Logophoric pronouns are not inherently logophoric

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Overview. Since Clements (1975), it has been accepted that yè in Ewe is a logophoric pronoun. Though yè may be logophoric in the subject of finite clauses, they are not in controlled, nonfinite subject positions. I present novel data from the Anlo dialect of Ewe to show that yè+a (subject control, optionally pronounced ya), ne (object) and yè+wo (plural, split, pronounced yo) are the overt instantiations of PRO, which can be inanimate crosslinguistically. The impossibility of a long-distance reading for nonfinite yè, despite it possessing inherent φ-features (3rd), presents an issue for Pearson (2015), who argues that the presence of φ-features leads to long-distance readings. Contra Pearson (2015), yè+a must be read de se. I propose a reanalysis of Ewe’s logophoric pronoun as left-periphery pronoun, while presenting numerous counterarguments to Hornstein (1999).

Data. The pronoun yè+a is found with predicates which would contain obligatorily-controlled (OC) PRO in languages such as English, as shown with the attitudinal control predicates in (1).

(1) Agbe1 djagbagba/nlobe/dzina/vovom/wosumu/dzi/susum be yèi/a dzo.
Agbe try/forget/want/afraid/decide/like/intend COMP LOG-IRR leave
'Agbei tried/forget/wanted/is afraid/decided/likes/intends PROi to leave.'

The suffix -a is the irrealis mood marker; this is unsurprising as control infinitives always have an irrealis mood, following Stowell (1982). The inanimacy test in (2)-(3) that Charnavel & Sportiche (2016) uses to rule out logophoricity show that yè+a is not logophoric. Yè can never appear alone as a regular pronoun. This pronoun also appears in embedded clauses that are not attitudinal, shown in (2), and with inanimate controllers with attitudinal predicates, shown in (3).

(2) Ati1-a dzegome be yè1-a nge.
Tree-NOM begin COMP LOG-IRR break.
'The tree began PRO1 to break.'

(3) Emo1 djagbagba be yè1-a dzegome.
Machine try COMP LOG-IRR begin
'The computer tried PRO1 to turn on.'

Pearson (2015), among others, points out that the logophoric pronoun yè in Ewe only appears via binding of the pronoun by an operator in the left periphery of the complement of an attitudinal predicate. Clements (1975) notes that yè is used to refer to the individual whose thought or speech is reported in a given context. This cannot be the case in (2) or (3).

(4) and (5) seem to be overtly identical, but are not. Three facts are represented in these examples. First, yè need not be read de se, as Pearson (2015) points out, but yè+a must always be read de se, when it can. Second, clauses containing yè are finite, as aspectual marking can be added to them, as in (4). Clauses containing yè+a are nonfinite, as seen in (5), as aspectual marking cannot be added. Finally, n-words can usually be assigned across nonfinite clauses in languages such as Italian and Hebrew, but not in finite clauses. (4) and (5) show that this is also the case in Ewe.

(4) Kofi (*mé)-be yè-de se/de re dzo (dzo-m) (*o).
Kofi NEG1-COMP LOG leave RED-PROG NEG2
'Kofi said he left (was leaving).'

(5) Kofi (mè)-be yè-de se/de re dzo (*dzo-m) (o).
Kofi NEG1-COMP LOG-IRR leave RED-PROG NEG2
'(lit. Kofi said PROi to leave (*leaving).)'
Crucial for Pearson’s analysis is that though finite yè may take a long-distance antecedent, nonfinite yè+a may not have a long-distance antecedent, similarly to OC PRO. This is represented in (6). This shows that nonfinite yè is not embedded in a resP.

(6) Agbe₉ kadedzi be Kofiᵢ djagbagba be yèᵢ/k-a dzo Agbe believe COMP Kofi try COMP LOG-IRR leave 'Agbe believed that Kofi tried to leave.'

All the aforementioned data shows that yè+a behaves very similarly to OC PRO, which Chierchia (1990) shows must be interpreted de se when possible, cannot usually have a long-distance antecedent, may also appear with non-attitudinal predicates and may be inanimate. Yè+a may therefore be a phonetically overt OC PRO. I show further similarities between yè+a and OC PRO: for example, the controller must c-command yè+a; in ellipsis contexts yè+a must be construed with a sloppy reading rather than strict and yè+a must be interpreted as a bound variable.

As expected, long-distance control yè+a is seen with the subject control predicate promise. In the case of split control, the OC subject has a complex coordination structure, in which each yè is syntactically plural but semantically singular: the plural of yè is yè+wo. Surprisingly, Ewe does not seem to allow partial control at all. Split control is represented below in (7).

(7) Agbeᵢ do englugble ne Fafaᵢ be [yèᵢ-wo meve yèᵢ-wo]ᵢ+k fo ntsu-a. Agbe make promise to Fafa COMP LOG-IRR two+person LOG-IRR beat man-DEF 'Agbeᵢ promised Fafaᵢ to beat the man.'

This set of data in which PRO is phonetically overt indicates that there is much more to split control than we could see in a language such as English where PRO is invisible.

Problem. This data raises numerous problems, most of which are beyond the scope of this paper. One problem that will be covered in this talk is why yè cannot be logophoric in nonfinite position. Why should it have the same phonetic form as the logophoric pronoun?

In addition, numerous problems for Hornstein (1999) arise, which cannot account for the phonetic similarity between the two pronouns. In addition, it struggles with the syntactic derivation of overt split control, and cannot provide a non-ad hoc answer for why Anlo Ewe should have control but not raising.

Proposal. I propose a reanalysis of Anlo Ewe’s yè as a logophoric pronoun. In order to account for the identical phonetic form between finite yè and nonfinite yè despite their different properties, I propose that this phonetic form arises when the pronoun is bound by be, or an operator in the left periphery of the embedded clause, following Anand (2006), among others. I give up the idea that yè is a logophoric pronoun, contra Clements (1975), reanalyzing as a left-periphery pronoun: a pronoun which is bound by the left periphery of the embedded clause.

Conclusion. The logophoric pronoun of Ewe is not inherently logophoric; it is better analyzed as a different kind of pronoun. PRO is not inherently phonetically null. I hypothesize that similar paradigms may be found in other languages with logophoric pronouns. Finally, overt control in Ewe shows that there is more to it than we can see in languages such as English.