

# snippets

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## Contents

1. Michael Yoshitaka Erlewine. *Can parasitic scope-taking movement be pronounced?*
2. Sampson Korsah, Augustina Pokua Owusu, and Comfort Ahenkorah. *On unexpected exceptions to prosodic vacuity and verbal resumption in Akan.*
3. Brian Rabern and Patrick Todd. *A puzzle about scope for restricted deontic modals.*



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## Editorial Statement

### 1. Purpose

The aim of *Snippets* is to publish specific remarks that motivate research or that make theoretical points germane to current work. The ideal contribution is brief, self-contained and explicit. One encounters short comments of this kind in earlier literature in linguistics. We feel that there no longer is a forum for them. We want *Snippets* to help fill that gap.

### 2. Content

We will publish notes that contribute to the study of syntax and semantics in generative grammar. The notes are to be brief, self-contained and explicit. They may do any of the following things:

- point out an empirical phenomenon that challenges accepted generalizations or influential theoretical proposals;
- point out unnoticed minimal pairs that fall outside the scope of any existing theory;
- point out an empirical phenomenon that confirms the predictions of a theory in an area where the theory has not been tested;
- explicitly describe technical inconsistencies in a theory or in a set of frequently adopted assumptions;
- explicitly describe unnoticed assumptions that underlie a theory or assumptions that a theory needs to be supplemented with in order to make desired predictions;
- call attention to little-known or forgotten literature in which issues of immediate relevance are discussed.

We also encourage submissions that connect psycholinguistic data to theoretical issues. A proposal for a pilot experiment in language acquisition or language processing could make for an excellent snippet.

The earliest *Linguistic Inquiry* squibs exemplify the kind of remark we would like to publish. Some of them posed unobserved puzzles. For instance, a squib by Postal and Ross in *Linguistic Inquiry* 1:1 (“A Problem of Adverb Preposing”) noted that whether or not we can construe a sentence-initial temporal adverb with an embedded verb depends on the tense of the matrix verb. A squib by Perlmutter and Ross in *LI* 1:3 (“Relative Clauses with Split Antecedents”), challenging the prevailing analyses of coordination and extraposition, noted that conjoined clauses, neither of which contains a plural noun phrase, can appear next to an “extraposed” relative that can only describe groups. Other squibs drew attention to particular theoretical assumptions. For instance, a squib by Bresnan in *LI* 1:2 (“A Grammatical Fiction”) outlined an alternative account of the derivation of sentences containing *believe* and *force*, and asked whether there were principled reasons for dismissing any of the underlying assumptions (among them that semantic interpretation is sensitive to details of a syntactic derivation). A squib by Zwicky in *LI* 1:2 (“Class Complements in Phonology”) asked to what extent phonological rules refer to complements of classes. None of these squibs was more than a couple of paragraphs; all of them limited themselves to a precise question or observation.

### 3. Submission details

*Snippets* is an electronic journal. We will solicit submissions twice a year. The submissions that we accept will be posted on the journal website approximately 3 months after each deadline, and all accepted submissions will remain permanently on the website. *Snippets* is intended as a service to the linguistics community. Consequently, authors are advised that, when they submit to *Snippets*, we understand them as allowing their submission to be reproduced if published. At the same time, the rights for the published snippets themselves will remain with the authors. As a result, citation of *Snippets* material will have to indicate the author's name and the specific source of the material.

We will accept electronic submissions at the address [snippetsjournal@gmail.com](mailto:snippetsjournal@gmail.com). Electronic submissions may take the form of (a) the text of an e-mail message, or (b) an attached file. The attached file should be a simple text file, a Word file (Mac or Windows), a Rich Text Format (RTF) file, or a PDF. The files must be anonymous, but must be accompanied with information about the authors: name, affiliation, and (postal or electronic) address. Submissions can be of any length below 500 words (including examples), with an additional half page allowed for diagrams, tables, and references. The submissions may not contain footnotes or general acknowledgments, except acknowledgements of funding sources, which must be credited in a line following the references. Authors who wish to acknowledge language consultants are allowed but not required to do so. We will not consider abstracts.

### 4. Editorial policy

Submissions will be reviewed by our editorial board and review board, and review will be name-blind both ways. While we guarantee a response within 3 months of the submission deadline, we will not necessarily provide more than a yes/no response to the submitter. We allow resubmission (once) of the same piece.

*This statement reproduces with minor modifications the editorial statement in Issue 1 of Snippets (January 2000), edited by Carlo Cecchetto, Caterina Donati and Orin Percus.*

# Can parasitic scope-taking movement be pronounced?

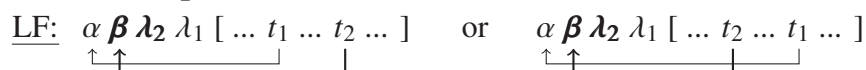
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Considerations of semantic interpretation have motivated LF structures that involve movement of an expression  $\beta$  to a position that ends up being located *in between* another expression  $\alpha$  that is moved and  $\alpha$ 's corresponding  $\lambda$ -binder, as in (1). Barker (2007) describes  $\beta$  as taking “parasitic scope” in such configurations.

## (1) Parasitic scope:

LF:  $\alpha \beta \lambda_2 \lambda_1 [ \dots t_1 \dots t_2 \dots ]$     or     $\alpha \beta \lambda_2 \lambda_1 [ \dots t_2 \dots t_1 \dots ]$



Here I note that in prior work that has argued for parasitic scope-taking LFs,  $\beta$  is not pronounced in the hypothesized, parasitic scope-taking position (except for a couple potential exceptions, below).

I first survey prominent examples of constructions for which parasitic scope taking has been argued to be required. In (2)-(4), the semantics of the expression in bold requires a two-place predicate denotation for its sister, which parasitic scope makes possible. Similar analyses exist for reflexive anaphors (Lechner 2012) and NP-internal *only* (Sharvit 2015). In all of these cases, the proposed movement taking parasitic scope is covert.

## (2) Relative superlatives:

(Heim 1999)

Amy is angriest at [Bea]<sub>F</sub>.

LF: Bea **-est**  $\lambda_2 \lambda_1 [ \text{Amy is } t_2\text{-angry at } t_1 ]$



## (3) Comparatives with phrasal standards:

(Bhatt and Takahashi 2007, 2011)

Cara is taller than Dana.

LF: Cara [**-er** than Dana]  $\lambda_2 \lambda_1 [ t_1 \text{ is } t_2\text{-tall} ]$

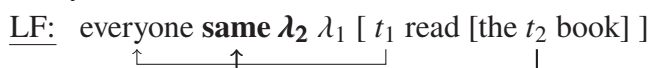


## (4) Sentence-internal *same* and *different*:

(Barker 2007)

Everyone read the same book.

LF: everyone **same**  $\lambda_2 \lambda_1 [ t_1 \text{ read } [ \text{the } t_2 \text{ book} ] ]$



Kennedy and Stanley (2008, 2009) present an analysis for NP-internal *average* that involves overt movement of the containing NP taking parasitic scope, but their analysis can also be recast as involving (covert) parasitic scope-taking of *average* alone, as in Barker and Shan 2014:146.

The semantics of certain adjuncts also motivate parasitic scope (5), as they require a derived two-place predicate sister. Examples include adjuncts with multiple parasitic gaps (Nissenbaum 2000a,b), the \*\* cumulative operator (Sauerland 1998, Beck 2000, Beck and Sauerland 2000), and *on average* (Kennedy and Stanley 2008, 2009).

(5) **Movement taking parasitic scope, motivated by adjunct:**

LF:  $\alpha \beta [ \text{adjunct} [ \lambda_2 \lambda_1 [ \dots t_1 \dots t_2 \dots ] ] ]$  or  $\alpha \beta [ \text{adjunct} [ \lambda_2 \lambda_1 [ \dots t_2 \dots t_1 \dots ] ] ]$

Note that in contrast to the examples above, adjuncts with multiple parasitic gaps can be licensed by two overlapping, overt movement chains: see e.g., Nissenbaum 2000b:117, exx. 42a, 43a and Davis 2020:224, ex. 53. However, following these works, the configuration in (5) then holds at an intermediate vP edge, so  $\beta$  is again not pronounced there. In summary, in the many constructions that arguably necessitate parasitic scope in English, the critical  $\beta$  movement step in (1)/(5) is not pronounced there.

Potential counterexamples to this generalization are attested, but — perhaps notably — in other languages. For instance, as the editors note, Aihara (2009) and Hallman (2016) analyze examples where superlative morphemes (Japanese *ichiban* and Syrian Arabic *aktar šey*, respectively) are separated from their associated degree predicates, as involving overt equivalents of Heim’s (2) above. However, as Aihara notes (p. 352, note 6), there is a potential, alternative account where the superlative morpheme does *not* take parasitic scope and is instead a focus-sensitive operator. Further work is necessary to determine which approach is most appropriate.

If such analyses involving overt movements taking parasitic scope are maintained, we must consider the intriguing possibility that the availability of overt parasitic scope-taking movement is subject to cross-linguistic variation. One possibility, building on a question from a reviewer, may be to relate this to independent variation in the pronunciation of multiple specifiers. Notice that in the parasitic scope configurations in (1-5) above,  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  form multiple specifiers of a single phrase. Richards (1997) and Pesetsky (2000) propose that multiple *wh*-phrases may move to form multiple specifiers of CP, but languages vary in how such structures are pronounced at PF: only the outermost specifier can be pronounced there in English, whereas multiple specifiers can be pronounced simultaneously in Bulgarian-type languages. If the proposed “pronunciation rule” extends to all phrases with multiple specifiers, regardless of whether they involve parasitic scope, the observation that  $\beta$  is not pronounced in the configurations in (1-5) in English above is explained, as it is an inner specifier of a multiple specifier configuration.

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A topic that has seen a sustained debate in the Akan (Niger-Congo) morphosyntax literature for, at least, the past fifty years (see Boadi 1966; Schachter and Fromkin 1968; Essilfie 1986; Dolfhyne 1988; Saah 1994) is: What constitutes the right analysis of the *yɛ* that is generally found in simple affirmative sentences in past tense involving intransitive verbs (1a), or transitive verbs with an omitted object (2b)? Data such as (1a) and (2a, b) led some earlier proposals (e.g., Ofori 2006) to assume one form of linear account or another.

- However, Kandybowicz (2015) argues that, for the Asante Twi dialect, the occurrence of  $y\epsilon$  may be sensitive to hierarchical structure, proposing the structure in (3) for Akan. To account for the distribution of  $y\epsilon$ , he treats  $y\epsilon$  in contexts like (1a) and (2b) as a case of default verbal resumption meant to satisfy a PF constraint that bans prosodic vacuity in the spell-out domain of the  $v$ -phase within a phase-based approach (Chomsky 2001).

- On this account, assuming there is V-to-T movement,  $y\epsilon$  is inserted only when AspP, the complement of  $v$ , is empty (4). The implication of this architecture is that, in (1a), V has raised to T, leaving behind a vacant AspP which feeds  $y\epsilon$  insertion, and in (2b), V raises to T, and a null object in AspP gives rise to a vacuous AspP at Spell-Out, thus feeding insertion.





It is not obvious how Kandybowicz's (2015) analysis applies to the full observed data pattern in (7) and (8). The fact that they all require *yɛ* is unexpected, as the complement of Asp should be filled – either because Neg blocks V-raising in (7)/(8), and/or because of the overt direct objects in (8). Now, Kandybowicz (2015:249, n. 10) does appear to suggest that in such Neg+Past examples, the verb can exceptionally raise through Neg to T; this would make (7a) and (7b) parallel to (2b) and (1a) respectively. However, this would still leave unexplained the examples in (8), where the complement of transitive V is pronounced, and which contrast with (2a)/(6). In fact, data involving Neg+Past receive almost no attention in Kandybowicz's work, the footnote cited above being a notable exception. Thus, we believe it is plausible that the pattern displayed in (7) and (8) could have been missed.

Our general impression is that the variety reported in (7)/(8) is common among younger speakers (including an author of this snippet) in urban areas, such as the national capital, Accra. Even though a more thorough socio-linguistic survey may be needed to ascertain this, that there may be micro-variation even within Asante Twi is not surprising, given that it is the most widely used indigenous Ghanaian language. It also is worth mentioning here that Asante Twi has a well-known puzzle of a reversed mismatch between the morphology and the semantics of tense/aspect in the context of negation (see, e.g., Stump 2009 and Paster 2010). Specifically, while Neg+Perfective morphological markings yield a negative past interpretation in the language, as in (1b) and (6), Neg+Past morphological markings yield a negative perfective interpretation, as in (7) and (8).

In sum, supposing that the *yɛ* in these contexts is the same as the one described in earlier literature, then Kandybowicz's characterization may not be entirely accurate. It has also been suggested (by an anonymous reviewer) that, given the known semantic broadness of the morphological object *yɛ* in the language, its instantiation in (7) and (8) may, in fact, be unrelated to the one in (1), (2), and (5). Independent of the final analysis, it is evident that additional research is required to better comprehend clause-final *yɛ* in Akan.

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# A puzzle about scope for restricted deontic modals

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Deontic necessity modals (e.g. *have to*, *ought to*, *must*, *need to*, *should*, etc.) seem to vary in how they interact with negation. Compare:

- (1) She doesn't have to leave. \**have-to* > NEG; ✓NEG > *have-to*  
(2) She oughtn't (to) leave. ✓*ought-to* > NEG; \*NEG > *ought-to*

Both *have-to* and *ought* are negated in (1)/(2), but the effect of negation in the two sentences is not the same: (1) is intuitively understood to deny that the subject has to leave (hence NEG > *have-to*), but (2) says that the subject ought *not* to leave (*ought-to* > NEG). The mechanism that generates the noted interpretation for (2) may have a pragmatic or purely semantic explanation (e.g., see Jeretič 2021), but many have taken it to be syntactic in nature (cf. Cormack and Smith 2002; Butler 2003). On some syntactic accounts, what forces modals like *ought* and *should* to outscope negation is their polarity sensitivity (e.g. Iatridou and Zeijlstra 2010, 2013): modals that scope over negation do so because they are positive polarity items, PPIs (cf. Israel 1996 and Homer 2015). According to this proposal, then, *should* must outscope *no one* in (3).

- (3) No one should stay. ✓*should* > *no one*; \**no one* > *should*

But there seems to be a conflict between this account and a widely assumed theory of *if*-clauses, namely the restrictor analysis (Lewis 1975; Kratzer 1986). Briefly, according to this account (4) has the form (5).

- (4) He should leave if he is infected.  
(5) [[Should: infected  $x_1$ ] leave  $x_1$ ]

The conflict arises for constructions containing a bound pronoun in the (restrictor) *if*-clause. Consider the following examples (cf. Higginbotham 1986, 2003):

- (6) No one should stay if they are infected.  
(7) Everyone should leave if they are infected.

(6) and (7) are intuitively equivalent. One might think that this follows from the polarity sensitivity of *should*: as a PPI, *should* has to take scope above *no one* in (6), like it does in (3). But assuming that the *if*-clause in (6) restricts the domain of *should*, the LF of the sentence would have to be the following:

- (8) [Should: infected  $x_1$ ] [[No  $x_2$ : person  $x_2$ ] stay  $x_2$ ]

The variable  $x_1$  in (8) — *they* in the *if*-clause in (6) — is free, and indeed (6) does allow a free interpretation of the pronoun. But a bound interpretation is also available, so there must be an LF of (6) where *no one* outscopes *should*, as in (9):

- (9) [No  $x_1$ : person  $x_1$ ][[should: infected  $x_1$ ] stay  $x_1$ ]

That is, we have a puzzle. On the uncontroversial assumption that the pronoun *they* in (6) can be bound by *no one*, the following claims appear to be inconsistent:

- (10) a. The modal *should* can't scope under *no one* in (6) (e.g., because of polarity constraints)  
 b. In (6), the *if*-clause restricts *should* (e.g., because the *if*-clause merges with *should*)

So unless these apparently inconsistent claims are in fact consistent, one of (10a) or (10b) is false.

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