

The Resumptive Pronoun Strategy: Insight from Tiv

Georgina O. Maduagwu, PhD

University of Ibadan, Ibadan
emesco2003@yahoo.com
and

Stephen A. Nyon

College of Education, Katsina –Ala
stevennyon10@gmail.com

Abstract

Resumptive pronouns (RPs) constitute part of the universal linguistic features obtainable in natural languages. Parametric variations, however, occur in the strategies employed to achieve resumption in different languages. Current treatment of resumptive pronouns hinges on movement analysis and non-movement analysis. The thrust of this paper is to examine resumption in Tiv, with a view to establishing the Tiv strategy. This paper explains the motivation for the resumption strategy and its behaviour in the language. It examines both the early and current analyses of RPs in the literature, with a view to positioning its analysis. The paper further sketches the behaviour of RPs in interrogative, topicalized and relativized constructions. Re-olativization remains the most productive strategy in Tiv and many other languages. The treatment of RPs in this paper is in the light of Asudeh, (2004), McCloskey, (2005), Uwalaka (1995), among others. This study shows that resumption in Tiv cannot be pinned down to either the movement or base generation strategy; it vacillates. Although Tiv RPs utilize the base generation more than there are instances of Merge and Move, the identity effects are considered more important than the locality effects. The theoretical framework for this paper is The Minimalist Program by Chomsky (1993). The corpus for this paper is elicited utterances by adult native speakers and intuition from one of the authors who is a native.

Keywords: *Tiv, Resumptive pronouns, Base-generation, Merge and Move, Minimalism, Syntax/Semantics.*

Introduction

Resumption is a language strategy that uses an element to establish an anaphoric dependency on some antecedent. Resumptive elements include: epithets (Aoun, Choeuri, and Hornstein, 2001) and verbs (Koopman 1984). Epithets are nominals usually but not always, employed in a diminutive, pejorative or even derogatory manner (Crystal, 2008). They may be used in an affectionate and/or emotional manner too. Generally though, pronouns are the most studied elements investigated here. In this paper we ask: why do languages, in this instance, Tiv-employ resumption? How is it achieved? Are there challenges that a native Tiv learning English as a second language, has in facilitating acquisition of English?. This paper attempts answers to these and some other pertinent issues. A good deal of the data for this paper is taken from Tiv, a language spoken in parts of central Nigeria. (Welmers 1973) and Crozier (1992) among others classify Tiv as a subgroup of the Benue-Congo family group. Crozier and Blench (1992) further classifies Tiv as Tivoid of southern Bantoid, a sub-group of the Bantoid of the Benue-Congo family. Tiv is an SVO language in both root and embedded clauses.

Resumptive pronouns

Linguists are not in agreement on a definition of Resumptive Pronoun (RP) that is acceptable to all. However, a good working definition of the term is provided by McClosky (2005:1) “a pronominal is an element which appears in a position in which under other circumstances, a gap would appear “This definition suffices for Tiv and some other languages but may not hold cross-linguistically. Asudeh, (2004:5) suggests that such a definition of RPs must be interpreted as “*where a gap might occur in the corresponding sentence in another language*” (italics his). Consider the following:

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

In (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 formation as Tiv.

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

Because (3) has a relative clause (RC) Akinremi (nd) following Lavine (2003) claims that “Resumption is a strategy for relative clause formation in which a pronoun appears rather than a gap in the site of relativisation”. Tiv is a good example because, basically, pronouns occur where a gap would have appeared, or in some few instances, alternate freely with gaps. In Tiv derivations utilizing pronouns are more productive.

For clarity of exposition and as reference point, we provide a working pronoun table for Tiv.

(4.) Tiv pronouns

Person	Number	Nominative	Accusative	Genitive	Reflexive
1 st	Singular	<i>m/mo</i> (I)	<i>m/mo</i> (me)		<i>Wám</i> (mine)
	Plural	<i>sé</i> (we)	<i>sé</i> (us)		<i>wáse</i> (ours) <i>áyòl á se</i> (ourselves)
2 nd	Singular	<i>wé/u</i> (you)	<i>ú</i> (you)	<i>wóu</i> (yours)	<i>Íyòl you</i> (yourself) <i>áyòl á en</i> (yourselves)
	Plural	<i>né</i> (you)	<i>né</i> (you)	<i>wén</i> (yours)	
3 rd	Singular	<i>á</i> (s/he)	<i>un`</i> (him/her)	<i>ná</i> (his/hers)	<i>Íyòl na</i> (him/herself) <i>áyòl á ve</i> (themselves)
	Plural	<i>vé</i> (they)	<i>vé</i> (them)	<i>vé</i> (theirs)	
Impersonal/unnamed entity		<i>í/á</i> (it)	<i>í/á</i> (it)	<i>i -í / á-a</i> (its)	<i>Íyòl i-í</i> itself <i>áyòl a-á</i>

Tiv pronouns are not marked for gender.

The motivation for resumption

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) Akinremi (nd: 8). The PSA postulates that, Universal Grammar (UG), specifies a binary choice of possible values for each parameter. The claim here is that there is either a strong or a 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 the case in Tiv, the relativized pronoun is first merged with a DP, and secondly the DP is moved leaving behind the pronoun, which is the RP. Simply stated; gaps are obligatory if the language has strong parameter setting, but RPs are obligatory if the parameter setting is weak. Becker, (2001) cited in Akinremi (nd: 9) calls this: 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 with 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 Parameters 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, the 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.

Some basic assumptions

The syntax of wh-movement shares some similarities with that of RPs; both involve the leftward movement of a phrase which originates within the IP and moves to the SPEC –C. A trace (t) of the moved element is left at the extraction site. If the wh-word/phrase remains in-situ, it is said to be base generated. Radford (1997:267) provides the following:

- (5a) You speak what languages? (b) What languages do you speak?

In (5a) the wh-word is base generated. Such constructions are referred to in the literature as *echoic*. In (5b) the wh-word, (the operator), has moved from within IP to the SPEC-C, leaving behind a trace at the extraction site.

Like wh-movement, RPs exhibit Condition C effect. The Condition C of the Binding Theory (BT) specifies that a lexical NP or a variable cannot be bound by an element in argument position (A-position) Yusuf (1998:153) provides a revision of the Binding Conditions.

(6) **Binding conditions**

- (a) An anaphor is bound in its governing category.
- (b) A pronominal is free in its governing category
- (c) An R-expression is free.

According to the movement analysis, RPs results from movement. For this Radford (ibid) provides the configuration (7) below.

$$(7) \quad S' \rightarrow C'' = [\dots [c' C P'']]$$

The merge, agree and move account

Adger and Ramchand (2003:18) in their account “merge and move” wh-Dependencies Revisited, propose the strategies; merge alongside move. For them, merge is employed if two lexical items selected [from the lexicon] have single interpretable features. It is assumed that the two parts of the dependency are base generated as independent lexical items, then the operation, Agree (Agr) establishes a syntactic connection between them. Adger and Ramchand (2003:18) thus analyze RPs as having no special morphological marking and their syntax, as the syntax of pronouns in a given language; i.e. language specific. They describe an RP simply as a full pronominal bearing an interpretable/valued feature.

Current treatment of resumptive pronouns

The RP is fully grammaticalised in many languages of the world: Igbo (Uwalaka, 1995) and (Mbah, 1999) Chinese, (Huang, 1982), Slavic (Lavine. 2003) Irish (McCloskey and Sells. 1988), English (Asudeh, 2004) and (Beltrama, 2013), Greek, (Alexopoulou, 2010) and Hebrew (Farby, S nd) among others. There has however been no uniform treatment of the RP though. Asudeh (2004:16) classifies current theories into two types: special pronouns and ordinary pronouns theories. The former theory claims that RPs are like non-RPs and are not like gaps. The latter theory, claims that RPs involve the kind of strategy that yields gaps, and are basically gap-like, as such, not same as non-RPs, and variants of spelled out traces. Asudeh (2004:253) concedes that RPs are gap-like.

Lavine (2003:130) on the other hand classifies the analysis of RPs into two: movement and non-movement analysis (8) and (9) are an adoption of Lavine’s analysis.

- (8) DP [_{CP} null wh-OP [_C... [_{TP}...*t*-RP...]]]
- (9) DP [_{CP} null wh-OP [_C... [_{TP}...*pro* RP...]]]

In (8), the movement structure, the null operator has moved from direct object position within TP into SPEC-CP, leaving a copy, *t*-RP at the extraction site. In the non-movement structure (9), the null operator is base-generated in SPEC-CP and remains in-situ.

A minimalist approach to the analysis of resumptive pronouns.

Although there is no consensus on the treatment of RPs within the Minimalist framework of grammatical analysis, there are some convergences. Great attention is given to the operations Merge and Move by many linguists working under this framework. The claim is that, movement operation is a combination of copying and deletion. A trace, the ‘silent copy’ is what remains at the extraction site after an element moves, (McCloskey 2005:11). Under the Minimalist framework therefore, an RP may result from partial deletion of the original copy of the moved DP, thereby deleting a part of the DP in the process and stranding their determiners (Radford 1997:48).

Boeckx (2001) cited in Akinremi (nd: 28, 29) further lends support to this analysis. To him, RPs are orphaned D-heads. Pronouns are the morphological realization of a D with a null complement. While ordinary pronouns are merged with a null complement; RPs are stranded by movement of their complement, that is, constructions with RPs involve merging of a constituent consisting of a resumptive pronoun and its antecedent and subsequent A' - movement of the antecedent, thus stranding the RP in the base. Consider:

- (10a) [_{DP} Icam i][_{VP} doon ungowan]
(Song AgrS good PEFT hear PEFT) ‘A melodious song.’

- (b) [FP Ka [DP icam i] [VP doon ungowan]
(It-is song AgrS good PEFT hear PEFT) ‘It is a melodious song.’
- (c) [FP Icam la ka ~~icam~~ i doon ungowan]
(Song DET it-is_ AgrS good PEFT hear PEFT) ‘That is a melodious song.’
- (d) [FP Icam_i la ka _i doon ungowan]
(Song DET it-is AgrS good PEFT hear PEFT) ‘That is a melodious song.’
- 11(a) [DP Mbampin ve][VP due ga]
(Question PL AgrS come out NEG) ‘The questions did not appear.’
- (b) [DP M hen][DP mbampin ve] [VP due ga]
(1SG study PAST Question PL AgrS come out NEG) ‘The questions I studied (for the exam) did not appear
- (c) [DP Mbampin mba m hen la ~~mbampin~~ ve due ga]
(Question PL DET 1SG study PAST DET_ AgrS come out NEG) ‘Those questions that I studied (for the exam) did not appear.’

(d) [DP Mbampin_i mba m hen la ve_i due ga]
(Question PL DET 1SG study PAST DET_ AgrS come out NEG) ‘Those questions that I studied (for the exam) did not appear.’
In (10) (a) the DP *icam* with its AgrS merges with the ADJP *doon ungowan*. The DP *icam* is focused in (10) (b) so moves to Spec-c and subsequently gets deleted in (10) (c), yielding (10) (d) where the PRON, *i* is orphaned. A similar operation takes place in (11). The DP with its plural AgrO, *ve* merges with the VP, *due* and the negative marker *ga*. Next the DP, *mbampin* is topicalised (moved) and gets deleted in (11) (C). The PRON *ve* is stranded in its base as an RP in (11) (d) it is therefore co-indexed with *mbampin*.

The Minimalist framework invokes economic principles. Move is the primary resource, while it involves Copy and Merge. Bind; a secondary strategy involves more complex derivations. Demerge (copy and Delete) Merge and Co-Index. Minimal principles require that alternative possible converging derivations are compared with identical ones and the more economic derivation; Move selected (McCLoskey 2005:12). In summary, the paper endeavoured to trace the analysis of RPs over the years and we have examined some theories offering varying analyses of the RP. Although no consensus on the analysis of RPs has been reached by linguists, the understanding is that; there are basically, the movement strategy and the non-movement analysis. The later is also known in the literature as ‘true resumption’ while the former is called ‘apparent resumption’.

Data from Tiv resumptive pronouns.

Although the RP strategy is found in a number of Tiv constructions, this paper is concerned with RPs in declarative, relative, interrogative and topicalised constructions. Relativised constructions are however, the most productive in the language.

The resumptive pronoun in Tiv relative construction

Consider the following constructions:

- (12) [DP Iwen_i] [CP _i [DP mbamaan ve][VP venda -i_i] [la [FOC ka _i _i hingir sha zongo ye
Stone AgrS builder PL AgrS refuse PAST RP it-is FMINDEF AgrS become corner EMP M PREP]]].
‘The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone’

In (12), the RP *i* first merge with the DP *iwēn*. *Iwēn* originates within IP and gets moved to the SPEC CP and leaves behind a resumptive pronoun. This can be illustrated as in (13).

- (13a) Mbamaan ve venda iwēn la...
(Builders AgrS refuse PAST stone DET...) ‘The builders rejected the stone...’
- (b) Iwen _i mbamaan ve venda ~~iwēn~~ la...
(Stone AgrS Builders AgrS refuse PAST _ DET...) ‘The stone which the builders rejected.’
- (c) Iwen_i _i mbamaan ve venda _i la...
(Stone AgrS Builders AgrS refuse PAST DET...) ‘The stone which the builders rejected...’
- (14) [DP Ior_i mba] [CP _i] [ADJP kpe ve_i iyol yô] [FOC ka] [ve] [VP lam dang]
(3PL AgrS COMP good RP body CONDM it-is_{3PL} speak bad) ‘Those who are fortunate speak thoughtlessly’

- (15) [or_i ù ù nenge a na_i [TP la ka un a lu or-ya ye]
 (3SG AgrS COMP see PAST CLIC RP it-ISFM 3SG AgrS BE man home DEFM) ‘The man whom you saw is the landlord’

A similar explanation holds for (14) and (15). The DP; *Ior* and *or* in (14) and (15) originates within IP. They are in fact objects of the verbs *kpe* and *nenge*; in (14) and (15) respectively. The movement of these DPs to the SPEC CP position leaves behind a trace which has to be pronounced at the PF level; for convergence; otherwise the derivation will crash. Consider:

- (16) *Ior mba i kpe – iyol yô ka ve lam dang
 (People AgrS COMP good body CONDM it-is 3PL speak bad) ‘Those who are fortunate speak thoughtlessly’

- (17) *Or ù u’ nenge a – la ka un a lu or- ya ye
 (Man AgrS COMP see PST CLIC it-is FM 2SG AgrS BE man home DEFM) ‘The man whom you saw is the landlord’.

The derivations (16) and (17) are ill- formed because after the movement of the DP; *Ior* and *or* in (18) and (19) respectively, both the DP and the RP are deleted but no resumptive pronoun is found in its place. Focusing is one way to achieve this as can be seen below:

- (18) Ka kasev_i mba ati ve_i a lu heen la kwagh a gba sha ve ye
 (FM woman PL COMP name PL RP AgrS BE here DISTRIBM thing AgrS fall PREP 3PL DEFM)
 ‘It is those women whose names appear here that are needed’

- (19) Ka akaa_i a u vande fan a_i la nga a taver we ga ye
 (Thing PLCOMP 2SG already know RP DISTRIBM it ArgS hard 2PL NEG DEFM)
 ‘It is those things which one already knows that are easy to do’

In (18) *kasev* originates as the object of the verb *gba* within the IP of the embedded clause. Then it moves first to the SPEC-CP of the clause and next gets fronted. At both extraction and landing sites, it leaves behind an audible trace, an RP; *ve*. Such movement does not violate subadjacency. In (19) *akaa* originates as the subject of *taver* and then gets fronted. The same situation accounts for the following;

- (20) Ka iyô_i i a lu i_i nyima u yô u kpe keng yô
 (FM snake COMP CLIC if RP bite 2SG CONDM 2SG die must CONDM) ‘This is the snake which if one is bitten by; one dies’

- (21) Ka ilegh_i ki i tsenge ki_i yô ka ki kehe ye
 (FM animal COMP INDEFP castrate PERF RP that-is FM big DEFM) ‘An animal which is castrated grows fat’

In (20) and (21), *iyô* and *ilegh*, respectively, first merge with *i* in (20) and *ki* in (21), then moves to the SPEC-C where it forms a chain with the stranded RP *i* and *ki* respectively.

The resumptive pronoun in Tiv declaratives

Resumption can also take declarative force. Consider the following examples;

- (22) Iti_i i dedoo i_i hembra inyaregh
 (Name AgrS good RP pass money) ‘A good name is better than money’

- (23) Tindi u hiihii la a_i taver u kuran
 (Law COMP first it-is RP hard to keep) ‘As for that first rule, is hard to keep’

In (22) and (23), which are root constructions, the resumptive elements *i* and *a* respectively can be said to serve as normal discourse pronouns or apparent resumption. Such derivations serve as a grammatical resource. (Creswel 2002)

Resumption in Tiv can also be used to provide additional information, without which the semantic readings will be obscured. Consider the examples below:

- (24) A jidi iyue_i i a ya ruam la a i_i yô
 (3SG boil soup COMP INDEFP eat *fifu* DET PREP RP then) ‘S/he has cooked the soup with which to eat the *fifu*’

- (25) M ngu a ijende_i i mo ve a na_i se tse i kuma anyom 30 yô
 (1SG HAVE CLIC friend COMP 1SG with CLIC RP 2PL last PREP DET years 30 now)
 ‘I have a friend with whom we have enjoyed friendship for the past 30 years’

Without the RP *i* in (24) and *na* in (25), the constructions will have ambiguous meaning.

Implication of resumptive pronouns on native Tiv learning English

This paper pointed out that resumption is fully grammaticalised in Tiv. The same is not true for English where gaps are normally found; or where resumption is highly marginal – it is commonly found in substandard English. So while the resumptive strategy is a ‘last resort’ to ensure convergence in English; it is more of a resource in Tiv; this means constructions in Tiv with gaps rather than RPs are ill-formed or at best, highly marginal on the grammatical scale. The implication of this on the Tiv native speaker learning English is that there is a high tendency for him to employ resumption in English where gaps would normally occur.

Conclusion

This paper considered the syntax of resumptive pronouns in Tiv. In the language, resumption is almost obligatory with few instances of gaps. Pronouns, unlike R-expressions, usually require that their reference be always accessible, even if they occur in a higher clause of an embedded clause. Such relationship is co-indexed even when the constituent has null phonetic content. Basically, the resumptive pronoun in Tiv originates within IP as a DP and may move to the SPEC-CP, where it gets deleted and leaves behind a phonologically audible copy, an RP. However, in Tiv RPs may be base generated too.

References

- Adger, D and G, Ramchand. (2004). “Merge and Move. Wh-dependencies revisited”.
Retrieved from <http://www.hum.uic.no/a/ramchand/downloads/sgaeltcrelsli.pdf>
- Akinremi, I.I. (nd) “Resumption: A comparative study of English and Hausa relative clauses; Manuscript: Department of Languages and Linguistics University of Jos.
- Aoun, Choueiri and Hornstein. (2001), “Resumption, Movement and Derivational Economy”. in *Linguistic Inquiry* 32, 371-404.
- Asudeh, A. (2004) Resumptive pronouns as a resource surplus. PhD. Dissertation. Stanford University.
- Beltrama, A. (2013) *Intrusive but not intruders. The processing of Resumptive pronouns in Italian and English*: Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- Boeckx, C. (2008), *Bare Syntax*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Creswell C (2002) “Resumptive Pronouns, Wh-island Violations, and Sentence Production”
Proceedings of the Sixth International Workshop on Tree Adjoining Grammar and Related Frameworks, pp. 101–109. Universit’ a di Venezia.
- Crozier, D.H. and R.M. Blench (Eds.) (1992), *An index of Nigerian Languages*. Calif: Summer.
- Crystal, D. (2008). *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics* (6th ed.) Maiden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Farby, S. (nd) “Resumptive Pronouns in Hebrew: Not only a last resort”. From: misshira@gmail.com.
- Huang, C-T.J. (1982), *Logical Relations in Chinese and the theory of Grammar*. PhD Dissertation. MIT Cambridge Mass.
- Koopman, H. (1984), *The Syntax of verbs: From verb movement in the Kru languages to universal Grammar*: Foris, Dordrecht.
- Lavine, J. (2003) “Resumption in Slavic: Phases, Cyclicity, and Case.” *Formal Approaches to Slavic Linguistics II*, eds. Wayles Browne et al. Ann Arbor: Michigan Slavic Publications, 355-372.
- Mbah, B.M. (1999), *Studies in syntax: Igbo phrase structure*. Nsukka: Prize Publishers.
- McCloskey, J. and P. Sells. (1988) “Control and A-chains in Modern Irish” in *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*. 6:143-189.
- McCloskey, J. (2005), “Resumption” in Everaert, M and H Van Riemsdijk (eds); *The Blackwell Companion to Syntax*. Oxford; Blackwell.
- Radford, A. (1997b) *Syntax: A Minimalist Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press..
- Uwalaka, M.A (1995) “The resumptive pronoun strategy in Igbo” in Emenanjo, E.N and Ndimele, O.M (Eds) *Issues in African languages and linguistics: Essays in honour of Kay Williamson*. Aba: NINLAN pp 279-289.
- Welmers, W. E. (1973). *African Language Structures*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Yusuf, O (1998) *Fundamentals of syntax and the study of Nigerian Languages*. Ijebu-ode: Shebiotimo publishers.