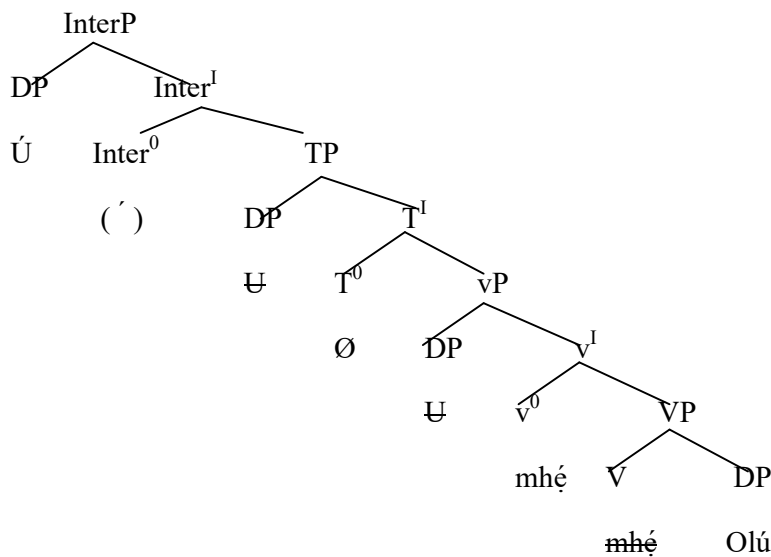
Constructions in (149b, 150b &151b) are PQs because they elicit yes/no answers to the questions. (149a, 150a & 151a) are affirmatives while (149b, 150b &151b) are their interrogative counterparts. In other words, only tone marks interrogation in the clause. It simply points to the fact that high tone marks interrogative force in Ghòtùò. Therefore, tone plays a significant role in the derivation of PQ in Ghòtùò. Consider these examples;

152a)               [InterP Ú [ TP mhẹ     Olú ] ]  
 [    You [     see     Olú ] ]  
 ‘Have you seen Olú?’

b)                   [InterP U [TP nhẹhé   Igó ] ]  
 [    You [     know   Igó ] ]  
 ‘Do you know Igó?’

Example (152a&b) are instances of polar questions in Ghòtùò. The question now is, how is PQ derived in Ghòtùò using framework assumed in this study? To derive (152a), using select and merge, *mhé* ‘see’ is merged with the DP, *Olú* ‘personal name’ to form VP. Since  $\theta$ -role is assigned under merge, it assigns  $\theta$ -role agent to *Olú*. The VP is merged with a null light performative verb to form  $v^I$ . The light  $v$  assigns ACC case to the verb under spec head relation. The strong  $vF$  of the light  $v$  attracts the lexical  $v$  to adjoin to it. Given that light  $v$  have EPP feature in Ghòtùò which requires it to have a subject and the LA is yet to be exhausted, *2<sup>nd</sup> person singular pronoun U* is selected and merged with  $v^I$  to form  $vP$ . Following PIC, the domain of  $vP$  is sent to PF and LF interfaces for appropriate interpretation. Computation proceeds with merging of T with  $vP$  to form  $T^I$ . The V moves further to T to value its T-features. T probes for the closest goal in its domain to value its unvalued Fs. *U* satisfied this requirement because its  $\phi$ -Fs are yet to be valued. It values them on T via Agree. The EPP feature on T attracts the Ex-DP to occupy its spec forming a TP. TP is not a phase, so, computation continues with merging TP with  $Inter^0$  to form  $Inter^I$ . Evidence from the data above shows that the Head of InterP is a floating high tone. Nevertheless,  $Inter^0$  has EPP feature which requires it to have a subject, so it attracts the DP *U* to occupy its spec. Since  $Inter^0$  lacks TBU or segmental tier, it is dumped on the adjacent pronominal copy. These contentions are represented in the diagram below:

153)



## 5.8 Parallel Between Wh-Questions and Focus

In Ghòtùò, wh-question formation and focusing are very similar in processes in that both of them require a movement to the left peripheral position i.e. the Spec of FocP. Consider these examples;

154a) Ibàtà òkpàá Ø rí sẹ Olú?  
 Shoe which FOC QM of Olú  
 ‘Which shoe is Olú’s?’

b) Enhinhi Ø Òmùà rí fié?  
 Why FOC Òmùà QM cry  
 ‘Why is Òmùà crying?’

c) Nyi Ø Olú rí é òìhà?  
 Where FOC Olú QM eat yam  
 ‘Where did Olú eat yam?’

d) Èghèghè òkpá Ø ghóhi ó rí bié?  
 Time which FOC food the QM ready  
 ‘When will the food be ready?’

All the above sentences lack focus marker **ónhi**, the focus marker is not overtly realised at the right of the wh-elements **èghèghè òkpá**, **ehinhi** and **nyi** in all the examples. And as earlier said that there could be leftward movement without the presence of the focus marker **ónhi**, as it has been shown that focus marker in Ghòtùò is optional and not obligatory.

## 5.9 Difference Between Yes/No Questions and Focus.

The main and noticable difference between focus and Yes/No question is that any constituent can be focused or moved to the Spec FocP that is, the probe Foc can attract any constituent that is, an active probe to its specifier position while only subject DP can be moved to the Spec InterP that is, the probe InterP can only attract the subject DP to its specifier position. Consider the following examples.

155a) Igó gbé ofè udo óvbàghi ó  
 Igó kill rat inside room the  
 ‘Igó killed a rat inside the room’

- b) Igó ọ̀nhi o gbé ofè udo óvbàghi ó  
 Igó FOC 3sg kill rat inside room the  
 ‘IGÓ killed a rat inside the room’
- c) Ofè ọ̀nhi Igó gbé ofè udo óvbàghi ó  
 Rat FOC Igó kill ~~rat~~ inside room the  
 ‘Igó killed A RAT inside the room’
- d) Gbé ọ̀nhi Igó gbé ofè udo óvbàghi ó  
 kill FOC Igó kill rat inside room the  
 “ Igó KILLED a rat inside the room”
- 156a) Ébè ọ̀ aghahha  
 Book(pl) the lose  
 ‘The books are missing’
- b) Ébè ọ̀ ághagha?  
 Book(pl) the lose  
 ‘Are the books missing?’
- c) U nḩḩé Olú?  
 You know Olú  
 ‘Do you know Olú?’
- d) Ú mhé Igó?  
 You see Igó  
 ‘Have you seen Igó?’
- di) \*Igó ú mhé?  
 Igó you see
- dii) \*mhé ú Igó?  
 See you Igó

From the examples (155b-d) above we observed that all of the constituents in (155a) can be focused: in (155b) subject DP is focused while in (155c) and (155d), the object DP and predicate are respectively focused. But as can be seen in examples (158b-d), only the subject DP in (156a) can be questioned and this is what bring about the ungrammaticality of (156di&dii) above.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.0 Preliminary

This chapter summary the whole work. It examined the scope of the syntax of focusing in Ghòtùò. It revealed the areas not covered as well point the young researchers the areas needed to be explore. This chapter is a pointer to some of the issues discussed in the course of our investigation of Ghòtùò language. It investigated the syntax and scope of focusing as a syntactic process. It also gives a vivid account of the findings this work has established so far in the course of our analysis alongside the requirements of the theoretical provisions with its contribution(s) to knowledge.

#### 6.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Focusing is a syntactic process employs in Ghòtùò to bring contrast among the items in the computation and this is done with the use of focus marker. The focus marker is that element that heads the focus phrase. The status of the focus marker has been a case of so much controversy as it is regarded by the like of Awobuluyi (1992:71) as a copula verb, a mere expletive or a focus marker. In Ghòtùò ‘Ónhi’ is the focus marker and it is optional. Its overt realisation in a sentence is to make contrast between the focused constituent and other constituents in the structure or to contrast new information. Consider these examples;

- 157a) Òmùà é oilha òwèni  
Òmùà eat yam yesterday  
“Òmùà ate yam yesterday”
- b) Òmùà (ónhi) ó é oilha òwèni  
Òmùà FM she eat yam yesterday  
“ÒMÙÀ ate yam yesterday”
- c) Oilha (ónhi) Òmùà é òwèni  
Yam FM Òmùà eat yesterday  
“Òmùà ate YAM yesterday”
- d) Òwèni (ónhi) Òmùà é oilha  
Yesterday FM Òmùà eat yam  
“Òmùà ate yam YESTERDAY”
- e) É (ónhi) Òmùà é oilha òwèni  
Eat FM Òmùà eat yam yesterday  
“Òmùà ATE yam yesterday”

In all of the examples above, the realisation of the focus marker is optional.

Moreso, according to Jackendoff (1977), only the constituents that share the Feature [-v] can be focused. In order to fulfill this condition, constituents such as verb has to be nominalised at the focused landing site with a copy left behind at the extraction site. In other words, for a verb to be raised to Spec.Infl, the verb must be of a type that can occupy an argument position, specifically, a nominal.

In Ghòtùò, the focused verb is moved to the sentence initial position, leaves a copy at the original position before movement, but the focused verb is never nominalized. The movement of this focused constituent is an A<sup>I</sup>-movement. The focused verb is extracted from its base-generated site and moved to the focus position, Spec., FocP and it does not require nominalization. Consider the following examples;

- 158a) Gbé (ónhi) Igó gbé ofè udo óvbàghi ó òwèni  
 Kill FOC Igó kill rat inside room the yesterday  
 ‘Igó KILLED a rat inside the room yesterday’
- b) É (ónhi) Ọmùà é oilha òwèni  
 Eating FM Ọmùà eat yam yesterday  
 “Ọmùà ATE yam yesterday”

As seen from examples (160a&b), we observe that the movement of any constituent to Spec. FocP is for feature checking, for such constituent receives prominence or emphasis over other constituents in the sentence. In Ghòtùò, such movement and the obligatory appearance of focus maker is for contrasting. The element focused is moved so as to contrast it from other possible constituent that may or may not be present in the sentence. **Gbé** ‘kill’ and **é** ‘eat’ are verbs in their base site, but when moved to Spec. FocP for their contrastive feature checking become nominal elements in as much as that the element moved must carry [+N] feature, though without being nominalised.

Also in Ghòtùò, adjective/ adjectival phrase cannot be focused, for the language does not allow adjective as a complement of D rather the D will be relativised which brings about relative clause. So, both the D and its relativised clause can then be focused. For instance;

- 159a. Igó nhi mhi mhẹ (ónhi) o nhẹghe òhọ ó  
 Igó who I see FOC 3sg cook soup the  
 ‘Igó THAT I SAW cooked the soup’
- b. Mhi mhẹ ovbaghi nhi ọmọhi ó zẹ  
 I know house Rel man the build  
 ‘I know the house WHICH THE MAN BUILT’

- c. Vbavba ibia nhi mhi nhèhè vbavba ibiá  
 2pl-emph children Rel I know 2pl-emph children  
 ‘You the children whom I know’

Moreover, whenever the two markers i.e. Rel marker and Foc marker occur in a sentence where both processes are at play, then the focus marker **ónhi** will not be in its full shape but as **nhi** or **nhọ**. Consider these examples;

- 160a) Igó nhi ọ dẹ ghobe mhe nhọ vú amẹ  
 Igó Rel she buy book my Foc fetch water  
 ‘That Igó who bought that my book fetched water’
- b) Igó nhi ọ dẹ ghobe mhe nhi vú amẹ  
 Igó Rel she buy book my Foc fetch water  
 ‘That Igó who bought that my book fetched water’

From the above examples, we discover that **ónhi** the focus marker has strong feature than relative marker in the language, for the marker can focus two constituent at the same time as seen in (160) where both the matrix and the embedded clause are focused at the same time taken the shape ‘nhi’. But whenever it takes the form **nhọ**, it focuses one single constituent as seen in (160a) where only the embedded clause is focused.

Furthermore, Ghòtùò attests two kinds of pronouns emphatic and non-emphatic. Only the emphatic pronouns can be focus, the unemphatic cannot, this is due in part to the features absent in the unemphatic ones. These features [+N], [+emphatic], [+pronominal] and [+referential] are present in emphatic pronouns but not all are available on unemphatic pronouns. So, the structural position for focused element, i.e. Spec FocP is a nominal position or simply put a DP position. Whether the item displays class marker overtly or not, the element will automatically become a noun or a DP. Consider the examples below ;

- 161a) U gbé ofè  
 You kill rat  
 ‘You killed a rat’
- b) Vbévbé (ónhi) u gbé ofè  
 You(Emph) FOC you kill rat  
 ‘YOU killed a rat’
- 162a) Ọ dẹ èdḡè  
 He buy fish  
 ‘He bought a fish’
- b) Nínhí (ónhi) ọ dẹ èdḡè  
 He FOC he buy fish  
 ‘HE bought a fish’

Looking at the examples (161&162 ) we assumed that Spec FocP requires that the item which can be focused must carry [+N] feature which can be marked by the inherent nominal property of the item if it a noun or emphatic pronoun since they have strong [+N] by virtue of being referential.

Furthermore, tone is very significant in Ghòtùò, tense and aspect are marked with tone, tone explicitly plays a significant role in distinguishing the perfective aspect from the imperfective aspect. Both categories are marked with tones with no attachment of any affix. The perfective either present or past, singular or plural is marked with mid tone on the main verb as in (163c, 164c, and 165c) while the imperfective which is categorized into habitual and progressive/continuous whether present or past, singular or plural is marked with low ( ` ) tone on the main verb as well as typified in (163b, 164b and 165b).

- 163a            Ọ    dẹ    ghobè  
                   He buy book  
                   ‘He buys / bought a book’
- b.                Ọ            dẹ            ghobè  
                   He buy(+BE) book  
                   ‘He is/was buying a book’
- c.                Ọ            dẹ            ghobè  
                   He buy(+HAVE) book  
                   ‘He has/had bought a book’
- 164a.           Mha    gbé        ini  
                   We    kill    elephant  
                   ‘We kill/killed an elephant’
- b.                Mha    gbè        ini  
                   We    kill(+BE) elephant  
                   ‘We are/were killing an elephant’
- c.                Mha    gbe        ini  
                   We    kill(+HAVE) elephant  
                   ‘We have/had an elephant’
- 165a.           Igó    dáḷẹ    isùkùù  
                   Igó    go        school  
                   ‘Igó goes/went to school’.
- b.                Igó    dàḷẹ    isùkùù  
                   Igó    go(+BE) school  
                   ‘Igó is/was going to school’.
- c.                Igó    daḷẹ        isùkùù



Igó go(+HAVE) school  
 ‘Igó will go to school’

The inherent tone of most mono-syllabic verb in Ghòtùò is high tone (´), as can be seen from (a) examples. But when tense and aspect the two major properties of verb interact with verb in order to show the tense and aspect then we will have the forms of (b) examples for progressives/continuous and the likes of (c) examples for perfectives/completives. The inherent tone of the verb will be deleted and a new separate tone of either low or mid will replace the deleted tone in order to express the aspectual form of a verb.

Also, only tone marks interrogation in the clause containing PQ, high tone marks the interrogative force. It simply points to the fact that tone plays a significant role in the derivation PQ in Ghòtùò. PQs are headed by an invariable High-Tone QM consistently stranded. It requires a TBU, which is the lexical verb but if the lexical verb is of high tone then it goes to the nominal DP. This is illustrated in the data below.

166a.       Ébè       ó    aghagha  
               Book(pl) the   lose  
               ‘The books are missing’

b.           Ébè       ó    ághagha?  
               Book(pl) the   lose  
               ‘Are the books missing?’

167a.       U       nhẹhẹ   Olú  
               you   know   Olú  
               ‘You know Olú.

b.           U       nhẹhé   Olú?  
               You   know   Olú  
               ‘Do you know Olú?’

168a.       U       mhẹ    Igó  
               You see    Igó  
               ‘You see/saw Igó

- b.                   Ú    mhé  Igó?  
                       You  see  Igó  
                       ‘Have you seen Igó?’

## 6.2 Contributions to Knowledge

Ghòtùò is one of the Edoid Languages the is going into extinction. A work of this kind is a mean of preserving, if not preventing the future of the language. Through the various ways of data collection encouraged the native speakers to keep using the language and also transmitting it to the younger generation.

It was also believed that Ghòtùò has no focus marker but the work revealed that the language has marker, though it is optional. Then, various form that the marker can take when interacts with other functors in the language was also revealed. Ghòtùò will also never allow adjective as NP complement for any syntactic process rather it will relativised the NP before the operation can take place.

Moreso, Wh words in ghòtùò can be preposed to spec C or left in situ and yet result to the same LF output. This study views the ex- situ WH interrogative sentences differs from its in-situ counterparts only pragmatically, i.e. to give emphasis to the preposed element which is in line with the motivation for focusing elements of a sentence.

## 6.3 Limitation and Recommendations

Ghòtùò is a tone language and most of the functional operators is tone. It was a tedious work to gather the data because of the peculiarity of its tone system. So the research was unable to look at all the functional operator and their interaction with the focus marker. It is apparent that tone is a significant functional category in Ghòtùò, so, we recommend that further research should be done on tone so as to determine other syntactic areas where tone is the functor or operator. Moreso, this study only look at focus constructions, further research should look into other syntactic processes in the language, since much has not been done in the language in the area of syntax.

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