The Syntax of Focus and Interrogation in Awing: a Descriptive Approach

Henry Z. Fominyam
University of Potsdam

According to Aikhenvald (2007:5), descriptive linguistics or linguistic fieldwork “ideally involves observing the language as it is used, becoming a member of the community, and often being adopted into the kinship system”. Descriptive linguistics therefore differs from theoretical linguistics in that while the former seeks to describe natural languages as they are used, the latter, other than describing, attempts to give explanations on how or why language phenomena behave in certain ways. Thus, I will abstract away from any preconceived ideas on how sentences ought to be in Awing and take the linguist/reader through focus and interrogative constructions to get a feeling of how the Awing people interact verbally.

Keywords: Awing, focus realization, question formation, descriptive grammar

1 Introduction

This paper describes the various ways to realize focus and interrogative constructions in Awing, a Grassfield Bantu language spoken in the North West Region of Cameroon. The first section deals with the different methods that Awing native speakers have recourse to in order to emphasize a given constituent (information structuring). The second part of the paper tackles interrogative constructions. I begin with a detailed presentation of content

---

1 The Awing language numbers about 20,000 speakers according to the Awing Civil Status Registrar (2006). The language cannot boast of any substantial scientific work. The data presented here is from the authors own native intuition, in corroboration with other native speakers.
question words and end with a cursory description of other interrogative constructions such as: yes-no questions, questioning by truncation, tag questions, echo questions, alternative questions and modal inversion in question formation.

The Awing empirical data presented in this paper demonstrate some obvious similarities between Awing and other Bantu languages, including the phenomena of morphological focus marking, obligatory focus marking in ex-situ contexts, verb doubling in predicate focusing and wh-expressions optionally realized in their base generated positions or in sentence-initial positions. However, the Awing data also show some properties not common in the literature. This will include, among others, the realization of a so-called focus marker (FM) in post-verbal positions. In this vein, we will see that wh-expressions can occur either with or without the FM in-situ, but that the FM is obligatory in ex-situ contexts—in parallel with focusing. Awing also displays what might be considered multiple realization of post-verbal foci with the overt realization of the FM. However, the FM cannot be realized successively with multiple wh-expressions, although focusing and wh-expressions exhibit the same structural patterns in this language. In polar question formation, the Awing language interlocks phonology and syntax by lengthening the final phoneme of a sentence-final morpheme to type the clause as interrogative. Moreover, while going through the Awing data, one will notice that (almost) all content words (i.e. nouns, verbs and adjectives/adverbs) in this language have long and short forms. This will introduce us to a morpho-syntactic structure in which the verb and the direct object are truncated in order to type the clause as interrogative.

Abbreviations: ASP: Aspect marker; COP: Copular verb; F1: Future one; F2: Future two; F3: Future three; FM: Focus marker; INF: Infinitive; LINK: Linking morpheme; LP: Lengthened phoneme; NEG: Negation marker; NP: Noun phrase; PLU: Plural marker; PP: Prepositional phrase; P1: Past one; P2: Past two; P3: Past three; QM: Question marker; SM: Subject marker; TM: Tense marker; TOP: Topic marker; TQ: Tag question marker; ?: Contextually/pragmatically not fit; *?: Mild ungrammaticality; *: Ungrammaticality.
The paper is organised as follows. Section 2 discusses focus realization. But first, Section 2.1 presents the various functions the \( \text{lo} \) morpheme (i.e. the alleged FM) can assume apart from associating with focus. In section 2.2, I concentrate on how focus is realized with the \( \text{lo} \) morpheme. Section 2.3 describes the morpho-syntactic marking of focus, which will be seen as the rearrangement of the sentence by displacing the focused phrase to sentence-initial position. Note that I will leave aside the question here of whether it is theoretically warranted to consider the \( \text{lo} \) morpheme to be a FM. I will gloss the morpheme as the FM whenever it occurs with a focused phrase and it clearly does not fulfil any of the other functions the morpheme has. Section 2.4 will tackle predicate focus constructions while section 2.5 will be dealing with predicate focus and wh-expressions. Then section 3 discusses interrogative clauses. In section 3.1, the overall organisation of matrix wh-expressions is presented. Section 3.2 will continue with wh-expressions in embedded clauses while section 3.3 will have to do with multiple wh-expressions. In this section, we will see that unlike English, Awing demonstrates no superiority effects. The rest of the work will be dedicated to other question types and section 4 presents the conclusive remarks.

2 Focus-marking in Awing

Focusing can be considered as the structuring of sentences via a wide range of techniques: prosodic, morphological and syntactic means, in order to introduce information assumed to be unfamiliar to the addressee. The Awing language appears to use each of these three methods to achieve focusing. However, prosody in focusing will not be discussed here, since it is not clear how this functions in Awing in particular and tonal languages in general, or if the grammars of tonal languages truly make use of prosody in focusing.
Nevertheless, it is important to mention from the onset that morphological focus-marking is only used in this language when the intention is to contrast, correct or indicate an exhaustive nature of the focused phrase. In other words, a focused phrase does not necessarily need to be realized with the particular morpheme that is considered to be the focus marker in Fominyam (2012). For example, in both subject and object focus, as those below, the assumed focus marker may not be used with the focus.

(1) a. Alombah à pí náŋnè kò   b. Alombah à pí náŋnè ndzò
    Alombah SM P1 cook what        Alombah SM P1 cook beans
    ‘What did Alombah cook?’        ‘Alombah cooked beans.’

c. #Alombah à pí náŋnà ló   ndzo
    Alombah SM P1 cook   FM beans
    ‘Alombah SM P1 cook beans.’

(2) a. Wó pí náŋnè  ndzò   b. Alombah à pí náŋnè ndzò
    who P1 cook   beans           Alombah SM P1 cook   beans
    ‘Who cooked beans?’           ‘Alombah cooked beans.’

c. *Ló Alombah à pí náŋnè  ndzò
    FM Alomnah SM P1 cook   beans
    ‘Alombah cooked beans.’

Example (1c) is not a felicitous reply to (1a). This is due to a contrastive and/or corrective interpretation attributed to the focused phrase when associated with the ló morpheme. (2c) is ungrammatical not only because of the ló morpheme but also due to the syntactic position of the focused subject; we return to this in section 2.3. However, I will label this ló morpheme as the F(ocus) M(arker) (FM in order not to get into any theoretical arguments.
2.1 \( lô \) as a multifunctional morpheme

The \( lô \) morpheme can be interpreted as the verb ‘be’ in copular clauses, as shown in the examples in (3) through (6).

Specification:

(3) a. \( ìlèn \ nô \ lô \ Alombah \)      \( \text{Or} \)      b. \( Alombah \ lô ìlèn \ yô \)
Name his ? Alombah  ‘His name is Alombah.’
Alombah ? name his  ‘Alombah is his name.’

(4) a. \( Àlàŋô \ Santa \ lô \ chîgô \ ndú \ yî \ shî’nô \)
Road Santa ? really way LINK good
‘The Santa road is the best way.’

\( \text{Or} \)

b. \( Chîgô \ ndú \ yî \ shî’nô \ lô \ àlànô \ Santa \)
Really way LINK good ? road Santa
‘The best way is the Santa road.’

Equative:

(5) \( Ngàñ \ m bó\-wîñô \ lô \ pó \)
People Awing ? them
‘The Awing people are them.’ (i.e. the exact type of people you need)

Identification:

(6) a. \( ìlò \ (lô)ndzîmô \ mô \)      b. \( Mô-mbyâñô \ yîô \ *(lô)ndzîmô \ mô \)
That ? brother my  Child-man that ? brother my
‘That’s my brother.’  ‘That boy is my brother.’

Unlike in English, the copula is optional (cf. 6a) when the demonstrative determiner is not used with a specific noun, but when there is a nominal (cf. 6b),
the copula must be used.\textsuperscript{3} As for copular clauses, it appears that the copula \textit{ló} can only be used with nominal arguments (i.e. NP \textit{be} NP). Thus, we cannot use a copula with a bare adjective, like ‘The house is big’ or ‘The Santa road is faster’, — as shown in (7) below.

(7)  *Àláŋò Santa \textit{ló} záŋkò-ngénò
     Road Santa \textit{?} quick-go
     Intended: ‘The Santa road is faster.’

Instead, it should be:

(8)  Àláŋò Santa \textit{?} záŋkò-ngénò
     Road Santa \textit{?} quick-go
     ‘The Santa road is faster.’

The \textit{?} morpheme in (8) is the same morpheme that shows up in this language as a non-animate subject marker (SM). I will not make any speculations as to whether this word functions in (8) as a copula, a subject marker or a pronoun. Moreover, it is argued by some researchers that the copula used in sentences as those above might involve different lexical items from a semantic point of view, with a specification, identification, or equative meanings, (see Mikkelsen

\textsuperscript{3} The morpheme considered to be the copula here is questionable. When sentences are constructed in the past tense, there is another morpheme that shows up and is read as the copula. See examples below:

(i)  Mó-mbyáŋnò yíó nà mbò ló ndzìmò mà
     Child-man that p2 be ? brother my
     ‘That boy was my brother.’

(ii)  Aghetse nà mbò ló ndzé’kà-ŋwárò
     Aghetse p2 be ? teach-book
     ‘Aghetse was a teacher.’

When sentences are constructed in the past tense as those above, neither the \textit{mbò} ‘be’ nor the \textit{ló} morpheme can be omitted. However, since I am concerned with a descriptive presentation here, the question of whether \textit{ló} or \textit{mbò} is the correct copula is postponed for future research.
For the purpose of this overview, I consider it sufficient to conclude that \( l \) in the above examples functions as a copula.

The \( l \) morpheme is also used in sentences having a tense marker (TM) and a verb to render passivation possible, as shown in (9b).

(9) a. Alota à pí ntsió mbángé  
    Alota SM P1 push wall  
    ‘Alota pushed the wall’ (active/neutral sentence)

    b. Mbángé ló pí ntsió Alota  
    Wall ? P1 push Alota  
    ‘The wall was pushed by Alota’ (passive sentence)

In the examples below, \( l \) is considered to be the FM. It precedes the focused phrase which can be realized post-verbally or in sentence-initial position.

(10) a. Ngwe à pí nghènò ló fú  
    Ngwe SM P1 go FM where  
    ‘Where has Ngwe gone to?’

    b. (Ngwe) à pí nghènò ló mòtéènò  
    Ngwe SM P1 go FM market  
    ‘Ngwe/he went to the MARKET.’ (not to the hospital or the farm)

    c. *(Ló) mòtéènò pà’à (Ngwe) à pí nghènò  
    FM market that Ngwe SM P1 go  
    ‘Ngwe/he went to the MARKET.’ (not to the hospital or the farm)

With the example in (11b), the \( l \) morpheme functions as an additive topic marker. The sentence in (11a) creates an appropriate context for (11b).

(11) a. Fominyam à nò nfè àŋwàrèàmbó pó piè  
    Fominyam SM P2 give book to children his  
    ‘Fominyam gave books to his children.’
b. Azise *(ló), Fominyam a nó kó nfê àŋwârè àmbó *(yí)
   Azise TOP Fominyam SM p2 also give book to her
   ‘How about Azise, did Fominyam give her a book, too?’

The asterisks on the parentheses in example (11b) indicate that this morpheme cannot be optional when the intended interpretation is required. Notice that the resumptive pronoun in (11b) cannot be omitted either.

Lastly, the ló morpheme can be used as an adversative conjunction (cf. 12).

(12) ̀lèn nò ló Alombah ló zó ló Alota
   Name his is Alombah but yours is Alota
   ‘His name is Alombah but yours is Alota.’

The above data show that the ló morpheme in this language functions as: (i) the verb ‘be’ in copular clauses, (ii) an element rendering passivation possible, (iii) a focus marker (must precede the focalized item), (iv) a topic marker (must follow the topicalized item), and (v) a conjunction (opposing the predication of two clauses). In what follows, I use this morpheme as in example (10) and simply gloss it as the FM.

2.2 Morphological marking of focus

The morphological means of focus-marking introduces a morphological element to the focused phrase. In the case of Awing, the FM always precedes the focused phrase. When the morpheme precedes a constituent, the latter may be unfamiliar but necessarily construed as contrastive and/or corrective depending on the context. The first part of this section will deal with focused elements within the lower domain (i.e., the area below the complementizer layer). We will call this *in-situ* focus since focused phrases in this domain do not display any syntactic movement. In *in-situ* focusing, the ló morpheme targets constituents that follow the verb. The verb and the subject in Awing can only be focused by means of syntactic displacement. Consider the examples below which show for each
constituent that it is interpreted as contrastive when directly preceded by the \( ló \) morpheme in post-verbal positions.

(13) a. \[ \text{Ayafor à yó yí ló ndé zónò ni ndef òzìò} \] 
Ayafor SM F1 come FM house tomorrow with money his
‘Ayafor will come to THE HOUSE tomorrow with his money’ (not the market or on campus)

b. \[ \text{Ayafor à yó yí ndé ló zónò ni ndef òzìò} \]
Ayafor SM F1 come house FM tomorrow with money his
‘Ayafor will come to the house TOMORROW with his money’ (not today or the day after tomorrow)

c. \[ \text{Ayafor à yó yí ndé zónò ló ni ndef òzìò} \]
Ayafor SM F1 come house tomorrow FM with money his
‘Ayafor will come to the house tomorrow WITH HIS MONEY’ (not with any other item)

Caps are used throughout this paper to represent the focused phrases. In (13a) the direct object \( ndé \) ‘THE HOUSE’ is the focused element. Semantically, the speaker supposes that ‘Ayafor’ will bring his money to the house, not to the market place or to the school campus, but specifically to the house (contrastive focus). Likewise (13b) and (13c) will be interpreted on the same basis: ‘Ayafor’ will come tomorrow and no other day for (b), and ‘Ayafor’ will come with his money and nothing else for (13c). The \( ló \) morpheme or FM obligatorily attributes a contrastive feature to the constituents it precedes \textit{in-situ}. However, this morpheme cannot be merged with the verb and the subject \textit{in-situ}, as the ungrammaticality of the examples below indicate.

(14) a. *\[\text{Ló Ayafor à yó yiò ndé zónò ni ndef òzìò}\]
FM Ayafor SM F1 come house tomorrow with money his
Intended: ‘AYAFOR will come to the house tomorrow with his money’
b. *Ayafor à yó lá yiò ndé zónò ní ṣkáp zíò
Ayafor SM F1 FM come house tomorrow with money his
Intended: ‘Ayafor will COME to the house tomorrow with his money’

The grammatical subject and the verb cannot be morphologically focus-marked in-situ. In order to focalize the verb, the structure will have to double the verb in sentence-final position (to be made obvious as we proceed). On the other hand, when subjects are focalized, they cannot remain in their canonical positions, as seen in example (15), where the subject is obligatorily followed by the relative marker pá’á⁴ ‘that’ and the subject marker, respectively.

(15) Ló Ayafor *(pá’á) *(à) yó yiò ndé zónò ní ṣkáp zíò
FM Ayafor that SM F1 come house tomorrow with money his
‘It is Ayafor that will come to the house tomorrow with his money’

The main difference between (14a) and (15) is the absence of the relative marker ‘that’. The reasoning is that the subject in (14a) has been displaced from within the IP domain to the complementizer domain and as such, an overt linker is needed (as shown by the relative marker pá’á ‘that’ in (15)) to link the focused expression to the IP.

One striking phenomenon in Awing is that more than one constituent can be focalized post-verbally. In such cases, the FM will precede any constituent which the speaker intends to make salient. Note, however, that in such a situation the speaker is trying to contradict/correct what s/he believes the listener(s) knows about the targeted constituents. An example like (16) can most naturally occur in an argumentative context in which one of the speakers decides to show some degree of knowledge or pragmatically foregone conclusion—by

⁴ The status of the pá’á morpheme has been altered here. In Fominyam (2012), I consider this morpheme a complementizer, in complementary distribution with ngɔ̀, and glossed both morphemes as ‘that’. However, this morpheme cannot be seen as such since it can only occur in the left periphery preceded by focalized or relativized nominals, or wh-expressions.
using the *lò* morpheme to indicate the exact status of the constituents following it.

(16) a. Ayafor à yó yí ló ndé, ló zónò ní ẹkáp zìọ
Ayafor SM F1 come FM house FM tomorrow with money his
‘Ayafor will come to THE HOUSE, TOMORROW with his money’

b. Ayafor à yó yí ló ndé, ló zónà, ló ní ẹkáp zìọ
Ayafor SM F1 come FM house FM tomorrow FM with money his
‘Ayafor will come to THE HOUSE, TOMORROW, WITH HIS
MONEY’

Example (16a) presents two foci while (16b) has three. However, these examples may not constitute a single phonological sequence. There is a phonological pause after each constituent preceded by the *lò* morpheme (indicated with a comma). The discussion so far reveals that there is a lower focus domain in Awing, a post-verbal position which can accommodate focused phrases. Unlike in most languages where the alleged FM shows up only within the left peripheral domain (see Reineke 2007 for Byali; Aboh 2007 for Gungbe; Biloa 2014 for Tuki; Bassong 2014 for Basa’a, among others), Awing has such a morpheme in sentence-internal position. We now turn to displaced focused phrases.

2.3 Morpho-syntactic marking of focus

Morpho-syntactic marking of focus constitutes the displacement of constituents (i.e., phrasal movements) with the obligatory use of the FM in Awing. The displaced constituents move to sentence-initial position. Such phrasal movements, just as what we have been discussing concerning focusing in general, are motivated by either the speaker’s assessment of the hearer’s degree of ignorance, or most importantly, the speaker’s intention to correct the hearer’s strength of contrary belief. A further pragmatic investigation (Fominyam in
progress) reveals that speakers of this language often move constituents to sentence-initial position when they intend to portray paralinguistic\(^5\) attitudes such as surprise or annoyance, indicating that this movement is not imposed by any grammatical condition, but rather a free choice of the speaker. However, the assertion that moved foci are not imposed by the grammar may not apply to subject focusing\(^6\). It is conceivable that the morpho-syntactic focus-marking strategy in Awing involves a cleft structure. These cleft-like sentences are structures in which a constituent is extracted from its base-generated position and set off (moved to the C-domain) with additional elements. In English, the additional elements consist of the expletive subject ‘it’ with the verb ‘is’, —the existential verb ‘to be’. These two combine to form the copula construction ‘it is’.

In Awing, the cleft-like sentence is introduced with what I have so far considered the focus marker (FM). Zerbian (2006) also notes that for some Bantu languages, it has been argued that the copula underwent grammaticalization towards a focus marker. As we have already seen, this is supported by the fact that the FM can be interpreted as ‘is’ (\(^{3}\)rd person singular present of ‘be’). The pattern is as follows. The FM introduces the focus-marked constituent in sentence-initial position, that is, the constituent that is focalized follows the FM and a relative marker immediately follows the latter. The relative marker pá’à ‘that’ is mandatory and as such, the focus sentence will be ungrammatical without it. Consider the following examples where any

\(^5\) I will not discuss this further here. I refer the reader to the manuscript ‘On some aspects of in-situ and ex-situ foci in Awing—why move to the C-domain’? (Fominyam in progress).

\(^6\) This is a theoretical issue which needs further investigation. Moreover, subjects can be focalized in-situ under the label of prosodic focus marking, which is completely ignored in this paper. In such cases, the focused subject remains in-situ with no overt focus marking clue.
constituent within the lower domain can be preposed (except the predicate). (17a) is the input sentence.

(17) a. Ayafor à yó yìò ndé zònò nì ŋkáp zìò ghá-kwànò  Ayafor SM F1 come house tomorrow with money his time-back ‘Ayafor will come to the house tomorrow evening with his money.’

b. subject displacement:
Ló Ayafor pà’à à yó yìò ndé zònò nì ŋkáp zìò ghá-kwànò  FM Ayafor that SM F1 come house tom. with money his time-back ‘It is Ayafor that will come to the house with his money tomorrow evening’

c. direct object displacement:
Ló ndé pà’à Ayafor à yó yìò zònò nì ŋkáp zìò ghá-kwànò  FM house that Ayafor SM F1 come tom. with money his time-back ‘It is in the house that Ayafor will come with his money tomorrow evening’

d. time adverbial displacement:
Ló ghá-kwànò pà’à Ayafor à yó yìò ndé zònò nì ŋkáp zìò  FM time-back that Ayafor SM F1 come tom. with money his time-back ‘It is in the evening that Ayafor will come to the house tomorrow with his money’

e. Prepositional phrase displacement:
Ló nì ŋkáp yìò pà’à Ayafor à yó yìò ndé zònò  FM with money his that Ayafor SM F1 come house tomorrow ghá-kwànò (nì zárò)  time-back with it ‘It is with his money that Ayafor will come to the house tomorrow evening’

From (17a–e), one notices that every constituent within the lower domain except the predicate can be preposed. When these constituents are in sentence-initial position, they are not resumed within the lower clause. However, the prepositional phrase (PP) is an exception to this generalization as there can be an optional preposition with a pronoun in the lower domain. We have seen that any
constituent but the verb can move to sentence-initial position. So how is verb-focus achieved in this language?

2.4 Predicate focus constructions

In Awing, as in most Bantu languages (see, e.g., Nkemnji 1995; Mutaka & Tamanji 2000), the overall sentence ends up having two verbs when there is verb focus. Specifically in Awing, a conjugated form of the verb appears in the canonical position and an infinitive form shows up in sentence-final position. It is the second or final copy that is morphologically focus-marked. Example (18) below illustrates this for a non-transitive verb.

(18) a. Seh à pí ŋkíŋà
   Seh SM P1 cry
   ‘Seh cried’

   b. Seh à pí ŋkíŋ lá kíŋ-nà
   Seh SM P1 cry FM cry-INF.
   ‘Seh (actually) CRIED’

   c. *Seh à ló kíŋ kíŋ-nà
   Seh SM FM cry cry-INF
   Intended: Seh (actually) CRIED’

   d. ? Seh à pí kíŋ kíŋ-nà
   Seh SM P1 cry cry-INF
   Intended: ‘Seh (actually) CRIED’

The example in (18c) is ungrammatical because the focus marker precedes the first verb rather than the second one. The ungrammaticality of (18d) is a mild one because there is no FM. Some speakers may even use sentences like (18d) in predicate focusing. But then, the sentence in (18d) will not have the same contrastive verb-focus interpretation like that in (18a). (18d) will be interpreted as a sort of verbal intensification—increasing the degree of the action (adverbial). The suffix –nà that appears in the second verb is one of the infinitive markers of this language (cf. Fominyam 2012: Chapter 2). Example (19) shows another verb focus example, this time with a transitive verb.

(19) a. Seh lá'à pó'-ò mó yìò
   Seh f3 beat child her
   ‘Seh shall beat her child.’

   b. Seh lá'à pó'-ò mó yìò *(ló)pó'-nà
   Seh f3 beat child her FM beat-INF
   ‘Seh shall BEAT her child.’
Notice that the FM comes after the direct object ‘her child’ and immediately precedes the duplicate or second verb. In such a position, the focus marker cannot be optional, as the asterisk on the parentheses indicates. Unlike in the cleft-like constructions where a focused item is in sentence-initial position, focused verbs show up in ‘sentence-final position’ in descriptive terms.

2.5 Predicate focusing and wh-expressions

It is possible to have a predicate-focused construction in Awing where the subject is questioned with the use of a wh-expression. Consider (20) where different ways of forming such questions are presented. (20a) is the input sentence.

(20) a. Montoh à yó pó’à mó yiò
    Montoh SM F1 beat child her
    ‘Montoh will beat her child’ (declarative)

    b. Montoh à yó pó’à mó yiò ló pó'-nò
       Montoh SM F1 beat childhis FM beat-INF
       ‘Montoh will BEAT her child’ (declarative with verb focus)

Interrogatives:

c. Wò yó pó’ò mó yiò?
   Who F1 beat child her
   ‘Who will beat her child?’ (Interrogative with the wh-expression in-situ)

d. Ló wò pá’à à yó pó’ò mó yiò?
   FM who that SM F1 beat child her
   ‘WHO will beat her child?’ (Interrogative with subject displacement)

e. Wò yó pó’ò mó yiò lè pó'-nò?
   who F1 beat child her FM beat-INF
   ‘Who will BEAT her child?’ (Interrogative with verb doubling)
(20a–g) show various ways that can be used to form the question(s) ‘who/WHO will BEAT her child?’ (20a) is the neutral declarative sentence. (20b) presents a simple predicate focus where the focused verb ends up in sentence-final position. Here the intention is to contrast the focused verb ‘BEAT’ with its implicit alternatives, say to pamper or indulge. (20c) questions ‘who will beat her child?’. In (20d) the wh-expression is in sentence-initial position and, as such, emphasis is laid on the ‘WHO’. Notice that in both (20c) and (20d), the verb is not focalized. The difference between (20e) and (20f) is that in the former, the speaker just wants to know who will beat the child (instead of pampering him/her), in the latter s/he wants to know what type of an individual (focusing/emphasis) will beat the child, instead of pampering him/her. The movement of constituents in (20f) and (20g) seems more intriguing.

Note that in (20f), the wh-word has been moved to sentence-initial position. In addition, the second copy of the verb is focalized in sentence-final position. This results in the overall sentence having two FMs. The (20g) sentence involves only one focus marking, yet there are two copies of the verb. The movement in (20g) seems to be more complex than that of (20f). Notice that in (20g), the tense marker (F1) and one copy of the verb precede the wh-word. However, it is worth mentioning that although (20e–g) are all understood as wh-questions with predicate focusing, there are subtle semantic/pragmatic differences between them. The semantic interpretation of the focused verb
'BEAT' in (20e) and (20f) is different from that of (20g). This may be due to the fact that the FM immediately precedes the verbs in (20e) and (20f), which is not the case in (20g). Actually, (20g) is interpreted rather as an intensified verbal situation—that is, the second copy of the verb acts as an adverbial. Thus, (20e) and (20f) have contrastive verb-focus which seems not to be the case with (20g), and similar examples given below in (21). Also observe that in what I am terming ‘intensification verb-doubling contexts’, the second copy of the verb does not bear the infinitive marker (cf. 21), and thus the two copies are not realized the same way.

(21) a.  Ló náŋkíŋ wá ŋkíŋə̀?  b.  Ló nó mbén wá mbénə̀ ðpènnə̀?
FM p2 cry who cry ‘Who CRIED?’  FM p2 dance who dance music ‘Who DANCED?’ or ‘who DANCED the dance/music?’

c.  Ló pín’tú wá ntí’ò ŋkíò?  d.  Ló yó tú wá tú’ò ŋkíò?
FM p1 carry who carry water ‘Who CARRIED the water?’  FM f1 carry who carry water ‘Who will CARRY the water?’

An important systematic observation in Awing that is worth mentioning is how tense influences the phonology of the verb. When the tense is in the past, the verb is prefixed with a homorganic nasal which is not present when the clause is realized with a future tense marker (see (21c) and (21d)). However, I cannot currently provide a complete account of why one of the verbal copies in examples (20g) and (21) must not appear with the final schwa (ə). It may well be that the schwa is a residue of the infinitive particle or the entire verbal complex. Nonetheless, what is clear is that the form of the verb without the schwa is a truncated form, and it is common in Awing to truncate verbs when certain syntactic interpretations are activated (section 3.4.3 will have more to say on this). The above discussion shows the possibility of having a wh-expression and a focalized verb in the same sentence. We have seen a good number of examples
with the subject. It is also possible to have both subject and object questioned with verb doubling as in (22). However, recall that this is another example of ‘intensification context’, and not actually contrastive verb-focus.

(22) Ló pén wó mbénɔ kɔ?
FM dance who dance what
‘Who is DANCING what?’

We can therefore conclude our discussion on focusing by asserting that the Awing language uses mainly two ways to focalize items (ignoring prosody). Categories within the IP domain receive a contrastive-focus interpretation when preceded by the FM. This has been termed morphological marking of focus, and we have seen that more than two constituents can be focalized with this method. The second method we have come across is the morpho-syntactic means of focusing. The Awing language may use cleft-like sentences to focus any item in sentence-initial position. This section then ends with verbal focusing: when a verb is focused, the sentence ends up having two copies of the same verb. Structurally, we have seen that the second copy occurs in sentence-final position. The next section tackles interrogatives and begins with wh-expressions.

3 Interrogation in Awing

In this section, we will discuss the overall organisation of wh-questions in Awing. The section will begin with words that express wh-expressions such as who, what, where, when, why and how. Unlike in English where these words obligatorily move to sentence-initial position or Mandarin Chinese where wh-words must remain in their canonical positions (in-situ), Awing exhibits a mixed structure—wh-words can remain in-situ or move to sentence-initial position. When the wh-expressions move to sentence-initial positions, they behave exactly like cleft-like constructions. That is, the focus marker must precede the
wh-word and the latter is obligatorily followed by the invariable relative marker *pá’á* ‘that’. It is also possible to have a question morpheme in sentence-final position. The question morpheme is optional and when present, the interrogative force of the entire sentence changes. Below are the wh-expressions used in Awing.

(23) Arguments: Referential adjuncts: Non-Referential adjuncts:
(ǝ̀)wǝ́ ‘who’ (ǝ̀)fú ‘where’ (ǝ̀)lé ‘how’
(ǝ̀)kǝ́ ‘what’ (ǝ̀)ghá-kǝ́ ‘when’ (ǝ̀)tè-kǝ́ ‘why’

The initial vowels are in parentheses because they are seldom perceived in actual speech. The referential adjunct ‘when’ is a combination of the noun ‘time’ and the argument ‘what’. Also notice that the non-referential adjunct ‘how’ is a combination, though the first part is not evident.

3.1 Matrix wh-expressions

It is possible to have wh-expressions both in sentence-final and sentence-initial positions. Let us begin our description with the *in-situ* wh-expressions. In such cases, the realization of the FM is optional. As already mentioned, a question morpheme can also show up in sentence-final position. Consider (24) below.

(24) a. Neh yó yí ní mózìò ndé màŋ
Neh F1 come with food house my
‘Neh will bring food to my house’ (declarative)

---

7 But it can be argued to have been derived from the morpheme ‘because’, as shown below:

(i) m̀ghénò té (ngá)m̀kóŋá
I go because that I love
‘I am leaving because I wish to.’

If this is correct, then the non-referential adjunct ‘why’ might be literally understood as ‘because what?’
The sentence in (24b) has two optional elements: the FM and a sentence-final question morpheme (QM). When the question is uttered without any of these elements, it simply questions the direct object in (24a). When the FM is used, the questioner creates a possibility where the answer or person that answers has to choose from an implicit set of locations. The additional question morpheme changes the status of the sentence to either a soliloquy or an echo question (whether the FM is present or not). It is also possible to question more than two constituents in their base generated positions. However, when the FM precedes one of the wh-expressions, it would be infelicitous to have it precede any other wh-word. See (25) for illustration.

(25) a. Neh yó yí ni kó fú?
    Neh F1 come with what where
    ‘What will Neh bring, and where?’

b. Neh yó yí ló ni kó fú?
    Neh F1 come FM with what where
    ‘What will Neh bring, and where?’

c. Neh yó yí ni kó lá fú?
    Neh F1 come with what FM where
    ‘What will Neh bring, and where?’

d. *?Neh yó yí ló ni kó lá fú?
    Neh F1 come FM with whatFM where
    Intended: ‘What will Neh bring, and where?’

Using the FM twice is somehow redundant when constituents are questioned using wh-expressions. This is the main descriptive difference between wh-expressions and focused constituents. In the first section of this paper, we saw
that it was possible, morphologically, to focalize more than one constituent with the FM post-verbally. When it comes to wh-expressions, inserting the FM twice is not possible. Let us then see how wh-expressions behave when occurring sentence-initially.

One striking similarity between focused phrases and wh-expressions is seen when wh-expressions moves to sentence-initial position. When these expressions are preposed, they behave precisely like foci—the FM must precede the wh-expression and the pá’à ‘that’ morpheme obligatorily follows it. See examples below.

(26) a.  Ló fú pá’à Neh yó yí ni máziò?
   FM where that Neh F1 come with food
   ‘Where will Neh bring the food?’

   b.  Ló wó pá’à à yó yí ni máziòndé màn?
       FM who that SM F1 come with food house my
       ‘Who will bring the food to my house?’

   c.  Ló kó pá’à Neh yó yí ni zérò ndé màn?
       FM what that Neh F1 come with it house my
       ‘What will Neh bring to my house?’

The examples in (26) show that there is no difference between subject, object and adjunct in the movement of wh-expressions. (27) further illustrates the claim that neither the relativizer pá’à ‘that’ nor the FM can be omitted.

(27) a. *(Ló) fú *(pa’à) Neh yó yí ni máziò?
       FM where that Neh F1 come with food
       ‘Where will Neh bring the food?’

If any wh-expression is used in place of the adjunct in (27), the sentence will still be ungrammatical.
3.2 Wh-expressions in embedded clauses

Embedded clauses in Awing can be introduced with predicates like *sûŋ̄* ‘tell/say’, or *kwáŋ̄* ‘believe/think’. In such constellations, a wh-expression can remain in sentence-final position or move to sentence-initial position within the embedded clause. Alternatively, the wh-expression can be realized in a matrix-initial position. The examples are given in (28) below where a wh-expression can occur either in its base position (28b), or move to the initial-position of the embedded clause (28c) and even all the way to the initial-position of the matrix clause (28d).

(28) a. Aghetse à kwáŋ̄ ñó Ngwe à kóŋ̄ Wakie
    Aghetse SM think that Ngwe SM love Wakie
    ‘Aghetse thinks that Ngwe loves Wakie’ (Declarative)

    b. Aghetse à kwáŋ̄ ñó Ngwe à kóŋ̄ (ló) wó?
    Aghetse SM think that Ngwe SM love FM who
    ‘Who does Aghetse think that Ngwe loves?’

    c. Aghetse à kwáŋ̄ ñó lá wó pá’á Ngwe à kóŋ̄?
    Aghetse SM think that FM who that Ngwe SM love
    ‘Who does Aghetse think that Ngwe loves?’

    d. Ló wó pá’á Aghetse à kwáŋ̄ ñó Ngwe à kóŋ̄
    FM who that Aghetse SM think that Ngwe SM love
    ‘Who does Aghetse think that Ngwe loves?’

Notice that, though the examples in (28a–d) have the same English translation, their internal syntactic structures differ in Awing. It is quite free to have these expressions in any of these positions. However, their semantic/pragmatic interpretations are not quite the same. The main difference arises when the FM in (28b) is used or left out. For the time being, I will just mention that this different is felt as a sort of emphasis. When the FM is used, as in (28b), the emphasis is attributed in a similar manner to (28b–d).
3.3 Multiple wh-expressions

As previously mentioned, it is possible to form questions in the Awing language with more than two wh-expressions. However, it is most natural to have these expressions realized in-situ. In addition, multiple wh-expressions are best parsed if they are discourse-linked—that is, they should be made accessible via the immediate discourse context. (29a) gives us grounds to ask such questions.

(29) a. Mefor à pí ntúmè ŋgàsáàŋè òmbò Ayafor màsáànè
   Mefor SM P1 send corn to Ayafor morning
   ‘Mefor sent corn to Ayafor in the morning’

   b. Mefor à pí ntú lá kò òmbò wò ɡhákè?
      Mefor SM P1 send FM what to who when
      ‘?What did Mefor send to who, when?’

   c. Lò kò pà’à wò pí ntúmè òmbò Tsefor màsáànè?
      FM what to who P1 send to Tsefor morning
      ‘?What did who send to Tsefor in the morning?’

   d. Lò òmbò wò pà’à wò pí ntúmè ŋgàsáàŋè màsáànè?
      FM to who that who P1 send corn morning
      ‘?To who(m) did who send corn in the morning?’

   e. Lò ɡhákè pà’à wò pí ntúmè ŋgàsáàŋè òmbò Tsefor?
      FM when that who P1 send corn to Tsefor
      ‘?When did who send a corn to Tsefor?’

In order to formulate these types of questions, the constituents which are being questioned ought to be shared by both the speaker and the listener. In example (29b), all the post-verbal wh-expressions are realised in-situ. The examples in (29c–e) show that any wh-expression can cross-over the wh-subject. Once more

8 The notion of cross-over is a technical term used to describe the implausibility of the direct object or other post-verbal wh-expressions to move upward when the subject is also questioned in languages like English. It is a notion of hierarchy in multiple questioning.
I will not dive into any theoretical speculations relating to the phenomenon of cross-over violation, since that will take us beyond the scope and intention of this paper. Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning that when the wh-subject overtly moves as in (30b), or any wh-expression (cf. 30a), then no other wh-expression can cross-over—as demonstrated by the ungrammaticality of (30c) and (30d).

(30) a. Aghetse à kwán ŋgó lá ká pà’à wó pí ntúmò àmbó wó?
   Aghetse SM think that FM what that who P1 send to who
   ‘?What does Aghetse think that who sent to who?’

   b. ?Aghetse à kwán ŋgó wó pà’à à pí ntúmò kó àmbó wó?
      Aghetse SM think that FM who that SM P1 send what to who
      ‘?Who does Aghetse think that (he) sent what to who when?’

   c. *Ló kó pà’à Aghetsé à kwán ŋgó lá wó pà’à à pí ntúmò
      FM what that Aghetse SM think that FM who that SM P1 send
      àmbo wó?
      to who

   d. *Ló àmbo wó pà’à Aghetsé à kwán ŋgó lá kó pà’à Mefor pí
      FM to who that Aghetse SM think that FM what that Mefor P1
      ntúmò?
      send

Now notice that the sentence in (30b) is not considered to be a perfect sentence in Awing. It appears that in multiple wh-questions, the overall interpretation of these words are easier when the wh-subject is in-situ. This is curiously unlike what we find in the literature in the descriptions of languages like English. To make the point obvious, consider example (31b) and (31c).

(31) a. Ayafor à ná nkórò ŋgèsáàŋò
   Ayafor SM P2 eat corn
   ‘Ayafor ate corn’
b. ?Ló wó pá’à à nó nkóró kó?
  FM who that SM P2 eat what
  ‘Who ate what?’

c. Ló kó pá’à wó nó nkóró
  FM what that who P2 eat
  ‘?What did who eat?’—(Instead of who ate what; in English)

Compared to English, the hierarchy is reversed in Awing—(31c) is preferred to (31b). We can therefore conclude that it is possible to have multiple wh-expression in question formation. These expressions can either remain in-situ or move to sentence-initial position both in matrix and embedded clauses. The movement of any post-verbal wh-expression to sentence-initial position does not matter as long as the wh-subject remains in-situ. However, if one of the wh-words occurs in the embedded-initial position, it creates a restriction for the other wh-expressions to successfully move to the matrix clause.

3.4 Yes/no questions

In Awing, yes/no questions can be considered neutral questions in the sense that the response can either be negative ṭm̄om̄ ‘no’ or positive ṭm̄ ‘yes’. Yes/no questions can be marked by a separate question morpheme éé or by the lengthening of some final segment. Both forms of question marking—morphological marking and segment lengthening appear in clause-final position in the overt syntax. Let us consider lengthening to be phonological marking and the separate question morpheme morphological marking. We will see that morphological marking is the dominant strategy in the sense that all cases of lengthening can be avoided or replaced with the separate question morpheme but not vice versa.
3.4.1 Lengthening in yes/no questions

Lengthening is seen as phonological marking in the sense that the last phoneme of the last morpheme is repeated or lengthened. This phenomenon affects vowels and some nasals in Awing as the following examples illustrate. I label the lengthened phoneme LP, but bear in mind that it functions as the QM.

(32)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements/Declarative</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Ngwe à lá’â kóŋà fó</td>
<td>Ngwe à lá’â kóŋà fó ó?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngwe SM F3 love Fon</td>
<td>Ngwe SM F3 love Fon LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Ngwe shall love the Fon.’</td>
<td>‘Shall Ngwe love the Fon?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Ngwe à tó kùnɔ mám ndé</td>
<td>Ngwe à tó kùnɔmáɔ ndé é?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngwe SM ASP enter inside house</td>
<td>Ngwe SM ASP enter inside house LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Ngwe is entering the house.’</td>
<td>‘Is Ngwe entering the house?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Ngwe à yó kórà mbǐŋ</td>
<td>Ngwe à yó kórà mbǐŋ ē?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngwe SM F1 eat goat</td>
<td>Ngwe SM F1 eat goat LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Ngwe will eat goat.’</td>
<td>‘Will Ngwe eat the goat?’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We can see from the above data that in the lengthening process, both vowels and nasals adopt/copy all the features of the preceding sound, a kind of tonal assimilation.

3.4.2 Morphological marking in yes/no questions

Yes/no questions can have a separate morpheme in sentence-final position. Thus, in all examples in (32), the LP can be replaced by a separate final question morpheme. For clarification, the questions in (32a) and (32c) are repeated below as (33a) and (33b).

(33)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(33a)</th>
<th>(33b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Ngwe à lá’â kóŋà fó éé?</td>
<td>b. Ngwe a yó kórà mbǐŋ éé?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngwe SM F3 love Fon QM</td>
<td>Ngwe SM F1 eat goat QM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Shall Ngwe love the Fon?’</td>
<td>‘Will Ngwe eat the goat?’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Now, in order to corroborate the assertion made earlier concerning morphological marking dominating phonological marking, one will notice that words that end with oral stops or glottal stops and some bi-/tri-syllabic words, can be questioned with the morphological marker but not with the lengthening process as examples (34a') and (34b') illustrate.

(34) a.  Alombah à kwárò ŋkébò éé? a'.  ?Alombah à kwárò ŋkébò ó  
    Alombah SM take money QM  Alombah SM take money LP  
    ‘Did Alombah take the money?’  ‘Alombah has taken the money’

   b.  Alombah à kápómò tsá’ò éé?  
    Alombah SM P1 mould block QM  
    ‘Did Alombah mould blocks?’

   b'.  ?Alombah à ká pómó tsá’ò ó  
    Alombah SM P1 mould block LP  
    ‘Alombah mould the blocks.’

   c.  Alombah à lá’a pómó ndé məjínè éé?  
    Alombah SM F3 mould house grass QM  
    ‘Shall Alombah build a grass house?’

   d.  Alombah à píɲá’a ndé ni wágò éé?  
    Alombah SM P1 open house with brutality QM  
    ‘Did Alombah open the door brutally?’

In the above examples, the QM in sentence-final position is used to type each clause as interrogative. If the speaker decides not to resort to the éé morpheme, and tries to lengthen the final phonemes or sounds of the last morphemes, then the sentence will simply remain declarative (cf. (34a') and (34b'), which can be systematically extended to the other examples). Therefore, any declarative sentence can be transformed into an interrogative via the use of the final question marker but not all sentences can use the lengthening technique.
### 3.4.3 Yes/no questions formed through short forms of words

In this section, I present another technique used by the speakers of this language to form yes/no questions, namely the shortening/truncation of words within the sentence. It is interesting to note that no question morpheme is realized overtly. The examples in (35) below show this possibility in Awing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Declaratives</th>
<th>Questions/interrogatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Ngwe à kwářà ŋkéèbò</td>
<td>Ngwe á kwà ŋkàp?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ngwe SM take money</em></td>
<td><em>Ngwe SM take money</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Ngwe has taken the money’</td>
<td>‘Has Ngwe taken the money?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Alombah à twáłam pòòñò</td>
<td>Alombah à twá pi?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Alombah SM carry people</em></td>
<td><em>Alombah SM carry people</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Alombah has carried the people’</td>
<td>‘Has Alombah carried the people?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. m̀ téèmò nì ásèènò</td>
<td>m̀ tsí nì ásó?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I stand with shame</td>
<td>I stand with shame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I am ashamed’</td>
<td>‘Am I ashamed?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. ?Ngwe à kwà ŋkap éé?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ngwe SM take money QM</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. ?Alombah à twá pi éé?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Alombah SM carry people QM</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples (35a–c) show that the Awing grammar uses short forms of both the verbs and the nouns (direct object) to change the force of the clause from declarative to interrogative. However, when these short forms are used, the QM is not needed, as (35d–e) indicate. The sentences in (35d–e) are not actually ungrammatical, the final-question morpheme rather changes such sentences to soliloquies or echo questions in a similar manner to that discussed for wh-expressions with the final-question morpheme (*ló*).
3.5 Tag questions

A tag question is formed by uttering a sentence, pausing, and following up with the tag marker kɔlɛ́: ‘or how’, ‘not so’, ‘isn’t it’ or better still ‘is it the case’ or in French as ‘n’est-ce pas?’ In Awing, the response to such constructions can be ɔm ‘yes’ or ɔmɔm ‘no’. A speaker may decide to add an element within the sentence that affirms the polarity of the response as negative or positive. Thus by inserting a negation morpheme, the speaker indicates a bias towards a negative answer, i.e. that (s)he expects a negative response ɔmɔm ‘no’. However, his/her expectation can be counteracted, resulting in an opposite response. The following examples clarify the discussion.

(36) a. Aghetse à pí ghénɔ̀ tɔsɔŋɔ̀ kɔ-lɛ́?
Aghetse SM P1 go Bamenda TQ
‘Aghetse has gone to Bamenda, hasn’t she?’

b. Fominyam à nɔ jkɔŋɔ̀ zɛ’kɔ̀ jwá’rɔ̀ kɔ-lɛ́?
Fominyam SM P2 love teach book TQ
‘Fominyam had loved teaching, hadn’t he?’

c. Fominyam a nɔ kɛ̀ zɛ’kɔ̀ jwá’rɔ̀ kɔŋ jɔ̀ pɔ̀, kɔ-lɛ́?
Fominyam SM P2 NEG teach book like NEG TQ
‘Fominyam had never liked teaching, has he?’

Example (36a) and (b) can be considered neutral tag questions in the sense that the speaker expects either a positive or a negative response. On the other hand, in (36c) where the speaker uses the discontinuous negation morpheme ke...pɔ̀, s/he expects a negative response. Nonetheless, in all three cases (36a–c), the question tag morpheme in sentence-final position scopes the entire sentence, which explains why the answer can either be positive or negative, independent of the speaker’s expectations.
3.6 Alternative question

Alternative questions are questions whose answers are derived by choosing a word or an entire clause within the question itself. In Awing, these answers can be a fragment or an entire clause. In the responses, observe that one or both of the alternative answers can occur with what we have so far considered to be the focus marker of this language. The alternatives are linked by the connective particle /kénǝ̀/ literally ‘or’ and the question ends with a question morpheme /ló/ (QM). Below are some examples.

(37) a. Fozoh à ná nchi n ló tɔsɔŋ kɔ̀nɔ laâ-kârâ ló?
Fozoh SM p2 live FM Bemenda or village-white QM
‘Fozoh lived in Bamenda or overseas?’

b. Ô lâ’â kóŋɔ Flash -nɔ ƞwá’é ló fi kénɔ ló fɛ ló?
you F3 love INF-learn-INF book FM there or FM here QM
‘You would love to study here or there?’

c. Fó à ná ndzùtɔ ló mɔ-bíŋ mén tá kɔ̀nɔ mɔ-ŋóp mén
Fon SM p2 kill FM PLU-goat LINK five or PLU-chicken LINK
térâ ló?
three QM
‘The Fon killed five goats or three chickens?’

While examples (37a) and (b) show that a single word can be questioned, (37c) illustrates that a larger constituent can equally be questioned. In all of the examples, the morpheme ló introduces the alternative responses. This morpheme highlights the targeted responses somewhat and appears before the first disjunct as in (37a) and (c), or before both of them as in (37b). For simplicity, I will continue to label this morpheme as the focus marker—it’s function here is to direct the attention of the speaker to the alternatives.
3.7 Echo questions

Echo questions, as the word indicates, are questions which repeat (echo) a preceding statement or an answer. They are formed in the Awing language by the same strategy used in yes/no questions—that is, either by lengthening the final vowel or nasal of the last word or by adding the separate interrogative morpheme éé. As we proceed, it is important to know that lengthening is usually accompanied with some kind of prosodic change that affects the entire clause. (32b) is repeated below as (38), this time with an echo interpretation, as the translation indicates.

(38) a. Ngwe á tó kúnà môme ndé
   Ngwe  SM  ASPenter  inside house
   ‘Ngwe is getting inside the house’ (declarative)

   b. Ngwe á tó kúnà môme ndé  é?
      Ngwe  SM  ASPenter  inside house  QM
      ‘Is Ngwe getting inside the house?’ (echo question)

   c. Ngwe á tó kúnà môme ndé  éé?
      Ngwe  SM  ASPenter  inside house  QM
      ‘Is Ngwe getting inside the house?’ (echo question)

The repetitive (echo) question (38b) uses the lengthening strategy while (38c) uses the separate morpheme strategy just as the yes/no and other question types, the question morpheme appears syntactically in sentence-final position but scopes over the entire sentence, giving it an interrogative force.

3.8 Question formation via modal inversion

It is possible to form a question by inverting the position of the modal element in Awing, similar to the English I→C strategy—‘Can Zamchang succeed in syntax?’ In modal inversion, the sentence may optionally have a final question morpheme. It is important to note that what is being considered modal inversion
here is very uncommon in this language and Bantu languages in general. Actually, Awing does not display (to the best of my knowledge) any other case than the one illustrated in (39).

(39) a. Zamchang, tômbó’ò à kóŋà syntaxò
   Zamchang can SM love syntax
   ‘Zamchang can love syntax’
   Or
   Actually interpreted as: ‘Zamchang, he can love syntax’

   b. Tômbó’ò Zamchang à kóŋà syntaxò?
      can Zamchang SM love syntax
      ‘Can Zamchang love syntax?’

   c. Tômbó’ò Zamchang à kóŋà syntaxò éé?
      can Zamchang SM love syntax QM
      ‘Can Zamchang love syntax?’

The sentence in (39a) might not actually be a typical situation of modal inversion in parallel to the English I—C strategy. The subject Zamchang in this example does not constitute a phonological string with the rest of the sentence, as shown with the comma—suggesting that the subject has been topicalized and as such, the modal element does not actually move in the questions in (39b) and (c) but might be in it base-generated position. However, in order not to mix up things, I leave this argument for future analysis. Finally, notice that the example in (39c) exhibits two properties: the (apparent) movement of the modal element and the final question morpheme. The presence of this question morpheme once more attributes the same interpretation that we discussed for examples (24) with a wh-question, and (35d–e) with the truncation process, namely rendering the sentence as an echo question or a monologue.
4 Conclusion

In this paper, I have presented the various strategies Awing speakers use to emphasize/focalize a given constituent. We have seen that focusing can be achieved morphologically and via morpho-syntactic means. In our discussion on focusing, we saw that predicate focusing is different from other constituents since the verb ends up having two copies. We then turned to a thorough description of wh-words. We saw that these elements could remain in their base-generated positions or move to sentence-initial positions. In sentence-initial positions, wh-expressions behave exactly like focused elements, when preposed. The second section dealt with the various strategies used in question formation. The overall aim of this paper, which is a refinement of (Fominyam 2012: chapter three), has been to present in a purely descriptive manner how these constructions are formed and interpreted in this language. Thus, the data can be used from any angle of linguistic inquiry for comparative or theoretical analyses.

Reference


Henry Z. Fominyam
Universität Potsdam
Department Linguistik
Karl-Liebknecht-Str. 24-25
14476 Potsdam
Germany
fominyam.henry@yahoo.com