On two types of resumption in Igbo and the nature of islands

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Claim: We argue (based on novel data from the native speaker author) that two types of resumption need to be distinguished in Igbo: resumption that occurs (a) under topicalization (at the bottom of a base-generated A-dependency) and (b) under certain wh-/focus movement A-dependencies. While it has been argued before that different kinds of resumption can co-exist in a language (see a.o. Aoun et al. 2001), the evidence was typically based on very subtle reconstruction effects. We additionally provide evidence from morpho-phonological cyclicity effects and parasitic gaps for the split. Furthermore, the distribution of resumptives under wh-/focus movement (type (b)) is highly restricted in Igbo and exhibits a cross-linguistically unusual pattern, being restricted to possessors, complements of prepositions and DP-conjuncts. We argue that what unifies the type (b)-contexts is the fact that the extraction site is assigned inherent/oblique case. For type-(b), we propose a spell-out approach based on a PF-visibility requirement for inherent case. Moreover, since XPs that are usually considered to be islands are transparent for extraction in Igbo, the results of this study challenge our understanding of locality domains and require reconsideration of cross-linguistic variability in islandhood.

A-dependencies in Igbo: In Igbo (Benue-Kwa, Nigeria, basic SVO order), wh-/focused constituents (followed by the focus marker kà) and topics occur in clause-initial position, compare (1-a) vs. (1-b,c):

(1) a. Ézè hù-rù Ùchè b. Ùchè kà Ézè hù-rù ___ c. Ùchè Ézè hù-rù yâ

Eze see-pst Uche Uche kà Eze see-pst Uche Eze see-pst 3SG.ACC

“Eze saw Uche.” (declar) “Eze saw UCHE.” (DO-focus) “As for U., Eze saw him” (DO-topic)

There is evidence that wh-/focus fronting results from movement, while topicalization involves base-generation of the topic-XP + binding of a resumptive pronoun (RP, yâ in (1-c)) (Author 2019): the former is island-sensitive, exhibits reconstruction + cyclicity effects, licenses parasitic gaps (pgs) and has a gap in the base-merge site of the fronted XP; the latter has none of these properties and must leave a RP, see lines a.+b. in (2), and (3),(4) for examples (pgs not illustrated due to space limitations):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>island-sens.</th>
<th>reconstr.</th>
<th>cyclicity</th>
<th>pg-licens.</th>
<th>bottom</th>
<th>conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. ex-situ wh/focus</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>gap</td>
<td>movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. topicalization</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>RP</td>
<td>base-gener.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. “repair” RPs</td>
<td>(✓)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>RP</td>
<td>movement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(3) island-(in)sensitivity, adjunct island (also holds for other islands, e.g. CNPC-islands):

a. *Úchè kà Àdá pùrù tùpù Ézè àhù ___ b. Ùchè Àdá pùrù tùpù Ézè àhù yâ

Uche FOC Ada left before Eze saw Uche Ada left before Eze saw 3SG.ACC
Lit. “U., Ada left before Eze saw.” (foc) “As for U., Ada left before Eze saw him.” (topic)

(4) reconstruction for idiom interpretation (more effects will be provided from binding, scope):

“to hit the teeth with a spoon” means to eat

a. Ñgàjì kà há nà-àkù ___ n’ézè b. ñgàjì, há nà-àkù yâ n’ézè

spoon FOC 3PL PROG-hit P-teeth spoon 3PL PROG-hit it P-teeth

“They are eating.” (DO-focus) “As for the spoon, they’re hitting the teeth with it.” (DO-topic)

(idiomatic reading still available) (only literal reading available, the “eat” reading is out)

We discuss two obligatory cyclicity effects: (i) the rightmost tone-bearing unit of the subject DP becomes high-toned when a XP moves across this DP (cf. Manfredi 2018, illustrated in (1), compare Eze’s final tone in (1a/c) (declarative/topicalization) vs. focus fronting in (1b) in red. (ii) The perfect morphology on the verb must be replaced by past tense morphology (ru-suffix) when the verb in the perfect is crossed by movement, see (5-a-c) (see Kandybowicz 2002 on a similar effect in Nupe). Evidence for the movement relatedness of these effects: They do not occur with wh-/focus in-situ (both ex-situ/in-situ focus is possible in Igbo) and they never occur in dependencies that involve base-generation by other diagnostics (e.g. topicalization, cf. (5-d) for (ii)).

(5) Aspectual marking (cyclicity effect):

a. Ôbì à-gù- José ãkwúkwo b. *Ãkwúkwo kà Ôbì à-gù- José ___

Obi PFX-read-SFX-PFV book c. Òbí à-gù-rù ___ (DO-focus, ex-situ, past)

“Obi has read the book.” (declar) d. Åkwúkwo, Ôbì à-gù-rù yâ (DO-topic, perfective)

“Exceptional” resumption: The pattern in (2a./b.) is common cross-linguistically (see e.g. McCloskey
Focus fronting of the complement of a prep.: (7) Focus fronting of a DP-conjunct:

- Úché kwèrè nà Ñgózi
- Úché believes P Ngozi
- “Uche believes in Ngozi.”
- (declar.)

- Ñgózi kà Úché kwèrè nà * / ýá
- Úché kà Ëzè hurlú [ Ádá nà * / ýá ]
- Ngozi FOC Uche believe P / 3SG.ACC
- “Uche believe in ÑGÓZI.”
- (focus)

Thus, it seems as if the RP “repairs” these islands. Given the presence of the RP in (6-b) and (7-b), one might think the repair arises because speakers resort to base-generation when movement is blocked. While such an “island repair by resumption” pattern has been described for several languages (see Boeckx 2003, Salzmann 2017 for overviews), cross-linguistically such “repair” resumptives either save all islands (Korsah & Murphy 2018) or the weak ones. But the distribution in Igbo is very different: first, the DP-/PP-islands are not (all) weak islands, and second, no other island (e.g. CED-islands) can be “saved” by resumption in Igbo. In fact, there is evidence that we are not dealing with “island repair” by means of base-generation in (6-b)/(7-b); instead, these wh-/focus dependencies behave like movement, see line (2-c): (i) cyclicity effects occur, see the tonal reflex on the subject DP in (6-b)/(7-b) vs. (6-a)/(7-a); perfective morphology is ruled out as well (not illustrated) in these sentences; (ii) these RP-dependencies license pgs (cf. (8) for movement of a DP-conjunct; “agree to mouth sth.” = “to price sth.”); (iii) they are island-sensitive (e.g. CED-islands) – not illustrated here; (iv) they exhibit reconstruction effects (see (9) for variable binding with extraction of the complement of a preposition).

**The trigger of RP-insertion:** The question is why a gap is ungrammatical when possessors/DP-conjuncts/P-complements are extracted. Proposal: The presence of the RP is due to a PF-visibility requirement (see a.o. Pesetsky 1998, Bayer et al. 2001, Bianchi 2004, Landau 2010): These positions are assigned inherent/oblique (I/O-)case and I/O-case must be morpho-phonologically realized. Thus, in the syntax, movement applies and leaves behind a (reduced) copy; at PF this copy is usually unpronounced (gap), but whenever it bears I/O-case the PF-filter forces pronunciation (RP). Igbo does have case distinctions: Nom vs. Acc (visible in pronouns), and Gen (visible by a special tone pattern). Conjuncts in Igbo always bear accusative case; this Acc is an I-case assigned by the &-head. Evidence: conjuncts bear Acc in Igbo regardless of the case assigned to the &P: If a conjunct is subextracted from a coordinated DP subject (based on (7) this would be: “ÚCHE FOC [Ada and him] saw Eze.”), the RP left behind is still in Acc, even though the subject DP is assigned Nom. (Note: DP-conjuncts must always be pronounce, even when they are pronouns in pro-dorp languages, Cardinaletti & Starke (2004). Possessors in Igbo bear genitive case, clearly an I/O-case. Finally, complements of prepositions in Igbo bear Acc, which we take to be an I-case in this position. Evidence: Other languages use the strong/emphatic forms of pronouns after P (e.g. French: avec lui = strong pronoun; / *avec ille = weak pronoun). Igbo does not have a special strong pronoun series; it rather uses the accusative form for these purposes (e.g. when a pronoun is focused). Hence, we do not see a morphological difference to ordinary structural accusative in complements of prepositions.

**Summary:** Igbo provides new evidence for two types of resumptives: movement-derived vs. base-generated ones. Their distribution calls for a reassessment of our views on islandhood.