Logophoricity and number in Wan (Southeastern Mande)

1. Introduction

The use of specialized logophoric pronouns is extremely widespread in Africa; it is attested in a large number of Niger-Congo languages, as well as in the Afroasiatic and Nilo-Saharan language families (Dimmendaal 2001; Güldemann 2008: 154-56). Whether it can be analyzed as a unitary phenomenon, however, remains an open question, due to cross-linguistic variation both in the range of logophoric predicates and in restrictions on the use of logophoric pronouns. In this paper, I present a first survey of the use of logophoric pronouns in Wan, a Southeastern Mande language spoken in Côte d’Ivoire. In particular, I focus on two aspects of logophoricity: the differences in the use of the singular and the plural logophoric pronouns, and the curious combination of features of direct and indirect discourse within logophoric constructions.

2. Logophoric pronouns in Wan: an overview

Logophoric pronouns are special pronominal forms used in the context of verbs of speaking, thinking, and certain other predicates encoding psychological and mental states to indicate reference to the person whose speech, thoughts or perceptions are reported (Hagège 1974; Clements 1975). The use of such pronouns in Wan is illustrated in (1a,b) for singular and plural referents, respectively.

(1) a. ɓé  à nɔ̰̀  gé  bā  bē  gō-mɔ̄
then  3SG wife  said  LOG,SG  that understood
‘And his wife said she understood that.’

b. yrā-mū  ē  gē  mʒ  sūglū  ē  īʒ
children  DEF  said  LOG,PL  manioc  DEF ate
‘The children said they ate the manioc.’

When the corresponding personal pronouns are used in the same context, their referents are understood not to coincide with the subject of the verb of speaking.

(2) a. ɓé  à nɔ̰̀  gé  è gā
then  3SG wife  said  3SG went
‘And his wife said that he left.’

b. yrā-mū  ē  gē  ā  sūglū  ē  īʒ
children  DEF  said  they  manioc  DEF ate
‘The children said that they ate the manioc.’

The logophoric pronouns are used in the same syntactic functions as personal pronouns, i.e. as subjects, objects, arguments of postpositions (3a), and two types of possessor (3b,c).

(3) a. argument of a postposition

yāá  yrā-lɔ  lé  dōō  pʒ  kū  bā  bglē  ʒ
3SG+COP  complain  PROG  that  thing  any  LOG,SG  at  NEG
‘She, complains that she, has nothing (to wear).’
b. inalienable possessor

\[\text{è gé ñ lèŋ bà gbôkålè kā}\]

3SG said 1SG to LOG.3G maternal.uncle died

‘She, told me that her, maternal uncle had died.’

c. alienable possessor

\[\text{yrā̰-mū gé mɔ̰̄ kú má̰}\]

children said LOG.PL house PRES

‘Children, said it was their, house.’

In a way consistent with Hyman and Comrie’s (1981) person hierarchy, the logophoric pronouns neutralize the distinction between 2nd and 3rd person (4a,b); 1st person, on the other hand, is excluded from the encoding of logophoricity (5).

(4) a. \[\text{lā gé bā súglù é lī}\]

2SG said LOG.3G manioc DEF ate

‘You said you ate the manioc.’

b. \[\text{ū gé mɔ̰̄ kú má̰}\]

2PL said LOG.PL house PRES

‘You (pl.) said it was your house.’

(5) \[\text{ŋ̀ gé dōō nā ŋ gà}\]

1SG said that 1SG.PERF PERF go

‘I said that I am gone.’

The marking of logophoricity is not restricted to reports of speech; it appears with a variety of predicates encoding perceptions, feelings, and thoughts (cf. Culy 1994).

(6) a. \[\text{kōtā zrāgbō gō-tɔ̄ dōō bà kla-ŋ lɔŋ ge blèkɔ́ é gō sè}\]

turtle oneself knew that LOG.3G win-NEG hare POSS run DEF in NEG

‘The turtle knew himself that he could not compete with the hare in running.’

b. \[\text{è lā gbō á è kātō dōō kākā sí lē bà lèŋ}\]

3SG it imagine COP REFL belly that 1PL.EXCL help PROG LOG.3G to

‘He, imagines (“in his belly”) that we are going to help him.’

Unlike in some other languages, logophoric pronouns in Wan need not be introduced by an overt complementizer or quotative, nor need they be licensed by a logophoric verb. For example, volition can be expressed in the main clause periphrastically by a postpositional phrase: “be after it” = ‘wish that x’ (where ‘x’ is a proposition expressed by a logophoric clause and usually cross-referenced in the main clause by a third person pronoun).

(7) \[\text{è bī ñ klā bā zē dō̄ dī}\]

3SG PAST 3SG after LOG.3G word one say

‘He wanted to say something…’

Furthermore, clauses with logophoric pronouns can be used by themselves in long stretches of reported discourse, at a considerable distance from any verbs of speaking. In (8), for example, the second instance of a logophoric pronoun is included in the domain of reported discourse, even though syntactically it is independent of the preceding clause and hence cannot, strictly speaking, be analyzed as subordinated to the clause containing the verb of speaking (see Dimmendaal 2001 for a general discussion of logophoricity as a discourse..."
phenomenon, rather than a syntactic phenomenon proper, and for similar examples from other languages).

(8) **ɓé ɓé gé čé! bāá lōsí sǐ-ŋ pɔ́ é lé ɔ́!**
then that said INTJ LOG.SG beak fit-NEG thing DEF at NEG

ɓāá yá-ŋ ɓé bāá bāá gò-ﬂé
LOG.SG+COP sit-PROG then LOG.SG+COP LOG.SG have.rest

‘And that one, said that oops! his, beak doesn’t fit into this thing [the jar]! He’ll sit and have rest [instead of eating].’

3. **Number asymmetry**

There is a difference in the range of contexts where the singular and the plural logophoric pronouns occur. The singular pronoun appears primarily in canonical logophoric environments, i.e. whenever the speaker reports someone else’s speech, feelings or perceptions. The plural pronoun, on the other hand, is attested in a variety of contexts that do not fit well into the notion of logophoricity. It occasionally occurs, for example, in focus constructions, where it refers back to a left-dislocated constituent:

(9) **làlɛ̀-yɔ̰̀ŋ mù té mɔ̰̄ lāā zegi-wā wò mą**
sorcerer PL only 3PL TOP witchcraft do HAB

‘Only sorcerers are occupied with witchcraft.’

It can also be used with coordination, referring to a plurality of individuals, as in (10), where it refers to the father and the son together, in a right-dislocated coordinated structure.

(10) **mī kɛ̄ é á zò lé, mɔ̰̄ péé ṭ̀ gbè yā**
man this DEF COP come PROG 3PL and 1SG son with

‘This man is coming with my son.’

The wide distribution of the plural pronoun suggests that it is not specialized for expressing logophoricity but can also serve as a general coreference marker. At the same time, its use in logophoric constructions cannot be subsumed fully under the notion of coreference marking, because it is obligatory in logophoric contexts and shows the same pattern of person neutralization as the singular logophoric pronoun ($2^{nd}$ = $3^{rd}$ person). Hence, while the singular pronoun is a well-behaved logophor, its plural counterpart appears to be a multifunctional pronoun that only expresses logophoricity in one of its uses. Similar cases of coreference markers employed in logophoric constructions are attested in other Mande languages (cf., e.g., Jones 2000 for Boko).

More generally, the asymmetry in the use of the singular and the plural pronouns challenges the distinction between “pure” and “mixed” logophoric languages as proposed by Culy (1994). While pure logophoric languages are supposed to use dedicated logophoric markers that appear in no other context, mixed logophoric languages make use of markers that are employed elsewhere for reference resolution, such as reflexive pronouns. The case of Wan shows that a single language may combine features of both types: while the singular pronoun is restricted to logophoric constructions, its plural counterpart has additional functions.
4. Logophoric style: between direct and indirect discourse

One of the most intriguing aspects of logophoricity is its ambiguous status within the direct vs. indirect speech dichotomy. On the one hand, the use of the logophoric pronoun itself modifies the original utterance, as in indirect discourse. On the other, the construction may preserve various markers of direct speech, including interjections and deictic markers referring to the situation in which the utterance was originally produced (von Roncador 1992: 164-65). In (11), for example, the logophoric clause is preceded by an affirmative particle, which are typically excluded from indirect discourse (cf. also the interjection in ex. 8).

(11) \(b\acute{e} \ \tilde{\dot{c}} \ \tilde{g\acute{e}} \ \tilde{\acute{c}}\acute{e}! \ \tilde{b\ddot{\alpha}} \ \tilde{b\acute{s}} \ \acute{\acute{a}} \ \tilde{d\ddot{d}i\ddot{\alpha}} \ \tilde{y\ddot{\alpha}}\)
then \(3_\text{SG}\) said \(\text{LOG.}SG\) passed \(\text{COP}\) just.now \(\text{there}\) ‘And he, said that yes, it was him, who passed just now.’

In (12), the construction retains a second person pronoun; and somewhat surprisingly, the pronoun refers to the reported interlocutor, rather than to a participant of the actual speech situation, i.e. the audience listening to the report.

(12) \(\tilde{\acute{c}} \ \tilde{g\acute{e}} \ \tilde{z\ddot{o}} \ \tilde{b\acute{e}} \ \tilde{\acute{l}\acute{\ddot{e}}} \ \tilde{b\ddot{\alpha}} \ \tilde{p\acute{o}\acute{l}\acute{i}}\)
\(3_\text{SG}\) said \(\text{come}\) then \(2_\text{SG}\) \(\text{LOG.}SG\) \(\text{wash}\) ‘She said: come and wash me.’

Finally, in (13), the deictic temporal adverb \(z\ddot{\alpha}\) ‘tomorrow’ is interpreted in the logophoric clause as referring to the day when the actual speech situation occurs, indicating an incomplete shift in perspective: the adverb is interpreted in the same way as in direct discourse, and temporal reference is calculated with respect to the reported speech event, not the actual deictic center.

(13) \(k\ddot{l\acute{\sigma}} \ \tilde{\acute{c}} \ \tilde{g\acute{e}} \ \tilde{b\ddot{\alpha}\ddot{\alpha}} \ \tilde{z\ddot{o}} \ \tilde{l\acute{\ddot{e}}} \ \tilde{y\ddot{\epsilon}} \ \tilde{z\ddot{\alpha}}\)
\text{yesterday} \(3_\text{SG}\) said \(\text{LOG.}SG+\text{COP}\) \(\text{come}\) \(\text{PROG}\) \(\text{here}\) \(\text{tomorrow}\) ‘Yesterday he said that he would come here today.’

This curious combination of features of direct and indirect discourse within logophoric constructions suggests, contrary to Culy (1997), that logophoric pronouns cannot be analyzed simply as “indirect-discourse elements”. Rather, their use seems to introduce a bi-perspectival mapping of deictic values within the entire logophoric clause. While the logophoric value is assigned in accordance with the actual speech situation (“the person whose speech is reported”), the second person value in (12) is assigned in accordance with the reported speech situation (“the interlocutor of the person whose speech is reported”). Similarly, the temporal reference in (13) is calculated from the point of view of the reported speech situation (“tomorrow with respect to the time when the speech situation occurred, i.e. with respect to yesterday”).

5. Conclusions

The major goal of this paper was to describe the system of logophoric marking in Wan and to discuss two of its properties that make it especially interesting from the cross-linguistic point of view. First of all, I showed that the logophoric pronouns in Wan display a number asymmetry: the singular pronoun is as a dedicated logophoric marker, but its plural counterpart behaves as a multifunctional marker that encodes logophoricity in only one of its functions. This asymmetry is most likely due to historical reasons. The distribution of the
plural marker appears to illustrate the development of a dedicated logophoric marker from a
general coreference marker, hence the use of homophonous markers in the two distinct
functions (coreference vs. logophoricity). It is likely that the development of the plural
logophoric marker was facilitated by the parallel use of the singular logophoric pronoun in
the context of logophoric verbs. The plural marker is also homophonous with the noun mɔ̄
‘people’, and it is possible that the coreference marker derives historically from that noun.

Secondly, I argued that logophoric constructions combine properties of direct and
indirect discourse, as deictic categories are interpreted based on a dual perspective that
includes both the actual speech situation and the reported event. The combination of two
distinct points of reference in the assignment of person values is similar in this respect to
instances of semi-direct discourse reported for Mundang (Hagège 1974), Gokana (Hyman &
Comrie 1981: 37), Engenni (Thomas 1978: 23), Aghem (Hyman 1979: 51), and many other
languages, both within and outside Africa (Aikhenvald 2008). The behavior of logophoric
clauses in Wan seems to instantiate a more general phenomenon of incomplete deictic shifts
in reports of someone else’s speech, feelings and perceptions. The extent of this phenomenon
and its exact relation to logophoricity remain to be explored, and the rich logophoric systems
of Niger-Congo languages appear to provide promising ground for this line of research.

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