Long Forms of verbs as Verum Focus exponents in Mauritian

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Introduction

- Languages with alternating verbal forms (Long vs Short, Disjoint vs Conjoint) show an interplay of syntactic and discursive constraints (Creissels and Roberts (1998, 2006) on Tswana, Crysmann (2005) on Hausa, Buell (2006) on Zulu, Degraff (2001) on Haitian (among others) and Mauritian, which is the focus of our study).
- The discursive constraints suggest that the distribution of the Long Form- or Conjoint Form- is related to Focus.
- Here we argue that Long Forms with complements in Mauritian are exponents of Verum Focus.

1 Mauritian Verb Forms

1.1 The Forms

- Mauritian, a French-based Creole, is different from its superstrate when it comes to verbal agreement: No agreement with TMA or in gender, number and person.
- 70% of Mauritian Verbs present an alternation between Long Forms and Short Forms (henceforth LFs and SFs) (Baker 1972)).

(1)

Short Form	manz, pas, telesarz, get dans, koriz, ...
Long Form	manze, pase, telesarze, gete danse, korize, ...

(2)

Non Alternating Forms	aste, lir, dormi ...

(3) a. Mo ti manz (*manze) kari.
1SG PST eat.SF (*LF) curry
I ate curry.

b. Zan pe manze (*manz).
John PROG eat.LF (*SF)
John is eating.

(4) a. Mari dans (*danse) toultan sega.
Mary dance.SF (*LF) always sega
Mary always dances the sega.

b. Mari danse (*dans) toultan.
Mary dance.LF (*SF) always
Mary always dances.

- Not phonological but morphological alternation.
- LF is the citation form but not the default form.
- Notice that the alternation is still productive with new verbs.

(5) Zan inn telesarz (*telesarze) enn ta manga.
John PERF download.SF (*LF) a lot manga
John has downloaded a lot of animes.

2 Syntactic Constraints on the distribution of SFs and LFs

The distribution of SF and LF is syntactically driven (Baker 1972; Henri and Abeillé 2008).

GENERALIZATION I: SFs are only grammatical when followed by (non-clausal) canonical complements.

(6) a. Mari inn trouv (*trouve) so mama.
Mary PERF see.SF see.LF 3POSS mother
Mary has seen her mother.

b. Mari pe asiz (*asize) lor sez.
Mary PROG sit.SF sit.LF PREP chair
Mary is sitting on the chair.

(7) a. Mari inn konn (*kone) lir.
Mary PERF know.SF know.LF read
Mary has known how to read.

b. Mari inn vinn (*vini) zoli.
Mary PERF become.SF become.LF beautiful
Mary has become beautiful.

GENERALIZATION II: LFs are only grammatical with extracted or clausal complements or when followed by adjuncts.

(8) a. Mari ti danse (*dans) yer.
Mary PST dance.LF dance.SF yesterday
Mary danced yesterday.

b. Ki Mari ti danse (*dans) yer?
What Mary PST dance.LF dance.SF yesterday
What did Mary dance yesterday?

(9) Mari panse (*pans) (ki) li'nn fel.
Mary think.LF (think.SF) (that) 3SG'PERF fail
Mary thinks that she failed.

A summary of the constraints governing the occurrence of SFs and LFs is given in Table (1)

Environment	SF	LF
V with canonical non-clausal CPLTs (VPs, APs, NPs...)	yes	no
V with no CPLTS	no	yes
V with adjuncts	no	yes
V with clausal CPLTS	no	yes
Extracted CPLTS	no	yes

Table 1: Syntactic constraints governing the occurrence of SFs and LFs in Mauritian

3 Distribution of LFs with (non-clausal) canonical complements

However, syntactic constraints do not account for the full distribution of LFs(Zribi-Hertz and Li Pook Tan 1987; Henri and Abeillé 2008). There are occurrences of LFs with (non-clausal) canonical complements: (10) is an illustration.

(10) SPEAKER A: Mo pe al kwi kari poul parski Zan kontan manz kari poul. (I'm going to cook chicken curry because John likes to eat chicken curry.)
SPEAKER B: Be non. Zan pa **MANZE** kari poul.
But no. John NEG eat.LF curry chicken
No, John doesn't EAT chicken curry.

We study the distribution of LFs in discourse according to three parameters:

1. Clause Types (Ginzburg and Sag 2000).
2. The “contrast" between root versus complement clauses.
3. Types of moves: reactive vs proactive (Godard and Marandin 2006; Geurts 1998; Gussenhoven 1987)

3.1 Clause Types

- LFs are grammatical in declaratives: asserting declaratives (10) or questioning declaratives (confirmation question) (11).

(11) Zan **MANZE** poul, non?
John eat.LF chicken, TAG
John EATS chicken, doesn't he?

- They are also grammatical in polar interrogatives (12).

(12) Eski Zan **GETE** linformasion?
POL-QUEST John see.LF information
Does John watch the news?

- But they are ungrammatical in *Wh*-interrogatives (13a), in Imperatives (13b). Neither are they grammatical in relative clauses (13c) nor in Exclamatives (13d)[1].

(13) a. *Kisannla ki'nn MANZE roti?
who KI'PERF eat.LF roti
Who ATE the roti?

b. *MANZE kari poul la!
eat.LF curry chicken DEF
EAT the chicken curry!

c. *Bann zanfan ki MANZE poul pa vezetarien.
PL child REL eat.LF chicken NEG veggie
Children whoEAT chicken are not veggies.

d. *Ala li RESTE dan enn zoli lakaz la!
EXCLAM 3SG live.LF PREP IND beautiful house DEF
How he/she LIVES in a beautiful house!

3.2 Root versus Complement Clauses

- LFs are grammatical in root clauses (11-12) and crucially, in non-root, non-*wh* clauses: complement clauses of verbs selecting *propositions* (14), protases (15), but not mandative or decidative verbs (selecting *outcomes*).

(14) To panse Mari (ki) **MANZE** poul?
2SG think.LF Mary (that) eat.LF chicken
Do you think (that) Mary EATS chicken?

[1]However, we note that there are cases of exclamatives where the long form is possible. The data are still under study. The difference may reside in the categorial status attributed to the particle *ala*, i.e. whether it is a *wh*-word or a complementizer.

(1) Ala li FIME sigaret la!
EXCLAM 3SG smoke.LF cigarette DEF
How he/she SMOKES cigarettes!

(15) Si Zan MANZE poul vedir li pa vezetarien!
If John eat.LF chicken mean 3SG NEG veggie
If john eats chicken it means that he is not a veggie.

(16) Mari pa kone si Zan MANZE poul.
Mary NEG know.LF if John eat.LF chicken
Mary doesn't know whether John EATS chicken.

(17) *Mari pa'nn deside si Zan MANZE poul.
Mary NEG'PERF decide.LF if John eat.LF chicken
Mary hasn't decided whether John EATS chicken.

GENERALIZATION III:	Assuming Ginzburg and Sag (2000), LFs with (non-clausal) complements are grammatical in clauses with a propositional content.

3.3 Types of move

LFs with complements are not felicitous in any type of declaratives or polar interrogatives.

(18) SPEAKER A: ki Zan kontan manze? (What does John like to eat?)
SPEAKER B: #Zan **MANZE** poul.
John eat.LF chicken
John EATS chicken.

(19) SPEAKER A: Mo'nn fer kari poul pou Zan. (I made chicken curry for John.)
SPEAKER B: Zan pa **MANZE** laviann, ta! (Li vezetarien)
John NEG eat.LF chicken, PART (3SG veggie)
John doesn't EAT meat, you should know! (He's a veggie).

Assuming the typology in Table (2). It is meant as a working grid to systematically describe the distribution of (lexical, prosodic, etc.) forms in Dialogue. It cross-classifies moves in dialogue along two dimensions: Dynamics and Orientation of the reply.

Descriptive Dimensions of Dialogue Moves					
DYNAMICS The way how the speaker steps in the dynamics of dialogue		**ORIENTATION** The way how the speaker takes up the addressee's previous move or the situation			
Proactive The speaker sets forth an issue or an activity	**Reactive** The speaker reacts to the addressee's move	**Co-Oriented** The speaker accepts the issue or the activity set forth by the addressee or the situation		**Counter-Oriented** The speaker's take-up is in opposition to the addressee's move or the situation	
		Simple co-Orientation (20)	**Marked Co-Orientation** (21)	**Deferment** The speaker suspends his take up of the addressee's move (22)	**Denial** Main subtypes of denial: (23) -Counter propositional -Counter implicative

Table 2: Descriptive Dimensions of Dialogue Moves

Prototypically, proactive moves are first members of adjacency pairs and reactive moves second members (adjacency pairs in the sense of conversation analysis). Co-oriented moves usually are less marked moves in the language. This does not mean that they are unmarked: the marks that are accounted for in terms of information structure (resorting either to the articulation ground/focus or the contrast given/focus) prototypically are marks of mere co-orientation.

Counter orientation is always marked and opposing moves show grammaticalized features that should be systematically accounted for.

(20) a. Mary won!
b. ok

(21) a. Mary won!
b. Oh Great! Mary won!

(22) a. Mary won!
b. Mary won?

(23) a. Mary won!
b. Mary didn't win!

Distribution of LFs in Mauritian						
DYNAMICS		**ORIENTATION**				
Proactive	**Reactive**	**Co-Oriented**		**Counter-Oriented**		
		Simple co-orientation	**Marked Co-orientation**	**Deferment**	**Denial**	
					Counter propositional	**Counter Implicative**
ok (33,32)	ok	# (24)	# (25)	ok (26)	ok (27-29)	ok (30)

Table 3: Distribution of LFs with complements in Mauritian

LFs are not felicitous in co-oriented moves (simple co-orientation), e.g. congruent answers to questions:

(24) SPEAKER A: ki Zan kontan manze? (What does John like to eat?)
SPEAKER B: #Zan **MANZE** poul.
John eat.LF chicken
John EATS chicken.

They are not felicitous in marked co-oriented moves, e.g. moves by which the speaker rejoins the addressee as in marked acknowledgments (25).

(25) SPEAKER A: Mari nepli manz laviann! (Mary doesn't eat chicken anymore!)
SPEAKER B: #Serye net! Mari nepli **MANZE** laviann.
Really completely! Mary no-more eat.LF meat
Great! Mary no longer EATS meat.

Contrastively, they are felicitous in counter-oriented moves. The prototypical moves marking deferment are reprises that are described in the literature as conveying the speaker's surprise or incredulity.

(26) SPEAKER A: Zan manz poul! (John eats chicken!)
SPEAKER B: Kiete! Zan **MANZE** poul!
What! John eat.LF chicken
What! John EATS chicken! (since when?)

They are felicitous in both counter-propositional moves- be they positive (27) or negative (28) or in counter-implicative moves (29).

(27) SPEAKER A: Zan pa'nn pas so lekzame! (John hasn't passed his exams!)
SPEAKER B: Be non. Zan inn **PASE** so lekzame.
But no. John PERF pass.LF 3POSS exam
No, John has PASSED his exams.

(28) SPEAKER A: Zan inn pas so lekzame! (John has passed his exams!)
SPEAKER B: Be non. Zan pa'nn **PASE** so lekzame.
But no. John NEG'PERF pass.LF 3POSS exam
No, John hasn't PASSED his exams.

(29) SPEAKER A: Zan pa'nn pass so driving license! (John hasn't passed his driving license!)

SPEAKER B: Li pa'nn **PAS** larout me li'nn **PASE** parking.
3SG NEG'PERF pass.SF street but 3SG'PERF pass.LF parking
He hasn't passed the street test but PASSED the parking test.

Prototypical counter-implicative moves are moves that challenges the propositions implicated by open questions (usually conveyed by *wh*-interrogatives):

(30) SPEAKER A: Kan Zan ti manz poul dernye fwa? (When did John eat chicken for the last time?)
SPEAKER B: Zan pa **MANZE** laviann ta!
John NEG eat.LF meat PART
John doesn't EAT meat, you should know!

Examples (24-30) are examples of reactive moves. Typically, proactive moves are questions uttered "out of the blue". LFs are felicitous in polar questions whose resolution is in opposition to the explicit information contributed by the situation. This explains the contrast between (31) and (32).

(31) CONTEXT: John is fond of meat and always eat whatever piece of meat he can find from the fridge. His mother comes back home and discovers that the chicken she had left for diner has disappeared.
SPEAKER A: #Zan inn **MANZE** poul la?
John PERF eat.LF chicken DEF
John has EATEN the chicken.

(32) CONTEXT: John is fond of sweets and junk food and his mother is always asking him to eat good food instead of junk food. She had left chicken in the fridge and knows that the only person who came in was John. So he is the only one who could have eaten it but this is so unexpected.
SPEAKER A: Zan inn **MANZE** poul la!
John PERF eat.LF chicken DEF
John has EATEN the chicken!

Note that the same obtains with negative Polar questions (33).

(33) CONTEXT: John used to eat meat but since a few weeks there are only vegetables in his fridge.
SPEAKER A: Zan nepli **MANZE** laviann?
John no-more eat.LF meat
John no longer EATS meat.

LFs are felicitous:	**1. clauses with propositional content be they root or complement**
	2. in Counter-oriented moves

4 Analysis

We now turn to the fine-grained contribution of LFs.

4.1 Against Narrow focus on the lexical verb

Information Focus:

- LFs are not felicitous to mark narrow informational focus on the verb when it resolves a question.

(34) SPEAKER A: Ki li'nn fer ar poul la? (What has he done with the chicken?)
SPEAKER B: Li'nn manz (*MANZE) poul la.
3SG'PERF eat.SF (*LF) chicken DEF
He has eaten the chicken.

Lexical Kontrast:

- LFs do not mark lexical contrast on the verb when it is part of a set of alternative (lexical) verbs (contra Hertz and Li Pook Tan (1987)). For instance, LFs are not felicitous in self-(35a) or other-corrections (36) :

(35) a. #Li pa ti MANZ kari la, li ti DEVORE devor kari la!
3SG NEG PST eat.SF curry DEF, 3SG pst devour.LF SF curry DEF
He didn't EAT the curry, he devoured it.

b. Li pa ti MANZ kari la, li ti DEVOR devor kari la!

(36) SPEAKER A: Li'nn lir bann papye la. (He has read the papers.)
SPEAKER B: #Non, li'nn KORIZE bann papye la!
No, 3SG'PERF correct.SF LF PL paper DEF
No, he has corrected the papers.

a. Non, li'nn koriz bann papye la!

4.2 Against LFs marking Focus on the Object

It has also been proposed in the literature (Bantu Languages) (Creissels and Robert 1998; McCormack 2006) that alternating verbal forms could mark Focus on the object, either informational Focus or Kontrastive Focus. Neither case shows up in Mauritian ((37) and (38))[2].

(37) SPEAKER A: Ki Zan inn manze? (What has John eaten?)
SPEAKER B: Li'nn manz (*MANZE) poul!
3SG'PERF eat.SF (*LF) poul
He has eaten chicken!

(38) SPEAKER A: Eski Zan inn manz poul? (Has John eaten chicken?)
SPEAKER B: Non, Li'nn manz (*MANZE) roti!
No, 3SG'PERF eat.SF (*LF) roti
No, he has eaten roti.

4.3 What is Verum Focus?

The notion of Verum Focus has at least two definitions in the literature.

1. Polarity Focus (Gussenhoven 1987; Krifka 2007)
2. Modality + 'presupposition' (Höhle 1992)

[2]LFs are not right boundaries of focal domains as illustrated below:

(1) a. Zan pou koze (*koz) demin.
John IRR talk.LF (*SF) tomorrow
John will talk tomorrow.

b. Kan Zan pou koze (*koz)?
When John IRR talk.LF (*SF)?
When will John talk?

If the object was "given" then we would expect a SF as it is the case in Zulu (Buell 2006).

4.3.1 Polarity Focus

We assume Jacobs (1984) illocutionary definition of Information Focus (Jacob's Free Focus).

(39) Illocutionary-Operator <Ground, Focus>

The focus is the part of content specifically affected by the illocutionary operator. In such a perspective, VF amounts to saying that in (40a), the positive polarity is specifically asserted -as schematically represented in (41a) -and in (40b) the negative polarity (41b).

(40) a. Zan **MANZE** poul!
b. Zan pa'nn **MANZE** poul!

(41) a. Assert <'John eats chicken', 1>
b. Assert <'John eats chicken', 0>

Three arguments against LFs as Information Focus:

1. Analyzing Mauritian LFs as polarity focus does not explain why LFs are not felicitous in co-oriented moves. If they conveyed polarity focus, they should be perfectly appropriate in moves where the Speaker shows full agreement with the Addressee (see (25) repeated here for convenience).

   (42) SPEAKER A: Mari nepli manz laviann! (Mary doesn't eat chicken anymore!)
   SPEAKER B: #Serye net! Mari nepli **MANZE** laviann.
   Really completely! Mary no-more eat.LF meat
   Great! Mary no longer EATS meat.

2. It would take us astray in analyzing LFs in polar questions as it implies that the polarity is specifically questioned:

   (43) a. Eski Zan **MANZE** poul?
   b. Quest < Zan **MANZE** poul, 1>

   Informally

   (44) Is it really true that John eats chicken ?

   Thus, the positive polarity would be specifically at stake as in double-checking questions. This is not the flavor question (43a) has in Mauritian. By using a LF, the speaker strongly favors that "John eats chicken" is the case while that might not be the case for the addressee.

3. If LFs were Polarity Focus markers, we do not see how to account for their occurrence in non-root clauses for example in protases (see (45) repeated below)

   (45) Si Zan **MANZE** poul vedir li pa vezetarien!
   If John eat.LF chicken mean 3SG NEG veggie
   If John EATS chicken it means that he' is not a veggie.

4.3.2 Modality + presupposition

Höhle (1992) analyzes the accentuation of the constituents in the left parenthesis (verbs, complementizers or wh-elements) as:

1. introducing an epistemic operator Verum (True) into the content.
2. requiring that the content in the Scope of Verum is "known" or "presupposed" (*bekannt, vorausgesetzt*).

(46) Karl **SCHREIBT** ein Drehbuch (Karl writes a scenario)

- It is true that Karl writes a scenario.
- The proposition 'Karl writes a scenario' is known from the context (*aus dem Kontext bekannt*).

Two arguments against an analysis *à la Höhle* for Mauritian LFs.

1. The introduction of a Verum Operator predicts scopal ambiguities[3] (Höhle (1992): 124-126). Take (47):

   (47) SPEAKER A: Zan manz poul?
   John eat.SF chicken
   John eats chicken?
   SPEAKER B: Non, Zan pa **MANZE** poul, ta! (Yes, he doesn't EAT chicken, I assure you!)

   It predicts the ambiguity in (48) and (49), where the Verum Operator either scopes over the negation (48) or the negation scopes over the Verum operator (49). However the (49) reading is not available in Mauritian[4].

   (48) It is true that John does not eat chicken (=I assure you that he doesn't)

   (49) It is not true that John eats chicken (=You cannot say that he eats chicken)

2. There is a major difference between German and Mauritian: VF requires the proposition expressed in the clause to be "known from the context" in German. This is not the case in Mauritian. On the contrary. The content of the clause is discourse- or speaker- new. If there is something "in the context", it is the converse proposition. *Karl schreibt kein Drehbuch* for (47).

Hence, we conclude that LFs do not convey polarity focus nor an epistemic modality. Moreover, something has to be said to account for the restricted distribution of LFs in counter-oriented moves

5 Analysis (II) : LFs as Exponents of Polarity Kontrast

We adopt another definition of Verum Focus: Polarity Kontrast (PK) (Vallduvi and Vilkuna 1998). Here, we rejoin Leonetti (2008)'s approach.

(50) LFs convey Polarity Kontrast

Polarity Kontrast is defined as follows:

1. PK is Kontrastive (Vallduvi and Vilkuna 1998): it evokes a set of alternatives. The evoked set is a singleton : it is made of the converse of the proposition making up the content of the clause.

[3] Höhle gives the following example: the utterance *aber Hanna denkt, er hört ihr nicht zu* (= Höhle's (55a)) when uttered as a reply to *ich hoffe, dass Karl ihr zuhört* has both reading in (1) :

(1) a. Hanna thinks that it is not sure that he listens to her.
b. Hanna thinks that it is sure that he does not listen to her.

[4] LFs are compatible with a number of epistemic adverbs, which could be taken as an argument against the idea that Verum Focus does not alternate with other epistemic modalities:

(1) a. Kapav Zan **MANZE** poul!
Perhaps John eat.LF chicken
Perhaps John EATS chicken.

b. Sirma Zan **MANZE** poul!
surely John eat.LF chicken
John surely EATS chicken.

2. PK conveys exhaustive Kontrast (Umbach 2004): It excludes the alternatives: *p* is true instead of *conv(p)*.

3. The converse is not merely Common Ground (i.e. a presupposition in Stalnaker's sense), rather it should be activated (in Chafe 1994's sense) (Chafe 1974; Schwenter 2005; Godard and Marandin 2006). It is explicitly contributed by the Addressee's move or inferred on the basis of the Addressee's move.

5.1 Accounting for the distribution in Dialogue

5.1.1 In declaratives

In root clauses Take (51)

(51) Zan **MANZE** poul.

-The LF evokes the alternative proposition : 'John does not eat chicken'.

-The alternative should have been introduced by the Addressee explicitly or should be inferable from the move he has just completed. This is how (51) can only occur in counter-oriented moves. LFs are simply impossible in moves in which the speaker rejoins the addressee: (see (42) repeated below.).

(52) SPEAKER A: Mari nepli manz laviann! (Mary doesn't eat chicken anymore!)
SPEAKER B: #Serye net! Mari nepli **MANZE** laviann.
Really completely! Mary no-more eat.LF meat
Great! Mary no longer EATS meat.

-By asserting (51), the speaker commits herself to *p* and calls on the addressee to share *p*. By using a LF, she shows that she is **NOT** committed to conv(*p*), even if conv(*p*) is the explicit commitment of the Addressee or a belief she attributes to the addressee. This accounts for the reinforcement of the assertive force of the utterance. Informally, it amounts to "I commit myself to *p* publicly and I show that I am not committed to conv(*p*)".

In non root clauses Take (15) repeated below:

(53) Si Zan MANZE poul vedir li pa vezetarien!
If John eat.LF chicken mean 3SG NEG veggie
If john eats chicken it means that he' is not a veggie.

The LF in the protasis indicates that the condition is chosen by the Speaker instead of conv(*p*). The choice of LF gives a cue to the perspective the speaker adopts : "suppose *p*" instead of "suppose conv(*p*)". "If John eats chicken" is a different condition from "if John does not eat chicken"!

Remember that an analysis in terms of polarity focus would be completely unable to account for cases such as (53): it would make no sense to say that the polarity of the protasis is specifically asserted. If one was to adopt an analysis *à la Höhle*, we do not see what sense it would make to introduce a VERUM operator in the protasis of (53).

5.1.2 In polar questions

In general, polar questions are biased. They are biased in favor of the proposition they express : the questions (54) are biased for the positive and (55) for the negative.

(54) a. Eski Zan **MANZ** laviann?
b. Eski Zan **MANZE** laviann?

(55) a. Eski Zan nepli **MANZ** laviann?
b. Eski Zan nepli **MANZE** laviann?

The bias corresponds to the the pragmatic intent of the questioning (Romero and Han 2002): the speaker favors the proposition she chooses to check by expressing it in her question.

The use of LFs in Polar Questions strengthens the bias in favor of the proposition expressed in the question by strengthening the pragmatic intent. By using a LF, the speaker indicates that she chooses *p* instead of conv(*p*). By evoking conv(*p*) and discarding it, she indicates that she has a strong inclination toward *p*.

As expected, LFs are not felicitous in

- Alternative polar questions.

  (56) *Zan MANZE poul ou bien li pa MANZE poul?
  John eat.LF chicken or else 3SG NEG eat.LF chicken
  John EATS chicken or does he not EAT chicken?

- Verifying (polar) questions. Verifying are questioning moves used by the speaker to make the addressee express his agreement explicitly. they usually occur at the end of a conversation when the speaker concludes by recapitulating the issues that have been discussed.

  (57) CONTEXT: Mary is organizing a diner and her guests have particular eating habits due to religious beliefs. She is verifying who are veggies and who aren't with her friend who knows pretty well the guests.
  MARY: Mo redir twa tou tansion mo'nn fer erer. Bann Dival manz (*MANZE) laviann.
  JOHN: wi.
  MARY: Bann Ramdanee pa manz (*MANZE) laviann.
  JOHN: Saem!
  MARY: Pol manz (*MANZE) pwason.
  JOHN: Wi.
  MARY: Rite.

The Verum Focus carried by the Mauritian LFs does not work as the Verum Focus Romero and Han associates with preposed negation in polar questions of English : Mauritian polar questions with LFs are not double-checking questions. By using LFs, the speaker reinforces the cue she gives the addressee that she favors the proposition making up her question even if the addressee may be inclined to choose its converse.

5.2 Accounting for the distribution with respect to Clause Types

LFs are not grammatical in clauses with non propositional content, in particular *wh*-interrogatives (see 13). This is expected if LFs require the converse of the proposition expressed in the clause: there is no proposition expressed in the clause.

We could imagine that LFs trigger the existential closure of the question. For example:

(58) a. * Kisannla manze poul?
  b. ∃x.Eat(x, poul)
  c. Not[∃x.Eat(x, poul)]

This would lead to pragmatic incoherence: A speaker could not ask "who eats chicken" while assuming that "nobody eats chicken".

The same line of argumentation holds for imperatives.

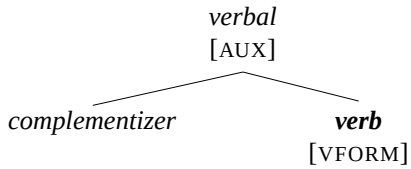
6 Formalization in HPSG

Here, we propose a sketch of the analysis couched in an HPSG grammar of Mauritian (Pollard and Sag 1994; Sag, Bender, and Wasow 2003; Ginzburg and Sag 2000; Henri and Abeille 2007; Henri and Abeillé 2008).

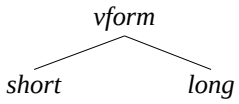
6.1 Accounting for the forms

Within a constraint-based framework like HPSG, (head) features are defined in terms of type-hierarchies. We redefine the attribute VFORM, which is a **HEAD** value, with two values *long* and *short* to account for the types of verb available in MC[5].

(59)



(60)



30% of verbs are underspecified for VFORM (non alternating ones)

6.2 Syntactic licensing of SFs and LFs

We define two lexical constraints to account for the occurrence of LFs and SFs. They are defined on the verb: (a) SFs need obligatorily to be followed by at least one non-clausal complement (61) and (b) LFs take as complement a list of clause which accounts for the fact that it can be either an empty list (no complements) or a clause. Adjuncts and extracted complements are encoded elsewhere (via the attribute MOD or SLASH) (62).

(61) $\left[\begin{array}{l} \textit{verb} \\ \text{HEAD} \mid \text{VFORM} \quad \textit{short} \end{array}\right] \Rightarrow \left[\text{COMPS} \left\langle \boxed{2}\textit{non-clause} \right\rangle \oplus \textit{list}\right]$

(62) $\left[\begin{array}{l} \textit{verb} \\ \text{VAL}\left[\text{COMPS} \quad \textit{list(clause)}\right] \end{array}\right] \Rightarrow \left[\text{VFORM} \quad \textit{long}\right]$

SFs are defined by a necessary condition whereas LFs are defined by a sufficient condition.

6.3 LFs as exponents of Verum Focus

We claim that LFs are Verum Focus exponents, which explains their occurrence in clauses where they are not syntactically licensed. We defined Verum Focus as Polarity Kontrast. The claim is encapsulated in the constraint (63).

(63) $\left[\begin{array}{l} \textit{clause} \\ \text{CONT} \quad \boxed{1}\textit{proposition} \\ \text{DGB}\left[\text{LATEST-MOVE}\left\langle \neg \boxed{1} \vee \boxed{2}(\text{p}, \text{p} \Rightarrow \neg \boxed{1}) \right\rangle\right] \\ \text{CTXT}\left[\text{SPEAKER-COMITT} \quad \neg \boxed{1} \notin \text{S}\right] \end{array}\right] \Rightarrow \left[\text{HEAD}\left[\begin{array}{l} \textit{verb} \\ \text{VFORM} \quad \textit{long} \end{array}\right]\right]$

Its main features should be read as follows:

- LFs are only licensed in clauses with propositional content (Ginzburg and Sag 2000): $\left[\text{CONT} \quad \boxed{1}\textit{propositional}\right]$

[5]Non-alternating verbs, that is those that have the same form in the different environments we described, have an underspecified VFORM value. Notice also that we keep the feature AUX as a value of *verbal*. This is because we want to account for sentences where the complementizer *pou* is present.

- The converse of the proposition expressed in the clause should have been introduced by the addressee or it should be inferable from the addressee's latest move. It is a kind of contextual felicity condition. Here, we resort to the Dialogue Gameboard (DGB) introduced by Ginzburg (Ginzburg 2008).
  $\text{DGB}\left[\text{LATEST-MOVE}\left\langle \neg \boxed{1} \vee \boxed{2}\,(\,p,\, p \Rightarrow \neg \boxed{1}\,)\right\rangle\right]$
- The speaker excludes the converse of the proposition expressed in the clause from the current portion of the common ground she is co-constructing with her addressee (what we call the Shared Ground). We capture such an import by using the contextual feature COMMITMENT (CMT) (Bonami and Godard 2008; Marandin 2008). CMT encodes contents that do not feed the update of the shared ground (the at-issue meaning *à la Potts* (Potts 2007)), but rather give cues about different attitudes of the speaker toward the current issues.
  $\text{CTXT}\left[\text{SPEAKER-COMITT}\ \ \neg \boxed{1} \notin S\right]$

7 Conclusion

We have made two claims :

- LFs of Mauritian are licensed syntactically or pragmatically;
- Pragmatically, LFs are licensed as exponents of Verum Focus defined as Polarity Kontrast.

From a more general perspective, we stress that:

- Verum Focus is just a descriptive label until it is more precisely defined;
- Precise analyses of Dialogue conditions must be carried out to give precise definitions of Verum Focus.
- HPSG is well suited for the expression of independent, order-free, overlapping constituents.

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