Focus and wh in Jamaican Creole: Movement and exhaustiveness[1]

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1 Introduction

Wh & ex-situ focus constructions in Creoles have been analysed in terms of movement to the left periphery (Saramaccan: Aboh (2006), Jamaican: Durrleman (2008), Papiamentu: Kouwenberg & Lefebvre (2007)) and as clefts (Haitian: Lumsden & Lefebvre (1990) Manfredi (1993), Jamaican: Patrick (2007), Veenstra (2008)). Our goal is to reassert the cartographically-rooted left-peripheral account, as in Rizzi (1997; 2004a) and related work.

We consider data from Jamaican Creole (JC) but we believe the analysis extends to other Creoles. Section 2 shows that JC focus and *wh*-questions involve internal rather than external merge. Section 3 explains why a cleft analysis cannot account for these properties. Section 4 summarizes and sharpens the arguments in favour of the left-peripheral approach, originally developed in Durrleman (2008), and discusses the driving force for movement and its interpretive correlates. Section 5 suggests that the formal difference between exhaustive and contrastive focus is at the root of some of their distributional properties. Section 6 is the conclusion.

2 Focus/*wh* in JC: External merge or internal merge in the left periphery?

Several considerations militate in favour of the thesis that the focused constituent in JC is internally and not externally merged.[2]

The grammaticality of (1) is naturally explained if the focused constituent containing the anaphor *imself* reconstructs into a position c-commanded by the subject. Reconstruction is a property of movement.

(1) A fi   imself Jan   did   tiif da mango de
     A Prep himself John Past   steal Det mango there
     'It's FOR HIMSELF that John stole that mango'

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[2] See e.g., e.g. Koopman (1984; 2000), Manfredi (1993) and Aboh (2006).

Preposition stranding in JC is accompanied by modification in the form of the preposition, *fi → fa,* when followed by what is arguably a silent copy of the *wh*/focus-moved constituent.

(2)   a. Im bring aki   fi /* fa di   pikni-dem
          3s bring ackee Prep   Det child-pl
          'S/he brought the ackee for the children'

      b. A (h)uu im bring dat *fi/ fa?
          A who   3s bring that Prep
          'Who did s/he bring that for?'

Durrleman (2008) proposes that JC *fa* licenses a *wh*-trace, while *fi* does not and hence must select an overt lexical object.[3]

Rizzi (1997: 292) argues that fronted Focus is quantificational. One diagnostic for quantificational movement is weak crossover. (3) shows that fronted focus in JC is sensitive to this condition.

(3)   A Jiemz$_i$ im$_{*i/k}$ muma lov bad
      A James 3s   mother love bad
      'It's JAMES his mother loves a lot'

Focalisation cannot cross a *wh*-island, (4b), further evidence that it involves movement and not external merge in a peripheral position.

(4) a. Jan no   nuo   weda   (ar nat) Piita wi gi   im uman   wan Blakberi   fi
        John neg know whether (or not) Peter will give 3s woman one blackberry Prep
        Krismas
        Christmas
        'John doesn't know whether (or not) Peter will give his companion a Blackberry for
        Christmas'

     b. *A   wan Blakberi   Jan no   nuo   weda   (ar nat) Piita wi gi   im uman
        *A   one Blackberry John Neg know whether (or not Peter will give 3s woman
        fi   Krismas
        Prep Christmas
       'John doesn't know whether (or not) Peter will give his companion A BLACKBERRY for
       Christmas'

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[3] See da Cruz (1997) on a similar alternation in Fongbè prepositions.

3 JC focus is not a cleft

Having shown that the focused/*wh* constituent in JC is moved to an ex-situ position as opposed to being merged there, we now turn to the question of its landing site.

Much of the debate surrounding *wh* interrogatives and fronted focus in Creole has centred on the properties of a particle that appears in these constructions, *a* in JC:

(5) a. (A)-huu put i de?   (Bailey 1966)
         a-who   put it there
         'Who put it there?'

     b. (A)-we unu pudong   unu kluoz?   (op. cit.)
         a-where 2pl put-down 2pl clothes
         'Where have you (pl) put your clothes?'

(6) a. Mi tingk se a di   buk Piita riid
         1s think se *a* Det book Peter read
         'I think that it's A BOOK that Peter read'

     b. Yu nuo   se a nyam im nyam di   mango
         2s know se *a* eat   3s eat   Det mango
         'You know that what s/he did was EAT the mango'

In (5), *a* is optional with *wh* movement. In (6), which illustrates DP and predicate focus, *a* is obligatory. This distribution is discussed in section 4.

A number of authors argue that focalisation in JC is akin to (perhaps bi-clausal) cleft formation and that, by implication, *a* is a copula. *A* is clearly a copula in equative constructions, such as (7). Cassidy (1961: 56, 59) and others believe that *a* is also a copula in (5) and (6).

(7)   Mi muma a   wan   tiicha
        1s mother Cop   one   teacher
        'My mother is a teacher'

For us, the *a* in (5) and (6) is different from copular *a* in (7). We argue that focus/*wh a* is an exhaustiveness marker merged with a constituent that undergoes movement to the left

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periphery (see Horvath 2010, on which the core of our analysis is modelled).

Durrleman (2008) argues that if *a* is a copula, then it requires a subject. Since there is no overt subject to the left of *a* in these examples, one must assume that it is a null expletive. However, JC disallows null expletives in embedded contexts, as shown by the contrast in (8), but allows focus with *a* in exactly the same context, (9).

(8) a. (I)   komiin laik se di pikni a   go   ron we
        Expl seem   like se Det child Prog Prosp run away
        'It seems like the child is going to run away'

    b. Im tel mi se *(i)   komiin laik se di   pikni a   go   ron we
       3s tell 1s *se* (Expl) seem   like se Det child Prog Prosp   run away
       'S/he told me that it seems like the child is going to run away'

(9) im tel mi se a   di   buk im riid (no di   magaziin)
     3s tell 1s se *a* Det book 3s read (Neg Det magazine)
     'S/e told me that he read THE BOOK (not the magazine)'

Another difference between copular *a* and *a* associated with focus/*wh* is that while a copula can easily be preceded by the tense-marker *did* in (10), focus/*wh a* may not, (11).

(10) Mi muma did   a   di   bes out a   aal a unu
     1s mother Past Cop Det best out of   all of 2pl
     'My mother was the best out of all of you'

(11) Yu nuo   se (??did) a mi muma (did) a   di   bes out a aal a unu
     2s know *se* (??Past) *a* 1s mother (Past) Cop Det best out of all of 2pl
     'You know that MY MOTHER was the best out of all of you'

Copular *a* occurs only with predicate nominals, but not with AP or PP predicates.

(12) Jan a   wan tiicha /mi faada /*kris   /*upa steidium
     John Cop one   teacher 1s father /handsome /up.at stadium
     'John is a teacher/ my father/*handsome/*up at the stadium'.

Fronted focus constructions can all be preceded by focus *a*, independently of their category.

(13) a. a loud loud im plie im radio
       a loud loud 3s play 3s radio
       'S/he plays his radio LOUDLY'

   b. a krievn im krievn
      a greedy 3s greedy
      'S/he is GREEDY'.

   c. a unda di   bed dem fain i
      a under Det bed 3pl   find it
      'Where they found it is UNDER THE BED'.

Another indication that these focus constructions do not fit into the 'pro-expletive [equative copular] XP CP' mould comes from the absence of complementisers and relative pronouns. JC mesolectal varieties which optionally display the complementiser *dat* in relative clauses, never manifest it in focus-background articulations, (Roberts (1980:34)).

An English cleft construction such as (14a) may involve an embedded *that*, since the complement of the focused constituent is a full CP. In Italian focus-movement, however, the complement of Focus^0 is not a full CP and hence, the complementiser cannot appear in (14b).

(14) a. It's an analysis of the left periphery that we propose.

   b. Un analisis   della   periferia sinistra (*che) propongono
      An analysis of+the   periphery left   (*that) propose-1Pl

Perhaps JC focus is a case of (hidden) relativisation? If so, one would expect the occurrence of the relative pronoun *we* of (15) in a focus construction.

(15) mi en si di uman we gaan a maakit   (Bailey 1966:101)
     1s Past see Det woman Rel go   to market
     'I had seen the woman who has gone to the market'

This is not what is found. A focus structure such as (6b) above cannot manifest *we*.

(16) *Yu   nuo   se a nyam we im nyam di   mango
       2s   know se *a* eat   Rel 3s eat   Det mango

'You know that what s/he did was EAT the mango'

In (17), a DP containing a relative clause is focused but *we* appears between the head of the relative and its modifier and crucially not after the entire relative clause.

(17)　A di tiela we a　　mek wan suut fi　mi mia　 kom from　　　　(Bailey 1966:102)
　　　 a Det tailor Rel Prog make one suit Prep 1s 1s Prog come from
　　　 'I am coming from the tailor's who is making my suit'

Belletti (2009, ch. 10) observes that clefts functioning as answers manifest a subject-object asymmetry. In French, for example, a question targeting the subject can be answered by a cleft but not a question targeting an object. In JC, both subject answers, (18b), and object answers, (19b), are grammatical with *a*.

(18)　Q:　A huu tiif　di bedfruut?
　　　　　 a who steal Det breadfruit
　　　　　 'Who stole the breadfruit?'

　　　 A:　A yu breda　(tiif　i)
　　　　　 a 2s brother (steal it)
　　　　　 'YOUR BROTHER (stole it)'

(19)　Q:　A huu yu waan si?
　　　　　 a who 2s want see
　　　　　 'Who do you want to see?'

　　　 A:　A Jan　(mi waahn si)
　　　　　 a John (1s want see)
　　　　　 'JOHN (I want to see)'

The absence of a subject-object asymmetry in JC strongly suggests that a cleft is not involved. Rather, JC focalisation resembles focus movement to the left periphery in e.g., Hungarian, where a subject-object asymmetry of this kind also fails to arise.

(20)　Q:　ki　　　　lopta　el　a　pénzt?
　　　　　 Who-Nom stole-3s Perf Det money-acc
　　　　　 'Who stole the money?'

A: a   bátyád   (lopta el)
      Det elder brother-poss-nom (stole Perf)
      'YOUR OLDER BROTHER (stole it).'

(21) Q: kit   láttál?
           who-acc saw-2s-indef.object
           'Who did you see?'

A: a   bátyádat   (láttam)
      Det elder brother-poss-acc (saw-1s-def.object)
      'YOUR OLDER BROTHER (I saw).'

Clefts resist appearance inside a relative clause, while left-peripheral focus is possible in this context, Aboh (2006). In light of this observation, the JC examples below once again strike a contrast with clefts and demonstrate an affinity with left-peripheral focus.

(22) a. Mi tel yu bout di   uman   we a tiif   im tiif   fi   sen   im pikni-dem go skuul
        1s tell 2s about Det woman Rel *a* steal 3s steal for send 3s child-Pl   go school
        'I told you about the woman who STEALS to send her children to school'.

     b. Mi nuo   dat   gyal we a chrii difran   man im ha   pikni fa
        1s know Dem girl Rel *a* three different man 3s have child Prep
        'I know a girl who has children for THREE DIFFERENT MEN'.

 4 Obligatory and optional *a*: The impact of exhaustiveness

The examples in (5) and (6) illustrate that *a* is obligatory with focus but optional with *wh*. This was observed by Veenstra and den Besten (1995: 310):

   "in Jamaican Creole, the highlighter *a* is optionally used with *wh*-words, but due to decreolization it is disappearing."

An account for the optionality of *a* with *wh* in terms of a decreolization process does not explain why it should be affected in this selective manner. We are therefore led to look for a different explanation.

Durrleman (2008) demonstrates that fronted focused constituents - obligatorily realized with

a - are interpreted exhaustively. In-situ focus is interpreted non-exhaustively.[4] In other words, JC distinguishes the two structurally.[5]

(23) a. A [wan bami   an   wan bredrut]   Mieri bai.
          a one   bammy and one breadfruit Mary buy
          'What Mary bought was (only) ONE BAMMY AND ONE BREADFRUIT.'

      b. ⇏ A wan bami   Mieri bai.
          a one bammy Mary buy
          'What Mary bought is (only) ONE BAMMY.'

(24) a. Mieri bai   [wan bami   an   wan bredfrut].
          Mary bought one   bammy and and breadfruit
          'Mary bought ONE BAMMY AND ONE BREADFRUIT'

      b. ⇒ Mieri bai   wan bami.
          Mary bought one bammy
          'Mary bought ONE BAMMY.'

We now present additional arguments in support of Durrleman's thesis, adapting diagnostic tests discussed in Horvath (2010). We then develop a syntactic implementation of focus movement, combining elements from Durrleman (2008) and Horvath (2010).
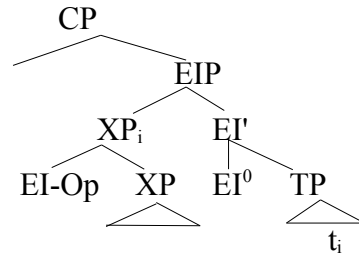
Horvath (2010) argues that it is not a focus feature as such that drives movement, but a formal feature on an E(xhaustive) I(dentification) operator.[6] This operator is optionally merged with a constituent and attracted by a left-peripheral functional head EI^0 (as originally proposed in Durrleman 2008, using different terminology). Movement of the focused phrase is diagrammed in (25) (adapting Horvath's (34)).

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[4] The examples in (23) and (24) are based on one of Szabolsci's (1981) tests for exhaustiveness: The entailment in (23b) does not go through because the set specified by the focused constituent must be maximal.
[5] Several other Creoles manifest exactly this state of affairs. We have verified the data in Krio and Guyanese.
[6] She argues extensively that focus is not a computational feature at all, a point which is challenged by the Italian data in Rizzi (1997).

(25)

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                    CP
                   /  \
                      EIP
                    /      \
                 XPᵢ          EI'
                /  \         /    \
           EI-Op   XP     EI⁰     TP
                    △              △
                                   tᵢ
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In Hungarian, focus movement has the import of exhaustiveness.[7] The EI operator is responsible for an identification operation performed on the membership set of a constituent lying within its c-command domain. It identifies the exhaustive, i.e., maximal, proper subset of this set for which the predicate holds (see Horvath 2010; Kenesei 1986; Szabolcsi 1981).

In exhaustive focus, the exhaustiveness of the identification of the focused subset can be denied (É. Kiss (1998).) The following discourse fragment, drawn from Horvath (2010: 1359), illustrates this effect. In A's answer to the question in (26), *John* is focused. B challenges this answer by denying that *John* is the unique member of the set of persons called-up. In so doing. B challenges the entailment of exhaustiveness in A's utterance. B''s utterance is infelicitous in this context because it does not constitute a denial of the exhaustive import.[8]

(26) Q: Who did they call up?

    A: [JÁNOST]   hívták   fel
          John-ACC   called-3PL   up
          'They called up JOHN'

    B: Nem igaz. MARIT   is   felhívták
          Not true. Mary-ACC also up-called-3PL
          'Not true. They also called up MARY.'

    B':   #Igen. Es (felhívták)   MARIT   is
          Yes   and up-called-3PL MARY-ACC also
          'Yes. And (they called up) MARY too.'

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[7] But see Beaver & Onea (2011) for a demurring view.
[8] Speaker B''s utterance would be felicitous if Hungarian focus were (merely) corrective, as it is in e.g., Italian, (Bianchi & Bocci 2013).

Fronted focus in JC also induces an exhaustiveness entailment, as we saw in (23) and (24). (27) - modelled on the Hungarian exchange in (26) - further illustrates this.

(27) Q: A huu di   bwai kaal?
           a who Det boy   call
         'Who did the boy call?'

   A: a MIERI
         a Mary
       'MARY (is who).'

   B: Na   sa. Yu   stei   de   fiil so! Im kaal di   oda   gyal tu.
         Neg   sir. 2S   stay   there   feel so! 3S call Det other girl too.
         Wa   im neim agen? LATOYA.
         What 3s name again? LATOYA.
         'No way. You go ahead believing that! He also called the other girl. What's her
         name? LATOYA'.

   B':   #Yes. An   a Latoya im kaal tu.
         Yes.   And *a* Latoya 3s call too
         '#Yes. And LATOYA (is who) too'.

In-situ focus in JC, (see (24)), resembles in-situ focus in English. Thus, (28b) is a logical consequence of (28a), as Szabolsci (1981) notes. The discourse in (29) is infelicitous because A's answer does not entail that John was the only person called up and hence B's assertion is inappropriate (Horvath's (28) and (29)).

(28) Q: Who did they call up?
      a. They called up JOHN AND MARY.
      b. They called up JOHN.

(29) Q: Who did they call up?
      A: They called up JOHN.
      B: #Not true. They also called up MARY.

Consider now the exchange in (30) (modelled on Horvath's (22) and (23).)

(30) Q: we   yu tingk mi kyan fain out bout di   bus shedul?
          Where 2s think 1s can   find out about Det bus schedule
          'Where do you think I can find out about the bus schedule?'

      A: yu   kyan luk   pan intanet far instans   ar yu kyan cal mi fren
          2s   can look   on internet for instance or you can   call 1s friend
          we   tek dat-de   bus aal   di   taim
          who take that-there bus all   Det time
          'You can look on internet for instance or you can call my friend who takes that bus
          all the time'

      B: #a pan intanet far instans   ar bai mi fren   yu kyan fain out
          a   on internet for instance or by 1s friend 2s can   find out
          '#It's ON INTERNET for instance or by my friend (that) you can find out'

B's utterance is inappropriate. The question in (30) can be answered by supplying some but
not all values. A's answer, in this context, does not entail exhaustiveness and is implemented
by focus in-situ (without *a*.) B's answer is infelicitous because the use of *a* entails that the two
options provided, namely, looking for the schedule on the Internet or asking a friend, are the
only two options. Expressions such as *far instans* 'for instance' are distinctly infelicitous with
a, because they precisely reinforce the non-exhaustive property of a given list.

Adapting Horvath's analysis (see (25)) to JC is straightforward. Take *a* to be EI-Op,
optionally merged with some constituent inside the clause. Movement to the left periphery is
driven by the need to satisfy the *Exhaustiveness Criterion* - modelled on Rizzi's (2006)
discussion of *Criteria* – by moving the *a*-marked constituent to Spec/EIP. This yields an
immediate explanation for the position of *a* to the left of the focused constituent in the left
periphery. It transpires that there is no focus movement per se in JC and hence no Focus
Phrase in the left periphery. Movement is driven by the need to satisfy the Exhaustiveness
Criterion, not a putative Focus Criterion.

Unlike focalized constituents, *wh* phrases obligatorily move to the left periphery; JC does not
have non-echoic single *wh* in-situ.

Durrleman (2008) notes that the presence of *a* in a *wh* question requests a maximal and
exhaustive answer. Without *a*, the question does not require the maximal set, as any

contextually-relevant subset will do. It is inaccurate to describe *a* as optional.[9]

In JC, as in Krio and Guyanese, negative existential 'nobody' can felicitously answer a question in which the *wh* expression is not preceded by *a* but not when it is: (31b) is an appropriate answer to (31a), unlike (31c).

(31) a. huu nyam di   aki   we mi mek?
       Who eat   Det ackee Rel 1s make
        'Who ate the ackee that I made?'

    b. nobadi neva nyam i caw   i tu mash-op   mash-op.
       Nobody never eat   it because it too mashed-up mashed-up
        'Nobody ate it because it is exceedingly mushy.'

    c. ??a nobadi neva nyam i caw   i tu mash-op   mash-op.
       a nobody never eat   it because it's too mashed-up mashed-up

To account for obligatory *wh*-movement in JC, independently of exhaustiveness, we assume that a specialized *wh* head attracts a *wh*-phrase to its specifier.

When the *wh*-phrase is preceded by *a*, it must move to Spec/EIP. Both *wh* movement and exhaustive focalisation are quantificational and the question arises why movement of the *wh*-phrase from one specifier to the other does not violate *Criterial Freezing*, (Rizzi 2006, Rizzi & Shlonsky 2007). A suggestion in Rizzi (2004b; 2006)) and further developed by Bocci (2007) provides a technical solution to this problem. The idea is that heads containing multiple features can be formed through head movement. In the case at hand, the *wh* head incorporates to the EI head (or vice versa). This complex head probes EI and *wh* simultaneously, attracting the *wh* phrase.[10] This implementation correctly predicts that exhaustive *wh* and exhaustive focus cannot co-occur in the left periphery as they target the same position.

(32) a. *a wen a di   bami   im kyari
         a when a Det bammy 3sg carry
         Lit: 'When THE BAMMI did he bring?'

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9   See Muysken (1977) for similar observations regarding the Papiamentu question particle.
[10] Unlike JC, Hungarian *wh* questions are always exhaustive, Brody & Szendrői (2010). It is as if *wh* questions were always preceded by *a*. Perhaps this means that in Hungarian, the *wh* head invariably moves to EI.

b. *a di   bami   a wen   im kyari
    a Det bammy a when 3s carry
      Lit: 'THE BAMMI when did he bring'

Wh phrases in the left-periphery block long focalization, (4), and left peripheral focus blocks long *wh*-movement, (33). These are clearly cases of intervention, in the sense of Relativized Minimality, attributable to the quantificational feature shared by focus movement and wh movement (Rizzi (2004a)).

(33) *(a) hu   yu tingk se a di   bami   im gi?
   (*a*)   who 2s think that *a* Det   bammy 3s   give

Left peripheral focalization in Italian and English is not exhaustive, (Brunetti 2004; È. Kiss 1998), Yet, both *wh* movement and focus movement are mutually exclusive (at least in root clauses). Rizzi (1997) argues that they target the same position and Rizzi (2004a) that they share a quantificational feature.[11] Pursuing the latter idea, suppose that the head which is activated in both *wh* movement and focus-fronting in Italian-like languages is not a focus head, per se, but a generalized quantificational head, i.e., a criterial probe for a quantificational feature, but one which is unmarked for the specific features [wh] or [focus]. The determination of the clause as a question does not depend on the features of this particular head but on the combination of features on the wh phrase itself and a [Q] feature, Baker (1970), presumably merged in a higher head and accessible to selection in embedded contexts, (see Liptàk (2001) and, in a different framework, Cable (2010).)

Contrastive/corrective focus -which is non truth-functional (generating different implicatures but not different entailments from its non-focus counterpart) receives its particular flavour pragmatically. For Bianchi & Bocci (2013), corrective focus requires contrast across utterances. For this reason, they suggest, it must have access to the root of the clause. However this is implemented, such a "structured meaning" approach to left peripheral focus in Italian would consist of a syntactic quantifier which, itself, is linked to the root of the clause and to the discourse.

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[11] They are both sensitive to weak crossover and license parasitic gaps. These quantificational properties of Italian focus-movement argue against its treatment as an interface strategy in the sense of Reinhart (2006) and Neeleman and van de Koot (2008).

Exhaustive focus does not require comparison across utterances and is licensed without access to the root of the clause. Unlike contrastive/corrective focus, it is associated with a specialized functional head in the left periphery.

5 On some differences between exhaustive and contrastive focus

We now turn our attention to the following tentative generalization.

(34) Exhaustive focus is licit in (central) adverbial conditional clauses while corrective/contrastive focus is not.

Haegeman (2010) attributes the ungrammaticality of (35) to Relativized Minimality. She argues that temporal and central conditional clauses are formed by operator movement to the left periphery. The operator associated with adverbial clauses cannot cross over the quantificational fronted phrase (a topic or focus in English, a focus in Italian).

(35) a. *If these exams you don't pass, you won't get the degree. (Haegeman's (9a))

     b. ??Se   LA PROVA   ORALE   non supera,
        if   THE EXAM   ORAL [she/he] not pass.3S
            non otterra   il   diploma!
     [she/he] not   obtain.FUT.3S the   diploma
     'If he/she doesn't pass the oral exam, he/she won't get the diploma!' (Bocci 2007:15, (32); Haegeman's (13))

Such sentences, however, are grammatical in languages with fronted exhaustive focus, such as JC (36), Hungarian (37) and Tuki (Bantu) (38).

(36) a. If   a   pur   likl pikni   de   bout di pleis tonait, yu naa get fi
        if   *a*   purely little child   there about Det place tonight, 2s Neg get to
        plie aal yu   ruud sang-dem!
        play all your   rude song-PL
        'If there will be ONLY LITTLE CHILDREN around the place tonight, you will not get to play all your rude songs!'

     b. Yu fail   agen, bwai?   Wel, wen   a pas yu pas di   eksam, mi wi
        2s   fail   again, boy?   Well, when *a* pass 2s pass Det exam,   1sg will
        yu bak yu   baisikl.
        you back 2s   bicycle
        'You've failed again, boy? Well, when you DO PASS the exam, I'll give you your bicycle back'.

(37) a. Amikor EZT   AZ DALT   hallottam,   (akkor) emlékeztem   az első
        When   this-acc the song-acc heard-1s-past then   remembered-1s Det first

   szerelmemre
   love-poss-iness
   'When THIS SONG I heard, I remembered my first love'

   b. Amikor tavaly   EZT   A KÖNYVET írta,   (akkor) gondoltam
      when   last-year this-acc the book-acc   write-3s-past then   thought-1s
      hogy   jól van
      that   well is
      'When THIS BOOK she wrote last year, I thought she was fine'

(38) a. árá   osáwu odzu ŋga mu -(u)bá, ŋga -má- bunga   okutu áámɔ a wušu
        when song Foc SM P1 hear   SM P2   remember woman my   of first
        'When THIS SONG I heard, I remembered my first love'.

   b. ŋgi nkata iídzi o má túmba, o nu timbá-m opɔpɔ róó
      if exam Foc 2s P2 pass   2s F1 have   paper your
      'If THESE EXAMS you pass, you'll get the degree.'

Fronted focus in JC, Hungarian and Tuki is exhaustive, while it Italian, it is not. Yet fronted focus in all these languages is quantificational, so it is not clear how to state the selectivity of the alleged intervention effect.

A suggestion that comes to mind is that it is not the focus which intervenes for the conditional operator but the opposite. If corrective focus requires access to the root, as in Bianchi and Bocci (2013), and if access to the root is implemented computationally, it stands to reason that the conditional clause (perhaps the conditional operator itself) is a barrier, in much the same way as conditional clauses are islands for overt syntactic movement.[12] Exhaustive focus does not require access to the root and is both syntactically and semantically interpretable in the left periphery of the conditional clause.

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[12]   Bianchi (2011) shows that left-peripheral focus in an embedded clause is constrained by negation in the matrix. Although she interprets this fact in terms of scope, it is suggestive to consider this as a case of intervention in the movement of the focus from the embedded clause to the root.
    (*Non) ti avevo detto [che a TE lo avrei dato] (ma a Lucia)!
    'I had not told that to you I would give it (but to Lucy)]'
    Lahousse (2012) argues that English and French clefts that are interpreted as "narrow contrastive focus" are acceptable in all types of embedded clauses (while clefts with a new information focus are restricted to a subset of embedded clauses (p. 1). The examples she provides seem to us to yield exhaustive readings and, as such, their distribution is predicted on our approach.

6 Conclusion

This contribution has attempted to make the following points:

a. JC focus/wh constructions involve movement to the left periphery.

b. Although JC focus and wh-questions share with clefts the interpretation of exhaustive focus, these constructions does not have the syntax of clefts.

c. Homophony notwithstanding, *a* is not an equative particle.

d. *a* is an operator of exhaustive identification.

e. Two distinct features drive movement to the JC left periphery: [wh] and [EI].

f. Although JC focus-movement resembles Italian focus movement, it differs from it in some important details which can be understood once the difference between exhaustive and non-exhaustive focus is brought into the picture.

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