

## Ex-situ and In-situ Focus in Hausa: syntax, semantics and discourse

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### 1. Introduction

Hausa (Chadic, Afroasiatic) has traditionally been described as having only one focusing strategy: focus fronting (McConvell 1973; Tuller 1986; Green 1997; Newman 2000:187-95). More recently, however, Jaggard (2001:496-98) has argued that there is evidence for focus in-situ in Hausa. The aims of this joint paper are twofold. Our first aim is to clarify the descriptive facts, in order to establish whether there exists in Hausa a systematic correlation between the syntax and semantics of focus, or whether the interpretation of focus rests purely on discourse-pragmatic grounds. Our second aim is theoretical: to consider the data in the light of Minimalist considerations (Chomsky 1995; 2000; 2001a; 2001b), in order to present a unified syntactic analysis of in-situ and ex-situ focus. This in turn relates to broader theoretical issues, concerning optionality in a perfectly economical system. Assuming the notion of ‘interface economy’<sup>1</sup> as proposed by Reinhart (1995) and adopted by Chomsky (2000; 2001a; 2001b), a ‘marked’ or ‘costly’ operation is only licensed if, at the interface, it results in a distinct interpretation from the ‘cheaper’ option. There are, however, a range of views about what constitutes ‘markedness’, ‘complexity’ and ‘cost’, to which we return below. The ensuing empirical research question can be framed as follows: if a language has more than one focusing strategy (morphosyntactic and/or phonological), can each of these be established to correspond to a distinct interpretive goal (hence providing support for the notion of language as an economy-driven system), or are interpretive ‘choices’ forced by pragmatic factors?

The paper is organised as follows. In Section 2 we consider a range of semantic-based conceptualisations of focus emerging from the literature, and the extent to which there exists a consensus view of the semantics of focus. We also review a (not unproblematic) account of focus in Hungarian and English, which provides a methodology for distinguishing semantic focus types (Kiss 1998). In Section 3 we present a brief overview of morphosyntactic and prosodic reflexes of focus, from a cross-linguistic perspective, and return to the discussion of optionality. In Section 4 we apply Kiss’ methodology to Hausa, and the descriptive facts emerging from the Hausa data are presented. In Section 5 we consider these facts from a Minimalist perspective. Section 6 concludes the paper. Focus (of all types) is marked throughout with **bold** type, and upper case A and B indicate participants in a conversational exchange.

### 2. Semantics of focus

The aim of this section is to consider the extent to which there emerges from the literature a consensus view of what semantic types of focus exist, and the basis upon which these should be distinguished, since this must constitute a starting point for any study of focus. A

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<sup>1</sup> Note here Reinhart’s (1995:46) distinction between *interface economy*, which involves issues of interpretation, and strict *derivational economy*, which is purely computational and cannot be violated (concerning only competing syntactic derivations operating over the same lexical set).

distinction widely assumed in the contemporary literature is one between new information (presentational) focus and exhaustive listing focus (which subsumes contrastive focus). New information (NI) focus (1B) simply introduces a new constituent into the discourse, and this term arises from traditional views wherein the role of focus is to mark or distinguish new information from old:

- (1) A: Who did you see in the market?  
B: I saw **John** *NI focus*

Exhaustive listing, a term originally introduced by Kuno (1972), and developed by Szabolcsi (1981), specifies an exhaustive set of which the proposition holds true, and excludes other possibilities. Contrastive focus can be viewed as a sub-case of exhaustive listing (EL) focus, and arises in certain pragmatic contexts, as in (2):

- (2) A: Mary bought an umbrella this morning  
B: No, it was a **hat** she bought (not an **umbrella**) *EL focus*

Rochemont (1986) attempts to recast the traditional distinction between ‘old’ and ‘new’ information, and introduces the notion of ‘c-construable’, which broadly means ‘under discussion’, where this can be interpreted as given information, or that which is already present in the discourse context. Presentational focus, then, includes any information which is not c-construable, as in (3):

- (3) A **letter** arrived for you today *presentational focus*

A focus is contrastive if the rest of the discourse it is embedded in is ‘under discussion’, as in (4). Note that in this example the pronouns themselves are c-construable by virtue of their co-referentiality with their antecedents:

- (4) John hit Mary, and then **she** hit **him** *contrastive focus*

Rochemont notes, however, that a constituent may simultaneously be presentationally and contrastively focused as in (5), and, indeed, states that ‘in the majority of cases, a focus will be both presentational and contrastive’:

- (5) (A walks into the kitchen and catches B eating cookies before dinner)  
**Billy** would never eat cookies before dinner *presentational & contrastive focus*

What emerges from Rochemont’s analysis is that, although the distinction between new information and contrastive (or exhaustive listing) focus may be a useful and empirically motivated one, it is not necessarily the case that these are truly distinct, since they may co-occur.

Another well-known distinction is that between ‘broad’ and ‘narrow’ focus, which is based on the scope of focus. Example (6) exemplifies broad focus, where in this case **bold** indicates main sentential stress; if this falls on the final constituent, the whole sentence may be interpreted as focused (this corresponds to ‘unmarked focus’ in the terminology of Cinque 1993, a point to which we return in Section 5):

- (6) Jane was talking to a man in a blue **hat** *broad focus*

Shifting the main stress as in (7) results in the scope of focus being limited to [a well-dressed man in a blue hat]:

(7) A well-dressed man in a blue **hat** was talking to Jane *less broad*

In (8) the focus is narrowly limited to the constituent [well-dressed (man)] (examples (6)-(8) from Rochemont 1986):

(8) A **well-dressed** man in a blue hat was talking to Jane *narrow focus*

According to this scope-based view, then, there is a ‘focus spectrum’ rather than clearly distinguished semantic types. Indeed, in Ladd’s view, “‘Contrastive stress’ is nothing more than accent placement that signals narrow focus, and narrow focus can be used for things other than explicit contrast” (Ladd 1980:79, cited in Rochemont 1986). What is suggested by Ladd’s analysis is that, according to some views, semantic focus type is clearly determined by accent placement, where ‘broad focus’ corresponds to new information, and ‘narrow focus’ to exhaustive or contrastive focus. See Rochemont (1986) for further discussion and arguments against this view, for example the fact that the broadest assignment of focus, that is, sentence focus, can still allow a contrastive interpretation.

A more detailed typology of focus can be seen in Watters’ (1979) paper on Aghem, a Bantu language, in which the author concludes that each semantic type of focus identified has a distinct morphosyntactic reflex. Watters identifies some five distinct types of focus, as exemplified by English examples (9)-(14) (examples from Watters 1979, cited in Dik 1981). Each example is labelled according to Watters’ terminology, and we attempt to place each of his focus types within the broad distinction between new information and exhaustive listing focus, as discussed above. Firstly, according to Watters, a sentence may be ‘unmarked’ for focus, as in (9):

(9) Inah gave fufu to his friends *unmarked focus*

‘Assertive focus’ is exemplified by cases where the focus corresponds to information that the speaker believes, knows or assumes that the hearer does not share with him. This can be seen as a type of new information focus:

(10) Inah gave **fufu** to his friends *assertive focus*

‘Counter-assertive focus’ involves information which the speaker substitutes for information which the hearer asserted in a previous utterance. In other words, this is a type of contrastive or corrective focus:

(11) Inah gave **fufu** (not yams) to his friends *counter-assertive focus*

Exhaustive listing focus involves ‘information which the speaker asserts is unique in the sense that the rest of the sentence is true only with respect to it, and false with respect to all other units of information which could be appropriately substituted for it in the sentence’. This is consistent with Kuno’s (1972) view, among others, although we note that exhaustivity is not always overtly marked by *only*-phrases.

(12) Inah gave **fufu only** (and nothing else) to his friends *EL focus*

‘Polar focus’ is Watters’ term for sentence focus, in other words cases where the focus is on the truth value which the speaker asserts concerning the proposition. This seems to constitute a sub-case of exhaustive listing focus, in the sense that it is corrective or contrastive:

(13) Inah **did** give fufu to his friends *polar focus*

Finally, ‘counter-assertive polar focus’ is the term used by Watters to indicate cases where the focus is on the truth value asserted by the speaker, which contradicts the hearer’s previous utterance. This, again, is a type of exhaustive listing focus in the sense that it is corrective or contrastive:

(14) Inah **did too** give fufu to his friends<sup>2</sup> *counter-assertive polar focus*

What emerges from Watters’ typology is that although several sub-types of focus may be distinguished, these can be broadly classified in terms of a two-way distinction between new information and exhaustive listing focus.

This discussion illustrates that identifying semantic types of focus is by no means a matter of consensus, although the distinction between new information and exhaustive or contrastive focus does appear to be well-supported. We leave this matter here, and for the remainder of the paper will make use of this broadly accepted terminology, whilst acknowledging that the distinction may not be as clear-cut as those labels suggest.

We move on now to briefly review a recent paper on focus in Hungarian and in English, which makes some strong claims concerning the correlation between the morphosyntax of focus and semantics of focus.<sup>3</sup> Kiss (1998) proposes that, for both Hungarian and English, ex-situ focus<sup>4</sup> corresponds to exhaustive listing (which she terms ‘identificational’), and in-situ focus corresponds to new information.<sup>5</sup> She proposes five semantic tests to distinguish the two types of focus. These are illustrated below with English examples (examples (15)-(20) from Kiss 1998), and for purposes of discussion will be referred to as ‘Tests A-E’.

The first test (A), which Kiss attributes to Szabolcsi (1981), works as follows: given a pair of sentences where the first contains focused co-ordinate DPs, and the second contains only one of those focused DPs, if the second sentence is **not** among the logical entailments of the first, then the type of focus involved is identificational (exhaustive):

(15) a. It was **a hat and a coat** that Mary picked for herself *does not entail*  
b. It was **a hat** that Mary picked for herself

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<sup>2</sup> We note that (14) exemplifies American English, and that in British English (13) is preferred for a ‘counter-assertive polar focus’ interpretation.

<sup>3</sup> Similar claims have been made for Hungarian by Brody (1996).

<sup>4</sup> Specifically, cleft constructions in English, as opposed to what Kiss describes as ‘topic with pitch accent’, e.g. *A hat and a coat Mary picked*. Whether Kiss’s generalisation can be upheld for English depends, in part, on whether ‘topicalisation’ is assumed to involve movement or not. We do not pursue this matter here.

<sup>5</sup> Kiss argues, however, that constructions where in-situ *only*-phrases occur involve LF movement, since such cases clearly involve identificational focus. She does not acknowledge any other instances of identificational focus in-situ in English, a point to which we return in the following discussion. Kiss’s generalisation therefore is more clearly stated as follows: identificational focus involves ‘syntactic re-ordering’, either covertly or overtly, whereas information focus does not.

Intuitively, because the co-ordinate DPs constitute the exhaustively defined set, all other possibilities are excluded, including a subset. Kiss contrasts this with (16), a case of focus in-situ:

- (16) a. Mary picked **a hat and a coat** for herself *entails*  
 b. Mary picked **a hat** for herself

In response to a *Wh*-question such as *What did Mary pick?* (16a) does indeed allow a new information reading. What Kiss does not acknowledge, however, is that in-situ focus in English, even in the absence of an *only*-phrase, may also be exhaustive or contrastive. Imagine (16a) in response to the yes-no question *Mary picked a handbag and an umbrella for herself, didn't she?* In other words, native speakers of English can freely assign a contrastive or exhaustive reading to focus in-situ, context permitting.

The second test (B), which Kiss attributes to Farkas (p.c.), states that, in a dialogue pair, exhaustivity can be negated (17), but not information focus (18):

- (17) A: It was **a hat** that Mary picked for herself  
 B: No, she picked a coat too
- (18) A: Mary picked **a hat** for herself  
 B: ?No, she picked a coat too

Intuitively, this test seems to work on the basis that it is odd to negate new information focus, because this does not imply the exclusion of other possibilities. Once more, however, Kiss presents too neat a picture of the English facts, claiming that focus in-situ is consistently new information focus.<sup>6</sup> Focus in-situ in English may correspond to either new information or exhaustive/contrastive focus, and this is determined entirely by discourse context. We would agree, however, that clefting in English does appear to be limited to exhaustive listing focus.<sup>7</sup>

Kiss's third test (C) states that identificational (exhaustive) focus cannot consist of the following: universal quantifiers; *something/somebody*; *even*-phrases; *also*-phrases. These distributional restrictions follow from semantic incompatibility, most noticeably with the universal quantifier. Examples (19a-f) exemplify exhaustive listing focus, whereas (19g) exemplifies new information focus. Example (19h), although involving displacement, is not a cleft but (according to Kiss) a topic structure. Once more, Kiss's claims for English are not fully consistent with native intuitions.<sup>8</sup>

- (19) a. \*It was **every hat** that Mary picked for herself  
 b. \*It was **everybody** that Mary invited to her party  
 c. ?It was **also a hat** that Mary picked for herself  
 d. \*It was **even a hat** that Mary picked for herself

<sup>6</sup> See also Szendrői (2001) for a critical discussion of Kiss's (1998) claims for Hungarian.

<sup>7</sup> Note however that an English cleft construction is not necessarily odd in response to a *Wh*-question, which suggests that this may not be a fail-safe means of eliciting new information focus. Indeed, Kiss suggests that in such cases (i) the focus is exhaustive but not contrastive (Kiss 1998:268(67)):

- i) A: Who wrote *War and Peace*?  
 B: It was **Tolstoy** who wrote *War and Peace*.

<sup>8</sup> Imagine (19g) in response to *Mary didn't invite anybody to her party*. This context would clearly license a contrastive interpretation.

- e. \*It was **even John** that Mary invited to her party
- f. ?It was **something** that Mary picked for herself
- g. Mary invited **everybody/even John** to her party
- h. Even John, Mary invited to her party

The fourth test (D) is based on the fact that identificational (exhaustive) focus (for Kiss, consistently ex-situ focus) is in an operator position and so enters into scope relations with other clause-mate operators, resulting in different scope-reading possibilities from in-situ focus. Scope readings are paraphrased in parentheses:<sup>9</sup>

- (20)
- a. For every boy, it was **Mary** that he wanted to dance with  
(Every boy wanted to dance with one girl only and nobody else)
  - b. It was **Mary** that every boy wanted to dance with  
(Mary was the only girl that all the boys wanted to dance with, but a smaller subset of boys may have wanted to dance with other girls as well)
  - c. Every boy wanted to dance with **the beauty queen**

In (20a) focus has narrow scope in relation to the universal quantifier, and in (20b) focus has wide scope in relation to the universal quantifier. In (20c), however, the proposition may be true in the context where all or some of the boys wanted to dance with more than one person, unlike in (20a). In other words, Kiss claims that (20c) does not receive an exhaustive focus reading. Once more, the facts as given by Kiss are not complete; although in the context of a *Wh*-question (20c) may receive a new information reading, the fact remains that in alternative contexts the focus could equally be interpreted as exhaustive, as Kiss claims for (20a).

Finally, in an earlier version of the (1998) paper, Kiss (1996) proposes a fifth test (E), attributed to Szabolcsi (1981): if a negative and a positive sentence containing focused DPs are co-ordinated, with one DP dropped from the positive one, and no contradiction results, then the type of focus involved is identificational (exhaustive) (Kiss 1996:31;44a):

- (21) It is not **Peter** and **John** that love Mary; it is **Peter** that loves her

We have applied these tests to the Hausa data, to which we turn in Section 4. In the meantime, having presented an overview of characterisations of focus on the basis of semantic type, as well as a recent approach which claims these types are syntactically distinguished, we turn now to a brief typology of the morphosyntax of focus.

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<sup>9</sup> Example (20a) may be paraphrased more naturally as: *As far as every boy was concerned, it was **Mary** that he wanted to dance with.*

### 3. Options for focus marking

It is well known that languages may manifest one or more from the following range of morphosyntactic or prosodic options as reflexes of focus:

- |      |    |                  |                                     |
|------|----|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (22) | a. | Focus in-situ    | English, Hungarian...               |
|      | b. | Focus movement   |                                     |
|      |    | • Clause-initial | English, Hausa...                   |
|      |    | • Pre-verbal     | Hungarian...                        |
|      |    | • Post-verbal    | Aghem (Bantu), Kanakuru (Chadic)... |
|      | c. | Focus markers    | Hausa...                            |
|      | d. | Focal stress     | English, Hausa...                   |

From this brief typology, it can be seen that languages frequently select more than one option from this set.<sup>10</sup> For example, both English and Hungarian display in-situ and ex-situ focus. A language that displays focus fronting or clefting is also likely to mark the displaced constituent with main sentential stress. Some languages, as we shall see with Hausa, display both displacement and the presence of a focus-marking morpheme within the same construction.

The issue that arises here is a theoretical one, which was touched upon in Section 1, and which is repeated here: given the Minimalist view of language as a perfectly economical system, we do not expect more than one means of achieving one interpretive goal. If a language has more than one focusing strategy, can each of these be established as corresponding to a distinct interpretive goal, or are interpretive ‘decisions’ forced by pragmatic factors?

It is clearly considerations of this nature that motivate approaches such as that of Kiss (1998), and which also, in part, motivate the present study. If we can establish that, in a given language, each distinct focusing strategy results in a distinct interpretation, then we can work towards upholding the view of language as a perfectly economical system in which redundancy and optionality do not exist. If, on the other hand, the empirical facts turn out to be inconsistent with this hypothesis, we are then forced to accept that optionality exists in the syntax, as well as at the interpretive level.

We turn here to a brief review of some of the theories which attempt to characterise explicitly the notion of economy with particular reference to focus. According to Cinque (1993), nuclear stress falls on the most deeply embedded constituent in a sentence by default, by means of the Nuclear Stress Rule (NSR). It follows from this that the ‘least costly’ focus in a sentence is one which contains nuclear stress, as this requires no ‘costly’ re-assignment of stress, which is termed by Cinque the ‘marked focus rule’. Reinhart (1995) builds upon these ideas to claim that if a language can achieve focus on constituents not containing nuclear stress by other means than re-assignment of stress (such as scrambling), it will do so, as these operations are ‘less costly’. Although various questions arise concerning the extent to which it is possible to define a ‘marked’ operation from a theory-internal perspective, it is nevertheless possible to offer the following intuitive explanation: PF operations, being ‘closer to the surface’, are strongly inclined towards generalisation (witness the consistency of prosodic processes), and strongly disinclined to allow exceptions. It follows from this that syntactic operations such as scrambling are ‘less costly’ than PF operations, and a ‘costly’

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<sup>10</sup> See Kiss (1995) for a survey of focus constructions in a range of languages, Tuller (1992) for a discussion of post-verbal focus in Chadic, and the introductory chapter in Rebuschi and Tuller (1999) for a historical overview of the syntactic analysis of focus within the generative tradition.

operation will only be licensed where it results in a distinct interpretation, or in other words, corresponds to a distinct interface goal: the notion of interface economy. In a similar vein, Zubizarreta (1998) claims that scrambling in Spanish is motivated by the objective of ‘stranding’ a constituent in nuclear stress position, by scrambling other constituents to a higher position. In other words, the grammar resorts to operations in the syntax in order to satisfy a PF constraint; such operations are termed ‘P-movement’.<sup>11</sup>

How does focus fronting fit into this picture? Neither Cinque (1993) nor Reinhart (1995) discuss focus fronting, but according to Zubizarreta (1998:92), “there are multiple ways of identifying the focus of a sentence: by means of prosody, morphology, or a syntactically specified position. In Germanic and Romance, the focus is prosodically licensed in statements, but syntactically licensed in questions.” In other words, while prosody licenses focus in some instances, in others it is licensed by a feature checking mechanism. What is not clear, however, is how we might measure the ‘cost’ of focus fronting (amongst other cases of displacement to a designated focus position), bearing in mind that, in many cases, the movement operation is accompanied by relocation of main sentential stress to the fronted constituent. Assuming ‘cost’ is measured by ‘complexity’, or number of operations, it seems that a ‘scale of cost’ might look something like (23).<sup>12</sup>

(23) FREE =====> COSTLY  
 NSR ==> P-MOVEMENT ==> MARKED STRESS RULE ==> DISPLACEMENT

The combination of these approaches therefore results in the following prediction: a language will not permit two (or more) focus-equivalent constructions, since one will always be less economical than the other. Any apparent optionality should reduce to distinct syntactic features related in turn to distinct interface goals (see also Brody 1996). We turn now to a consideration of the Hausa facts in relation to these issues.

#### 4. Focus constructions in Hausa

In this section, the Hausa data are presented; in Section 4.1 we examine the facts surrounding focus fronting in Hausa, and in Section 4.2 we explore the evidence for focus in-situ in Hausa. In Section 4.3 the results of the application of Kiss’s (1996; 1998) tests to the Hausa data are discussed. Firstly, for those unfamiliar with the language, we present a few facts about Hausa. Hausa is an SVO language, and, like many languages with a morphologically rich inflection system, a pro-drop language. Inflection (INFL) occurs as an independent word-level constituent, and may take one of two forms, ‘neutral’ and ‘focus’ (glossed as FOC), the latter traditionally labelled ‘relative’. ‘Focus’ INFL appears with focus fronting, *wh*-fronting, *wh-ever* and relative clause formation, so that it can be seen to correlate with movement, and functions as a diagnostic thereof.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> See Green (1997) for a discussion of inversion in English copular constructions as an instance of P-movement.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Chomsky (2000:101): “Move is more complex than its subcomponents Merge and Agree, since it involves the extra step of determining P(F) (generalized “pied-piping”).”

<sup>13</sup> The distinction between ‘neutral’ and ‘focus’ forms of INFL is morphologically marked; compare, for example, *kukà* (2pl. focus perfective) in example (24A) with *kun* (2pl. neutral perfective) in (25A). In some cases, the morphological distinction is limited to tone or vowel length; compare *ka* (short vowel: 2m. focus perfective) in (26A) with *kā* (long vowel: 2m. neutral perfective) in (29A). The term ‘focus marking’ is introduced by Jaggar (2001) on the basis of the view that the semantic term ‘focus’ is more descriptively accurate than the traditional term ‘relative’, given the range of related focus constructions in which this special inflection appears (see Jaggar (2001) chapter 6, footnote 4). Newman (2000:567), however, favours the

#### 4.1. *Ex-situ focus*

Focus fronting in Hausa is exemplified by (24)-(25). The element glossed as FM is a non-verbal copular focus marker, which agrees in number and gender with the left-adjacent focused constituent (*nē/cē/nē* m/f/pl, with polar tone).<sup>14</sup> We point out that, although the Hausa focus fronting examples given below are glossed as English clefts, they are not syntactic clefts, in the sense that they are not bi-clausal constructions (see Green 1997).

These data have been given in question-answer pairs (where upper-case A and B denote speakers in a conversational exchange); this discourse context enables us to clarify the distinction between semantic focus types, with caveats mentioned in Section 1. From these data, it appears that focus fronting is appropriate as either new information or exhaustive listing focus, and that the type of focus is determined by discourse context. The presence/absence of FM does not alter the type of focus, only its ‘impact’; native speakers describe it as ‘adding emphasis’. Note that, although the examples given here are limited to object focus, Hausa freely allows the focus fronting of any constituent, including VP (data from Jaggard 2001:494):

- (24) A: Wa<sub>i</sub> kukà ganī t<sub>i</sub> à kàsuwā?  
 who 2pl.FOC.PF see at market  
 ‘Who did you see at the market?’  
 B: **yārònkà**<sub>i</sub> (nē) mukà ganī t<sub>i</sub> *NI focus*  
 boy.of.2m (FM.m) 1pl.FOC.PF see  
 ‘It was **your boy** we saw’
- (25) A: Kun sàyi baƙaĩ mōtā?  
 2pl.pfbuy black.of car  
 ‘Did you buy a black car?’  
 B: Ā’ à, **ƙaraĩ** motā<sub>i</sub> (cē) mukà sàyā t<sub>i</sub> (bā baƙā ba) *EL focus*  
 no white.of car (FM.f) 1pl.FOC.PF buy NEG black NEG  
 ‘No, it was a **white car** we bought (not a black one)’

#### 4.2. *In-situ focus*

Jaggard (2001:496-98) has recently demonstrated that, contrary to received wisdom, and consistent with the facts for a number of other (West) Chadic languages, there is evidence for focus in-situ in Hausa. Some new data have therefore emerged, which we take the opportunity to discuss more fully here. As Jaggard points out, focus fronting is strongly preferred over focus in-situ, which perhaps explains why these facts have been overlooked in the literature to date. Nevertheless, the fact that such constructions are attested warrants an

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traditional term ‘relative marking’. See also Green and Reintges (to appear) and references cited there for further discussion on the syntactic conditioning of special inflection.

<sup>14</sup> See Green (1997; in press) for a full discussion of the contexts in which this element occurs, and arguments for treating this as a focus-marking morpheme; see also references cited there for alternative analyses. Transcription system: à / â = low tone; â = falling tone; high tone is unmarked. A macron over a vowel indicates length, e.g., ā is long, a is short. ƙ (K) = ejective; ɾ = apical tap/roll; c and j = palato-alveolar affricates. Abbreviations: DD = definite determiner; f = feminine; FM = focus marker; FUT = future; IMPF = neutral imperfective; FOC.IMPF = focus imperfective; m = masculine; NEG = negation; PCL = particle; PF = neutral perfective; FOC.PF = focus perfective; pl = plural; Q = question morpheme; s = singular; SUB = subjunctive.

investigation of their properties.<sup>15</sup> As the term ‘in-situ’ suggests, in these constructions (26)-(29) the focused constituent appears in its base position, INFL appears in the neutral form, and the focus is indicated by main sentential stress.<sup>16</sup> The contexts given indicate that, as with ex-situ focus in Hausa, in-situ focus is appropriate as either new information or exhaustive listing focus (data from Jaggat 2001):

- (26) A: Dàgà wà nè gārī ka zō ?  
 from which town 2m.FOC.PF come  
 ‘Which town do you come from?’  
 B: Nā tahō dāgà **Bīrnin Kwànni** *NI focus*  
 1s.PF come from Birnin Konni  
 ‘I come from **Birnin Konni**’
- (27) A: Wà nè kāyā kīkà mântā?  
 which things 2f.FOC.PF forget  
 ‘Which things did you forget?’  
 B: Nā mǎncē **jàkātā dà hūlātā** *NI focus*  
 1s.PF forget bag.of.1s and hat.of.1s  
 ‘I forgot **my bag and my hat**’
- (28) A: Kòfī zā kà shā kō kùwa shāyī?  
 coffee FUT 2m drink or else tea  
 ‘Will you drink coffee or tea?’  
 B: Zān shā **shāyī** *EL focus*  
 FUT.1s drink tea  
 ‘I’ll drink **tea**’
- (29) A: Kā aikà dà takārdār?  
 2m.PF send with paper.DD  
 ‘Did you send the paper?’  
 B: Ā’ à, nā aikà dà **littāfin** nē (bà takārdār ba) *EL focus*  
 no 1s.PF send with book.DD FM.m NEG paper.DD NEG  
 ‘No, I sent **the book** (not the paper)’

A number of noteworthy points arise in relation to these data. Firstly, it seems that subject focus is impossible in-situ; native speakers reject examples such as (30B):

<sup>15</sup> According to data collected so far from spontaneous discourse, the following descriptive statements can be made (see Jaggat 2001:496-98 for more details). Speakers of Standard (Kano) Hausa allow in-situ focus (and *Wh*-questions) more freely in constructions containing locative predicates (26B). Speakers of Eastern Hausa, however, allow in-situ focus more freely across the board, and are more likely to produce constructions like (27B) (28B), where these illustrate (direct) object focus in-situ. Nevertheless, it should be repeated that focus fronting is a strongly preferred option for all speakers.

<sup>16</sup> Impressionistically, the focus can be marked by means of higher pitch, especially on an initial high tone. This prosodic feature requires instrumental (pitch meter measurement) verification however, and is a subject for future research.

- (30) A: Su-wà sukà tàfi Amīrkà?  
 3pl-who3pl.FOC.PF go America  
 ‘Who went to America?’
- B: \*Su **Audù dà Mūsā** (nè) sun tàfi  
 3pl Audu and Musa (FM.pl) 3pl.PF go  
 ‘**Audu and Musa** went’

What renders (30B) ungrammatical is the absence of focus-marking on INFL (underlined), in a construction where the subject is in focus. It follows from this that subject focus (with or without fm) is only possible ex-situ, although string-vacuously, as in (31):<sup>17</sup>

- (31) Su **Audù dà Mūsā**<sub>i</sub> (nè) t<sub>i</sub> sukà tàfi  
 3pl Audu and Musa (FM.pl) 3pl.FOC.PF go  
 ‘**Audu and Musa** went’

Secondly, note the (optional) presence of FM in (29B). Jaggar (2001) analyses such examples as cases of in-situ focus, noting that the surface form of such constructions is identical to cases of sentence focus, where the focus is on the assertion of the truth value of the whole proposition (cf. (13)). We return to this discussion in Section 5, noting for the time being the problematic examples in (32):

- (32) a. \*Zân sàyi **mōtā** cē  
 FUT.1s buy car FM.f  
 ‘I’m going to buy a **car**’
- b. Zân sàyi **mōtā** nē  
 FUT.1s buy car FM.m  
 ‘I’m going to buy a **car**’

Example (32a) shows that, even when the postverbal element is a feminine gender noun (e.g., *mōtā* ‘car’), the clause-final FM cannot appear in its feminine form. This is true across the board, suggesting that, in cases where FM appears clause-finally, it is not agreeing with the constituent immediately left-adjacent to it, but with the whole sentence, in which case it

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<sup>17</sup> Asymmetry between subject and non-subject focus is also manifested in other Afroasiatic languages. In the related West-Chadic language Miya, for example, focused (and *wh-*) subjects require special forms of perfective and imperfective INFL (Schuh 1998:331), and in Somali (Cushitic), focused subjects occur in the absolutive (not nominative) case, and subject-verb agreement marking is reduced (Saeed 1999:192). However, although focus fronting is a licensed (and preferred) strategy for expressing new information focus in discourse-linked contexts like (24B), it should be pointed out that, as in English, it is not licensed in presentational ‘out of the blue’ contexts. For example, (24B) would not be appropriate as (the Hausa equivalent of) *Guess what? We saw **your son!*** In-situ focus would be the only possible strategy in this context, including subject focus, which otherwise only occurs ex-situ (see section 4.2):

- i) àlbishīrīnkà, mun ga **yārōnkà**  
 Good news.of.2m 1pl.PF see son.of.2m  
 ‘Guess what? We saw **your son!**’
- ii) àlbishīrīnkà, bàkîn sun isō  
 good news.of.2m guests.DD 3pl.PF arrive  
 ‘Guess what? **The guests** have arrived!’

defaults to the masculine singular form, as shown by the grammaticality of (32b). The data in (32), together with (30B), strongly suggest that the presence of FM correlates with ex-situ focus, so that in-situ focus cannot be marked with fm, from which it follows that cases like (29B) may be better analysed as sentence-focus.

A final question which arises in relation to focus in-situ is the following: since Hausa permits both ex-situ and in-situ focus, is it possible to find both co-occurring in a single construction? A few speakers find multiple focus constructions such as (33B) marginally acceptable, given an appropriate context, whereas constructions with more than one occurrence of FM, such as (34), are strongly rejected:

- (33) A: Kun ga mātātā à makařantā, kō?  
 2pl.PF see wife.of.1s at school Q  
 ‘You saw my wife at school didn’t you?’  
 B: Ā’ à, yārònkà (nē) mukà ganī à kàsuwā  
 no boy.of.2m (FM.m) 1pl.FOC.PF see at market  
 ‘No, we saw **your boy** at **market**’
- (34) \*Ā’ à, yārònkà nē mukà ganī à kàsuwā nē  
 no boy.of.2m FM.m 1pl.FOC.PF see at market FM.m  
 ‘No, we saw **your boy** at **market**’

#### 4.3. *Parallels between Focus and Wh*

We turn now to a brief review of parallels between focus and *wh*-constructions. It is well known that focus and *wh*-constructions tend to pattern together in terms of morphosyntactic properties. It is therefore unsurprising that Hausa also allows both ex-situ and in-situ *wh*-phrases, where these show the same properties as focus and differ from topics.<sup>18</sup> Examples (from Jaggar 2001:514,522) are given in (35) and (36). *Wh*-phrases are underlined:

- (35) Wà ka ganī? *ex-situ wh-phrase*  
 whom 2m.FOC.PF see  
 ‘Whom did you see?’
- (36) Sunà ìnā yànzū? *in-situ wh-phrase*  
 3pl.IMPF where now  
 ‘Where are they now?’ (Lit. ‘They are where now?’)

Example (36) illustrates an in-situ *wh*-construction with a non-verbal locative predicate.

#### 4.4. *Kiss’s (1996; 1998) tests applied to the Hausa data*

In this section, we return to a consideration of the semantic tests proposed by Kiss (1996; 1998). As discussed in Section 2, it is doubtful whether an approach of this nature can be upheld as a fail-safe approach to the identification of semantic focus types in English. As

<sup>18</sup>In Hausa, both focus-fronting constructions and *wh*-fronting constructions obey movement constraints, generally lack resumption, display the focus form of INFL, and prohibit multiple fronting (multiple focus/*wh*-constructions where the second focus/*wh* phrase is in-situ also tend to be rejected, with the possible exception of multiple *wh* constructions where the second *wh*-phrase receives an echo-interpretation [see Newman 2000:494]). The opposite holds in each case for topic constructions (see Jaggar 2001:538 and references cited there). As with focus in-situ, *wh*-in-situ is most common in non verbal locative sentences (36), although in Eastern Hausa, *wh*-in-situ is attested in verbal sentences, including direct and indirect objects (Jaggar 2001), although speaker judgements vary.

will be shown, the results for Hausa are similarly inconsistent. Native speakers were presented with examples of both in-situ and ex-situ focus, the latter both with and without fm. The findings for each test are briefly presented below, along with the relevant data.

With respect to **test A**, the findings are consistent with Kiss's claims, where (37a) (ex-situ) was judged not to entail (37b). The presence/absence of FM did not alter the judgements. For (38) (in-situ) an entailment relation was judged to hold.

- (37) a. **jākā dà hùlā** (nè) Audù ya sàtā *does not entail*  
 bag and hat (FM.pl) Audu 3m.FOC.PF steal  
 'It was **a bag and a hat** that Audu stole'
- b. **jākā** (cè) Audù ya sàtā  
 bag (FM.f) Audu 3m.FOC.PF steal  
 'It was **a bag** that Audu stole'
- (38) a. Audù yā sàci **jākā dà hùlā** *entails*  
 Audu 3m.PF steal bag and hat  
 'Audu stole **a bag and a hat**'
- b. Audù yā sàci **jākā**  
 Audu 3m.PF steal bag  
 'Audu stole **a bag**'

With respect to **test B**, however, the results were not consistent with Kiss's predictions. Speakers consulted judged the negation of both ex-situ focus (39b) and in-situ focus (40b) to be fine:

- (39) a. **Jākā** (cè) Audù ya sàtā  
 bag (FM.f) Audu 3m.FOC.PF steal  
 'It was **a bag** that Audu stole'
- b. Ā' à, yā sàci kuma **hùlā**  
 no 3m.PF steal also hat  
 'No, he also stole **a hat**'
- (40) a. Audù yā mǎncē **jàkařsà**  
 Audu 3m.PF forget bag.of.3m  
 'Audu forgot **his bag**'
- b. Ā' à, yā mǎncē kuma **hùlařsà**  
 no 3m.PF forget also hat.of.3m  
 'No, he also forgot **his hat**'

For **test C**, the findings were consistent with Kiss's predictions; (41)-(42) show examples with the universal pronoun *kōwā*, which speakers judged ungrammatical ex-situ. Judgements were also consistent for *something/somebody*, *even*-phrases and *also*-phrases, although the data are not given here. Note that (42b) contains a concessive generic *wh-ever*, which is homophonous with the universal, but, unlike the universal, licensed to appear only in focus-fronted position with a focus INFL:

- (41) a. Kōwā yanà sâ hùlā  
 everybody 3m.IMPF put hat  
 'Everybody wears a hat'

- b. \***kōwā** (nè) yakè sâ hùlā  
 everybody (FM.m) 3m.FOC.IMPF put hat  
 \* ‘It’s **everybody** who wears a hat’
- (42) a. Audù yā kirā **kōwā**  
 Audu 3m.PF call everybody  
 ‘Audu called **everybody**’
- b. Kōwā kikhà ganī...  
 whoever 2f.FOC.PF see  
 ‘Whoever you see...’

For **test D**, speakers were presented with examples where the universal quantifier takes scope over focus in-situ (43a), and where focus (ex-situ) takes scope over the universal (43b). However, they were unable to make clear judgements concerning scope differences. This is unsurprising, since scope judgements are notoriously difficult to access.

- (43) a. Kōwànè yārò yanà sô yà àuri **Kànde**  
 every boy 3m.IMPFwant 3m.SUB marry Kande  
 ‘Every boy wants to marry **Kande**’
- b. **Kànde** (cè) kōwànè yārò yakè sô yà àurā  
 Kande (FM.f) every boy 3m.FOC.IMPF want 3m.SUB marry  
 ‘It’s **Kande** that every boy wants to marry’

Finally, with respect to **test E**, the results were consistent with Kiss’s predictions, in that, for speakers consulted, the ex-situ construction (44a) did not result in a contradiction, but the in-situ construction (44b) did:

- (44) a. Bā **Audù** dà **Mūsā** ba nè Kànde takè sô ...  
 NEG Audu and Musa NEG (FM.pl) Kande 3f.FOC.IMPF love  
 ‘It’s not **Audu** and **Musa** that Kande loves...’
- ... **Audù** (nè) takè sô  
 Audu (FM.m) 3f.FOC.IMPF love  
 ... it’s **Audu** she loves’
- b. #Kànde bā tà sôn **Audù** dà **Mūsā**...  
 Kande NEG 3f.IMPF love Audu and Musa  
 ‘Kande doesn’t love **Audu** and **Musa**...’
- ... tanà sôn **Audù**  
 3f.IMPF love Audu  
 ... she loves **Audu**’

To conclude this section, the following descriptive generalisations are in order: with respect to the morphosyntax of focus, Hausa allows both ex-situ and in-situ focus, although ex-situ focus is strongly preferred. The (optional) presence of FM is strongly indicative of ex-situ focus, where either a phrasal or a clausal constituent is fronted. It is only ever possible to find one occurrence of FM per clause, including multiple focus constructions, where these are judged marginally acceptable. In-situ focus appears to be limited to non-subject constituents, and is especially common with locative and prepositional phrases in constructions with non-verbal predicates.

With respect to the semantics of focus, it would appear from spontaneous discourse in Hausa that both in-situ and ex-situ focus constructions (the latter with or without *fm*) are licensed to be interpreted as either new information or exhaustive listing focus, and that the type of focus is entirely determined by discourse context, in other words, pragmatically determined. This is confirmed by the fact that Kiss's predictions are not borne out for Hausa consistently.<sup>19</sup> On the basis of both the English and the Hausa facts we conclude that, although Kiss's approach uncovers some interesting facts concerning the semantics of focus, the view that there is a direct correlation between the morphosyntax of focus and the semantics of focus cannot be upheld.

## 5. Minimalist analysis of in-situ and ex-situ focus

### 5.1. *Ex-situ focus*

We turn finally to the syntactic analysis of focus constructions in Hausa, from a Minimalist perspective, beginning with ex-situ focus. In Green (1997; in press) the standard analysis of the 1990s was assumed for focus fronting in Hausa, where [+focus] is a grammatical feature visible to the computational system, or narrow syntax (NS) in Chomsky's more recent vocabulary. According to this analysis, the focused constituent raises to SpecFP, and *FM* optionally instantiates the head of FP. Example (45) shows an FP analysis for (24B):

(45) [FP [Spec *yār̀̀nka*<sub>i</sub>] [F' [F (nē)] [IP [Spec Pro] [I [<sub>I</sub> mukà] [VP [V' [V *ganī*] [NP *t<sub>i</sub>*] ]]]]]]]]

This operation 'Move' is assumed to be driven by a feature-checking requirement 'Attract *f*' (Chomsky 1995), whereby the computational system requires the checking of 'strong' features within the spec-head configuration of a functional projection. It was argued that this focus feature [+F] may be strong in Hausa for this displacement operation to be possible, and that, as a [+interpretable] feature, this survives to contribute to interpretation at LF. The attraction of this analysis for Hausa, as for many other languages, is that [+focus] and [+*wh*] pattern together in their morphosyntax (as distinct from the morphosyntax of topics), with the added benefit that the analysis for focus fronting can be extended to copular constructions (Green, in press). Note, though, that the emergence of new facts concerning focus in-situ in Hausa would necessitate an analysis whereby [+F] is optionally [+/- strong].

There are several problems with this analysis. Firstly, as a number of researchers have pointed out (Zubizarreta 1998; Kidwai 1999, among others) the [+F] feature violates Chomsky's (1995) Inclusiveness Condition; focus is not an inherent lexical property of any given XP. Secondly, the [+/- strong] distinction lacks explanatory power, particularly for a phenomenon like focus which frequently defies neat statements of parametric variation. This in turn relates to the final point: as Chomsky frequently points out, focus and other 'stylistic' or discourse-related departures from canonical word-order demand a different kind of explanation from issues of core syntax and structure-building.

A number of these issues are addressed in more recent versions of the Minimalist Program. According to Chomsky (2000) there are two operations occurring within the computational system: Merge (a basic structure-building operation) and Agree (the matching of syntactic features). The operation Move consists of both Merge and Agree, and is

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<sup>19</sup> It is fair to point out, however, that judgements concerning semantic relations are far less likely to be reliable than straightforward grammaticality judgements, so that our findings directly in relation to Kiss's predictions remain tentative. This difficulty is compounded by the fact that ex-situ focus is strongly preferred, which may also affect judgements.

therefore a more complex and less economical operation, occurring only when no ‘cheaper’ alternative will yield the same outcome. Move targets specifier positions of ‘core’ functional categories C, T and v, and is motivated by EPP features on the head (so-called because they result in positions not determined by lexically-driven basic structure-building). EPP features are uninterpretable, or nonsemantic, and are erased by Agree under Match (where features of ‘probe’ and ‘goal’ match) within a local domain. Spell-Out occurs cyclically by ‘phase’, so that the [+/- strong] distinction is no longer valid; there is no single ‘moment’ between pre- and post-Spell-Out for a given derivation. The notion of ‘phase’ is elaborated by Chomsky (2001a): a phase consists of a functional head and the substantive XP it selects as a complement. Chomsky (2001b) goes on to define vP and CP as ‘strong phases’ - those eligible for Spell-Out, since these are both ‘propositional’ constructions.

Chomsky (1995; 2000) articulates the distinction mentioned above between ‘stylistic’ operations and basic structure-building by suggesting that ‘stylistic’ operations might occur at PF rather than as part of the the core syntax, an analysis developed by Kidwai (1999). Chomsky (2001a) further states that, while displacement in the ‘narrow syntax’ might yield semantic effects, displacement within PF should not. We might interpret this statement as capturing the idea that ‘stylistic’ operations such as focus movement do not affect the core semantics of the construction. Chomsky (2001a) further suggests that, while displacement operations may affect the semantics of the outcome, the displacement operations are not themselves *driven* by semantic features: “a ‘dumb’ computational system shouldn’t have access to considerations of that kind, typically involving discourse considerations and the like. These are best understood as properties of the resulting configuration.” (Chomsky 2001a:27). Related to this is the idea that there may be ‘optional’ EPP features: those which may be assigned to X at the stage of lexical selection only if they result in an outcome which yields a distinct interpretation at the interface. This articulation of optionality and economy is attributed to Reinhart (1993 [1997]).

Chomsky (2001b) further articulates these ideas. External Merge, or basic structure-building is associated with argument structure. Internal Merge (Move) is “motivated by nontheta-theoretic C-I conditions: scopal and discourse-related (informational) properties in particular.” (Chomsky 2001b:11). Chomsky (2001b:11) also states clearly that a given head is assigned an EPP feature “only if that yields new scopal or discourse-related properties... Informally, we can think of [EPP features] as having the ‘function’ of providing new interpretations; ... such functional accounts are eliminated in terms of mechanisms.”

It is worth noting that ‘discourse-related’ displacement is no longer attributed to the phonological component in Chomsky (2001a; 2001b). The phonological component is responsible only for determining temporal order over the configuration determined by the narrow syntax. Furthermore, despite cyclic Spell-Out, Chomsky (2001b:9) states that internal Merge can apply either before or after Transfer, the operation that passes the output of syntactic computation to the phonological and semantic components, hence the overt/covert distinction is maintained.

In summary, then, we might suggest the following revised Minimalist theory of ex-situ focus: F has a focus-EPP feature; this feature is not an inherent lexical feature, but is introduced into the derivation because it is the mechanism responsible for reaching an otherwise unavailable interface goal, or interpretation. Therefore, under this revised framework, it is no longer a problem that focus is not an inherent lexical feature. As far as the syntactic computation is concerned, this feature is uninterpretable, and must therefore be eliminated as a consequence of the operation Agree. If Agree takes place by means of Move and internal Merge before Transfer, the result is overt displacement (ex-situ focus). The Agree operation takes place when the goal (moved XP) and the probe (head of the left-peripheral functional projection CP/FP) have a matching feature.

What is responsible for parametric variation in this version of the Minimalist program? In the absence of [+/- strong] as a property of features, it remains unclear what determines overt versus covert movement, or vice-versa. As will be clear from the preceding discussion, the phenomenon of focus marking in many cases resists neat statements in terms of parameters. Nevertheless, if the uninterpretable feature mechanism is held responsible for matters of core syntax (such as internal Merge to eliminate phi-features and case) in addition to matters of scope and discourse, this issue remains to be resolved. We return below to the question of optionality.

Having considered the status of focus within recent versions of the Minimalist Program, we might propose the following revised analysis of focus fronting in Hausa: optional FM occupies the head of the left-peripheral functional projection; we continue to label this FP, since for independent reasons this projection must be distinct from CP in Hausa.<sup>20</sup> Both the phrase XP and the head F that has the uninterpretable focus-EPP feature are active with respect to the same focus feature, which is eliminated by Move, internal Merge and Agree prior to Spell-Out, resulting in overt movement. Note that the resulting structure for an example of ex-situ focus like (24B) is not distinct from (45), as we expect; only the status of the mechanism concerned is viewed differently.<sup>21</sup>

### 5.3. *In-situ focus*

The analysis of in-situ focus follows straightforwardly from the theory outlined above. The only difference is that the uninterpretable focus-EPP feature is eliminated by Move, internal Merge and Agree post Spell-Out, resulting in covert movement. The focused phrase is spelled out in-situ, together with its phonological reflex.<sup>22</sup>

A number of points of theoretical interest arise here. Firstly, recall that the theory proposed by Kiss (1998) for Hungarian and English requires that the computational system be sensitive to semantic focus type, so that there are two distinct focus features, one resulting in ex-situ focus, and the other resulting in in-situ focus. The alternative view is that the computational system is not sensitive to semantic focus types, and that interpretation is directed by discourse-pragmatic factors. This view is assumed here, on the basis of the fact that in Hausa, semantic focus type is not transparently reflected in surface syntax, so that there is insufficient motivation for two distinct focus features.

The second point of theoretical interest arising in relation to the Hausa data concerns the scope of focus, which appears to be less clearly delimited for in-situ focus than for ex-situ focus.<sup>23</sup> Consider the example of in-situ focus given in (46):

- (46) Sunà ginà sābuwaĩ **makařantā**  
 3pl.IMPF build new.of school  
 ‘They’re building a new **school**’

<sup>20</sup> Overt COMP may precede focus-fronted XP in embedded sentences; see Green (1997).

<sup>21</sup> With thanks to Jacqueline Lecarme for helpful discussion of this section. See also Lecarme (1999).

<sup>22</sup> For an alternative to the covert movement analysis, see Green and Reintges (2003).

<sup>23</sup> A phenomenon that Kiss refers to as ‘focus projection’. See (Kiss 1998) and references cited there.

Such examples are ambiguous with respect to scope of focus, which is determined by discourse context, plausibly on a Relevance-theoretic basis (Sperber and Wilson 1995).<sup>24</sup> Example (46) may serve as a natural response to (the Hausa equivalents of) any of the following:

- |      |    |                         |                   |
|------|----|-------------------------|-------------------|
| (47) | a. | What's happening?       | <i>scope = IP</i> |
|      | b. | What are they doing?    | <i>scope = VP</i> |
|      | c. | What are they building? | <i>scope = NP</i> |

For cases with clause-final FM, whether or not we assume IP movement, the same range of interpretations is permitted.

A point of theoretical interest worth noting here is that, in each of the cases in (47), the focused constituent contains nuclear stress, in the sense of Cinque (1993). This is interesting in the light of recent claims relating to theoretical economy, which were outlined in Section 3. In the light of these claims, the following explanation of the facts surrounding in-situ focus in Hausa suggests itself: subject focus in-situ is ruled out because the subject does not contain nuclear stress. In other words, only constituents containing nuclear stress may be focused in-situ, and these constituents include IP, VP and object NP, but exclude the subject NP in isolation.

Can these facts be explained on the basis of the economy considerations outlined in Section 3 above? Perhaps these focusing possibilities arise from the fact that no 'extra' operations, either syntactic or prosodic, are required. In the case of subject focus, however, Hausa has a choice between a syntactic operation (focus fronting) or a PF operation (the marked focus rule). Why does Hausa choose the syntactic 'option'?

It is worth making explicit here the different levels of optionality relevant to this paper. For Chomsky, optionality in relation to EPP features might be interpreted as determining the difference between a construction that is marked for X (say, focus) and one that is not. On the other hand, the level of optionality discussed in Section 3, and which is of interest here in relation to subject focus in Hausa, concerns the distinction between marking X (focus) by means of reflex Y or reflex Z. What unites these levels of optionality, though, is the question of economy. If a construction is marked for focus at all, by a process of displacement, this is 'justified' in economy terms by the output: an enriched interpretation at the interface. Economy considerations also come into play in determining which option for marking focus is preferred, assuming that more 'costly' options must again be justified by the output. What

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<sup>24</sup> Relevance Theory aims to explain linguistic (and non-linguistic) information processing on a cost-benefit basis, such that an 'optimally relevant' utterance will interact with speaker knowledge and context in such a way that it results in maximum benefit (in the form of creating new assumptions or strengthening or weakening existing assumptions) at minimum cost, where cost is measured in terms of processing effort. Against the background of this theory, Sperber and Wilson (1995: 202-17) discuss the interpretation of focus. They describe the range of possible focus interpretations arising from the placement of focal stress in final position. Only one possible interpretation (in terms of the scope of focus) will be relevant in a given context, since it must interact with the context to yield some benefit. If we apply this model to example (46), it is interpreted against one of the following contextually determined assumptions (the 'focal scale'):

- |    |    |   |
|----|----|---|
| i) | a. | Something's happening/what's happening?             |
|    | b. | They are doing something/what are they doing?       |
|    | c. | They are building something/what are they building? |

Against the assumptions in (ia, b & c) the scope of focus is determined as IP, VP or NP respectively, since only a match between context and focus will result in optimal relevance.

remains to be clarified is the relationship between morphosyntactic and prosodic options for marking focus.

We turn now to briefly review two recent treatments of focus which emphasise the role of the phonological component. Kidwai (1999) develops a theory of focus wherein the [+F] feature drives displacement, but this displacement takes place within the phonological component, under conditions of linear adjacency to a verbal projection. The [+F] feature is checked by a verbal projection, Kidwai argues, on the basis that in many languages the focus position is local to the verbal projection. Kidwai proposes that [+F] is [+PF interpretable], so that it can be licensed at any of the PF-internal levels: by PF-movement, by morphology, or by prosody. According to Kidwai, optionality follows from this analysis; movement is not forced, since the [+PF interpretable] [+F] feature can be spelled out in other ways. This is similar in spirit to Chomsky's (2001b:16) statement that an uninterpretable feature "must be transferred to [the phonological component] by transfer before it is eliminated, since it may have a phonetic reflex". In other words, although Chomsky (2001a; 2001b) no longer implies that discourse-related phenomena occur in the phonological component, both theories suggest that the phonological component can 'see' the focus feature. In Kidwai's model, PF feeds into Domain Discourse (DD), where [+F] is interpreted, rather than assuming that the [+F] is LF-related. She therefore builds into the model a sharp semantic/pragmatic distinction, reminiscent of Chomsky's (1995; 2000) position on 'stylistic' phenomena. Kidwai's treatment of optionality is particularly appealing, but this theory leaves questions unanswered for languages in which the focus position is not local to VP, including Hausa where non-verbal copular sentences also have a focus position.

Szendrői (2001) proposes an economy-driven stress-based account of focus. In this view (an analysis in parts reminiscent of Zubizarreta 1998), focus is always related to main stress, either as the result of the NSR, of movement to NSR position, of scrambling to strand a constituent in NSR position, or of the relocation of main stress to a non-NSR position. In all cases, focus resulting from NSR is the unmarked or 'free' case; all other options are marked or 'costly', and what determines the 'option' chosen by a given language is the ranking of constraints within an Optimality Theory framework. Marked operations are only justified by interpretation at the interface (after Reinhart 1995). Unlike Zubizarreta (1998) and Kidwai (1999), Szendrői argues that there is no motivation for a [+F] feature in the syntax at all, since focus is driven by stress. This analysis works for Hungarian, because the designated focus position happens also to be the (left-peripheral) NSR position; in other words, the constituent is moved into the position where it can receive main stress by the NSR. Within an Optimality Theory framework, Szendrői states that Hungarian prefers a syntactic operation rather than a prosodic one (relocate main stress), because prosody is 'ranked' higher than syntax, and therefore violations of syntax are preferred. For a language like English, on the other hand, syntax is ranked higher than prosody, so that a violation of prosody is preferred; hence the relocation of main stress for marked focus in English. Szendrői does not discuss focus clefting in English, however, which raises similar questions to those raised by focus fronting in Hausa: given that the constituent moved to a designated syntactic position is prosodically marked in both cases, what motivates the movement, and what is the economy status of such operations? It seems, therefore, that although Szendrői's stress-based analysis provides an appealing explanation for certain phenomena, it does not provide grounds for a comprehensive theory of focus.

In keeping with a number of these economy-based theories, the Hausa in-situ focus facts suggest that there is some basis for the view that there is a relationship between prosodic operations and syntactic operations. If Hausa selects the post-Spell-Out option for Agree (in-situ focus), this is restricted to cases where there is no necessity for a marked prosodic operation to apply. To this extent, the relevant claims in the literature are upheld, which in

turn necessitates a model such as those proposed by Zubizarreta (1998) and Szendrői (2001), in which syntactic processes are ‘sensitive’ to prosodic constraints. On the other hand, the economy status of focus fronting in Hausa, and indeed, clefting in English, does not accord with these predictions: as outlined in Section 3, we might view these operations as the most costly of all, and in neither case do they necessarily yield a distinct interpretation.<sup>25</sup>

## 6. Conclusions

A number of conclusions, both descriptive and theoretical, can be drawn from this study. For ease of exposition, these are presented in list form.

### 6.1. *Descriptive conclusions*

- Contrary to previous descriptions, Hausa has focus in-situ, although ex-situ focus is strongly preferred. In-situ focus appears to correspond to either new information or exhaustive listing focus, dependent on the discourse context (like focus in-situ in English, contra Kiss 1996; 1998). This option appears to be limited to constituents which contain nuclear stress, although elaboration on this point requires further investigation into the prosodic properties of the language.
- Focus fronting in Hausa also appears to correspond to either new information or exhaustive listing focus, dependent on the discourse context.
- The (optional) presence of FM is strongly indicative of ex-situ focus, and does not appear to alter the semantic type of focus; native speakers describe it as ‘adding extra emphasis’. Furthermore, it is only ever possible to find one occurrence of FM per clause, including multiple focus constructions, where these are judged marginally acceptable.

### 6.2. *Theoretical conclusions*

- In the light of these facts, it is misguided to look exclusively to morphosyntactic reflexes to distinguish semantic focus types.
- It follows that a range of morphosyntactic options is permitted for encoding each semantic focus type, so that the computational system is not sensitive to semantic focus type, and so that focus type is pragmatically determined. It follows that a direct correlation between morphosyntax of focus and semantics of focus, such as that proposed by Kiss (1998), where in-situ focus equals new information focus, and ex-situ focus equals exhaustive listing, cannot be upheld for Hausa, nor indeed for English.
- In the absence of a semantic feature-based distinction, the Agree operation that eliminates the uninterpretable focus-EPP feature in Hausa is licensed to operate either overtly or covertly. In either case, the feature survives to PF, where it is spelled out phonologically.
- There are no empirical grounds for viewing either option as the ‘optimal derivation’, although Hausa displays a strong preference for ex-situ focus in general. There is, however, limited support for recent claims in the literature that there is a relationship between prosodic operations and syntactic operations: if Hausa selects the post-Spell-Out option for Agree (in-situ focus), this appears to be restricted to cases where there is no necessity for a marked prosodic operation to apply.

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<sup>25</sup> The picture is further complicated by the fact that in-situ focus is licensed in presentational focus contexts in Hausa (see note 17).

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