A Minimalist Analysis of Relative Clauses in the Ifẹ̀ Dialect of Yorùbá

Emmanuel Ọmọniyì Ọlańrewájú
olanrewaju.emmanuel@oouagoiwoye.edu.ng
Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0714-1255

Abstract

A considerable amount of scholarly works have been carried out on the syntax of relativisation in Yorùbá but with little attention paid to how the Ifẹ̀ dialect forms its relative clauses. This paper therefore, investigates the syntax of relative constructions in the Ifẹ̀ dialect detailing the strategies employed for them. Ten native speakers aged 60 years and above were purposively selected for structured oral interview based on their proficiency. Data were subjected to syntactic analysis using the Minimalist Program. The Ifẹ̀ dialect operates "kí" as its relative marker, this is optionally dropped. When the dialect stacks two or more relative clauses in a complex sentence it optionally drops only the first relative marker, others are always visible to the PF interface. The dialect operates Head Raising Analysis (HRA) whereby the relativised argument DPs are copied to the clause left peripheral position to check the [+Rel] feature on the Rel^0. Relativisable constituents are subject DPs, object DPs (comprising direct objects, objects in serial verb constructions and prepositional objects) genitive DPs and prepositional complements. Relativising a VP/predicate, the dialect either externally merges the nominalised form of a verb as the specifier of the RelP or lexicalises the [+nominal] feature copied from the main verb at the spec RelP. The Ifẹ̀ dialect exhibits some dialectal variations lexically and structurally.

Keywords: Ifẹ̀ Dialect, Head Raising Analysis, Minimalist Program, Relativisable Constituents, Relative Clauses in Yorùbá

1.   Introduction

Yorùbá dialects began to attract the interest of language scholars over the last two decades, and it still merits attention (Ọláńrewájú, 2022a). In fact, Awóbùlúyì (1998) urged Yorùbá scholars to explore Yorùbá dialects. As remarked by Olúmúyìwá (2006, p. 105), "any endeavour in line with Awóbùlúyì's (1998) appeal will invariably have immediate and long-term benefits for Yorùbá studies, especially on things that every dialect can teach us about the structure of standard Yorùbá". Many of the lexical and grammatical items operated in standard Yorubá take their sources from its dialects. In line with Awóbùlúyì's (1998) positions, it is believed that analysis of the syntax of relative clauses in the Ifẹ̀ dialect of Yorùbá will reveal many technicalities underlying the categorial status of both relative and focus constructions in Yorùbá. Relative clauses are used to qualify DPs (e.g., Bámgbóṣé, 1990; Laurel, 2000; Óláńrewájú, 2007).

According to Abney (1987), in the DP hypothesis, a relative clause is adjoined to a noun phrase (NP) within a determiner phrase (DP). Generally, relative clauses are classified into two main types: restrictive and non-restrictive (appositive) relative clauses (e.g., Jackendoff, 1977; Laurel, 2000). To them, the two types are distinctively different both in syntactic and semantic respects. A post-nominal or head-initial-relative language allows a head noun to precede the relative clause while prenominal or head-final relative languages do otherwise. English and Yorùbá belong to this second category unlike Mandarin which operates the first type (Wen, 2020). Considering the relationship that holds between the head noun and its relative clause, the existing literature in natural language identify Head External Analysis (HEA) and Head Raising Analysis (HRA). In HEA, the head noun is generated outside the restricting clause, indicating that there is no relationship between a head noun and the relative clause it precedes (Chomsky, 1977; Cinque, 2003; Jackendoff, 1977; Wen, 2020). In HRA, the head noun is base-generated within the restricting clause before it is copied to the clause left peripheral position (Kayne, 1994; Mun, 1994). Yorùbá and some other members of Kwa family use the head raising strategy.

This paper comprises four sections. Section one discusses the introduction while section two reviews existing literature, particularly the categorial status of relative and focus constructions in Yorùbá. A detailed analysis of the syntax of relative clauses is done in section three, and the concluding remarks are presented in section four.

2.   Comments on the Categorial Status of Relative and Focus Constructions in Yorùbá

There are two different opinions on the categorial status of focus constructions in Yorùbá. Extant works, such as Owólabi (1983 1987, 1989), Yusuf (1990) and Ọláńrewájú (2007), classify them as sentences, while Awobùlúyì (1992, 2013) classifies them as noun phrases. Awobùlúyì claims that apart from the fact that both the so-called topical qualifiers (focus constructions) and relative clauses follow the same transformational processes, they are also similar in other identifiable respects. He, therefore, proposes an alternative theory dubbed "The Insertion Theory" as a possible means to almost satisfactorily account for relative clauses. Awobùlúyì's principal point in support of his argument is based on the occurrence of both focus and relative constructions as complements of the verb *ṣe*, as shown in the following examples:

(1) a. Kìí ṣe *ìwé ni mo rà*.
NEG be book FOC I buy
'It was not a book I bought.'

b. Kìí ṣe *ìwé   tí mo rà*.
NEG be book REL I buy
'It was not the book I bought.'

(Awóbùlúyì, 1978, p. 94)

As claimed in some extant literature, it is equally important to note that both focus and relative constructions still exhibit some identifiable dissimilarities (e.g. Owólabí, 1983, 1989; Ọláńrewajú, 2007, 2022a). Suffice to note that the underlined expression in 1a is not structurally equivalent to its 1b counterpart as also seen in examples 2a to 2b:

(2) a. Èyí$_i$ kìí ṣe *iwé tí mo rà$_i$*.
This NEG be book REL I buy
'This was not the book I bought.'

b. *Èyí$_i$ kìí ṣe *iwé ni   mo rà$_i$*.
This NEG   be book FOC I buy   (Ọláńrewajú, 2024, p. 73)

c. Èyí ni ọmọ tí   mo rí.
This FOC child REL I   see
'This was the child I saw.'

d.　　*Èyí ti　ọmọ tí mo rí.
　　　This REL child REL I　see

Unlike 2a, example 2b is ill-formed because the italicised expression *(iwé　ni　mo rà)* cannot be co-indexed with the subject DP *èyí*, consequent upon their different categorial status. Also, example 2d is meaningless because it does not have a predicate unlike 2c. Therefore, the underlined expression in 1b, unlike its focus construction counterpart in 1a, is a phrasal category - it is not sentential. It is equally important to abstract from discussing the syntactic dissimilarities between examples 1a and 1b types to investigate some other underlying technicalities that factor the occurrence of both *ìwé ni mo rà* and *ìwé tí mo rà* as the complements of the verb *ṣe* in these two examples.

Corroborating the veracity of the assertion that relative and focus constructions are of different categorial status, this work presents the following syntactic evidence:

i.　　A subject DP of the higher clause is always not visible to the PF interface when a focus construction occurs as the complement of *ṣe,* unlike its relative construction counterpart.　Let us consider the following examples:

(3)　　a.　　*Ìyẹn kìí ṣe aṣọ ni　mo fẹ́.
　　　　　That NEG be cloth FOC I　want

　　　b.　　Ìyẹn kìí　ṣe aṣọ tí　mo fẹ́.
　　　　　That　NEG　be cloth REL I　want
　　　　　'That is not the cloth I want.'

　　　c.　　?Ìyẹn kìí　ṣe pé　aṣọ　ni　mo fẹ́.
　　　　　　That NEG be that　cloth FOC I　want

　　　d.　　*Ìyẹn kìí　ṣe pé aṣọ　tí　mo fẹ́.
　　　　　　That　NEG be that cloth REL I want

　　　e.　　*Ìyẹn kìí　ṣe pé　aṣọ　mi.
　　　　　　That　NEG be that　cloth　me

　　　f.　　Ìyẹn kìí　ṣe aṣọ　mi.
　　　　　That NEG be　cloth me
　　　　　'That is not my cloth.'

Example 3a is ill-formed because the verb *ṣe* sub-categorises a clausal complement. In 3b and 3f, *ṣe* takes a DP complement, and therefore, the constructions are grammatical. In addition, 3c is acceptable because the clausal complement has been nominalised by *pé* (a nominaliser), while 3d and 3e are ill-formed. A complementiser is never used to nominalise a DP in Yorùbá. The implication borne out of this is that whenever the spec TP of a higher clause is overtly realised, the predicate never sub-categorises a clausal complement, otherwise the embedded clause is nominalised by a complementiser. The example in 4 is ill-formed, unlike the one in 5.

(4)   *Ọlá   kò   fẹ́ [TP ọmọ náà wá].
        Ọlá   NEG want child the come

(5)   Ọlá kò   fẹ́   kí   ọmọ náà   wá.
       Ọlá NEG want that   child the come
       'Ọlá did not want the child to come.'

The restricting clause in 4 needs to be nominalised by the complementiser *kí* "that" as shown in 5.

ii. The occurrence of a relative construction in a complex sentence stacked with other qualifiers is another empirical evidence that depicts a structural difference between relative and focus constructions (Ọláńrewáju, 2022a, 2024). This is shown in the examples in 6a and 6b

(6)   a.   Ilé   tí   Olú kọ́ yìí náà ni   ó ń gbé.
             House REL Olú build this the FOC he is live
             'Olú lives in the same house he built.'

       b.   ?Ilé   ni   Olú kọ́ yìí náà ti   ó ń gbé.
             House FOC Olú build this the that he is live

Yorùbá speakers never use a sentence like 6b.

iii.   Unlike relative clauses, focus constructions and other clausal complements can be nominalised by complementisers. Let us consider the following examples:

(7)   a.   A gbọ́ pé Olú ni   ó   lọ.
                  We hear that Olu FOC RES go
                  'We heard that OLU went.'

        b.   A   ní   kí   Olú lọ.
                  We say that Olú go
                  'We said Olú should go.'

        c.   A gbọ́ pé   Olú ti   lọ
                  We hear that   Olú have go
                  'We heard that Olú has gone.'

        d.   *A gbọ́ pé Olú ti   ó   lọ.
                  We hear that Olú REL RES gone.'

        e.   *A   mọ̀ pé Olú ti   ó   lọ.
                  We know that Olú REL RES go

        f.   A   rí aṣọ tí ó rà.
                  We see cloth REL he buy
                  'We saw the cloth he bought.'

Examples 7d to 7e are ill-formed because a complementiser does not head a determiner phrase (DP), it only nominalises a higher category like a sentence. Examples 7a to 7c have nominalised clausal complements, where 7a has a restricting focus construction while 7b to 7c have simple declarative sentences. The implication borne out of these examples is that a relative clause with the noun it qualifies is already a DP unlike a focus construction.

iv.   Additionally, Awobùlúyì (1992, 2013) does not adequately account for the reasons why a focus construction does not occur as a clausal complement of other verbs in Yorùbá. Take for instance, the verbs *rí* 'see' and *kà* 'read', never subcategorise focus constructions as clausal complements as shown in the following examples:

(8)   a.   *Ọlá rí aṣọ ni mo rà.
                  Ọlá see cloth FOC I buy

        b.   Ọlá ri pe aṣọ ni mo rà.
                  Ọlá see that cloth FOC I buy
                  'Ọlá saw that I bought A CLOTH.'

      c.   Ọlá rí   aṣọ   tí   mo rà.
                Ọlá see cloth REL I   buy
                'Ọlá saw the cloth I bought.'

      d.   Ọlá kà   ìwé   tí   mo rà.
                Ọlá read book REL I   buy
                'Ọlá read the book I bought.'

      e.   *Ọlá kà   ìwé   ni   mo rà.
                 Ọlá read book FOC I   buy

Apart from *ṣe*, 'be' identified by Awobùlúyì (1992, 2013), *jẹ́* 'be' is another lexical verb that exhibits this similar (syntactic) behaviour in the grammar of Yorùbá (Ọlańrewájú, 2022a). Let us consider the examples in 9:

  (9)   a.   Bí ó bá   jẹ́/ṣe owó   ni   o   fẹ́ ...
               If it PRM be money FOC you want
               'If it was money you wanted ...'

        b.   Bí ó bá   jẹ́/ṣe ilé   ni   o   fẹ́ ...
               If it PRM be house FOC you want
               'If it was a house you wanted ...'

Based on their feature properties, *ṣe ,jẹ́* and the copula *ni*, all meaning 'be', are closely related. Perhaps this permits *ṣe* and *jẹ́* to subcategorise focus constructions as clausal complements. From the evidence discussed, it is clear that the extant literature in support of Awóbùlúyì's (1992, 2013) position still needs more data for the sake of clarity. His discussion on the issue is characterised by a survey of limited data as Yusuf (1990) rightly remarks.

3. Strategies of Relativisation in the Ifẹ̀ Dialect

The Ifẹ̀ dialect employs the HRA just like the standard dialect, that is, a process whereby the relativised constituent is copied to the clause left peripheral position to check the [+Rel] feature on the Rel[0] through the specifier and head agreement. The dialect uses *kí* as the relative marker in the place of *tí* that the standard dialect (Yorùbá) uses. Ifẹ̀ optionally drops the relative marker. Some other dialects classified under Central Yorùbá dialects also share this similar feature (Olúmúyìwá, 2006; Olańrewájú, 2007).

(10)   a   Olú kí   mo rí.
                  Olu REL I   see
                  'Olú that I saw.'

       b.   Olú ø mo rí
                  Olu   I see
                  'Olú that I saw'

       c.   Ìghan akẹ́kòọ̀ kí   ó   sùn
                  They student REL RES sleep
                  'The students that slept'

       d.   Ìghan akẹ́kòọ̀ ø ó   kí ti lọ.
                  They student   he greet have go
                  'The students he greeted have gone.'

       e.   Olú hún ìghan ø ó rí.
                  Olú give they   he see
                  'Olú gave those he saw.'

       f.   Yèyé Òjó jẹ ẹja ø ọ́   rà.
                  Mother Òjó eat fish   she buy
                  'Òjó's mother ate the fish she bought.'

The relative marker *kí* is not visible to the FP interface in each of the examples 10b and 10d to 10f. The entire relative clause, that is, the restricting clause is headed by the Rel^0 *kí* or its abstract form, and therefore, it qualifies the preceding noun in each of the examples above (Ajíbóyè, 2005; Awóbùlúyì, 1978, 2013; Bámgbóṣé, 1990; Olańrewájú, 2007). The examples in 10a to 10c are determiner phrases (DPs) while 10d-f are complete sentences. Therefore, in line with Kayne (1994) and Ajíbóyè (2005), identifying a relative clause as a complement of the (abstract) D^0, this paper proposes the following as the structure for a relativised DP in Ifẹ̀, where the entire RelP is attracted to the spec DP to check the [+nominal] feature on the abstract D^0 through the specifier and head agreement.

(11)
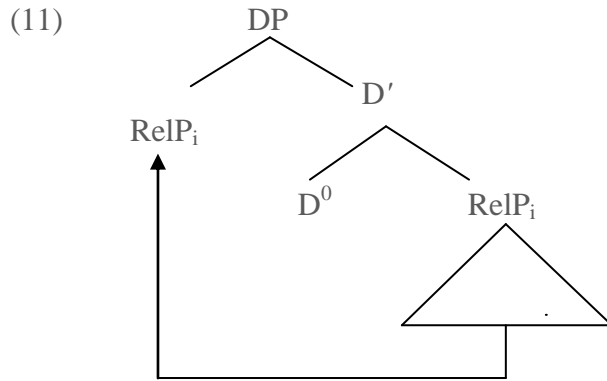
3.1   Argument Positions Accessible to Relativisation in Ifẹ̀

The argument position accessible to relativisation in Ifẹ̀ are: Subject DP, direct object DP, prepositional object DP and genitive DP.

i.   Subject DP

A subject DP is a noun, pronoun or DP that performs the action or acts upon the verb in a clause. Let us consider these examples:

(12)   a.   Gbogbo òbí   kí   ọ́   ghá   sí ilé   ìwé
              All   parent REL RES come to house book
              'All the parents that came to school.'

        b.   Gbogbo òbí   ọ́   ghá   sí ilé   ìwé
              All   parent   RES come to house book
              'All the parents that came to school.'

(13)   a.   Ìghan akẹ́kọ̀ọ́ kí   ọ́   ka   ìwé righan
              They student REL RES read book they
              'The students that read their books.'

        b.   Ìghan akẹ́kọ̀ọ́ ó   ṣe   ìdánwò
              They student RES do   examination
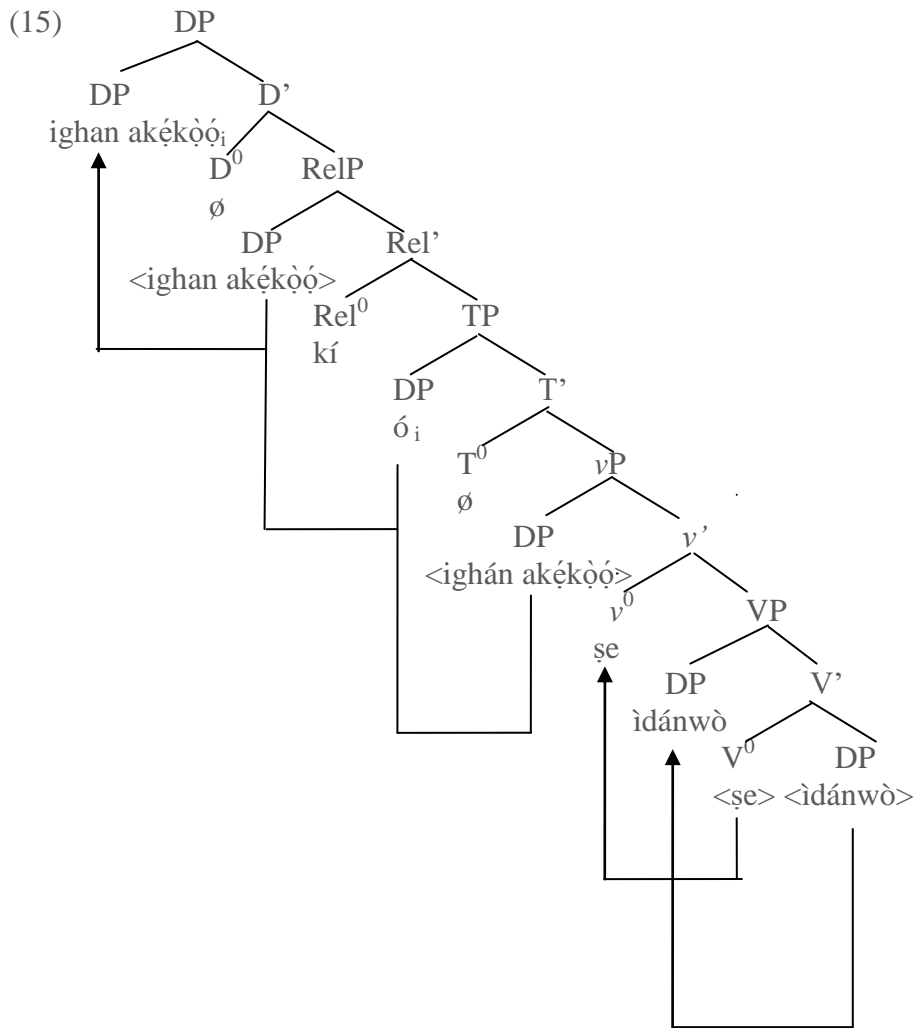   'The students that wrote the examination.'

The relative marker is not visible to the PF interface in 12a and 13a unlike 12b and 13b. Also, the spec TPs of the restricting clauses are occupied by resumptive pronouns in 12 and 13 after Operation Copy and Delete had been applied on the relativised (subject) DPs to license each of

these derivations from a crash. A spec TP of a restricting clause is never left empty in the dialect (Ọlánrewajú, 2022a). In 13b phrase marked as 14, the entire RelP comprising the relativised noun and the restricting clause is attracted to the clause left peripheral position to check the [+EF, nominal] on the D^0. This is in line with the Phase Impenetrability Condition (PIC).

An alternative way is to assume that only the relativised DP *ìghan akẹ́kọ̀ọ́* 'the students' in 14 is visible to the probe (the abstract D^0). With this, it is licensed from the Phase Impenetrability Condition (PIC).

(14)
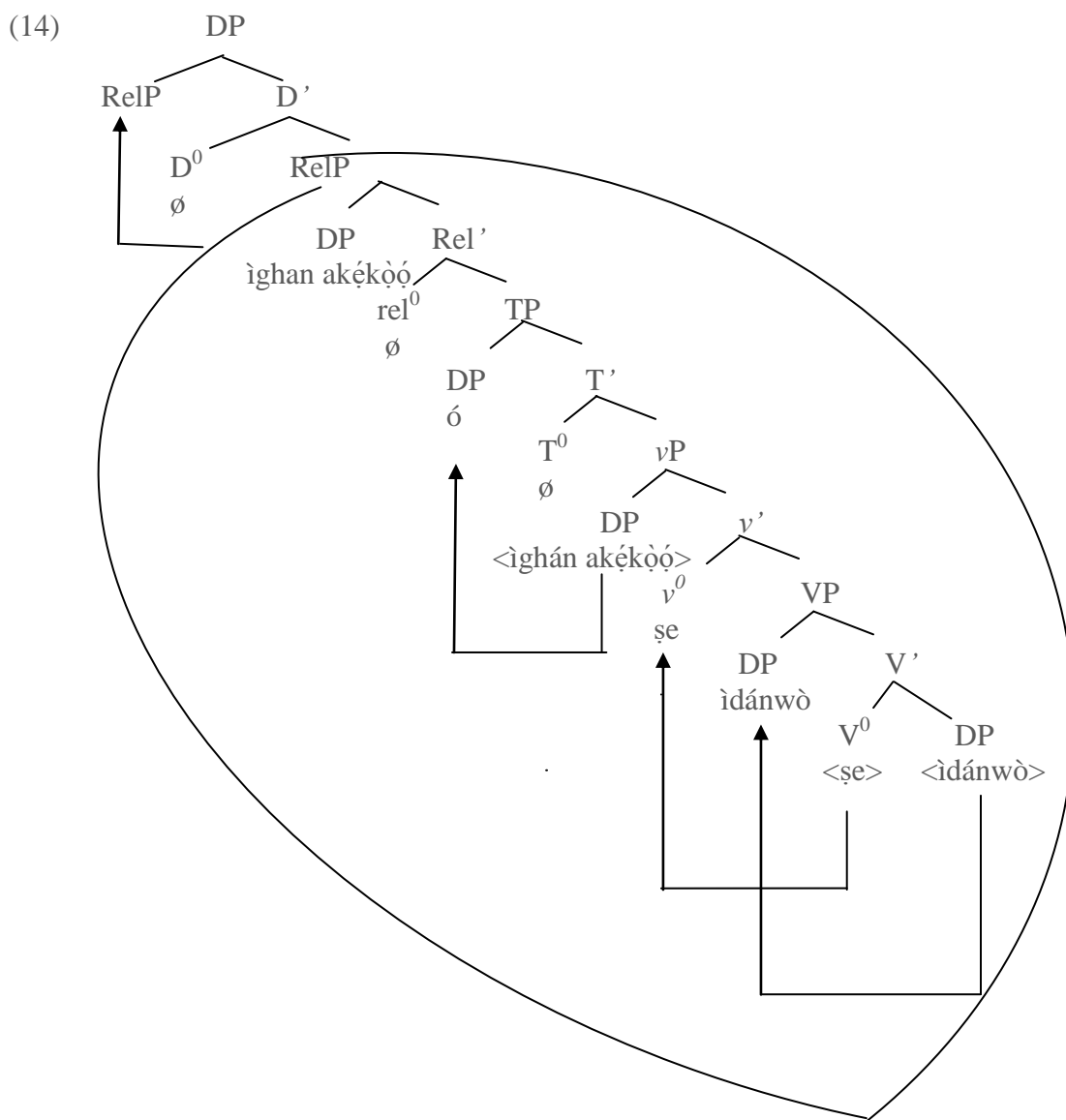
Consequent upon this, only the relativised constituent, *ìghan akẹ́kọ̀ọ́* 'the students,' is copied to the spec RelP before it is finally copied to the clause left peripheral position to check the [+EF, nominal] on the D^0 as shown in 15. The former option is adopted in this paper for the sake of descriptive adequacy.

(15)

DP
├── DP
│   └── ighan akẹ́kọ̀ọ́ᵢ
└── D'
    ├── D^0
    │   └── ø
    └── RelP
        ├── DP
        │   └── <ighan akẹ́kọ̀ọ́>
        └── Rel'
            ├── Rel^0
            │   └── kí
            └── TP
                ├── DP
                │   └── ó ᵢ
                └── T'
                    ├── T^0
                    │   └── ø
                    └── vP
                        ├── DP
                        │   └── <ighán akẹ́kọ̀ọ́>
                        └── v'
                            ├── v^0
                            │   └── ṣe
                            └── VP
                                ├── DP
                                │   └── ìdánwò
                                └── V'
                                    ├── V^0
                                    │   └── <ṣe>
                                    └── DP
                                        └── <ìdánwò>
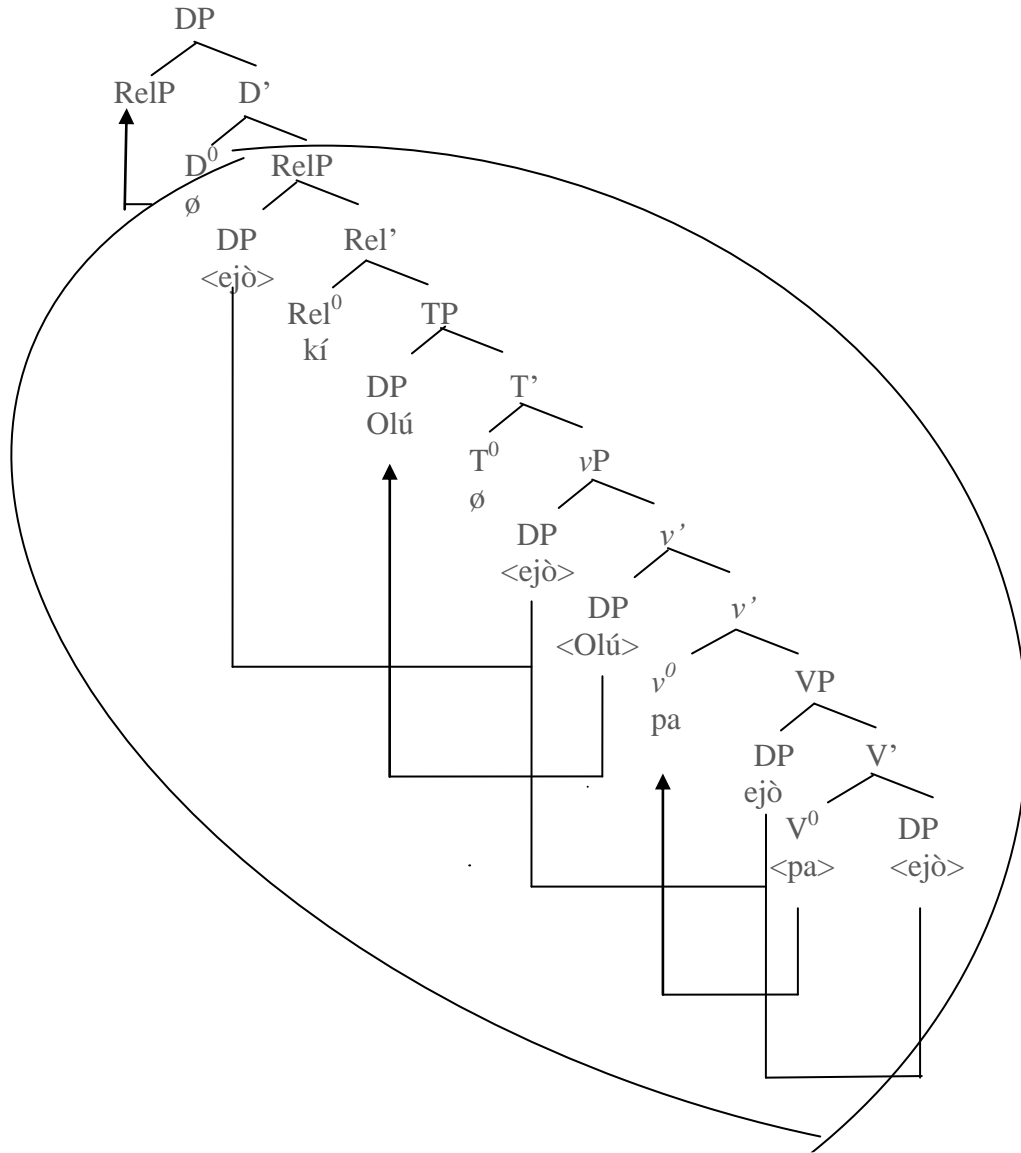
ii.   Object DP

A DP object could be a direct object of a transitive verb, an object in a serial verb construction or an object of a preposition. A direct object of a transitive verb is a noun, pronoun or a DP that receives the action performed by the subject of a clause. Let us consider examples 16a and 16b:

(16)   a.   Ìwé   (kí)   akẹ́kòọ́   rà
               Book REL student buy
               'The book that a student bought.'

       b.   Ejo   (kí)   Olú   pa
               Snake REL   Olú   kill
               'The snake that Olú killed.'

The direct object DP *ejò* 'snake' in 16b is attracted to the spec RelP through the outer vP as shown in the tree diagram 17. The example in 16a also shares the similar process of derivation.

(17)

```
                        DP
                   ┌────┴────┐
                 RelP       D'
                        ┌────┴────┐
                       D⁰        RelP
                       ø     ┌────┴────┐
                            DP        Rel'
                          <ejò>   ┌────┴────┐
                                Rel⁰        TP
                                 kí     ┌────┴────┐
                                       DP        T'
                                      Olú    ┌────┴────┐
                                            T⁰        vP
                                            ø     ┌────┴────┐
                                                 DP        v'
                                               <ejò>   ┌────┴────┐
                                                      DP        v'
                                                    <Olú>   ┌────┴────┐
                                                           v⁰        VP
                                                           pa    ┌────┴────┐
                                                                DP        V'
                                                               ejò    ┌────┴────┐
                                                                     V⁰        DP
                                                                    <pa>      <ejò>
```

The tree diagram in 17 is derived as follows: *Ejò* 'snake' (the direct object DP) is merged with the transitive verb *pa* 'kill' to project the V-bar (V') in line with the constituent selection requirement of the verb. After this, the direct object DP *ejò* 'snake' is copied to the specifier position of the verb phrase (VP) by *Operation Copy and Delete* to have its [+case] feature valued. The derivation proceeds by merging the abstract performative light verb-head (v^0) with the verb phrase (VP) to project the *v*-bar (*v*') while the strong verb feature (*v*F) on the light v^0 attracts the transitive verb *pa* 'kill' to adjoin to itself. Then, the subject DP *Olú* is externally merged at the specifier position of the inner verb phrase (inner spec *v*P) in line with the Predicate-Internal Subject Hypothesis (PISH) while the direct object DP *ejò* 'snake' is copied to the specifier position of the outer light

verb phrase. The derivation in 17 still proceeds by merging the abstract tense-head (T^0) with the *v*P to project the T-bar (T'). The abstract T^0 as a probe attracts the subject DP *Olú* to the spec TP to value its unvalued [+EPP, case] feature. After this, the relative marker *(kí)* externally merges with the TP to project the Rel-bar. The Rel^0 *(kí)* as a potential probe searches its c-command domain and attracts the direct object DP *ejò* 'snake' to the spec RelP to value its unvalued [+nominal, Rel] feature. Finally, the abstract D^0 merges with the RelP to project the D-bar. The abstract D^0 probes the entire RelP to the spec DP to value its unvalued [+ nominal, EF] (feature).

An object DP in a serial verb construction can also be relativised in Ife as obtainable in Yorùbá, the standard dialect. In 18b, 19b and 20b, the object DPs are relativised in serial verb constructions. The relativised constituent in 19b is very similar to what Comrie and Keenan (1979) refer to as an object of comparison.

(18) a.   Olú làa gbé àga ghá.
              Olú go carry chair come
              'Olú went to carry (get) a chair.'

        b.   Àga kí Olú làa gbé ghá.
              Chair REL Olú go carry come
              'The chair that Olú went to carry (bring)'

(19) a.   Oyè ju Bádé lọ.
              Oye pass Bade go
              'Oyè is older than Bádé.'

.   b.   Bádé kí Oyè jù lọ
              Bádé REL Oyè pass go
              'Bade that Oyè is older than'

(20) a.   Olú mú ìwé ko Kọ́lá.
              Olú give book meet Kọ́lá
              'Olú gave Kọ́lá a book.'

        b.   Kọ́lá kí Olú mú ìwé kò
              Kọ́lá REL Olú give book meet
              'Kọ́lá that Olú gave a book'

iii. Object DP of a preposition

The following examples depict how object DPs in prepositional complements are relativised in Ifẹ̀.

(21) a. Olú fi   owó mi   sí àpò.
Olú put money me   to pocket
'Olú kept my money in the pocket.'

b. Àpò   kí Olú fi   owó mi sí
Pocket REL Olú put money me to
'The pocket where Olú kept my money'

(22) a. Bíọ́lá ghà   ní ilú   ìbàdàn.
Bíọ́lá be   at town Ìbàdàn
'Bíọ́lá is in Ìbàdàn town.'

b. (Ní) ìlú   ìbàdàn kí   Bíọ́lá ghà.
(At) town   Ìbàdàn REL Bíọ́lá be
'Ìbàdàn town where Bíọ́lá stays'

(23) a. Olú ti   ti   Iléṣà ghá.
Olú has from Iléṣà come
'Olú has come from Iléṣà.'

b. Iléṣà kí   Olú ti   ghá
Iléṣà REL Olú has   come
'Iléṣà, where Olú came from'

It is discovered that only the preposition *sí* is left orphaned as shown in 21b. Therefore, pied-piping it alongside the relativised constituent would cause the derivation to crash. The prepositions *ni* and *ti* always get deleted as shown in 22b and 23b. In 22b the prepositional head *ní* is visible only to the PF interface and not the LF level of representation as evident in the English gloss. Although some native speakers still realise the prepositional head *ni* at the spec RelP, it is, however, deleted in line with the Principle of Economy (of Effort).

iv. Genitive DP

A possessor DP with its genitive qualifier (complement) can function as a subject of a sentence and object of a transitive verb or a transitive preposition. It is discovered that extraction of constituent is not allowed in a genitive DP in Yorùbá as claimed in the existing literature (see Arókoyọ̀, 2013; Ọláńrewájú, 2022a). Under a minimalist assumption, the entire relativised DP is

attracted to the clause left peripheral position. A relativised constituent is also externally merged at the clause left peripheral position when a genitive DP comprises a possessum with the possessive pronoun *rẹ̀* as its complement as shown in 24b. The examples in 24a to 24b show how genitive DPs are relativised in Ifẹ̀:

(24) a. [DP RelPj [D' ø [RelPj Okùn bàtài [Rel' kí [TP ọ́i [T' ø[vP <okùn bàtà>[v' já [vP
            Lace shoe   REL RES   cut
                                    <okùn bàtà> [v' <já>]]]]]]]]]].
      'The shoe lace that was cut'

   b. [DP RelPj [D'ø [RelPj Kúnléi [Rel' kí [TP Olú [T' ø[vP <Olú>[v' rí [vP ìyàó rẹ̀i
            Kúnlé   REL   Olú   see wife his
                                [v' <rí>[DP <ìyàó rẹ̀>?]]]]]]]]]]]
      'Kúnlé that Olú saw his wife'

In 24a, the Operation Copy and Delete is applied on the relativised DP (genitive phrase) occupying the subject position. Therefore, it is attracted to the spec RelP while the resumptive pronoun *ọ́* is selected from the numeration and merged at the subject position, that is, the spec TP to save the derivation from a crash. The subject position is always visible to the PF interface in the dialect. This principle is captured by the Subject Condition Constraint (SCC) under the previous models of generative syntax (see Mũller, 2005; Ndimele, 1992). In 24b, the relativised constituent *Kúnlé* enters the derivation at the spec RelP to check the [+ nominal, Rel] feature on the Rel[0] through the specifier and head agreement. The relativised item *Kúnlé* (the possessor) is co-indexed with the possessive pronoun *rẹ̀* 'his'. The dialect does not allow extraction from a genitive DP as shown in the ill-formedness of the example in 25. This is captured under the Complex Noun Phrase Constraint in the previous models of generative syntax.

25) *[DP RelPi [RelPi Ìyàó   kí [TP Olú rí [vP <ìyàó> Ayọ̀]]]]
            Wife   REL Olú see   Ayọ̀

The example in 26a depicts how a relativised genitive DP functioning as a prepositional object is raised to the clause left peripheral position whereby the preposition *si* 'to' is left stranded. Unlike 26a, the relativised constituent *Òjó* enters the derivation at the spec RelP in 26b. Example 26c) is ill-formed because the relativised constituent is extracted from a genitive DP (Ajíbóyè, 2005; Arókoyọ̀, 2013).

(26) a. Yèyé Òjó kí Bọ́lá ju   ọọ́ sí ____
          Mother Ojó REL Bọ́lá throw hand   to
          'Òjó's mother that Bíọ́lá waved.'

      b   Òjó kí   Bọ́lá ju ọọ́ sí yèyé   rẹ̀
          Ojó REL Bọ́lá throw hand to mother his
          'Òjó that Bíọ́lá waved his mother'

      c. *Yèyé   kí Bọ́lá ju   ọọ́ sí ____ Òjó
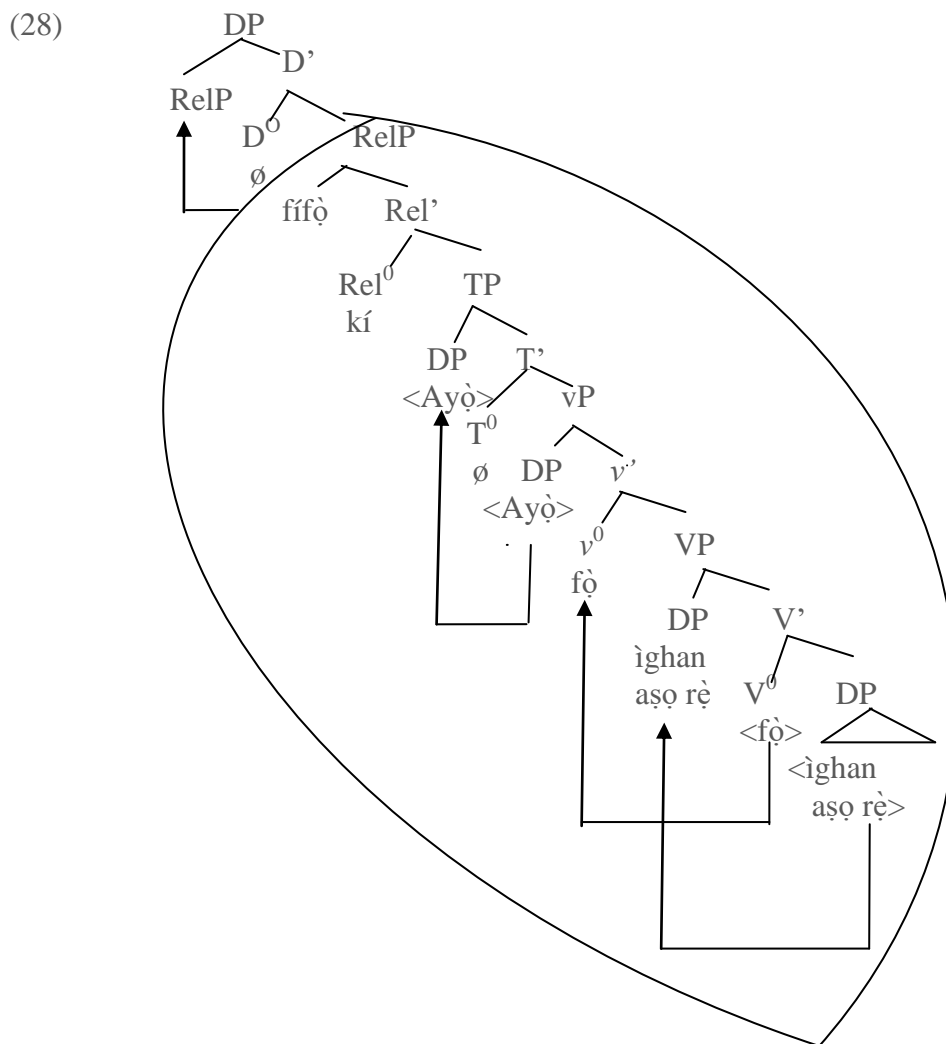   Mother REL Bọ́lá throw hand to   Òjó

3.2   Predicate/VP Relativisation

A lexical verb or an entire predicate is also relativisable in Ifẹ̀. The specifier position of a relative construction (spec, RelP) only hosts constituents with [+nominal] feature in Yorùbá (Ìlọ̀rí, 2010; Ọláògún, 2016). Under minimalist assumption, two methods are identified for VP/predicate relativisation in Ifẹ̀:

(i)   following Óláògún (2016) and Ọláńrewájú (2022a), the [+nominal] feature is copied from the verb and lexicalised at the spec RelP.

(ii) the relativised item, that is, the nominalised form of the verb enters the derivation at the spec RelP before the entire RelP is finally probed to the specifier position of the DP for feature valuation. Let us consider the following examples:

(27) a. Lílọ   kí Olú lọ
          Going REL Olú go
          'Olú's going.'

      b. Fífọ̀   kí Ayọ̀ fọ ighan   aṣọ rẹ̀
          Washing REL Ayọ̀ wash they   cloth his
          'Washing his clothes by Ayo.'

The second method is adopted in this work because it upholds the Principle of Economy. Therefore, 27b is phrase-marked as 28 for the purpose of more clarity. *Fífọ̀* 'washing,' the nominalised verb, enters the derivation at the spec RelP before the entire RelP is copied to the spec DP to check the [+nominal and EF] (feature) on the D^0 in 28.

(28)

DP
D'
RelP
D⁰
ø
RelP
fífɔ̀   Rel'
Rel⁰   TP
kí
DP   T'
<Ayɔ̀>   vP
T⁰
ø   DP   v'
<Ayɔ̀>
v⁰   VP
fɔ̀
DP   V'
ìghan
aṣọ rẹ̀   V⁰   DP
<fɔ̀>
<ìghan
aṣọ rẹ̀>

3.3   Relativisation of Adverbs

Adverbs are also referred to as post-modifiers (Awóbùlùyi, 1978). Awóbùlùyi (2013) disregards items like *kíákíá*, *wéréwéré*; *díẹ̀díẹ́* and so on as adverbs. He, therefore, identifies them as nouns. This study does not lay an emphasis on the categorial status of these words. Examples are considered from ideophones which are categorised as adverbs in Yorùbá and its dialects (Awóyalé, 1989).

(29) a. [DP RelPi [D' ø [RelPi Gbì [Rel' kí [TP ìbọn ọ̀hún [T'ø [vP < ìbọn ọ̀hún >
         NOM REL gun that
     [v' dún [VP < ìbọn ọ̀hún > [v' <dún>]]]]]]]]]].
      sound
    'The *gbì* sound produced by that gun'

  b. [DP RelPi [D' ø [RelPi Kẹ̀ù [Rel' kí [TP ìbọn ọ̀hún [T'ø [vP < ìbọn ọ̀hún >
         NOM REL gun that
   [v' ró [VP < ìbọn ọ̀hún > [v' <ró>]]]]]]]]]]].
    sound
    'The *kẹ̀ù* sound produced from that gun'

b. [DP RelPi [D' ø [RelPi Kẹ̀ù [Rel' kí [TP ìbọn ọ̀hún [T'ø [vP < ìbọn ọ̀hún >
        NOM REL gun that
   [v' ró [VP < ìbọn ọ̀hún > [v' <ró>]]]]]]]]]]].
    sound
    'The *kẹ̀ù* sound produced from that gun'

In 29a and 29b, each of the relativised constituents *gbì* and *kẹ̀ù* are externally merged at the spec RelP to check the unvalued [+Rel, EF] (feature) on the Rel^0 through the specifier and head agreement before the entire RelP is copied and moved to the specifier position of the D^0. *Gbì* and *kẹ̀ù* are nominalised constituents. They have different feature properties from their adverbial counterparts (post-modifiers) in 30a and 30b:

(30) a. [TP Ìbọn ọ̀hún ró/dún gbì]
    Vehicle the sound PSM
    'The gun produced *gbì* sound.'

  b. [TP Ìbọn ọ̀hún ró/dún kẹ̀ù].
    Vehicle the sound PSM
    'The gun produced *kẹ̀ù* sound.'

3.4 Relativisation of Long Pronouns

Long pronouns are identified as emphatic pronouns in some extant works on Yorùbá grammar (Ajíbóyè, 2005; Ilọ̀rí, 2010). Let us consider the following examples on how the Ifẹ̀ dialect relativises its long proouns.

(31) a.[DP RelPᵢ [RelPi Èmi [Rel' kí [EmphP <èmi> [Emph' ø [TP mo pè àbúrò mi]]]]]].
                 I   REL   I call younger me
           'I that called my younger one.'

    b.[DP RelPᵢ [RelP Èmi ø [EmphP <èmi> [TP bàbá mi [vP <èmi> [v'<bàbá mi> pè [VP <èmi>
              I   father me   call

                                                   <pè> <èmi>]]]]]]].
          'I that was called by my father.'

3.5 Stacking of Relative Clauses in Ifẹ̀

Two or more relative clauses can be stacked in Ifẹ̀ just like the standard dialect. Whenever this occurs, the first embedded clause optionally drops its relative marker while others have theirs visible to the PF interface as shown in the following examples.

(32)   a.   [TP Akẹ́kòọ́ᵢ ø ọ́ᵢ ra ìwé rẹ̀, kí ọ́ᵢ kà á ṣe dáadáa].
                Student   RES buy book his REL RES read it do good
                'The student that bought and read his book performed very well.'

         b.   [TP Ọdẹᵢ ø ọ́ᵢ pa ejò, kí ọ́ᵢ sè é, kí ọ́ᵢ jẹ ẹ́ ti kú].
                Hunter   he kill snake, RES he cook it, REL RES eat it has died
   'The hunter that killed, cooked and ate a snake is dead.'

3.6 Focusing a Relative Clause

A relative phrase, that is a restricting relative clause with the head noun it qualifies, can be focused in Ifẹ̀. A DP with its embedded relative clause occupies an argument position. Therefore, it can be focused just like other constituents specified [+nominal] feature. Let us consider the following example.

(33)   a.   Ọdẹ kí ọ́ pa ejò, kí ọ́ jẹ ẹ́ ni ọ́ kú.
                Hunter REL RES kill snake, REL RES eat it FOC RES die
                'THE HUNTER THAT KILLED AND ATE A SNAKE died.'

b.   Akekòọ́ kí   ọ́   ka ìwé rẹ̀ ni   olùkọ́ yìn.
Student REL RES read book his FOC teacher praise
'The teacher commended THE STUDENT WHO READ HIS BOOK.'

The two relative clauses stacked in 33a, *kí ọ́ pa ejò* 'that killed a snake'and *kí ọ́ jẹ ẹ́* 'that ate it,' qualify the DP *ọdẹ* 'hunter'. The example in 33b has an embedded relative qualifier. The tree diagram in 34 is a better illustration of 33b.
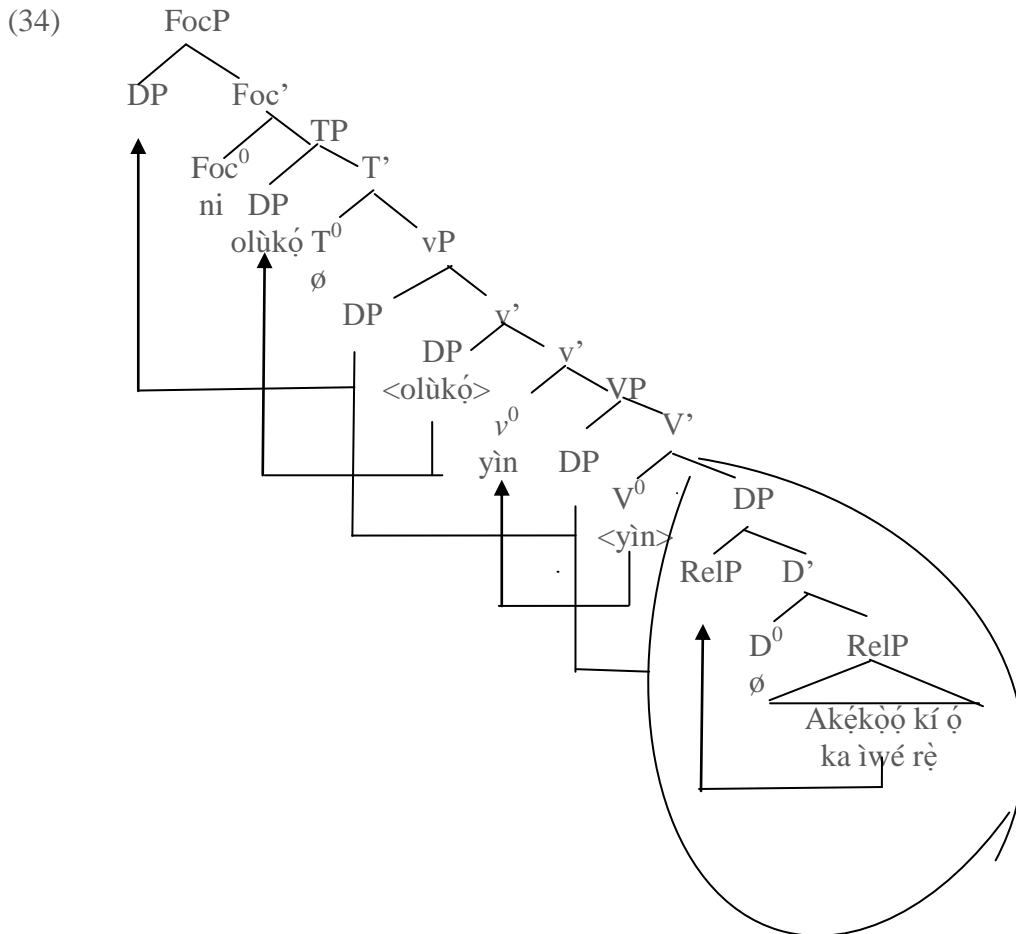
In 34, the entire DP, that is, the relative clause with the head noun it qualifies is merged with the lexical verb *yin* 'praise' to satisfy the c-selection requirement of the verb, hence, it forms the V-bar. The DP is copied to the spec VP to check the [+case] feature on the V^0. The derivation proceeds by externally merging the performative light verb with the VP to project the V-bar. The strong *v*F on the light v^0 attracts the lexical verb *yìn* 'praise' to adjoin to itself while the subject DP, *Olùkọ́* 'teacher' is externally merged at the inner spec *v*P, in line with the PISH which requires the subject of a sentence to be base-generated within the predicate. After this, the DP (embedded

with the relative clause) is entirely copied to the specifier position of the light verb phrase (the spec *v*P) so as to be visible for subsequent operations. The derivation proceeds by externally merging the abstract T^0 with the outer *v*P to project the T-bar. The T^0, as a probe, searches for the DP *olùkọ́* (a matching goal in its c-command domain) and attracts it to the spec TP to check its [+case, EPP] feature. The derivation still proceeds by merging the Foc^0 with the TP to form the Foc-bar. The DP comprising the head noun and the relative qualifier is attracted to the spec FocP to check the [+nominal, EF] (feature) on the Foc^0 through the specifier and head agreement. The implication borne out of the derivation in 34 is that only DPs are hosted at the spec FocP unlike other categories with sentential status. Therefore, a focus construction cannot be relativised or focused. Another inference drawn from this is that constructions like 35a and 35b feature what Owólabí (1987, 1989) identifies as linking particles.

> 35   a.   Olú kí ó dìde, kí ó dúró ni mo rí.
>   Olú REL RES stand REL RES wait FOC I see
>   'I saw OLU WHO STOOD UP.'
>
>   b.   Olú ni mo rí <u>kí   ó n sùn</u>.
>   Olú FOC I see that he is sleep
>   'It was Olú I saw sleeping.'

The underlined expression in 35b is not a relative clause. Therefore, the *kí* that introduces it is not a relative marker as it only introduces the second clause. The underlined expression in 34b behaves differently to the restricting relative clause in 36:

> (36)   Olú <u>kí   ó   n sùn</u> ni mo rí. .
>   Olú REL RES is sleep FOC I see
>   'I saw OLÚ WHO WAS SLEEPING.'

The entire direct object DP *Olú kí ó n sùn* 'Olú who was sleeping' is focused in 36. This system operates similarly in the standard dialect.

4.   Conclusion

This paper has discussed the syntax of relativisation in Ifẹ̀. The dialect exhibits some similarities with the standard dialect regarding the strategies it uses to form its relative constructions. It is pertinent to note that they both share many things in common because Yorùbá being the standard

dialect is the conglomeration of all its dialects (e.g. Awóbùlúyì, 1998; Olúmúyìwá, 2006). However, Ifẹ̀ still features some dialectal variations with respect to how it forms its relative clauses. As proposed in this paper, a RelP by transformational process occupies the spec DP to check the [+nominal] feature on the abstract D^0. The fact that relative and focus constructions are formed in standard Yorùbá, and its dialects using what some literature refer to as the HRA is not an adequate reason to conclude that they both have the same categorial status. Interestingly, using the Minimalist Program as the syntactic framework, this paper has also produced and discussed evidence revealing that relative clauses are DPs while focus constructions are sentences in the Ifẹ̀ dialect. This goes a long way in determining the status of relative and focus constructions in Yorùbá.

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