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Focalization in Musey

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Abstract- In this paper, we tackle the focalization in musey language. We analyze musey data in terms of Kayne's (1994) Antisymmetry. We uncover two focusing strategies (à la clause final comp and clause initial comp): the one sets the focused constituent at the end of the clause and the other moves the focused constituent to the beginning of the clause. In the focalization à la clause final comp, we observe two movements. The first moves the focused constituent from its initial position to the Specifier of the Focus Phrase. The second brings the rest of the clause to the Specifier of the Cleft Phrase. As regards the focalization à la clause initial comp, we observe one movement which goes from the initial position of focused constituent to the Specifier of the Focus Phrase.

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I. Introduction

Since Chomsky (1973, 1977, 1986a), it is known that some syntactic constituents move from their initial position to a higher position. For example, Chomsky (1986) indicates that when a head is merged, movement into its specifier is obligatory. It is observed that movement goes always to the left. Kayne (1994) maintains that all movement must be leftward. It is what is known as Antisymmetry. This viewpoint was based on Indo-European languages analysis: English and Italian. However, some African languages seem to reject the left condition. Some moved constituents are rightward at the surface structure. For example, we can notice *musgum* language in which focused constituents and negation markers occupy the end of the clause (Brahim, 2018 and 2021). We want to analyze the focalization in mosey language which is spoken in Chad and Cameroon. The main question is to know whether the musey focusing strategies allow for Kayne's (1994) left condition. We organize this work in four sections. The first section is interested in mosey language family and words order. The second section tackles the focalization. The third section studies features checking and movement triggers. The last section approaches the semantic contents of functional heads.

a) Musey Language Family and Words Order

Musey is a chadic language from afro-asiatic family. Its words order is SVO:

(1) *Sinà u viná zúm zoyrà.*
Dog and monkey plow + perf. groundnuts
"The dog and the monkey plowed groundnuts."

In this structure, we have the subject *sinà u viná* (the dog and the monkey), the verb *zúm* (plowed) and the object *zoyrà* (groundnuts).

b) Focalization

Let us consider the following musey basic structure:

(2) *Aikomu hí ɓusla maŋ Sukasya ká'à.*
Aikomu give + perf. cow to Sukasya yesterday
"Aikomu gave a cow to Sukasya yesterday."

This sentence has the subject *Aikomu*, the verb *hí* (gave), the direct object *ɓusla* (a cow), the indirect object *maŋ Sukasya* (to Sukasya) and time circumstantial complement *ká'à* (yesterday). Excepting the verb, all the other functions can be focalized.

i. *Focalization à la clause final comp*

This focusing strategy brings the focused constituent at the end of the clause. Let us observe the following structures:

(3) a. ____ *Hí ɓusla maŋ Sukasya ká ni Aikomu.*
Give + perf. cow to Sukasya yesterday Foc Aikomu
"It is Aikomu who gave a cow to Sukasya yesterday."
b. Aikomu hí ____ maŋ Sukasya ká'à ni ɓuslá.
Aikomu give + perf. to Sukasya yesterday Foc cow
"It is a cow that Aikomu gave to Sukasya yesterday."
c. Aikomu hí ɓusla ____ ká'à ni maŋ Sukasya.
Aikomu give + perf. cow yesterday Foc to Sukasya
"It is to Sukasya that Aikomu gave a cow yesterday."
d. Aikomu hí ɓusla maŋ Sukasya ____ ni ká'à.
Aikomu give + perf. cow to Sukasya Foc yesterday
"It is yesterday that Aikomu gave a cow to Sukasya."

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In the first structure (3a), the focused constituent is *Aikomu*. It is preceded by focus marker *ni*. The focused constituent concludes the clause. In the second structure (3b), the focused constituent is *ɓusla* (a cow). It is also preceded by focus marker *ni*. Focused constituent closes the clause. In the following structure (3c), we focalize the prepositional phrase *maŋ Sukasya* (to Sukasya). It is preceded by the focus marker *ni*. In the last structure (3d), the focused constituent is the verb *ká'à* (yesterday). It is preceded by the focus marker *ni* and ends the clause.

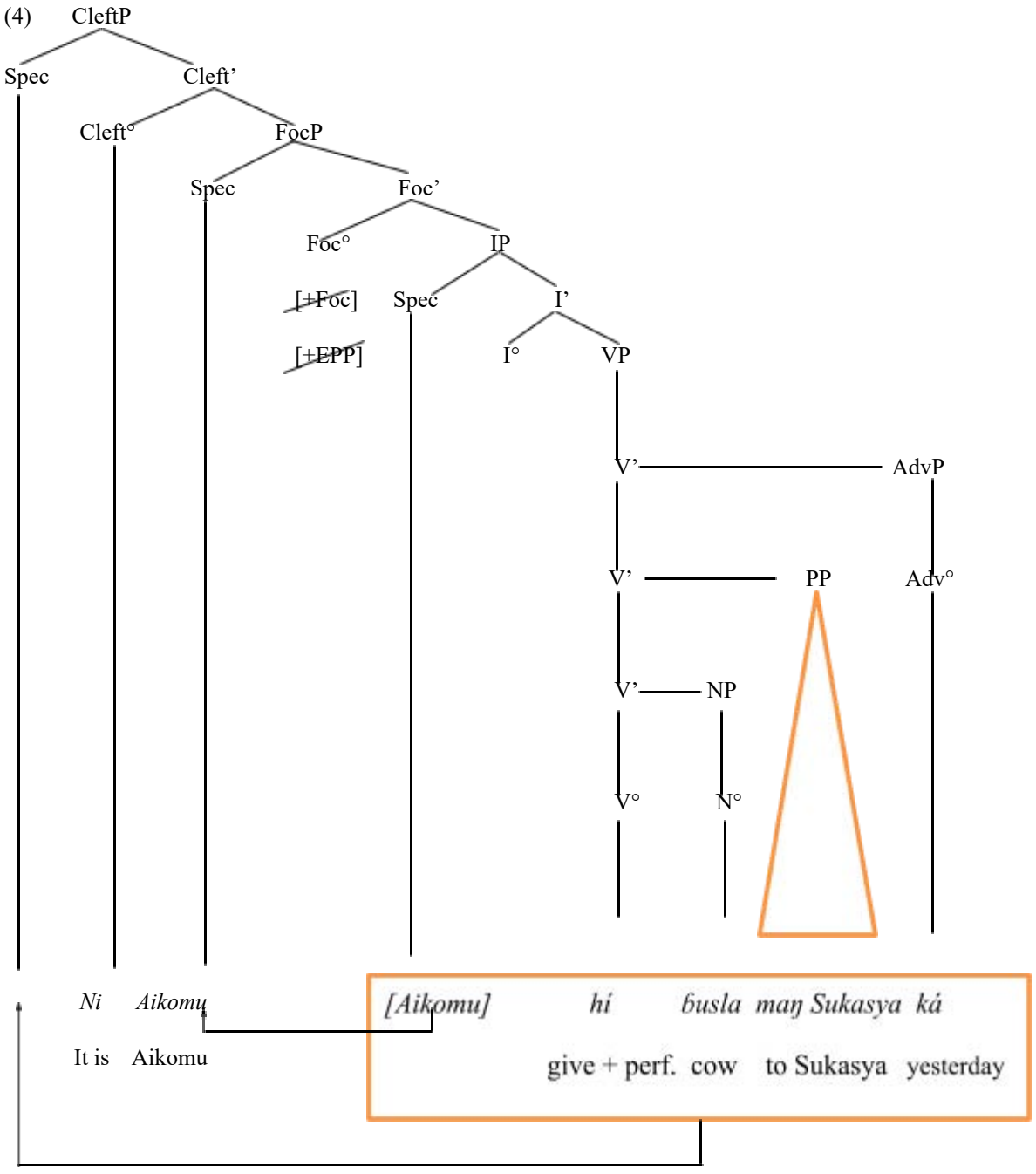
We notice that one of the focusing strategies in musey language moves constituents from their basic positions to the end of the clause. The focused constituents occupy a low position. This fact seems to reject Kayne's (1994: 4) Antisymmetry Condition:

> *If syntactic theory allowed lowering a phrase to a position c-commanded by the original position, such movement would have to be rightward. If lowerings are not available at all, as Chomsky's (1993) proposals would lead one to expect then that possibility can be set aside.*

Then, Kayne (1994: 4) defends the "Antisymmetric prohibition against right-hand specifiers": "All movement must be leftward".

As from this fact, we can think that in the surface structure, the focused constituent occupies a low position but in the deep structure, it is a high position. Let us observe the following tree representation of (3a):

(4)



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We notice that the focus marker *ni* (it is) is generated in the Cleft Phrase (CleftP) head. This fact can be accounted for by Koopman (2000), Biloa (2012b) and Brahim (2018) viewpoints. Koopman (2000) suggests that if the Focus Phrase cannot accommodate the focus marker or if the focus marker precedes the focus constituent, it occupies a higher position that she calls: YP. Biloa (2012b) and Brahim (2018) state that this position is Cleft Phrase (CleftP).

The focused constituent *Aikomu* moves from Spec-IP position to Spec-Foc. FocP head is only endowed with implicit features [+Foc] and [+EPP]. After the first movement of the focused constituent, IP goes to Spec-Cleft. It is what is known in the literature as heavy pied-piping (see Nkemnji, 1995). This latter raising movement is called remnant movement (den Besten and Webelhut, 1987; Cecchetto, 2004).

The focusing strategy à la clause final comp is not specific to musey language. It is found in *musgum*, another Chadic language mainly spoken in Cameroon and Chad:

(5) *À sà yém gírná á Sali*. (Brahim, 2018:195 (10a))
SM drink + perf. water today Foc Sali
"It is Sali who drank water today."

ii. *Focalization à la clause initial comp*

This focusing strategy *sets* the focused constituent at the beginning of the clause. We have the following structures:

(6) a. *Ni Aikomu* _____ *hí ɓusla maŋ Sukasya ká.*
Foc Aikomu give + perf. cow to Sukasya yesterday
"It is Aikomu who gave a cow to Sukasya yesterday."

b. *Ni ɓusla Aikomu hí* _____ *maŋ Sukasya ká'à.*
Foc cow Aikomu give + perf. to Sukasya yesterday
"It is a cow that Aikomu gave to Sukasya yesterday."

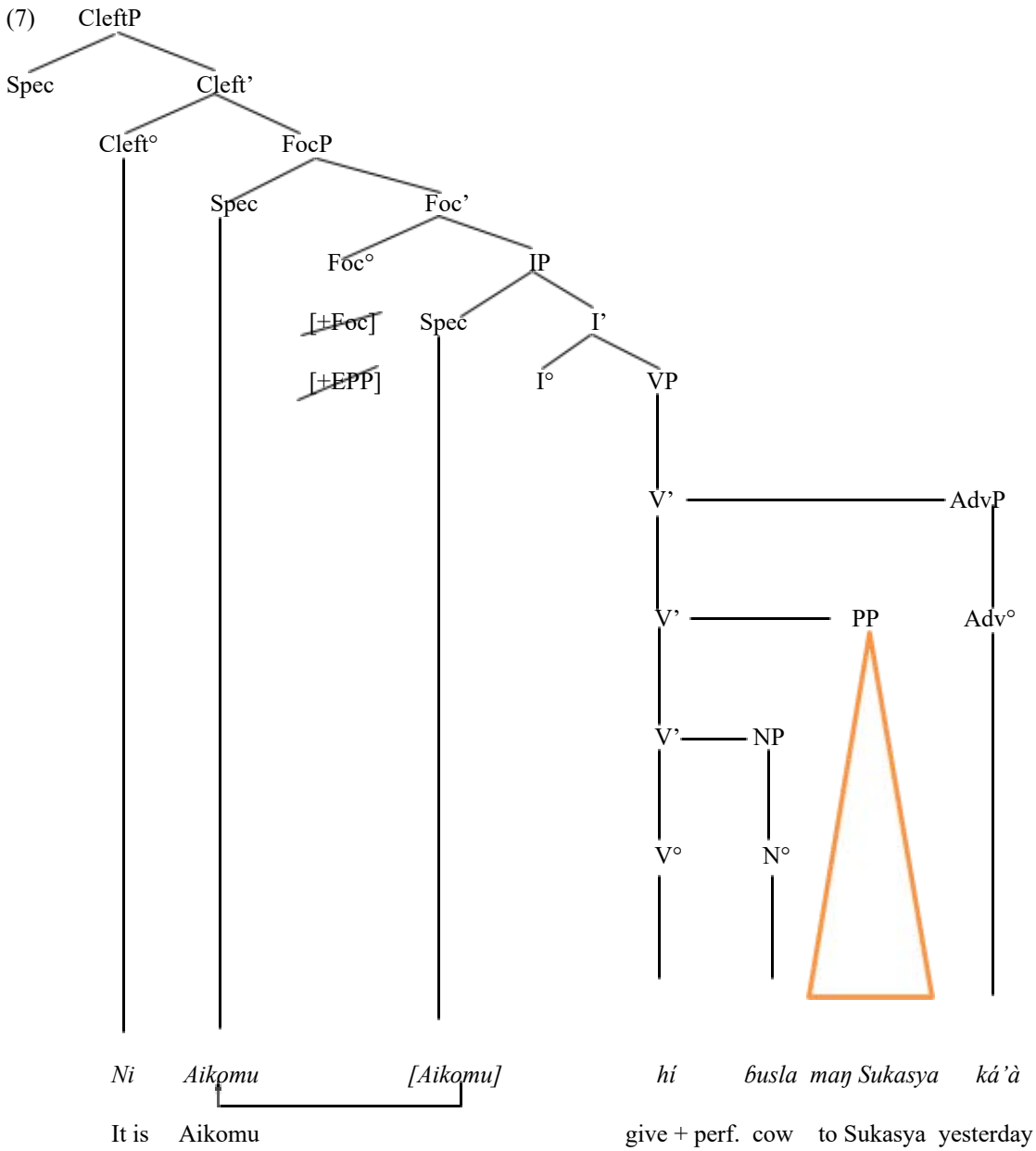
c. *Ni maŋ Sukasya Aikomu hí ɓusla* _____ *ká'à*.
Foc to Sukasya Aikomu give + perf. cow yesterday
"It is to Sukasya that Aikomu gave a cow yesterday."

d. *Ni ká'à Aikomu hí ɓusla maŋ Sukasya* ____.
Foc yesterday Aikomu give + perf. cow to Sukasya
"It is yesterday that Aikomu gave a cow to Sukasya."

In the first structure (6a), the focused constituent is *Aikomu*. It is preceded by focus marker *ni* (it is). We notice that the focused constituent is at the beginning of the sentence. In the second structure (6b), the focused constituent is *ɓusla* (a cow). It is preceded by *ni* and begins the sentence. In the following structure (6c), the focused constituent is the Preposition Phrase *maŋ Sukasya* (to Sukasya). It is preceded by focus marker *ni* and starts the sentence. In the last structure (6d), the focused constituent is *ká'à* (yesterday). It is preceded by focus marker ni and also begins the clause.

In the focusing strategy à la clause initial comp, the focused constituent moves from its initial position to a higher position. It occupies Spec-Foc as follows:

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This diagram represents (6a). We notice that what we call focus marker occupies the head of CleftP seeing that it precedes the focused constituent. The focused constituent *Aikomu* moves from Spec-IP to Spec-Foc. FocP head is endowed with implicit features [+Foc] and [+EPP].

In the focalization à la clause initial comp, we have one movement which raises focused constituent to Spec-FocP. It apparently respects the Left Condition of Kayne (1994).

c) Features Checking and Movement Triggers

We previously indicated that the focused constituent à la clause final comp occupies Spec-FocP. We also show that the focused constituent à la clause initial comp occupies the same position. The focused constituent goes to this position by the focalization.

When we observe the focalization à la clause final comp, we notice a heavy pied-piping of IP (clause) to Spec-Cleft. Both focused constituent movement and pied-piping constitute what is known in the literature: Move Operations. These movements depend on certain conditions. One of these conditions is that movement is triggered. The movement intervenes for checking features of a lexical head.

So, can we think that checking features condition determines movement triggering in focalization à la clause final comp in musey?

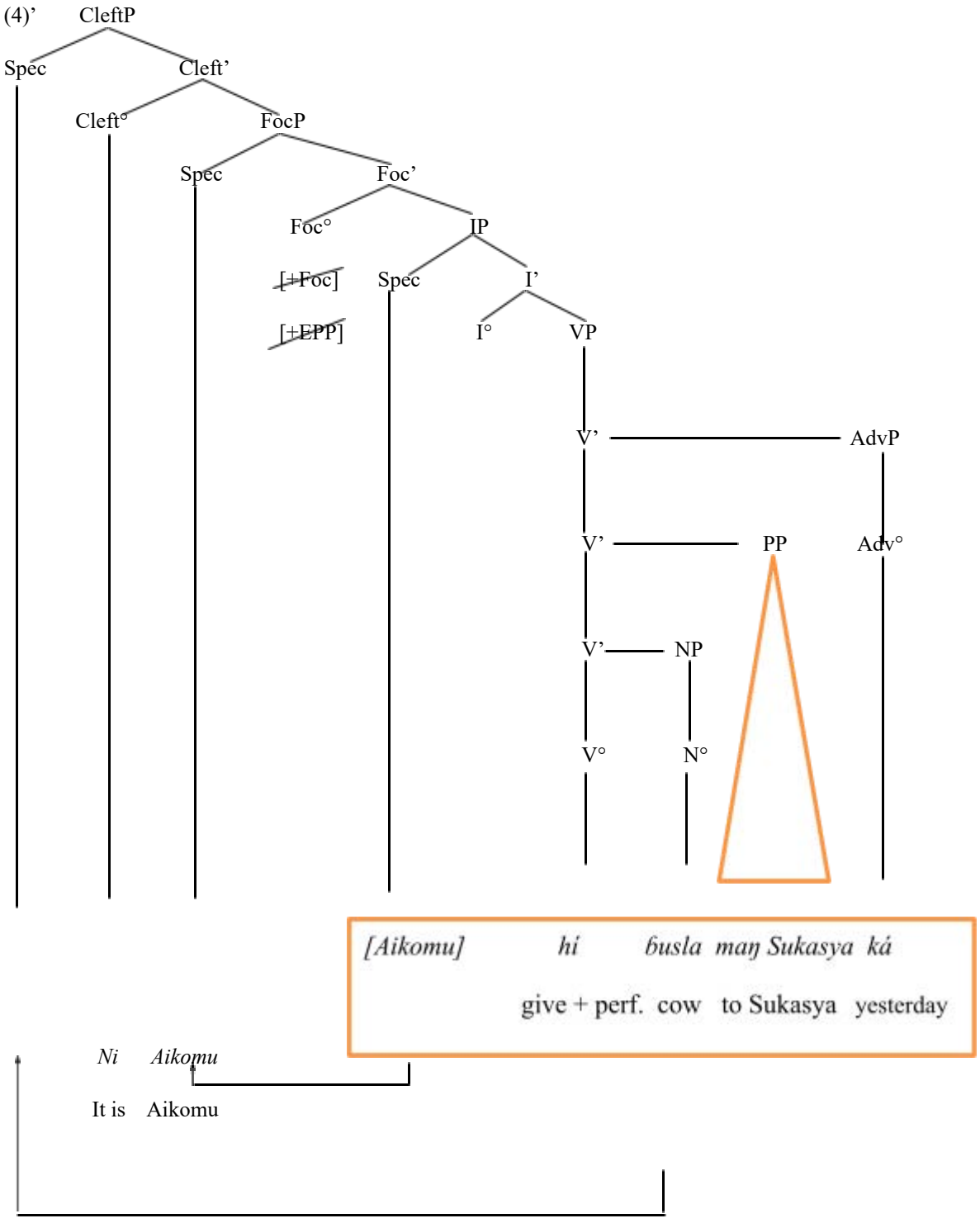
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Let us re-observe (3a) and its tree representation (4):

(4a)'_____*Hí ɓusla maŋ Sukasya ká ni Aikomu.*

Give + perf. cow to Sukasya yesterday Foc Aikomu

"It is Aikomu who gave a cow to Sukasya yesterday."



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In the diagram, we notice that Foc and EPP in Foc head attract focused constituent to Spec-FocP. [Foc] and [EPP] are crossed out when this condition is satisfied. Thus, we can say that in (4)', *Aikomu* moves from Spec-IP to Spec-FocP. The condition of [Foc] and [EPP] features is satisfied. That is why they are crossed out as it is indicated in (4)'.

In the focalization à la clause initial comp in mosey, the focused constituent goes to Spec-FocP. But, there is not remnant movement. Let us re-observe (6a) and (7):

(6a)' *Ni Aikomu* _____ *hí ɓusla maŋ Sukasya ká.*

Foc Aikomu give + perf. cow to Sukasya yesterday

"It is Aikomu who gave a cow to Sukasya yesterday."

(7)' CleftP

We also notice that in the focalization à la clause initial comp, [Foc] and [EPP] features trigger the focalization of the subject position *Aikomu*.

d) Semantic Contents of Functional Heads

In both focusing strategies (à la clause final comp and clause initial comp) in mosey language, the focus marker *ni* precedes focus constituent. Since it precedes, it moves to a higher position: CleftP-Cleft. The focused constituent occupies Spec-FocP. We identify two functional heads: FocP and CleftP. Which are the semantic contents of these functional heads?

In fact, Rizzi and Cinque (2016: 139-157) indicate that the functional elements make up the functional lexicon and they partake in the triggering of syntactic actions: "Functional heads endowed with the appropriate morphosyntactic features trigger syntactic actions" (Rizzi and Cinque, 2016: 141).

As for Rizzi and Cinque (2016: 143), "functional structures are richly articulated objects". Their heads are endowed with semantic contents. After analyzing Italian, Rizzi and Bocci (2015) bring out a functional sequence in which the criterial positions have a specific order within the Complementizer domain.

As we say, the focusing strategies analysis in mosey language revealed the existence of two functional projections in the complementizer field: FocP and CleftP. FocP is already uncovered by Rizzi (1997). CleftP is relatively recent in the specialized literature. Biloa (2012b), for example, talked about it. At the internal interface with meaning, functional heads express how their specifier and complement must be interpreted. Let us comment both heads:

. *Foc.* In musey language, Foc can express new information focus or corrective focus. The focused constituent occupies Spec-FocP. The movement is triggered by [Foc] and [EPP] features that are not expressed phonetically by material element.

. *Cleft.* In mosey language, CleftP head precedes FocP. The interpretation of clause is such that it is the element in Cleft head that is in fact Foc head. CleftP precedes FocP when the focus marker precedes the focused constituent.

In focusing strategy à la clause final comp, when the focused constituent merges to Spec-FocP, the rest of the clause is massively pied-piped to Spec-CleftP. Whereas in focusing strategy à la clause initial comp, remnant movement of the rest of the clause does not exist. Pragmatically, the focalization à la clause initial comp determines and defines more what we are talking about. Let us re-observe the previous structures (3a and 6a):

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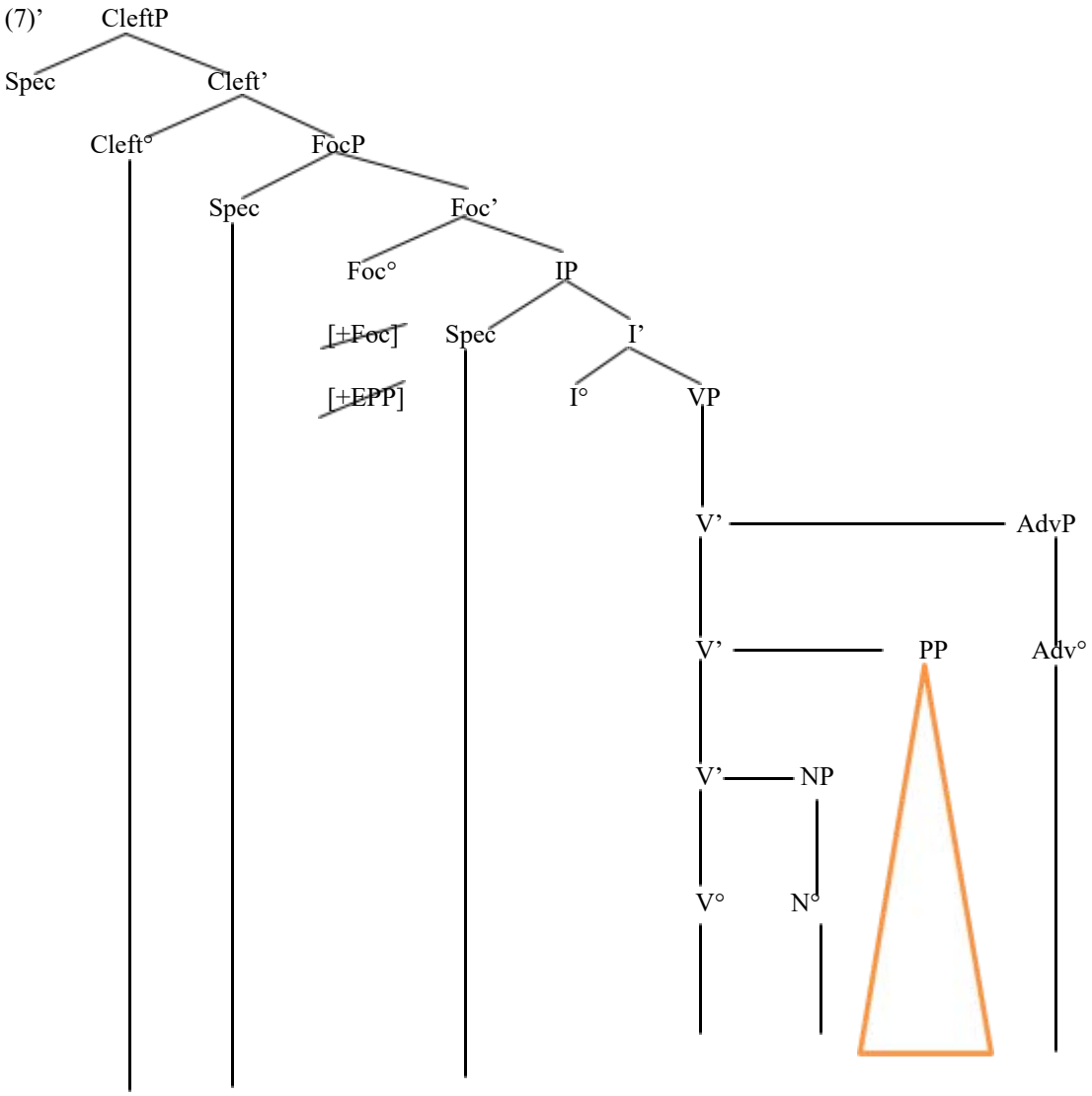
"It is Aikomu who gave a cow to Sukasya yesterday."

(6a)' *Ni Aikomu* _____ *hí ɓusla maŋ Sukasya ká.*

Foc Aikomu give + perf. cow to Sukasya yesterday

"It is Aikomu who gave a cow to Sukasya yesterday."

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We also notice that in the focalization à la clause initial comp, [Foc] and [EPP] features trigger the focalization of the subject position *Aikomu*.

e) Semantic Contents of Functional Heads

In both focusing strategies (à la clause final comp and clause initial comp) in mosey language, the focus marker *ni* precedes focus constituent. Since it precedes, it moves to a higher position: CleftP-Cleft. The focused constituent occupies Spec-FocP. We identify two functional heads: FocP and CleftP. Which are the semantic contents of these functional heads?

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"It is Aikomu who gave a cow to Sukasya yesterday."

(6a)' *Ni Aikomu _____ hí ɓusla maŋ Sukasya ká.*
Foc Aikomu give + perf. cow to Sukasya yesterday
"It is Aikomu who gave a cow to Sukasya yesterday."

In the first structure, we talk about *Aikomu* who is known. Meanwhile in the second structure, we suppose that there are persons whose name is *Aikomu*. We identify one we talk about.
The complement of Cleft should be interpreted as focus.

II. Conclusion

There are two focusing strategies in musey language: à la clause final comp and clause initial comp. the one sets the focused constituent at the end of the clause and the other moves the focused constituent to the beginning of the clause. In the focalization à la clause final comp, we observe two movements. The first moves the focused constituent from its initial position to the Specifier of the Focus Phrase. The second brings the rest of the clause to the Specifier of the Cleft Phrase. As regards the focalization à la clause initial comp, we observe one movement which goes from the initial position of focused constituent to the Specifier of the Focus Phrase. The focused constituent is attracted by Focus Phrase head for checking [Foc] and [EPP] features. So, these features trigger the movement of the focused constituent. We bring out two functional heads: Foc and Cleft. Both heads have semantic contents: Foc expresses new information focus and corrective focus; Cleft should be interpreted as focus.

This research concerning musey language enriches the theories about the movement. It shows that the movement is leftward. Deep structure analyzing is important for identifying the real direction of the movement. The study of more African languages can be important for explaining movement theory.

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