

snippets

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Not all occurrences of logophoric pronouns are bound by a logophoric operator: The case of Ewe

Abigail Anne Bimpeh · Leibniz-Zentrum für Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft
Frank Sode · Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität

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The question whether logophoric pronouns have “fake” occurrences has not, to our knowledge, been addressed in the literature. We present data from Ewe that suggest that the answer is: yes. It is a shared assumption on all accounts that the Ewe pronoun *yè* is licensed under binding by an operator, associated either with the embedding predicate (Schlenker 2003; von Stechow 2004; Pearson 2013, 2015) or the complementizer *be* (O’Neill 2016; Bimpeh 2019; Satik 2021). Our data show that this is not the only way to license *yè*, and that any account of logophoric pronouns must make room for “fake” instances.

The possessive pronoun in (1) can either have a strict or a sloppy interpretation (2) (confirmed by 12 native speaker consultants). This is the same as with the possessive pronoun *his* in the English translation.

- (1) Kofi_i súsú be yè_i ko yé wɔ yè_i-fe dɔ
Kofi think COMP LOG only FOC do LOG-POSS work
‘Kofi_i thinks that only he_i did his_i work’
- (2) Kofi thinks that he is the only one of whom $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} (\lambda x.x \text{ does Kofi's work}) \text{ is true} \\ (\lambda x.x \text{ does } x\text{'s work}) \text{ is true} \end{array} \right. \begin{array}{l} \text{strict} \\ \text{sloppy} \end{array}$

Given that (1) has the same readings as its English counterpart, and given that there is no evidence to the contrary, we assume that the [DP *ko yé*]-construction in Ewe has the same interpretation options as the [*only DP*]-construction in English.

The interesting case is the sloppy reading. In the literature, we find two general strategies for how to derive this reading with an *only*-DP: via focus alternatives or structured propositions (Rooth 1992; Krifka 1991 resp.), or by treating the *only*-DP as a quantifier (e.g. Heim 2008). On both kinds of accounts, the sloppy interpretation requires the pronoun to be bound at LF by the focused DP. If Ewe is like English in that it requires the pronoun on a sloppy interpretation to be bound, it cannot be bound by the logophoric operator. This suggests that the logophoric feature in Ewe can undergo a similar feature transmission/deletion process as ϕ -features in a focus-construction in English, i.e., some overt occurrences of logophoric pronouns are not directly bound by a logophoric operator but are “fake” (Kratzer 2009) logophors.

The observation that Ewe has “fake” logophors is of theoretical interest not because the facts couldn’t in principle be handled by existing accounts; on some accounts it might even be predicted ?- although not explicitly so. Rather it is not obvious, given current understanding, that the answer should be positive in the first place. Since the [log]-feature that is commonly associated with *yè* is more closely related to features that mark anaphoric pronouns as anaphoric than to ϕ -features

(cf. von Stechow 2004), and since the features that mark pronouns as anaphoric typically are not “fake”, it could have turned out that there are no fake logophors.

To be somewhat more concrete: One way to explain the licensing of the logophoric feature of the bound pronoun on a sloppy interpretation is by assuming that logophoric features in Ewe are subject to Heim (2008)’s principle of feature transmission (Heim 2008:50): “In the derivation of PF, all features of a DP must be copied onto all variables that it binds.” The details would look as follows, assuming that the logophoric feature comes with the complementizer *be* and is transmitted under binding in a binding chain with *be* as the source of licensing; cf. Heim (2008:49).

(3) Base-generated:

Kofi thinks [*be*₄-LOG [[only** \emptyset_4 **did** \emptyset_2 ’s work]]]**

After transmission, at PF:

Kofi thinks [*be*-LOG 4 [*LOG*-[only** *LOG*₄] 2 [*LOG*₂ **did** *LOG*₂’s work]]]**

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Abigail Anne Bimpeh
Leibniz-Zentrum für Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft (ZAS)

bimpeh@leibniz-zas.de

Schützenstr. 18,
10117-Berlin
Germany

Frank Sode

Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität

frank_sode@gmx.de, sode@em.uni-frankfurt.de

Fachbereich Neuere Philologien

Institut für Linguistik

Norbert-Wollheim-Platz 1

60629 Frankfurt am Main

Germany