Relational subject / non-subject asymmetries in Igbo

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We present new data from Ā-constructions in Igbo (Benue-Congo, Nigeria) that exhibit subject / non-subject asymmetries: If a non-subject is questioned ex-situ, the presence of the marker *ka* next to the displaced constituent is required; however, questioned subjects must not co-occur with *ka*, see (1):

(1) **Short questions (simple wh-phrase):**

a. Òbí hụrụ  Ada n’-áhá
   *Obi saw Ada P-market*
   "Obi saw Ada at the market."

b. Ọnyé hụrụ  Ada n’-áhá
   *who saw Ada P-market*
   "Who saw Ada at the market?"

c. Ọnyé kà  Òbí hụrụ n’-áhá
   *who foc Obi saw P-market*
   "Who did Obi see at the market?"

Furthermore, Igbo exhibits the *that*-trace effect under subject extraction and disposes of several repair strategies (resumption, C-drop, special C-form). We argue that these subject / non-subject asymmetries are relational in nature, i.e. they are not due to some inherent property of subjects. Rather, it is the structural configuration that singles out local subjects. We present empirical arguments that suggest that the structurally highest argument (in SpecTP) cannot move to SpecCP in focus / question constructions. We will present an anti-locality based approach to model these findings. The Igbo facts are also interesting from a comparative perspective because they run counter the empirical generalization in Fiedler et al. (2010) according to which in languages that exhibit a (morphological) subject / non-subject asymmetry, it is (local) subjects that have to be marked for focus, while focus marking is not obligatory for non-subjects.

**Literatur:**  