A′-movement restrictions in Igbo reanalyzed

Jasper Jian and Martina Martinović
Stanford University, McGill University

1. Introduction

This paper investigates two types of clauses in Igbo (Niger-Congo, Nigeria), which differ in several morphosyntactic properties. Clauses with the perfective suffix *lá* (1a) and clauses with the negation suffix *ghi* (2a) are incompatible with A′-movement, shown with *focus fronting* (Amaechi, 2020; Jian, 2024) in (1b) and (2b). In both clauses the verbal complex is prefixed with the harmonizing vowel *e/a*.[1]

(1) Perfective (*-lá*)[2]

a. Àdá ꜜé- rí -é **-lá** ꜜjí.
Ada E/A- eat -OVS **-PFV** yam
'Ada has eaten yam.'

b. *Jí$_i$ kà Àdá ꜜé- rí -é **-lá** $\_\__i$.
yam C_{WH} Ada E/A- eat -OVS **-PFV**
Int.: *'Ada has eaten* YAM.*'*

(2) Negation (*-ghi*)

a. Àdá é- ꜜrí **-ghí** jí.
Ada E/A- eat **-NEG** yam
'Ada did not eat yam.'

b. *Jí$_i$ kà Àdá é- ꜜrí **-ghí** $\_\__i$.
yam C_{WH} Ada E/A- eat **-NEG**
Int.: *'Ada did not eat* YAM.*'*

Extraction is possible from clauses that contain the *-rV* suffix, as in (3a). Note also that the harmonizing vowel prefix is absent.

(3) *rV*-sentence

a. Àdá (*e)- rì **-rì** jí.
Ada (*E/A)- eat **-rV** yam
'Ada ate yam.'

b. Jí$_i$ kà Àdá rì **-rì** $\_\__i$.
yam C_{WH} Ada eat **-rV**
'Ada ate YAM.*'*

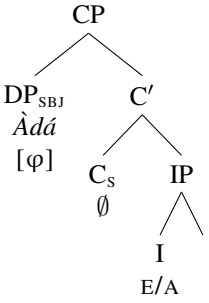
We argue that the key difference between the perfective and negative clauses, which ban extraction, and clauses which allow it, is structural. In our analysis, E/A occurs in perfective and negative clauses because their subjects are higher than IP (i.e., Spec,IP is empty), occupying the layer of the structure that would also be needed for A′-extraction (CP), illustrated in (4). We propose that E/A is a contextual allomorph of I, surfacing when IP does not contain an element with φ-features in its specifier. We label the subject-hosting C head found in these clauses C_S. When subjects are in Spec,IP, which we argue is the case in *-rV*-clauses, I is spelled out as ∅, and extraction is permitted, as the CP-layer is not occupied by the subject, as in (5). We label the A′-movement driving C head C_{WH}.

[*] **Jasper Jian, Stanford University, jjian@stanford.edu; Martina Martinović, McGill University, martina.martinovic@mcgill.ca.** **We thank our Igbo consultants, Amarachi Onuorah and Levi Eruala, for generously sharing their language with us. Thanks to audiences at Stanford and McGill University, and at WCCFL 43, for their questions and suggestions. All errors are our own.**

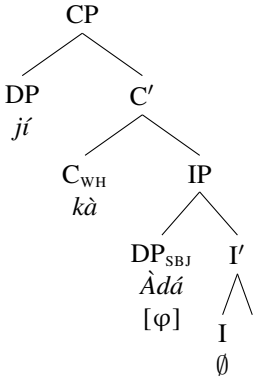
[1] Unless noted otherwise, all data were collected by the authors from two Igbo speakers in Montreal, Canada.

[2] Glossing follows the Leipzig Glossing Rules, with the following additions: *-rV* – default verbal suffix; E/A – harmonizing verbal prefix; OVS – open vowel suffix; PFX – prefix.

(4) Subject in Spec,CP, extraction banned



(5) Subject in Spec,IP, extraction permitted



In section 2, we present evidence of a relationship the height of subjects in different clauses and presence of extraction restrictions, proposing that E/A should be analyzed as an allomorph of the I head. Section 3 presents data from subjunctives, supporting our proposal that perfective and negative clauses involve high subjects. We introduce additional evidence from a construction involving the inversion of the 1SG subject pronoun, which we argue also contains the CP-layer, in section 4. Section 5 discusses competing accounts of the extraction restriction, and section 6 concludes.

2. The position of subjects in Igbo

We propose that the harmonizing prefix E/A is the exponent of I (see also Déchaine 1993), surfacing when no element with φ-features occupies the IP-layer. We support situating E/A in I by showing that it is in complementary distribution with clitic subjects, which we propose always adjoin to I, unlike non-clitic subjects, which surface either in Spec,IP, or in Spec,CP. Our analysis predicts that E/A should surface in clauses where subjects occupy the IP-layer if the subject is φ-featureless, but should not introduce an extraction ban, since in that case, E/A is not the result of involvement of the CP-layer. We show that this prediction is borne out.

2.1. High subjects in perfective and negative clauses

In perfective and negative clauses, non-clitic subjects must co-occur with E/A, as shown in (6a)-(6b). Clitic subjects in these clauses do not co-occur with E/A, but immediately precede the verb stem, as in (7) and (8).

(6) Perfective and negation with non-clitic subject

a. Àdá ꜜé- rí -é **-lá** ꜜjí.
Ada E/A- eat -OVS **-PFV** yam
'Ada has eaten yam.'

b. Àdá é- ꜜrí **-ghí** jí.
Ada E/A- eat **-NEG** yam
'Ada did not eat yam.'

(7) Perfective with clitic subjects

a. Ḿ ꜜrí-é-**lá** ꜜjí.
1SG eat-OVS-**PFV** yam
'I have eaten yam.'

b. Í ꜜrí-é-**lá** ꜜjí.
2SG eat-OVS-**PFV** yam
'You have eaten yam.'

c. Ó ꜜrí-é-**lá** ꜜjí.
3SG eat-OVS-**PFV** yam
'S/he has eaten yam.'

(8) Negation with clitic subjects

a. M̀ rí-ꜜ**ghí** jí.
1SG eat-**NEG** yam
'I did not eat yam.'

b. Ì rí-ꜜ**ghí** jí.
1SG eat-**NEG** yam
'You did not eat yam.'

c. Ò rí-ꜜ**ghí** jí.
1SG eat-**NEG** yam
'He did not eat yam.'

We propose that perfective and negative clauses contain an obligatory CP-layer, leaving for future work an explanation of why these two clause types involve this structure. Crucially, we argue that it is Spec,CP in these clauses that hosts non-clitic subjects – we take the IP-internal position for non-clitic subjects (by hypothesis, Spec,IP) to be unavailable in these clauses (for example, because it is a 'defective' I that lacks a specifier). We propose that E/A is the allomorph of I which only surfaces in the absence of φ-features in the IP-layer, as given in the Vocabulary Insertion rules in (9).

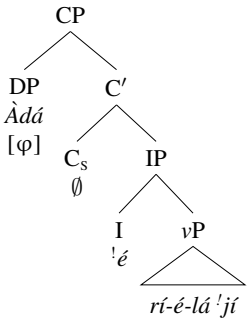
(9) VI Rules:

a. $I \rightarrow \emptyset$ /[φ]__

b. $I \rightarrow$ *e/a*

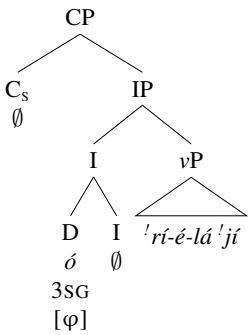
We propose that the structure of (6a) is as in (10): the non-clitic subject is in Spec,CP, triggering the VI rule in (9b), which spells out I as *e/a* in the absence of local φ-features.

(10) Non-clitic subject



We argue that the complementary distribution between clitic subjects and E/A means that they occupy the same projection. Specifically, we argue that subject clitics always adjoin to I (see e.g., Kayne 1991; Roberts 2010 on Romance clitics), and therefore, E/A does not surface in the presence of subject clitics. (11) corresponds to example (7c). Note that clauses with subject clitics do not allow extraction, even though Spec,CP is not occupied by an overt element. In our analysis this follows from the incompatibility of C_S with A′-movement, which requires the presence of a different kind of a complementizer, C_{WH}

(11) Clitic subject



We argue that it is this *structural* difference that corresponds to the *morphological* difference between perfective and negative clauses on the one hand, and *rV*-clauses on the other, in the presence of non-clitic subjects, which we present next.

2.2. Low subjects in rV-clauses

In *rV*-clauses, neither clitic nor non-clitic subjects co-occur with E/A, as shown in (12)-(13). We therefore argue that all subjects occupy the same layer in these clauses, unlike in perfective and negative clauses.

(12) *rV*-clause with non-clitic subject

Àdá rì-**rì** jí.
Ada eat-**rV** yam
'Ada ate yam.'

(13) *rV*-clause with clitic subjects

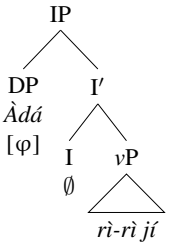
a. Ḿ rì-**rì** jí.
1SG eat-**rV** yam
'I ate yam.'

b. Í rì-**rì** jí.
2SG eat-**rV** yam
'You ate yam.'

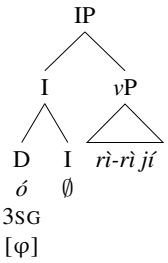
c. Ó rì-**rì** jí.
3SG eat-**rV** yam
'S/he ate yam.'

We propose that *rV*-clauses are IP-sized, and that Spec,IP is available to the non-clitic subject (see also, Déchaine, 1993; Amaechi, 2020; Jian, 2024). As in perfective and negative clauses, clitic subjects adjoin to I, but unlike in those clauses, non-clitic subjects occupy Spec,IP. Given that both clitic and non-clitic subjects occupy the IP layer, the VI rule in (9a) applies in both cases, and E/A does not surface. Structures in (14)-(15) correspond to examples (12) and (13c).

(14) Non-clitic subject



(15) Clitic subject



We propose that it is the absence of the CP layer that makes these clauses compatible with C_{WH}, the head that drives A′-extraction (16). In contrast, C_S, which we argued above is present in perfective and negative clauses, is in complementary distribution with C_{WH}, blocking A′-extraction (17).

(16) Jí$_i$ kà Àdá rì **-rì** –$_i$.
yam C_{WH} Ada eat **-rV**
'Ada ate YAM.'

(17) *Jí$_i$ kà Àdá ∅ ꜜé- rí -é **-lá** –$_i$.
yam C_{WH} Ada C_S E/A- eat -OVS -**PFV**
Int.: *'Ada has eaten* YAM.'

In the remainder of this section, we provide additional evidence for our proposal that E/A is tied to the presence of φ-features in the IP layer, returning to the complementary distribution of different complementizers in the following section.

2.3. Impersonal subject

Additional evidence that E/A is related to the presence of φ-features in Spec,IP comes from sentences with impersonal subjects. When the subject is an impersonal, E/A surfaces in both perfective/negative, and in *rV*-clauses, as in (18). We propose that these clauses contain a null φ-featureless pronoun as the subject (e.g., Nevins 2007; Holmberg & Phimsawat 2017; Fenger 2018), in which case I is spelled out as *e/a* in all clauses.

(18) Impersonal subject with E/A

a. É- rì-**rì** jí.
E/A- eat-**rV** yam
'Someone ate yam.'

b. É- ꜜrí-é-**lá** ꜜjí.
E/A- eat-OVS-**PFV** yam
'Someone has eaten yam.'

c. È- síꜜ-**ghí**-rí Àdá ńrí.
E/A- cook-**NEG**-APPL Ada food
'Someone didn't cook for Ada.'

These examples crucially show that the presence of E/A does not always correlate with an extraction restriction, as *rV*-clauses with indefinite subjects, where E/A does surface, permit extraction, as in (19). This means that E/A cannot be directly responsible for the ban on extraction. Our proposal accounts for this: the subject occupies the IP layer in *rV*-clauses with E/A, therefore the CP-layer required for extraction is still compatible with these clauses.

(19) Extraction out of *rV*-clauses with E/A
Gíꜜníi kà é- sì **-rì** –i?
what C_{WH} E/A- cook -**rV**
'What did someone cook?'

This speaks against proposals which tie extraction restrictions specifically to E/A, as in Amaechi 2020 (building on Déchaine 1993), where E/A is taken to be a nominalizer that introduces a barrier for extraction. We present further arguments against nominalization-based accounts in section 5.

In this section we argued that E/A spells out I when there is no other element with φ-features in the IP-layer. This occurs when the subject is outside of the IP, which we argue happens in perfective and negative clauses, or when the subject is a φ-featureless pronoun, as in impersonals.

In the following two sections, we present additional evidence that different kinds of C-elements compete for the same layer of the clause. Section 3 presents data from subjunctives, and section 4 from structures which involve the inversion of the 1SG subject.

3. Higher structure is blocked in subjunctives

Our claim that perfective and negative clauses contain a CP-layer predicts that they should be incompatible with other kinds of C-elements. Additionally, if the CP-layer in perfective and negative clauses is in complementary distribution with the CP-layer in A′-extraction, clauses requiring a different kind of C should also be incompatible with extraction. This prediction is born out in subjunctives, which contain the complementizer *kà*, as in (20). We show data with negation only, as there may be other reasons why the perfective is disallowed in the subjunctive clause.

(20) Subjunctive clause

a. Ézè kwèrè [**kà** Àdá gá-á órírí].
Eze agree **C_{SBJV}** Ada go-OVS party
'Eze allowed Ada to go to the party.'

b. Ézè kwèrè [**kà** ḿ gá-á órírí].
Eze agree **C_{SBJV}** 1SG go-OVS party
'Eze allowed me to go to the party.'

First, subjunctives cannot be negated with *-ghi*, as shown in (21a). Negation must be expressed with the lexical verb *ghàrà* 'ignore'/'leave off', which embeds a nominalized VP, illustrated in (21b).

(21) *-ghi* negation blocked in subjunctives

a. *Ézè kwèrè [**kà** Àdá á- ꜜgá -**ghị́** órírí].
Eze agree **C_{SBJV}** Ada E/A- go -**NEG** party
Int:. *'Eze allowed Ada to not go to the party.'*

b. Ézè kwèrè [**kà** Àdá **ghàrà** í-ꜜgá órírí].
Eze agree **C_{SBJV}** Ada **leave.off** NMLZ-go party
'Eze allowed Ada to not go to the party.'
(lit. *'Eze allowed Ada to leave off going to the party.'*)

Second, focus fronting cannot target the subjunctive left periphery, as in (22). Two clause types which we propose involve higher structure are thus incompatible with C_{SBJV} *kà*.

(22) Focus fronting blocked in subjunctives

*Ézè kwèrè [**kà** óríríi **kà** Àdá gá-á –i].
Eze agree **C$_{SBJV}$** party **C$_{WH}$** Ada go-OVS
Int:. *'Eze allowed Ada to go to the* PARTY.'

Clauses embedded under *nà* (23), a high embedding head (*e.g.*, Rizzi's 1997 Force^0, as argued in Amaechi, 2020), permit the perfective *-lá*, the negative *ghi*, with C$_S$, and focus fronting, with C$_{WH}$.

(23) *-ghi* negation, perfective, and focus fronting under *nà*

a. Ézè chè [nà Àdá á- !gá -**ghị́** skúùl].
Eze thinks that Ada E/A- go -**NEG** school
'Eze thinks that Ada did not go to school.'

b. Ézè chè [nà Àdá !é- rí-é **-lá** !jí].
Eze thinks that Ada E/A- eat-OVS -**PFV** yam
'Eze thinks that Ada has eaten yam.'

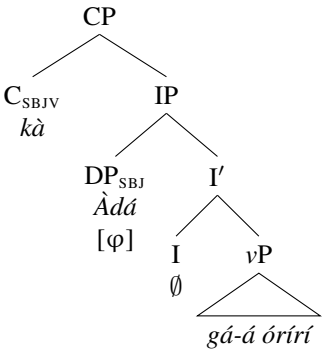
c. Ézè chè [nà óríríi **kà** Àdá gà-rà –i].
Eze think that party **C$_{WH}$** Ada go-rV
'Eze thinks that Ada went to the PARTY.'

We argue that the subjunctive embedding restriction is not due to these being 'root' phenomena. Instead, we propose that the subjunctive C is one of the low Cs competing for the same position as C$_S$ and C$_{WH}$. Thus, we argue that subjects occupy the IP layer, given that they surface to the right of the subjunctive C, as in (25). Our proposal accounts for the fact that E/A does not co-occur with φ-bearing subjects in subjunctives, as in (20), and that it does surface with an impersonal subject, as in (24)/(26).

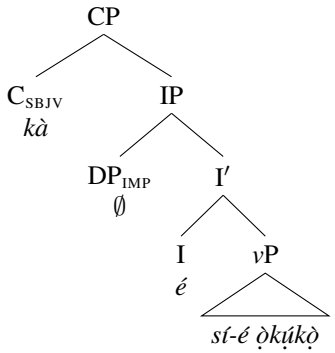
(24) Impersonal subject in a subjunctive clause

Ézè kwèrè [kà é- !sí-é ọ̀kụ́kọ̀].
Eze agree C$_{SBJV}$ E/A- cook-OVS chicken
'Eze allowed someone to cook chicken.'

(25) Subjunctive with a non-clitic subject



(26) Subjunctive with an impersonal subject



We have now provided further evidence that negation employs higher structure. We previously accounted for the ban on A′-extraction in negative clauses as incompatibility between C$_S$ and C$_{WH}$. We extended this analysis to account for the incompatibility of negation and focus fronting in subjunctive clauses as well. C$_{WH}$, C$_S$, & C$_{SBJV}$ are all in complementary distribution.

4. [φ]-bearing subjects with E/A always block extraction: 1SG-inversion

The last construction that we bring to bear on our proposal are sentences with 1SG-inversion. First, recall that in *-rV* clauses, neither clitic nor non-clitic subjects occur with E/A, shown again in (27a).

(27) No E/A in *rV*-clauses

a. Àdá (*é) -rì -rì jí.
Ada (*E/A) -eat -rV yam
'Ada ate yam.'

b. Ḿ (*é) -rì -rì jí.
1SG (*E/A) -eat -rV yam
'I ate yam.'

1SG-inversion (also '*mụ* permutation,' Goldsmith, 1981) is a construction in which the 1SG pronoun *follows* the verbal complex, as in (28). Relevant for our discussion, E/A must surface when 1SG-inversion occurs. 1SG-inversion is permitted across *rV*, perfective, and negative clauses, shown in (28)-(30).

(28) 1SG-inversion in *rV*-clause

*(É)- rì -rì **m** jí.
*(E/A)- eat -rV **1SG** yam
'I ate yam.'

(29) 1SG-inversion in perfective clause

a. Ḿ (*é)- ꜜrí -é -lá ꜜjí.
1SG (*E/A)- eat -OVS -PFV yam
'I have eaten yam.'

b. *(É)- ꜜrí -é -lá **m** ꜜjí.
*(E/A)- eat -OVS -PFV **1SG** yam
'I have eaten yam.'

(30) 1SG-inversion in negative clause

a. **M̀** (*é)- rí -ꜜghí jí.
1SG (*E/A)- eat -NEG yam
'I did not eat yam.'

b. *(È)- rí -ꜜghí **m** ꜜjí.
*(E/A)- eat -NEG **1SG** yam
'I did not eat yam.'

1SG-inversion blocks extraction from *rV*-clauses, which otherwise permit extraction; cf. (31a) and (31b).

(31) Extraction out of *rV*-clause

a. Jí$_i$ **kà** ḿ rì -rì $\_\_i$.
yam **C$_{WH}$** 1SG eat -rV
'I ate YAM.'

b. *Jí$_i$ **kà** é- rì -rì m $\_\_i$.
yam **C$_{WH}$** E/A- eat -rV 1SG
Int.: *'I ate* YAM.'

Given that a φ-bearing subject occurs with E/A in this construction, we propose that they also involve the presence of a higher layer that interferes with extraction. Previous work has similarly discussed a connection between 1SG-inversion and the CP-layer: Goldsmith (1981) proposes that 1SG-inversion is restricted to root clauses, i.e., those without overt complementizers, and Eze (1995) proposes that 1SG-inversion involves the movement of the verbal complex to C. In a similar vein, we propose that the 1SG pronoun in these constructions is not IP-internal, but that 1SG-inversion involves movement of the 1SG pronoun to the same higher layer as in perfective and negative constructions. E/A surfaces for the same reason as in perfective and negative clauses where a non-clitic subject is hosted outside of the IP. We stipulate that the inverted order is a due to a *postsyntactic* operation which reverses the linear order of the 1SG pronoun and the verbal complex after VI, such as *Local Dislocation* (Embick & Noyer, 2001). If we are correct, in addition to blocking extraction, 1SG-inversion should be impossible under the subjunctive *kà*. This is borne out: the 1SG pronoun in subjunctives can only be preverbal as in (32a), never postverbal, in (32b).

(32) No 1SG-inversion in the subjunctive

a. Ézè kwèrè [kà **ḿ** gá-á skúùl].
Eze agree C$_{SBJV}$ **1SG** go-OVS school
'Eze allowed me to go to school.'

b. *Ézè kwèrè [kà á- gá-á **m** skúùl].
Eze agree C_{SBJV} E/A- go-OVS **1SG** school
Int.: *'Eze allowed me to go to school.'*

In the variety of Igbo discussed in this paper, 1SG-inversion can be embedded wherever C_S and C_{WH} can be, e.g., under *nà* in (33).

(33) Ézè chè [nà á-gà-rà m skúùl].
Eze thinks that E/A-go-rV 1SG school
'Eze thinks that I went to school.'

5. Discussion

In our analysis, E/A surfaces in configurations out of which extraction and occurrence in subjunctive clauses is banned, however, it is not itself directly responsible for either restriction. Systematically, across clauses in the language, E/A only correlates with an A′-extraction restriction when it co-occurs with a φ-bearing subject, as summarized in Table 1. In this section, we briefly compare our proposal to previous accounts of the extraction restriction and the identity of E/A.

CLAUSE TYPE	SUBJECT OCCURS WITH E/A? CLITIC		NON-CLITIC	A′-EXTRACTION?	
-rV	no		no	yes	
FUT	no		no	yes	②
IPFV	no	①	no	yes	
PFV	no		yes	no	
NEG	no		yes	no	③
1SG-inversion			yes	no	

Table 1: Summary. ① Clitic subjects have the same distribution in all clauses. ② & ③ Co-occurrence of E/A with a subject with φ-features determines availability of A′-extraction.

In their discussion of perfective clauses, Déchaine (1993) and Amaechi (2020), take E/A to be a nominalizer, with Amaechi proposing that A′-extraction restrictions arise due to a barrier induced by this nominalization. The most immediate issue that such an analysis faces is that structures with E/A do not pattern with nominals in distribution: other nominalizations involving I- prefixed or O+REDUP-prefixed verb stems (Ezeamuzie, 2020) can, e.g., occupy the subject position, as in (34). E/A-structures cannot, as shown in (35).

(34) Nominalizations as subjects

a. [Ị́-tá ánụ́ é!wú] sì-rì íké.
NMLZ-chew meat goat be.difficult
'Eating goat is difficult.'

b. [Ọ́-tị́-tá ánụ́ é!wú] sì-rì íké.
NMLZ-REDUP-chew meat goat be.difficult
'Eating goat is difficult.'

(35) E/A structure is not a nominal

*[À-tá ánụ́ é!wú] sì-rì íké.
E/A-chew meat goat be.difficult
Int.: *'Eating goat is difficult.'*

A second distributional difference we observe in this variety of Igbo, compared to the varieties described in previous work, is that the often-referenced evidence of nominalization, drawing on

tonal parallels between E/A found in perfective verbal complexes and the E/A found in putative nominalizations in the future and imperfective, does not hold. In the variety described here, the tone on E/A in the future and imperfective is polar (the tone is L if verb root is H, H if verb root is L).

(36) Future construction

a. Àdá gà è-rí ꜜjí.
Ada FUT PFX-eat yam
'Ada will eat yam.'

b. Àdá gà á-ꜜghá ꜜgị́.
Ada FUT PFX-leave 2SG
'Ada will leave you.'

(37) Imperfective construction

a. Àdá nà è-rí ꜜjí.
Ada IPFV PFX-eat yam
'Ada is eating yam.'

b. Àdá nà é-ꜜgwú ꜜgị́ wàyó.
Ada IPFV PFX-play 2SG fraud
'Ada is defrauding you.'

In the perfective, the tone matches the last syllable of the subject if the root is H, shown in (38), otherwise it is always L if the root is L, as in (39).

(38) Tone on E/A in perfective sentences

a. Àd**á** ꜜ**é**-rí-é-lá ꜜjí.
Ada E/A-eat-OVS-PFV yam
'Ada has eaten yam.'

b. Éz**è** **è**-rí-é-lá ꜜjí.
Eze E/A-eat-OVS-PFV yam
'Eze has eaten yam.'

(39) Tone on E/A in negative sentences

a. Àdá **à**-**ghà**-á-lá ꜜgị́.
Ada E/A-leave-OVS-PFV 2SG
'Ada has left you.'

b. Ézè **à**-**ghà**-á-lá ꜜgị́.
Eze E/A-leave-OVS-PFV 2SG
'Eze has left you.'

We further note that future and imperfective constructions permit A′-extraction, even though an E/A morpheme surfaces, (40). Note, however, that non-clitic subjects and the verb stem are immediately adjacent – we take this to mean that non-clitic subjects in these clauses are also low, as in *rV*-clauses, and should thus be compatible with extraction, as we observe.

(40) Extraction possible out of future and imperfective clauses

a. Jí kà Àdá gà è-rí.
yam C_{WH} Ada FUT E/A-eat
'Ada will eat YAM*.'*

b. Jí kà Àdá nà è-rí.
yam C_{WH} Ada IPFV E/A-eat
'Ada is eating YAM*.'*

A final issue with nominalization based approaches is that they predict there to be a subject/non-subject asymmetry: subjects linearly precede the hypothesized nominalizer E/A and should thus be *higher* in the clause than the island that nominalization introduces, unlike non-subjects trapped within the island, which surface to the right of E/A. Attempted focus fronting (41a) shows us, however, that there is no such asymmetry: these constructions are blocked on par with non-subject focus (41b). The same facts hold for relativization.[3]

(41) Subject and object focus in the perfective

a. *Ọ́ bụ̀ Ézè ∅ __ è-rí-é-lá ꜜjí.
3SG COP Eze C_{WH} E/A-eat-OVS-PFV yam
Int.: 'It's EZE that has eaten yam.'

b. *Ọ́ bụ̀ jí kà Àdá ꜜé-rí-é-lá __.
3SG COP yam C_{WH} Ada E/A-eat-OVS-PFV
Int.: 'It's YAM that Ada has eaten.'

[3] See Jian (2025) for arguments that subject focus involves movement and C_{WH}, *pace* Amaechi & Georgi (2024).

Our proposal, on the other hand, does not make such a prediction. We have argued that E/A itself does not block extraction, but can signal the presence of higher structure which competes with Cs required for A′-extraction. A′-movement is not blocked due to an induced island, but rather due to the unavailability of A′-movement driving Cs in these clauses, blocking A′-movement, regardless of whether it targets subjects or non-subjects. Furthermore, nominalization–based accounts provide no treatment of the restrictions on occurrence in the subjunctive, nor the 1SG-inversion phenomenon.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, we have argued for a new analysis of extraction restrictions in Igbo. Our proposal unifies a disparate set of facts: the distribution of clitic/non-clitic subjects, impersonal and inverted subjects, A′-movement restrictions, and embedding restrictions. The core conclusion we reach is that clauses systematically fall into classes with respect to the position occupied by their subject. This has already been discussed for Igbo – Jian (2024) argues that *wh in-situ* and polar interrogative constructions in the language *also* result in movement of the subject to the CP-domain. Subjects occupying a higher position in indicative clauses have also been observed across the Niger-Congo language family (e.g., Baker 2003; Henderson 2006; Schneider-Zioga 2007; Martinović 2015, 2023). Igbo presents an interesting case where subject position covaries with changes in lower clausal domains, here, aspect and negation. Future investigation will seek to understand why such a dependency should hold between typically independent domains of the clause.

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