ON THE NATURE AND STATUS OF THE MORPHEME "*TʃE*" IN LIMBUM

By

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ABSTRACT

In Limbum, a Grassfield bBantu language spoken in the Nkambe plateau of the North West Region of Cameroon, there exists the morpheme *tʃe*. This morpheme has various interpretations depending on the context in which it is used. Due to the fact that in the various contexts where this morpheme can be used, its phonetic shape is same, in linguistic analysis and in the elaboration of didactic materials, the explanations or the meanings attributed to this morpheme in these contexts has been problematic to teachers of the language and those elaborating didactic materials for the language; it is the aim of this paper to bring to the lamp light the various uses of this morpheme and with illustrative sentences, bring out its different meanings/functions. In terms of theoretical orientation, I use an eclectic approach: the structuralist framework as propounded by de Saussure and his followers and Chomsky's Minimalist Program.Tthe former aids in explaining the linear succession of elements and their relationship in Limbum sentence, while the latter, while capitalizing on the linear order, provides explanations on word order variation of this morpheme in the syntax.

ABBREVIATIONS:

Prog	Progressive	prep	Prepositio	SM	Subject marker
F	Future	F2	Near Future	P2	Today past
F3	Remote future	Def.	Definitiviser	pron	Pronoun
Rel	Relativizer	Pre.	Present	P3	Identifiable past
Foc	Focus	RM	Relative marker		

1. INTRODUCTION

Limbum is a Grassfield Bantu language spoken in the extreme North West Region of the Republic of Cameroon. Limbum (903) has been classified all through the years as one of the languages belonging to zone nine (9) of the languages of Cameroon together with other languages like Dzodinka (904), Mfumte (905) and Yamba (906) (B, Dieu et Renaud (1993), Binam Bikoi (ed) (2012). All of these languages fall within the Northern Group of Grassfield Bantu languages. The first figure of the codes of these languages (9) indicate that they are found within the same zone while the second figure (0) poinst to the fact that they are genetically related and the third number indicate the number of languages within the zone. In this paper, I analyze the Limbum language with particular attention to the different shades of meaning that the morpheme *tʃe* has. This morpheme is very frequently used in a varied number of constructions of the language. This frequent use in many constructions of the language might push one to think that it points to the same reality in all circumstances. This paper demonstrates that it is only the morphological structure of the morpheme as well as its pronunciation that is similar but that it actually represents defferent morphemes in the language. The paper argues that the similarity in its structure is a mere coincidence and that the different instances of use translate different meanings These meanings are dependent not only on the context of use but also on the position of its occurence.

The paper is divided into six (6) sections. The first section is the introduction and the last, the conclusion. Section two analyses *tʃe* as an aspectual marker, while section three, presents **it** as a relativiser. The analysis in section four presents *tʃe* as a marker of focus. Section five, examines the various distributions of the morpheme *tʃe* in its various interpretations to justify the claim that these different uses should be interpreted as different morphemes., gaining inspiration from Chomsky's (1995) Miniimalist Program and its subsequent developments, section six tries to demonstrate that these different interpretions of *tʃe* can be handled by different nodes in their respective syntactic representations.

2. THE USE OF tʃe AS AN ASPECTUAL MARKER

To indicate that an action is carried out or a state is experienced at the time of speaking in Limbum, be it in the past, present or the future, the morpheme *tʃe* must be used. Hence, the presence of this morpheme in a certain Limbum sentences indicates that the action or the state is in progress. Thus, in this circumstance, this morpheme serves as a marker of the progressive aspect. In the light of this meaning, this morpheme always precedes a verb and follows a tense marker. This is captured in the following illustrations:

1.a. Mallah tʃe fā ŋwàʔ nè Njuh
    Mallah prog give book to Njuh
    "Mallah is giving a book to Njuh."

b. Mallah à bā tʃē fā ŋwàʔ nè mè
    Mallah SM P2 prog give book prep me
    "Mallah was giving me a book."

c. Mallah bé fū̄ tʃē fā ŋwàʔ nè mè
    Mallah F F2 prog give book prep me
    "Mallah will give me a book to" (in an identifiable time in the future)

d. Mallah   bé   kè: tʃē   fā   ŋwàʔ   nè   mɛ̀

Malllah   F   F3   prog   give   book   prep   me
"Mallah will give me a book"   (in a remote future)

As seen from the examples in (1) above, the morpheme *tʃē* occurs in the present tense (1a), past tenses (1b) and in the future tenses (1c and 1d). This morpheme is preceded by the tense marker and followed by the verb in the constructions in (1b, 1c and 1d). This is not the distribution we notice with the construction in (1a). An obvious question that arises concerns the discrepancy in the occurrence of this morpheme where in (a), the morpheme is not preceded by a tense marker while in the others, the tense marker can be clearly seen. This is explained by the fact that the present tense in Limbum is not morphologically marked. Hence, symmetrically with the other tenses, this ø morpheme is found immediately after the subject and before the morpheme tʃē as represented in (2) below.

2.   Mallah   ø   tʃe   fā   ŋwà̀ʔ   nè   Njuh
     Mallah   Pres.   prog   give   book   prep   Njuh
     "Mallah is giving a book to Njuh."

Constructions like those in 1 and 2 translate an action that is going on or a state that is experienced at the same time as expressed by the tense. Therefore, *tʃē* in all of these cases is a marker of the progressive aspect.

3.   THE USE OF tʃe AS A RELATIVISER

According to Chang and Wu (2006), restrictive relative clauses can be subdivided into embedded or adjoined relative clauses. Embedded relative clauses can on their part be subdivided into three types with regard to the distribution of the head noun namely: head internal, head external and head incorporated free relative clauses. The adjoined relative clause can be subdivided into two subtypes viz: left adjoined (correlatives) and right adjoined relatives (extraposed relative clauses).

Limbum uses restrictive relatives in which the morpheme *tʃe* is found. This section therefore focuses on the nature and function of this morpheme in this relevant clause type in the language. In this language, almost all constituents of a sentence can be relativised except adverbs and adjectives. When relativization takes place, the relativised element occurs at the left periphery of the relative clause. The relativized element must be immediately followed by the morpheme *tʃe*, which remains invariable no matter the noun class of the relativized element. At the end of the relative clause, there is the occurrence of the morpheme *na*. To illustrate these facts, this realisation and function is demonstrated in sentence 3a, 3b and 3c below:

3.a.   m̀tʃɛ̀p   [tʃé   mí   mū   kɨ̄té   nà]   mí   mì
       medicine   Rel   pron   P3   spill   Def   pron   finish
       "The drugs that spilled is finished."

  b.   pkū: rèréŋ   Nfor   [tʃé   mɛ̀   yú   nà]   yí   képfi
       Bed   bamboo   Nfor   Rel   I   buy   Def   pron   break
       "Nfor's bamboo bed that I bought is broken is broken."

c. *pku: [tʃé rèréŋ Nfɔ̀ mḛ̀ yú nà] yí képtí
    bed Rel bamboo Nfor I buy Def pron break

Looking at the constructions in (3) above, one notices that the relativized elements; **m̀tʃḛ̂p** "medicines" in (3a) and **pkū:rèréŋ Nfor** "Nfor's bamboo bed" in (3b) occur at the left edge of the relative clause. In both sentences, the relative clause is closed off by the morpheme **na**. The case of (3c) simply illustrates the fact that in Limbum, a part of the associative construction cannot be relativized. This is the reason for its ungrammaticality.

In the discussion of relative constructions in Limbum, we notice that the morpheme which has the same phonetic shape like the progressive aspectual marker discussed in section 2 above in this instance rather functions as the relativizer. Notice that the progressive **tʃe** occurs at a clause internal position while relativizer **tʃe** occurs as the leftmost element of the relative clause. The presence of progressive **tʃe** does not provoke the occurrence of a clause final **nà** while the presence of relativizer **tʃe** implies the apparition of the clause final **nà**. Given the different distributions of this (these) morpheme(s) in theses separate cases and their distinct semantic interpretations, we address the issue of their status in section five (5).

4. THE USE OF tʃe AS A FOCUS MARKER

When we say an item is in focus, we refer to the item in that part of the clause that provides the most relevant or most salient information in a given discourse structure. Typically, an expression will be most relevant or most salient if it is either new information or contrasted with another element in the preceding or subsequent discourse. (Frascarelli and Puglielli in Aboh (2004:163)

Items in Limbum can be placed in focus by using two strategies: focus insitu (by leaving the focused element at its original syntactic position) or by moving the focused element to a clause initial position. The following examples throw more light on this.

4.a. Nyeh tʃe tɔ̀: bá kwâ mbà mɔ̀r
      Nyeh Prog burn Foc corn in fire
      "It is maize that Nyeh is roasting in the fire."

b. á kwâ tʃé Nyɛ: tʃē tɔ̀: mbà mɔ̀r
    Cleft corn Foc Nyeh Prog burn in fire
    "It is maize that Nyeh is roasting in the fire."

c. á nè Nfɔ̀ tʃé mḛ̀ mū tʃē fā ŋwà? ká?
    cleft to Nfor Foc I P2 prog give book Neg
    "It is not to Nfor that I was giving the book"

d. á ndʒép kē tʃé kíḱi tʃē byèsē mndip ?
    cleft in what Foc Kiki prog turn water
    "in what is Kiki turning the water?"

In the sentence in (4a), the item that is focused is kwâ "corn". This sentence illustrates the instance of in-situ focus. **kwâ** is the direct object of the verb **tɔ̀:** "burn" and based on the fact that Limbum is an SVO language, kwâ "corn", when focused in this case, remains at its original post verbal position. Contrarily, in (4b), the focus of this same item places it at a sentence initial position. While the construction in (4a) is preceded by bá, which marks

constituents for in-situ focus, that in (4b) is preceded by á, which is a reduced cleft. Following the focused element in (4a), there is no extra morpheme. But in the case of (4b), a new element is added to the sentence which has the same phonetic shape like what has been analysed in sections (2) and (3) as the progressive aspectual marker and the relativizer respectively. The sentence in (4c) simply illustrates the case of constituent negation and that in (d) illustrates constituent question. The constituent structure of the sentences in (4c) and (4d) are the same as that found in (4b). The difference between these morphemes in (2), (3) and (4) will be better clarified in a subsequent section. It should be noted also that the occurrence of this morpheme in (3) above subcategorises for the presence of another morpheme *nà* which is absent in the cases of (1) and (4).

5.   TOWARDS EXPLANATIONS AND THE SYNTAX OF THE MORPHEME tʃe

The fact that the morpheme *tʃē* occurs in all the contexts above but with different interpretations while maintaining the same phonetic shape, calls for an in-depth explanation in other to justify the different interpretations given to it in the various contexts in the Limbum language.

5.1.   WHY SHOULD tʃé BE INTERPRETED AS THE PROGRESSIVE ASPECTUAL MARKER?

Unlike the same morpheme in the other contexts, the distribution of tʃe in the case of progressive aspectual marker is unique. First, it occurs at a post tense morpheme position. In the other instances (sections (3) and (4)), the morpheme with the same morphological shape does not occur at the same position. In the examples in section (3), the morpheme occurs immediately after a noun that has been moved out of the containing clause and placed at a pre subject position. On the other hand, in section (4), this same kind of morpheme must be preceded by the morpheme á and followed by any element of the sentence that is focused.

Another perculiarity of this morpheme is that it can occur with (precede) all the markers of the past and the future tenses to express the progressive in the past and in the future respectively. The examples in (1) above are illustrative.

As mentioned earlier, we note that the structural position of this aspectual marker is an immediate-after-tense marker position, this is true for all the tenses identified in Limbum.

5.2.   WHY SHOULD tʃé BE INTERPRETED AS A RELATIVISER?

In this analysis, we have deliberately referred to this morpheme in sentences (3a) and (3b) as a relativizer rather than a "relative pronoun." This is because this morpheme does not behave like a pronoun; its morphology does not change with regards to the relativised noun it refers to. In the sentences in (3a) and (3b), the relativised elements belong to different categories and different noun classes but the relativiser is the same for both. If this morpheme were a relative pronoun, one would expect it to change its morphology following the class of the relativised noun as is the case with narrow Bantu languages like Duala as seen in the Duala example in 5a and 5b below:

Duala

5.a.   ètámbí   yéná   nà   màbótí
       shoe   Rel.Cl7   I   wear
       "the shoe that I am wearing"

  b.   bètámbi   bénà   nà   màbótò-nó
       shoes   Rel.Cl2   I   wear
       "the shoes which I am wearing"

The Duala examples reveal that this form of the relative pronoun changes, this is explained by the fact that the relativized nouns belong to different classes. The presence of the morpheme **nó** in the sentence in (5b) points to the fact that an element has been moved out of that position; some type of resumption. In some languages of the Grassfield family for instance Màdʉ́mbα, the relative pronoun is identified. (Kouankem 2010). Examples in the Màdʉ́mbὰ language include:

6.a.   mɛ́n   zə̀   mə̀   yɛ̀n   lá
       child RM   I   see   Def
       "the child that I saw"

  b.   ŋ̀ká   mάm   mì   ŋgâmì   fά   nŭm   bú   lá
       dishes my   RM   Ngami   give   to   them   Def
       "my dishes that Ngami gave to them"

Adopted from Kouankem (2010:280)

Just like in the Duala example, the form of the relative marker in Màdʉ́mbὰ changes with regards to the class of the relativised noun. While for Duala, Nseme (personal conversation) treats it as a relative pronoun, Kouankem follows Kuteva and Comrie (2004) in the case of Màdʉ́mbα, in analyzing this morpheme as a nominal class agreement marker and not a case-marking pronoun. Hence, because the relative morpheme in Limbum does not change with the noun class as is the case with Màdʉ́mbα and Duala, it is better referred to simply as a relativizer.

Another motivation for considering this morpheme in this context as a relativiser and not a progressive aspect marker stems from the distribution of this morpheme in the sentence. Unlike in the case in section (3), this morpheme does not occur within the IP. On the contrary, it follows a nominal that has been pre-posed to the subject. Hence, it does not appear clause internally as is the case of the aspectual marker. However, in the same construction, the two can co-occur, with each maintaining its specific distribution. This can be seen in the sentences below.

7.   mū: [tʃé   é   mū   tʃé   fά   kāŋ   nè   mè   nà]   tʃé   kwē
     Child Rel   pron   P3   prog   give   dish   to   me   Def   prog   die
     "The child who was giving me the dish is dying."

Another distinction between progressive *tʃe* and relativizer *tʃé* is the fact that the relativizer *tʃé* can never be accompanied by a tense morpheme as would the progressive aspectual marker. The result of the ungrammaticality of the construction below stems from the fact that with *tʃe*

introducing an embedded clause, the future tense marker accompanies it. *tʃe* can only be preceded by a tense marker when it is used as the progressive aspectual marker.

8.	*mūː	bé	fū̄	[tʃé	é	mū	tʃé	fá	kāŋ	nè	mè	nà]	tʃé	kwē
	Child	F	F2	Rel	pron	P3	prog	give	dish	to	me	Def	prog	die

In the sentence in (7), three (3) ocurences of the same morpheme are noticed. While the first occurs at a pre-subject position, the last two occur clause internally: one in the subordinate clause and the other on the main clause. These last two are interpreted as the progressive aspectual marker while the first is the relativiser. (8) is ungrammatical because the relativizer *tʃě* is preceded by the tense marker.

The difference between this morpheme and that translated as a focus marker is that while *tʃě* which is a focus marker can only occur when there is clefting (in Limbum, focus by placing the focused element at pre-subject position is usually done via clefting), and *tʃé* which is a relativiser does not have a cleft occurring with it. If we take the same construction, one with *tʃé* as focus marker and the other with *tʃé* as a relativizer, the meanings will be different. This is illustrated by the constructions in (9) below:

9.a.	á	mūː	tʃé	é	mū	fá	kāŋ	nè	mɛ		
	cleft	Child	Foc	pron	P3	give	dish	prep	me		

"it is the child who gave me the dish."

b	mūː	tʃé	é	mū	tʃé	fá	kāŋ	nè	mè	nà	tʃé	kwē
	Child	Rel	pron	P3	prog	give	dish	to	me	Def	prog	die

"The child who was giving me the dish is dying."

As illustrated by the constructions above, focus *tʃé* (9a) is always preceded by *á* (a reduced cleft) but when we have the relativizer *tʃé*, it is usually preceded by a nominal that has been relativized (9b). Hence, *tʃé* as used with relative clauses is a relativizer different from *tʃé* used in focus constructions.

5.3. WHY SHOULD tʃé BE INTERPRETED AS A FOCUS MARKER?

One of the reasons for considering *tʃé* as a focus marker stems from the literal translation of the sentence containing this morpheme. In this context as in section (4) above, the interpretation of the sentences in the illustration indicates that the speaker is laying emphasis on the item that immediately follows the morpheme *á*. This is how contrastive focus is materialised in Limbum. This fact is understood better going by the example below:

10.	á	nè	Nfor	tʃé	mūː	tʃē	fā	ŋwaʔ
	Cleft	to	Nfor	Foc	child	prog	give	book

"It is to Nfor that the child is giving a book."

The constituent that follows *á* and precedes the first instance of *tʃé* above is a prepositional phrase which normally with a di-transitive verb like *fā* "give" should occur after the direct object *ŋwàʔ* "book" as is evident from the grammaticality of the sentence below:

11.
mūː	tʃē	fā	ŋwaʔ	nè	Nfor
child	prog	give	book	to	Nfor

"the child is giving a book to Nfor"

The sentence in (11) above illustrates the fact that in Limbum, verbs that subcategorise for two complements, place their indirect objects after the direct object. This is not the case observed for the construction in (10). However, this construction remains grammatical in the language. The prepositional phrase in (10) occurs rather at a pre-subject position. Gaining inspiration from the discussion of relativzer *tʃě* above, one might be tempted to treat *tʃě* as a relativizer since it occurs at a pre-subject position like the sentence in (7) above. However, such an interpretation will lead one to explain why in this case, the morpheme *á* precedes this pre-subject constituent and does not do same in the case of (7). This is simply because these two instances of *tʃě* perform two distinct functions in the syntax of the language though they have the same phonetic shape. tʃé as used in (10) above is a focus marker.

The presence of á which precedes the prepositional phrase is a reduced cleft in Limbum. This morpheme always features when a constituent is focused. In other words, constituent focus in Limbum is achieved through clefting. The derivation of such structures will be handled in the following section.

On the other hand, if the morpheme *tʃě* as used in (10) above is interpreted as a relativizer in line with the same morpheme of the previous section in example (7) , one will be hard put to account for the absence of the morpheme nà which is mandatory whenever there is relativization in Limbum. Given the fact that *tʃě* in (10) above occurs without the morpheme *nà*, it becomes clear that these two instances of the morpheme *tʃě* perform distinct functions. They are thus simply homophones.

In the following section, we invoke theoretical considerations to clarify the difference between the various realisations of this morpheme.

6. THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As mentioned earlier, the analysis in this paper uses an eclectic approach: a combination of the Structuralist framework as proposed by de Saussure and his followers and the Minimalist Program as propounded by Chomsky and its subsequent developments.

Structuralism intervenes in the earlier part of the paper to provide adequate explanations, justifying the reasons for considering the different uses of *tʃe* as instances of different morphemes.

To further justify the point that the different instances of the use of *tʃe* are separate morphemes with different interpretations, some tenets of the the Generative Framework with specific attention to the Minimalist Program as proposed by Chomsky (1995) and its subsequent developments are used. The figure below provides a summary of the Minimalist Program.

Figure 1: THE MINIMALIST MODEL
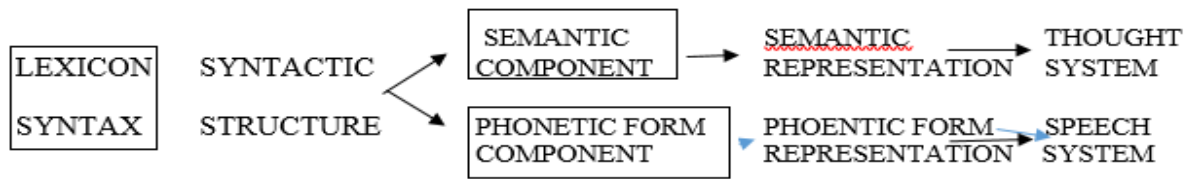
Adapted from Radford (2004:5)

According to the Minimalist Program as summarized in the figure above, the lexicon forms our mental dictionary. All the word stored here contain their idiosyncratic properties. To build syntactic structures, two operations are required: "Operations Merge and "Operation Move" Here, in the computation of syntactic structures, the appropriate items are retrieved from the lexicon (selection) and depending on the intended message, they are put together (merge). The merger operation operates in a pair wise fashion i.e. only two items are merged at a time. Items are merged in this way until the operation is maximal i.e. a full phrase has been formed. This merger is done from bottom to top in conformity with the X-bar schema. It recognizes three levels of projection: the minimal or zero level projection, the intermediate level projection and the maximal projection. The pairwise fashion of merging implies that the syntactic structures created by this operation are binary branching. As for the operation move, this implies the displacement of an item or feature from an original syntactic position (extraction site) to another position (landing site). Movement can either be overt in that an element is visibly displaced in the syntax or it can be covert in which case there is feature percolation. Movement must be motivated. The model employed in this study with, the motivation for movement is feature valuation. According to Chomsky, an element should move if only it must move otherwise it should not since movement is "costly". Movement should be as a last resort. Since features are valued in a C-Command domain, a "probe" with an interpretable feature beacons on a "goal" with a matching unvalued feature so it can be valued in the right configuration. Feature valuation implies copying and deletion. Despite the fact that the Minimalist Program prohibits the use of traces based on the grounds that it involves an introduction of an item which was not there during the merger operation hence not upholding the fidelity of the Projection Principle, we shall however, for purposes of clarity in this study, use the pre-minimalist terminology of traces.

Another development of the Minimalist Program used in this analysis involves the notion of split projections.The whole idea of split projections is a development in the Minimalist Program which proposes that phrases that have hitherto been given a specific structure should be further split into many more projections Abney (1987) taken up by Carstens (1991) and Nkemnji (1995), Rizzi (1997), (2001) and others) and subsequent works. The former handles the "Split DP Hypothesis" while the later has to do with the "Split CP Hypothesis". This study also evoques Nkemtnji's (1995), "Heavy Pied piping" which stipulates that a huge chunk of material can be moved out of the containing clause to another position in the syntax of Limbum.

While the former theory provides arguments based on the position of the various uses of *tʃe* and their relationship with other constituents in their respective constructions to show that they are different, the Minimalist Program goes further to show that these uses occupy different nodes on the phrase markers based on their respective interpretations.

7. THE STATUS OF tʃé

This study in the following paragraphs presents the status of the various uses of *tʃé* as per their various interpretations discussed above.

7.1. tʃé AS THE PROGRESSIVE ASPECTUAL MARKER

As an aspectual morpheme, *tʃé* occurs inside the clause; this morpheme in this capacity, occurs after the tense marker. Using the construction in (1b) above, repeated here as (12a), one can clearly see its position on the phrase marker that follows.
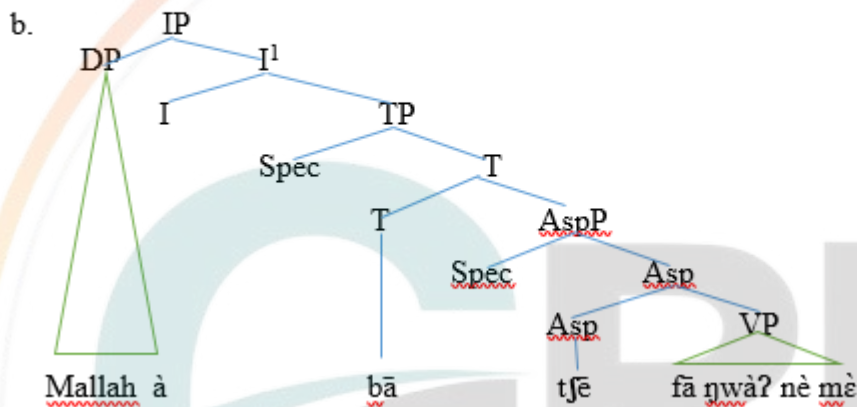

As shown on the phrase marker above, the aspectual marker *tʃē* occurs as the head of an Aspectual Phrase, the complement of T^0. The complement of the head of AspP is a VP.

7.2. tʃé AS A RELATIVISER

Contrary to aspectual *tʃe*, as mentioned above, the construction with the relativizer *tʃé* is a DP and this morpheme occurs at a pre-subject position. To show its status, sentence (7a) is used and it represents only the part of the sentence that contains the relativiser as in (13a). The phrase marker of this constituent is represented on (12b) below.

13.a.

mū:	tʃé	é	mū	tʃé	fá	kāŋ	nè	mè̀	nà
Child	Rel	pron	P3	prog	give	dish	to	me	Def

"The child who was giving me the dish…"

b.
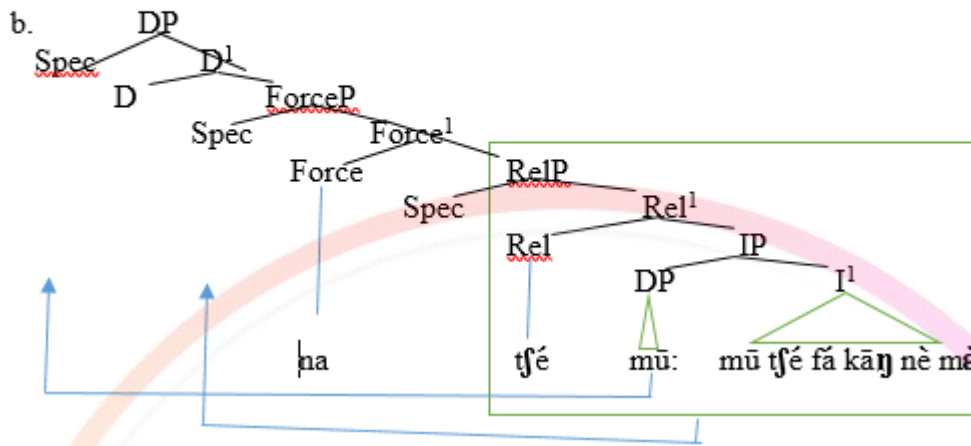
The element that has been relativised is a DP. The DP moves out of the embedded clause and substitutes for the Spec of the higher DP. Given the fact that the subject position in Limbum is mandatory, in the embedded clause, at the subject position, there is a resumptive pronoun *é* that refers back to the relativised subject as is evident in (13a) above. Then a second movement raises the whole of RelP to the Specifier node of ForceP. These movements yield a structure where **na** is found at clause final position. These sequences of movements are summarized below:

- DP moves to the Spec of higher DP
- RelP moves to Spec ForceP (Heavy Pied-piping)

It is important to note that the projection of Force Phrase and Relativizer Phrase goes in line with Rizzi's (1977} Split CP Hypothesis (Decomposing the clausal Left Periphery).

As also noted above, this morpheme cannot accompany a tense marker. Furthermore, it must occur with the morpheme **nà**. Hence, besides the fact that it has the same phonetic shape like the aspectual **tʃě**, the case of this morpheme used as a relativizer occupies a distinct node – (the head of RelP).

As seen earlier, this morpheme cannot accompany a tense marker., it must occur with the morpheme **nà**. Hence, besides the fact that it has the same phonetic shape like aspectual **tʃě**, the case of this morpheme used as a relativizer occupies a distinct node – (the head of RelP).

7.3. tʃě́ AS A FOCUS MARKER

When **tʃě** occurs as a focus marker, the configuration in which it occurs is very different from the others. With this interpretation as a focus marker, besides the fact that it is found at a pre-subject position, it must be followed by the focused constituent and preceded by the reduced cleft **á.** This is the reason why a syntactic analysis of this morpheme will host it on a different node from the last two cases. Sentence (14) below illustrates this.

14.a á   nè   Nfor   tʃé   mū: tʃē   fã   ŋwaʔ
     Cleft to   Nfor   Foc. child   prog give   book
     "It is to Nfor that the child is giving a book."

In this sentence, the constituent that has been focused is the prepositional phrase **nè Nfor** "to Nfor" and this constituent is found between á and **tʃě**, unlike the distribution of the relativizer **tʃě** and the aspectual **tʃě**.

The Phrase marker for the elements found at pre-IP position in the construction in (14a) can be represented on the phrase marker as found in (14b) below. Hence, focus is achieved in Limbum through clefting.
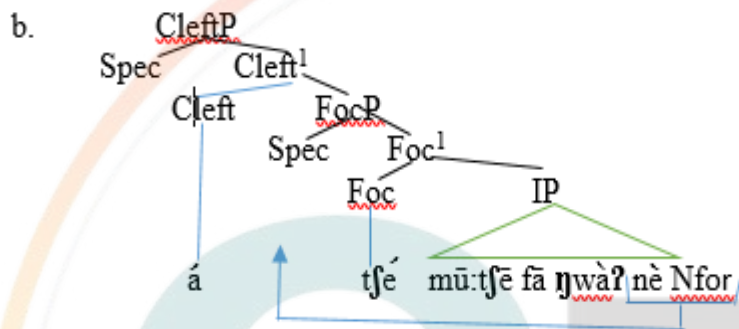
As shown on the phrase marker above, for the post verbal Prepositional Phrase to be interpreted as focused, it has to be moved out of the containing clause and placed in a pre-subject position. Since focus in Limbum is achieved by clefting, this focused constituent occurs as a complement of the Cleft Phrase in the manner shown above. This way, the focused PP hosted by the Specifier node of Focus Phrase will be in a Spec-Head configuration with the focus marker. A movement of this nature (as in 14b) will give us the correct word order and interpretation as obtains in the language.

8. CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the various uses of the morpheme **tʃé** in Limbum, examined their distribution and provided arguments to show that in its various uses, it has varied interpretations. Based on the positions of occurrence of these morphemes and their selection restrictions, the paper has proven that though the morpheme in the various instances has the same phonetic shape, it can be a marker of the progressive aspect, a relativizer or a marker of focus. To boost this point of view, the study demonstrates that in their various interpretations, they can be hosted by different nodes on a phrase marker: Head of AspP, Head of a RelP and the Head of a FocP respectively.

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