Exceptional Case-Marking of NPs in Lòkáá

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Abstract
Ordinary, the SPEC-I position of infinitive clauses contains an empty category (EC), PRO, rather than a substantive (lexical) NP. There are, however, instances where the subjects of infinitive clauses may contain an overt NP under certain circumstances. The SPEC-I position of such infinitives that houses a substantive NP must be Case-marked in accordance with the Case-filter requirement. In this study therefore, exception to the Case-marking principles is examined in Lòkáá. Lòkáá is a language spoken in central part of Cross River State. It is observed that some verbs of the matrix clause can govern an overt NP in the non-finite clause, assigning Accusative Case to it. Such verbs were identified in Lòkáá and used for the explication of this phenomenon. The prepositional complementizer [ńg] ‘for’ is also adjudged to license lexical NPs in the [NP, IP] of the non-finite clause. This paper, which is organized in six sub-parts for ease of reference beginning with an introduction and ending with a conclusion, recommends more studies in Lòkáá syntax in order to help push the research frontiers further and even beyond the limits covered by this paper.

Introduction
The minimalist program include the important conjecture that most or all properties of syntactic computation in natural language should be understood as arising from either:

(a) The interaction of independent mental system or
(b) General properties of organic systems (Chomsky 2001a)

The study of Case morphology and the distribution of normal expressions in the languages of the world is one of the areas in which generative syntax has made the most profound advances over previous approaches. A large and increasing number of studies have identified patterns and principles of great generality.

In the earlier description of grammar, Chomsky’s main idea was the existence of rule systems of grammar that describe the formation and interpretation of constructions. The sub-components of rule systems are:

(i) Lexicon
(ii) Syntax
   (a) Base component
   (b) Transformational component
(iii) Interpretative component
   (a) PF – component
   (b) LF – component (Chomsky 1981:5).

The need to modify the Principles and Parameters of grammar and to give a simpler description of language led to the introduction of Government and Binding (GB) grammar. GB is a modular grammar that places emphasis on the system of Principles. The introduction of GB grammar is an attempt to checkmate the profound and fundamental nature of transformational grammar set off in the Standard Theory. It has many modules which meet at interface.

Government and Binding grammar correctly accentuates the exact acquisition process of the child in human learning. It proposes that the child acquires his language through an inherently endowed language programme. The child simply shifts from one stage to another, registering items of his language. Each of the modules take only a limited range of variables, all taken together determine a finite number of possible grammars the child has to choose from. The sub-systems of Principles of
Case theory, which is our focus and also a Principle of GB is discussed under the grammar of Case. Case refers to the grammatical relationship of nouns and pronouns to other words in a sentence. It is a grammatical category by which the form of a noun phrase varies for grammatical or semantic function performed by a noun or pronoun in a phrase, clause or sentence.

Noun phrases are universal features of language in that all languages have phrases that are headed by a noun. Therefore, this work seeks to describe how overt nominal NPs that occur in the SPEC-1 position of the infinitival clauses in Lökáá are assigned Case.

Lökáá is the language of the Yakurr people in Central Cross River State. The most recent classification of Nigerian languages places Lökáá in the Delta-Cross sub-branch of the Cross River language family (cf. Iwara 1990:16, 1993:39). It was earlier classified under the Cross River 3 section of the Benue-Congo language sub-family by Greenberg, under the “Middle Cross River Group” with Mbmbe and Leggbo by F.D.D. Winston, and under the “Upper Cross” sub-group of the Cross River languages by Kay Williamson.

We therefore beam our research light through the path: Introduction (with its sub-themes), Review of related literature (with its sub-themes), Exceptional Case-marking of NPs in Lökáá, Findings, Recommendation and Conclusion.

The orthography adopted in this study incorporates some special/technical symbols which have IPA equivalents, as follows: e = ε, ọ = ͻ, a = ǝ, ng = ŋ.

Lökáá orthography is now widely used. It is therefore easy for me to employ it in writing the examples discussed.

Statement of research problem
Many linguistics scholars have investigated, established and written lots of articles on Case theory and its exceptionality, but none has made any attempt to investigate and describe Case theory in Lökáá, let alone its exceptionality. This work is therefore a pioneering effort in the syntactic analysis of exceptional Case marking of NPs in Lökáá.

Specific objectives of the study
The aim of this research is to contribute to the current trend of growing intellectual works with regard to language.

Also, to critically examine the subject positions of infinitival clauses in Lökáá, and see whether they contain overt NPs that can be Case-marked in accordance with the Case Filter requirement.

Finally, it is the aim of this study to find out whether any intervening node between the verbs of the matrix clauses and the [NP, IP] of its infinitival clauses can allow or block Case assignment of NPs.

Method of data analysis
This work is by design descriptive. Consequently, we only have to objectively describe what we solely observe hence the motive for considering this method most appropriate as descriptive linguistics describes language objectively as it existed at a given point in time. Therefore, the descriptive method was adopted in analysing our data.

Review of related literature
Attempts are made to review the opinions of scholars who have contributed in the areas related to Case grammar, with the intention to document their investigations and findings so as to have an explicit understanding of the grammatical workings surrounding Case grammar.

The history of Case grammar dates back to the time of traditional grammar. Case grammar according to Crystal (1971) as quoted by Mbah (2011:56) refers to a variation in the actual form or
shape of the noun, which shows its relationship with other parts of speech or its function in a sentence. For instance, if the noun is in the active Case, it must be governed by the verb or preposition. This government is achieved by means of inflection. Case theory is the module of grammar concerned with the distribution of NPs, Haegeman (1991:180).

According to Trask (1993), Case theory is one of the principal modules in GB, consisting of various Case marking conventions and the Case filter. It is this theory that is responsible for ensuring that every overt NP (i.e an NP that has a phonetic content) in a sentence is marked as possessing a Case such as Nominative, Accusative or Genitive as required by the Case Filter.

The basic instances of Case assignment, according to Ndimele (1992:44-45) that have been set up are as follows:

(1) (i) Nominative Case is assigned to the [NP, IP] position if INFL is [+Tense].
   (ii) Accusative Case is assigned by the verb to [NP, VP].
   (iii) A preposition assigns oblique Case to [NP, PP]
   (iv) Genitive Case is assigned in the structure [NP – X^]
   (v) Only lexical categories specified as [-N] can assign Case under government; those specified as [+N] cannot.
   (vi) Case is assigned under government with the exception of Genitive Case
   (vii) PRO is not visible to Case because it lacks phonetic content. In other words, the presence of Case is associated with being phonetically realised, and its absence does not.
   (viii) Only non-phrasal categories can be Case assigners
   (ix) Every Case assigner is the head of a projection of some sort that immediately dominates the NP to be Case marked.
   (x) NP is inherently Case-marked as determined by properties of its [-N] governor.

Case theory recognizes two types of Case assignment namely: Inherent Case and Structural Case. The Case assigned (i) – (iv) above is known as structural Case. Whereas structural Case is assigned in terms of S-structure position, Inherent Case is assigned at the D-structure, and is presumably closely linked to theta role.

Haegeman (1991:141) and Carnie (2007:297) argues that there are two basic types of Case. The Abstract and the Morphological Case. The abstract Case is part of UG. It is a form of Case that is assigned to all Nouns – we just don’t see it overtly in the pronounced morphology.

The morphological Case is a common process by which a lexical pronominal item morphologically changes or inflects in various shapes because of its distribution in the sentence. For instance, the pronoun “he” has such morphological variants as he, him and his. It is ‘he’ when it appears at the subject position, ‘him’ when used as object of the sentence and ‘his’ when used to show possession.

In support of this, Radford (1988:291) opines that English has three different Case-forms, illustrated by the partial paradigm below:

(2) NOMINATIVE : I he we they
OBJECTIVE/ACCUSATIVE: me him us them
GENITIVE : my his our their

See below the Case forms of “he” and its morphological variants.

(3)a He lives here (Nominative)
b I can’t stand Him (Objective)
c His car broke down (Genitive)

Radford (1981:313), posits that any adequate grammar of English must contain a set of Case marking rules which assign to NPs some Case appropriate to their sentence positions.

Ndimele (1992:41), in support of this proposed that whether Case is morphologically marked or not, an overt nominal element is assigned Case by virtue of its position in a sentence.
Case theory is concerned with the assignment of Case to overt nominal elements that occur in Case-marked positions. Case theory is responsible for regulating the distribution of NPs in a sentence. Case is considered an obligatory feature of NPs. This is why a structure is considered ill-formed if overt NPs fail to be assigned Case, or fail to appear in a position to which Case can be assigned. This is clearly expressed in the Case Filter given below:

(4) **Case Filter**
Any sentence containing an overt NP (i.e an NP that has phonetic content) is ill-formed if the NP is not Case-marked.

(4) above has the following underpinnings:

(5) **Conditions for case assignment**
\[ \alpha \text{ assigns Case to } \beta \text{ if} \]
(a) \(\alpha\) is a Case assigner
(b) \(\alpha\) governs \(\beta\)
(c) \(\alpha\) is adjacent to \(\beta\)

(where Case assigners are 6)

(6) **Case assignment**
(a) Every lexically headed NP receives Case from a Case assigner
(b) INFL, V and P are Case assigners
(c) The infinitive marker to and the passive participle are not Case assigners.

(cf: Mbah 2011:145).

(7) **Case criterion**
Each NP bears one and only one Case and each Case is assigned to one and only one NP.

Ndimele (1992:50) asserts that if we follow the above specification (in 7 i.e each Case assigner assigns only one Case) very strictly, then it would mean that one of the NPs in a double object construction such as (8) and (9), would necessarily fail to be Case-marked in violation of the Case filter requirement. The reason why one of the NPs will fail to be Case-marked is that there is only one verb in the vicinity of the double object construction.

(8) Ubi bought Usor a pen
(9) Okama gave Obia a toy.

Two analyses have been proposed in the literature as to how the two NPs in a double object construction are to be Case-marked. One alternative is to assume that the first NP (e.g Usor and Obia in (8) and (9) respectively) after the verb receives Case from the verb, while the second NP (e.g a pen and a toy in (8) and (9) respectively) is Case-marked in some way. Chomsky (1980, 1981, 1986a) as quoted by Ndimele (1992:50) describes the first as Structural Case and the second as Inherent Case. However, the problem with the second explanation provided by Chomsky for the analysis of double object constructions is that it is not properly understood how the second instance of the NP is inherently Case-marked.

The second alternative for the analysis of double object constructions, which was first proposed by Williams (1975) and later formalized in Chomsky (1980) as quoted in Ndimele (1992:51) states that a VP directly dominating double objects must of necessity contain an internal V₁, as can be seen in the following configuration.
Following the above analysis, (8) and (9) can be demonstrated to have the structures (11) and (12) respectively.

(11) Ubi [VP [V bought Usor] a pen]
(12) Okama [VP [V gave Obia] a toy]

In (11) and (12), Usor and Obia respectively assume the Case-marking properties of their respective verbs, while a pen and a toy are Case-marked by V1, which is also admitted in the sense of Chomsky (1981:171) as a governor. In this Case, then, each governor (Case-assigner) assigns only one Case. Again, this kind of analysis obeys the strict Adjacency Constraint for Case-assignment.

(8) Exceptional case-marking

Normally, the SPEC-I1 position of infinitive clauses contains an empty category (EC), PRO, rather than a substantial (lexical) NP. There are, however, instances where the subjects of infinitive clauses may contain an overt NP under certain circumstances. The SPEC-I1 position of such infinitives that houses a substantive NP must be Case-marked in accordance with the Case Filter requirement. This situation has been described as Exceptional case-marking (ECM). Ndimele (1992:52).

There are some verbs (e.g expects, believe etc) that subcategorize for IP (i.e the verbs obligatorily go with a full-fledged sentence) and in which instance, the Case Filter requirement which nullifies the occurrence of a lexical NP in the subject position of infinitive clause is violated thereby permitting the presence of overt NPs in such position. Consider the following examples:

(13) Eyong expects [IP Omini to respect him]
(14) Onun believes [IP Okoi to be honest]

In the above sentences, we find lexical NPs ‘Omini’ in (13) and ‘Okoi’ in (14) occupying the subject position of the infinitival clauses, a position that is supposed to be a barrier to both government and Case-assignment. The verb expect (cf. (13)) and believe, (cf. (14)) Case-mark Omini and Okoi respectively despite the fact that the lexical NPs which occupy the SPEC-I1 (subject) position of the infinitive is housed in a clause that is different from that of its Case assigner. The grammaticality of these constructions remain a puzzle because the Cases where assigned across maximal projection or IP which ought to be a barrier in government.

In the context of GB, there can be no Case assignment without government, ungoverned positions cannot be Case-marked. For this to be possible the Case assignee and the Case assigner must be under ‘strict adjacency’ relationship without any intervening node between them. Riemsdijk and Williams (1986) as quoted by Ndimele (1992:43) have, however, observed that strict adjacency of a Case assigner and its Case assignee is violated in the Case of German where there can be certain categories intervening between the verb and its direct object.

Below is a table showing the relationship existing between Case assigners and their respective Case assignees, Ndimele (1992:45).
In a number of languages with impoverished Case system, there seems to be no morphological distinction between the Case the verb assigns to its object and that which the preposition assigns to its object as well. In such languages, the verb and the preposition assign the same Accusative Case to their objects.

In the opinion of Haegaman (1992), Nominative Case is assigned by a finite INFL to the subject position. The consensus in the literature seem to be that it is the AGR features (person, number) contained in the INFL that is responsible for Nominative Case assignment.

Accusative Case is assigned under government by a transitive verb or a preposition notes Haegaman (1992). Consider the following examples.

(16)a I consider [CP that he is innocent]
   b. I like [NP him]
   c. I consider [IP him to be innocent]
   d. I talked about [NP him]
   e. I prefer very much [CP for [IP him to leave now]]
   f. *I prefer very much him.

From the example (16b) above the verb like assigns Accusative Case to the direct object NP. In (16c), the transitive verb consider assigns Accusative Case to the subject of the infinitival clause, the infinitival INFL itself not being a Case assigner here will allow an outside verb ‘consider’ to govern into an IP in (16c) and that the IP is not a barrier. This is referred to as exceptional Case-marking.

In (16d), the preposition ‘about’ governs and Case-marks the complement ‘him’. In (16e), the preposition for is the head of CP. It is a prepositional complementizer. Again, ‘for’ can assign Accusative Case to him in the subject position of the infinitival clause and the IP also is not a barrier for outside government. Stowell (1981) proposes that there is an adjacency condition on Case assignment, this condition explains why (16f) is ungrammatical. The Case assigning verb ‘prefer’ is not adjacent to the NP him, Haegeman (1992).

A typical example of Case assignment under government is presented in (17) below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case-marked Position</th>
<th>Case Assigner</th>
<th>Case Assigned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject of tensed clause</td>
<td>[+Tense] INFL</td>
<td>Nominative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object of verb</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Accusative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object of preposition</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Oblique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possessive NP in an NP</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Genitive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the above configuration, a [+Tense] INFL verb assigns Nominative Case to the subject, the verb assigns Accusative Case to its object, and the preposition assigns oblique Case to its object or complement. Let us illustrate this with the example below:

(18) The man pushed Chioma into the car.
The above structure in (18) establishes that the NP *the man* is the subject to which INFL assigns Nominative Case. The NP *Chioma* is the object to which the verb assigns Accusative Case and the NP *the cars* is the object of the preposition to which the preposition assigns oblique Case. Whereas the Nominative, Accusative and Oblique Cases are assigned by INFL, V and P respectively, Genitive Case assignment is treated as a property of the whole sentence, Agbedo (2000:140).

The exceptional case-marking of NPs in Lòkáá.

Ordinarily, a governor Case-mark its overt governee under government in a strict subjacency condition without any intervening node. However, there are instances where the subjects of infinitive clauses may contain an overt NP under certain circumstances. The Spec–I position of such infinitives that houses a substantive NP must be Case-marked by a verb of a higher clause in accordance with the Case filter requirement. Such a situation where a V can govern into another IP and assign accusative Case to the subject of infinitive clause (i.e the NP, IP node) is referred to as Exceptional Case-Marking (ECM) (Chomsky 1981:49, Cowper 1991:100-101, Haegeman 1991:159-160, Ndimele 1992:52).

We considered the following data for the exemplification of ECM in Lòkáá.

1. [N-köómi [òfèm-átà ò-yàà-màà o-kàà-m iimàn]]
   [1SG wait cont. [Ofem to he-come he-give-me money]]
   “I am expecting Ofem to come to give me money”.
2. [O-nài [òfèm-à tà 0-nàng áájáà]]
   [3SG make. [Ofem to he-do so]]
   “He made Ofem to do so”.
3. [O-dàíi [iimàn ò-tà ò-dààdàl]]
   [3SG take [money he-to he-buy sheep]]
   “He collects money to buy a sheep”.
4. [N-wóóyí [yònánáng tà ǹ-náàg]]
   [1SG want [work to I – do]]
   “I want job to do”.
5. [N-wóóyí [ubi-à tà o-kàà-m iimàn]]
   [1SG want [Ubi to he-give me money]]
   “I want Ubi to give me money”.

We assume that the data in (1-5) are grammatical sentences of Lòkáá, and that the NPs, especially the [NPs, IP] in the lower infinitival clauses are Case-marked, otherwise, the Case Filter’s violation rule would have filtered out the sentences as ill-formed.

A close observation of the data further reveals that the verbs of the matrix clauses namely: kòóm’ “waiting/expecting” (in 1), nái “make” (in 2), dàíi “take/collect” (in 3), wóóyí (in 4 and 5) all select clausal complements of the infinitival type as their internal arguments. The [NPs, IP] of the non-finite clauses are lexically filled by Ofem, iimàn “money”, yònánáng “work” and Ubi in (1-5) respectively.

The ‘probable’ Case-assigners to the [NPs, IP] of the lower, non-finite clauses could be identified as the INFL of the lower clauses, and the verbs of the higher clauses. Unfortunately, each of the INFL of the lower non-finite clauses is negatively specified for both Tense and AGR features. It is therefore too weak both to govern and assign Nominative Case to the subject NPs in the lower clause. The [Tense, AGR] of the infinitival clauses does not meet the requirement for both governing and Case-marking. This requirement as expressed by Chomsky (1981:162) states:

6. V does not govern subject NP but INFL does if it is tensed i.e [+ Tense, + AGR].

Ruling out [Tense, AGR] INFL of the lower clauses makes the choice of each V of each of the matrix clauses in (1-5) plausible.
The presence of the substantive (lexical) NP in the SPEC–I\(^{1}\) position of the infinitive constructions above cannot, however be attributed to the infinitive itself (cf Riemsdijk and Williams (1986) as quoted in Ndimele (1992:52), rather in each of the examples, there is the presence of a governor (Case assigner) immediately to the left of any of the lexical NPs in question.

Pursuing the above line of reasoning, therefore, each of the verbs of the higher clauses governs into the [NP, IP] of its lower clause and assigns Accusative Case to it.

The infinitival IPs in (1-5) could not block outside government. The reason as advanced by Haegeman (1991:157) is that:

(7) Non-finite I is ‘too weak’ to define a barrier for outside heads, it loses out on stronger outside heads.

On this ground, therefore, each verb of the matrix clause intrudes into the lower non-finite clause and Case-marks (governs) the substantive NPs there and assigning them with Accusative Case in accordance with the Case filter requirement.

Another verb [yòó] “believe” can also be used as an exceptional Case-assigner. Consider the following examples.

(8) Ò-bétèn ó-yòó [wé ké tά ódά òbémbémά]
    Obeten she-believe [him ASP. to be liar]
    “Obeten believes [him to be a liar]”

In (8), [yòó] “believe” takes an infinitival clause as its internal argument. Since the IP hypothesis is of the view that it is not possible to insert the complementiser [ńg] “for”, which is typical for infinitival clauses, in front of the subordinate clause, the following structures are rendered ungrammatical (9a-b).

(9a)* Ò-bétèn ó-yòó ńg - wé ké tά ódά òbémbémά
    Obeten he-believe for-him ASP. to be liar

(b)* Ò-bétèn ó-yòó ńg  - wé ké káání tά ódά òbémbémά
    Obeten he-believe for-him ASP. very much to be liar

(8) above will therefore have the syntactic representation in (10) below:
“Obeten believes him to be a liar”.

From the above configuration, the question therefore is how [wé] “him” can satisfy the Case filter i.e be assigned ACCUSATIVE Case considering the fact that the infinitival I in the lower non-finite clause is negatively specified for both Tense and AGR. features and hence a non-Case assigner? The obvious potential candidate for Case-marking [wé] “him” in (10) is the transitive verb [yóó] “believe”. In (10), [yóó] “believe” assigns ACCUSATIVE Case to [wé] “him”, the subject of the complement IP. The infinitival IP (because of its weakness) will not constitute a barrier for outside government and hence [yóó] “believe” assigns Case to the relevant NP. This kind of situation in which a verb like [yóó] “believe” governs into an IP and assigns Case to its subject NP is what is referred to as Exceptional Case-Marking (ECM). The ‘exceptionality’ is because maximal projections normally constitute barriers for Case assignment from the outside (Haegeman 1991:160).

It is important stating that the verb [yóó] “believe” takes different affixes in concordant agreement in the language. However, the verb stem is [yóó]. Other attachable clitics only complement the verb to show the temporal status of the stem. See examples below.

\[\begin{align*}
(11a) & \quad yóó \quad áá-bì \\
& \quad \text{believe that} \\
& \quad \text{“believe that”}
\end{align*}\]

\[\begin{align*}
(b) & \quad ó \quad -yóó \quad -yi \quad óó-bì \\
& \quad (s)he-believe-present \quad that \\
& \quad “(s)he believes that”
\end{align*}\]

\[\begin{align*}
(c) & \quad ŋg \quad -yóó \quad -yi \quad mím-bì
\end{align*}\]
I(myself)-believe-pres. that
“1 believe that”
(d) ǹg- yóó -ké mím-bi
I(myself)-believe ASP-Perf. that
“I have believed that”

Other verbs like [yììmá ] “know”, [géná/yéná ] “consider” can as well show a similar pattern of exceptional Case-marking. Let us analyse one of such examples below.

(12) ǹg-yììmá-ké  [Èbrì-à tà òdà ò-máámá]
I  -know-ASP.Perf. Ebri to be Ugep person
“I have known Ebri to be an Ugep person”

(12) is parallel with (10) above. [yììmá ] “know” takes an IP complement, governs into the maximal projection IP and Case-marks  [Èbrì -á ] “Ebri”. The infinitive [tà ] “to” (because of its weakness) will not constitute a barrier from outside government and so [yììmá ] assigns Case to the relevant NP.

Apart from the above exceptional Case-assigning verbs, the complementiser, [ǹ] ‘for’ can also license lexical NP in the [NP, IP] of the non-finite clauses. Such a complementiser treats the licensed NP as its object even if it is not. Like the exceptional Case-marking verbs, such complementiser must be close to its Case-assignee linearly and hierarchically. This, however, has a very limited occurrence in Lòkáá. See examples below.

(13a) ǹg-wé tà ó-fúkéèn ò-yììyí – ò-yììyí
for-him to he-come it-good – it-good
“For him to come is good”.
(b) ǹg-wé tà ó-jíí bòóng áá èblá ó-túm òbúwà
for-him to he-eat thing  like dog  it-very wrong
“For him to eat like a dog is very wrong”.

In (13), the prepositional complementiser [ǹg] “for” Case-marks the lexical NP [wé ] “him”. Its absence in 13(a-b) above would have rendered the sentences ill-formed and ungrammatical in the language.

Findings
In line with the objectives of this work, the following findings are made:

Firstly, it becomes obvious that kòómí ‘expect’, nài “make”, dàlì ‘take, wóóyí “want” in subsection 3.0 (examples 1-5), yòó ‘believe’ of (8-11), yììmá ‘know’ of (12) etc. constitute a few examples of the Lòkáá verbs that can intrude into the infinitival subjects of their subordinate clauses to govern and assign them Accusative Case. They are therefore ‘Exceptional Case-markers”. The exceptionality in their Case-marking exercise relates precisely to the fact that the maximal projections that inhibit outside governor from governing an [NP, IP] of an external clause could not bar them from assigning Case to [NP, IP] of their infinitival IP complement.

Secondly, we also found out that any intervening node between the verbs of the matrix clause and the [NP, IP] of its non-finite clauses block Case-assignment. We exemplify with the following data.

14(a) * Éyóng ò-wóóyí ká lòtém-túmájá [yà-nèén- á tà ó-fúkéèn ká étó ]
Eyong he-want CONT. earnestly wife – his to she- come in house.

(b) Éyóng à-wóóyí [yà-nèén-à tà ó-fúkéèn ká étó ]
Eyong he-want CONT wife-his to she-come in house
“Eyong is expecting his wife to come home”.

14(a) above is ungrammatical. The ill-formedness is due to the intervening projection of the ADVP ka  kátém-túmájá “earnestly” in (14a). The ungrammaticality is rectified with the deletion of the projection to reflect (14b).
Lastly, Lòkáá conforms to the universal mould of syntactic analysis on exceptional Case marking of NPs at the infinitival (lower) clause.

**Recommendation**

In view of the findings in this study, we therefore recommend more studies in Lòkáá syntax. This will undoubtedly stimulate other grammatical analysis in the same language and other related languages to help push the research frontiers further and even beyond the limits covered by this paper.

**Conclusion**

This paper x-rays the ECM in Lòkáá within the framework of Government and Binding (GB) Theory. With the current wave of interest in the use of minority languages of Nigeria in education, it therefore challenges native-linguists to pay greater attention to reducing their minority languages to writing. Lòkáá, like other Nigerian languages, is chosen because it cannot afford to be left out of this present global struggle to fit into the universal mould of syntactic analysis. In conclusion, therefore exceptional Case marking of NPs in Lòkáá is suitable for Lòkáá syntax.

**References**


