CHAPTER 7

EKEGUSII OPERATOR MOVEMENT

7.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter sheds light on the wh-operator and its interaction with focus in EkeGusii. Specifically, it describes the syntax of wh-movement and focus. Section 7.2 investigates how the wh-movement operation is derived, while section 7.3 addresses nature of focus.

7.1 WH-MOVEMENT

Question formation involves the fronting of wh-phrases, which are typically DPs, PPs ADVPs, and is obligatory in many languages. The underlying assumption in wh-movement is that the wh-constituent in English, for example, is an internal argument at D-structure which moves from its canonical position inside the VP to an empty [Spec, CP] position (Haegeman 1994; Huang 1996; Carnie 1999, among others). Such successive cyclic A-movement to [Spec, CP] where the wh-phrase checks the [+Q] feature of C\(^0\) occurs only after the wh-phrase is merged in its \(\theta\)-position. Carnie (1999) formulates the wh-movement operation as a rule in (1):

(1) Move a wh-word to the specifier of CP to check a wh-feature in C.

Once the wh-phrase is merged in its \(\theta\)-position, it makes successive A-movement to the Spec of CP position

As will be shown presently, the rule in (1) explains why wh-phrases do not occupy the [Spec, TP] position in Bantu languages such as Kinyarwanda, Dzamba, Kitharaka and Zulu (Sabel & Zeller 2006). This generalization is expected to hold in EkeGusii and universally since the [Spec, CP] site on which the wh-phrase lands is a non-argument position. Noteworthy at the outset is the fact that argument wh-phrases
can appear *ex situ* as well as *in situ* "but never in the structural position" (Sabel & Zeller 2006:271). (2) exemplifies *ex situ* wh-objects in EkeGusii:

2  (EkeGusii)  
(a) **N-ki/**  ku-á-ri-a t.?  
FOC-what  2SG-PST-eat-FV  
‘What, did your eat t.?’  

(b) **N-ki/**  ba-ó-gor-a t.?  
FOC-what  3PL-PST-buy-FV  
‘What, did they buy t.?’  

(c) **N-ngo/**  ba-ó-ror-a ti?  
FOC-who  3PL-PST-See-FV  
‘Who, did they see t.?’  

(d) **N-ngo/**  Bosibori  a-ó-rang-e-r-a t.?  
FOC-who Bosibori  3SG-PST-call-FV  
‘Who did Bosibori call’?  

(e) **N-ki/**  Prudence  a-ó-nyor-a t.?  
FOC-what Prudence  3SG-PST-get-FV  
‘What, did prudence get t.?’  

(f) **N-ngo/**  Prudence  a-ó-anch-et-e ti?  
FOC-what Prudence  3SG-PST-like-PFV-FV  
‘Who, does Prudence like t.?’  

The data in (2) indicate that wh-objects move from their base-generated positions and land in the left periphery of the clause. As happens in Zulu (Sabel & Zeller 2006), EkeGusii embedded wh-phrases may make either partial or full

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1 The possibility of occurrence of example 2 (a), for example, as ‘Ku-a-gor-a ki?’, i.e. ‘You bought what?’ is not a typical wh- *in situ* case since it is an echo question.
movement. In full movement, the \textit{wh}-phrase lands in the left periphery of the matrix clause while partial movement involves dislocation within the embedded CP as in (3):

3 (Eke Gusii)

(a) \([\text{CP } \text{O-ko-rengi-a} \ [\text{CP } \text{n-ki} \ a-\text{o-ror-a}]] \) (Partial movement)

\begin{align*}
2\text{SG-PROG-think-FV} & \quad \text{that FOC-what } 3\text{SG-PST-see-FV} \\
\text{‘What do you think s/he saw?’}
\end{align*}

(b) \([\text{CP } \text{N-ki} \ o-\text{ko-rengi-a} \ [\text{CP } \text{naa-\text{o-ror-a}]}] \text{(Full movement)}

\begin{align*}
\text{FOC-what } 2\text{SG-PROG-think-FV} & \quad \text{that 3SG-PST-see-FV} \\
\text{‘What do you think s/he saw?’}
\end{align*}

(c) \([\text{cp } \text{O-ko-rengi-a} \ [\text{cp } \text{n-ki} \ a-\text{kir-er-a}]] \text{(Partial Movement)}

\begin{align*}
2\text{SG-PROG-think-FV} & \quad \text{that FOC-what } 3\text{SG-keep-quiet-APL-FV} \\
\text{‘Why do you think she kept quiet?’}
\end{align*}

(d) \([\text{CP } \text{N-ki} \ o-\text{ko-rengi-a} \ [\text{CP } \text{n-ki} \ a-\text{kir-er-a}]]

\begin{align*}
\text{FOC-what } 2\text{SG-PROG-think-FV} & \quad \text{that 3SG-Keep.quiet-APL-FV} \\
\text{‘Why do you think she kept quiet?’}
\end{align*}

(e) \([\text{CP } \text{O-ko-rengi-a} \ [\text{CP } \text{n-ki} \ a-\text{kir-e ra}]] \text{(Partial movement)}

\begin{align*}
2\text{SG-PROG-think-FV} & \quad \text{that FOC-what } 3\text{SG-Keep.quiet-APL-FV} \\
\text{‘Why do you think she kept quiet?’}
\end{align*}

(f) \([\text{CP } \text{N-ki} \ o-\text{ko-rengi-a} \ [\text{CP } \text{n-ki} \ m-buat-e]] \text{(Full movement)}

\begin{align*}
\text{FOC-what } 2\text{SG-PROG-think-FV} & \quad \text{that 1SG-have-FV} \\
\text{‘What do you think I have?’}
\end{align*}

As will emerge in section 7.1.2, the data in 3 (a) to (f) are consistent with Sabel & Zeller’s (2006) restriction which states that the landing site of the \textit{wh}-phrase originating in the embedded VP is either the left periphery of the embedded CP in
partial movement or the matrix CP in full movement and in neither case is the wh-
phrase in Spec TP (cf Haegeman 1994; Carnie 1999).

Section 7.1.2 describes the syntax and semantics of such wh-phrases as they
occur in EkeGusii by drawing upon some of the existing research findings in Bantu
languages.

7.1.2 THE SYNTAX OF WH-MOVEMENT IN EKEGUSII

As shown in (2), wh-objects in EkeGusii are realized by the two wh-words ki- and
ngo which move to [Spec, CP] and, therefore, they appear ex situ. However, in
Kinyarwanda, Kiswahili and Gikuyu, wh-phrases may occur in situ as well as ex situ:

4 (Kinyarwanda, Sabel and Zeller 2006:273)
(a) Umugore jiše nde?
Woman killed who
'Who did the woman kill'?

(b) Ni-nde Umugore jiše?
FOC-who woman kill
'Who did the woman kill'?

5 (Kiswahili)
(a) U-na-tak-a nini?
2SG-PRES-want-FV what
'What do you want?'

(b) Ni nini u-na-cho-tak-a?
FOC what 2SG-PRES-OM-want-FV
'What do you want?'
(Gikuyu, Schwarz, to appear)

(a) abdul a-ra-nyu-ir-e kee?
A. SM-T-drink-ASP-FV What
‘What did Abdul drink?’

(b) ne-kee abdul a-ra-nyu-ir-e?
FM-what A. SM-T-drink-ASP-FV
‘What did Abdul drink?’

The moved wh-constituents in EkeGusii of the kind encountered in (2) have as their antecedents lexical DPs as (7) suggests:

7 (EkeGusii)

(a) Omw-ana o-ø-mer-a en-tetere.
   1-child 3SG-PST-swallow-FV 9-seed
   ‘The child swallowed a seed.’

(b) N-ki, omw-ana o-ø-mer-a t?
   FOC-what 1-child 3SG-PST-swallow-FV
   ‘What did the child swallow?’

(c) Omw-ana o-ø-at-a eke-rasi
   1-child 3SG-PST-break-FV 7-glass
   ‘The child broke a glass.’

(d) N-ki, omw-ana o-ø-at-a t?
   FOC-what 1-child 3SG-PST-break-FV
   ‘What did the child break?’
While English *wh*-subjects undergo vacuous movement to occur in Spec CP, the movement of *ex situ* *wh*-phrases in Zulu, Kinyarwanda, Kitharaka and EkeGusii to focus position is obligatory as shown in (8)\(^2\):

8 (Eke Gusii)

(a) *Ngo o-ø-ak-a baba?

  Who 3SG-PST-hit-FV mother

  ‘What hit my mother?’

(b) N-ngo o-ø-ak-a baba?

  FOC-who 3SG-PST-hit-FV mother

  ‘Who hit my mother?’

(c) *Ngo o-ø-ch-a?

  Who 3SG-PST-come-FV

  ‘Who came?’

(d) *Ki gi-á-ch-a?

  What 7-PST come-FV

  ‘What came?’

(f) N-ki gi-á-c ch-a?

  FOC-what 7-PST-come-FV

  ‘What came?’

(g) *Ki ki-á-mo-ak-a

  What 7-PST-3SG-hurt-FV

  ‘What hurt him/her’?

(h) N-ki ki-á-mo-ak-a

  FOC-what 7-PST-3SG-hurt-FV

  ‘What hurt him/her?’

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\(^2\) EkeGusii *wh*-movement is obligatory as it cannot occur *in situ.*
Sabel & Zeller (2006) posit that the ban on the occurrence of *wh*-phrases in Bantu languages in Spec TP can be accounted for with reference to a parameter stated for Bantu as (9):

9 \[ *\text{Wh-in-Spec TP} \]

Sabel & Zeller contend that (9) is a restriction resulting from the preference for focused constituents to not appear in subject position. The licensing of *wh*-phrases in focus-marked positions is not surprising since *wh*-constituents are inherently focused and are intended to provide new information. As the data in (8) show, the moved *wh*-objects are licensed in the left periphery only by focus. Considering that they contain the features [+wh] and [+focus], they cannot occur in Spec TP, a position earmarked for topics. Topicalized lexical DPs may scramble leftwards as far as matrix clause initial position as in (10):

10 (EkeGusii)

(a) Omw-ana n-ki Sinclair a-ø-teeb-a a-ø-ri-a?
   ‘What did Sinclair say the child ate?’

(b) Kerubo n-ki Bosibori a-ø-teeb-a a-tag-et-e?
   Kerubo FOC-what Bosibori3SG-PST-say-FV 3SG-want-PFV-e
   ‘What did Bosibori say Kerubo wants?’

(c) Chi-sese n-ki chi-go-kog-er-a
   10-dog FOC-what 10-PROG-bark-API-FV
   ‘Why are the dogs barking?’

The occurrence of elements preceding focused constituents has been reported also in, for example, Gikuyu (Schwarz, to appear):

11 (Gikuyu, Schwarz, to appear)

Abdul ne-mae a-ra-nyu-ir-e
A. FM-6 water 5M-T-drink-ASP-FV
   ‘Abdul drank water.’
Examples like (10) and (11) indicate that the TopP occupies a position higher than the FocP in the extended CP-projection.

*Wh*-movement in EkeGusii proceeds within the constraints applicable to *wh*-movement universally. For example, the language obeys the ban on extraction from phenomena termed islands. The complex NP is one such island out of which extraction is not permissible as is shown in (12):

12 (EkeGusii)

(a) Atandi a-egen-et-e e-nkwana ŋa Omari na-ø-ib-a e-mbori.
Atandi 3SG-believe-PFV-FV 9-talk that Omari FOC-PST-steal-FV 9-goat
‘Atandi believes the talk that Omari stole a goat.’

(b) * N-ki Atandi a-egen-et-e enkwana ŋa Omari na-ø-ib-a?
FOC-what Atandi 3SG-believe-PFV-FV talk that Omari FOC-ø-steal-FV
‘*What does Atandi believe the talk that Omari stole?’

(c) Bosibori o-ø-gechi-bw-a na e-nkwana ŋa Omari na-ib-a e-mbori.
Bosibori 3SG-PST-be.annoyed-PASS-FV with 9-talk that Omari FOC-steal-FV 9-goat
‘Bosibori was annoyed with the talk that Omari stole a goat.’

(d) *N-ki Bosibori a-ø-gechi-bw-a na e-nkwana ŋa Omari na-ib-a?
FOC-what Bosibori 3SG-PST-get.annoyed-FV with 9-talk that Omari FOC-steal-FV
‘*What did Bosibori get annoyed with the talk that Omari stole?’

While the interrogative pronoun *ngo* moves singly to [Spec CP], the [+wh] feature of the *wh*-determiner may percolate into the lexical DP, for example, and, therefore, the *wh*-determiner pied-pipes the DP into the Spec of CP position as in (13):

13 (EkeGusii)

(a) M-bi-rogo ki mw-a-gor-a t?
FOC-8-chair which 2PL-PST-buy-FV
‘Which chairs did you buy?’
As is well known, the *wh*-word does not always pied-pipe the entire *wh*-phrase. For example, EkeGusii may either pied-pipe the preposition or strand it as in (14):

14  (EkeGusii)

(a) N-korua a-i a-ø-sok-a?
    FOC-from 16-where 3SG-2SG-emerge-a
    “From where did s/he emerge?”

(b) ṅ-a-i a-ø-sok-a korua?
    FOC-16-where 3SG-PST-emerge-FV where
    “Where did s/he emerge from?”

(c) ṅ-gochia a-i ba-ø-rag-a?
    FOC-to(wards) 16-where 3PL-PST-point-FV
    ‘At what did they point? (lit ‘To where did they point?’)

(d) ṅ-a-i ba-ø-rag-a gochia?
    FOC-16-where 3PL-PST-point-FV to(wards)
    ‘What did they point at?’

In a nutshell, what section 7.1.2 has shown is that *wh*-phrases may appear in situ or ex situ in some Bantu languages but EkeGusii prefers the ex situ position. To account for the optionality of *wh*-in situ, Sabel and Zeller (2006) argue that the [+wh] feature in CΦ is weak and therefore does not trigger movement as opposed to the strong [+focus]-feature which demands checking by Spec FocP in Bantu languages.
exhibiting focus-marked *wh*-phrases in the left periphery. This reasoning accounts for the parametric variation notable in Romance and Bantu with regard to the syntax of *wh*-phrases.

### 7.2 EKEGUSII FOCUS

In a discussion of *ex situ* focus in Gikuyu, Schwarz (to appear) correctly argues that the syntax of focus constructions is intertwined with that of *wh*-movement. *Ex situ* focus constructions in some Bantu languages such as Kiswahili, Gikuyu and EkeGusii involve a particle whose syntax and semantics remain unresolved in the literature. In Gikuyu, the particle is /ne-/ while in EkeGusii, it is /na-/ and its allomorph /n-/. In both languages, the particle precedes the focused constituents as the examples in (15) and (16) show:

15 (Gikuyu, Schwarz, to appear)

(a) *nc-kce abdul a-ra-nyu-ir-e?*

FM-what A. SM-T-drink-ASP-FV

‘What did Abdul drink?’

(b) *ne-mae abdul a-ra-nyu-ir-e*

FM-water A. SM-T-drink-ASP-FV

‘Abdul drank water’.

16 (EkeGusii)

(a) *N-ki a-ø-tag-et-e?*

FOC-what 3SG-PST-want-PFV-FV

‘What does s/he want?’

(b) *N-eri-tunda a-ø-tag-et-e*

FOC-5-fruit 3SG-ASP-want-FV-FV

‘He wants a fruit’.

(c) *N-ki a-ko-rigi-a?*

FOC-what 3SG-PROG-look.for-FV

‘What is s/he looking for?’
In both languages, the question word and the lexical DP which answers the question occur in the focus position where they are preceded by the focus markers /ne/ and /n/ in Gikuyu and EkeGusii, respectively. Divergent proposals have been made to characterize the syntax and semantics of this particle. For example, Kingston (1983) views it as a "stabilizer" while Cammenga (2002) notes that the morpheme is homomorphous with existential or identificatory /na-/ and n-/. Such indeterminacy in the characterization of the particle explains why two conflicting analyses of the same exist in the literature. Sabel & Zeller (2006) and Bergvall (1987) analyze wh-constructions containing the morpheme as cleft constructions as shown in (17):

17 (Zulu, Sabel & Zeller 2006:272)
(a) Y-\textit{ini} o-y-bona-yo?
\begin{tabular}{l}
COP-what9 RC2\textsuperscript{nd}SG-OC9-see-RS
\end{tabular}
‘What is it that your see?’

(b) Ng-\textit{ubani} o-m-bona-yo?
\begin{tabular}{l}
COP-who1a RC2ndSG-OC1a-see-RS.
\end{tabular}
‘Who is it that you see?’

Conversely, in Kinyarwanda, the particle is glossed as a focus marker as in (18):

18 (Kinyarwanda, Sabel & Zeller 2006:274)
(a) Ni-\textit{nde} u-ise umunhu?
\begin{tabular}{l}
FOC-who SP-killed man
\end{tabular}
‘Who killed the man?’

(b) Ni-\textit{nde} u-is-we na umunhu?
\begin{tabular}{l}
FOC-who SP-kill-PASS by man
\end{tabular}
‘Who was killed by the man?’
Cognizant of the fact that the semantics of the focus particle is unclear, Schwarz (to appear) identifies its distribution in Gikuyu as occurrence before the focused phrase, copula construction usage and preverbal position in some declaratives. The choice as to whether the analysis of the particle proceeds as a cleft sentence or a focus marker seems to stem from such distributional properties. While Sabel & Zeller (2006) consider the particle as an instance of clefting, Schwarz (to appear) suggests that the particle be analyzed as a focus marker.3

The temptation to treat /n-/ as a copula verb in EkeGusii arises from translations such as those in (19):

19  (EkeGusii)
(a) Ongarora n-omw-arimu (a-re)
    Ongarora FOC-1-teacher (3SG-be)
    'Ongarora is a teacher.'

(b) Bosibori n-omo-rem-i (a-rc)
    Bosibori FOC-1-farmer-AS (3SG-be)
    'Bosibori is a farmer.'

(c) Nyasuguta n-omo-nyagitari (a-re)
    Nyasuguta FOC-1-doctor (3SG-be)
    'Nyasuguta is a doctor.'

It should be noted that the optional verb 'be' is ordinarily dropped in constructions such as those in (19), thereby leaving the focus marker in copula function. Further, since the focus marker can co-occur with 'be' as in (20), the association of this verb with focus semantics is debatable:

3 The cleft construction analyses do not identify the particle as a copula verb. Cammenga (2002) observes that although Eke Gusii /na-/ has linking use, it differs from the English copula verb. This reasoning is also found in Bergvall's (1987) analysis of Gikuyu.
20 (Eke Gusii)

(a) Ongarora na-a-re omo-enenu.
Ongarora FOC-3SG-be 1-rude
‘Ongarora is rude’.

(b) Ogoti na-a-re omw-ango.
Ogoti FOC-3SG-be 1-prompt
‘Ogoti is prompt’

(c) Bosibori na-a-re omo-kiriru
Bosibori FOC-3SG-be 1-reticent
‘Bosibori is reticent.’

The argument being advanced here is that the focus marker does not arrogate
itself the proto-typical properties of a copula verb by reason of the absence of the verb
‘be’ as in the constructions in (19). Accordingly, the particle /n/- marks focus here.
Further evidence that /n/- signals focus comes from (21) in which the focused complements are replaceable by focused wh-phrases:

21 (Eke Gusii)

(a) Ongarora a-re omo-tindi.
Ongarora 3SG-be 1-strict
‘Ongarora is strict’

(b) Ongarora n-omo-tindi a-re.
‘Ongarora FOC-1-strict 3SG-be
‘Ongarora is strict’.

(c) Ongarora n-ki a-re?
Ongarora FOC-what 3SG-be
‘What is Ongarora?’

21 (a) shows that the verb ‘be’ is the prototypical copula in EkeGusii while 21
(b) and (c) exemplify ex situ focus in which the complements of ‘be’ move into focus
position. The analysis of the wh-phrase introducing element as an exemplar of focus has been proposed for Kinyarwanda while the copula analysis has been preferred for Zulu (Sabel & Zeller 2006: 273):

22 (Kinyarwanda, Sabel & Zeller 2006: 273)
Ni-nde umugore jise?
FOC-who woman kill
‘Who did the woman kill?’

23 (Zulu, Sabel & Zeller 2006:272)
Ng-ubani o-m-bona-yo?
COP-who1a RC2 nd SG-OC1a-See-RS
‘Who is it that you see?’

Disregarding the debate as to the status of ni and -ng in (22) and (23), what is common in both analyses is the fact that the moved wh-phrases receive focus in both types of construction.

7.2.1 /n-/ AND THE FocP ANALYSIS

Following Brody (1990), Kiss (1998) and Rizzi (1990), Schwarz (2006) postulates the existence of a focus phrase (FocP) within an extended CP-projection with the structure in (24):

24

FP
Spec FP
F'
F
[+F]

YP

In this configuration, Schwarz (to appear) is in agreement with Sabel & Zeller (2006) in which, as has been argued, wh-movement is triggered by a strong [+focus]
feature in C which needs checking. XP then moves into the Spec of FocP position to be in a checking relation with C.

In the analysis of Gikuyu in Bergvall (1987), *ne* is said to be used for making an assertion in a cleft construction. However, Schwarz (to appear) argues against the cleft sentence approach, noting that *ne* appears in questions and other clauses which are not assertions and that the approach fails to account for topicalization of subjects which precede *ex situ* wh-phrases or their antecedents as in, for example, (25):

25 (EkeGusii)
   (a) Mama n-ama-tunda a-ø-gor-a.
   Mama FOC-6-fruit 3SG-PST-buy-FV
   ‘My father bought fruits.’

   (b) Kerubo n-e-chae- a-ø-nyu-a.
   Kerubo FOC-9-tea 3SG-PST-drink-FV
   ‘Kerubo drank tea.’

   (c) Mama ne-emi-ongo a-nch-et-e.
   Mother FOC-4-pumpkin 3SG-like-PFV-FV
   ‘My mother likes pumpkins.’

Furthermore, constructions of the sort in (25) are amenable to the extended CP-projection in which the TopP and FocP are available in the syntax to accommodate the topic and focus postulates.

Although the syntax and semantics of wh-movement and focus constructions in Bantu languages are inconclusive, a FocP-based analysis as presented in Schwarz (to appear) seems to be on the right track among the current theoretical approaches to the phenomenon. Further, Sabel and Zeller’s (2006) view that a strong [+focus] feature triggers wh-movement is consistent with Schwarz’s proposal. This reasoning also fits into the parametric choices between *in situ* and *ex situ* focus.