Weak focus-movement islands in Yorùbá

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1. A dichotomy among strong (syntactic) islands (Stahlke 1974)

1.1 Those rescuable by resumptives

(1) (a) ʔAdé/Ta ni o rí [òun àti Olú]
           WH.PERS FOC 2S see 3S and
           'It is Adé you saw him and Olú'
           'Who did you see her/him and Olú?'

     (b) ʔAdé/Ta ni o jí [ìwé e rè].
           WH.PERS FOC 2S steal book K 3S
           'It is Adé whose book you stole'
           'Whose book did you steal?'

1.2 Those that resumptives can't fix ("essential S configurations")

(2) *Bàtà ni/tí o mọ [ẹni tí ó jí (wọn)].
      shoe FOC/REL 2S know person REL 3S steal 3P
      ['It is shoes that you know the person who stole (them)']
      ['The shoes that you know the person who stole (them)…']

1.3 A problem: nonparallelism of *wh-* across strong islands

(3) (a) Kí ni o mọ [ẹni tí ó jí (wọn)]?
           WH.THING FOC 2S know person REL 3S steal 3P
           'What do you know the person who stole (it/them)?'

     (b) O mọ [ẹni tí ó jí kí ni (ḿ bẹ̀)]?
           2S know person REL 3S steal WH.THING FOC there
           'You know the person who stole WHAT (there)?'

     (c) *O mọ [ẹni tí ó jí bàtà ni (ḿ bẹ̀)].
           2S know person REL 3S steal shoe FOC there
           ['You know the person who stole SHOES there']

2. Reconstruction as the source of *wh-*/focus nonparallelism

2.1. COP *ni*

(4) Ọ́lọ́pàá ni mí.
      cop   COP 1S.ACC
      'I'm a cop'

(5) (a) *Èmi ni Ọ́lọ́pàá ni.
           IS FOC cop COP
           ['I'm the person who's a cop']

     (b) *Ọ́lọ́pàá ni (ó) ni mí.
           cop   FOC AGR COP 1S.ACC
           ['A cop is what I am']

(6) (a) *Ta ni ọ́lọ́pàá ni?
           WH.PERSON FOC cop   COP
           ['WHO's a cop']

     (b) Ta ni mí?
           WH.PERSON COP 1S.ACC
           'Who am I?'

     (c) Kí ni mí?
           WH.THING COP 1S.ACC
           'What (role/profession) am I?'

(7) (a) Èmi ni ó ṣe/jẹ́ ọ́lọ́pàá.
           1S COP AGR do/equal cop
           'I'm the one who's a cop'   *N.b.* 'cop' is not in Focus in (7).

     (b) Ta ni ó ṣe/jẹ́ olè?
           WH.PERSON COP AGR do/equal thief
           'Who is a cop?'/'Who are cops?'

2.2 No wh- superiority effect

(8) (a) Ta ni ó ra kí (ni)?
           WH.PERSON FOC AGR buy WH.THING FOC
           'Who bought what?'   *N.b.* Eastern dialects lack in-situ object *ni*

     (b) Kí ni ta ni-ín rà?
           WH.THING FOC WH.PERSON FOC-AGR buy
           'What did who buy?'

     (c) Ibí ni ta ni-ín ń gbé?
           here FOC WH.PERSON FOC-AGR DUR hold
           'Who lives HERE?'

3. Weak (semantic) focus-movement islands

3.1 Generics, to subject idioms

(9) (a) Ọjọ́ ń lọ.
           day DUR go
           'Time flies'

     (b) Ayé ń lọ. (…A ń tọ̀ ọ́.)
           visible.world DUR go 1P DUR follow 3S
           'Life's a journey. (We follow along its path.)'

(10) (a) Kí ni ó ń lọ?
           WH.THING FOC 3s DUR go
           'What is it that goes/is going?'

     (b) #Ọjọ́ ni ó ń lọ.
           day FOC 3s DUR go
           ['What flies is TIME']   *N.b.* Good only without the idiom.

     (c) #Ọjọ́ kìí lọ.
           day NEG.FOC go
           ['What never flies is TIME']   *N.b.* Good only without the idiom.

     (d) Ìgbà kìí lọ bí òréré l'áyé.
           day NEG.FOC go manner vista in.world
           'What never flies is TIME'

3.2 Negation, to adjuncts and other quantifiers

(11) (a) Kò rí/jẹ́ bẹ́ẹ̀.
           NEG see/equal thus
           'That's not how it appears/is', i.e. 'Matters do not stand thus'

     (b) *Bẹ́ẹ̀ ni kò rí/jẹ́.
           thus FOC NEG see/equal

     (c) Bẹ́ẹ̀ kọ́ ni ọlá rí.
           thus NEG.COP FOC prestige see
           'That's not how prestige looks'

(12) (a) *Bá.wo ni kò rí/jẹ́?
           way.which FOC NEG see/equal

     (b) Bá.wo kọ́ ni ọlá rí?
           way.which NEG.COP FOC prestige see
           'How isn't it that prestige looks?'

(13) (a) Wọn kò lọ pẹ̀lẹ́pẹ̀lẹ́.
           3P NEG go gently
           'They did not go gently'

     (b) *Pẹ̀lẹ́pẹ̀lẹ́ ni wọn kò (fi/ṣe) lọ.
           gently' FOC 3p NEG PV go

(14) (a) Ọlá kò ṣe ibi .kan.
prestige NEG do misfortune one
'Social standing in itself cannot be one's undoing'

(b) *Ibi .kan. ni ọlá kò ṣe.
misfortune one FOC prestige NEG do

(15) (a) Wọn kò jẹ àmàlà.
3P NEG eat àmàlà
'They did not eat *àmàlà*'

(b) Ta ni kò jẹ àmàlà?
WH.THING FOC NEG eat àmàlà
'Who did not eat *àmàlà*?'

(c) Àwọn ni (wọn) kò jẹ àmàlà.
3P FOC 3P NEG eat àmàlà
'They're the only ones who didn't eat *àmàlà*'

(16) (a) Gbogbo o wa kò lọ.
all K 1P NEG go
'All of us did not go' (¬ > ∀, ? ∀ < ¬) (Adéwọlé 1993)

(b) Gbogbo o wa ni kò lọ.
all K 1P FOC NEG go
'None of us went' (∀ < ¬) (Adéwọlé 1993)

(c) Gbogbo o wa kọ́ ni ó lọ.
all K 1P NEG.COP FOC AGR go
'Not all of us went' (¬ < ∀)

(17) (a) Kí ni wọn kò jẹ?
WH.THING FOC 3P NEG eat
'What did they not eat?'

(b) Àmàlà ni wọn kò jẹ.
àmàlà FOC 3P NEG eat
'*Àmàlà* is the only thing they didn't eat'

(c) Àmàlà kọ́ ni wọn jẹ.
àmàlà NEG.COP FOC 3P.AGR eat
'They ate something other than *àmàlà*'

3.2 Yes/no Q

(18) (a) Ṣé o jẹ àmàlà?
Q 2S eat àmàlà
'Did you eat *àmàlà*?'

(b) Ṣé àmàlà ni o jẹ?
Q àmàlà FOC 2S eat
(i) 'Is it *àmàlà* that you ate?' i.e. 'Did you eat ÀMÀLÀ?'
(ii) *'Is it the case that it is *àmàlà* that you ate'?

(c) Ṣé ìwọ ni ó jẹ àmàlà?
Q 2S FOC AGR eat àmàlà
(i) 'Is it you who ate *àmàlà*?' i.e. 'Did YOU eat *àmàlà*?'
(ii) *'Is it the case that it is you who ate *àmàlà*'?

(19) (a) Ìyẹn ni pé àmàlà ni o jẹ?
that.one COP that àmàlà FOC 2S eat
'Is it the case that it is *àmàlà* that you ate'?

(b) Ìyẹn ni pé ìwọ ni ó jẹ àmàlà?
that.one COP that 2S FOC AGR eat àmàlà
'Is it the case that it is you who ate *àmàlà*'?

4. Verb focus

(20) (a) #Lílọ ni ojọ́ ń lọ.
GER-go FOC day DUR go
'Time (really) FLIES'

(b) *Ríri/jíjẹ ni kò rí/jẹ bẹ́ẹ̀.
GER-see/equal FOC NEG see/equal thus
'That's not how the matter (actually) APPEARS'

(c) *Ríri ni ọ̀rọ̀ kò rí bẹ́ẹ̀.
GER-see FOC matter NEG see thus

(21) (a) *Ríri ni m kò rí ẹnìkan.
GER-see FOC 1S NEG see person.one

(b) *Ṣíṣe ni Ọlá kò ṣe ibi .kan. (vs. Ṣíṣe kọ́…)
GER-do FOC prestige NEG do misfortune one

(c) *Lílọ ni wọn kò lọ pẹ̀lẹ́pẹ̀lẹ́. (vs. Lílọ kọ́…)
GER-go FOC 3P NEG go gently

(d) *Jíjẹ ni Sopé kò jẹun. (vs. Jíjẹ kọ́…)
GER-eat FOC NEG eat.meal

(e) *Jíjẹ ni (wọn) kò jẹ àmàlà. (vs. Jíjẹ kọ́…)
GER-eat FOC 3P NEG eat àmàlà

(f) Ìyẹn ni pé jíjẹ ni o jẹ àmàlà?
that.one COP that GER-eat FOC 2S eat àmàlà
(i) 'Did you EAT *àmàlà*?'
(ii) 'Is it the case that you ATE *ÀMÀLÀ*?'

5. Consequences

5.1 For UG (cf. Szabolsci & den Dikken 1999)

5.2 For YG (cf. Koopman 1984, 1999)

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