THE RESUMPTIVE PRONOUN IN HAUSA: A MINIMALIST APPROACH

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to examine resumptive pronouns in Hausa with a view to establishing the Hausa strategy.This paper explains the motivations for the resumptive strategy and its behaviour in the language. It examines both the early and the current analysis of resumptive pronouns in the literature with a view to positioning its analysis.The paper further sketches the behaviour of the resumptive pronouns in relativization, wh-movement, and topicalized constructions. Relavization remains the most productive strategy in Hausa and many other languages.

Keywords: Topicalisation, Focalisation, Relativisation, Wh-movement, Transformations and Resumptive pronoun.

Introduction

Resumption is a language strategy that uses an element to establish an anaphoric dependency on some antecedent. Resumptive elements include epithets (Aoun, Choueiri and Hornstein, 2001:371-404) and verbs (Koopman, 1984:340). Epithets are nominals usually but not always employed in a diminutive, pejorative or even derogatory manner (Crystal, 2008:85)**.** Linguists are not in agreement on the definition of resumptive pronouns (RP) that is acceptable to all. However, a good working definition of the term is provided by McClowsky (200578) according to whom "a pronominal is an element which appears in a position in which under other circumstances, a gap would appear". This definition suffices for Hausa and some other languages but may not hold cross-linguistically. Asudeh (2005:5)

suggests that such a definition of RPs must be interpreted as "where a gap might occur in the corresponding sentence in another language". Consider the following:

(1) Every rich man thinks that the poor envy him.

(2) Every rich man that the poor envy him sneers.

In examples (1) and (2), the verb 'envy' is followed by 'him', which is an object pronoun and an RP in (1) and (2) respectively. If the pronoun in (2) is replaced with a gap, the sentence will be acceptable. This is indicative that English does not employ resumption in such relative clause formations as in Hausa.

(3) Every rich man that the poor envy-sneers.

Here, (3) has a relative clause (RC). Lavine (2003:355) claims that "Resumption is a strategy for a relative clause formation in which a pronoun appears rather than a gap in the site of relativisation".

There is no consensus in the literature for the motivation for resumption. The two broad divides to account for this phenomenon are: The parametric Setting Assumption (PSA) and the Lexical Feature Hypothesis (LFH). The PSA postulates that Universal Grammar (UG) specifies a binary choice of possible values for each parameter. The claim here is that there is a strong or weak setting for the head complementizer. If the feature is strong, such as in English, the relativized pronoun is deleted resulting in a gap. But if weak, as in the case of Hausa, the relativized pronoun is first merged with a DP, and secondly the DP is moved leaving behind the pronoun which is the RP. Here, it is simply stated that gaps are obligatory if the language has a strong parameter setting. But RPs are obligatory if the parameter setting is weak. Becker (2001:118) calls it "The Resumptive Parameter". Conversely, the LFH assumes that parameters are associated with 'lexical items' rather than, with particular grammars. The locus here is the 'lexicon'. The parameter is still binary, but a difference as to

whether the language has a type of complementizer that will license RPs or it has none (Asudeh, 2004:359).

The choice of the lexicon especially, the functional categories as the benchmark for linguistic variation is favoured over other accounts, cross-theoretically- from the Principles and Parameter Theory (PPT) through to the Lexical Functional Grammar (LFG) theory to the Head -Driven phrase- structure Grammar (HDPSG) (Asudeh, 2004:244).

A further preference for locating the licensing or otherwise of the RP for languages that make productive use of RPs is that both the PPT and the Minimalist Program (MP) have failed to provide a cross-linguistic theory to account for the treatment of RPs. Because of such failure, this paper employs the 'lexicalist' approach in the treatment of RPs. According to this approach, for RPs to be licensed depends on the elements in the lexicon of a language.

Theoretical Framework: The Minimalist Programme

The Minimalist Program (hence, MP) as developed in Chomsky (1995:320) is motivated not only by the search for explanatory adequacy, but also for a certain level of formal simplicity and elegance (Carnie, 2007:355). MP views the human cognitive system as a computational system similar to that of a computer which uses a limited set of mechanisms and constraints to provide adequate explanation to language structures. Basing its assumption to economic principles, MP reduces the complexity of grammar than what is implied by previous Generative models.

The Minimalist Program is organized as represented by Radford (2009:14), shown below, indicating that the computation is regulated by a principle called the Inclusiveness Condition.

Lexicon: Syntactic-structure~Semantic-component~Semantic representation~THOUGHT SYSTEMS

Syntax:~ PF component ~ PF representation ~ SPEECH SYSTEMS

In the structure above, the Lexicon feeds the narrow Syntax which yields the Syntactic structure and that leads to the interface levels, i.e. the Semantic component and the PF component. The interface levels relate to the thought systems and the speech systems. Following Kayne's (1994:145) analysis, we assume that a Specifier precedes the Head and the Head precedes the Complement as specified by Linear Correspondence Axiom (LCA).

The Resumptive Strategy in Hausa

In this session, we are going to see how some conditions and constraints are violated in Hausa with a resultant grammatical sentence. And in all those instances, the gap or trace is left empty. However, there are other instances where such a gap or trace cannot be left empty. That is to say, leaving it empty will render the sentence ungrammatical. Consider for example, sentence (4) below.

> (4) (a) *Kyau ne (S(NP jin (S cewa(S yarinyar tana da shi) ya ruda Audu).
> *(It is beauty hearing that the girl has drove Audu crazy
> (b) *Menene (S(NP jin(S cewa(S yarinyar tana da shi) ya ruda Audu)?
> 	*what is it hearing that the girl has, drove Audu crazy)?

The above sentences show that none of the transformations could attract the second NP 'kyau' with the trace being left empty. What then do we do having claimed that any NP could be extracted?

Tuller (1986:215) has suggested that an LF resumptive pronoun in Hausa sometimes appears as the trace of movement. This happens in cases where if the gap is left empty, the construction would be ungrammatical. So to make the above sentence grammatical, there must be a resumptive pronoun to serve as the trace of movement.

Consider (5) for example: -

(5) (a) Kyau ne (s(NP jin (cewa(yarinyar tana da shii) ya ruda Audu).

*It is Foc/op beauty, hearing that the girl has it drove Audu crazy).

*It is beauty, hearing that the girl has drove Audu crazy.

(b) Menene (S (NP jin (S cewa yarinyar tana da shi) ya ruda Audu)?.

*What is it, hearing that the girl has drove Audu crazy?.

Now, going by example (5) above, we have said that the attraction of the second NP alone (without the conjunct) would give an ungrammatical sentence. However, the appearance of a resumptive pronoun as the trace of the movement would give a grammatical sentence as shown in (6):-

(6) Wanene (Bala zai iya taimakon (NPi(NP Musa da (shi)?

*Who is it that Bala can help Musa with him)?

Still going by our analysis, to topicalize the sentence, a resumptive pronoun must be used in order to avoid the potential ungrammaticality. This can be seen in example (7) below: -

(7) Shinkafa (kam) (Audu ya saye (NPi (NP ta) da (wake).

*(As for the rice, Audu bought it with beans).

We would at this point, therefore, agree that Hausa does extract NPs to sentence initial positions across all the bounding nodes that have been proposed by transformational theory. And in cases where the movement would cause ungrammaticality, a resumptive pronoun is used so as to circumvent the ungrammaticality. What remains for us now, is to come up with a possible explanation as to why Hausa does this, and then to find out how we can constrain Hausa movement rules. This can be done by finding out what will constitute a bounding node in the language.

The Pro-drop Parameter

We have seen how movement transformations are done across all the bounding nodes, i.e. how the combination of S and NP are crossed. We have also seen how another combination, NPi and NP, is also crossed. As a result, we may like to suggest that all the preceding examples do not constitute a bounding node in Hausa. If that is the case, what then would be a bounding node? Let us try S in the sense that crossing more than one S would produce an ungrammatical sentence. Consider examples (8) and (9) when the movement transformations applies to them, they became (8a) and (8b) respectively.

(8) (a) Musa ya yarda da (Si labarin (NP cewa (S Audu ne ya ci jarrabawa).

(Musa he PAST accept the news that Audu it is he that pass the exams).

Musa has accepted the news that it was Audu who passed the exams.

(b) Menene (Si Musa ya yarda da (S labarin (NP cewa (S Audu ne ya ci ei)?

What is it that Musa accepted the news that Audu passed?

(9) (a) Ka ji (Si labarin (NP cewa (S za mu tafi kano)?

(You PAST hear the news that we FUT go to Kano)?

Have you heard the news that we will be going to Kano?

(b) Ina ne (Si ka ji(S labarin (NP cewa (S zamu tafi ei)?

Where have you heard the news that we will be going to?

In both (8) and (9), we would clearly see how the NPs moved by crossing a combination of S, NP, S, thus entailing that even S is not a bounding node (i.e. since the two Ss have been crossed.

To solve this problem, we should note that according to Tuller (1982:217), Hausa is a pro-drop language, thus it has a null or unexpressed subjects and direct objects. This can be seen in examples

(10) and (11) below, in which the subject and the object respectively are null in the (b) versions: -

> (10) (a) Audu ya tafi gida
> (Audu INPC PAST go house).
> Audu went home.
> (b) ø ya tafi gida
> (INFL PAST go house)
> He went home.
> (11) (a) Ka ci abinci?
> Did you eat food?
> (b) Na ci ø
> I ate.

The case of the subject is like that of other pro drop languages. With regard to the direct object. However, it is null when it has a definite referent. In fact, in such cases, a null object is most preferred if not obligatory. Furthermore, when the direct object refers to an entire S-bar, it has to be null as in (12) below: -

> (12) (a) Ka san (S cewa (S za mu tafi Kano)?
> Do you know that we will be travelling to Kano?
> (b) Eh, na sani ø   Yes, I know.

But when the referent is human, an overt resumptive pronoun has to be used. Likewise it is obligatory when it comes after a PP, or a conjunct. Now all this will suggest that since the elements could either be overt or null, and also, since as we have seen all the way through our arguments that most of the elements that are extracted out of the so-called islands are NPs either in subject or direct object positions, the analysis is then systematic.

We should however, remember that in cases where the movement indicates potential ungrammaticality, for example, moving the objects of prepositions or an element in a co-ordinate structure or the direct objects of certain verbs, the resumptive pronoun takes the

place of the movement trace. With this, we may then posit that all movements in Hausa involve resumptive strategy. The reason why we sometimes see a pronoun and sometimes not is that, whenever the antecedent of the resumptive is an NP that could be null i.e. subjects, direct object pronoun with a definite reference etc.), then the resumptive pronoun itself could be null. But if the assumed moved element leaves a trace with a human referent (antecedent), then the resumptive pronoun must not be null i.e. it has to be overt. This is because the NP leaving the trace could not be null whatsoever.

Conclusion

With this analysis therefore, we would like to propose a claim that, what is happening in Hausa could not be described as a movement transformation. We would describe the phenomena as something similar to what Ayoub (1981:245) discovered in standard Arabic. Transformation in Hausa involves a base generation of an NP (in the sense of topicalization, focalization and relativisation) and a Wh-phrase (in Wh-interrogation), plus an obligatory resumptive pronoun. The resumptive pronoun will either be overt or covert depending on the nature of the position it is occupying. If it is in a subject or a direct object position, then it will be null. But if it is in a PP or after a conjunct or in the indirect object position, then it has to be overt.

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