Contrast and Logophoricity: reflections on the use of the emphatic pronoun *ale* in Jula

Introduction:

This paper is concerned with the interpretive effects associated with the use of the third person emphatic pronoun *ale* in Jula, a West-African Mande language of the Manding dialect group (Niger-Congo). Basically, depending on the context, the pronoun may be used to express two different types of information: contrast and logophoricity. While at first glance, these two notions appear to be unrelated, I will argue that, as far Jula is concerned, the logophoric and contrastive readings of *ale* are related in a sense that the former can be derived from the latter.

Data

Consider the examples in (1), which illustrate the logophoric use of *ale*.

(1) Logophoric marking

a. *Adama$_i$ kó (ko) ale$_{i/*j}$ / a $_{i/j}$ hakili ka di.*
   Adama say COMP 3EMP 3SG mind COP good
   'Adama said that he is clever.'

b. *Adama$_i$ ŋɛ na ko ale$_{i/*j}$ / a $_{i/j}$ hakili ka di.*
   Adama eye Post COMP 3EMP 3SG mind COP good
   'Adama thinks that he is clever.'

In Jula, logophoric contexts are introduced by the quotative *ko*, which functions both as a verb of saying and as a complementizer. In these contexts, the emphatic third person *ale* functions like a logophoric pronoun: it refers to the matrix subject *Adama*, the person whose speech (1a) or thought (1b) is being reported, and not to somebody else outside the sentence. The simple third person pronoun *a*, however, has an ambiguous reading: it may refer or not to the reported speaker or thinker.

Yet, outside the logophoric contexts, the pronoun *ale* exhibits different referential properties. In a main clause, for example, it never takes a clause-internal argument as antecedent, in line with the condition B of Binding Theory (Chomsky 1981). This is shown in (2).

(2) a. *Adama$_i$ ye ale$_{*i/j}$ bamuso wele*
      Adama PFV 3EMP.POSS mother call
      'Adama$_i$ called HIS$_{*i/j}$ mother.'

   b. *Awa$_i$ ye saa yé ale$_{*i/j}$ kɔfɛ*
      Awa PFV snake see 3EMP behind
      'Awa$_i$ saw a snake behind HER$_{*i/j}$.'

What is more, in contexts like (2) the use of *ale* invokes the presence of some contrast. Thus, (2a) conveys that "Adama called the mother of a particular person and no one else´s mother". This is further illustrated in different other contexts. First, sentences containing *ale* are infelicitous as a response to the request *tell me about X*. Assuming, this expression is associated with non-contrastive topics (cf. Reinhart 1981), the unacceptability of (3Ba) is straightforward.

(3) A: Tell me about Adama.   *non-contrastive topic*

    B: a. # ***ale*** *kɛ-ra*   *polisi*   *ye.*
                  3EMP   become-PFV   policeman   PostP
                  'HE became a policeman.'
         b. ***a***   *kɛ-ra*   *polisi*   *ye.*
                  3SG   become-PFV   policeman   PostP
                  'He became a policeman.'

Second, some particles convey a contrastive reading only when they are associated with the emphatic form.

(4) A: I heard that Awa became a pilot, what about Adama?

    B: a. ***ale***   *kɔni* *kɛ-ra*   *polisi*   *ye.*   *Constrastive topic reading*
                  3EMP   TOP   become-PFV   policeman   PostP
                  'As for him, he became a policeman.'

         b. #***a***   *kɔni* *kɛ-ra*   *polisi*   *ye.*   *Non- constrastive reading*
                  3SG   TOP   become-PFV   policeman   PostP
                  'Indeed, he became a policeman.'

Discussion

Considering the examples in (1)-(4), one may observe that the referential properties of *ale* depend on whether it is used to express logophoricity or contrast. In the first case, it takes an internal argument as antecedent, in the second one it does not. While it is by no means new that, cross-linguistically, logophoric markers may have other functions that are not related to logophoricity (von Roncador 1992, Culy 1997 et al.), it appears to be no proposal on how the logophoric and the non-logophoric use are related to each other. Yet, as far as the case of Jula is concerned, there appears to be evidence from the literature that suggests a link between the expression of contrast and logophoricity. The reasoning goes as follows.

Contrast is often assumed to indicate the negation of one salient alternative in favor of another one (cf. Vermeulen 2011). By establishing a contrastive relation, the speaker aims at focusing the addressee´s attention on some particular discourse information that s/he considers particularly relevant (cf. Zimmermann 2007). I propose that a similar reasoning seems to be underlying logophoric marking. In fact, since Clements (1975), it is a well-established generalization that the function of logophoricity is to indicate the perspective of a discourse participant as opposed to that of the reporting speaker. Viewed in this light, logophoricity may be described as involving the presence of two alternatives à la Rooth (1992). In this line of thought, the presence of the logophoric

marking indicates the negation of the speaker´s perspective. Finally, the use of the logophoric marker may be seen as a means for the speaker to signal to the hearer his own distance vis-à-vis the content of the report (Nikitina 2012).

If the hypothesis advanced here is true, the case of Jula discussed here suggests that logophoricity is not an isolated phenomenon and that a better understanding of it requires exploring the semantic input of logophoric markers themselves, especially when they are used elsewhere than in logophoric contexts.

Selected references

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