# Igala Sentence-Final Particles at the edge of *v*P

Brandon Chaperon – BA Linguistics & Computer Science

Supervised by Prof. Martina Martinović

## Introduction

- **Sentence-Final Particles (SFPs)** are common to many East Asian languages (e.g. Mandarin, Cantonese, Japanese, Korean), and also to some African (e.g. Supyire) and even Austronesian (e.g. Tagalog) languages.
- In **Igala** (Niger-Congo; Yoruboid), a language spoken in Nigeria, particles that behave similarly to these so-called Sentence-Final Particles are also found.

## Igala SFPs

- The relevant Igala particles follow some of the following properties which identify Sentence-Final Particles:

(i) Found at the **end of clauses** and are usually phonologically small or **monosyllabic without inflection**:

(1) eiga-o    miru  mae-ni gohan-o  tabe-you **ka**?    | Japanese
movie-ACC watch before food-ACC eat-HORT **Q**
'Shall we eat before watching the movie?' (Davis 2011)

(2) òŋʷū  á  ténè ē  l(a) ìmōtò **ī**.    | Igala
3SG.STR IPFV want NMLZ buy car    **FOC**
'S/he is the one that wants to buy a car.'

(ii) Used to express interrogation, focus, negation, speaker attitude, and other **discourse related** meanings:

(3) lei⁵ sik¹  gong² jing¹man² **maa**³?    | Mandarin
2SG know speak English    **Q**
'Do you speak English?' (Law 1990)

(4) ɛ̃   dʒ(ɛ) ɔ̄dā  ɔ̀nálɛ́  **ň**.    | Igala
2SG.NEG eat  pear yesterday **NEG.SFP**
'You did not eat a pear yesterday.'

(iii) Can be **used in tandem**, which usually results in merging their individual meanings:

(5) keoi⁵ lo²-zo²  dai⁶-jat¹ ming⁴ **tim**¹ **ge**³ **laa**³ **wo**³.    | Cantonese
3SG take-PERF first    place **SFP SFP SFP SFP**
'And she got first place too, you know.' (Matthews and Yip 1994)

(6) ōŋʷú  è̀  mǎ fɛ́dō **ní**   **lɛ̄**  **ì**.    | Igala
3SG.STR 2SG NEG like **NEG.SFP SFP FOC**
'It's him/her you do no love.'

(iv) Although commonly found to be **matrix phenomena** (Emonds 1970; Ross 1970), some Igala SFPs are **embeddable**:

(7) Tā  gāngcái gàosu wǒ [Ākiū yǐjīng  líkāi Běijīng **(*le)**].    | Mandarin
3SG just    tell   1SG Akiu already leave Beijing **SFP**
'He just told me [that Akiu had already left Beijing].' (Paul 2014)

(8) ù  l(a) ɔ̀tákɨ́dā [kì  tʃìdè mǎ gbā **ń̀i**]    lɛ̄.    | Igala
1SG buy book  C.REL Chide NEG read **NEG.SFP** DET.DIST
'I bought the book [that Chide did not read]'.

## Scopal Interaction

- When combined, SFPs often have fixed relative ordering, but some exceptions exist.
- SFP *gɛ* behaves similarly to an adverb meaning 'again', 'anymore', or 'also'.
- Another SFP, *i*, is used in focus constructions.
- Their order has an effect on scope and **affects sentence interpretation**:

**gɛ > FOC**:

(9) ōŋʷū  á  ténè é  l(a) ìmótò **ī**  **gè**.
3SG.STR IPFV want NMLZ buy car    **FOC SFP**
'It's her that wants to buy a car again.'

*Context: Chide wants a house and also a car/He wants to car and Chide too.*
'It's her that, in addition to someone/something else, wants to buy a car.'

**FOC > gɛ**:

(10) ōŋʷū  á  ténè é  l(a) ìmótò **gè**  **ī**.
3SG.STR IPFV want NMLZ buy car    **SFP FOC**
'It's her that wants to buy a car again.'

*Context: Chide wants a house and also a car/He wants to car and Chide too.*
# 'It's her that, in addition to someone/something else, wants to buy a car.'

- Both sentences have meaning that Chide wants to buy a car for the $2^{nd}$ time.
- But when gɛ occurs before the focus particle, second interpretation is not as salient.

---

- Another example is when *gɛ* is combined with negation:

**gɛ > NEG**:

*Context: We've expected her to buy a car twice now, but she again hasn't bought one.*

(11) ī́   l(a) īmótò **ní**   **gè**.
3SG.NEG buy car    **NEG.SFP SFP**
'S/he didn't buy a car again.'

**NEG > gɛ**:

*Context: She was in the process of buying a car before, but not anymore.*

(12) ī́   l(a) īmótò **gè**  **ń**.
3SG.NEG buy car    **SFP NEG.SFP**
'S/he isn't buying a car anymore.'
# 'She didn't buy a car again.'

### Properties of scope

- Some particles do **not** have **restricted relative ordering**.
- The **relative ordering** of particles has an **effect on meaning** of sentence.

**Selected References** Davis, Christopher. 2011. "Constraining interpretation: Sentence final particles in Japanese." *University of Massachusetts Amherst.* **Ejeba, Ochala.** 2016. "A Grammar of Igala." *M & J Grand Orbit Communications.* **Emonds, Joseph Embley.** 1970. "Root and structure-preserving transformations." *Massachusetts Institute of Technology.* **Erlewine, Michael Yoshitaka.** 2015. "Sentence-final particles at the vP phase edge." *Final Particles.* **Erlewine, Michael Yoshitaka.** 2017. "Low sentence-final particles in Mandarin Chinese and the Final-over-Final Constraint." *Journal of East Asian Linguistics 26.1.* **Law, Sam-Po.** 1990. "The syntax and phonology of Cantonese sentence-final particles." *Boston University* **Lin, T-H Jonah.** 2010. "Structures and functional categories of Mandarin sentences." *UST Working Papers in Linguistics.* **Matthews, Stephen, and Virginia Yip.** 2013. "Cantonese: A comprehensive grammar." *Routledge* **Ross, John Robert.** 1970. "On Declarative Sentences." *Jacobs and Rosenbaum (eds).*

## Where are they located?

- SFPs are assumed to be located in the CP domain, but Erlewine (2015, 2017) argues that some (e.g. Chinese 'low' SFPs) can be located in extended *v*P periphery.
- Evidence to support Erlewine's claim can also be found in Igala.
- SFP *gɛ* cannot be contained within nominalized clause whilst negation can.

(13) *[e  l(a) imoto **gɛ**] tʃide  l(a) imoto **gɛ**.
NMLZ buy car    **SFP** Chide buy car    **SFP**

(14) [é  má l(a) ìmótò **ń̀**]    tʃīdè má l(a) ìmótò **ń̀**.
NMLZ NEG buy car    **NEG.SFP** Chide NEG buy car    **NEG.SFP**
*lit.* 'It's not buying a car that Chide didn't buy a car.'

- Suggests that negation can be located lower than CP, such as *v*P periphery.
- But *gɛ* can only remain high in the CP domain.

### Properties of location

- Some Igala SFPs may be found in ***v*P periphery**.
- **Rest of the particles** must only be in **CP domain**.

## Structure of the clause

- Argued that negation has both *v*P periphery and CP available.
- Accounts for fact that no order restriction for *gɛ* and negation.
- SFP *gɛ* remains in the CP, but negation can either be in CP or *v*P periphery.
- Structure of examples (11) and (12) would respectively look as such:
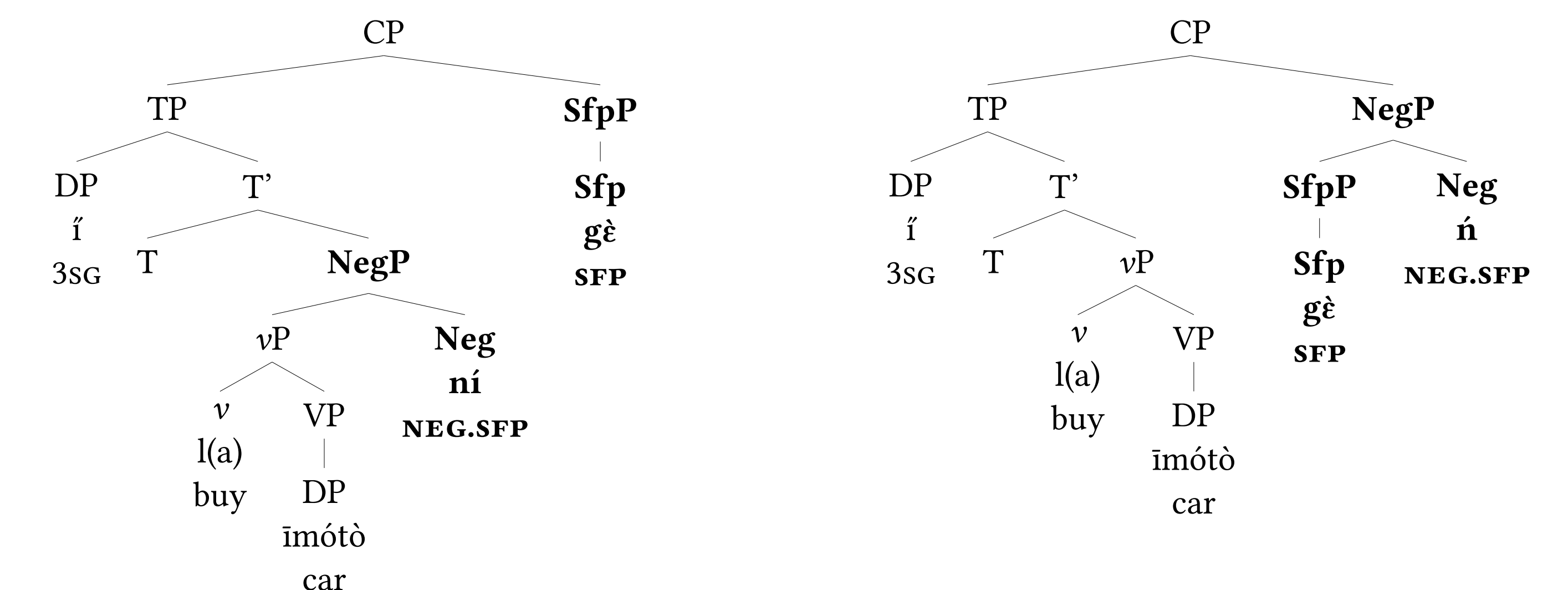


### Properties of structure

- Some particles can be located in either ***v*P periphery or CP**.

## Conclusion

Igala contains Sentence-Final Particles, found in many other languages of the world.

- Some SFP combinations can be ordered any which way but usually have a fixed order.
- In those cases, the scope has an effect on meaning of the sentence.

**Igala helps support claim that SFPs not only found in CP domain, but also lower in *v*P periphery as in Erlewine (2015, 2017)**