Overt Pronoun
Subjects of
Infinitival Clauses in
Gã

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Introduction
The need for PRO

- English non-finite clauses appear to lack a subject.

  (1)a. Cindy remembered [PRO, to buy a book]
  (1)b. Cindy persuaded Mark, [PRO, to buy a book]

- Infinitival subjects need to be null for (1a,b) to be grammatical

- PRO (Chomsky 1981) a null DP category *simultaneously* anaphoric and pronominal offers a principled solution to the EPP and theta criterion
Plot Twist: Gã’s Overt Pronouns

In Gã (Kwa group of the Niger-Congo language family), there is a full overt pronoun where we expect a PRO:

(2) a. Miiₖ tao maₖ na bo  
1.SG want 1.SG see.INF. you  
‘I want to see you’

(2) b. *Mii tao ø na bo  
1.SG want [PRO] see.INF. you  
‘I want to see you’

(2b) is ungrammatical because of the absence of the overt pronoun *ma.*

Overt pronoun is obligatory in the embedded infinitival construction.
My argument:

The goal of this talk is to show that the overt pronouns in infinitival predicates of Gã are the lexical counterparts of PRO in subject position.
Outline of Talk
Roadmap

❖ Brief background on Gã
❖ Arguments for Gã’s overt PRO
❖ Sketching a hypothesis for Gã’s overt PRO
❖ Summary and Conclusions
The Gã Language
Gã

- Kwa sub-group of the Niger-Congo family (Williamson 1989)

- Spoken in south-east Ghana

- >600,000 people L1 speakers (Lewis 2015)

- Non pro drop

- Tonal language: High, mid, low

- SVO basic word order

Overt Pronoun Subjects of Infinitival Clauses in Gã
Cross-linguistic evidence for Overt PRO
(3) $A_k$ tforo $m_k$ ihu gi
1.SG want 1.SG see.INF you
‘I want to see you’

(4) $M_k$ di be $m_k$ -akpo we
1.SG want to 1.SG-see.INF you
‘I want to see you’

(5) $M_i$ pe se$e$e $m_i$ hu wo
1.SG want that 1.SG see.INF you
‘I want to see you’
(6) Decidiu ir ele ao mercado [European Portuguese]
decided to-go he.NOM to-the market
‘He_k decided for it to be the case that he_k goes to the market’
(Barbosa, 2016)

(7) Pedro_k quer [ele_k chegar infcedo] [Brazilian Portuguese]
Peter wants [he.NOM arrive.INF early]
‘Peter wants to arrive early.’
(Corlaban, 2018)

(8) Juan_k prometió a su profesor [hacer él_k los deberes] [Spanish]
John promised to his teacher [do.INF he.NOM the homework]
‘John promised his teacher to do the homework by himself.’
(Corlaban, 2018)
Previous analyses of Overt PRO
For Gã

Dakubu (2004) & Campbell (2017): Overt PRO is a subjunctive subject embedded under a matrix volitional verb

Korsah (p.c): Overt PRO is an agreement marker agreeing with matrix subject
Cross-linguistically


Szabolcsi (2009): Long Distance Agree Hypothesis (LDA)

Satik (2019): Left-periphery bound pronoun
Overt PRO in Gã: Evidence and Argumentation
Properties of Gā’s Overt PRO

1. Must be overt
2. Must be a pronoun
3. Must be co-indexed with matrix argument
4. Must be C commanded
5. No long-distance antecedent
6. Sloppy reading only
7. Bound Variable
8. Spec TP of embed clause
The embedded pronoun must be \textit{overt}.

Unlike PRO, the \textit{ma} pronoun cannot be silent.

(9) Didaₖ sumɔ-ɔɔ ni *(eₖ) na bo
    Father like-NEG C 3.SG see.INF you
    ‘Father is reluctant to see you’

(10) Miiₖ tao ni *(maₖ) na bo
    1.SG want C 1.SG see.INF you
    ‘I want to see you’

If the embedded pronominal is omitted from these sentences, they are rendered ungrammatical.
The embedded pronoun must be a pronoun

The *ma* pronoun position does not permit lexical nouns in the embedded infinitival clause.

(11) a. $E_k / Ameele_k \text{kai \qquad ni \ e}_k \text{-he \ wolo}$  
     $3.\text{SG} / Ameele \text{ remember C \ 3.SG-buy \ book}$  
     ‘Ameele remembered to buy a book’

b. *$Ameele_k \text{kai \qquad ni Ameele}_k \text{-he \ wolo}$  
   Ameele \text{ remember C \ Ameele-buy book}$

c. *$E_k \text{kai \qquad ni Ameele}_k \text{-he \ wolo}$  
   $3.\text{SG \ remember C \ Ameele-buy book}$
The embedded pronoun must be co-indexed.

The embedded *ma* pronoun must be co-indexed with a matrix argument.

(12) Miₖ kai ni maₖ he wolo
  1.SG remember C 1.SG buy.INF book
  ‘I remembered to buy a book’

(13) Miₖ wa Amaₖ ni eₖ-ya skul
  1.SG help Ama C 3.SG-go.INF school
  ‘I helped Ama to go to school’.
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The embedded pronoun must be \textit{c-commanded}


(14) \([\text{Jojo}_k \text{gbekɛbii lɛ}]_1 \text{hiɛkpano ni ame}^*_{k/1} \text{sha \ tsɛnsii lɛ}\)

\hspace{2cm} Jojo children DET forgot C 3.PL wash.INF dishes DET

\hspace{2cm} Jojo’s children forgot to wash the dishes.’

(15) \([\text{Gbekɛbii}_k \text{ papa}]_1 \text{kai ni e}^*_{k/1}-\text{he woji lɛ}\)

\hspace{2cm} Children DET father remembered C 3.SG-buy INF books DET

\hspace{2cm} ‘The children’s father remembered to buy the book’

The embedded infinitival subject pronoun must be co-referent with the possessive phrase and not the possessor.
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Long distance binding of the embedded pronoun is not possible

The subject of the embedded clause must pick its antecedent in the immediately preceding clause.

(16) Akuₖ kɛɛ akɛ e₁-tao ni e*ₖ/₁-ya skul gbiko
Aku said C 3.SG-want.INF C 3.SG-go.INF school day
A ‘Aku said she wants to go to school one day’

(17) Miₖ kɛɛ akɛ Debo₁ hiekpano ni e₁/*maₖ he wololɛ
1.SG say C Debo forgot C 3.SG/*1.SG buy book
‘I said Debo forgot to buy the book’.
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The ma pronoun must be construed **sloppy** under ellipsis

English elided VPs can be interpreted in at least two ways:

(18) John scratched his arm and Bob did too

a) **Strict reading:**
   
   $John_k$ scratched $his_k$ arm and $Bob_1$ [scratched $his_k$ arm] too

b) **Sloppy reading:**

   $John_k$ scratched $his_k$ arm and $Bob_1$ [scratched $his_1$ arm] too
The ma pronoun must be construed sloppy under ellipsis

Landau (2013): PRO in the elided VP must be construed sloppily (and not strictly)

(19) Maryₖ expected [PROₖ to attend the ceremony] and Sue₁ did too[ PRO₁/*ₖ to attend the ceremony]

(20) Maryₖ kplÉno ni eₖ-ya paati lε ni Pite₁ hu kplÉno
Mary agreed C 3-go party DET and Pite also agreed
[ni e₁-ya paati lε]
C 3-go party DET

‘Mary agreed to go to the party and Peter also [agreed to go to the party]’
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De Se: The ma pronoun must be interpreted as a bound variable

Chierchia (1990):
PRO has a *de se* reading. The *de se* reading arises when the antecedent subject of a predicate is aware that the complement proposition pertains to herself.

Imagine a scenario where Ajele Thompson has been nominated to win a prize but has no knowledge of this. Ajele comes to a notice that reads “Ayele Tomson is nominated for the Anisha prize”. Ajele anticipates that Ayele will win the prize, not knowing that she is the one nominated for the prize, but her name was misspelled. Ajele comes to believe that Ayele will win the prize.
De Se: The ma pronoun must be interpreted as a **bound variable**

(21) "Ajele_k kpã-gbɛ ni e_k-ye jweremɔ lɛ
Ajele expects C 3.SG-win.INF prize DET
‘#Ajele_k expects PRO_k to win the prize’.

(21) is not felicitous since *Ajele* mistakes the embedded subject to be *Ayele*. This outcome gives the embedded pronominal the bound variable reading as *de se*. 
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Overt Pronoun Subjects of Infinitival Clauses in Gã
Gã’s Overt PRO is a subject
Gã does not show agreement in person or number on the verb:

(22) Mi/Wɔ tee skul mra
    1.SG/1.PL went school early
    ‘I went to school early’

(23) O/Nyɛ tee skul mra
    2.SG/2.PL went school early
    ‘You went to school early’

(24) E/Amɛ tee skul mra
    3.SG/3.PL went school early
    ‘I went to school early’
The ma pronoun not agreement marker

If the *ma* pronoun is agreement, we should be able to have the pronoun together with an overt DP subject.

(25) $Asibi_k \ (e_k) - he \ \text{wolo} \ \epsilon$

$Asibi \ (3.SG) - \text{buy book} \ \text{DET}$

‘Asibi bought the book’

(26) $E_k \ (e_k) - he \ \text{wolo} \ \epsilon$

$3.SG \ (3.SG) - \text{buy book} \ \text{DET}$

‘She bought the book’

This however is not possible.
Negation markers intervene between the embedded pronoun and the verb

(29) Jojo kplɛnɔ ni e ka he wolo lɛ
     Jojo agreed C 3 NEG buy book DET
     ‘John agreed not to buy the book / to not buy the book’

(30) Aku tao ni e ka na bo
     Aku want C 3 NEG see you
     ‘Aku wanted to not see you’

If the *ma* pronoun is agreement, we expect negation to precede the *ma* pronoun not follow it
Negation markers intervene between the embedded pronoun and the verb

Implications

- the *ma* pronoun is not attached to the verb as a clitic or agreement marker
- The *ma* pronoun is in Spec TP of embedded clause
- The *ma* pronoun sits in subject position of the embedded clause

Conclusion

- The *ma* pronoun is an embedded subject.
Sketching an analysis for Gã’s Overt PRO
Long Distance Agree Hypothesis (LDA)

Proposed by Szabolcsi (2009):

- the nominative DP in the infinitival complement, agrees with a superordinate subject, in case, person and number.

- Conditions for LDA
  i. DP must be overt
  ii. DP must be a pronoun
Overt Pronoun Subjects of Infinitival Clauses in Gã

movement for Φ features and case

Long Distance Agreement
Summary and Conclusions
What we know so far of Gã’s Overt PRO

1. Occurs with control verbs such as persuade, want, forget etc.

2. Occurs in subject position of an embedded infinitival clause

3. Obligatory control of matrix and embedded arguments

4. Embedded subject fits Landau’s (2013) PRO diagnostics

Conclusion

This pronoun is PRO being overt
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Thank You!

Contact details:
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