A cross-linguistic perspective on Echo-Subject marking in Vanuatu

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ALT 2017
12th Conference of the Association for Linguistic Typology
December 12th, 2017, Canberra, Australia
Echo-Subject marking: Outline

1. What is Echo-Subject marking (ES)?
   - Also sometimes called ‘Echo-Referent’

2. Where is ES found?
   - Distribution is more extensive than often stated

3. Typological perspective:
   - ES compared to other cross-linguistic phenomena found in Oceanic/Austronesian and elsewhere
What is an ES marker?

- Verb prefix indicating the same subject as previous verb, found in Southern Vanuatu languages:

  *Lenakel (Lynch 1983: 211)*

  i-ɨm-ɨn (kani) m-ɨm-apul
  1-PST-go (and) ES-PST-sleep
  ‘I went and slept.’

  i-ɨm-ɨn (kani) r-ɨm-apul
  1-PST-go (and) 3SG-PST-sleep
  ‘I went and he slept.’
Previous research

- Lynch (1983, 2001, etc.): extensive descriptive work
- Crowley (2002, etc.): additional comparative work
- de Sousa (2008, etc.): wider distribution & origin
- Hammond (2014, etc.): additional descriptive work
- Barbour & Dodd (2017: this conf.): ES on Malakula
Definition of ES?

- Rather than being explicitly defined, ES is often presented as a **descriptive observation** of a feature of the Southern Vanuatu languages.
  - = language (family) specific feature, not comparative concept

- Uncertain borders; potential for marginal cases.

- Similar to and sometimes compared with other cross-linguistic phenomena such as Switch-Reference, etc.

- I will explore its properties, present a geographic distribution and compare to other phenomena.
ES as Switch-Reference?

- Lynch (1983) and others have analyzed ES as a type of Switch-Reference marking.
- ES is (half of) a system determining one verb’s subject is the same as or different from another.
- Some linguists are more hesitant to consider ES as SR (e.g. van Gijn 2016 vs. Hammond 2016).
- Unlike typical SR systems, ES only marks same-subject, using default strategies for different-subject.
Switch-Reference marking

- Switch-Reference (SR) systems mark same-subject (SS) and different-subject (DS):


  daka oro-go-i era-ga-nu
  1SG come-SG-SS see-SG-PST
  ‘I came and saw him.’

  daka oro-go-nuge auki da era-ga-nu
  1SG come-SG-DS 3SG 1SG.OBJ see-SG-PST
  ‘I came and he saw me.’
SR distribution (Ross 2016a)

- 54 (17%) have SR, plus 19 (6%) are borderline cases, of 325 languages in WALS-style sample

(Eromangan (Sie) represents Southern Vanuatu)
ES vs. Switch-Reference

- ES is *only half* of typical SR system
- SR is about difference (and sameness)
  - ES only marks sameness
- SR is typically suffixed
  - ES is prefixed
- SR typically precedes final, finite clause
  - ES follows main verb
- *ES also has other properties...*
Properties of ES:

- Marks *same-subject* on verbs
- ...
ES and Serial Verbs

- ES overlaps with—and possibly substitutes for—Serial Verb Constructions

- SVCs are (Ross et al. 2015):
  - Two or more juxtaposed verbs
  - *with no marker of dependency or linking element*
  - expressing a single event in a single clause
  - with shared values for Tense-Aspect-Modality and negation
  - and shared arguments (subject and/or object)
SVCs distribution (Ross et al. 2015)

- 126/325 (39%) of the languages have SVCs
ES vs. Serial Verbs

- SVCs (strictly defined) have no dependency markers
  - ES is a dependency marker
  - But we could argue it is a type of person agreement
    - Or define SVCs more loosely

- SVCs may sometimes be a tighter bond than ES

- Not all ES usage is SVC-like (e.g. complementation)

- Some Vanuatu languages have both ES and SVCs!
  - Generally SVCs found (more & in general) where ES is not
Properties of ES:

- Marks *same-subject* on verbs
- **Functional overlap with SVCs**
- ...
Converbs: dependent forms

- Converbs typical of clause-chaining or adverbial clauses:
  
  Everyone laughing, we arrived at the party.

- But also sometimes found in tight, SVC-like usage
  - ES may also have other functions (subordination, coordination)

- Distinct from SVCs due to dependency-marking

- Both converbs and ES typically mark same-subject

- ES prefix also a sort of dependency-marking: the ES verb form is never used independently
Converbs distribution (Ross 2016b)

- 111/325 (34%) of the languages have converbs
ES vs. Converbs

- Converbs almost always suffixing
  - But ES is prefixing

- Converbs usually precede finite forms
  - ES forms follow

- ES is arguably a type of agreement
  - Converb suffixes are typically subordinators
    - Note that SVC analysis (as agreement) would preclude verb analysis

- ES typically tighter bond than typical converses
  - Though this reflects traditional labels over (some) usage
Properties of ES:

- Marks *same-subject* on verbs
- Functional overlap with SVCs
- **ES marker is type of morphosyntactic dependency**
- ...
Pseudocoordination

- PC: extension of a coordinating conjunction ‘and’ beyond normal coordinative functions (Ross 2016c):
  - Verbal pseudocoordination in English:
    
    Go and see a movie.
    Try and read a book.
  
  - Clausal PC also found in some languages where a subordinator (e.g., ‘that’) is cognate with ‘and’.

- The ES marker *m- (or similar) in Southern Vanuatu languages developed from Proto-Oceanic *ma ‘and’.
  - PC is rarer (or less described) than the other phenomena, but relatively common in Oceanic/Austronesian
PC distribution (Ross 2016c)

- 46/325 (14%) of the languages have PC (including both verbal or clausal types)
ES vs. PC

- Both involve secondary grammaticalization of ‘and’
  - In ES it has (in some languages) become a clitic/affix

- PC accurately describes (some) ES
  - But PC may have much broader functions

- Not all ES markers are cognate with ‘and’ (beyond Southern Vanuatu)
  - By definition, the form of PC always involves ‘and’
Properties of ES:

- Marks *same-subject* on verbs
- Functional overlap with SVCs
- ES marker is type of morphosyntactic dependency
- **ES marker cognate with ‘and’ (in Southern Vanuatu)**
What is ES?

- Marks *same-subject* like **SR**
- Functional overlap with **SVCs**
- Marks dependency like **converbs**
- Cognate with ‘*and*’ like **pseudocoordination**

- *ES is similar to other phenomena but not equivalent...*
  - Several broad comparative concepts apply to **ES** (at least sometimes)
Can we find ES elsewhere?

- What about English PC, requiring same-subject? *What did you go and (*he) do?*
- Or even just infinitives? *You tried to (*he) eat.*

- Kießling (2013) describes ŋ (‘subject copy marker’) as a “coordinative” marker for “continuation of the same subject” in Taa (Southern Khoisan, Africa):
  ě qx’àbà (ṅ) tshúù
  3i rise.S (and) sit.S
  ‘He has risen (into sitting position).’

- *How to know...? Let’s ask another question first...*
Where is ES?

- (Southern) Vanuatu
VANUATU

SOUTHERN VANUATU
ES in Southern Vanuatu

- “All the other languages of the Southern Vanuatu subgroup appear to have a prefix which is cognate with the Lenakel ES-marker *m*.-.” (Lynch 1983: 216)

- ANEITYUM: Anejom

- TANNA: Lenakel, Southwest Tanna, North Tanna, Kwamera, Whitesands

- ERROMANGGO: Sie, Ura, Utaha

Sources: Lynch (1983, 2001), de Sousa (2008), Hammond (2014), *inter alia*
Futuna-Aniwa

- A Polynesian language spoken on two small islands in Southern Vanuatu

- Capell (1984: 53-4) reports a parallel construction with *ma* in the Aniwan dialect (the closer island), which is apparently calqued to the Polynesian cognate of Southern Vanuatu *m-*
  - *ma* is only used to conjoin nouns in Futuna-Aniwa
  - Usage may have been spreading in children’s speech
To the north: ES on Efate

- Although ES is best known in Southern Vanuatu, similar features are found in Central Vanuatu:
  - Thieberger (2006, 2007) describes ES usage in South Efate, in lieu of SVCs
    - The marker is *kai*, probably related to a different Proto-Oceanic conjunction, *ka* (Lichtenberk 2014)
  - Nguna also may have ES (marker: *poo*)
  - Other languages such as Lelepa lack ES
    - A fuller study of other Efate languages is desirable
Efate + Southern Vanuatu group?

- Southern Vanuatu forms a subgroup with the New Caledonian languages among the Oceanic languages, in contrast to the distinct subgroup of Central Vanuatu (where additional ES is found).

- Lynch (2004) considered the possibility of a closer historical relationship between these languages due to shared features such as this.
  - But see later: that does not explain all ES in Vanuatu.
    - A complex contact situation is implied, beyond their shared ancestry; at this point details remain uncertain.
Farther north: Malakula

- Dodd (2014) reported ES in V’ënen Taut, stretching the extent of ES marking to languages of Malakula
  - ES marker kë- likely cognate with Proto-Oceanic *ka (Lichtenberk 2014)
- Tape also has ES, with dë- (see also Crowley 2006a)
- Larevet has two forms: t(V)- (realis) and khV- (irrealis)
- Paviour-Smith (2009, etc.) has given examples of ES in Aulua with ana-
- Crowley (2006b) reported ES in Nese with ko-, but Takau (2016) did not report such a feature
- Claudia Williams’ ongoing fieldwork on Lamap has hinted that there may be some type of ES there also

Sources: Dodd (2014), Barbour & Dodd (this conf.), Barbour (p.c.), inter alia
Farther north: Malakula

- Known or assumed to be absent in the many other languages of Malakula

- Crowley (2006c) reports a peculiar SVC pattern in Naman: default 3SG marking on the second verb

  Tër-lungo-lung  bë-jëber  nowe.
  1DL-REDUP-walk  3SG-reach  river
  ‘Let’s walk to the river.’

- Could this be a potential alternative ES marker etymology?

- No ES attested in Shepherd Islands, Epi or Ambrym (east of Malakula) although closer to Efate (and Southern Vanuatu)
Additional ES on Pentecost

- In Ske, ES is marked by *la-* (Johnson 2014)
  - Related but extinct Sowa had *la* or *lapa*, possibly originally distinct singular and plural forms (Andrew Gray p.c.)

- In Sa, ES is marked by *e* (Andrew Gray p.c.)

- No ES is attested on Espiritu Santo or to the north
Where does ES come from?

- Most salient as a feature in Southern Vanuatu
- There, ES marker *m- can be reconstructed for Proto-Southern-Vanuatu from Proto-Oceanic *ma ‘and’ (de Sousa 2008, Moyse-Faurie & Lynch 2004)
- Several linguists (Blust 2005; Pawley 2006, 2007; Donohue & Denham 2008, *inter alia*) have considered a possible ancient Papuan substrate in Vanuatu
  - The frequency of Switch-Reference in Papuan languages could have influenced ES development
  - Little evidence, and even if true, questions remain...
Link to New Caledonia?

- The Southern Vanuatu languages form a subgroup with the New Caledonian languages (Lynch 2004)
  - We might expect New Caledonian languages would also have ES, more than elsewhere in Vanuatu
  - ES *per se* is not attested, however.

- The development of *ma* ‘and’ to ES marker *m*- is a type of pseudocoordination

- In fact, New Caledonian languages very often have pseudocoordination with reflexes of *ma*
  - See also de Sousa (2008: 20) for a related comment
PC in New Caledonia

For example, Bril (2004a,b) discusses PC in Nêlêmwa:

**Coordination**

\[ l \ xam \ wâlem, \ wâlem \ me \ wâlem \ me \ gi \ me \ ôôxi. \]

3SG ASS walk walk ME walk ME cry ME go.away

‘She walks, walks and walks and cries and goes away.’

**Ambiguous/Intermediate**

\[ Pwâ \ ôôxi \ me \ yo \ shaavic \ mwa. \]

a.little go.forward ME 2SG warm.up ACT

‘Come a little closer and/to get warm.’

**Subordination**

\[ Hma \ tabô \ kot \ me \ kââlek \ o \ na \ â \ Pum. \]

a.lot fall rain ME impossible IRR 1SG go Poum

‘It rained so much that I cannot go to Poum.’
PC in New Caledonia

- Survey of PC in New Caledonian languages
  - Convenience sample of 17 languages (of about 30) based on available grammars and dictionaries
  - 11/17 languages in sample have PC
  - Significant variation in details and other conjunctions

- Often not ES-like PC
  - For example, clausal PC rather than verbal PC
  - Often identified just as homophonous ‘and’ & ‘that’
  - More information about PC in New Caledonia desired
Same-Subject VP conjunction

- In fact, in some New Caledonian languages, *ma is restricted to coordinating only SS VPs, with another DS conjunction (Moyse-Faurie & Lynch 2004)
  - SR coordinators also found elsewhere (Ross 2016a)

- Lichtenberk (1978) observes for Houaïlou/Ajië: “ma is used in both clausal and NP coordination as well as in other types... Note that ma can conjoin clauses with coreferential subjects only and that clauses introduced by ma typically have no subjective pronouns”
  
  na pwaʔ ma kuru rro-a
  3SG arrive and sleep in-there
  ‘He arrived and slept there.’
Polynesian PC

- Moyse-Faurie & Lynch (2004:463-4) identified PC in several western Polynesian languages with a different conjunction, from Proto-Polynesian *qo
- Found in Tongan, East Uvean and East Futunan; also related usage in Tokelauan, Tuvaluan and others

Tokelauan (Hooper 1997)

Na kita tamā iloa oi tamā nanununu.
TA 1SG.EMP little know COMP little speak.English
‘I knew slightly how to speak a bit of English.’
PSEUDOCOORDINATION IN WESTERN POLYNESIA
PC/SVC linker in New Britain

- Kove (Sato 2013, 2015) and some other New Britain languages have “SVCs” with a linking morpheme likely derived from a conjunction:

  Kove (Western Oceanic; Sato 2015):
  U-kea uraghe eta gha i-nama
  2SG-take knife ART LNK 3SG-come
  ‘Get a knife.’

- A range of relevant usage is also found in nearby related languages including PC with υa in Lusi (Counts 1969) and coordination with ga in Bariai (Gallagher & Baehr 2005)
PC in Formosan languages

- Elsewhere in Austronesian as well we find coordinators grammaticalizing in other functions
  - A long and maybe general history of such developments is implied for Austronesian
  - Other Austronesian languages split from Formosan
  - Interesting also to note the extensive use of “ligatures” in Austronesian in general

- In the Formosan languages, “linker” constructions in some languages alternate with SVCs in others
  - See Tsai (2007, 2008); Shibatani & Huang (2007), *inter alia*
PC in Formosan languages

- It has been proposed that linkers originated from coordinating conjunctions (Tsai 2007, *inter alia*)
  - Although not generally used synchronically in this way

Tsou (Formosan; Tsai 2007):

\[(M-i-ta)\text{ }\text{ngosio ‘e Pasuya ho *(m-i-ta) yaa-hioa.}\]

AV-REA-3SG tired.AV NOM Pasuya CONJ AV-REA-3SG do.AV-work

‘Pasuya worked till he was tired.’

- See Liu (2003: 167-171) for arguments about reconstructing the similar Amis linker *a* as ‘and’ and its diachronic development
PC in Formosan languages

- Tsai & Wu (2012) present a survey of linker functions in 5 Formosan languages, also hinting at development
- The wide range of functions do overlap with some of coordinators
- The extent of use of linkers and SVCs seem to correlate inversely

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| (Tsai & Wu 2012: 178, Table 2)
Conclusions

- ES is not unique to Southern Vanuatu
  - Similar forms found on three islands to the north

- ES-like constructions or properties widespread in Oceanic/Austronesian and elsewhere (Ross 2016c)

- We can say:
  - ES is a type of (non-canonical) Switch-Reference
  - ES is functionally similar to Serial Verbs
  - ES is similar to other SVC-like dependency-marked constructions like those with converbs
  - ES is at least diachronically pseudocoordination
Conclusions

- It is in a sense all of those types, but unique also
- Whether it meets strict definitions for other categories depends on theoretical analysis
  - What is the ES marker? Agreement? Linker? etc.
- *Does it even make sense to define it? Or just describe...*
- *Conclusion: ES is a particular (though variable) configuration of other cross-linguistic phenomena as manifested in Southern Vanuatu with analogous constructions nearby (and elsewhere)*
Thank you!

- Questions or comments are welcome.
Selected References

Barbour, Julie & Royce Dodd. 2017. Serials and Echoes in the languages of Western Malekula. Presented at the 12th Conference of the Association for Linguistic Typology (ALT 2017), Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.


Selected References


Selected References


Shibatani, Masayoshi & Lillian M. Huang. 2007. Serial verb constructions in Formosan languages — their form and grammaticalization pattern. Unpublished manuscript. Rice University & Shih Chien University.


Some references for particular languages (such as in New Caledonia) are omitted but can be made available upon request.