Knowing in interaction: Fieldwork on epistemicity and intersubjectivity

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

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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

III. 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>
<th>JOINT ATTENTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hēhié</td>
<td>close to SPKR</td>
<td>far from SAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kwēhié</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>twēhié</td>
<td></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 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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Speaker perspective</th>
<th>Addressee perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Symmetric</td>
<td>( ni )-</td>
<td>( shi )-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymmetric</td>
<td>( na(k) )-</td>
<td>( sha )-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 ShaClTa, 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: ShaClaTask

(3)

D:  

```
  ezwa ama kêyakêyá-gatse naldatshak zumêya tû gatse
don uhm edged-seem be.but star look look.like
'One, uhm, with edges but it looks like a star.'
```

M:  

```
kêyakêyá gatse naldatshak zumêya tû gatse
  edged look.like be.but star look look.like
'One with edges but it looks like a star.'
```

```
  meilde sha-hangu-kú, zumêya tû-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 hê nzha (ni-na) ni-hangu-kú hai kêyakêyá 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-ldo
DEM look-seem uhm DEM middle=LOC be.SPKR.ASYM be.located
‘It's similar to that one, uhm, it's there in the middle!’
Example: ShaClаТask

M:  hēnié?
    DEM
    ‘This one?’

D:  ese  twē
    DEM DEM
    ‘[Yes] that one.’
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 nakldá [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-béya-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-tů-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-häbbia-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].’
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.
