Focus and resumption in Kwa languages

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Pronominal resumption interacts with information structure in several languages: in many languages, while topics may co-occur with a pronominal form in in situ, focused constituents must correspond to a gap; see Italian (Rizzi 1997), Greek (Anagnostopoulou 2006), Tzotzil Maya (Aissen 1992) or Warlpiri (Legate 2002). However, the conditions of resumption are subject to cross-linguistic variation: languages differ with respect to the array of argument positions that may or must be resumed: e.g., subjects but not objects in Ā-positions obligatorily bind a pronoun in situ in Vata (see Koopman & Sportiche 1982, Koopman 1983: 367), while in Hebrew and Levantene varieties of Arabic (in particular Palestinian and Libanese Arabic) resumption is required for extracted objects (Borer 1984; Shlonsky 1992; Aoun, Choueri & Hornstein 2001). Moreover, the syntactic operations that underlie pronominal resumption are not uniform: pronouns amnesty island violations in some languages (English, Irish, Hebrew, and Levantene varieties of Arabic), while resumptive constructions are subject to islands in other languages such as Vata (Koopman 1983), and Edo (Beerman, Hellan, Ogie 2002).

This talk presents the properties of pronominal resumptives in Kwa languages. The relevant facts are introduced with two languages of the Central Tano subgroup, namely Anyi and Baule (spoken in Ivory Coast). In these languages, resumptive pronouns are obligatory in focus constructions with subjects, see (1), and animate objects, see (2) (whereby resumption is optional with subjects in Baule, see (1)). Resumption appears with topic and focus constructions, wh- questions, and relative clauses (Larson 2005).

(1) | ANYI | kòfĩ$_i$ | jɛ̌ | *(ó$_i$) | lì-lì | bànà̰ | àljɛ́ | ɔ́. |
| | BAULE | kòfĩ$_i$ | jɛ̀ | (ɔ̀$_i$) | dì-lí | mā̰dā | àljɛ́ | ɔ́. |
| | | Kofi | FOC | 3SG | eat-PFV | banana | fufu | PRES |

'It is Kofi who ate the banana fufu.'

(2) | ANYI | blá$_i$ | jɛ̌ | ɛ̀ | pḭ̀dɛ̀-lì | *(jí$_i$) | ɔ́. |
| | BAULE | blā$_i$ | jɛ̀ | à | kṵ̀dɛ̀-lí | *(í$_i$) | ɔ́. |
| | | woman | FOC | 2SG | search-PFV | 3SG | PRES |

'It's a woman that you searched for.'

(3=3rd person; FOC=focus; PFV=perfective; PRES=presentative)

Foci and topics have the following differences. In general, *these properties show that focus but not topics involve movement, which is independent of pronominal resumption* (in these languages):

(a) FOCI: the extraction site must be filled by a bound pronoun. TOPICS: it is possible to find other material in the extraction site, e.g., epithets or co-referent DPs in a part-whole relation to the topic.

(b) FOCI: pronouns in situ *agree* with the φ-features of the focused constituent. TOPICS: the φ-features of the pro-form just *match* with the topic referent. Evidence: disagreement is possible with topics, but not so with foci.

(c) FOCI bind a *co-valued variable* in situ, TOPICS relate to a *co-referent constant* in situ. Evidence: Weak Crossover effects appear with foci but not so with topics.

(d) FOCI: the pro-form (spelling out a variable) does not have a specificity restriction; TOPICS: the pro-form (spelling out a constant) must have a specific antecedent.

(e)   FOCI: are sensitive to island violations; TOPICS: no evidence for island violations (which is in line with cross-linguistic findings about foci/topics. (in languages in which resumption is only possible with topics).

A comparison to further Kwa languages shows that *resumption is determined by factors that are orthogonal to syntactic movement*. In particular, a subset of these languages allows for subject gaps in short extraction, but not so in long extraction (out of embedded clauses) (this is the case for the optional subject resumptives in Baule, see (1)). This difference is explained by a locality requirement on gaps (such that gaps in an A-position must be locally Ā-bound) that cannot be traced back to further independent differences between Kwa languages. With respect to objects, there are two groups of Kwa languages: (a) those that have resumption with object foci and topics, like Anyi, Baule and Akan in (2) and (b) languages like Gungbe, Fongbe and Ewe, that only allow resumption with object topics. The subset of the (a)-type languages share a particular property in common: a contrast between null object pronouns for inanimates and overt pronouns for animates. We conclude that the source of variation is that zeros have phi-features in languages of the former type (in particular they are inanimate pronouns).