Knowing in interaction: Fieldwork on epistemicity and intersubjectivity

Exploring Kogi epistemic marking in interactional elicitation tasks: A report from the field

Dominique Knuchel (University of Bern)

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Outline

I. Introduction
   • The notion of engagement
   • Engagement marking in Kogi

II. Interactional elicitation tasks
   • Description of stimuli and procedures
   • Results and examples

III. Conclusions

IIII. Outlook: Planned elicitation task
The notion of ‘engagement’

- “A grammatical system for encoding the relative accessibility of an entity or state of affairs to the speaker and addressee” (Evans et al. 2018)
- Various conceptions of accessibility, i.e. perceptual, epistemic, cognitive (e.g. attention, awareness, knowledge, epistemic rights, expectations…)
- Access to referents or state of affairs
- Intersubjectivity: indication of accessibility to speaker as well as to addressee, as estimated by the speaker
- Epistemicity: distribution of knowledge / epistemic authority
Joint attention demonstrative

- One of three demonstratives, first associated with addressee-proximity, reflects attentional contrast

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(ad)nominal DEM</th>
<th>DISTANCE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JOINT ATTENTION</td>
<td>close to SPKR</td>
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<tr>
<td>—</td>
<td>hēhié</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td>kwēhié</td>
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<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td>twēhié</td>
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- Example from elicitation:

A: *Kwēhié.* 'That one over there!' [pointing out one of the objects]

B: *Kwēhié?* 'That one over there?' [checking whether the they have identified the right object]

A: *Aha, twēhié.* 'Yes, that one.' [confirming that B has identified the one A pointed out]
Joint access demonstrative

- The use of the form is dependent on a speaker's assumption about the addressee's attentional state
- *twēhié* is used, irrespective of distance, to refer to an object that is in the focus of attention of both speaker and addressee
- It cannot be used when joint attention is not yet established
- *twēhié* is also used for referents mentioned earlier in discourse > speaker assumes that referent is still accessible to addressee
Engagement prefixes

• A set of four verbal prefixes which signal (a)symmetries in access to a state of affairs between speech act participants (Bergqvist 2016)

• Two parameters
  – Perspective: whose knowledge/perception is at stake?
  – (A)symmetrical access: shared vs. non-shared

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Speaker perspective</th>
<th>Addressee perspective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Symmetric</td>
<td><em>ni-</em></td>
<td><em>shi-</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymmetric</td>
<td><em>na(k)-</em></td>
<td><em>sha-</em></td>
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Engagement prefixes

(1)
$hēhié=ki$ nahí gamá $nzha$ ($ni$-ná)
DEM=SW 1SG.POSS bag SPKR.SYM-be
‘This is my bag.’ (cnc_el)

(2)
A girl says to her younger brother who mistakenly took her school bag: $nahí$ $nak$-ldá!
1SG.POSS SPKR.ASYM-be
‘That's mine!’ (obs)
Characteristics of engagement prefixes

• Resources for argumentation, negotiation, indicating unexpected information, directing attention, claiming epistemic rights, enquiring about mental states...
• Not obligatory: unmarked/differently marked alternatives
• Used in contexts in which a speaker wishes to epistemically qualify a proposition
• Use is dependent on genre, age / social status of speakers, discourse structure
• Comparable to modal particles (e.g. Germanic languages)
• Semantics/function of such forms is often opaque to speakers
How to explore engagement in Kogi?

• ENG forms are infrequent in elicited materials from initial research phase (i.e. translated utterances, elicited narratives either free or stimuli-based)
• Contexts arise in verbal interaction between actual speakers in which (a)symmetries in perceptual/epistemic access exist

Ideal data:
• naturally occurring speech
• face-to-face interaction, referring to objects / state of affairs in speech situation
• conversations concerning personal knowledge / experiences / opinions
How to explore engagement in Kogi?

• Challenges of obtaining/working with naturally occurring speech...
• Opportunities of interactional, stimuli-based elicitation tasks
  – Fairly natural conversational data
  – Designed to target certain topics or expressions
  – (A)symmetries in access given by task design
  – Problem solving that induces verbal negotiation, argumentation, question-answer sequences
Interactional elicitation tasks

- Shape Classifier Task
- The Difference Task
- Family Problems Picture Task
- (Positional Verbs matcher-director task [Ameka et al. 1999, Hellwig 2006])
Shape Classifier Task

- Variation of shape classifier task (Seifart 2003)
- Inspired by study on Jahai demonstratives (Burenhult 2003)
- 25 objects of various shapes and sizes, a subset is depicted in picture
- Asymmetrical access: Director has access to pictures, while matcher does not
- Demonstratives, asymmetric prefixes
Shape Classifier Task
The difference task

- Based on Enfield & de Ruiter (2003)
- Original task designed to investigate aspects of multimodal interaction
- 10 Pairs of almost identical pictures
- Participants need to spot the difference
- No interactional asymmetry inherent in the director-matcher design
- Symmetric prefixes
The Family Problems Picture Task

- Collaborative story-building /-telling (San Roque et al. 2012)
The Family Problems Picture Task

- Four phases:
  1. Description of each picture
  2. Organization of cards into a coherent narrative
  3. Third-person narrative to an audience
  4. First-person narrative
- Depictions of socially-pregnant and emotionally-charged situations
- The four phases induce different language choices, e.g. descriptions, conversations, narrative discourse, reported speech
Results

- Fewer instances of ENG marking than anticipated, yet they are in line with hypotheses

Demonstratives
- Used extensively in the ShaClaTa, to some extent in FPPT
- Evidence for demonstrative that is licensed by joint access

Engagement prefixes
- Only some in matching tasks – no correlation with task design (symmetric vs. asymmetric access to stimuli)
- Most prominent in FPPT, particularly in reported speech
Example: ShaCluTask

(3)
D:  
  ezwa ama kēyakēyá-gatse naldatshak zumēya tū gatse
  one uhm edged-seem be.but star look look.like
  ‘One, uhm, with edges but it looks like a star.’

M:  
  kēyakēyá gatse naldatshak zumēya tū gatse
  edged look.like be.but star look look.like
  ‘One with edges but it looks like a star.’

  meilde sha-hangu-kú, zumēya tū-gatse?
  which.one ADDR.ASYM-think-1SG star look-seem
  ‘Which one may it be (lit: I think)? It looks like a star?’

D:  
  hai hē nzha (ni-na) ni-hangu-kú hai kēyakēyá gatse hai
  DEM DEM SPKR.SYM.be SPKR.SYM-think-1SG DEM edged look DEM
  ‘Here, it’s this one, I think [gestures with lips]. Here, the one with the edges, here.’
Example: ShaClaTask

M:  kēyakēyā-gatse naldachák hui hukase, hēnié?
edged-seem but house roof, DEM
‘With edges but like the roof of a house, this one?’

D:  twē  shi-nalda
DEM  ADDR.SYM-be
‘Is it that one?’
ē=ki makēwā ak-ldukka ezwa mozhwa twē=ki maigwa mechwi
DEM=SW four 3SG.IO-be one two DEM=SW three only
‘This one [in the picture] has four sides, but that one only has three.’

twē tūgatse ama tweka mua-ka pa nak-lđo
DEM look-seem uhm DEM middle=LOC be.FLAT SPKR.ASYM-be.located
‘It's similar to that one, uhm, it's there in the middle!’
Example: ShaClaTask

M:  hēnié?  
DEM  
‘This one?’

D:  ese twē  
DEM DEM  
‘[Yes] that one.’

(kog_170826_sct3-2)
Examples: DiffTask

(4) *hi  *shi-*tū*-kú?
    what ADDR.SYM-see-1SG.SUBJ.PRS
    ‘What is it? (lit.: What do I see?)’

(5) *malakze* *hangwa* *ni*-gu-kú
    sweet  think  SKPR.SYM-do-1SG.SUBJ.PRS
    ‘It's candy, I think.’  (LCZ_32)
Example: DiffTask

DiffTask (LGN_7-11)

A:  *bakka zhawa*
   ‘A little cow.’

B:  *mh no inzhi zhawa nakaldini hi zhawa*
   ‘No, there's a yuca root, then what?’

A:  *bakka zhawa*
   ‘A little cow.’

B:  *relo zhawa nenka náklá [SPKR.ASYM]*
   ‘There's a clock!’

A:  *ah ah baka zhawa*
   ‘No, a little cow.’
Examples: FPPT

(5)
heki atshi-ka nak-ldá mihí munzhi
DEM do-PRS SPKR.ASYM-be 2SG.POSS woman

ak-bëya-té
3SG.IOBJ-say-IPFV

"This is what your wife does [without you knowing].", he is telling him.’
(fppt1-1_cnc)
Examples: FPPT

(3)

ekí sigí na ma-wa-tū-ne
DEM.ADV man with 2SG.DO-3PL.SJ-see-PST

nag-a-bē-ne nalda shā (shi-na)
1SG.IO-3PL.SJ-tell-PST be ADDR.SYM.be

[Man:] ‘They saw you like this with another man, is that so?’

no z-hābbia-l nuka ne-nuge nzha (ni-na)
no INTR-buy-PURP only go-1SG.PST SPKR.SYM.be

[Woman:] ‘No, I just went to buy [something].’

(fppt1-3_cnc)
Conclusions

- Fewer instances of ENG marking than anticipated, yet they are in line with hypotheses
  - Evidence for joint access demonstrative in ShaClaTa
  - Instances of ENG prefixes in contexts of convincing, unexpected information, disputes
  - Use of ENG prefixes in reported conversations (FPPT)
- Limitations
  - Naturalistic interactions, yet artificial setting / topics
  - Low frequency of ENG markers due to low personal investment in and low complexity of matching tasks
Outlook

- ENG markers in reported conversations
- Contexts of gossip, arguments, accusation
Outlook

• Planned interactional elicitation task based on Senft (2003) "Reasoning in language"
• Original task investigates how speakers "verbally reason about moral issues"
• Moral problems presented in open story plots or scenarios that require a solution
• Plots are aimed to present common conflicts in societies and human behaviour
• Discussion about personal opinions and social norms
Outlook

• Stimuli: Unfinished short stories / descriptions of problems
• Participants: Native speaker interviewer, and at least two speakers
• Procedure: Interviewer presents scenario, solicits discussion of possible outcome/solution and imagined conversations
References


Özyürek, Asli and Sotaro Kita. n.d. Joint attention and distance in the semantics of Turkish and Japanese demonstrative systems.
